

News Digest

CRPF Man Ends Life In Pulwama

Srinagar: A Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) man on Thursday allegedly committed suicide in Awantipora area of South Kashmir's Pulwama district. ASI Moti Ram of CRPF 178 battalion on Thursday committed suicide after finish his patrolling duty in Awantipora, officials said. CRPF PRO, Junaid Khan, said that they were investigating the circumstances due to which the paramilitary man took the harsh step to end his life.

BSF Man 'Thrashes' Rafiabad Youth

Srinagar: A youth on Thursday was hospitalised after allegedly beaten up by a Border Security Force (BSF) man in Rafiabad area of north Kashmir's Baramulla district. According to the eyewitnesses, the incident happened when the Road Opening Party (ROP) of BSF was questioning the youth when they passed by the orchard where he was working. One of the BSF man, witnesses said hit the youth on his head following an altercation. The injured youth identified as Mohammad Rafi Ahangar was rushed to district hospital Baramulla for treatment. ● P-02

3 Missing Sopore Boys Traced: Police

Srinagar: Police on Thursday claimed to have traced out three youth who were missing from Sopore area of north Kashmir's Baramulla district. A police official said that the three youth identified as Adil Ahmad War of Warpora, Faheem Ahmad Wagay and Waseem Ahmad Wagay were traced by police within 18 hours after the police received missing complaint by the families. Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Sopore, Javid Iqbal said that a team was constituted ● P-02

Canines Injure 5 Men In Pulwama

Srinagar: At least five people were injured after stray dogs went on a biting spree in south Kashmir's Pulwama district, reports said Thursday. A pack of stray dogs appeared in Prichoo area on Wednesday evening and attacked whosoever they came across, reports said. At least five people suffered injuries after bitten by the dogs. Some of the injured have been identified as Rashid Ahmad (45), Ghulam Mohammad (60) and Ghulam Mohiuddin (50). Two non-locals were also injured in canine ● P-02

Man Falls From Tree In Kulgam, Dies

Srinagar: An elderly man died after falling from a tree in Tangmarg Manzgam area of Dambhal Hanjipora in South Kashmir's Kulgam district. Officials said that a 50-year-old man was cutting the branches of a tree when he lost his balance and fell down. He was immediately taken to a nearby hospital where he succumbed to his injuries. A police officer identified the deceased as Bahaj Khan, son of Ghazi Khan of Mohore Reasi. "A case has been registered in this regard and further investigation taken up", he said—(KNO)

PSA Of Naeem Akhtar, Hilal Lone Revoked

SRINAGAR: The detention of Hilal Ahmad Lone, son of National Conference Lok Sabha MP Mohammad Akbar Lone, and PDP leader Nayeem Akhtar under the Public Safety Act was revoked on Thursday, officials said here. "The detention of Nayeem Akhtar and Hilal Ahmad Lone under the PSA has been revoked by authorities concerned," the officials said. The revocation of their detention comes two days after the Jammu and Kashmir High Court quashed the PSA detention of NC general secretary Ali Mohammad Sagar. The six-time former MLA was released on Wednesday from 10-month detention. Akhtar was among dozens of mainstream politicians taken into preventive custody last year. ● P-02

India, China Military Talks Fail To End Deadlock

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Indian and Chinese militaries held Major General-level dialogue on Thursday for the third consecutive day on disengagement of troops as well as restoration of normalcy in Galwan Valley in eastern Ladakh, official sources said.

Galwan Valley was the site of a violent clash between Indian and Chinese troops on Monday evening that resulted in the death of a colonel and 19 other Indian Army soldiers. Around 18 Indian Army soldiers also sustained serious injuries in the clash.

The talks between the two sides near Galwan Valley ended in a stalemate on Tuesday as well as Wednesday, the sources said.

On Wednesday, the two sides discussed ways to implement the disengagement of troops from the region as agreed to during a high-level military dialogue on June 6.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said India wants peace but is capable of giving befitting reply if instigated.

The clash in Galwan Valley is the biggest confrontation between the two militaries after their 1967 clashes in Nathu La when India lost around 80 soldiers while the death toll on the Chinese side was over 300.

The two armies were engaged in a standoff in Galwan and several other areas of the eastern Ladakh since May 5 when the two sides clashed on the bank of the Pangong Tso.

After the standoff began, the Indian military leadership decided that Indian troops will adopt a firm approach in dealing with the aggressive posturing by the Chinese troops in all disputed ● P-02



No Soldier Missing Since Galwan Valley Clash: Army

NEW DELHI: The Indian Army on Thursday trashed media reports claiming that a number of its soldiers went missing after the violent clashes with Chinese troops at Galwan Valley in eastern Ladakh three days back. "It is clarified that there are no Indian troops missing in action," the Army said in a statement.

There have been reports that several Indian Army soldiers were held captive by the Chinese Army following the Galwan Valley clashes in which 20 Indian Army personnel including a Colonel were killed. China has not yet released any casualty figures.

At a media briefing, External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava also said ● P-02

China's Claim Over Galwan Valley 'Exaggerated, Untenable': MEA

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: India has trashed China's claim of sovereignty over the Galwan Valley in eastern Ladakh, the site of a violent cross-border clash, saying such "exaggerated" and "untenable" claims are contrary to the understanding reached during a high-level military dialogue on June 6.

The Chinese military on Thursday said the Galwan Valley has always been a part of China.

In a sharp reaction to the claim by China's People's Liberation Army (PLA), Spokesperson in the Ministry of External Affairs Anurag Srivastava referred to an agreement reached between Chinese and Indian militaries on "disengagement" during the Lt

More Troops Deployed Along LAC, Navy; Air Force On High Alert

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Frontline bases of the Indian army and the air force along the nearly 3,500 km border with China were put on high alert on Wednesday in view of the worst border clash between Indian and Chinese troops in Galwan Valley that left 20 Army personnel dead and several injured, government sources said.

The Indian Navy has also been asked to raise its alert-level in the Indian Ocean Region where Chinese Navy has been making regular forays.

The Indian Army has already

rushed in additional troops and weapon ry to all its key frontline bases and formations along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Arunachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh, they said.

"The rules of engagement will be different from now onwards. The prime minister has spelt out the broad policy about it," a top military official told PTI on the condition of anonymity.

Sending a strong message to China, PM Modi said India wants peace but is capable of giving a befitting reply if instigated. It was his first reaction to the violent ● P-02

China Asks India Not To Underestimate Its Will

NEW DELHI/BEIJING: A day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi warned China against aggression, Beijing asked New Delhi not to "misjudge" the situation or "underestimate" its will. China even went a step further alleging India of breaking consensus and "deliberately provoking".

Even as China's President Xi Jinping has remained tight-lipped about the escalation of tensions between India and China, especially after the killing of 20 Indian soldiers in a violent stand-off between the two sides at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh, Beijing's spokesperson took to social media to respond to India's warning.

In a couple of tweets, Foreign Ministry spokesperson of China, Hua Chunying said, "India ● P-02

China Disturbing Flow Of Galwan River Into Ladakh: Report

China is using bulldozers to disturb the flow of Galwan river into northeast Ladakh in further escalation of hostilities between the two neighbouring nuclear countries, NDTV reported Thursday.

The report based on the high resolution satellite images procured by the English news channel indicate Chinese efforts to block or disturb the flow of the Galwan river in Northeast Ladakh, less than a kilometer from the site of the deadly clash between Indian and Chinese soldiers on June 15 in which 20 Indian officers and men were killed. The images show Chinese troops using bulldozers on their side of the LAC, the report said. It further says that the flow of the river perceptibly changes at the spot where the bulldozers are seen - from flowing blue waters to a small, muddy stream which becomes imperceptible when it crosses over to the Indian side of the LAC a short distance away. The report also says that Indian army trucks deployed in the Galwan Valley within two kilometres of the LAC can be seen parked in a mostly dry Galwan river bed. However, the images have not been put out due to security reasons. The images also indicate the depth of both the Indian and Chinese build-up in the region. ● P-02

7 Covid-19 Deaths In A Day Takes Toll To 72

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR-- Jammu and Kashmir reported seven COVID-19 related deaths in the last 24 hours, taking the total number of fatalities due to coronavirus in the union territory to 72, officials said on Thursday.

While five of the deaths took place in the Kashmir valley, two people died in the Jammu region, the officials said. While four deaths took place at SMHS, another one was reported by Chest Diseases hospital here, they added.

The dead included a 65-year-old from Batamalo and 70-year-old from Budgam all of whom passed away on Wednesday night, the officials said.

They said an 80-year-old man from Nawab Bazar area of Srinagar and a 65-year-old from Shop-

ian passed away at the hospital on Thursday morning.

All of these patients were CO-

VID-19 positive and had several comorbidities like hypertension, bilateral pneumonia and ● P-02

Srinagar Doctor In Saudi Dies of Covid-19

A 69-year-old doctor from Nishat area of Srinagar has died of covid-19 in Saudi Arabia, his family friend said on Thursday. The sexagenarian was working as senior radiologist in Saudi from last more than 35 years including the local ministry of health. "He worked in a private hospital in Saudi mostly in Jeddah and left the ministry of health some ● P-02

4 Policemen, Doctor Among 149 New Positives

Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday reported 149 fresh cases of coronavirus, including a doctor and four policemen, taking the number of infected people in the Union Territory to 5555. Giving district wise break, official sources said that among the fresh cases 25 were reported from Budgam followed by Pulwama (21), Baramulla (20), Undhampur (16), Kathua (12), 11 ● P-02

2 Militants Killed In South Kashmir Encounters

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Two unidentified militants on Thursday were killed in separate encounters with government forces in the twin districts of Pulwama and Shopian in south Kashmir.

Acting on specific information about presence of militants, special operation group (SOG) of police, army and CRPF personnel cordoned off Meej locality of Pampore and started search operation, a police official said. He said the search operation turned into a gunfight after militants fired on a search party of the forces, who retaliated.

One militant has been killed, the official said, adding ● P-02

'Militant' Arrested From Anantnag

Security forces have apprehended a militant from Anantnag district of Jammu and Kashmir, an Army official said on Thursday. "In a joint operation, security forces apprehended terrorist Imran Nabi Dar late last night (Wednesday) near Janglat Mandi, Anantnag," the official said. He said a pistol was recovered from the arrested militant, who had joined militancy on 10 May.

DGP Chairs High Level Meet

Jammu and Kashmir Police chief Dilbag Singh on Thursday warned that Pakistan will try to infiltrate more militants and also give impetus to violence in the Kashmir Valley and elsewhere in view of the standoff between the armies of India and China in Ladakh. The Director General of Police, Jammu and Kashmir, Thursday chaired a high-level meeting of officers to review the security scenario of the union territory particularly on the borders. ● P-02

Losing To Lowest Bidder: 'Tender' Blow To Kashmiri Unit-holders

Jyotsna Bharti

SRINAGAR: A year before Kashmir would plunge into raging protests, Mujtabha Khan had decided to return to his politically-uncertain homeland as a self-starter. It was 2015, and the MBA-degree holder knew that being a unit-holder wouldn't be easy. The move came at the cost of his promising career abroad where he could've risen to ranks by the dint of his merit and hard work. The manufacturer of steel tubular poles stood steadfast only to grow disillusioned about his decision half a decade later.

"I shouldn't have left London," Khan, struggling for words, said. "All I ever wanted after my studies

was to come back and be a job creator in my homeland."

Over the years, he took a bank loan of around Rs 2 crores to run and sustain his unit, Khan says. "But the sudden change of policies has now left me stranded and marooned. There're so many people associated with me. I don't really know what to do."

Today, Khan is one of the dejected unit-holders of the valley getting anxious over the junked Industrial Policy 2016. Among other things, the scrapped policy clearly states that the locals should be given the priority in order to grow and sustain.

"After our state became union territory, nobody is listening to us," a Kashmir-based transformer unit-



holder told Kashmir Observer.

"Officials are allotting a trans-

former tender to the lowest bidder from Punjab, irrespective of being

an outsider. Such steps will kill the industries here. There're many youngsters who've come back to Kashmir to work here. What'll they do now? They've huge loans on their account to settle."

Notably, Punjab was the lowest bidder in the transformer tender recently because unit-holders there have the raw material, cheap labour costs, besides power and constant working allowance.

"But here in the valley," the unit-holder said, "we work only for a few months in a year and most of the time it is shut."

Kashmiri unit-holders, he said, can't compete with another state as "we are dependent on government tenders. Our rates aren't buyable in

another state so our market is just this much, and if they remove us from here also, how will we sustain?"

Pertinently, after New Delhi scrapped special status of Jammu and Kashmir last summer, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said, "There must be investment and job opportunities in Jammu and Kashmir. Article 35A, 370 have been standing in the way of development."

Howbeit, the reality of development looks vague in the valley, even as the government celebrated a year of achievement recently.

"Earlier, the tenders were given to the locals as per the J&K's Industrial Policy 2016," Raja Nayeem Khan, a transformers manufacturer told Kashmir Observer. ● P-02

'Boycott China' Trending Online But Little Impact On Consumer Products Sales

New Delhi: Calls for boycott of Chinese products amid Sino-India border tension may be trending on social media but these are yet to impact sales of smartphone and consumer durables products from the stables of companies like Xiaomi, Realme and Haier, according to industry executives.

While companies declined to comment on the issue, senior executives at many of these Chinese firms said there has been no impact on sales yet.

One of the senior leaders at a smartphone company, who did not wish to be named, said there is pent up demand for phones because people are working and studying from home amid the COVID-19 pandemic, and many firms have had to resort to expensive imports to meet the spurt in demand.

Another executive said Chinese firms are keeping a close watch on the developments, and monitoring the situation on the ground as well as on social media.

On Twitter, topics like 'Boycott China', 'Go China' and 'Go Chinese Go' were trending as killing of 20 Indian soldiers in a violent clash with the Chinese army in Ladakh's

Galwan Valley stirred anti-China sentiment among people.

Industry body Consumer Electronics and Appliances Manufacturers Association (CEAMA) said sentiments are being shaped in consumers' minds through various social media platforms and other channels over recent developments that could reflect in the purchase behaviour.

"Consumers are getting messages through various social media platforms and they are taking decisions, and these emotions would result finally in purchase behaviour. It is quite expected. We will see that over a period of time," CEAMA President Kamal Nandi said.

PankajMohindroo, Chairman of India Cellular and Electronics Association (ICEA), said it is no secret that a substantive part of India's supply chain has its roots in China.

"Efforts are underway to enhance self-dependency over the past few years. We should focus on building strong capabilities... There is no impact (of the protests)...We have been focussing on enhancing production in India, and now we are promoting Indian champions, by 2025, we



will have strong Indian companies in mobile phone and component segment," he said.

Interestingly, four of the top five smartphone brands in India (Xiaomi, Vivo, Realme and Oppo) are from China, and accounted for almost 76 per cent share of the 32.5 million smartphones shipped in India in the March 2020 quarter, according to IDC data.

South Korea's Samsung, which ranked third and cornered 15.6 per cent share of shipment in the said quarter, is the only non-Chi-

nese firm in the top five sellers.

India is the second-largest smartphone market after China and clocked a shipment of 152.5 million smartphones in 2019.

"We believe within smartphones Indian users don't have much choice as 81 per cent of the smartphone shipments in Q1 2020 were from Chinese smartphone players (up from 67 per cent in March 2019 quarter).

Share of local OEMs is now at 1 per cent and Samsung, Apple is the only strong non-Chinese al-

ternatives available," Counterpoint Research Associate Director TarunPathak said.

Smartphone shipments in India are expected to decline by 10 per cent in 2020 due to coronavirus pandemic, according to Counterpoint Research.

Pathak said labelling a product in the era of globalisation is also difficult as a product is made of different components sourced across regions. For consumers, it will be a decision made more of brand perception and brands

will be very careful to distance themselves from these sentiments, he added.

"That is why if you see in India, almost all the leading players are quite vocal about their 'India operations' and are likely to go aggressive by announcing their contribution, new incentives, providing jobs in manufacturing and scaling local R&D to focus on the importance of India as a market to them," he emphasised.

A Chinese consumer durables maker noted that it has invested thousands of crores of rupees in setting up manufacturing facilities in India to cater to the local demand, and almost 90 per cent of its products sold in the country are manufactured locally.

Carrier Midea India Managing Director KrishanSachdev said the company is "run more like an Indian company with values of an Indian company", even though it is managed by Chinese company Midea Corporation.

Carrier Midea India - which is a joint venture between US-based UTC Climate Control & Security and Chinese Midea Group - said it does not expect any major im-

pact on its business.

"We are 100 per cent local manufacturing company. The ACs that we sell here, whether it is Carrier or Midea branded, are locally manufactured. We do buy some components from other countries like China, which everyone else also does but we are more local than another company," Sachdev said.

CEAMA's Nandi noted that while new capacity has been added by various players, the issue still remains in components where India is largely dependent on imports that come mainly from China.

"There is a need to develop an ecosystem in this country, and the industry is working with the government towards that. But it would take a couple of years," he said adding that there is a need to look for "China-plus-one" strategy for components.

"We can look at countries like Thailand, Vietnam and Korea as alternative destinations for components," he said.

Counterpoint's Pathak pointed out that identifying an app by the source of origin is easy and these sentiments can be more strong in such categories than in a pure hardware segment.

India, China Military Talks...

areas of Pangong Tso, Galwan Valley, Demchok and Daulat Beg Oldie.

The trigger for the face-off was China's stiff opposition to India laying a key road in the Finger area around the Pangong Tso Lake besides construction of another road connecting the Darbuk-Shayok-Daulat Beg Oldie road in Galwan Valley.

More Troops Deployed...

clashes in Galwan Valley.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the evening and is learnt to have briefed him about steps being taken to boost military strength along the LAC to deal with any eventuality.

The Indian Air Force has raised the alert level in all its frontline bases tasked to keep an eye on the LAC, the sources said.

The decision to raise the alert level of the three forces was taken at a high-level meeting Defence Minister Rajnath Singh held with Chief of Defence Staff Gen Bipin Rawat and the three service chiefs, sources said.

They said the Navy is increasing its deployment in the Indian Ocean Region to send across a strong message to the Chinese Navy.

The clash in Galwan Valley on Monday night is the biggest confrontation between the two militaries after their 1967 clashes in Nathu La in 1967 when India lost around 80 soldiers while over 300 Chinese army personnel were killed. The sources said the armed forces will respond with a "firm approach" to any act of aggression by the Chinese Army henceforth.

They said Indian Navy is also expected to adopt an aggressive approach in dealing with Chinese naval forays into the Indian Ocean region.

No Soldier Missing Since...

that no Indian soldiers were missing since the clashes on Monday three days back.

Indian and Chinese militaries held a Major General-level dialogue on Thursday for the third consecutive day on disengagement of troops as well as to restore normalcy in areas around the Galwan Valley.

The clash in Galwan Valley is the biggest confrontation between the two militaries after their 1967 clashes in Nathu La when India lost around 80 soldiers while the death toll on the Chinese side was over 300.

The two armies were engaged in a standoff in Galwan and several other areas of eastern Ladakh since May 5 when the two sides clashed on the banks of the Pangong Tso. After the standoff began, the Indian military leadership decided that Indian troops will adopt a firm approach in dealing with the aggressive posturing by the Chinese troops in all disputed areas of Pangong Tso, Galwan Valley, Demchok and Daulat Beg Oldie.

The Chinese Army has been gradually ramping up its strategic reserves in its rear bases near the LAC by rushing in artillery guns, infantry combat vehicles and heavy military equipment.

The trigger for the face-off was China's stiff opposition to India laying a key road in the Finger area around the Pangong Tso Lake besides construction of another road connecting the Darbuk-Shayok-Daulat Beg Oldie road in Galwan Valley.

China's Claim Over Galwan...

June 6 meeting.

"As we have conveyed earlier today, External Affairs Minister and the State Councillor and Foreign Minister of China had a phone conversation on recent developments in Ladakh," Srivastava said.

"Both sides have agreed that the overall situation should be handled in a responsible manner and that the understandings reached between Senior Commanders on 6th June should be implemented sincerely. Making exaggerated and untenable claims is contrary to this understanding," he said.

In the telephonic talks, Jaishankar delivered a strong message to Wang saying the "unprecedented" incident in the Galwan Valley will have a "serious impact" on the bilateral relationship and held the "pre-meditated" action by Chinese Army directly responsible for the violence.

The India-China border dispute covers the 3,488-km-long LAC. China claims Arunachal Pradesh as part of southern Tibet, while India contests it.

Prior to the clashes, both sides have been asserting that pending the final resolution of the boundary issue, it is necessary to maintain peace and tranquillity in the border areas.

sensus and crossed the Line of Actual Control, deliberately provoking and attacking Chinese officers and soldiers, thus triggering fierce physical conflicts and causing casualties". The statement on Twitter came while Indian and Chinese militaries are holding talks about the confrontation in Ladakh.

India's Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar in a phone conversation with his Chinese counterpart on Wednesday had asked China to "reassess its actions and take corrective steps" in view of the "unprecedented" violence along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh.

Jaishankar had also accused China of taking "pre-meditated and planned action that was directly responsible for the resulting violence and casualties".

China Disturbing Flow...

"The images clearly show more than a hundred Chinese vehicles including trucks, military transports and bulldozers along the banks of the Galwan river on their side of the LAC. The Chinese motorcade stretches more than 5 kilometres," the report says while not showcasing the extent of the substantial Indian Army build up in the contested region.

The report also quotes unnamed senior army officers as saying that the river continued to flow within the Galwan Valley for the moment. It also says that two areas appear to show pre-fabricated huts for accommodation.

"It is believed that Chinese soldiers from these positions surged to the Line of Control on the evening of June 15 where both sides fought pitched battles. Reports suggest that some Indian soldiers were thrown off the cliffs in the area and either fell to their death or were exposed to the extreme cold weather. Reports have also suggested that some soldiers fell into the waters of the Galwan, though, as these images indicate, the river was barely flowing as it crosses the Line of Actual Control," the report adds.

BSF Steps Up Vigil Along...

of the IB and increase in the number of militants ready to infiltrate, they said.

DGP Singh Thursday chaired a high-level meeting of officers to review the security scenario in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, particularly on the borders.

IGP, BSF, Jammu frontier, N S Jamwal gave a power point presentation in the meeting with the DGP on strengthening of the border grid and briefed him about the security plans being made on the IB

"During the meeting, ceasefire violations and infiltration dynamics were discussed. It was said that there are a number of camps across the border in various sectors where militants are ready to infiltrate", a police spokesman said.

7 Covid-19 Deaths In A Day...

respiratory issues, they added.

At the CD hospital, a 55-year-old woman from Shopian, who had tested positive for Covid-19, died on Thursday evening. The woman, officials said was admitted to hospital on Wednesday and was suffering from hypertension and septicemia.

Meanwhile, a 65-year-old coronavirus positive man, who had returned from New Delhi along with three family members, died at the Government Medical College (GMC) in Jammu on Wednesday night, the officials said.

He belonged to Bohri area of Talab Tilloo belt of Jammu city, they said, adding that the family was under paid administrative quarantine at a hotel.

The officials said a 68-year-old man belonging to Kote Garhi hamlet of Akhnoor tehsil too died at the GMC Jammu. He had tested positive for the virus and was admitted to the isolation ward of the hospital, they added.

With these fatalities, the death toll due to the pathogen has risen in Jammu and Kashmir to 72— 63 in Valley and 9 in Jammu division.

So far Srinagar district with sixteen deaths due to the virus has the highest fatalities, followed by twelve in Baramulla, nine in Shopian, eight in Kulgam, six in Jammu, five each in Anantnag, Kupwara & Budgam, two in Pulwama while one death each has been reported in Bandipora, Doda, Rajouri & Udhampur.

Srinagar Doctor In Saudi...

14 months ago and joined a private hospital," Dr Mohammad Iqbal Bhat, his friend told news agency GNS.

"He contacted corona virus infection and remained admitted to the hospital for last nine days. He was put on ventilator and died late last night after suffering heart attack," Dr Iqbal said.

Survived by wife and four children—two sons and daughters, the senior radiologist was laid to rest today, Dr Iqbal added.

4 Policemen, Doctor Among

each in Jammu and Srinagar , Shopian (10), Samba (7), Anantnag (4), three each in Kulgam and Bandipora, Kupwara (2) and one each in Ganderbal and Reasi.

Dr. G H Yatoo, Nodal Officer Coronavirus Control Measures

at SKIMS said that out of the total processed at the viral diagnostic lab today, 40 returned positive for the virus.

Professor Farooq Jan, Medical Superintendent SKIMS Soura, said among them nine are from Shopian, eight from Pulwama, seven from Srinagar, four each from Anantnag and Baramulla, three from Bandipora, two from Kulgam and one each from Ganderbal, Budgam and Kupwara.

Dr Riyaz Untoo, Principal SKIMS Bemina said that out of 538 samples processed at the hospital's lab, 24 tested positive for COVID-19, all from Budgam.

Regarding cases reported from SKIMS Soura hospital lab, they said, two were from Kulgam: a female (75) from Dumbhal and a Male (48) from Laktipora; four cases from Anantnag: 01 female (20) from Sandoo, 01 Male (35) from KP road Mattan , 01 female (40) from Pashward Batknot and 01 Male (20) from kathpopra.

Nine cases from Shopian include a female (40) from Arhama , Male (60) from Sedow , female (20) from Pargochi , female (30) from imamsahib , 02 Male (47, 23) from P.S Keegam Shopian, , Male (33) from DPL Shopian, 01 Male (22) from Ferripora Shopian and 01 female (35) from Shopian

Eight cases from Pulwama include a Male (38) from Sadi-pora, 02 Males (45, 38) from Lassipora , female (36) from Bagh , Male (40) from PS Awantipora Pulwama, Male (27) from Beighpora Pulwama, Male (47) from DPL and Male (45) from Awantipora while one case from Budgam includes a female (26) Safapora Budgam. Three cases were reported from Bandipora: Male (32), female (32) from Rakhi Daslipora and Male (30) from Ward 5 Bandipora while one case from Ganderbal is female (31) from Nagbal Ganderbal

The cases Srinagar were from Srinagar and include 02 female (32, 37), 01 male (35) from Mujund , 02 Male (52, 52) from Nowshehra Srinagar and 01 Male (40) from Pandach while cases from Baramulla

Include Male (25) from Kachmitipora , Male (35) from Dhoibiwan Baramulla, Male (25) from Nehalpora Baramulla and Male (80) from Sopore Baramulla. (GNS)

2 Militants Killed In South...

the operation was ongoing.

Another unknown militant was killed in Munand-Bandpava area of Shopian district of south Kashmir, police said.

State forces launched a cordon-and-search operation at Munand-Bandpava area after receiving specific information about the presence of militants, a police official said. He said the militants hiding in the village opened fire upon the search party in an attempt to flee their dragnet. In the retaliatory fire, the police official said one militant was killed.

According to the police, the operation was in progress when the last reports came in.

DGP Chairs High Level Meet..

Cross border infiltration attempts are being made continuously from Pakistan even during the pandemic and we have to be extra alert to thwart such attempts, he said.

There are over 300 militants at launching pads along the LoC in Jammu and Kashmir ready to infiltrate into the union territory to increase the pitch of violence in the Valley, according to reports.

"In view of the Ladakh standoff, Pakistan will try to infiltrate more militants and also give impetus to violence in Kashmir Valley and elsewhere", Singh told the meeting here.

He said the border alongside Pakistan needs extra attention in view of the Ladakh developments.

The DGP said there are reports that militant outfits in Pakistan -- Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), Hizbul Mujahideen (HM), Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and others -- are joining hands to create mischief in Jammu and Kashmir.

He also said there are greater challenges of infiltration for which we have to be prepared in the changed environment. He directed the officers to take care of the vital installations and also review minority guards.

Singh also said the security presence on the highway grid has been increased by putting in service mobile patrols and the number of nakas has also been increased.

He said personnel of police, central paramilitary forces and Army are continuing with successful operations in counter insurgency grid and on the borders.

PSA Of Naeem Akther, Hilal

just before the Centre revoked special status of Jammu and Kashmir and divided the erstwhile state into two union territories on August 5, 2019.

Among others taken into custody were National Conference president Farooq Abdullah, his son Omar Abdullah and PDP president Mehbooba Mufti -- all former chief ministers.

Losing To Lowest Bidder...

"The lowest bidder used to get 1/3rd of the tenders and the rest of us would share equally the 2/3rd of it. In that way, we all used to get the opportunity to work and earn."

To generate more employment within J&K, the former

state government would give priority to the native industrialists only.

Interestingly, mission statement of Industrial Policy 2016 clearly endorses promotion and development "of micro, small, medium, large industries for employment generations and higher contribution of the industrial sector to the gross state domestic product (GSDP)".

While the vision of the said policy asserts to "achieve sustainable, equitable, environment-friendly and balance industrial growth leading to the creation of employment opportunities for the local skilled and educated youth, income generation and overall economic development of the state".

As per this policy, the locals were given the utmost priority for the employment and tenders considering the former state's geographical and economical situation. The policy was to remain in operation for ten years.

But after dissolving the former state's special status, Industrial Policy 2016 also lost its ground — the step now feared to cause large scale unemployment in J&K.

"We've around 200 or more units across J&K providing employment to thousands of people," said Raja Nayeem, President Kashmir Electrical Manufacturers Association (KEMA).

"We generate employment which is the need of the hour for us to be economically stable region."

Till last time, Raja Nayeem said, all the tenders were meant for Kashmiri unit-holders. "It was the way of employment generation to hundreds of families."

The predicament of these unit-holders, however, doesn't stop here. A lot of them have not been paid for their earlier tenders yet. With the result, these unit-holders have been standing at their offices for hours in vain.

"We also wrote a letter to Altaf Bukhari regarding the issue of unemployment of lakhs of people associated with it," continued Raja Nayeem. "But unfortunately, we got no response from his side too."

If this continues, these native unit-holders fear to lose their living.

"It is not only about us alone," Vikar Ul Mulk, General Secretary of Jammu Steel Tubular Poles Manufacturers Associations, told Kashmir Observer. "This is a big industry and huge employment generator in Jammu and Kashmir. It's equally about our employees, the only breadwinners for their families."

Since last summer, things have indeed gone haywire in the valley, said another unit-holder. "Secretariat is not following the policies. Our Association President, Ashraf Mir Sahab wrote a letter to Principal Secretary Industries of Power Development. But there wasn't any response either."

A lot of units in Jammu, he said, have already started laying off people because they don't have money and haven't received payment from previous tenders.

However, to know the official version of the story, Kashmir Observer contacted Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, PK Pole. He excused himself and hung phone, so did his predecessor, and now LG Murmu's adviser, Baseer Khan. However, a chief engineer agreed to talk on the issue on the condition of anonymity.

"Yes, the [recent] transformer tender went to the unit of Punjab as they were the lowest bidder," he said. "Whereas the policy is concerned, I'm a government employee. I do what I'm asked to do. There's a committee that takes the decision. However, I'm not answerable for it."

Having such conditions thrown upfront, the Kashmir-based unit-holders feel that there's no one in the administration today who's even ready to listen to their grievances. They've tried reaching out to everyone they can, from the president to a party to a corporation who has been deciding their fates.

"While giving the tender to the lowest bidder, the authorities clearly overlooked our condition," Ashraf Mir, a well-known industrialist in the valley, told Kashmir Observer. "We import most of our stuff from outside. We don't work the entire year. We cannot compete with other states having what we have. They need to consider this, or else lakhs of people in J&K will be unemployed."

BSF Man 'Thrashes'...

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Sopore, Javid Iqbal said that the youth was injured during scuffle with a road opening party of BSF in the area.

He said that the youth is undergoing treatment at DH Baramulla and his condition was stable—(KNO)

3 Missing Sopore Boys...

and the trio was recovered from Watlab area of Sopore within less than 18 hours.

"After completing legal formalities, the missing youth were handed over to their family members," he said.

Canines Injure 5 Men In...

attack.

"The victims were shifted to hospitals but were advised to stay at their respective homes, after treatment with vaccines, due to the risk of novel coronavirus infection in hospitals," Mohammad Shafi, a local vendor said.(KNT)

Kashmir transporters stage protest in Sgr, urge Govt to allow them to resume services

Agencies

Srinagar: Kashmir transporters on Thursday staged a protest to urge the government to allow the local transporters resume their services too as they have faced huge losses since lockdown was enforced in the Valley in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic

Scores of transporters under the banner of All Kashmir Transporters Welfare Association (AKTWA) headed by its chairman, Matt Shabir Ahmad

mad assembled at Parimpora Bus Stand today and staged a protest. The protesters were holding placards reading slogans in favour of their demands

Matt Shabir Ahmad while talking to news agency, said that the transporters have suffered huge losses due to the lockdown. "Although SRTC busses have been allowed to ferry passengers, local transporters are still being barred to earn their livelihood," he said. "Isn't this unjustified?"

We too have families and our vehicles are the main source of livelihood for us."

He added that despite such a situation, no favourable decision has been taken vis-a-vis loans and other things for the transporters while as the diesel and petrol prices have soared again, thus adding to the miseries of transporters

Ahmad along with all the district chairmen of the association demanded authorities to fulfill all the demands of transporters—(KNO)



Heat Wave grips J&K, weathermen predict further rise in day temperature

Srinagar: Heat wave has gripped Jammu and Kashmir over the past few days with weathermen predicting more rise in the day temperature in the UT.



The summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory, Srinagar has once again touched the season's hottest day which was recorded on May 26 this year. As per the officials, Srinagar recorded a temperature of 31.7 degree Celsius on Thursday.

In Qazigund, the temperature was 29.9 degree Celsius while in Pahalgam, the temperature was 26.4 degree Cel-

sus, officials told news agency, adding that the temperature in Kokernag was 30.2 degree Celsius.

They added that in Kupwara, the temperature was 31.4 degree Celsius and in the famous ski-resort, Gulmarg, the temperature was 20.0 degree Celsius.

In Leh, the temperature was 26.4 degree Celsius while in Jammu, the temperature was 41.9 degree Celsius.

Meanwhile, Director Meteorological department (MeT), Sonum Lotus said that there is possibility of further rise in day temperature in upcoming days. He said that as per prediction, the night temperature will remain almost constant while the day temperature will go further up in coming days.

Lotus further stated that in wake of pre-monsoon season, there is although possibility of light rainfall as well—(KNO)

LG's directive on rationalisation of schools

Govt seeks details of teacher and students in schools of Srinagar, Jammu schools

Agencies

Srinagar: The administration in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir have asked authorities of School Education department to submit details about student enrolment and teacher postings in each government school in Srinagar / Jammu cities and adjoining

In a move aimed at implementing Lieutenant Governor Girish Chandra Murmu's directive, Principal Secretary, School Education department Asgar Samoon has written to Director School Education Kashmir and Jammu to submit list of government schools in Srinagar and Jammu cities

He has also asked them to submit details about number of students enrolled in each school and



number of teachers posted in each of them with stay period/ tenure.

The exercise is being carried out to implement LG G.C. Murmu's directive on rationalisation of teachers in government schools of J&K.

According to news agency, in a meeting chaired by him on May 5 here, Murmu had directed authorities to "rationalise teachers in government schools and ensure avail-

ability of adequate number of teachers in all schools before the opening of schools to improve the quality of education especially of elementary level."

The process of rationalisation of teacher-student ratio in government schools was initiated by former Education Minister Naeem Akther in 2015.

He had justified the policy on the grounds that "the students of the government schools are finding it difficult to compete with their counterparts in the private educational institutions only because of failure of the respective Governments to properly utilize the available resources".

He had claimed that 5000 schools across Jammu & Kashmir have less than 20 enrolments—(KNO)

Care Hospital Bemina still functional even after authorities cancel its registration

Srinagar, June 18 (KNO): Even as the authorities cancelled its registration, the Care Hospital in Bemina area of Srinagar is still functional while as the authorities concerned are acting as mute spectator.

Officials told news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that Care hospital was found involved in illegal activities following which its registration was cancelled.

The document, dated 19-02-2020, available with KNO read that the hospital registration was cancelled from the date of expiry of the registration for running the hospital in violation of rules and regulations. "Though the request put forth by the proprietor is not covered under rules, however, the hospital are allowed to use the premises for OPD purpose only for six months from the date of representation made by the owner of the hospital i.e. 31-05-2018, as on date the hospital/nursing home was not registered for renewal of registration," the document reads.

Suraiya Jabeen reviews functioning of Evacuee Property Deptt

JAMMU, JUNE 18: After taking charge as Custodian General J&K, Suraiya Jabeen today took a detailed review during an introductory meeting regarding functioning of Evacuee Property Department here.

Speaking on the occasion, Jabeen impressed upon the officers and officials of the department to work with honesty and dedication for protection and best management of Evacuee Property to improve its financial health.

Soura residents anguished as authorities fail to repair Rangil canal breach

'We are facing water scarcity, Admin ignoring our demands'

Srinagar: Inhabitants of Srinagar outskirts here have accused the authorities in Jal Shakti department of ignoring their repeated pleas and demanded immediate redressal of their grievances.

Talking to news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the local inhabitants of Srinagar outskirts including Soura, Buchpora, Gulab Bagh and others said that they are facing immense hardships as the authorities concerned have failed to provide them adequate water supply from the last couple of months.

Since the breach in Rangil canal, we are not getting the water supply properly, the residents said, adding that the supply to them is being provided only in morning and evening hours and that too for the period of only half an hour.

The locals said that more than two lakh inhabitants are suffering due to the callous attitude of the concerned department. "We went from pillar to post to seek justice but nothing has been done so far," the locals said.

They said that the administration is in deep slumber as the breach in the canal has not been repaired for over six months, thus leaving the residents to lurch at large.

Inhabitants from different Srinagar areas here have appealed the concerned authorities especially the Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir P K Pole to personally intervene into the matter and redress their genuine grievances at an earliest so that they could heave a sigh of relief—(KNO)

COVID-19: Govt evacuates 1,47,642 stranded JK residents

JAMMU, JUNE 18: The Jammu and Kashmir Government has evacuated about 1,47,642 JK residents, stranded in other parts of the country due to COVID lockdown, via Lakhampur and through special trains and buses till date amid strict observance of all necessary guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures.

As per the official data received in this regard, the Jammu and Kashmir administration has received 57 special trains at Jammu and Udhampur railway stations from different states and UTs, so far, with about 45,747 passengers while about 1,01,895 persons from other states and UTs including 328 from abroad have been evacuated by the government through Lakhampur till date.

Delegations, Individuals call on Advisor Baseer Khan; raise grievances, demands

SRINAGAR, JUNE 18: Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Baseer Ahmad Khan, convened a public outreach programme to take stock of people's issues and concerns especially in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic.

The event was attended by several delegations and individuals who raised their grievances and demands concerning welfare and development of their respective areas.

During the programme, the participants strictly followed all the necessary preventive protocols regarding COVID-19.

Delegation of Parents Association of Private Schools Kashmir requested for slashing school fee to a genuine amount proportionate to the expenditures made by the schools considering the prevailing pandemic.

A delegation of Kashmir Hotel and Restaurant Owners Federation demanded waiving of different tariff and charges be-



ing realized by government departments including PDD, PHE, SMC and JK LAWDA till normal tourist activities resumes.

Meanwhile, delegation of Federation Chamber of Industries Kashmir raised various development issues including regular power supply to Industrial Estate Aglar, Shopian be-

fore the onset of apple harvesting season this year.

Another delegation of Tourist Facilitators demanded that their services should be regularised by formulating some policy on the analogy of Rehbar-i-khel scheme so that their career gets secured.

Another delegation of

Amar Singh Club Srinagar projected different development issues pertaining to the club and sought their early resolution.

The Advisor gave specific directions to the concerned departments for redressal of the grievances raised by the deputations and individuals.

DIAL-EMMA



- TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266686
- PCR: 0194-2452092,2455883
- PDD: 0194-2450213
- FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488,2452222,2452155
- CAPD: 18001807011
- SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

RAILWAYS



- SRINAGAR: 0194-2103259
- ANANTNAG: 01932-228243
- BARAMULLA: 0194-102029
- BIJHERA: 01932-228243
- PAMPORE: 01933-294132
- PATTAN: 01954-293507
- QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

HIGHWAY STATUS



- Sgr-Jammu highway - (Open)
- Mughal Road - (Open)
- Srinagar- Leh- (Open)



HIJRI
CALENDAR
27 Shawwal
1441

PRAYERS

FAJR	3: 34
ZUHR	12: 32
ASR	5:32
Magrib	7:47
ISHA	9:29

This Day In History

- 1910 - Father's Day celebrated for 1st time (Spokane, Washington)
- 1917 - The British Royal Family, which has had strong German ties since George I, renounces its German names and titles and adopts the name of Windsor
- 1919 - Opposed to dismemberment of Turkey by the Allies, Mustafa Kemal declares his Turkish Nationalist Congress, headquartered in Ankara, independent of Constantinople
- 1921 - Census held in Great Britain
- 1921 - Turks and Christians of Palestine sign a friendship treaty against Jews
- 1931 - 1st photoelectric cell installed commercially West Haven, Connecticut
- 1940 - German 7th Armoured division under command of Rommel occupies Cherbourg
- 1941 - Romania orders Jews to evacuate Darabani
- 1941 - US President Franklin Roosevelt signs Two Ocean Navy Expansion Act
- 1944 - French troops free Elba
- 1944 - Heavy air raid on US fleet at Guam "Turkey Shoot"
- 1944 - Japanese troops conquer Changsha China
- 1944 - World War II: First day of the 2 day Battle of the Philippine Sea, US naval forces defeat Japanese fleet
- 1948 - Panama and Costa Rica recognize Israel
- 1961 - "Little Egypt (Ying-Yang)" by Coasters peaks at #23
- 1961 - Kuwait declares independence from UK
- 1961 - US Supreme Court struck down a provision in Maryland's constitution requiring state office holders to believe in God
- 1963 - 2 Russian space missions return to Earth
- 1963 - Valentina Tereshkova 1st woman in space returns to Earth
- 1964 - Civil Rights Act of 1964 passes 73-27
- 1965 - Algerian coup under colonel Houari Boumedienne, pres Ben Bella fired
- 1968 - 50,000 participate in Solidarity Day March of Poor People's Campaign
- 1969 - State troopers ordered to Cairo Ill, to quell racial disturbances
- 1970 - A Nikolayev & V Sevastyanov return after 18 days in Soyuz 9
- 1970 - The Patent Cooperation Treaty is signed
- 1971 - Mayor declares state of emergency in Columbus Georgia due to racial disturbance
- 1972 - Hundreds of thousands of holidaymakers face flight delays and cancellations after pilots threaten to strike over hijack fears
- 1972 - Secretary of State for Northern Ireland William Whitelaw concedes 'special category' status, or 'political status' for paramilitary prisoners in Northern Ireland
- 1974 - Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen) suspends constitution
- 1976 - US Viking I goes into Martian orbit after 10-month flight from Earth
- 1979 - Mali's constitution goes into effect
- 1980 - Battle between police and demonstrators in Capetown, 34 killed
- 1981 - Boeing commercial Chinook 2-rotor helicopter is certified
- 1981 - European Space Agency's Ariane carries 2 satellites into orbit
- 1981 - Heaviest known orange (2.5 kg) exhibited, Nelspruit, South Africa
- 1981 - India's APPLE satellite, 1st to be stabilized on 3 axes, launched
- 1988 - Namphy takes control of Haitian government
- 1988 - World's then largest sausage completed at 131/8 miles long
- 1988 - 32 divers finish cycling underwater on a standard tricycle, to complete 116.66 mi in 75 hrs 20 mins
- 2005 - Michael Schumacher wins controversial Formula 1 United States Grand Prix where only 6 of 20 cars complete the race amongst ridicule.

From KO Archives

7 Militants Among 12 Killed In JK

SRINAGAR – Twelve people, inclining six militants infiltrating " across the LoC and a company commander of Hizbul Mujahideen, were killed in separate incidents of violence in Jammu and Kashmir, where troops foiled two major infiltration bids along the Line of Control.

Sin militants, who had sneaked across the LoC in Tangdhar sector in Kupwara district yesterday, were killed by army troops in a two-day-long operation, thus thwarting a major infiltration bid, a defence, spokesperson said here today.

While three of the militants were killed yesterday three others were killed this afternoon. A huge cache of arms and ammunition, including six AK assault rifles and a pistol were recovered from the slain militants, he said. Security forces scuttled another bid by, militants to sneak into the state through Mendhar forward belt in Poonch district early morning. Though no one was killed in the incident, sustained firing by security forces forced the militants to retreat to the Pakistani side. In a separate incident, a company commander of Hizbul Mujahideen identified as Imran Bhat was killed in an encounter with security forces in Weenpalwan-Chirsu in Awantipora area of Pulwama district in south Kashmir. An AK rifle, four magazines, 5R rounds and two band grenades were recovered from him.

Two persons, identified as Shah Nawaz Amin Shah and Alijiz Yousuf were shot dead on Thursday at Peth-Makhama in Beerwah area of Badgam district in central Kashmir.

The two were going in a car along with a third companion who got out of the vehicle and pumped bullets into them, the police said.

According to sources, the two were released militants. Police suspected that militants had a hand in their killing.

(Kashmir Observer, 19 June, 2005)

KASHMIR
OBSERVER

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Ignored LoC tension

Over the past few days as the India-China face-off along Line of Actual Control has worsened with Chinese troops killing twenty Indian soldiers, the Line of Control with Pakistan has also heated up. India and Pakistan have engaged in artillery duels along the border resulting in loss of lives of soldiers and civilians. Latest exchange of firing took place along Nowgam sector in Kupwara. Earlier, there was shelling in Tanghdar sector. In the skirmishes along the border in Jammu's Poonch sector, an army man was killed and three others were injured in the shelling from Pakistani side. In Pakistan administered Kashmir, a woman and three young boys lost their lives.

But while the entire focus has been on the LAC, the violence on the LoC and its fraught nature has gone largely unnoticed. Alongwith the potential of these skirmishes to grow into a major military confrontation, the recurrent border violence is making life hell for the civilians living along the border. They have to move to safer areas along with their cattle. In some areas the government has made underground bunkers for the shelter of the fleeing people. But they are not enough to accommodate all the people. In some areas along the border, the government has yet to build bunkers that is taking heavy on the life of border dwellers. More so, in Kashmir where such bunkers remain grossly inadequate in number. For example, in Uri the residents recently protested the lack of bunkers in vulnerable areas. Though the administration has recently sanctioned Rs 25 crore for 125 underground bunkers along the LoC in Baramulla and Kupwara, there has been no progress on the work. The issue has been brought into fresh focus after a woman from Batgra village in Uri lost her life when she was hit by a shell fired from Pakistan. The shelling damaged several residential houses as well.

As for the military implications of these frequent LoC face-offs, situation has the potential to worsen in the upcoming weeks and months. There is a possibility that the skirmishes can escalate into a bigger confrontation. The bitterness between the neighbours now runs deeper than before. The leaders of the two countries have now even given up the pretense of showing interest in the engagement thus abdicating their responsibility towards peace in the region. This has let the violence take the centre stage again. And with the LAC stand-off with China taking a war-like dimension, the violence along the LoC cannot be ignored. From the looks of it, the current instability seems set to continue for some time. Here's hoping it all ends up well.

OTHER OPINION

Resolute Response

The bloody clash on the Line of Actual Control on Monday night should have been averted. The loss of 20 soldiers, including the Commanding Officer of the 16 Bihar Regiment, Col B Santosh Babu, and critical injuries suffered by others have only proven once again that India refuses to learn lessons from its history, when it comes to China. Whoever be at the helm of affairs, India swings from Hindi-Chini bhai-bhai bonhomie to outright hostilities. All the high-profile deliberations and agreements between Prime Minister Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping came to a naught on a steep ridgeline of the Galwan valley in Ladakh where the troops violently tried to dislodge each other. The military and political leaders who sanctioned this patrol during disengagement ought to have factored in all the risks.

Meanwhile, the usually rabid Chinese propaganda newspaper, Global Times — considered to reflect the thinking of the Chinese leadership — has taken a benign, reasonable stand offering peace and goodwill, claiming the nondisclosure of Chinese casualties as proof of restraint. Though Global Times unambiguously attempts to claim military superiority over India and conveys Chinese concerns of Washington offering a 'lever' to worsen India-China ties, the tone is uncharacteristically reconciliatory. The mouthpiece says that China 'does not and will not create conflicts'. This could be deceptive diplomacy at its best. But such deception ought to be responded with a greater degree of cautious cynicism.

Foreign policy and national security are matters of grave import, which ought to be sagaciously handled. Instead, some Indian politicians have a tendency to use border disputes and potential flashpoints as instruments of petty politics against domestic rivals. The PM's decision to call an all-party meeting is a step in the right direction. His statement on a 'befitting reply' to China ought to dispel doubts about India's indignation. There is no need for bravado in utterances that can affect bilateral relations adversely. India-China relations have always been edgy since India offered asylum to Dalai Lama. China sees India as a threat and has worked overtime to bolster its western front. India should reciprocate by guarding its eastern front, quietly and effectively with resolute response to any act of aggression.

Tribune India

Principle Of POLITICS: Know Your Enemy

Something All
Ideologies Follow,
My Enemy's Enemy
Is My Friend

THE ENEMY
OF MY
ENEMY IS
MY FRIEND

SHASHI WARRIER

“When you look at the people to whom temples are built... You know, they were human, after all. Marx and Gandhi and Lenin and Lincoln and Mandela, all had their failings, their grey areas

When a Mercedes Benz E Class stopped outside the gates of my house one evening, I thought the owner must have lost his way. But when the rear door opened and the sole passenger stepped out, I got a surprise, for it was my old friend Murthy, whom I'd last spoken to on the phone when he was locked down in Thiruvananthapuram. I was thrilled, because this was my first visitor since the lockdown began, and, besides, the Merc was a sight to behold!

Murthy made himself at home in my drawing room in a matter of minutes. He took the most comfortable seat, eased the cat off an ottoman so that he could put his feet up, got me to fetch him a large peg of his favourite whiskey (of which I had limited stocks, because it's so expensive), turned on the TV with the sound off so he could watch the ticker tape of a news channel at the bottom of the screen, and persuaded my wife to start frying snacks.

When he had made himself truly comfortable, I asked him what brought him this way. “An inauguration,” he replied. “A sort of temple.”

“A temple!” I said, surprised, for I'd somehow got the impression that he was an agnostic.

“Not a temple, exactly,” he said, taking a large swig of my whiskey. “A monument to a leader. One of those fellows who turned a local community into a vote bank.”

“Why did you say temple, then?” I asked, irritated.

“Because that's what it is,” he said, smiling in a way that set my teeth on edge. “You can't go in there as you wish, there are lots of rules about it, like leaving your shoes outside, and being quiet and respectful inside, and saying the right words, and placing flowers on pictures, and so on, regardless of whether the person in question was a devil or a saint.”

I got his point and tried to shut

him up, but getting a word in when Murthy is in full cry is like trying to stop an avalanche with a sheet of newspaper. “There are many types of temples,” he went on. “The oldest are to gods, even those that don't permit pictures inside. The second are to events. Like a monument to Independence Day or Kargil Vijay Diwas or whatever. The third type are to people. Leaders, you know, people who won their followers freedom or land or dignity or whatever.

And the fourth type, those are to ideologies. Monuments to Marxism, or Socialism, or whatever ism comes to your mind.

“They all have these rules and rituals and special days and flowers and protocols...”

“When you look at the people to whom temples are built... You know, they were human, after all. Marx and Gandhi and Lenin and Lincoln and Mandela, all had their failings, their grey areas. I'm not sure any of those wise people to whom we put up temples would agree that they deserved those temples.”

“And, you know, the thing is that ideological beliefs are no different from religious beliefs. Religion fellows say that god made these rules for you to obey if you want happiness in some future life. No trace of evidence for all this, mind you.

The ideology fellows say that society or countries or whatever must follow such-and-such rules to achieve happiness in this life. Again, very little evidence. Of course, they give you examples, of societies that followed those rules and progressed, and they give you measures of how to find out if your society is better than others, and so on, but when you examine it all you find the ideology fellows have no deep evidence, either.

“Which is why they quarrel all the time, just like the religion-wallahs. Like the communists and the capitalists, or rightists and leftists,

or whatever. And sometimes it all gets mixed up, ideology and religion, like we're beginning to see increasingly, and that's really messy. But there's one thing that all ideologies have in common...”

My wife entered the room at this point, bearing a tray of hot cheese fritters. I saw, for the first time, one of Murthy's monologues interrupted. My wife didn't even need a sheet of newspaper to stop the avalanche: all she needed was one look. She's got this look, you see, like steel and ice all wrapped up in unspoken menace...

Well, Murthy lost the thread of his monologue, and kept quiet though most of dinner. He resumed only when it was about time for him to leave, and I was leading him to gate from where I'd be able to get another look at the exquisite Mercedes in which he'd arrived. After I'd looked at it gleaming in the lamp-light — for night had come while Murthy was talking — I thought I'd ask him about the one thing that ideologies have in common.

“Oh, that,” he said airily, for he had regained his confidence. “It's a very simple principle that they all follow.” My wife turned up to wish him goodbye and he dried up again. “Where was I?” he asked when she had nodded him a gracious goodbye and disappeared into the house.

“Something all ideologies follow,” I said. “What is it?”

“It's an easy way to find friends,” he said. “My enemy's enemy is my friend.” The chauffeur opened the car door for him, and he stepped in. Sitting inside, he grinned up at me, mischief in his eyes. “Only there's a trick to it, you know.”

“What?” I asked, rising to the bait, as usual.

“It's difficult, especially after this coronavirus business and WHO and so on,” he replied, “but you've got to know who your enemies are!”

Deccan Chronicle



OBSERVER
MAIL

All letters intended for publication must include the writer's name and address, even if a pseudonym is used. Letters are edited as clarity, space and accuracy of expression require. Our publishing a letter does not mean we agree with everything or even anything in it. -EDITOR

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Centre should revisit domicile law

The government of India on April 1 promulgated a new domicile law for J&K which defines the residents of the union territory as well as eligibility of acquiring citizenship within the union territory. The persons who fulfill the eligibility criteria become the residents of the territory. The law formulated doesn't bring within its ambit the land rights of the residents, while speaks about only citizenship, who become naturally eligible for acquiring jobs within the territory.

According to domicile law those persons who have resided within the union territory for almost 15 years can claim for domicile. The children of people who have stayed in the J&K union territory for almost 7 years and have appeared in class 11 and class 12 examination are also deemed to be the subjects of the union territory. Also children of central government employees who have served the union territory for almost 10 years are also

considered to be the residents of union territory. Besides children of all such people who fulfill such criteria are also deemed to be the subjects of the territory and those children who have been outside the union territory of J&K either for one reason or another can also claim for domicile provided their parents fulfill the criteria of citizenship of the union territory.

In Domicile law migrants are also classified to be the residents of union territory. All such persons can claim for the domicile of union territory. The designated official for issuing the domicile certificate is Tehsildar. In case the person is denied by Tehsildar he can file an appeal before District commissioner but within 30 days. The Domicile Law framed is directly linked with jobs for persons who acquire domicile status. Such persons are eligible and can compete for all gazetted as well as non gazetted posts whenever advertised by PSC and SSRB. Whereas the LEVEL 4 jobs have been reserved for persons already residing within the erstwhile

state of J&K. The level 4th jobs include gatekeeper, gardener, cleric etc.

In other words people of outside union territory can apply for gazetted and non gazetted posts, thus encroaching the jobs solely meant for the actual residents of the union territory. The domicile law therefore can be called as the law of acquiring jobs, because any one else who acquires the citizenship of the union territory apart from people of the erstwhile state of J&K can compete for the jobs. The law coincides with the British philosophy of teaching English language to the Indians during pre-independence era, so that they can help them in clerical assignments only.

The domicile law is ambiguous in nature and is full of drawbacks, like when a person fulfills the domicile eligibility and can compete for gazetted and non gazetted jobs, why on earth he is not eligible for level 4th grades. This itself violates the fundamental right of right to equality. The restriction on class 4th jobs for outsiders is itself

contradiction of the domicile law, displaying aberration and complexities of the law. The law doesn't cover the legal land rights of the domicile persons and thus appears incomplete in itself. The law is framed for only neutralizing the gazetted and non gazetted jobs by paving way for outsiders. This will have bad implications for the people of union territory, where there is already surge in unemployment. More over the territory of J&K has been in turmoil since decades. Besides COVID 19 has brought everything to a standstill especially in J&K, which has been under lockdown post abrogation of Article 370. The educational sector has also suffered tremendously during the persistent unrest in the valley, while the rest of India was working normal. The center needs to revisit the domicile law, in order to bring the solace to the trouble torn union territory.

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Arts And Humanities Is As Important As Science

ANNA MAGDALENA ELSNER
& VANESSA RAMPTON

“We are entangled with nature. We tend to imagine a human world separate from natural laws, but the novel coronavirus reminds us of the extent to which we are intricately bound up with the life around us. As philosopher David Benatar has noted, the emergence of the new coronavirus is most likely a result of our treatment of nonhuman animals. The virus has forced us to alter our behaviour, likely triggering higher rates of anxiety, depression, and other stress-related responses. In essence, it has shown how what we think of as 'non-human' can become a fundamental part of our lives in unexpected ways.

In recent months, world leaders have mobilised seemingly every technological resource at their disposal to stem the threat of the Covid-19 pandemic. Evidence and scientific opinion have gained newfound respect; decision makers have arguably become better at listening to scientists and following their directives.

But the virus has also exposed social problems that, by their very nature, go beyond science: deep-rooted health and social inequalities, a fractured political response, mental health challenges associated with home confinement. All this points to systemic issues that are broader than the immediate public health emergency. Here, science still has a role to play, but it is a supporting one to the humanities and social sciences.

To judge by news reports, the humanities are 'nice to have' - think of the entertainment value of balcony music or an online book club - but not essential for helping resolve the crisis. But as the impacts of public health measures ripple through societies, languages, and cultures, thinking critically about our reaction to SARS-CoV-2 is as important as new scientific findings about the virus. The humanities can contribute to a deeper understanding of the entrenched mentalities and social dynamics that have informed society's response to this crisis. And by encouraging us to turn a mirror on our own selves, they prompt us to question whether we are the rational individuals that we aspire to be, and whether we are sufficiently equipped, as a society, to solve our own problems.

We are creatures of stories. Scholarship in the medical humanities has persistently emphasised that narratives are crucial for how humans experience illness. For instance, Felicity Callard, a professor of human geography, has written about how a lack of "narrative anchors" during the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic led to confusion over what counts as a 'mild' symptom and what the 'normal' course of the disease looks like, ultimately heightening the suffering the disease caused. Existing social conditions, previous illnesses and disabilities, a sense of precarity - all of these factors influence our attitude toward disease and how it affects the way we exist in the world.

We are entangled with nature. We tend to imagine a human world separate from natural laws, but the novel coronavirus reminds us of the extent to which we are intricately bound up with the life around us. As philosopher David Benatar has noted, the emergence of the new coronavirus is most likely a result of our treatment of nonhuman animals. The virus has forced us to alter our behaviour, likely triggering higher rates of anxiety, depression, and other stress-related responses. In essence, it has shown how what we think of as 'non-human' can become a fundamental part of our lives in unexpected ways.

We react to crises in predictable fashion, and with foreseeable cognitive and moral failings. A growing body of work suggests that, although we want to act on knowledge, it is our nature to react instinctively and short-sightedly. Images of overcapacity intensive care units, for example, galvanise us to comply with lockdown restrictions, even as we have much more difficulty acting prudentially to prevent the emergence of such viruses. The desire for a quick solution has fuelled a race for a vaccine, even though - as historian of science David Jones has noted - failures and false starts have been recurring themes in past attempts to handle epidemics. Even if a vaccine were available, it wouldn't erase the striking disparities in health outcomes across class, race, and gender.

We have trouble coping with uncertainty and complexity. In recent months, policymakers have pressed scientists for predictions of infection rates, reproduction numbers, and other epidemiological data in a vast effort to minimize uncertainty. But as historian and philosopher Lara Keuck has noted, every political decision occurs in a multidimensional system shrouded by uncertainty about biomedical knowledge, regulatory



“The humanities may not make us more humane or empathetic, but by reminding us constantly of others' points of view, they are an investment in the future of democracy itself

measures, and even our own existence. The decision to put a country under lockdown has implications for social stratification, domestic violence, the emotional lives of children, and a myriad of other concerns. Factoring all this in does not make the decision any easier, but it is necessary.

By giving us the tools to decode complex social problems - to contextualize them historically and analyze them critically - the humanities can serve as an antidote to an overreliance on or mistrust in "the science." They encourage us to look beneath the surface of what we are being told. For instance, the work of historian Lukas Engelmann illustrates how visual analysis of pictures showing the physical manifestations of disease can remind us that there are human beings behind the death tolls. The writing of author Leslie Jamison stands as a reminder that there is no single experience of illness, quarantine, or remote work.

The deciphering of text can also reveal underlying dynamics of crisis messaging. For example, the pandemic has been described as a "war," implying a fight against an enemy and inviting exclusionary practices that stigmatize a foreign "other." But the metaphor also suggests the possibility of "winning," and paints health care workers as "selfless heroes" doing something more than merely work. This language echoes medicine's "war against ageing and death," as the late bioethicist Daniel Callahan has described it, and predisposes us to measure the success of medicine in terms of lives saved and lifespans extended, rather than, say, our ability to care for the dying.

The humanities may not make us more humane or empathetic, but by reminding us constantly of others' points of view, they are an investment in the future of democracy itself. According to philosopher Martha Nussbaum, the lived experience of frailty and dependence is a mark of our common humanity and thereby the beginning of ethical life. This idea seems to be gaining traction during the current crisis. For example, both health practitioners and family members affected by Covid-19 point to patients dying alone as "the bitterest" aspect of the pandemic. Guidance from the World Health Organization that failed to include palliative care as an essential health service during the pandemic speaks volumes about the political worth of these testimonials. It is high time that we take the stories of

patients and health care workers more seriously as examples of the moral weight of relationships.

By imagining the points of view of people unlike ourselves, we begin to appreciate the very significant physical and mental labor that allows us to live together in a society. Care work, for example, has been rediscovered as an essential service, but one for which people get few benefits, rights, and support. From pharmacists to social workers, many of the jobs now described as essential are being performed by women, and by non-white women more than anyone else. At the same time, women have lost a disproportionate number of jobs due to the pandemic and will continue to do so in its aftermath. This persistent gender inequality isn't news, of course; rather, it's just another instance of entrenched social dynamics that the pandemic has cast into the spotlight.

As David Jones has put it, by exerting pressure on societies, epidemics make "visible latent structures that might not otherwise be evident," and the humanities are crucial for completing the resulting social and cultural analysis. They are not merely a distraction from the depressing news of the day; they temper our fascination with death tolls and economic recovery by forcing us to consider the cultural forces that will shape the pandemic's course - and by reminding us what we value as a society.

Most fundamentally, as the public is flooded with competing narratives of what the crisis is and how it can be resolved, the humanities enable us to resist those who claim certainty using simplified biological or societal models. Instead they point to ways out that involve cultivating the shared habits, beliefs, and values that make social life possible. The pandemic has given new concreteness to society's vulnerabilities, and we must take those vulnerabilities seriously if we are to address the more fundamental problems of our health care systems and social interconnectedness.

Earlier this year, French author Annie Ernaux wrote in a public letter to President Emmanuel Macron that the pandemic is making us dream of "a new world." This crisis needs the humanities because they show that dreams do not come from nowhere, and that there are multiple ways to realize them.

Khaleej Times

The Story Of Printed Photos

I still enjoy those worn out photos with no editing or filters

SANA ALTAF | GULF NEWS

Sharing moments of joy or pain with our loved ones has become a matter of seconds. It takes just a few clicks before we can share our lives through images and videos with anyone in the world.

Not to mention the interaction through comments and shares that follows. But being a part of a generation that witnessed the transition from print to digital photography, I continue to be a fan of printed pictures.

Those were the days when having a camera was a luxury not everyone could afford. A family usually had one camera, before small digital cameras came. Photographs were taken only on special occasions. Those pictures had a special feel and value.

After the first look, we would carefully observe each and every photograph — the pose, the background, the lighting. Though there would be a few misses every time, we would be overjoyed to see our photo shoot turn a success with a collection of nicely clicked portraits.

Back home, we have a huge collection of photographs — black and white, coloured and some hand painted, too. For me, those are one of the most valuable things in the house. Despite the errors in print like poor colour setting, bad background, the red eye effect or their worn out condition, they still feel unique and emotional.

As a child, I loved flipping through the old pictures. During those long winter vacations, when power would be cut most evenings, running through old albums and pictures was a favourite pastime. I enjoyed listening to anecdotes behind the pictures of mum and dad.

I, however, always complained I was less clicked



than my sister as a child for whatever reason.

With time, photography became a favourite 'play' for me and my sister. However, it wasn't cheap to buy the camera rolls, batteries that exhausted fast and then having them printed from a good studio.

I did not own my camera (couldn't think of buying it then) and used the family camera, which my father had bought from somewhere in India (we still have it).

We would keep a camera roll always at home. On any random day, depending on our mood, we would start our photo shoot. We would dress up in our new

clothes with matched footwear and make funky hairstyles. Once ready, we would move around the house to look for a good background for the shoot.

Our favourite places were stairs where we posed sitting, standing, leaning against the wooden railing, stepping down, looking back and all the postures possible. We also loved the garden in the background, snaps with toys on the bed or playing with snow during winters.

No means of editing

We took turns in taking each other's photographs. We lost hours in our photo shoots, totally

ignorant of the world around us. It was all about dressing up, changing backgrounds, styles and poses. It was exhausting, yet an enjoyable experience.

Since the camera roll had a limit of 30-35 pictures, we had to keep a track of the number of snaps each of us clicked to share them equally. Every photograph taken had to be well planned before pressing the shutter button as there was no means of editing and re-taking.

One wrong click would mean wasting one snap. Sometimes we would finish the whole roll at one go, other times we spared a few pictures for some important occasion or just another day.

Once we shot the full roll, dad would take it for printing to a studio. For us the wait was long, usually a few days before we could have the pictures in our hand. The moment we got the bundle of photos, we would jump for joy. Snuggled together, two of us would first shuffle through them quickly.

After the first look, we would carefully observe each and every photograph — the pose, the background, the lighting. Though there would be a few misses every time, we would be overjoyed to see our photo shoot turn a success with a collection of nicely clicked portraits.

The new, precious photographs would rest on our bedsides for days to come so that we could look at them whenever we wished. It was only when we got bored of seeing them repeatedly that they would find a place in our other collection of photographs.

Today, even as I have more than 3,000 pictures on my phone, I rarely go through them. I still enjoy those worn out photos with no editing or filters.

Sana Altaf is a freelancer based in Dubai.



‘COVID-19 SPREADS EASILY Among People Who Live Together’

Press Trust Of India

COVID-19 spreads easily among people who live together and other family members, even before an infected person shows any symptoms, according to a modelling study that is the first-of-its-kind to quantify symptomless transmission.

The research, published in The Lancet Infectious Diseases journal on Wednesday, also suggests the SARS-CoV-2 that causes COVID-19 may spread more easily in households than severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) or Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS).

The analysis, based on contact

tracing data from 349 people with COVID-19 and 1,964 of their close contacts in Guangzhou, China, found that people with COVID-19 were at least as infectious before they developed symptoms as during their actual illness.

The researchers, including those from the University of Florida in the US, also found that people aged 60 years or more were most susceptible to household infection with SARS-CoV-2.

The study of people living together and family members -- not living at the same address -- and non-household contacts suggests that breaking the chain of transmission within households through timely tracing and

quarantine of close contacts, in addition to case finding and isolation, could have a huge impact on reducing the number of COVID-19 cases.

While the model has been updated to reflect the current knowledge about the transmission dynamics of COVID-19, the researchers caution that it is based on a series of assumptions, for example about the length of incubation and how long symptomatic cases are infectious, that are yet to be confirmed, and might affect the accuracy of the estimates.

"Our analyses suggest that the infectiousness of individuals with COVID-19 before they have symp-

oms is high and could substantially increase the difficulty of curbing the ongoing pandemic," said Yang Yang from the University of Florida, who co-led the research.

"Active case finding and isolation in conjunction with comprehensive contact tracing and quarantine will be key to preventing infected contacts from spreading the virus during their incubation periods, which will be crucial when easing lockdown restrictions on movement and mixing," Yang said.

The researchers developed a transmission model that accounted for individual-level exposure, tertiary transmission, potential exposure to untraced

infection sources, and asymptomatic infections.

The study estimated the secondary attack rate -- the probability that an infected person transmits the disease to a susceptible individual -- among people living together and family members, and non-household contacts.

Close contacts -- unprotected individuals who had been within a metre of a person with COVID-19 less than two days before their symptoms developed -- were traced, quarantined, and tested for SARS-CoV-2 on days 1 and 14.

The analyses estimated that the likelihood of secondary transmission -- spread from an infected person to non-house-

hold contacts -- was 2.4 per cent, the researchers said.

The likelihood of passing on the virus was higher among people living together and family members, with an attack rate of 17.1 per cent -- around 1 in 6 -- among people living at the same address, and 12.4 per cent among family members, they said.

"Family members such as parents and older children may not be living at the same address, which might explain why they appear at less risk of secondary infections than those living in the same household as the COVID-19 case," said Natalie Dean from the University of Florida.

"While the likelihood of trans-

mitting COVID-19 in households may seem quite low, it is around twice what has been estimated for SARS (4.6-8 per cent) and three times higher than for MERS (4-5 per cent), although these data are only based on a small number of studies," Dean said.

The model also suggests that the likelihood of household infection is highest among older adults aged 60 or more, and lowest in those aged 20 years or younger, according to the researchers.

The estimates also suggest substantial infectivity during the incubation period, comparable to, and potentially higher than, during the illness period, they said.

Here's Why Coronavirus Disease Affect People Differently

Agencies

The coronavirus can be deadly for some people or no big deal for others. It can put a patient on a ventilator facing lonely death or can come and go without leaving a mark. The scientists across the globe are working day and night to find out what are the factors due which this virus affects people differently.

The issue of disease variability "is the most critical question about COVID-19," The Washington Post quoted Edward Behrens, chief of the rheumatology division at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

"Why do some people get sick? Why do some people have no problem at all?" he said.

However, National Institutes of



Health Director Francis Collins on his blog has highlighted one potential breakthrough. He stated that the scientists developed an artificial intelligence tool that sorted the blood of covid-19 patients and found 22 proteins that consistently appear among the

patients who are severely ill.

The researchers have also found that COVID-19 victim who had Type A blood had a 50 per cent higher risk of needing oxygen or a ventilator. Type O blood seemed to have a partial protective effect.

Collins further stated in comparison to potential mutations and dosages, the most critical factor is the person getting infected -- the "host." Not everybody hosts the COVID-19 virus in the same way.

"The most critical factor is the person getting infected -- the host," Collins stated.

Also, Jennifer Lighter, a hospital epidemiologist at NYU Langone found that obesity as one of the factors infecting people with COVID-19.

COVID-19 patients with a body mass index between 30 and 34 -- obese under CDC definitions -- were two folds as likely to be admitted to the ICU than patients with a BMI under 30.

Those with a BMI of 35 and over were three folds more likely to die than those with a healthy BMI.

There's A Possibility Of Dozens Of Intelligent Civilisations In Our Galaxy, Suggests Study

Agencies

A new study has calculated that there could be more than 30 intelligent civilizations throughout the Milky Way galaxy.

This is an enormous advance over previous estimates which spanned from zero to billions.

One of the biggest and longest-standing questions in the history of human thought is whether there are other intelligent lifeforms within our universe. Obtaining good estimates of the number of possible extraterrestrial civilizations has however been very challenging.

The study led by the University of Nottingham is published in the Astrophysical Journal.

Using the assumption that intelligent life forms on other plan-

ets in a similar way as it does on Earth these researchers have obtained an estimate for the number of intelligent communicating civilizations within our own galaxy, the Milky Way. They calculate that there could be over 30 active communicating intelligent civilizations in our home galaxy.

"There should be at least a few dozen active civilizations in our galaxy under the assumption that it takes 5 billion years for intelligent life to form on other planets, as on Earth. The idea is looking at evolution, but on a cosmic scale. We call this calculation the Astrobiological Copernican Limit," said Professor of Astrophysics at the University of Nottingham, Christopher Conselice who also led the research.

50Pc Of Global Population Exposed To Rising Air Pollution: Study

Agencies

London-: Despite global efforts to improve air quality, half of the world's population is exposed to increasing air pollution, and according to the WHO, more than four million deaths annually can be attributed to outdoor air pollution.

Vast swathes of the world's population are experiencing increased air pollution, says the study conducted in association with the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Air pollution constitutes major, and in many areas increasing, threat to public health, according to the study published in the journal Climate and Atmospheric Science.

"While long-term policies to reduce air pollution have been effective in many regions, notably in Europe and the US, there

are regions that have dangerously high levels of air pollution," said study researcher Gavin Shaddick from the University of Exeter in the UK.

In some regions air pollution was five times higher than WHO guidelines, and in some countries it was still increasing, Shaddick added.

Major sources of fine particulate matter air pollution includes inefficient use of energy by households, industry, agriculture and transport sectors, and coal-fired power plants. In some regions, sand and desert dust, waste burning and deforestation add to it.

Although air pollution affects high- and low-income countries alike, low- and middle-income countries experience the largest burden with the highest concentrations seen in central, eastern, southern and south-eastern Asia.

Young People With Early Psychosis May Not Require Antipsychotic Medications To Recover

Agencies

Researchers found that some young people with early-stage first-episode psychosis (FEP) can experience reduced symptoms and improve functioning without antipsychotic medication when they are provided with psychological interventions and comprehensive case management.

The study led by researchers at the Orygen study that compared two groups of young people, aged 15 - 25 years, presenting with FEP to a specialist early psychosis service. The results of the Staged Treatment and Acceptability Guidelines in Early Psychosis (STAGES) study have been published in the Schizophrenia Bulletin Open.

Both groups received the intensive psychosocial intervention, with one group also receiving low dose antipsychotic medication and the other receiving a placebo.

The study found that the addition of antipsychotic medication to intensive psychosocial intervention did not lead to superior outcomes in symptoms and functioning within the first six months, suggesting that antipsychotic medication may not be needed early in the course of illness for all people within the spectrum of psychosis.

Orygen researcher Dr Shona Francey, who led the study, said the team wanted to investigate whether the medication was an essential part of treatment for young



people with early-stage FEP.

"For a significant number of young people, it is. But, I think some young people can recover, at least initially, from their psychosis without medication," she said.

Current practice recommends anti-psychotic medication be taken from the outset of psychotic illness in order to achieve rapid recovery and improvement of psychotic symptoms.

However, Dr Francey said, in reality, a lot of people vote with their feet and don't take their medication for a variety of reasons.

"Medications can have heavy-duty side effects for young people, including weight gain which is a significant issue that young people are concerned about. There are also various sexual and other physical side effects that young people on medication have to contend with."

Dr Francey said that not all young people could de-

lay their antipsychotic medication. "For many young people with early-stage FEP, medication is an essential part of their treatment plan. But, for those young people who do not want medication, psychological interventions and comprehensive case management could be a feasible model of treatment."

"What the findings of this research tell us is that if a young person is reluctant to take medication for FEP, a period of intensive psychosocial treatments could be offered as an alternative," Dr Francey said.

She said a larger trial would be required to investigate whether antipsychotic-free treatment could be recommended for particular groups of young people with FEP.

"Young people currently using the medication as part of their supervised treatment should continue to do so under the direction of their doctor," Dr Francey said.

Mortar Blast At Afghan Religious School Kills 9 Students

Agencies

Kunduz, Afghanistan: A mortar bomb blast inside a religious school in northern Afghanistan Thursday killed at least nine students, police said.

"As per initial investigation, the explosion was caused by a mortar that had somehow been carried inside the madrassa," police spokesman Khalil Asir told AFP, adding many of the dead were aged under 18.

Six students were wounded in the explosion in the Ishkamish district of Takhar province.

Gunmen attacked a hospital in the Afghan capital, Kabul, on Tuesday where the international humanitarian organization Doctors Without Borders runs a maternity

clinic. At least sixteen people, including two newborn babies, were killed, officials said.

Provincial governor spokesman Jawad Hejri confirmed the incident and the toll.

It comes after two deadly blasts this month targeted separate mosques in Kabul.

On Friday, four people were killed when explosives detonated at a mosque in the capital during weekly prayers.

A week earlier a blast at a mosque in the heavily fortified Green Zone killed two people, including a prominent imam.

The latest bloodshed comes as the Taliban and government are preparing to launch much-delayed peace talks aimed at ending the nearly two-decade old conflict in the impoverished country.



Nepal Presses On With New Map Including Indian Areas, Bill Passed

Press Trust Of India

Kathmandu: Nepal's National Assembly today unanimously passed the Constitution Amendment Bill to update the country's political and administrative map incorporating three Indian territories.

India has termed as untenable the "artificial enlargement" of territorial claims by Nepal after its lower house of parliament on Saturday unanimously approved the new political map of the country featuring areas which India maintains

belong to it.

The National Assembly, or the upper house of the Nepal-

cal map in its national emblem.

The bill was passed with all the 57 members present voting

The National Assembly, or the upper house of the Nepalese parliament, unanimously passed the constitution amendment bill providing for inclusion of the country's new political map in its national emblem.

ese parliament, unanimously passed the constitution amendment bill providing for inclusion of the country's new politi-

in its favour.

Nepal, in its new map, claims India's Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura as its territories.

Google's Chrome target of massive spying attack

Agencies

United States: Google declined to discuss how the latest spyware compared with prior campaigns, the breadth of the damage, or why it did not detect and remove the bad extensions on its own despite past promises to supervise offerings more closely.

A newly discovered spyware effort attacked users through 32 million downloads of extensions to Google's market-leading Chrome web browser, researchers at Awake Security told Reuters, highlighting the tech industry's failure to protect browsers as they are used more for email, payroll and other sensitive functions.

Alphabet Inc's Google said it removed more than 70 of the malicious add-ons from its official Chrome Web Store after being alerted by the researchers last month.

"When we are alerted of extensions in the Web Store that violate our policies, we take action and use those incidents as training material to improve our automated and manual analyses," Google spokesman Scott Westover told Reuters.

Most of the free extensions purported to warn users about questionable websites or convert files from one format to another. Instead, they siphoned off browsing history and data that provided credentials for access to internal business tools.

Based on the number of downloads, it was the most far-reaching malicious Chrome store campaign to date, according to Awake co-founder and chief scientist Gary Golomb.

Google declined to discuss how the latest spyware compared with prior campaigns, the breadth of the damage, or why it did not detect and remove the bad extensions on its own despite past promises to supervise offerings more closely.

It is unclear who was behind the effort to distribute the malware. Awake said the developers supplied fake contact information when they submitted the extensions to Google.

"Anything that gets you into somebody's browser or email



or other sensitive areas would be a target for national espionage as well as organized crime," said former National Security Agency engineer Ben Johnson, who founded security companies Carbon Black and Obsidian Security.

The extensions were designed to avoid detection by antivirus companies or security software that evaluates the reputations of web domains, Golomb said.

If someone used the browser to surf the web on a home computer, it would connect to a series of websites and transmit information, the researchers found. Anyone using a corporate network, which would include security services, would not transmit the sensitive information or even reach the malicious versions of the websites.

Trump signs sanctions law over China treatment of Uighurs



Agencies

Washington: The United States would then freeze any assets the officials hold in the world's largest economy and ban their entry into the country

US President Donald Trump on Wednesday signed into law an act that authorizes sanctions against Chinese officials over the mass incarceration of Uighur Muslims.

Trump's announcement came just as excerpts emerged from an explosive new book by his former national security advisor John Bolton, who said the president told his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping that he approved of the vast detention camps.

Trump was widely expected to sign the Uighur Human Rights Act, which passed Congress almost unanimously

amid wide outrage over China's treatment of the minority.

"The Act holds accountable perpetrators of human rights violations and abuses such as the systematic use of indoctrination camps, forced labor and intrusive surveillance to eradicate the ethnic identity and religious beliefs of Uighurs and other minorities in China," Trump said in a statement.

The legislation requires the US administration to determine which Chinese officials are responsible for the "arbitrary detention, torture and harassment" of Uighurs and other minorities.

2020/06/samsung-june-of-fer-dt-1170x90-1592483732604.gif

The United States would then freeze any assets the officials hold in the world's largest

economy and ban their entry into the country.

Trump, while signing the act, objected to a technical aspect of the legislation on his powers as president to terminate sanctions on individuals.

Activists say China has rounded up at least one million Uighurs and other Turkic Muslims and is forcibly homogenizing them in a brainwashing campaign with few modern precedents.

Beijing counters that it is running vocational educational centers that offer an alternative to Islamic extremism.

According to The Washington Post, Bolton in his upcoming book said that Xi explained the issue to Trump, who told him that the detention camps were "exactly the right thing to do."

Atlanta Cop Charged With Murder For Shooting 27-Year-Old Black Man

Agencies

Atlanta, United States: An Atlanta police officer has been charged with murder for shooting a 27-year-old man in the back, justice officials announced Wednesday in the latest case to spark anger over police killings of African Americans.

Atlanta District Attorney Paul Howard said police officer Garrett Rolfe had no justification for shooting Rayshard Brooks as Brooks fled, and aggravated the case by kicking Brooks' body as he lay on the ground bleeding.

He also said that Rolfe and fellow officer Devin Brosnan violated multiple police department regulations after

racism and police brutality.

Brooks' death ignited a fresh round of angry protests, and forced the resignation of Atlanta's police chief.

Howard said a warrant was issued for Rolfe's arrest on 11 counts including felony murder -- a homicide committed in the course of another felony crime -- aggravated assault, and multiple counts of violating police procedures.

Relatives of black American Rayshard Brooks, many of them in tears, called for justice and "drastic change" in policing after an Atlanta officer fatally shot him in the back. Yhaira Jacquez has more.

The murder count could bring a sentence of death or life in prison.



they detained Brooks when he was found sleeping in his car in the drive-up line at a local Wendy's fast food restaurant on June 12.

"We concluded that, at the time that Mr Brooks was shot, he did not pose an immediate threat of death or serious physical injury to the officers," Howard said.

11 counts

Brooks' shooting came less than three weeks after a Minneapolis police officer's killing of handcuffed African American George Floyd on May 25 fuelled a national uproar over

Brosnan, who has agreed to become a witness for the state in the investigation, faces three charges including aggravated assault.

Brosnan and Rolfe found Brooks sleeping in his car at the restaurant last Friday.

Over a calm 20 minute interaction, they gave him an alcohol test and, after it proved positive, sought to arrest him for driving under the influence.

After a brief struggle Brooks ran off with one of the officers' Tasers and, as he swung his arm back to point it at them, Rolfe shot Brooks twice in the back.

Iran has over \$62bn in net foreign assets: IRNA

Agencies

Tehran: The Central Bank of Iran (CBI) says net foreign assets held by the bank and other Iranian non-bank financial institutions have surged by nearly a third over the year ending March 19.

A Thursday report by the official IRNA news agency cited CBI figures as showing that foreign reserves had increased by 27.4 percent over the past calendar year to reach a total of 11,680 trillion rials (over \$62 billion).

It said net foreign assets had more than doubled compared to 2016-2017, adding that assets held by Iranian commercial banks were excluded from the calculations.

The CBI said its own foreign reserves had also increased by 17.6 percent year on year in March to reach 5,470 trillion rials (more than \$29 billion).

It added that CBI assets in foreign banks had increased by less than a quarter compared

to 2016, when Iran was relieved of international sanctions after signing a major nuclear agreement with world powers.

Iran came under a series of new and unilateral sanctions by the United States in 2018 when the US government decided to pull out of the nuclear agreement.

That has caused a decline in Iran's exports of oil which is a major source of earning foreign currency for the country. However, funds related to previous sales of crude are still held in banks outside Iran mainly because sanctions make transfers into Iran almost impossible.

In the meantime, the Iranian government has opted to use some of the funds held in foreign banks for purchase of certain goods and services.

Reports on Wednesday showed that CBI governor Abdolnasser Hemmati had travelled to Iraq to negotiate how Iran could use its massive funds in the Arab country for imports of basic goods.

NEW SMAKERS

Trump Seen "Pleading With China's Xi" To Ensure 2020 Win: Ex-Aide In Book

Former National Security Advisor John Bolton writes in a new book that President Donald Trump asked Chinese leader Xi Jinping to help him win re-election by buying more U.S. farm products, according to an excerpt published by the Wall Street Journal.

The disclosure is part of a devastating portrayal of Trump's conduct of foreign policy by Bolton, the most senior official in this White House so far to publish an account of his experience. The book is poised to further burden Trump's already struggling effort to secure a second term.

In the book, which is scheduled to be released next week, Bolton describes a dis-



cussion between Trump and Xi at last year's Group of 20 summit in Osaka, Japan. Bolton writes that Trump was "pleading with Xi to ensure he'd win" but said he could not print the president's exact words because of the government's pre-publication review process for classified material forbade it, according to the excerpt.

The former top security aide said the result was em-

blematic of "the confluence in Trump's mind of his own political interests and U.S. national interests," writing that he routinely made foreign policy choices in order to benefit himself politically.

"I am hard-pressed to identify any significant Trump decision during my White House tenure that wasn't driven by re-election calculations," Bolton writes.

The Trump administration has been trying to stop the book's publication, and on Wednesday night asked a federal judge in Washington to grant an emergency restraining order. But the New York Times and the Washington Post have both published reports on Bolton's book on Wednesday after obtaining copies.

Oxford College Votes To Remove Statue Of Man Behind Rhodes Scholarship

London, United Kingdom: An Oxford University college has voted in favour of removing a statue of 19th-century colonialist Cecil Rhodes, less than two weeks after thousands of protesters called for it to be taken down.

Oriel College said it also wanted to set up an independent inquiry into the "key issues" surrounding the statue of the Victorian mining tycoon.

"Both of these decisions were reached after a thoughtful period of debate and reflection and with the full awareness of the impact these decisions are likely to have in Britain and around the world," it said in a statement Wednesday.

The move comes after a large protest by the Rhodes Must Fall campaign on June 9, with demonstrators chanting "Take it down!" and "Decolonise!"

The campaign to remove the statue, which started four years ago, was reignited by the global explosion of Black Lives Mat-

ter demonstrations, following the killing in the United States of African-American George Floyd by a white police officer.

Campaigners had also demanded changes to the Rhodes scholarship, which has been awarded to more than 8,000 overseas students to study at Oxford University, since 1902.

Rhodes -- a white supremacist like many builders of the British empire -- gave his name to the territories of Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe and Zambia, and founded the De Beers diamond company.

He studied at Oxford and left money to Oriel College after his death in 1902.

Oriel's statement said it would examine how to improve access and attendance of Black Asian and minority ethnic undergraduate and graduate students.

The independent commission of inquiry would also review "how the college's 21st-century commitment to diversity can sit more easily with its past."



Twitter Tests New Voice Tweeting Feature

Twitter Inc said on Wednesday it is testing a new feature that will allow users to tweet using their voice, capturing up to 140 seconds of audio in a single tweet.

The feature will be available to a limited number of users on Apple's iOS platform for now and be rolled out for more iOS users in the coming weeks, Twitter said in a blog post.

The micro-blogging platform said users will be able to create a voice tweet using a new "wave-lengths" icon on the Tweet composer screen. Social media companies including Twitter have long been under pressure to curb content such as abuse, harassment and misinformation on their platforms.

"We are working to incorporate additional monitoring systems ahead of bringing this to everyone," Twitter spokeswoman Aly Pavea told Reuters.

Indian troops on border duty carry arms: Jaishankar to Rahul

NEW DELHI: All Indian troops guarding the border with China carry arms, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Thursday, replying to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's poser that why Army personnel in Galwan Valley were sent "unarmed to martyrdom".

The minister said armies of the two sides do not use firearms as per provisions of two bilateral agreements



sealed in 1996 and 2005.

"Let us get the facts straight. All troops on border duty always carry arms, especially when leaving post. Those at Galwan on 15 June did so. Long-stand-

ing practice (as per 1996 & 2005 agreements) not to use firearms during faceoffs," Jaishankar tweeted.

Earlier, Gandhi questioned why Indian soldiers were sent "unarmed to martyrdom" in Ladakh and who is responsible for sending them towards danger. He also asked how China dared to kill the Indian soldiers.

Twenty Indian Army per-



India Elected Unopposed To Non-Permanent Seat Of UN Security Council

UNITED NATIONS: India was elected as non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for a two-year term after winning 184 votes in the 193-member General Assembly.

Along with India, Ireland, Mexico and Norway also won the Security Council elections held Wednesday.

India was a candidate for a non-permanent seat from the Asia-Pacific category for the 2021-22 term. Its

victory was a given since it was the sole candidate vying for the lone seat from the grouping.

New Delhi's candidature was unanimously endorsed by the 55-member Asia-Pacific grouping, including China and Pakistan, in June last year.

Previously, India has been elected as a non-permanent member of the Council for the years 1950-1951, 1967-1968, 1972-1973, 1977-1978,

1984-1985, 1991-1992 and most recently in 2011-2012.

The UN General Assembly on Wednesday conducted elections for President of the 75th session of the Assembly, five non-permanent members of the Security Council and members of the Economic and Social Council under special voting arrangements put in place here due to COVID-19 related restrictions.

'Get Facts Straight': Jaishankar Raps Rahul For Poser On Why Soldiers Went 'Unarmed To Martyrdom'

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The minister said armies of the two sides do not use firearms as per provisions of two bilateral agreements sealed in 1996 and 2005.

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Earlier, Gandhi questioned why Indian soldiers were sent "unarmed to martyrdom" in Ladakh and who is responsible for sending them towards danger. He also



asked how China dared to kill the Indian soldiers.

Twenty Indian Army personnel including a Colonel were killed in the



fierce clash between the two armies in Galwan Valley on Monday evening. China has not yet released any casualty figures.

25-Year-Old Woman Travelling With Two Kids To Noida 'Raped' By Driver In Bus With 10 Passengers

NOIDA: A 25-year-old woman travelling with her children from Uttar Pradesh's Pratapgarh to Noida was allegedly raped on a moving bus by one its two drivers early on Wednesday, police said.

The accused is absconding, police said, adding that the other driver has been held for allegedly intimidating her.

According to police, the incident apparently took place on a stretch between Lucknow and Mathura.

The woman was travelling on the long-distance private bus with her two children and around 10 other people at the time of the incident.

However, the woman gave a complaint to police after reaching Noida,

where an FIR under Indian Penal Code Sections 376 and 506 was lodged at the Sector 20 police station, they said.

The bus had two drivers and support staff.

It was the woman's first trip to Noida from her native place in Pratapgarh, officials said, adding that her husband is a vegetable vendor.

It was an AC sleeper bus, coming to Noida from Pratapgarh. According to information given to police by the woman, it appears the incident took place in the night when the bus would have been on a stretch between Lucknow and Mathura," said DSP (Women Safety) Vrinda Shukla.

"As the complaint was made after the woman reached here, an FIR was immediately lodged," Shukla said.

She said one of the two drivers has been arrested and the bus impounded.

Police teams have been formed to ensure the arrest of the other driver as well as the owner of the bus at the earliest, she added.

The DCP said further proceedings in the case are underway and the complainant has been sent for a medical test.

"All co-passengers are being traced and their statements are being taken so that a charge sheet in the case could be filed soon," she added.

Vitamin K May Offer Protective Health Benefits In Old Age

A new study says that vitamin K levels affect longevity. The research, published in The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, suggests vitamin K, a nutrient found in leafy greens and vegetable oils, may have protective health benefits as we age.

The multi-ethnic study has found that older adults with low vitamin K levels were more likely to die within 13 years compared to those whose vitamin K levels were adequate.

The meta-analysis, involving nearly 4,000 Americans aged 54-76, one-third of whom were non-white, was led by researchers at the Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts University (USDA HNRCA) and Tufts Medical Center.

The research team categorized participants according to their vitamin K blood levels. They then compared risk of heart disease and risk of death across the categories over approximately 13 years of follow-up.

The results showed no significant associations between vitamin K levels and heart disease. However, the people with the lowest vitamin K levels had a 19 per cent higher risk of death, compared to the those with vitamin K levels that reflected adequate vitamin K intake.

Vitamin K is a nutrient that is important for maintaining healthy blood vessels. It is found in leafy greens, such as lettuce, kale and spinach, and in some vegetable oils, especially soybean and canola.

"The possibility that vitamin K is linked to heart disease and mortality is based on our knowledge about proteins in vascular tissue that require vitamin K to function. These proteins help prevent calcium from



building up in artery walls, and without enough vitamin K, they are less functional," said first author Kyla Shea.

Shea is a scientist on the HNRCA's vitamin K team, long renowned for its work on the role of vitamin K in the prevention of chronic disease. Sarah Booth, a co-author on the study and director of the USDA HNRCA, developed the methodology for measuring vitamin K in blood. Her research team measured the vitamin K levels in the study participants and continues to generate data about vitamin K status in population and clinic-based studies.

"Similar to when a rubber band dries out and loses its elasticity, when veins and arteries are calcified, blood pumps less efficiently, causing a variety of complications. That is why measuring risk of death, in a study such as this, may better capture the spectrum of events associated with worsening vascular health," said last author Daniel Weiner, nephrologist at Tufts Medical Center, whose research includes vascular disease in people with impaired kidney function.

While this study adds to existing evidence that vitamin K may have protective health benefits, it cannot establish a causal relationship between low vitamin K levels and risk of death because it is observational. Additional studies are also needed to clarify why circulating vitamin K was associated with risk for death but not heart disease.

Locusts from Pakistan arrive in Gujarat's Banaskantha district

Palanpur: Locusts flying in from Pakistan were spotted in parts of Gujarat's Banaskantha district, an official said on Thursday.

Small clusters of the insects arrived in at least four villages of Suigam tehsil in the district close to the border with Pakistan, agriculture officer Pramod Patel said.

"Locusts in small groups invaded some parts of Suigam, and we sprayed pesticides to control them. They

affected a 12 -hectare area. They have been brought under control now," he said.

"They came from the Pakistan border, and some were diverted from Rapar and Bhachau tehsils of neighbouring Kutch district," he added.

Late last year, swarms of locusts coming from Pakistan ravaged crops over 25,000 hectares in the districts of Banaskantha, Patan, Kutch and Mehsana in Gujarat. PTI

COVID-19: Flushing Toilets Can Spread Virus In The Air, Says Study



Flushing a toilet can create a large and widespread cloud of virus-containing aerosol droplets that last long enough to be breathed in by others, according to a simulation study that raises the possibility of COVID-19 being transmitted with the use of toilets.

Researchers from Yangzhou University in China noted that recent studies show the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19 can survive in the human digestive tract and show up in faeces of the infected.

Toilet flushing creates a great deal of turbulence, and qualitative evidence suggests this can spread both bacteria and viruses, they said.

The study, published in the journal Physics of Fluids, used computer models to simulate water and air flows in a flushing toilet and the resulting droplet cloud.

The researchers used a standard set of fluid dynamic formulas, known as the Navier-Stokes equations, to simulate flushing in two types of toilet -- one with a single inlet for flushing water, and another with two inlets to create a rotating flow.

They also used a discrete phase model to simulate movement of the numerous tiny droplets likely to be ejected from the toilet bowl into the air.

A similar model was used recently to simulate the movement of aerosol droplets ejected during a human cough, the researchers said.

As water pours into the toilet bowl from one side, it strikes the opposite side, creating vortices, the explained.

These vortices continue upward into the air above the bowl, carrying droplets to a height of nearly three feet, where they might be inhaled or settle onto surfaces, according to the researchers.

These droplets are so small they float in the air for over a minute. A toilet with

two inlet ports for water generates an even greater velocity of upward flowing aerosol particles, they said.

"One can foresee that the velocity will be even higher when a toilet is used frequently, such as in the case of a family toilet during a busy time or a public toilet serving a densely populated area," said study co-author Ji-Xiang Wang, of Yangzhou University.

The simulations show that nearly 60 per cent of the ejected particles rise high above the seat for a toilet with two inlet ports, the researchers said.

"The number of particles and their size distribution is estimated based on published literature reports. The viral load in faecal matter and the fraction of resulting aerosol containing the virus is unknown, said Bryan Bzdek, Research Fellow at the University of Bristol, who was not involved in the study.

"Even if the virus were contained in the produced aerosols, it is unknown whether the virus would still be infectious; there is not yet clear evidence for faecal-oral transmission," Bzdek noted.

A solution to this deadly problem is to simply close the lid before flushing, since this should decrease aerosol spread, the researchers in the study said.

However, in many countries toilets in public restrooms are often without lids, according to the researchers who added that this poses a serious hazard.

They also suggest a better toilet design would include a lid that closes automatically before flushing.

"While this study is unable to demonstrate that these measures will reduce transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, many other viruses are transmitted through the faecal-oral route, so these are good hygiene practices to have anyway," Bzdek added.

NEWS MAKERS

Col. Santosh Babu's 4 Yr Old Performs Last Rites Amid Tearful Adieu To Slain Soldier

SURYAPET: Amid chants of "Bharat mata ki jai", the mortal remains of Colonel Bikkumalla Santosh Babu, who was killed by Chinese troops during clashes, were consigned to flames with full military honours here on Thursday.

Thousands of people wearing masks chanting "Santosh Babu amar rahe" and "Vande Mataram" participated in the funeral procession even as scores, standing on balconies of their respective places showered flowers on the army vehicle which was carrying the body.

Most of the shops and establishments in the town remained closed as a mark of respect to the departed soldier. His mortal remains were



flown from the national capital in a special aircraft to Hakimpet Air Force base near Hyderabad on Wednesday and then it arrived at his residence here late at night.

Telangana Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan, State Ministers K T Rama Rao, Malla Reddy, Jagdish Reddy, Cyberabad Police

Commissioner VC Sajjanar, Hyderabad City Police Commissioner Anjani Kumarand other army officials paid their tributes at the Air Force station.

Colonel Santosh's body was draped in tricolour and a large number of people paid their last respects to him here.

Congress Removes Sanjay Jha As Spokesperson After Critical Article

Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Wednesday removed Sanjay Jha as a party spokesperson, days after he wrote a newspaper article critical of the party.

Gandhi also approved the appointment of Abhishek Dutt and Sadhna Bharti as national media panelists for the Congress.

"Congress president has also approved that Sanjay Jha be dropped as AICC spokesperson with immediate effect," the party said in an official statement.

In the article published a few days ago, Jha had said, "The Congress has demonstrated extraordinary lassitude, and its lackadaisical attitude towards its own political obsolescence is



baffling..."

"I would like to call a spade a spade here and a shovel: there has been no serious effort to get the party up and running with any sense of urgency, he had said in the article published in The Times of India. "There are many in the

party who cannot comprehend this perceptible listlessness. For someone like me, for instance, permanently wedded to Gandhian philosophy and Nehruvian outlook that defines the Congress, it is dismaying to see its painful disintegration," he had said.

Ban Chinese Food: BJP Minister

Union minister Ramdas Athawale has said all restaurants and hotels that sell Chinese food in India should be closed down and products made in China should be boycotted.

His comments come after 20 Indian soldiers lost their lives in a violent clash with the Chinese army in Ladakh's Galwan Valley.

"China is a country that betrays. India should boycott all products that are made in China. Chinese food and all restaurants and hotels that sell Chinese food in India should be closed down," Athawale, minister of state for social justice and empowerment, said in a tweet.

Twenty Indian Army personnel including a colonel were killed in a fierce clash with Chinese troops in the Galwan Valley in eastern Ladakh on Monday night, the biggest military confrontation in over five decades that has significantly escalated the already volatile border standoff in the region.

He also paid tribute to the martyred soldiers. "20 soldiers of India have been killed in violent clashes in Galwan of Ladakh. Humble tribute to the soldiers! The martyrdom of the soldiers will not go in vain. The government of India and all Indians stand with the families of the martyred soldiers," Athawale tweeted in Hindi.