



Maximum : 31°C
Minimum : 17°C
Humidity : 41%

SUNSET
Today 07:46 PM
SUNRISE
Tomorrow 05:23 AM



News Digest

4 New JKPSM Members Take Oath

Jammu: Four of the six newly appointed members of the J&K Public Service Commission on Monday took oath of office. Chairman, J&K Public Service Commission, B.R. Sharma, today administered oath of office to the four newly appointed members, an official spokesperson said. While two members, Subash Gupta and Sameer Bharti were administered oath at Jammu office, Syed Iqbal Aga and Showkat Ahmad Zargar took oath of office at Srinagar through video conferencing mode.

6 Rafale Jets To Arrive In India Next Month

New Delhi: India is likely to receive by July 27 the first batch of six Rafale fighter jets which are expected to significantly boost the combat capability of the Indian Air Force, people familiar with the development said. The IAF has been on a high alert for the last two weeks in view of escalation in tension with China following clashes between troops of the two countries in Galwan Valley in eastern Ladakh in which 20 Indian Army personnel were killed. The two armies are locked in a bitter standoff in the region for seven weeks. **● P-02**

HM Amit Shah Meets Jaishankar, Goyal

New Delhi: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday met External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, officials said. It is immediately not known the subjects the three ministers discussed in the meeting. The meeting comes amidst the ongoing stand-off between the Indian Army and China's PLA in Ladakh. There have been campaigns in certain quarters to boycott the China-made products in view of the stand-off.

SKIMS Discharges 10 More After Recovery

Srinagar: At least ten Covid-19 patients on Monday were discharged from SKIMS, Bemia here after recovering fully from the deadly disease. According to an official spokesperson, 10 patients who were admitted at SKIMS, Bemia after found positive for Covid-19, were discharged today after successful completion of treatment and testing negative. "With this the number of COVID-19 recovered patient's moves to 479 out of total COVID positive admitted patients numbering 610 till date," the official spokesperson said. "The recovery rate at present is more than 78.5 percent and with four fatalities the mortality **● P-02**

Rs 1.7L Penalty Imposed On 2 JKSRCTC Conductors

Jammu: The Jammu and Kashmir Road Transport Corporation on Monday imposed a total penalty of over Rs 1.7 lakh on its two conductors and suspended the services of a driver for negligence of duty, an official statement said. Managing Director, JKRTC, Angrez Singh Rana issued these orders on the recommendations and reports submitted by general managers (operation) of Jammu and Kashmir, it said. In view of magnitude of offence, a total of Rs 1,70,553 penalty has **● P-02**

Ailing Geelani Throws Surprise, Quits Hurriyat

Observer News Service

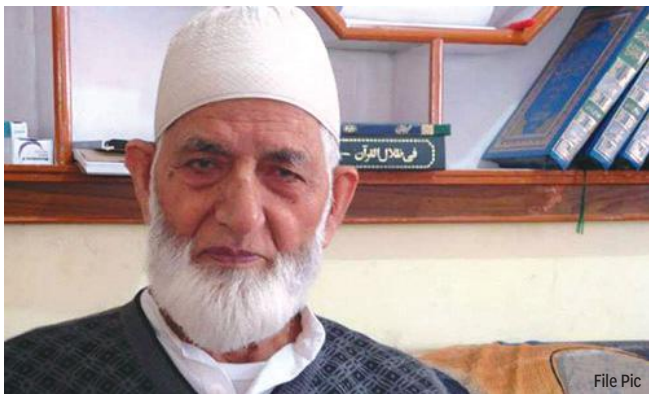
SRINAGAR- Hurriyat Conference (G) chairman Syed Ali Shah Geelani on Monday announced his dissociation from the faction of the Hurriyat Conference that he floated in 2003 by enforcing a vertical split in the amalgam.

In a four-line letter and an audio message to the media, a spokesperson for the 90-year-old leader said, "Geelani has announced complete dissociation from Hurriyat Conference forum."

Geelani has written a detailed letter to all constituent parts of the amalgam about the reasons behind his decision to leave the Hurriyat Conference, of which he had been nominated as a lifetime chairman, he said.

Geelani said the activities of Hurriyat Conference members currently in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir (PcK) were being investigated by the amalgam for various allegations.

"The activities of these representatives were limited now to seeking access to assemblies and ministries for joining the government there (PcK). Some members were expelled while others started holding their own meetings. These ac-



Madhav Blames Geelani For Kashmir Quagmire

The BJP said on Monday that Syed Ali Shah Geelani, who has announced his dissociation from the Hurriyat Conference, was singularly responsible for pushing Kashmir into militancy and ruining lives of thousands of Kashmiri youths and families. Coming down heavily on the ailing leader, BJP general secretary Ram Madhav asked if Geelani's action can absolve him of the "past sins". "This man was singularly responsible for ruining the lives of thousands of Kashmiri youths and **● P-02**

tivities were endorsed by you (constituents) by holding a meeting here to endorse their decisions." Geelani said in his two-page letter.

He referred to inaction by the Hurriyat members post the abrogation of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir, and the division of the erstwhile state into two Union territories.

"I sent messages to you through various means so that the next course of action could be decided but all my efforts **▶▶PAGE 02**

THE LACK OF DISCIPLINE AND OTHER SHORTCOMINGS WERE ignored and you did not allow a robust accountability system to be established over the years but today, you have crossed all limits and indulged in rebellion against the leadership,"

Pak Troops Shell Army Posts Along LoC

SRINAGAR: Pakistani troops opened unprovoked fire at Indian positions along the Line of Control (LoC) in Tangdhar sector of Jammu and Kashmir on Monday in violation of a ceasefire agreement, an army official said.

"On 29 June 2020, in the evening hours, Pakistan initiated an unprovoked ceasefire violation along the LoC in Tangdhar (in north Kashmir's Kupwara district) by firing mortars and other weapons," the official said.

He said befitting response was being given to the Pakistani fire.

There were no reports of any casualties so far. **▶▶PAGE 02**

Hizb Commander Among 3 Militants Killed In Anantnag Encounter

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Three militants, including a Doda native on Monday were killed in a firefight with government forces in south Kashmir's Anantnag district.

Acting on a specific input about the presence of militants, special operations group (SOG) of police, army's 19 RR and CRPF laid a cordon around Khulchohar area of the district and started a search operation, a police spokesperson said. The militants hiding in the village fired upon the search party drawing retaliation from them.

"In the ensuing encounter, 3 militants were killed and their bodies were retrieved from the site of encounter. The identification and **▶▶PAGE 02**

Police Declares Doda 'Militancy Free'

Doda district in Jammu and Kashmir has become "militancy free" as the last of the surviving militants in the area was killed in an encounter with state forces in Anantnag district on Monday, police said. "With today's operation at Khull Chohar in Anantnag by Anantnag Police along with 19 RR, CRPF in which two LET (militants) including one district commander and one **● P-02**

Militants Fire UBGL Towards Army Camp

Unidentified militants on Monday made a failed attempt to attack an army camp in Chattergam area of central Kashmir's Budgam district. Unknown militants fired an under barrel grenade launcher (UBGL) towards an army's 50 RR camp in Chattergam area of the district on Monday evening, a police official said. However, the grenade, he said landed outside the **● P-02**

Businessman Mubeen Shah Booked For Sedition

Observer News Service



SRINAGAR: Police on Monday slapped sedition case against prominent businessman and former president of Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) Dr Mubeen Shah over a

social media post in which he had flagged concerns over the newly introduced domicile laws.

According to reports, a case of sedition has been filed against Shah at the Ram Munshibagh police station over his social media post in which he had advocated boycott and ouster of non-Kashmiris over fears of demographic changes due to the new domicile laws.

"Yes, we have lodged a case against him (Shah). Law will take its own course," said Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Srinagar Dr Haseeb Mughal.

In the post that went viral on popular social networking **▶▶PAGE 02**

2 More Covid-19 Deaths In Kashmir, Toll In J&K Reaches 96

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: Two more people died of coronavirus at a hospital here on Monday, taking the number of fatalities caused by the virus to 96 in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

A 65-year-old Covid-19 positive man from south Kashmir's Shopian district died at the SMHS hospital here on Monday morning.

A resident of Sujan Shopian, the sexagenarian was admitted to the SMHS hos-

Newborn, 5 Security Men Among 144 Test Positive

Jammu and Kashmir on Monday recorded 144 new cases of Covid-19, including a six-day-old baby, three CRPF men and two army soldiers, raising the total number of infected persons across the Union Territory to 7237. "144 new Covid-19 cases were detected in J&K. While 99 of them are from Kashmir, 45 are from Jammu," the officials said. **● P-02**

patient yesterday (June 28) "sampled on the same day", Dr Nazir Choudhary, Medical Superintendent of the hospital said. "The pa-

tient was hypertensive and had breathlessness besides other ailments. He died at 1:30 a.m. today," he said. Later in the day, SMHS reported death **▶▶PAGE 02**

LADAKH STAND-OFF

India, China Corps Commanders To Hold Talks Today



Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Indian and Chinese militaries will hold another round of Lt General-level talks on Tuesday in an attempt to de-escalate tension in Eastern Ladakh and finalise modalities for disengagement of troops from the sensitive region, government sources said.

It will be the third round of Lt General-level talks and it will take place in Chushul sector on the Indian side of Line of Actual Control. The meeting is scheduled to start at 10:30 am, the sources said.

The first two meetings had taken place at Moldo on the Chinese side of the LAC.

In the second round of talks on June 22, the two sides **▶▶PAGE 02**

India Keeps Eye On Chinese Activity In Indian Ocean

The Navy has increased its surveillance missions and beefed up operational deployment in the Indian Ocean region in the wake of India's seven-week bitter border standoff with China in eastern Ladakh, people familiar with the development said. **● P-02**

Despite India's Objection, Pak To Hold Elections In Gilgit-Baltistan

GB Election Commission Will Hold Elections On August 18

Press Trust Of India

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will hold general elections in Gilgit-Baltistan on August 18, the government has announced after the country's top court allowed holding of polls in the region, notwithstanding India's strong protest to Islamabad for its efforts to bring "material change" to the territories under its "illegal and forcible" occupation.

The Pakistan Supreme Court on April 30 allowed the government to amend a 2018 administrative order to conduct general elections in the region.

President Anifalvi on Saturday

approved August 18, 2020, as the poll day for general elections to the Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Legislative Assembly, according to a statement from the President House.

The GB Election Commission will hold the elections in 24 constituencies, according to the statement.

The Gilgit-Baltistan order of 2018 provided for administrative changes, including authorising the Prime Minister of Pakistan to legislate on an array of subjects.

India last month issued a demarche to a senior Pakistani diplomat in New Delhi and lodged a strong protest over the apex court ruling.

India also clearly **▶▶PAGE 02**

Delhi Court Seeks Tihar Jail Reply On Shahir Shah's Plea

NEW DELHI: A Delhi Court Monday sought response from Tihar jail authority on a plea of Hurriyat leader Shahir Shah, arrested

in two separate cases of alleged militant financing, seeking a separate cell in Tihar central jail in the wake of coronavirus pandemic.

Special Judge Dharmendra Rana issued notice to the jail superintendent with a direction to file the reply by July 1.

In an application, Shah's advocate Qausar Khan submitted that the accused was suffering from various ailments, including heart disease, and that his immunity was **● P-02**

HC Allows J&K Bank To Open Online Registration For 1850 PO, BA Posts

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir High Court on Monday allowed the J&K Bank to make available the link for online registration of candidature by the prospective candidates pursuant to a fresh notification for 350 probationary officers and 1500 banking associates vacancies.

"The law being that mere participation in the recruitment process does not confer any right of appointment on a candidate, the Court is of the opinion that even if candidature of prospective candidates pursuant to the fresh notification dated 01.06.2020 is registered and the selection process is allowed to be completed upto a certain stage, it would not confer any right of appointment on such candidates," a bench of Justice Ali Mohammad

Magrey said while hearing an application filed by the Bank seeking vacation of the June 15 orders.

"Whether the ultimate selection process should be completed pursuant to the earlier advertisement notification or the subsequent notification would naturally be dependent on the final decision in the writ petition," the court said.

At this stage, therefore, the Court said it is of the view that it would be appropriate to allow the Bank to open the link and proceed with the selection process.

However, the court made it clear that the final select list of candidates shall not be drawn, issued or published by the Bank unless orders in that regard are sought from the Court "if the matter is not finally decided till then and remains sub-judice before the Court." **▶▶PAGE 02**

Interview: 'Following CPEC, China Desiring A Greater Role In Kashmir'

By SaumyTripathi

A MID Ladakh standoff, China has once again sought to raise the Kashmir issue at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). The development took place days after a certain Beijing-based think tank linked the August 5 events in Kashmir with the ongoing faceoff — that already saw the two nations raising war-rooms at Line of Control (LAC).

Following these developments closely, ManojKewalramani, known for his twitter handle "theChinaDude", is being sought as a Chinese expert on various platforms today.

A Fellow-China Studies at the Takshashila Institution, Bangalore, Kewalramani has in his name a



reckoning research titled the role of the US post 9/11 and its effects on the Kashmir issue.

But before becoming a policy analyst, he had his journalistic stints

with NDTV, NewsX and CCTV news China, where he worked as a Senior Editor, Digital News.

His experience of working with CCTV has given him an insight into

the workings of the Chinese state. He publishes a weekly brief called Eye on China for more than two years which tracks development in China.

In an exclusive chat with Kashmir Observer, Kewalramani talks about the current confrontation and its impact on the Kashmir issue.

As a Chinese expert, do you also see a link between the recent LAC attacks and the internal pressure faced by Xi Jinping on his handling of the COVID-19 crisis?

I'm not of the opinion that the current escalation in tensions along the LAC is linked to domestic pressure faced by the Chinese Communist Party with regard to its handling of the Covid-19. If this were to be the case, we would've seen greater media coverage to stoke na-

tionalism. Instead, party-state media has generally followed the official line and been fairly circumspect this time, unlike its behaviour during the 2017 Doklam incident.

That said, it's highly likely that the casualties following the clashes in Galwan would've had some impact in terms of elite politics.

A recent report by the Chinese think tank CICIR titled 'India blinded by double confidence' says that the recent tensions have their links in the abrogation of Article 370 by India. As somebody who tracks Beijing's politics closely, how valid is this reasoning?

I don't believe we can locate the cause of the current crisis to one specific issue or decision. But **▶▶PAGE 02**

Ailing Geelani Throws...

(to get in touch) went in vain. Now that the sword of accountability is hanging over your heads for the financial and other irregularities, you thought of calling the advisory committee meeting," he alleged.

Geelani said he was forced by the constituent parties in 2003 to take over the reins of the Hurriyat Conference and later, made lifetime chairman.

"The lack of discipline and other shortcomings were ignored and you did not allow a robust accountability system to be established over the years but today, you have crossed all limits and indulged in rebellion against the leadership," he added.

Madhav Blames Geelani...

families; for pushing Valley into terror and violence. Now resigns from Hurriyat without giving a reason. Does it absolve him of all d d past sins?" he tweeted.

Madhav is BJP's point man for Jammu and Kashmir.

Govt Bans 59 Apps...

section 69A of the IT Act and rules, and has decided to block 59 apps in view of information available that they are "engaged in activities which are prejudicial to sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of state and public order".

The move will "safeguard the interests of crores of Indian mobile and internet users. This decision is a targeted move to ensure safety and sovereignty of Indian cyberspace", it added. The list included prominent names like TikTok (which has over 200 million users in India), SHAREit, WeChat, UC Browser, Helo, Likee and Cam Scanner, among others.

The Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre, Ministry of Home Affairs, has also sent an exhaustive recommendation for blocking these malicious apps, the statement said, adding that there has been a strong chorus in the public space to take strict action against apps that harm India's sovereignty as well as the privacy of citizens. Likewise, there have been similar bipartisan concerns, flagged by various public representatives, both outside and inside Parliament. "On the basis of these and upon receiving recent credible inputs that such apps pose threat to sovereignty and integrity of India, the Government of India has decided to disallow the usage of certain apps, used in both mobile and non-mobile Internet enabled devices," it added. Comments from these companies could not be immediately obtained.

"There have been raging concerns on aspects relating to data security and safeguarding the privacy of 130 crore Indians. It has been noted recently that such concerns also pose a threat to sovereignty and security of our country," the statement said. Over 2015-19, Chinese investors including Alibaba, Tencent, TR Capital and Hillhouse Capital, have invested over USD 5.5 billion in Indian startups, according to Venture Intelligence that tracks private equity, venture capital, M&A transactions and valuations, in India.

India, China Corps...

arrived at a "mutual consensus" to "disengage" from all the friction points in eastern Ladakh.

On Tuesday, the two sides are expected to deliberate on the implementation of an agreement arrived at the first round of the Lt General talks on June 6, the sources said. The Indian delegation at the talks will be headed by 14 Corps Commander Lt Gen Harinder Singh, while the Chinese side is likely to be led by the Commander of the Tibet Military District. The tension between the two sides escalated after the Galwan valley clashes on June 15 that left 20 Indian soldiers dead. The Chinese soldiers used stones, nail-studded sticks, iron rods and clubs in carrying out brutal attacks on Indian soldiers after they protested the erection of a surveillance post by China on the Indian side of the Line of Actual Control in Galwan. After the clashes, the two sides held at least three rounds of Major General-level talks to explore ways to bring down tension between the two sides.

India Keeps Eye On Chinese ...

The Indian Navy is also ramping up its operational cooperation with various friendly naval forces like the US Navy and Japan Maritime Self Defense Force in view of the fast evolving regional security landscape, they said.

On Saturday, the Indian Navy held a crucial exercise with Japanese Navy in the Indian Ocean region, an area where Chinese naval vessels and submarines are making frequent forays, they said. Indian Navy ships INS Rana and INS Kulish were part of the exercise while Japan Maritime Self Defense Forces deployed its two ships, JS Kashima and JS Shimayuki, for the exercise. The exercise assumed significance as it took place amid India's border standoff with China in eastern Ladakh and Chinese Navy's aggressive posturing in South China Sea as well as in the Indo-Pacific region.

"The aim of the exercise was to enhance interoperability between the two navies," said a source.

Navies from the US, India, Australia, Japan and France have been deepening their mutual cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region in view of China's growing attempts to expand military influence in the resource-rich region.

Following an escalation in tension between India and China in eastern Ladakh after the killing of 20 Indian Army soldiers on June 15, the government put all the three forces on alert. The Indian Navy was asked to raise its alert level in the Indian Ocean Region where Chinese Navy has been making regular forays.

The people cited above said Indian Navy has increased its surveillance missions and enhanced operational deployment in the Indian Ocean region in the last couple of weeks.

"We are increasing surveillance to track Chinese activities in Indian Ocean region," said a military expert.

The Galwan Valley incident on June 15 was 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.

India and Japan are part of the influential "Quad" or Quadrilateral coalition which also comprises the United States and Australia.

In November 2017, the four countries gave shape to the long-pending "Quad" coalition to develop a new strategy to keep the critical sea routes in the Indo-Pacific free of any influence.

The US has been pushing for a greater role for India in the Indo-Pacific which is seen by many countries as an effort to contain China's growing clout in the region

Despite India's Objection,...

conveyed to Pakistan that the entire Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, including the areas of Gilgit and Baltistan, are an integral part of the country.

The Ministry of External Affairs said the government of Pakistan or its judiciary has no locus standi on territories "illegally and forcibly" occupied by it.

President Alvi last month promulgated an order to form a caretaker government and for extension of the Elections Act 2017 of Pakistan to Gilgit-Baltistan.

The GB Legislative Assembly was dissolved on completion of its term on June 24.

The federal government has appointed Mir Afzal, a former Deputy Inspector General of Police, as the "caretaker Chief Minister".

Hizb Commander Among 3...

affiliation of the militants is being ascertained," the police

spokesperson said.

Quoting sources, the police spokesperson said that one of the dead militant was Hizbul Mujahideen district commander Masood Ahmad Bhat of Doda district. The other two, he said were associated with Lashkar-e-Taiba.

"Incriminating material including arms and ammunition were recovered from the site of encounter. All the recovered materials have been taken into case records for further investigation and to probe their complicity in other crimes," he said.

The police spokesperson said that the bodies have been sent to Handwara for their last rites after conducting medico-legal formalities including collection of their DNA.

"In case any family claims the killed militants to be their kith or kin, they can come forward for their identification and participation in last rites at Handwara. In this connection a case under relevant sections of law has been registered in Police Station Mattan and investigation has been initiated," the police spokesperson added.

Police Declares Doda...

Hizbul Mujahideen commander Masood were neutralised, Doda district in Jammu Zone becomes totally militancy free once again as Masood was last surviving (militant) of Doda," a police spokesman said.

"Masood, a resident of Doda had shifted his area of operation to Kashmir," the spokesman added.

Militants Fire UBGL Towards

camp and exploded near a brick kiln with a bang.

In the attack, the officer said no loss of life or injury was reported. Soon after the attack, government forces cordoned off the area and launched a manhunt to nab the attackers. (GNS)

Pak Troops Shell Army Posts

There has been a sharp increase in cross-LoC shelling in Jammu and Kashmir past three weeks.

On June 20, five civilians, including two minors were injured in cross-LoC shelling in Uri sector of Baramulla district. A few unexploded shells were diffused a day after the two armies traded gunfire

On Friday last, a teenage girl was injured after India and Pakistan troops exchanged heavy gunfire along the LoC in Poonch district.

Businessman Mubeen Shah

websites like Facebook and Twitter, the NRI businessman, had called for resistance against the new law that grants domicile rights to non-locals, who have lived for a period of 15 years or who have studied for seven years in the Union Territory. Children of central government officials who worked in Jammu and Kashmir for at least 10 years can also apply for domicile certificates issued by Tehsildars.

"All village/mohalla/town committees of Kashmir should come together and make sure that not a single non-local lives in their areas. They should ask all non-Kashmiris to vacate and leave Kashmir. Each and every local committee must do its part," Shah had posted on social media.

The post further reads, "All of these committees should give clear instructions to people that anyone who tries to give space to non-locals will be socially boycotted and anyone who tries to sell land to any non-Kashmiri will be socially boycotted as well as evicted from the area".

"These committees should also make it clear that any tehsildar or any administrator who's found to have given domicile to any non-Kashmiri will also be socially boycotted. The social boycott against these people should be very strict", the post added.

He further wrote, "They shouldn't be allowed to enter into the village/mohalla/town and no one should speak to them or their families or do any kind of work with them. We should think of other efficient measures as well to stop India from changing the demographics of Kashmir".

Urging people of Kashmir to unite and oppose the move, Shah wrote that it was most important for all Kashmiris to come together at this very important stage and collectively fight against "settler-colonialism".

"It's now or never. It's do or die. All of us have to join hands and fight now! I find it the only way to stop this settler program in India. Let us do it," he had written.

Pertinently, Shah was among hundreds of people, including politicians, religious, social and trade union leaders arrested and slapped with controversial Public Safety Act (PSA) after the government of India abrogated Article 370 and Article 35 A, besides splitting Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories. He was released in December after his family had approached the Supreme Court seeking quashing of the PSA.

Shah was released under sub-section 2 of section 20 of the PSA, which allows the government to release a person at any time for any specified period either without conditions or upon such conditions specified in the direction as that person accepts and may at any time time cancel his release.

"In directing the release of any person, the government may require him to enter into a bond with or without sureties for the due observance of the condition specified in the directions," the Act says.

Mubeen Shah figured during the 'US Congress hearing on South Asia human rights, focused on India action in Kashmir' in November 2019 when Indian-American Democratic Party's lawmaker from Washington's 7th Congressional district Pramila Jayapal raised the issue about his detention.

"One of the individuals detained without charges is Dr Mubeen Shah, who is the uncle of my constituents in Seattle...this is former CEO of chamber of commerce. His urologist who is affiliated with Registrar General of Hospital has called for his immediate release because of serious medical issues."

The Deputy Ambassador to India "told me that he is receiving all medical help but that is not what the family is saying, that is not what his doctors are saying and I remain deeply concerned" she had said.

Assuring Jayapal, the US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Alice G Wells had replied that America had taken up the issue of Shah with the Indian government.

"Yes, we explicitly raised the case of Dr Shah and shared your concern about the grounds for detention particularly given the health condition. We have received a response that he is receiving medication," she had said.

Based out of Malaysia, where he runs his handicrafts business, Shah used to visit Kashmir once in a year. Earlier, he was president of the Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

He had come to Kashmir in May 2019 from Malaysia for a short duration but had to extend it due to a bereavement in his family and later due to infection for which he was undergoing treatment in the Srinagar hospital. (with KNO inputs)

2 More Covid-19 Deaths...

of another man from south Kashmir's Anantnag. The 45-year-old man from Bibhiera with "bilateral pneumonia" died this afternoon, a day after he was admitted to the health facility, Choudhary said.

With two more fatalities, the death toll in J&K due to COVID-19 has reached 96 – 85 in Valley and 11 in Jammu division.

Srinagar, with 22 deaths tops the list of Covid-19 fatalities followed by 15 in Baramulla, 13 in Kulgam, 11 in Shopian, seven each in Budgam & Jammu, seven in Anantnag, five in Kupwara, four in Pulwama and one each in Bandipora, Udhampur, Doda, Poonch and Rajouri districts. (With GNS inputs)

Newborn, 5 Security Men...

Among fresh cases, 29 cases were reported from Pulwama followed by 18 from Shopian, 17 from Srinagar, 15 from Anantnag,13 from Kathua, 10 from Baramulla, eight from Samba, seven from Rajouri, five from Reasi, four from Budgam, three each from Jammu, Udhampur & Doda, two each from Bandipora, Kupwara & Poonch and one each from Kulgam, Ganderbal & Ramban, they said.

According to officials, 269 more patients recovered and were discharged from different hospitals.

The cases detected on Monday included 53 people who had returned to J&K recently.

Among the cases confirmed today at Chest Diseases hospital includes a newborn from Khansahib area of Budgam. The newborn's sample was taken from GB Pant Hospital here.

Besides it, two soldiers from army's Badamibagh cantonment were also confirmed Covid-19 positive at the CB hospital authorities.

Among the 67 cases reported today by SKIMS Soura are 3 CRPF personnel.

The number of confirmed cases has now reached 7,237 out of which 5,658 are in Kashmir, while 1,579 are in Jammu, the officials said.

There are 2,557 active cases of the coronavirus disease in J&K – 2,125 in Kashmir and 432 in Jammu – and 4,585 (3,449 from Kashmir and 1,136 from Jammu) patients have recovered, according to officials.

The J&K has witnessed 96 (85 from Kashmir, 11 from Jammu) Covid-19 deaths so far.

Delhi Court Seeks Tihar Jail...

very low that makes him prone to COVID-19.

She said the Hurriyat leader has sought direction that he be provided proper treatment and a separate cell in the jail.

Looking at the recent occurrences of COVID-19 in the central jail and the health condition of the accused, his life would be in danger if he comes in contact with the virus. Therefore, direct the jail authorities to put him in a separate cell, the advocate said.

She told the court that the jail manual has a provision to provide temporary accommodation in case of an epidemic.

The application was filed after Shah conveyed about the same through his wife to the lawyer.

In two cases, the first was registered in 2007 for the alleged money laundering committed in 2005 for the purpose of militant financing.

Shah was arrested by ED on July 25, 2017 in connection with the August 2005 case in which the Special Cell of Delhi Police had arrested an alleged hawala dealer Mohammad Aslam Wani. ED claimed that Rs 63 lakh was recovered from Wani, out of which Rs 52 lakh was allegedly to be delivered to Shah, adding that money was received from "enemy countries" like Pakistan to promote militancy in India.

Wani was also arrested in the case but later got bail.

In the second case, the NIA took Shah in its custody in June 2019 in connection with its probe into a separate militant funding case involving Jama'at-ud-Da'wah (JuD) chief Hafiz Saeed. Shah is currently in judicial custody in both the cases.

HC Allows J&K Bank To...

The court was hearing a petition filed by as many as 288 aspiring candidates who had participated in the selection process pursuant to a notification on 6 October 2018. The candidates had challenged the notification issued earlier this year by the Bank whereby it notified that the selection process conducted for the posts stands canceled. They have also challenged the fresh recruitment notice. (GNS)

Interview: ‘Following CPEC...

on the question of the abrogation of Article 370, it's useful to go back and examine Beijing's responses. The immediate reaction was two separate statements by the foreign ministry, which were critical of the Indian government's actions.

Soon after the August 5th decision, Indian Foreign Minister S Jaishankar visited Beijing to meet his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi. The MEA had then said that Jaishankar told Wang the decision would have "no implication for either the external boundaries of India or the Line of Actual Control with China". China's readout following the meeting said that India's actions had challenged "the sovereign rights and interests of the Chinese side," resulting in serious concerns, but it wouldn't result in changing the status quo that the Chinese side exercises in terms of the territory there. This suggests that Beijing understood that the creation of the Ladakh Union Territory would not really change facts on the ground.

However, prior to Jaishankar's visit, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah MahmoodQureshi had landed in Beijing. Wang Yi had told him that China would "continue to support Pakistan in safeguarding its legitimate rights and interests and uphold justice for Pakistan on the international arena". But he had also added that "Pakistan and India are both China's friendly neighbors," calling on both sides to proceed focussing on national development.

But thereafter, the Chinese side raised the Kashmir issue at the UNSC. The agenda item that was discussed was curiously titled the "India Pakistan Question," although China's representative Zhang Jun did mention the issue of Aksai Chin.

In September, scuffles were reported along Pangong Tso, but there wasn't further escalation. In October, Xi Jinping and Narendra Modi met for the informal summit in Mamallapuram, with Article 370 not being an issue.

Subsequently, the 22nd round of Special Representatives talks on the boundary issue was held in December 2019. Once again, the Chinese side made no public reference to the issue of Article 370. What all this tells us is that while the abrogation of Article 370 did lead to concern in Beijing about New Delhi's intentions, it would be incorrect to view it as a trigger for the current situation.

So I don't agree with Wang Shida's reasoning in the piece you've mentioned, but it does offer some insight into different strands of thought about Indian intentions doing the rounds in Beijing. We tend to presume that Beijing has a clear understanding of New Delhi's intentions and objectives. But that might not necessarily be the case. States often tend to view others' actions and intentions through the prism of their own perspectives on exercise of power and insecurities. In my view, there are tactical reasons such as changes to border infrastructure and strategic reasons of geopolitics for what's playing out in Eastern Ladakh. But do you think that China is now taking a more active role in Kashmir than ever? I think China's interest in ensuring stability and connectivity through the region are far greater than before, following the development of CPEC.

So in that sense, yes it does seem to be desiring a greater role in Kashmir, as also evident by the August meetings between Wang Yi and both Indian and Pakistani foreign ministers. Many Indian analysts say that these LAC tensions now represent a new dual challenge on Kashmir. What do you think?

I think we should be very careful in casting what's happening at the LAC. Each boundary has its own dynamic. To me, tensions on the LAC are representative of the wearing out of existing modalities of boundary management owing to tactical-level capacity enhancement along with the asymmetric rise of India and China and strategic shifts underway in the global order.

What this means is that we should expect increased volatility going ahead, which might characterise a new normal between the two sides. But what should one read from the recent army statement wherein it said that the rules of engagement with China's PLA have changed? From what reports inform, it means that there is greater flexibility and freedom for ground commanders to de-

cide upon the use of force and potentially firearms based on their discretion in extraordinary circumstances. This is significant. Under Article VI of the 1996 agreement between the two sides, they both had eschewed the use of firearms and explosives within two kilometers of the LAC. The 2005 agreement on the Political Parameters and Guiding Principles for the Settlement of the India-China Boundary Question had reiterated this commitment.

With PM Modi devoting his six years in power to make the India-China relations closer, how will trouble at LAC affect the Modi-Xi relationships now? To me the key issue is not about the relationship between Prime Minister Modi and President Xi but about the deterioration of political trust in the aftermath of the Galwan clashes. Over the years, both India and China had seemingly become used to scuffles, transgressions, and incursions at different locations along the India-China boundary.

This had become an uneasy pattern over the past decade or so along the LAC. And in this backdrop, the two sides had sought to continue to work together on issues of common and strategic interests. The clashes of June 16 mark a fundamental shift in this pattern. It's clear that our old mechanisms and agreements need to be renegotiated in order to arrive at a new understanding of border management. Arriving at a new modus vivendi is important, but extremely complex given the rise of both countries and geopolitical churn that is underway. For any of this to happen, we first need the PLA to step back and the ground situation in Eastern Ladakh to return to the April status quo. This will be the first step in repairing political trust. Thereafter, the challenge will be about restoring it and establishing new mechanisms, which will require both leaders to invest significant political capital.

What options should India pursue now?

Well, it's important for both sides to recognise that conflict does not serve their strategic interests. While military level talks are being held, disengagement will likely require higher-level political engagement between the two sides.

In the interim, it is important for India not to let its guard down militarily, and also consider asymmetric, low-intensity escalatory options in other sectors and theatres

6 Rafale Jets To Arrive In...

On June 2, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh held a telephonic conversation with his French counterpart Florence Parly during which she conveyed that the Rafale jets will be delivered to India as scheduled notwithstanding the coronavirus pandemic in France. Military officials, on the condition of anonymity, said the arrival of the Rafale jets will significantly enhance the IAF's overall combat capability and will send a clear message to India's "adversaries". When asked about the matter, the IAF did not comment.

The first squadron of the aircraft will be stationed at Ambala air force station, considered one of the most strategically located bases of the IAF. India had signed an inter-governmental agreement with France in September 2016 for procurement of 36 Rafale fighter jets at a cost of around Rs 58,000 crore. The aircraft is capable of carrying a range of potent weapons. European missile maker MBDA's Meteor beyond visual range air-to-air missile and Scalp cruise missile will be the mainstay of the weapons package of the Rafale jets Meteor is the next generation of BVR air-to-air missile (BVRAAM) designed to revolutionise air-to-air combat. The weapon has been developed by MBDA to combat common threats facing the UK, Germany, Italy, France, Spain and Sweden Besides the missile systems, the Rafale jets will come with various India-specific modifications, including Israeli helmet-mounted displays, radar warning receivers, low-band jammers, 10-hour flight data recording, infra-red search and tracking systems among others The IAF has already completed preparations, including readying required infrastructure and training of pilots, to welcome the fighter aircraft. The second squadron of Rafale will be stationed at Hasimara base in West Bengal. The IAF spent around Rs 400 crore to develop infrastructure like shelters, hangars and maintenance facilities at the two bases

Out of the 36 Rafale jets, 30 will be fighter jets and six will be trainers. The trainer jets will be twin-seater and they will have almost all the features of the fighter jets.

The Congress had raised questions on the deal, including on rates of the aircraft, and alleged corruption, but the government had rejected the charges.

SKIMS Discharges 10 More..

rate is 0.65 percent," he added.

The official spokesperson further said that the treated patients include COVID positive patients admitted for maternity care wherein till date 39 deliveries of COVID positive pregnant ladies including 22 major surgeries (LSCS) for child birth have been done.

"Besides this, the COVID Testing Lab at SKIMS Medical College Hospital, Bemina is conducting more than 500 Tests daily and till date 22757 tests have been conducted," he added.

Rs 1.7L Penalty Imposed...

been imposed on two conductors of the corporation, including the calculated penalty of an amount of Rs 1,61,035 imposed on Mohammad Salim and Rs 9,518 imposed on Tara Chand, the statement said.

The penalty shall be recoverable from the salaries of the two conductors, it said.

They will also furnish an undertaking to the effect that they will not repeat similar practice in future, the statement said.

Besides, the JKRTC also suspended the consolidated services of driver ChulamMohUd Din, it said.

Cong Stages Protest Against Fuel Price Hike

Press Trust Of India

prices of essential commodities.

"Similar protests were also organised at district headquarters across Jammu region, he said.

In a symbolic protest, the party workers rode two horse carts and raised slogans against the central government.

Prominent among others who participated in the rally included former minister and district president Jammu urban Yogesh Sawhney, vice president Kanta Bhan, General secretary Manmohan Singh, Congress Corporators of Jammu and leaders of Mahila Congress, youth Congress , NSUI and Seva Dal activists, Sharma said.

Sharma accused the central government of putting extra burden on the people by raising fuel prices amid the coronavirus crisis.

"The unprecedented hike is unjustified at a time when the prices of crude oil are at their lowest," he said.

Water Shortage Across Kashmir As Taps Run Dry

Agencies

Srinagar:- Amid scorching heat, many residential areas of Srinagar and other districts of the Valley has been complaining of acute water scarcity while as the government on Monday stated that breaches at Rangguil open canal and COVID outbreak are among the main reasons behind reduction in water supply to the residents.

Inhabitants of several areas especially those hailing from Srinagar City areas including Chat-tabal, Habba Kadal, Fateh Kadal, Lal Chowk, Batamalo, Khanyar and others told news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that they have been facing acute water scarcity from two weeks.

They said amid scorching heat, the concerned department is depriving them of basic facility, thus leaving them to lurch



at large. The residents added that the department is forcing them to hit the streets to press for their demands.

“It is not for the first time that the Srinagar residents are facing acute water scarcity during the summer season, but such

a situation has been witnessed in the past as well,” Nazir Ahmad, a local resident from Chat-tabal said.

Meanwhile, Chief Engineer of Jal Shakti Department (Public Health Engineering PHE), Abdul Wahid told KNO that there is no shortage of water in the plants, adding that the department has stocked adequate water in the plants.

However, he said that the main reasons behind the shortage in water supply to the people are the breach in Rangguil open canal and COVID. “Due to the breach in Rangguil open canal, we (department) are supplying our stocked water to the irrigation as well,” he said, adding that this is one among the main reasons that people are complaining of shortage of water.

“Although there is no shortage in supply, but the quantity has got reduced,” he said, adding that the PHE department is doing its best to ensure the people will not suffer—(KNO)

COVID-19: With no access to online classes, teachers impart lessons to students under open sky

Agencies

Srinagar: With no access to the internet and subsequently to online classes teachers in upper reaches and remote areas of Kashmir valley reach out to students even as schools remain closed in view of Covid-19 pandemic.

The teachers in these areas have started imparting lessons to the students by teaching them under open sky in nearby forest areas or in the lawns of their houses.

One among those teachers is Ghulam Rasool, a government teacher posted at primary school Wehnard in Pahalgam who teaches the students under open sky who have no access to the internet.

The students mostly belong to tribal communities who don't have access to the internet and can't afford to buy smartphones, thereby depriving them of the provisions of online classes.

Wehnard which falls close to the tourist destination Pahalgam has no internet facility and subsequently students of this village have no access to online classes.

Ghulam Rasool who has realized the shortcomings decided to offer his services and teach the students under open space so that their academic session does not go waste due to closure of schools in view of Covid-19 pandemic. Talking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) Ghulam Rasool said that all the students across Kashmir valley are studying through online classes, however, there are some areas including Wehnard where no such facility is being offered to students.

“If we also close our eyes to this situation, the students here will see a complete waste of their one academic year. The school where I am posted has around 50 students and most of them belong to the tribal community of the area. If we do not

come forward to help them, they will be at loss,” he added.

He said that he has to traverse 4 kms on foot everyday to reach the village and then assemble the students in nearby forest areas to impart them school lessons.

He said the village has no internet access and the students also belong to a tribal community who cannot afford to buy smartphones so he decided to teach them in a traditional manner.

Like Ghulam Rasool there are many other teachers who have resorted to traditional means to impart lessons to the students who don't have access to online classes in absence of internet facilities.

Rizwan Ahmad and his wife in Uri area of Baramulla and Khurshed Ahmad from Argi check area of Pulwama district are among those teachers who are reaching to their students even as schools remain closed.

Three Army porters detained in Poonch

Agencies

Poonch: At least three Army porters were detained by the government forces after they were found using WhatsApp in a 'sensitive' manner.

All the three Army porters are residents of Poonch district and are working at the unit near Bhimber Gali area of the

district.

Officials told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that during routine monitoring, the trio was found using WhatsApp in a suspicious manner. “Their use of WhatsApp was treated as 'sensitive' and their numbers were also added in some WhatsApp groups, which raised suspicion,” they said.

No Baker has tested positive in Zafran Colony, Pantha Chowk

Agencies

Srinagar: The officials on Monday said that no Baker has tested positive in Zafran Colony Pantha Chowk Srinagar and termed the rumours as baseless stating that all the samples collected from the area have tested negative.

Earlier, on Friday, one person from Bilal Lane of Zafran Colony had tested positive for the Covid-19 af-

ter which rumours gripped entire area that a Baker was also tested positive for the virus. “The report of Baker that came today has come as negative. There have rumours everywhere that a Baker is positive. We have decided to identify the rumour mongers and they will be booked under law,” an official in the district administration told news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

Public Notice

I have lost the RC of my vehicle bearing Regd No: JK13B 9323 . Now I have applied for the duplicate of the same . If any body having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the ARTO Pulwama within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice . After that no objection shall be entertained.

Arif Ahmad Sofi

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Govt Degree College Bemina
Ph.9086670735

MJA

Office Of The Divisional Officer (Working Plan Officer) Singh Foresh Division Ganderbal

Subject: Dasti Quotation.

Dasti Quotation are invited from registered dealers/suppliers for supply of below mentioned items for use in compilation of Sindh working plan. The item wise rates be quoted and should be inclusive of all taxes . The quotations should reach to the office of the undersigned within weeks time. The requirement of the quantity of items will be placed as per order

S.No	Name of item	Rates
1	Nerolac Paint (Black)	Rates to be quoted per ltr
2	Brushes (4", 3", 2", & 1"	Rates to be quoted per no.
3	Tarpine	Rates to be quoted per ltr

No: DFOWP/Estt/09
Dated: 26-06-2020

DIPK-2282/20

Divisional Forest Officer
Sindh Forest Division Ganderbal

UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

Office of the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) Mechanical Division (South) Awantipora

CORRIGENDUM


Kindly read submersible type pumping unit only instead of open well/submersible type in respect of work No. 01 & 02 of the e-NIT No. 13 of 2020-21 dated 23-06-2020.
Other terms, conditions, and specifications shall remain the same.

Sd/
Executive Engineer
Jal Shakti PHE Mechanical Division
(South) Awantipora

No: JSD/PHE/MDSA/ 524
Date: 29-06-2020

DIPK-2287/20

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
- BUBHERA: 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**

08 Zu al-Qa'dah
1441

PRAYERS

FAJR	3: 38
ZUHR	12: 34
ASR	5:34
Magrib	7:50
ISHA	9:31

This Day In History

- 1548 - Augsburg Interim issued by Charles V becomes law - orders Lutherans to return to Catholic practices with some concessions
- 1559 - King Henry II of France is seriously injured in a jousting match against Gabriel de Montgomery
- 1596 - English and Dutch fleet reach Cadiz
- 1598 - King Philip II moves to Escorial palace
- Philip II
- 1607 - Annales Ecclesiastici (Scientific History of Catholicism) published
- 1690 - Battle of Beachy Head: French under Tourville beat Dutch/English fleet
- 1758 - Seven Years' War: The Battle of Domstadt takes place.
- 1859 - Charles Blondin is 1st to cross Niagara Falls on a tightrope
- Event of interestEvent of interest
- 1860 - Famous debate on Charles Darwin's theory of evolution held at the Oxford University Museum and dominated by arguments between Thomas Henry Huxley and Bishop Samuel Wilberforce
- 1876 - Serbia declares war on Turkey
- 1893 - Excelsior diamond (blue-white 995 carats) discovered
- 1894 - Korea declares independence from China, asks for Japanese aid
- 1914 - Mahatma Gandhi's 1st arrest after campaigning for Indian rights in South Africa
- 1930 - 1st round-the-world radio broadcast Schenectady NY
- 1938 - Superman 1st appears in DC Comics' Action Comics Series issue #1
- 1940 - German troops begin the invasion of the undefended Channel Islands.
- 1941 - Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) declare Ukraine independent
- 1941 - World War II: Operation Barbarossa - Germany captures Lviv, Ukraine.
- 1942 - US bombs Celebes & Timor
- 1944 - French Cotentin Peninsula in allied hands
- 1944 - Universal strike against Nazi terror in Copenhagen
- 1944 - World War II: The Battle of Cherbourg ends with the fall of the strategically valuable port to American forces.
- 1948 - Last British troops leave Israel
- 1949 - Dutch troops evacuate Jakarta
- 1950 - US Gen MacArthur visits front in South Korea/asks for US troops
- 1961 - NASA Explorer Micrometeoroid research mission fails to reach Earth orbit
- 1963 - International Labour Organisation excludes South Africa from its two-day meeting because of its apartheid policies
- 1964 - Centaur 3 launch vehicle fails to make Earth orbit
- 1971 - Crew of Russian space mission Soyuz 11 found dead upon arrival on earth (only people to die in space)
- 2012 - Mohamed Morsi is sworn in as President of Egypt

From KO Archives

Peace process with India irreversible: Pak

Islamabad - Emphasising the need for “meaningful and constructive” dialogue to resolve bilateral issues, Pakistan today described the peace process with India as “irreversible” and said “flexibility, courage and open mindedness” were required to settle the Kashmir problem.

Addressing legislators at the ‘Azad Kashmir Council in Muzaffarabad, Pakistan Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, who was on a day's visit to the capital of Muzaffarabad said Islamabad's stand to resolve the Kashmir issue through dialogue with India was widely appreciated all over the world. Any solution to the Kashmir issue should satisfy all the three parties India Pakistan and Kashmiris. Aziz said, asserting that “the peace process is irreversible and we will have to show flexibility, courage and open mindedness” to arrive at a solution to the problem.

“While firm in our resolve in extending moral and political support to the people of Kashmir for their right to self-determination. Pakistan has always emphasised the necessity of creating a climate for peace and stability and resolution of differences and disputes through meaningful and construct o dialogue,” he said. Pakistan, he said, has however “made it clear” that it cannot agree to any proposal aimed at converting the existing Line of Control (LoC) into permanent border.

Aziz also praised President Pervez Musharraf for entering into the peace process with India and for his “untiring efforts” to continue with it. “The positive development which we are witnessing today would not have been possible without the courageous, determined and sincere efforts by President Musharraf. “It was due to his initiatives that the Composite Dialogue Process was resumed in January last year and the dialogue process offered a valuable opportunity to all of us. It was his proposal that ensured ceasefire along LoC which still continues to hold.” Aziz said.

He also said the recent visit of the leaders of the moderate faction of the Hurriyat Conference to ‘Azad’ Kashmir and Pakistan was part of Musharraf's “untiring efforts.” Aziz said Kashmiris were the main party to the Kashmir issue and they should be its main beneficiaries too.

The visit of the Kashmiri separatist leaders was part of Pakistan's effort to “involve” them in the dialogue process, he said, adding “we assured them in the dialogue process, consultations with the real representatives of Kashmiri people.” Aziz's address was attended among others by AK President Gen (Retd) Anwar Khan, AK Prime Minister Sikendar Hayat and several Pakistani ministers, including information minister Sheikh Rashid.

(Kashmir Observer, 30 June, 2005)

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Lingering stand-off

A fortnight after August 15 face-off between India and China that led to killing of 20 Indian soldiers, the situation remains unchanged. The two countries remain in eye-ball to eye-ball confrontation at Galwan Valley, Pangong Tso, Hot Springs and Depsang. Mercifully, there has been no fresh violent face-off but there is no guarantee this would not recur, if the two countries fail to reach an understanding in near future. This would only increase the odds of the two sides trying resolve the stand-off through military means. At the same time neither of the two countries wants it. Hence the simultaneous effort to carry on dialogue at several levels.

There has been engagement between the foreign ministers, at the Corps Commander level, and in the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs. However, this has hardly resulted in de-escalation so far. Though, there was some talk of disengagement for a while, China has only firmed up its control of the friction points in the period. This has created irreconcilable differences between the two sides and these can only be resolved if they meet each other half way. But this doesn't appear to be the case. In fact, China has further hardened its position by claiming the entire Galwan Valley.

The current stand-off has left the Indian strategic community wondering as to the objectives of China. More so, when an open hostility with India has also far-reaching consequences for the regional geo-politics: it can push New Delhi more and more into the embrace of the US, something that will be to the detriment of China. Interestingly, Chinese incursions follow ten months after revocation of Article 370 and bifurcation of J&K into two union territories. China had termed Ladakh's conversion into a union territory as "unacceptable". And in a part of the analysis of the Chinese action emanating from its policy personnel, the altered constitutional status of Ladakh has been cited as one of the reasons. The statements by the top BJP ministers threatening to take back Aksai Chin, PaK and Gilgit and Baltistan are also said to have forced Beijing to act and secure its assets in Pakistani controlled Kashmir.

In a sense, we are witnessing a profound transformation of regional geo-politics. India-China border face-off is not only creating a sharper regional divide but also accelerating the process of cold war between China and the US. There certainly is an alternative to this fraught realignment of forces: and this is for a larger reconciliation process among India, Pakistan and China. But the big question is, do we have the statesmanly leaders who would make such a prospect a reality?

OTHER OPINION

Inhumanity of custodial torture

On June 19, P Jayaraj, 59, and his son, J Fennix Immanuel, 31, were picked up by the police at Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu, for allegedly violating lockdown norms, by keeping their shop open for longer hours and defying the night curfew. They were lodged in jail on June 21. On June 22, Immanuel died of breathlessness, and a day later his father passed away. The family has alleged that both were subjected to custodial torture, resulting in rectal bleeding and eventual death. The deaths sparked protests. But even though two FIRs have been filed, no officer has been booked on murder charges. Only four policemen have been suspended.

The Tamil Nadu deaths are not a one-off case. India's police personnel are well-known for their high-handed behaviour, and third-degree methods in custody. As many as 100 people are reported to have died in police custody in 2017, according to the National Crime Records Bureau data. Of these, 58 were not on remand, while 42 were on police or judicial remand. Suicide (37) was the most reported reason for the deaths, followed by death due to illness (28) and injuries sustained during the police custody (5); journey connected with investigation (4); while escaping custody (3); injuries prior to custody (1); and Others (22). In 62 cases pertaining to custodial deaths, 33 policepersons were arrested, 27 chargesheeted, four were acquitted or discharged, and none was convicted.

The State must implement the 2018 Supreme Court directives on police reforms that recommended the separation of police functions of investigation and maintaining law and order, and setting up of a complaints authority to look into complaints against officers in cases of custodial death, grievous hurt or rape in police custody. For India, custodial torture and deaths are a huge blot on its democratic credentials. It undermines rule of law, erodes the faith of people in the system and is inhuman.

Hindustan Times

“The problem is not Abdullah's ice-cream, but his reluctance to talk on matters that concern every single Kashmiri. The matters related to existence, demography, land, property, jobs and scholarships etc. It does not take a lot of time for the ice-cream to melt in our hands, especially in the hot sun, but the hot political issues are not like ice-creams.

GOWHARGEELANI

A Rude Surprise In Every Scoop

When Kashmir is adrift and crying for a direction, its top leader steps out to inaugurate an ice cream parlour

First, a confession: I love eating ice-creams.

During the winter season too, I sometimes clandestinely eat ice-creams. Soon, my bad throat does all the talking. Vanilla remains my all-time favourite. I am not fond of chocolate toppings, strawberry, banana split, mango or other added flavours.

During my sojourns in Hyderabad and London I would always enjoy my Vanilla ice-cream. Vanilla is simple and it goes with almost everything. For example, chips. However, in Germany, Poland, the Netherlands and Spain I did not eat ice-creams. I do not remember or know why.

To put it bluntly, I do not have a moral or intellectual right to criticise Dr. Farooq Abdullah's food habits. A recent picture of him having an ice-cream has gone viral. I plead guilty for I also sent out a harmless tweet with some important dates about Kashmir's history since 1953 and a picture of senior Abdullah inaugurating an ice-cream parlour in the summer capital.

I did not dare criticise Farooq Abdullah for having an ice-cream or for sharing a lighter moment at his age when there are tensions in the far-away Galwan Valley and at the Pangong Tso Lake in the Ladakh region. Neither did I use the word "compromise" anywhere nor did I mock Abdullah for eating his ice-cream outdoors. No moral policing.

How could I have done that?

In 'Naya Kashmir' we are so cautious that we tell our nose not to smell the fragrance of the rose while entering a garden. Because smelling the fragrance with one of our sense organs (in this case, our nose) without seeking permission from the bureaucrats could be declared an offence, according to the new J&K Media Policy. We must act responsibly. The act of smelling can fall under "unethical" or "sedition" category!

After all, what is wrong with having an ice-cream?

When Omar Abdullah, Farooq Abdullah's son and another former Chief Minister of the former state of Jammu and Kashmir, was trolled on Twitter over his personal life story, past marriage, separation and an alleged affair, I always remained away from commenting. Everyone deserves privacy. Intrusion in privacy is an unwanted and an indecent act.

During my career, as a broadcast and print journalist, spanning over 15 years I have stayed away from intrusion in anyone's private life, including important politicians and the who's who. I abhor this ugly practice.

Allow me a small divergence. A few months ago a prominent BBC journalist invited me to his prime time show and asked me to analyse Farooq Abdullah's release from the alleged house arrest and his alleged silence on Kashmir politics.

Initially, I did not know what to say to him. But since the programme was being recorded silence was not an option. Merci-

fully, I hadn't signed a bond or given an undertaking to remain silent or to speak up. "In a situation wherein Kashmir's top politicians talk about anything but politics there is very little left to analyse and a lot to mourn about," I said. "Isskatajziyanahinbalki is par maatamkiasaktahai," I spoke in chaste Urdu.

At the time of the BBC interview, senior Abdullah had just been released and he had declared that he would not speak on political matters unless all other political detainees were released. And he hadn't eaten his ice-cream by then.

As journalists, analysts and commentators, it is our professional predicament to say, write and analyse the given situations.

“At the time of the BBC interview, senior Abdullah had just been released and he had declared that he would not speak on political matters unless all other political detainees were released. And he hadn't eaten his ice-cream by then.

We do not nurse any personal grudges. Politicians and their spokespersons should show some mercy and grace in tolerating our harmless views.

Meanwhile, in his first public appearance after release from 'house arrest' the former five-time Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir on June 27 did two things. One, Farooq Abdullah was seen buying smart mobile phones for the family members in Srinagar's city centre. Two, he also allegedly inaugurated an ice cream parlour (Nirula's chain).

Though it was unclear from the hastily-written news reports whether Dr. Abdullah bought the Chinese-made mobile phones or boycotted the Chinese products.

Anyway, for years a journalist friend has been maintaining that Farooq Abdullah will always make 'news'. His argument is that whether Farooq speaks or not you have to understand that his silence too is a form of speech and therefore meaningful.

The problem is not his ice-cream, but his reluctance to talk on matters that concern every single Kashmiri. The matters related to existence, demography, land, property, jobs and scholarships etc. It does not take a lot of time for the ice-cream to melt in our hands, especially in the hot sun, but the hot political issues are not like ice-creams. They remain there like a big elephant in the room.

Credible reports said that former spymaster and chief of India's intelligence agency, Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW), Amarjit Singh Dulat had come to Kashmir to meet Farooq Abdullah at his Gupkar residence. Dulat said in an interview that National Security Advisor AjitDoval was aware of his Srinagar visit and his meeting with Abdullah. It is not about an ice-cream!

Dulat in his memoir Kashmir: The Vajpayee Years has showered accolades on Abdullah. Dulat wrote: "Money in Kashmir goes way back, even to Sheikh Abdullah's time. After all, why

was Sheikh Abdullah dismissed as Prime Minister of J&K in 1953? ... Thus, since Sheikh Saheb's time, anybody who's been on the right side of Delhi has been getting money from Delhi. It's as simple as that." It is not about an ice-cream!

And in his second book titled Spy Chronicles, which was co-authored with the former intelligence chief of Pakistan, AsadDurrani, and written by Indian journalist and editor Aditya Sinha, Dulat said, "He (Farooq Abdullah) is one Kashmiri who understands not only Kashmir but New Delhi well. He is the best bridge between Delhi and Srinagar. Now he's reached a stage where he needs to understand Pakistan, and if

he did, and he already knows Delhi, then it would help." It is not about an ice-cream!

People want to listen to the otherwise firebrand Abdullah. Is Abdullah's newly-acquired silence on politics his conviction or compulsion? Or, is there a repeat of what his father late Sheikh Abdullah did back in 1975?

Kashmiris are gracious people. They did not object when back in the Eighties, Farooq rode pillion on a motorcycle with his actress-friend ShabanaAzmi in front. People are not objecting to him having his ice-cream now. All they want to know is why the roar is missing. 'Kuch to haijiskipardahdaarihai!'

In all fairness, J&K National Conference in its official statements has started to oppose the new domicile order and new Media Policy and made a renewed demand for restoration of autonomy for J&K besides challenging the August 5 decision in the Supreme Court. No denying that. That said, the people also remember what LK Advani, former deputy prime minister and senior BJP leader, wrote in his memoir My Country, My Life. In detail Advani argued that Dr. Abdullah had allowed the issue of Jammu and Kashmir's autonomy to lapse after "Atalji (AB Vajpayee) told Dr Abdullah to decide whether to continue in the NDA at the Centre following the Union Cabinet's rejection of the state assembly's autonomy resolution."

"To his credit, Dr Abdullah allowed the issue to lapse," Advaniji noted.

And once in a television interview with Karan Thapar, Farooq had said that "credibility is not important. It comes and goes."

That is why it is not about an ice-cream!

(Gowhar Geelani is a journalist-author who served Deutsche Welle as editor. He is author of Kashmir: Rage and Reason.



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Remembering ex-PCCF Abdul Hameed Khan

June 28 marks the first death anniversary of Abdul Hameed Khan. Khan, an initial recruit to the Indian Forest Service, was the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) and advisor forests to the Government of Jammu and Kashmir on his superannuation. After completing his initial studies from the University of Kashmir, he chose to study Forestry at the prestigious Indian Forest College, Dehradun. He went on to study Forestry at the University of Oxford, ranked as the world's best university, becoming

the first Kashmiri and among the handful of Indians to do so in 1972.

He successfully completed his MSc in Forestry and Its Relation to Land Management, at the Department Forestry, where his research was on "The coniferous forests of Kashmir; a study of regeneration and conservation problems" under the able guidance of the renowned Peter J Wood.

Honouring both his commitment to the people of Kashmir and to the government, he refused highly lucrative offers to work abroad, as any Oxford graduate would get, including

one from a Muslim head of state, who was seeking highly educated people to establish a Forest Department in his country.

In Kashmir, he held important positions in the Department of Forests. He was instrumental in setting up the World Bank funded Social Forestry Project in the valley, under the illustrious guidance of R K Mattoo. He also held the positions of Conservator of Forests (Srinagar Circle), Director of Forest Research Institute, Direct of Environment and Remote Sensing, Chief Conservator of Forests (Kashmir), and retired, in

2000, as the top-most bureaucrat of the department.

Even during the 1990s, even given the security situation then, he would continue to visit far flung areas to ensure connecting with and listening to people. He was actively involved in social issues, as well as actively supporting or helping with construction of multiple mosques in Raj Bagh. He is survived by his wife, two sons, and a daughter.

Asif Hameed Khan
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The Text That Saw The Future

Khaldun argues that rulers without administrative skills and rational temper would ruin their existence amidst the havoc wreaked by pandemics

P.K. YASSER ARAFATH

“Rulers who are only concerned with the well-being of their “inner circle and their parties” are an incurable “disease”. States with such rulers can get “seized by senility and the chronic disease from which [they] can hardly ever rid [themselves], for which [they] can find no cure”, and, eventually, be destroyed. Looking at the different functionalities of the State as the different organs of the human body, Khaldun enunciates that when senile rulers ruin the foundations of the nations they rule, “the feelings of the people of the dynasty become diseased as a result of the contempt in which they are held and the hostility of the ruler. They hate him and await the opportunity of a change in his fortune.”

Why would the reading of a 14th-century African-Arabic text, Muqaddimah, and its author, Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406), be of interest to us in the 21st century? This question takes us to a wider discussion that will show how a pre-modern thinker made certain cogent and universal arguments about the relationship between political leadership and the complexities of pandemics. Ibn Khaldun’s Muqaddimah seems to be the first text that explained the intrinsic relationship between a political leadership and the management of pandemics in the pre-colonial period.

Khaldun explained why rulers must fear pandemics and be concerned about the management of public health and hygiene. As pandemics have indisputable capacities to shift the centres of power, Khaldun argued that rulers without administrative skills and rational temper would ruin their existence amidst the havoc wreaked by pandemics. Khaldun was a victim of ‘Black Death’, the catastrophic plague that devastated a number of royal courts, cultural communities and big cities across Europe, Asia and Africa in the mid-14th century. His ideas about post-pandemic situations certainly came from his witnessing how the inter-continental contagion annihilated the most powerful among the ‘nations’ in the 14th century.

Khaldun wanted the political leadership to understand that pandemics have the capacity to destroy civilizations, urban centres and rulers, irrespective of their prosperity and military superiority. According to him, contagions like the Great Plague “swallowed up many of the good things of civilization and wiped them out.” Historically, such pandemics had the capacity to overtake “the dynasties at the time of their senility, when they had reached the limit of their duration” and, in the process, challenged their “power and curtailed their [rulers’] influence...” Cities, buildings and houses “were laid to waste” and “roads and way-signs... obliterated” during the Great Plague, resembling what one is witnessing today. People moved from their settlement zones and many dynasties and communities “grew weak”. What we call ‘pandemic migration’ was a matter of destruction for Khaldun. He categorically asserted that rulers who don’t care about their vulnerable subjects during calamities caused the whole population to vanish.

Khaldun also linked the health of people with the intellectual health of rulers. For him, the real cure for diseases was a well-knit State under a wise political leadership. Unscrupulous rulers who pay scanty attention to medical care, air quality, water, food and hygiene make their fall inevitable. Thus, cities collapsed and dynasties fell as unwise rulers did not read the situation rationally; nor did they arrange medical care for the victims of epidemics. Khaldun, therefore, laid out various responsibilities for the State to ensure the health of the people, including arrangements for physicians working under adverse conditions.

Rulers who are only concerned with the well-being of their “inner circle and their parties” are an incurable “disease”. States with such rulers can



get “seized by senility and the chronic disease from which [they] can hardly ever rid [themselves], for which [they] can find no cure”, and, eventually, be destroyed. Looking at the different functionalities of the State as the different organs of the human body, Khaldun enunciates that when senile rulers ruin the foundations of the nations they rule, “the feelings of the people of the dynasty become diseased as a result of the contempt in which they are held and the hostility of the ruler. They hate him and await the opportunity of a change in his fortune.”

To thwart calamities, rulers should possess certain qualifications. Khaldun recognizes wisdom, logic, honesty, justice and education as the most desirable qualities in a ruler. Only such rulers could become patrons of scientific knowledge, have scholar-friends, possess a mind for common good and generate employment. Such desirable qualities would ensure that the civilizational process is productive and that the recovery from the injuries of calamities are faster. Similarly, undesirable rulers are the ones who are loud-mouthed, self-indulgent, war-mongers and corrupt. They spend excessive money on self-promotion. The rulers who keep the company of wise ministers, bureaucrats, counsellors and scholars would be the ones who would tackle pandemics well, while the ones who keep ignoble entourage are bound to perish. They weaken the production of scientific knowledge and technology. People refrain from knowledge activities because such unscrupulous rulers fear rational negotiations based on science, medical knowledge and technological ad-

vancements. Analysing the relationship among knowledge, scientific temper, rational behaviour and a critical population, Khaldun was persuasive about constant improvisation of the sciences and technology as the two fundamental prerequisites for the survival of the State. A dispossessed intellectual class and the collapse of knowledge-producing communities could bring civilizational and dynastic decline. Therefore, the State has to provide material resources and infrastructures for the improvisation of scientific explorations. Adding a phenomenological coda to the Aristotelian idea of popular rationality, Khaldun argued that the moment ordinary men stopped thinking, rulers became autocrats and narcissists. The absence of a critical mass is what they desire the most as it permits them to impose their will from above. The Muqaddimah not only broadens our understanding of a particular political theory, but also positions the centrality of intellect in the survival of the State.

The incredulous attitude of many modern rulers towards Covid-19 shows that the Muqaddimah remains relevant. The unscientific measures to control the pandemic suggested by Donald Trump, the indifference of Boris Johnson, the absurdities of Kim Jong-un and the theatrics of Narendra Modi have revealed the universalism of Khaldun’s thoughts when it comes to the relationship among pandemics, good governance and a thinking population. Protected by the media and living among a pliant entourage, these leaders force us to wonder whether Khaldun had foreseen their emergence.

When No Amount Of Planning Works For You

VALENTINA STOICHEVA

Planning Fatigue is settling in because having to plan our every move goes against how the unconscious brain has evolved

A big portion of my work week these days is spent helping clients manage already existing mental health problems in the context of the additional stress brought on by Covid-19, isolation, and health-related anxieties. But in the past few weeks, I have also noticed the insurgence of what I call ‘planning fatigue’. You know it, that feeling of bone-deep exhaustion at the thought of having to make one more decision related to safety measures at the grocery store, planning how to execute what would otherwise have been a simple backyard get together, or even mapping your route to the drug store (‘mask, gloves, sanitizer, check’). I myself have even gone so far as to call my local Trader Joe’s and inquire what their least busy time is, so as to minimise exposure to people. All of these actions require not only time, but forethought and mental space, which we have been forced to create on top of already existing responsibilities. And it is exhausting!

There is a reason why our brains are struggling to adapt to this new predicament. Planning Fatigue is settling in because having to plan our every move goes against how the unconscious brain has evolved. Our minds, over centuries of evolution, have worked hard to simplify our existence by automatising functioning and taking short cuts, by filtering much of the information around us, and thus allowing us to execute a multitude of functions (and actions) simultaneously and unconsciously. This way, our conscious minds are free to focus on more pressing matters like learning new information, creating spreadsheets, planning our finances, communicating with others, etc.

What we know and understand about



the unconscious today is light years away from the narrowly defined conflictual unconscious of Freud and psychoanalysis. As we discuss in our book, The Unconscious: Theory, Research, and Clinical Implications, unconscious processes are much more ubiquitous than previously thought, are part of everyday functioning, and, rather than being pathological, actually serve an evolutionary purpose. In a lot of ways, they make our lives easier.

For example, right now you may be reading this article while your mind is also filtering tonnes of sensory information, scanning the environment for relevant stimuli (your child starting to cry or food starting to burn on the stove), and even processing internal stimuli like

thoughts and emotions related to that heated zoom discussion earlier today or the feeling of hunger in your stomach. All of these processes occur simultaneously, some more automatically and with less conscious awareness than others. If we were to give all of them the same amount of focus and attention, we would simply become overloaded.

Currently, we are having to overthink so many actions throughout our day! Every time we step outside of our homes, interact with people, or even receive a package at our doorstep, what would have otherwise been an automatic effortless action is now a conscious, effortful, and well thought out one. Add many of those throughout the day, and we have plan-

ning fatigue.

Much of our functioning is unconscious and this is not a good or a bad thing. It just is. Whether or not unconscious processes hinder or enhance our functioning depends on a multitude of other factors, including stressors in the environment and how well adapted we are to it. If you are experiencing planning fatigue, 1) you are not alone and 2) this is normal. Your brain is struggling to adjust not only to a new (and scary) environment, but also to a slower, much more laborious way of functioning in that environment, with less help from automaticity. As a result, the distress and fatigue you are experiencing reflect your mind’s efforts to adapt. (Coincidentally, if auto-

matic self-criticism does not seem to be similarly impacted, please take a moment to find some self-compassion for just how difficult the last few months may have been).

Equally as important is the realisation that over time, these new ways of operating under the present circumstances will become more habitual and will, therefore, require much less conscious effort. In the meantime, if it is any consolation, your brain is building new synapses which may just lead to personal growth and, in the long run, making you more adaptable and resilient.

Valentina Stoycheva is the founder of Steps (Stress & Trauma Evaluation and Psychological Services) and the co-author of The Unconscious: Theory, Research, and Clinical Implications.

Psychology Today

“Currently, we are having to overthink so many actions throughout our day! Every time we step outside of our homes, interact with people, or even receive a package at our doorstep, what would have otherwise been an automatic effortless action is now a conscious, effortful, and well thought out one. Add many of those throughout the day, and we have planning fatigue.”



Eating More Fruits, Vegetables Help Verbal Fluency, Cognitive Function

Agencies

Individuals who consume more vegetables, fruits, nuts, and pluses score higher on tests of verbal fluency, suggests a recent study. The study investigated factors associated with verbal fluency among a large sample of English-speaking Canadians aged 45 to 85.

"These findings are consistent with other research that has found a Mediterranean diet high in fruits, vegetables, nuts, and legumes is protective against cognitive decline," reported co-author Dr. Karen Davison, a nutrition informatics research program director at Kwantlen Polytechnic University, in British Columbia and a North American Primary Care Research Fellow. "Every increase in average daily fruit and vegetable intake was linked to higher verbal fluency scores, but the best outcomes were found among those who consumed at least 6 servings a day," Davison added.

Verbal fluency is an important measure of cognitive function. To test it, subjects are asked to list as many words from a given category as they can in one minute. This measures language and executive function and can be used to detect cognitive impairment. Adults who have an insufficient appetite, face challenges in preparing food or consume low-quality diets, may be at risk of malnourishment, and grip strength can be used to assess under-nutrition. Those in the study who had poor grip strength and/or high nutritional risk scores also had

lower verbal fluency.

"Previous research has also indicated that measures of under-nutrition are associated with cognitive decline," said co-author Zahraa Saab from Public Health graduate of the University of Toronto. The researchers investigated the relationship between other factors and cognitive health, as well, including immigrant status, age, blood pressure, obesity, and body fat. Anglophone immigrants who had lived in Canada at least 20 years had higher verbal fluency scores than their Canadian-born peers. The researchers suspect that this protective effect may be partially due to better cognitive reserve among immigrants.

"Our earlier research on a big British cohort of individuals born in 1946 found that those who emigrated from the United Kingdom had, on average, 5 points higher IQ than their peers who remained in the UK," says senior author, Esme Fuller-Thomson, professor at University of Toronto's Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work (FIFSW) and director of the Institute for Life Course & Aging. "We purposively restricted the current study to those whose mother tongue was English, so we could investigate the association between immigrant status and verbal fluency, independent of bilingualism," Thomson added.

Previous research suggests that those who are bilingual have a lower incidence and delayed onset of dementia. Most of the studies finding a 'bilingualism advantage'

have, unfortunately, neglected to account for immigration status. "Our findings suggest that this is an important omission because even immigrants whose mother tongue is English had significantly higher verbal fluency scores than anglophones born in Canada. Thus, the 'bilingualism advantage' may be at least partially attributable to the 'healthy immigrant effect,'" said Fuller-Thomson, who is also cross-appointed to U of T's Department of Family and Community Medicine and the Faculty of Nursing. Age & Education

"Consistent with other studies, those younger in age had better cognitive functioning scores when compared to older participants," says co-author Hongmei Tong, assistant professor of Social Work at MacEwan University in Edmonton. The association between cognitive impairment and advanced age may be mediated or moderated by cognitive reserve factors such as high educational levels, which are protective against cognitive decline.

"Respondents who were aged 75-85 with a high school degree had verbal fluency scores comparable to individuals a decade younger who had not completed high school," says co-author Vanessa Taler, associate professor of psychology, University of Ottawa. "Our findings underline the importance of managing blood pressure for brain health in mid-life and beyond," says co-author Shen (Lamson) Lin, a doctoral student at the FIFSW.

Both obesity and higher percent of body fat were

associated with worse verbal fluency scores. "Obesity has been linked in other research to inflammation and to greater insulin resistance, both of which have been associated to cognitive decline," says co-author Karen Kobayashi, a professor in the Department of Sociology and a research fellow at the Institute on Aging & Lifelong Health at the University of Victoria.

The study team analyzed data from the baseline Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging, which included 8,574 anglophone participants aged 45-85, of whom 1,126 were immigrants who had arrived in Canada 20 or more years earlier. All participants were living in the community and were free from dementia. Two verbal fluency tests were examined: the Controlled Oral Word Association Test (COWAT) and the Animal Fluency (AF) task. The article was published this month in the Journal of Nutrition Health and Aging.

"The team's findings suggest that it may be beneficial to design policies and health care practices to reduce nutrition risk, improve diet quality, and address obesity and hypertension among midlife and older citizens in order to improve these potentially modifiable risk factors for lower verbal fluency scores," adds Dr. Fuller-Thomson. "The good news is that the higher levels of education obtained by baby boomers and subsequent birth cohorts may mitigate some of the cognitive declines often observed in previous generations of older adults," the professor added.

Researches get closer to discover why eczema happens

Agencies

Researchers may be getting closer to finding the cure of a chronic skin condition - Eczema, by analysing the cause of the skin disease in a recent study.

An estimated 35 million Americans suffer from eczema, also known as atopic dermatitis. Worldwide, 2 to 5 % of adults and about 15 % of children suffer from symptoms such as dry, inflamed and very itchy skin with open sores.

Although there are myriad treatments for eczema, such as medical creams and natural remedies, the exact causes of the condition remain elusive. In a new paper, the team - Associate Professor Guy German and PhD student Zachary W. Lipsky from the Thomas J. Watson School of Engineering and Applied Science's Department of Biomedical Engineering, and Associate Professor Claudia N.H. Marques of the Harpur College of Arts and Sciences' Department of Biological Sciences - connects two aspects of eczema research that are rarely studied together.

One result of atopic dermatitis is a decreased level of skin oils known as lipids, particularly one group called ceramides. Lipids on the surface of the skin function to regulate hydration and also help defend the skin from foreign invaders either indirectly through immune signalling or directly through their inherent antimicrobial activity.

Another result of eczema is an increase in staph bacteria in the skin, which can cause irritation and infection.

German said that genetics can play a part in whether someone has eczema, but people in certain occupations have also been shown to be more likely to get the skin condition, such as healthcare professionals, metalworkers, hairdressers, and food processing workers. The connection? An increased amount of handwashing or regular contact with detergents for your job.

"What happens if, either through a mutation or through occupational risks, there's a decreased presence of lipids on the skin?" he said.

"The essence of this study is that in normal,



healthy conditions, bacteria do not penetrate the skin barrier. In atopic dermatitis conditions or lipid levels consistent with AD, it does -- and it consistently takes nine days," he added.

Because the staph bacteria are immobile, they need to multiply in number to grow through the protective outer skin layer known as the stratum corneum. The Watson researchers believe the bacteria don't grow around the skin cells but actually through them. With lipid depletion -- either through genetics or occupational risks -- the skin appears to become more vulnerable to bacterial invasion and infection of underlying skin tissue.

"When we usually think about the oils in our skin, we think about water retention and moisturizing -- things like that. Now we're looking at how these lipids are important for protection against these microorganisms that can come in and cause diseases," Lipsky said.

While this study has not unlocked all the secrets of atopic dermatitis, showing that the bacteria could be the cause rather than the result of the disease is a major step forward. Further research is required, and that's where the Watson team will investigate next.

"Now that we know that bacteria can permeate through lipid depleted skin, how does it affect the skin mechanically? Does it make the skin weaker and more likely to crack? Can we figure out how bacteria are moving through different skin layers?" Lipsky said.

Press Trust Of India

Houston- The majority of children with COVID-19 in 26 countries fared well clinically compared to adults, according to a review of studies which assessed research published during the first four months of the pandemic.

Scientists, including those from The University of Texas in the US, performed the largest systematic review to date of children and young adults with COVID-19, assessing the clinical data of more than 7,500 individuals.

In the findings, published in the journal EClinicalMedicine, a journal of The Lancet, they said nearly a fifth of the pediatric population with COVID-19 did not exhibit any symptoms, and 21 per cent of the children exhibited patchy marks of tissue injury on lung X-rays.

The researchers said 5.6 per cent of the children assessed in the studies suffered from co-infections, such as flu, on top of COVID-19, and a little more than 3 per cent were admitted to intensive care units.

Seven deaths were reported, according to the review research.

"Our data is compiled from 131 studies and encompasses 7,780 patients who span the pediatric age spectrum,"

Children more resilient against COVID-19: Lancet study



said study senior author Alvaro Moreira from UT.

The research reported the most common symptoms, quantified laboratory findings, and described X-ray scan characteristics of children with COVID-19.

"Furthermore, we summarise treatments that were administered and offer an initial glimpse of a handful of patients who met the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) criteria for multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children," Moreira said.

According to the study, the most frequent symptoms, similar to the adult population, were fever and cough—

found in 59 and 56 per cent of the pediatric population, respectively.

In 233 individuals, the scientists said a past medical history was noted with 152 children in the group presenting with compromised immune systems, or had underlying respiratory or cardiac disease.

"Although we are hearing about severe forms of the disease in children, this is occurring in very rare circumstances," Moreira said.

Based on laboratory measures noted in the reviewed studies, the scientists said pediatric COVID-19 patients had abnormal levels of molecules signifying inflammation in

the body like creatine kinase, interleukin-6, and procalcitonin.

According to the scientists, only a small number of patients met inclusion for multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children.

They said the disease condition in these children paralleled the extreme forms of COVID-19 seen in adults.

"Children with systemic inflammation had a significant decrease in the amount of lymphocytes in their blood," Moreira said.

COVID-positive children who didn't have the extreme form of the disease had 42 per cent of the immune cells called lymphocytes in their blood, versus 11 per cent in children with the multisystem syndrome, he added.

The scientists said kidney failure was seen in nine pediatric patients, liver failure also in nine, and shock in 19.

They said mechanical ventilation was required by 42 patients.

While the review research provides evidence that children with COVID-19 have an overall better prognosis, the scientists said further studies are needed to confirm the findings, and "better understand which patients are at increased risk for developing severe inflammation and multi-organ failure."

23 Killed In Blast At Cattle Market In Southern Afghanistan

Agencies

Kabul: At least 23 civilians were killed in Afghanistan's southern Helmand province and dozens were wounded when rockets hit a cattle market on Monday, Afghan government and Taliban officials said.

The warring sides blamed each other for the attack on the open-air weekly cattle market in Sangin district, where hundreds of villagers from neighboring districts had gathered to trade sheep and goats.

Khushakyar, who goes by a single name, said he was trying to sell a calf when the rockets hit the market. He said his two nephews were killed and his son was wounded.

"I saw around 20 bodies on the ground," he said, adding that dozens were wounded and "live-stock lay dead next to men."

Some residents of Helmand province, a Taliban stronghold, said the shelling occurred during fierce clashes between Taliban militants and government security forces in residential areas surrounding the market. A spokesperson for Helmand's governor said several rockets fired by Taliban insurgents landed close to the cattle market, killing 23 civilians, including children. But the statement did not pro-

vide further details and there was no claim of responsibility for the attack.

The army also said there was no military activity in the area on Monday and that two Taliban fighters were also killed when the car bomb detonated at the marketplace. Livestock that the locals were selling on the market, sheep and goats, were also killed.

Qari Yousuf Ahmadi, a Taliban spokesperson said the Afghan army fired several rounds of mortar bombs on civilian houses and the cattle market, killing dozens of villagers.

Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani's office released a statement strongly condemning the "brutal and inhumane act." It also stressed that targeting civilians, especially children and adults, is against Islamic and human values.

"The government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan once again calls on the Taliban to refrain from war and violence and to accept the will of the Afghan people, which is the end of the war and the start of negotiations," Ghani's statement said.

The United Nations in recent reports and statements has asked both sides in the conflict to be more careful of civilian casualties, saying they are on the increase.



Iran Issues Arrest Warrant For Trump, Asks Interpol To Help

Agencies

Tehran: Iran has issued an arrest warrant and asked Interpol for help in detaining US President Donald Trump and dozens of others it believes carried out the drone strike that killed a top Iranian general in Baghdad.

Tehran prosecutor Ali Alqasimehr said on Monday that Trump, along with more than 30 others Iran accuses of involvement in the January 3 attack that killed General Qassem Soleimani, face "murder and terrorism charges", the semi-official ISNA news agency reported.

Alqasimehr did not identify anyone else sought other than Trump, but stressed Iran would continue to pursue his prosecution even after his presidency ends.

Interpol, based in Lyon, France, said in a statement that its constitution forbade it to undertake "any intervention or activities of a political, military, religious or racial character".

"Therefore, if or when any

such requests were to be sent to the General Secretariat," it added, "... Interpol would not consider requests of this nature."

The US's Iran envoy Brian Hook described the move as a "propaganda stunt".

"Our assessment is that Interpol does not intervene and issue Red Notices that are based on a political nature," Hook said at a news conference in Saudi Arabia.

"This is a political nature. This has nothing to do with national security, international peace or promoting stability ... It is a propaganda stunt that no one takes seriously," he said.

Red notice request

Alqasimehr was also quoted as saying Iran had requested a "red notice" be put out for Trump and the others, the highest-level notice issued by Interpol, requesting that seeks the location and arrest of the individual named.

Under a red notice, local authorities make the arrests on behalf of the country that

requested it. The notices cannot force countries to arrest or extradite suspects, but can put government leaders on the spot and limit suspects' travel.

After receiving a request, Interpol meets by committee and discusses whether or not to share the information with its member states. Interpol has no requirement for making any of the notices public, though some do get published on its website.

It is unlikely Interpol would grant Iran's request as its guideline for notices forbids it from "undertaking any intervention or activities of a political" nature.

The US killed General Soleimani, who oversaw the Revolutionary Guard Corps' expeditionary Quds Force, and others in the January attack near Baghdad International Airport.

The assassination came after months of incidents raising tensions between the two countries and ultimately saw Iran retaliate with a ballistic missile strike targeting American troops in Iraq.

'China Forcing Birth Control On Uighurs To Suppress Population'

Agencies

Beijing: China is imposing draconian measures to slash birth rates among ethnic Uighurs as part of a sweeping campaign to curb its Muslim population, according to a new investigation.

China's foreign ministry spokesman responded on Monday by calling the news report "fake news".

While individual women have spoken out before about forced birth control, the practice is far more widespread and systematic than previously known, according to an AP news agency investigation based on government statistics, state documents, and interviews with 30 ex-detainees, family members, and a former detention-camp instructor.

The campaign over the past four years in the far west region of Xinjiang is leading to what some experts are calling a form

as punishment for failure to comply. Having too many children is a major reason people are sent to detention camps, AP found, with parents of three or more children ripped away from their families unless they can pay huge fines.

Police raid homes, terrifying parents as they search for hidden children.

Knock on the door

After Gulnar Omirzakh, a Chinese-born Kazakh, had her third child, the government ordered her to have an IUD implanted. Two years later, in January 2018, four officials in military camouflage came knocking at her door anyway. They gave Omirzakh, the penniless wife of a detained vegetable trader, three days to pay a \$2,685 fine for having more than two children.

If she did not, they warned, she would join her husband



of "demographic genocide".

China regularly subjects minority women to pregnancy checks and forces intrauterine devices, sterilisation, even abortion on hundreds of thousands, the interviews and data show.

The population-control measures are backed by mass detention both as a threat and

and a million other members of ethnic minorities locked up in internment camps.

"God bequeaths children on you. To prevent people from having children is wrong," said Omirzakh, who tears up even now thinking back to that day. "They want to destroy us as a people."

Cansino's COVID-19 Vaccine Candidate Approved For Military Use In China

Agencies

Beijing: China's military has received the greenlight to use a COVID-19 vaccine candidate developed by its research unit and CanSino Biologics after clinical trials proved it was safe and somewhat efficient, the company said on Monday.

The Ad5-nCoV is one of the eight vaccine candidates being developed by Chinese companies and researchers approved to be moved into human trials for the respiratory disease caused by the new coronavirus. The shot also won approval for human testing in Canada.

China's Central Military Commission approved the use of the vaccine by the military on June 25 for a period of one year, CanSino said in a filing. The vaccine candidate was developed jointly by CanSino and the Beijing Institute of Biotechnology



in the Academy of Military Medical Sciences.

"The Ad5-nCoV is currently limited to military use only and its use cannot be expanded to a broader vaccination range without the approval of the Logistics Support Department," CanSino said, referring to the Central Military Commission department where the military use of the vaccine was approved.

The Phase 1 and Phase 2 clinical trials showed the vaccine candidate has potential to prevent diseases caused by the coronavirus, which has killed half a million people globally, but its commercial success cannot be guaranteed, the company said.

No vaccine has yet been approved for commercial use against the illness caused by the new coronavirus, but over a dozen vaccines from more than 100 candidates globally are being tested in humans.

11 Killed as militants attack Pakistan Stock Exchange Hostage Situation Foiled

Agencies

Karachi: Four heavily armed militants, believed to be from a banned Baloch terror group, on Monday made a brazen attempt to take over the Pakistan Stock Exchange building here, killing four security guards and a police officer before being shot dead by security forces.

The militants, who arrived in a car, opened indiscriminate fire and lobbed grenades at the main gate of the multi-storey building situated in the city's high-security commercial hub as they tried to storm it.

Armed with automatic machine guns, grenades and explosives, they tried to enter into the compound leading to the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) building through a park-

ing lot but security forces foiled their attack within the compound itself, Deputy Superintendent of Police (South) Jamil Ahmed said.

"The militants lobbed hand grenades and opened fire initially at the compound entrance to force themselves into the compound but one of them was killed immediately and that pushed them back," he said.

Director-General Rangers Sindh Major-General Omer Ahmed Bokhari, addressing a press conference in Karachi, said the attackers intended to not only enter the building but also carry out violence and hold people hostage.

"Every terrorist was armed with weapons that included AK-47s, hand grenades, rocket launchers. They were also car-

rying food and water," he said.

He continued: "The PSX is an important symbol of economic activity hence the objective of these militants was to increase casualties here and hold hostages. It was an attempt to send a message to the world that Pakistan is not safe. They wanted to damage Pakistan's economic activity and harm investors' confidence," DG Rangers said.

The police and Rangers' officials killed all the four terrorists near the entrance gates, he said.

Four security guards, a police sub-inspector and two civilians were killed in the heavy exchange of fire at the PSX compound on Karachi's I.I. Chundrigar Road, also known as Pakistan's Wall Street, the police said.

Agencies

London: The British are far fatter than any other nation in Europe bar the Maltese so there needs to be a debate about how to tackle soaring rates of obesity that cost the country dearly, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Monday.

Johnson, who said at the start of the year that he needed to lose weight, was hospitalised in April with coronavirus and treated in intensive care with oxygen. He later said doctors in the National Health Service (NHS) had saved his life.

Asked about how ill he had been in an interview with Times Radio, Johnson said: "I did lose some weight--that is perfectly true--as you do in ICU (Intensive Care Unit)".

"I have taken a very libertarian stance on obesity but actually when you look at the numbers, when you look at the pressure on the NHS, compare, I'm afraid this wonderful country of ours to other European countries, we are significantly fatter than most others, apart from the Maltese for some reason. It is an issue."

The United Kingdom has



one of the highest rates of obesity in the world: nearly one in three adults are obese, according to the OECD. Worldwide, obesity has nearly tripled since 1975 and more than 650 million people are obese--defined by the World Health Organization as having a Body Mass Index of 30 or greater.

'Hugely costly'

Johnson, who in his youth was slender, has ditched take-aways since his illness and even told meetings that "it's all right for you thinnies" when discussing the novel coronavirus, British media reported.

"I am not going to pretend I have original thinking about this nor am I going to pretend that it is easy for politicians to solve--everybody knows that this is a tough one," Johnson said. "It's something we all need to address." Asked if he was now an interventionist who would support a sugar tax, Johnson did not give a direct answer.

Israel Orders Evangelical GOD TV Off Air

Jerusalem: Israel's media watchdog said Sunday that it had withdrawn the broadcast licence from US-based evangelical network GOD TV, accusing it of seeking to target Jews with Christian content.

International Christian network's GOD TV launched its Shelanu (Hebrew for "ours") channel at the end of April on Israeli cable provider Hot, describing it as catering to Christians.

But the channel provoked an immediate outcry in Israel, with then-communications minister David Amsalem accusing it of being a "missionary channel" seeking to convert Jews to Christianity.

The Cable and Satellite Broadcasting Council launched an investigation to determine if GOD TV had misrepresented its content when



it applied for a licence.

Council chairman Asher Bitton said on Sunday that following the probe and a hearing, he had informed Hot that Shelanu broadcasts must be removed within seven days.

"The channel is aimed at Jews with Christian content, in contrast to the original broadcast request, which stated it was designated for Christians," Bitton said in a council statement.

It said that a Christian channel for Jews would not be automatically disqualified in the future, but that it would

have to seek council approval, which Shelanu had not done.

Hot could file a new request for Shelanu that would include "a truthful and detailed" characterisation of the channel, the statement added.

A spokeswoman for Hot said that the company was "co-operating with the council and will act in accordance with its decisions on the matter". In one promotional clip for Shelanu, GOD TV director Ward Simpson tells viewers, "we're going to preach the Jewish Jesus to the nation of Israel... they're going to hear the gospel presented to them in their native tongue".

In a separate online video response to the criticism, he acknowledged that "proselytising in Israel is a very touchy subject" but went on to say that preaching about Jesus was a mission.

Trump Tweets, Then Deletes Video Of Supporter Yelling "White Power"

Washington: US President Donald Trump Sunday shared a video of a stand-off between anti-Trump protesters and his supporters in which a man chants "white power" -- before deleting it amid an outcry.

"Thank you to the great people of The Villages," Trump tweeted above the video clip. "The Radical Left Do Nothing Democrats will Fall in the Fall."

The footage apparently shot in a Florida retirement community shows a man driving a golf-cart bearing "Trump 2020" and "America First" signs, being heckled by a roadside protester chanting "racist."

As they yell at each other, the driver repeatedly mouths the words "white power" with a raised fist.

"White power! There you go, white power. Did you hear that?" the protester yells back at him.

Trump tweeted the video shortly after 7:30 am. But at 11 am it was no longer

visible on his Twitter account.

Trump has long been accused of fanning racial tensions, including during the nationwide reckoning over racial inequality triggered by the death-in-custody of African American George Floyd a month ago.

Infamously, after deadly violence pitted neo-Nazis against counter protesters in the Virginia city of Charlottesville in 2017, he declared there to be "very fine people on both sides."

The "Villages" video triggered an immediate backlash on social media, and Trump allies were pressed to defend it on the Sunday morning talk shows.

The Republican Party's only black senator, Tim Scott, interviewed on CNN's "State of the Union," called the entire video "offensive."

"We can play politics with it or we can't. I'm not going to. I think it's indefensible. We should take it down. That's what I think."

1 in 50 million: English woman becomes pregnant with twins in two different wombs

Chandigarh: A 28-year-old woman in England has defied one in 50 million odds after doctors told her she had two wombs and was pregnant with a twin in each.

Kelly Fairhurst of Essex has a rare condition called uterus didelphys, which means she has two wombs and two cervixes. Uterus didelphys is a congenital abnormality that typically occurs in one in 3,000 women.

Fairhurst already has two daughters with her boyfriend. She was told the news at her 12-week scan. Fairhurst told the Sun that the twins could be identical.



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