



Maximum : 32°C
Minum : 18°C
Humidity : 43%

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



News Digest

Shabir Shah Given 'Proper' Medical Aid

New Delhi: Tihar Jail superintendent informed a Delhi Court Wednesday that Kashmiri separatist leader Shabir Shah, arrested in two separate cases of alleged terror financing, is being provided with all the necessary medical facilities in view of the coronavirus pandemic. The submissions were made before Special Judge DharmendraRana in a response to a plea on behalf of Shah, claiming that the accused was suffering from various ailments, including heart disease, and that his immunity was very low. The plea, moved by advocate Qausar Khan, **● P-02**

Militant Killed In Rajouri, Says Army

Jammu- A Pakistani militant was killed on Wednesday as the Army foiled an infiltration bid by a group of militants along the Line of Control (LoC) in Rajouri district of Jammu region, an Army officer said. Troops intercepted the group when it entered 400 metres into this side from across the LoC in Keri sector of Rajouri around 0555 hours, triggering a gunfight, the officer said. He said one militant was killed and an AK 47 rifle along with two magazines was recovered from his possession. The search operation to track down other members of the group was on when last reports came in, the officer said, adding further details are awaited.

Medium Intensity Quake Hits J&K

New Delhi: A medium-intensity earthquake of magnitude 4.6 hit Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday night, the National Centre for Seismology said. The quake occurred at 11.32 pm at a depth of five kilometres, it said. There were no immediate reports of loss of life or property.

Son Kills Bear After Father Attacked

Srinagar: A youth on Wednesday shot dead a bear in Uri area of north Kashmir's Baramulla district after the bear attacked and injured his father. 75-year-old Nazamuddin was attacked and injured by a bear at Shudwani Dardkote area of Uri, officials said. In a bid to save his father from further mauling, his son Shabir Ahmed used his 12 Bore rifle and shot the bear dead. The injured elderly man was shifted to Sub-District Hospital Uri for treatment. Police and Wild Life Department rushed to the spot to assess the situation. The body of the beast was taken by the wildlife team in custody. (KNT)

Bridge Collapses In Sopore

Srinagar: A three-decade-old bridge in Sopore area of north Kashmir's Baramulla district collapsed on Wednesday evening. Officials said that an oldest bridge in Chankhan area of Sopore, collapsed in the evening, adding that the debris of the bridge fell into the river Jehlum. Sources said the bridge was closed for the public in the year 2019 after it developed cracks and posed threat to the lives of commuters. Meanwhile, officials visited the spot to take stock of the situation—(KNO)

Civilian, CRPF Man Killed In Sopore Shootout

Family Alleges Cold-Blooded Murder, Police Refutes Charges



FAMILY OF SLAIN Bashir A Khan wail after his body was brought in to his home for last rites- KO Photo Abid Bhat

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A civilian and a CRPF personnel were killed and three others injured on Wednesday in a shootout in Sopore town of north Kashmir's Baramulla district, even as the family of the slain civilian charged the paramilitary men of a 'cold-blooded murder'.

Around 7:40 am today, **▶PAGE 02**

Mainstream Parties Condemn Killing, Seek Probe

Mainstream parties National Conference, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and JK Apni Party on Wednesday condemned the killing of a civilian in Sopore **● P-02**

Sopore Shocker: 'The Trauma Shall Stay With The Kid For A Lifetime'

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Tear-jerking scenes emerged from Apple town of Sopore on Wednesday morning when a three-year-old kid was caught on camera wailing on the dead body of his slain grandfather. While many wondered who could click the image at the shootout site, the kid was shortly sent home where his arrival triggered mourning.

The sniveling kid was seen inside a police jeep, with half-eaten biscuit, blood-stained clothes and tearful haunting eyes, before a cop lapped and comforted him.

Kashmir witnessed these devastating images on early Wednesday morning when a shoot-out took place between militants and a paramilitary CRPF patrol party at Model Town in Sopore.

A civilian and a CRPF



Picture Courtesy Social Media

personnel were killed and three others injured in the shootout.

JK Police took to its twitter account to laud one of its cops for "saving the life" of the kid. The cop can be seen consoling the crying kid whose clothes were stained with his fallen

grandfather's blood.

According to the police, the boy's grandfather stopped the car and got out to run to a safe spot but was killed in the crossfire. The boy was later rescued by a policeman standing nearby, police said.

"When we reached the



site, what we saw was disturbing. Our priority was to evacuate the child. It was very challenging as terrorists were firing upon us," said Azim Khan, a police officer. The slain civilian was

identified as Bashir Ahmad Khan, 60, of Mustafa Abad, HMT.

Khan's inconsolable daughter told reporters at her house that her father was killed in front of his grandson.

"They have snatched my father forever. He was our only support system. May his killers meet the same fate," she cursed.

Khan's son in a video statement alleged that the CRPF personnel "dragged him from his car and shot

him dead". Khan, who was a contractor, had taken his grandson from Srinagar to Sopore to oversee the progress of a construction work, he said. **▶PAGE 02**

Rajnath, Army Chief To Review Military Preparedness In Ladakh On Friday

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh is scheduled to visit Ladakh on Friday to take stock of India's military preparedness in the wake of a bitter border standoff with the Chinese troops in the region, government sources said.

To be accompanied by Chief of Army Staff Gen M M Naravane, it will be the defence minister's first visit to Ladakh after the standoff between the two armies began on May 5.

During his visit, Singh will carry out a comprehensive review of the security situation in

China Welcomes Progress In Corps Commander Level Talks

China on Wednesday welcomed the progress made in Sino-India senior military commander-level talks to "disengage and deescalate the situation" at the LAC and said the two sides are working towards implementing the consensus reached so far. **● P-02**

the region with Gen Naravane, Northern Army Commander Lt Gen Yogesh Kumar Joshi, Commander of the 14 Corps Lt Gen Harinder Singh and other senior Army officials, sources said.

The visit is also aimed at boosting morale of the army personnel engaged in the seven-

week bitter border faceoff with the Chinese troops in the region, sources added.

The Army Chief visited Ladakh on June 23 and 24 during which he held a series of meetings with senior army officials and visited various forward areas in eastern Ladakh. Gen Naravane **▶PAGE 02**

Govt To Digitise Land Records To Recover Encroached Land

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: To tackle land mafia and retrieve encroached government land, the Jammu and Kashmir administration has set a deadline of July 31 to complete survey and digitisation of land records across the union territory, official sources said on Wednesday.

The decision was taken after the administration learnt that illegal entries of encroached about nine lakh kanal state and forest land in the Jammu region by the land ma-

fia have been officially deleted, and the land restored to the government only "on papers", they said.

According to the sources, near about 21 lakh acres of state and forest land have been encroached in Jammu and Kashmir by the land mafia in league with revenue officials over the past several decades, taking advantage of several orders of the earlier governments.

In a bid to break this nexus and find changes made in land records, the Lieutenant Governor administration has strengthened

the department of land records by inducting various officers at district levels as settlement commissioners recently to ensure speedy digitisation of land records and deletion of the illegal entries of state lands in the name of private persons, they said.

Lt Governor Girish Chandra Murmu has given clear directions to the officials to complete the digitisation of land records by July end as a final deadline, the sources said.

Murmu said this after reviewing the progress of the digitisation **▶PAGE 02**

IN THIS DIRECTION, THE ADMINISTRATION HAS strengthened the survey and land records department by posting directors in districts of Doda, Baramulla, Udhampur and Rajouri and others districts on June 26, the sources said.

NC Leaders Seek End To Their 'Illegal, Unlawful' Detention

SRINAGAR: As many as 19 prominent National Conference leaders who are under house detention in different parts of the Kashmir valley since August last year, have sought immediate end to "illegal and unlawful" curbs on their "fundamental right to movement".

The leaders, including party's general secretary Ali Mohammad Sagar and Kashmir provincial president Nasir Aslam Wani, have sent identical letters to the Jammu and Kashmir Principal Secretary (Home), urging him to lift the restrictions on their movement.

In their letters, the NC leaders said they are being subjected to an "illegal confinement" and **▶PAGE 02**

Hurriyat (M) Meets, Cautions People Against 'Demographic Changes'

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Asking government to stop issuing domicile certificates to outsiders to 'change the demographic character' of J&K, the Hurriyat Conference (M) on Wednesday cautioned people against selling their land and property to outsiders at any cost.

In a statement issued here today, a Hurriyat spokesperson said that executive members Prof. Abdul Ghani Bhat and Bilal Ghani Lone called on ailing executive member and former APMC chairman Maulana Abbas Ansari to check on his deteriorating health at his residence and later held a meeting there.

Executive member Masroor Abbas Ansari also participated in the



meeting while APMC chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq could not attend as he continues to be under arbitrary house arrest since August 2019, the spokesperson said. In the meeting, the members said that the government should stop issuing domicile certificates to outsiders with the view to change the demographic character of J&K, which is causing great concern among people and could have serious consequences for the region. **▶PAGE 02**

Tral Operation Called Off After Militants Flee

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Government forces on Wednesday called off search operation in Tral area of South Kashmir's Pulwama district after militants managed to flee following a brief exchange of fire on Tuesday.

An official said that after exchange of fire between government forces and militants on Tuesday evening, search operation continued in the area till today late afternoon. However, no contact wasn't established with the militants.

He said that a joint team of Police, Army's 42 RR and CRPF launched a cordon and search operation on specific information about the presence of militants in the area on Tuesday night at around 10 pm.



He said that as the joint forces approached towards the suspected spot, the hiding militants fired upon them which was retaliated triggering an encounter.

After exchange of fire, search operation was conducted in the area which remained on till later part of the day today. However, it was called off later, as militants had managed to give a slip to the forces, officials said.

Pertinently, 40 militants were killed in 15 encounters in South Kashmir in month of June alone (KNO)

Ex-MD SICOP Held In Disproportionate Assets Case

Observer News Service

JAMMU: The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Wednesday detained former Managing Director (MD) of Small Scale Industries Development Corporation Limited (SICOP) in a disproportionate assets case.

In a handout issued to Kashmir Observer, an ACB spokesperson said that former MD SICOP Bhupinder Singh Dua was taken into custody for questioning regarding assets acquired by him. Dua, according to the spokesperson has amassed massive wealth and raised a number of assets in his own name as well as in the names of his family members and close relatives.

"He had acquired these assets with the ill-gotten money earned through corrupt practices during



his stint in SICOP in various capacities," the spokesperson said.

Divulging the details, the ACB spokesperson said that in a search conducted on October 14, last year, golden ornaments weighing 1.834 kg, silver weighing 1.470 kg and cash amounting Rs 9, 57,400 was

recovered from his premises.

"During ongoing investigation, it was discovered that Dua has also acquired massive movable and immovable properties, including 12 different factories under different names and style established by him and his family members," **▶PAGE 02**

PM Modi Quits Chinese Weibo

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has quit Chinese social media platform Weibo, the BJP said on Wednesday, with its general secretary (organisation) B L Santhosh saying that Modi has sent out a "strong message" at the border, on economic front and now at "personal level too".

"After govt move of banning 59 Chinese Apps, PM Narendra Modi exits from Chinese social media platform WEIBO also. Strong message at the border, on economic front & at personal level too," Santhosh said.

Sources have said Modi decided to quit Weibo, which he had joined in 2015, as soon as the decision was taken to ban 59 Chinese apps in India.

They added that Weibo has a



more complex procedure to quit for accounts of important personalities which is why an official process was initiated.

For reasons best known to the Chinese, there was a great delay in granting this basic permission, they said.

The prime minister had 115 posts on Weibo, and it was decided to manually delete them and after much effort 113 posts were removed, they said.

The two posts left were those where Modi had photos **▶PAGE 02**

From Front page...

Rlys Begins Process To Invite Pvt Players In Passenger Train Operations

NEW DELHI: The Railways on Wednesday formally kickstarted its plans to allow private entities to operate passenger trains on its network by inviting request for qualifications (RFQ) for participation on 109 pairs of routes through 151 modern trains, the national transporter said.

The project would entail a private sector investment of about Rs 30,000 crore, it said.

This is the first initiative for private investment for running passenger trains on the Indian Railways network. It began last year with the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) introducing the Lucknow-Delhi Tejas Express.

Currently, the IRCTC operates three trains -- the KashiMahakal Express on the Varanasi-Indore route, the Lucknow-New Delhi Tejas and the Ahmedabad-Mumbai Tejas.

"The objective of this initiative is to introduce modern technology rolling stock with reduced maintenance, reduced transit time, boost job creation, provide enhanced safety, provide world-class travel experience to passengers," the Railways said.

The 109 origin-destination routes have been formed into 12 clusters across the Indian Railway network. Each train shall have a minimum of 16 coaches, it said.

The Railways also said that

majority of these modern trains are to be manufactured in India as 'Make in India' and the private entity shall be responsible for financing, procuring, operating and maintaining the trains.

"Trains shall be designed for a maximum speed of 160 kmph. There would be a substantial reduction in journey time. The running time taken by a train shall be comparable to or faster than the fastest train of the Indian Railways operating in the respective route," it said.

The concession period for the project shall be 35 years and the private entity shall pay the Indian Railways fixed haulage

charges, energy charges as per actual consumption and a share in gross revenue determined through a transparent bidding process, the transporter said.

"These trains shall be operated by the driver and guard of Indian Railways. The operation of the trains by the private entity shall conform to the key performance indicators like punctuality, reliability, upkeep of trains etc," the Railways said.

Operation and maintenance of the passenger trains would be governed by standards and specifications, and requirements specified by Indian Railways, it said.

The entire process of handing over certain routes to private play-

ers will be completed in two parts.

The first started on Wednesday with invite for RFQs wherein private bidders will qualify. The second step will be Request for Proposal (RFP). The details of revenue generation and routes will be decided during the latter process.

In the pre-COVID times, companies such as R K Catering, Adani Ports and MakeMyTrip and airlines, including Indigo, Vistara and SpiceJet, had shown interest in participating in operating private trains, sources said.

Other players whose attention has been attracted by this are global majors like Alstom Transport, Bombardier, Siemens AG

and Macquarie, they said.

Aimed at offering airline-like services to train passengers, the national transporter has said that the private players, apart from fixing fares, have to also provide facilities like catering, cleaning and supply of beddings to passengers.

Earlier this year, the NitiAayog and the Indian Railways came out with a discussion paper for running 150 trains on 100 routes by private operators, envisaging an investment of Rs 22,500 crore.

The discussion paper titled 'Private Participation: Passenger Trains' has identified 100 routes, including Mumbai Central-New Delhi, New Delhi- Patna, Alla-

habad-Pune and Dadar-Vadodara.

Other prominent routes include Howrah-Chennai, Howrah-Patna, Indore-Okhla, Lucknow-Jammu-Tawi, Chennai-Okhla, AnandVihar-Bhagalpur, Secunderabad-Guwahati and Howrah-AnandVihar.

Each bidder would be eligible for award of maximum three clusters, according to the paper.

The Railway Board had in October last year formed an empowered group of secretaries, headed by NitiAayog CEO Amitabh Kant, to chalk out the modalities of the bidding process and take other decisions to fast-track awarding of bids to private players.

Civilian, CRPF Man Killed...

militants fired indiscriminately upon joint party of police and CRPF from the attic of a mosque near Model Town Sopore, a police spokesperson said. In the attack, the police spokesperson said that four CRPF personnel and a civilian were injured.

Among the injured, a CRPF personal and a civilian succumbed to their injuries," the police spokesperson said, while identifying the civilian as Bashir Ahmad Khan of Mustafa Colony HMT Srinagar. The police spokesperson said that the preliminary investigation have revealed that the militants were hiding in a mosque and as the joint party were de-boarding the vehicles for naka duty, they were fired upon by the militants.

The spokesperson added that the CRPF personnel and the civilian were hit by bullets before the state forces could retaliate.

"The militants escaped from the mosque and our parties followed them and retaliated," he said, adding "Credible input indicates that 2 LeT militants, Osman, a foreigner and Nasir were involved in the attack on the joint party.

The police spokesperson also claimed to have rescued a three-year-old grandson of the deceased civilian when the forces came under fire.

Outrage On Social Media

Contrary to the police claims, the horrific images of the minor boy, unattended and wailing over his grandfather's body on the street took the social media by storm with many outraged netizens calling the rescue claim of police as a mere 'PR exercise'

"Oh Sopore! Blood-soaked cookies, he held on. Grandfathers love kids to squat on chest, playway. As if, kid was granting last wish. But then cold body of grandfather turned the kid's face steel-cold. If bullets, biscuits go together, it should turn souls. All awaiting 'rescue'," senior journalist Pirzada Ashiq Tweeted.

In another Tweet, Ashiq hit out at the Cyber police for disclosing identity of the minor.

"How Juvenile Justice Board is dumped, and law trampled with impunity. 74. (1) No one shall disclose identity of a minor victim or witness of a crime, under any other law for the time being in force, nor shall the picture of any such child be published. Our cyber police does this," Ashiq wrote in the Tweet.

The angry netizens also vent ire on prominent TV anchor and journalist Burkha Dutt after she posted image of the child and claimed that the boy was saved by security forces while militants killed his grandfather.

"You are quick to give a clean chit to security forces. Says a lot about your 'unbiased' journalism," replied a user to Dutt.

Another user Tatheer Hussain wrote, "The soldier can be seen lying his foot on the dead body. They killed him and then kept his three year old grandson on his body only to capture this moment in their cameras,"

Cold-Blooded Murder, Says Family

Talking to reporters, the family members of Khan said that early morning he went to Sopore along with his grandchild to oversee his work and bring back his granddaughter.

"He left 6 am to Sopore to oversee his work. When the encounter broke out, he was taken out of the car and shot dead by CRPF," Khan's son Suhail told media persons.

Khan's inconsolable daughter told reporters at her house that her father was dragged out of the car and shot dead in front of his grandson.

"They have snatched my father forever. He was our only support system. May his killers meet the same fate," she said.

Police Refutes Charges

Sopore police in a statement issued after the shootout rejected the news that the middle-aged man was brought down from the car and shot dead. The police termed the allegations "totally baseless and far beyond the facts"

"Sopore Police refutes and denies the news and legal action shall be initiated against the false reports and rumours" the statement added.

Mainstream Parties Condemn

shootout and demanded a probe into it

In a statement issued here, a NC spokesperson expressed grief over the civilian killing in Sopore and sought a time bound judicial probe into the circumstances which led to the "barbaric" incident.

"Targeting civilians, minors is condemnable, such barbaric incidents cannot be tolerated. The heart wrenching sight of a dead man with the kid atop his chest has shaken every sane person. Incidents like these agitate one's souls and conscience," Party's Provincial Spokesperson Imran Nabi Dar said.

"Such incidents can never be acceptable in any civilized society. It is therefore imperative upon the government to establish the verity behind the unfortunate incident. The veracity of the different versions will only come to forth following a time bound judicial probe into the matter."

"My heart goes out to families of the killed civilian and the CRPF trooper who lost his life in the incident," the NC Spokesman said, adding that the attack was a clear indication of the deteriorating security scenario in J&K and puts a big question mark over the claims of the government.

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) also demanded time-bound inquiry into the "gruesome" episode.

According to the party spokesman, the videos and the pictures of the shootout and its aftermath have gone viral on social media with a 3-year-old kid becoming the unfortunate face of this mayhem.

He said that the family of the civilian killed in the shootout has given a statement which goes contrary to the official statement issued by the security agencies. "This needs to be probed at a high level and time-bound inquiry and impartial probe into the matter is what we demand from the government at present," said the PDP spokesman.

Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party (JKAP) also demanded an impartial probe into the killing of Bashir Ahmad Khan, a resident of Mustafa Colony HMT Srinagar who lost his life "near an encounter site" in Sopore.

In a statement issued here a party spokesman said that the family version of the deceased and the circumstantial evidence, prima facie, suggest that Khan was killed in "cold blood".

"The government should order an impartial investigation into the circumstances that led to the killing of a civilian who was on the way to Sopore in connection with his personal work," the spokesman added.

He said only a time bound and transparent probe into the incident can reveal the veracity of claims made by the family of the deceased.

"The security forces should exercise maximum restraint in such situations and ensure that no collateral damage takes place during such incidents," he added.

Sopore Shocker: 'The...

Soon after the video started doing rounds on social media and "aprehending law and order situation", Inspector General of Police Kashmir Vijay Kumar called a Press Conference.

Kumar, questioned those accusing CRPF for the killing. "I want to ask them if they were present at the site of the incident. Did they see who fired," Kumar asked.

Giving details he said, "When militants started firing in which a CRPF trooper attained martyrdom and three others were injured, a civilian vehicle was going from the area. The man left the vehicle in panic and started to runaway for safety by carrying his 3-year-old grandson in his lap. The fire also hit and he died," Kumar said.

Despite persistent police denials, the horrific images of the minor boy, unattended and wailing over his grandfather's body on the street took the social media by storm with many outraged netizens calling the rescue claim of police as a mere 'PR stunt'.

Former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said, "Everything becomes a propaganda tool in the bloody violence in Kashmir. A three year old toddler has to live his misery broadcast to the whole world to drive home the "we good they bad" message. We would have got the point without his misery being filmed & shared so please don't."

"We would have expected no less from the men in uniform than to rescue the young boy & for that they have our gratitude but we would expect better than for them to film & use a three year old's pain the way it's being done today," he added.

What shocked most people was the kid's image wherein he is exhorting his grandfather to wake up. Oblivious of his fate, the crying kid runs for help, before being taken away from the spot.

While reacting over the heart-breaking incident, many netizens wrote that "This trauma shall stay with this kid for a lifetime. #Sopore."

"Oh Sopore! Blood-soaked cookies, he held on. Grandfathers love kids to squat on their chest, playway. As if, the kid was granting a last wish. But then the cold body of grandfather turned the kid's face steel-cold. If bullets, biscuits go together, they should turn souls. All awaiting 'rescue'," senior journalist Pirzada Ashiq tweeted.

Last week, a six-year-old boy was killed in more or less similar circumstances in Anantnag.

Little Nihaan Bhat was sleeping in a parked car when he was hit by a bullet.The child's killing drew widespread anger and condemnation.

Rajnath, Army Chief To...

earlier visited Leh on May 22.

The Indian and Chinese armies are locked in a standoff position at multiple locations in eastern Ladakh for the last seven weeks. The tension escalated manifold after 20 Indian soldiers were killed in a violent clash in Galwan Valley on June 15.

The Chinese side also suffered casualties but it is yet to give out the details.

The defence minister's visit to the region comes in the midst of India significantly ramping up the number of troops and weaponry along the Line of Actual Control(LAC) in the eastern Ladakh region.

Following the Galwan Valley clashes, the army has sent thousands of additional troops to forward locations along the border besides moving in heavy weapons.

The IAF has also moved air defence systems as well as a sizeable number of its frontline combat jets and attack helicopters to several key air bases.

On Tuesday, the Indian and Chinese armies held the third round of Lt General-level talks during which both sides agreed on the need for an "expeditious, phased and stepwise" de-escalation as a "priority" to end the standoff.

However, military sources did not give any indications of early resolution of the standoff, and said it may continue till winters.

The process of disengagement along the LAC is "complex", sources said but added that the 12-hour discussions on Tuesday reflected the commitment of both sides to reduce tensions in the region.

The Tuesday talks took place on the Indian side of the LAC in Chushul sector in eastern Ladakh.

The Indian delegation at the meeting was headed by 14 Corps Commander Lt Gen Singh while the Chinese side was led by the Commander of the Tibet Military District Major General Liu Lin.

It was the third senior military commander level engagement to discuss issues related to disengagement at the faceoff sites along the LAC and de-escalation in the border areas.

In the previous two rounds of talks, the Indian side demanded immediate withdrawal of Chinese troops from various areas in the region.

Following the Galwan Valley incident, the government has given the armed forces "full freedom" to give a "befitting" response to any Chinese misadventure along the LAC, the 3,500-km de-facto border, sources said.

The first round of the Lt General talks were held on June 6 during which both sides finalised an agreement to disengage gradually from all the standoff points beginning with Galwan Valley.

However, the situation deteriorated following the Galwan Valley clashes as the two sides significantly bolstered their deployments in most areas along the LAC.

The situation in eastern Ladakh deteriorated after around 250 Chinese and Indian soldiers were engaged in a violent face-off on May 5 and 6. The incident in Pangong Tso was followed by a similar incident in north Sikkim on May 9.

China Welcomes Progress...

Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said that Chinese and Indian military commanders held third round of talks on June 30.

He said the "two sides continue working towards implementing the consensus reached at the two earlier rounds of commander-level talks and made progress in effective measures by frontline troops to disengage and deescalate the situation."

"China welcomes that," Zhao said in a reply posted on the Foreign Ministry website to a query about the June 30 senior commander-level talks.

"We hope the Indian side will work with the Chinese side towards the same goal, keep up close communication through military and diplomatic channels, and ease the situation and reduce the temperature along the border," he said.

The Indian and Chinese armies are locked in a bitter standoff in multiple locations in eastern Ladakh for the last seven weeks, and the tension escalated manifold after 20 Indian soldiers were killed in a violent clash in Galwan Valley on June 15. The Chinese side also suffered casualties but it is yet to give out the details.

In the talks on June 22, the two sides arrived at a "mutual consensus"

to "disengage" from all the friction points in eastern Ladakh.

The first round of the Lt General-level talks were held on June 6 during which both sides finalised an agreement to disengage gradually from all the standoff points beginning with Galwan Valley.

However, the situation deteriorated following the Galwan Valley clashes as the two sides significantly bolstered their deployments in most areas along the Line of Actual Control.

Covid-19 Claims Six More...

Block as a case of hypertension, hypothyroidism with community acquired pneumonia with Type 1 respiratory failure," they said, adding that she expired at 6 a.m. on Wednesday.

Later in the evening, SKIMS confirmed two more Covid-19 deaths.

Among them was a middle-aged woman from Kandi Kupwara and a man from south Kashmir's Anantnag.

"The patient was admitted on June 30 as a case of carcinoma of unknown origin with Right I/lj dvt with anemia," Medical Superintendent SKIMS, Professor Farooq Jan said.

"The Patient had undergone peritoneal biopsy and developed post operation sepsis. She was admitted in medical observation on June 27 with complaints of vomiting and hematochesia," he added.

Jan said that the Covid-19 swab was taken during that admission which came out positive following which patient was shifted to IDB.

"She expired on at 05:30 p.m. because of cardiopulmonary arrest," he added.

Meanwhile, 45-year-old man from Undoo Shangus Anantnag died "due to cardiopulmonary arrest" at 6 p.m. at the same hospital.

Admitted on June 28, Professor Jan said patient was "k/c/o AML." He came out positive or the covid-19 on June 28.

With the deaths, 107 people so far have succumbed to the virus in J&K— 94 from the Valley and 13 from Jammu division.

Srinagar district with 25 deaths has the highest fatalities followed by Baramulla (17), Kulgam (13), Shopian (12), Anantnag (9), eight each from Jammu and Budgam, Kupwara (6), Pulwama (four) while one death each has been reported from Bandipora, Poonch, Doda, Udhampur, Rajouri and Kathua (with GNS inputs)

25 Paramilitary Men, 5 Cops

to the union territory recently, the officials said.

They said Baramulla district in north Kashmir recorded the highest number of COVID-19 cases -- 49 -- on Wednesday. It was followed by 32 each in Srinagar and Shopian districts.

Six districts -- Pooch, Kathua, Reasi, Kishtwar, Ramban and Bandipora -- did not have any fresh cases detected in the past 24 hours, the officials said.

Among the 85 cases from SKIMS, include CRPF personnel from 185, 177, 162, 181 battalions from Pulwama, Sopore, Kupwara and Charar-e-Sharief Budgam. Besides it, Chest Diseases hospital confirmed five cops from Police Station Shadi Pora Ganderbal, and two paramilitary BSF men with travel history from Chandigarh, three paramilitary men from SSB 14 battalion Fatehpora Ganderbal, and a soldier from BB Cant here Covid-19 positive.

With Wednesday's fresh cases, the total number of coronavirus-infected persons in Jammu and Kashmir reached 7,695.

Of these, 6,065 are in Kashmir and 1,630 in the Jammu region, the officials said.

Hurriyat (M) Meets...

"APHC members advised people to be very vigilant at this time and not sell their land or any property to outsiders at any cost," the spokesperson said.

He said the members recalled the events from 1931 and said that when the people of J&K stood up for the realisation of their aspirations, till date those aspirations and there will have been repeatedly compromised.

"Since 1947 there have also been attempts to change the demographic character of J&K and in August 2019 a final nail in the coffin was hammered in this regard. These attempts at demographic engineering are completely unacceptable to the people of J&K who have totally rejected it," the members, according to the spokesperson said.

The senior Hurriyat leaders also reiterated APHC's basic stand that the dispute of Jammu and Kashmir has to be resolved peacefully as per the wishes and aspirations of the people of J&K among the three stakeholders India,Pakistan and people of J&K.

"Dialogue among the three stakeholders is the best alternative method to resolve the issue that APHC has consistently advocated and even participated in. While Resolution of the Kashmir issue is the best guarantee of real peace and subsequent prosperity in the subcontinent," the Hurriyat spokesperson said.

The APHC members said that they will continue to pursue persistently for peaceful resolution of Kashmir conflict, he added.

The meeting also condemned the killing of civilian in Sopore and sought an end to such killings.

NC Leaders Seek End...

are suffering incarceration at their residences since August 5 last year, when the centre withdrew special status of the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir state and divided it into two union territories.

They said that no order for their detention has been served to them till date.

They said their fundamental right of movement has been illegally and unlawfully curtailed and any movement beyond the confines of the house has been restricted.

No order, whether preventive or otherwise, justifying such confinement has till date been served upon them, they have said.

Sagar, the Public Safety Act against whom was recently quashed by the Jammu and Kashmir High Court, said that despite the court order, his movement has been restricted by the police.

The leaders said that either they should be given the order on their detention or they would move a court to get directions for their release.

The leaders, who also included former ministers Mohammad Shafi Uri, Abdul Rehman Rather, Choudhary Mohammad Ramzan and Mubarak Gul, said despite repeated requests to either set them free or provide them with orders specifying the arrest and grounds thereof, no steps have been taken till date.

Demanding immediate removal of all restrictions on their movement, the leaders threatened to take legal course to end their "illegal confinement".

Most of these leaders, including former ministers and legislators, were taken into preventive custody or kept under house arrest on

August 5 last year, when the Centre also announced revocation of the special status to Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370.

Three former chief ministers including National Conference president Farooq Abdullah and his son Omar Abdullah along with other leaders were released subsequently after revocation of the PSA against them.

Among others who have approached the home department include former ministers Aga Syed Roohullah, Mir Saifullah, Basharat Bukhari and Mohammad Khalil Bandh.

Govt To Digitise Land...

of land records in J and K under the Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP) and expressed concern over the slow speed and output of the work, they said.

In this direction, the administration has strengthened the survey and land records department by posting directors in districts of Doda, Baramulla, Udhampur and Rajouri and others districts on June 26, the sources said.

The laws and acts were used to usurp the government lands in a planned way, including under the Roshni Act, they said.

Those who had state land under their cultivation in Kharif 1958 AD, were given tenancy rights of such state land vide government notification LB 6. Subsequently, vide S-432 notification, such tenants of the state agricultural land were given proprietary rights, but without right to alienate such land," a senior official said.

In districts of Poonch, Rajouri and Doda as well as in other districts, a major scam has happened wherein some corrupt revenue officers have mutated land in favour of those under notification of S-432 who were even not born in 1958, the official sources said.

A huge chunk of state land has been illegally mutated under notification S-432 in favour of undeserving people, they added.

In 1970, when agrarian reforms were introduced vide J-K Agrarian Reforms Act, the then government had put a ban on LB-6 and mutations under S-432.

But when Ghulam Nabi Azad became the chief minister of J-K, he deliberately removed this ban on S-432 to encourage illegal transfer of state land to occupants born after 1958, the sources added.

The revenue department has already missed three earlier deadlines -- February 2018, March 2019 and June 2019 -- for completion of the digitisation of land records in the twin capital cities of Srinagar and Jammu in phase I, they said.

The digitisation process was started by the revenue department in 2015 through its land records management agency, a nodal agency of the department.

The official data presented by the then state government in the erstwhile legislative assembly regarding digitisation revealed that against the target of scanning 666.49 lakh revenue documents, only 164.61 lakh revenue documents (58.77 lakh in Kashmir and 105.84 lakh in Jammu) had been scanned till December 2017.

Ex-MD SICOP Held In...

the ACB spokesperson said.

He said that Dua and his family had also acquired large number of goods carriers, trucks besides four luxury cars and two houses and two plots.

"In addition, the retiree public servant has also raised a double storey palatial house in Posh Nanak Nagar area over a piece of land measuring 2 kanals approximately which clearly indicates that the accused is having property disproportionate to his known sources which has been acquired by him through illegal and corrupt practices during his service career," the Bureau spokesperson said.

He said that the accused was given ample time and opportunity to provide details of the assets and properties acquired by him.

"Further investigations are going on," he added.

PM Modi Quits Chinese...

with Chinese President Xi Jinping, they noted, adding that it is difficult to remove posts on Weibo in which pictures of Xi feature.

All the posts are deleted now, the sources said.

The BJP's IT wing head Amit Malviya said Modi's decision to quit Weibo sends out a "loud and clear" message that if red lines are crossed, then there will be consequences.

"Prime Minister Modi quits Chinese social media platform Weibo. The message is loud and clear. If red lines are crossed, there will be consequences... What started at the borders has now acquired multiple dimensions. And it may just be the beginning," Malviya tweeted.

Sources said Modi's followers' count at Weibo stands at 244,000 - which was roughly the same when the deletion of posts began.

The Modi government recently banned 59 Chinese apps, saying 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 ties between India and China have come under strain due to their military standoff at Ladakh border.

Shabir Shah Given 'Proper'...

said Shah's medical condition made him prone to COVID-19.

The three-page report filed on Wednesday said that Shah has already been put in a separate cell, as requested in his application, and proper medical check ups and medication are being provided to him.

After the submission, the court disposed of the application.

Advocate Khan had said in the application, 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 first case was registered against Shah in 2007 for alleged money laundering in 2005 for terror financing.

Shah was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate 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 AslamWani.

ED claimed that Rs 63 lakh was recovered from Wani, out of which Rs 52 lakh was allegedly to be delivered to Shah, and money was received from "enemy countries" like Pakistan to promote terrorism in India.

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

In the second case, the NIA took Shah in custody in June 2019 in connection with probe into a separate terror funding case involving Jama'at-ud-Da'wah (JuD) chief Hafiz Saeed, the alleged mastermind of 2008 Mumbai terror attack.

Shah is currently in judicial custody in both the cases.

KSSIA Warns To Close Businesses As Major Contracts Go To Non-Local Units

Govt Waiting To Put Last Nail In The Coffin Of Local Industry: Illahi

Srinagar: Kashmir Small Scale Industrial Association (KSSIA) Industrial Estate Baghi Ali Mardan Khan on Tuesday expressed its anguish over the alleged failure of the government to save the remnants of local industrial units, most of which have already culminated in a debt trap and breathed its last due to unprecedented business interruptions and “callous attitude of authorities”.

In a meeting held under the chairmanship of President KSSIA Syed Fazal Illahi, the members warned of a volcanic situation ahead where the local entrepreneurs would be forced to close down all their establishments and retrench their labor force, a KSSIA spokesperson said.

The members, he said have put the blame of such volatile situation squarely on the shoulders of the government and bureaucracy that is probably waiting for “putting the last nail in the coffin of local industry”.

“Even though the Government of India woke up within a month of COVID lockdown to announce various measures for making up the losses of trade and industry, the local bureaucrats continue to be in deep slumber here despite such a lockdown for almost a year now”, the members, according to the spokesperson said.

“No concrete proposal for affording any relief to the local enterprises has so far been devised or submitted to any relevant authority here or at the Centre,” they added.



“They alleged that instead of extending any relief, the local industry is fast being deprived of its due share from the developmental works and ongoing projects resulting in sharp fall in the demand and marketing of their products.”

“The members informed that all major developmental schemes in Jammu and Kashmir are presently being executed by nonlocal contractors who procure their industrial goods from outside,” the spokesperson said.

While quoting some examples, the members mentioned that the major schemes of power development department for laying and installation of transmission system has been entrusted to non-locals and now the material like transformers, conductors etc is also being procured from outside enterprises leaving about 200 industrial units in Jammu and Kashmir jobless.

“The members demanded a probe into the decision, taken by authorities to procure steeply priced Godrej and Chinese furniture for Panchayat houses and other ordinary departments worth crores, that severely affected the viability of hundreds local units engaged in this activity,” the spokesperson said.

Speaking at the meeting, the President KSSIA expressed his dismay over the “insensitive behavior and callous attitude” of the authorities that has resulted in the depression of the local enterprises.

He said that the government needs to come clean on the revival of distressed industry or else the time may not be far away when the existing entrepreneurs would prefer to take an exit route besides that no prospective entrepreneur would venture in setting up new units in Jammu and Kashmir.

Illahi expressed his concern that huge amount of payment due to the enterprises was withheld by various government departments despite an assurance for its immediate release by Union Finance Minister several months back.

The president assured the members of formalizing future strategy for saving the dilapidated industry in consultation with other industrial estates of Jammu and Kashmir and their apex organizations, the spokesperson added.

DM Budgam urges Imams, Muftis for adhering COVID-19 related SOPs

BUDGAM: District Magistrate Budgam, Shahbaz Ahmad Mirza today convened a meeting of religious scholars, aimas, muftis of various jamia masajids, dargas located across the district.

While addressing the meeting, the DM said that the aim of this meeting is to apprise the participants to adhere to the instructions envisaged under lockdown guidelines and ensure that no gathering of any kind assembles in any mosques or shrines in the district.

He said these steps have been taken to control the spread of deadly COVID-19 virus and as aimas and muftis are respected citizens all over, they shall impart guidance and ensure that people abide by all norms and maintain social distancing.

The DM urged upon imams to coordinate and co-operate with the Village Level Committees already set up for the purpose of creating awareness among people regarding do's and don'ts of covid-19 pandemic.

He further instructed all SDMs to conduct public awareness programme on COVID-19 pandemic in concerned division of the District. The DM emphasized that, “as responsible citizens of the society, everyone has to come forward and show an element of discipline and sense of responsibility in fighting war against Covid-19 pandemic. All aimas, muftis present during the meeting assured the DM of following all guidelines and instructions that were discussed in the meeting.

J&K Bank opens ATM at Tarigam in Kulgam

Srinagar, Jul 1: J&K Bank today commissioned an Automated Teller Machine (ATM) in Tarigam area of south Kashmir's district Kulgam.

While maintaining the social distancing norms, District Development Commissioner (DDC) Kulgam Showkat Aijaz Bhat and bank's Zonal Head Kashmir (South II) Fayaz Ahmad Bhat jointly inaugurated the ATM housed in the premises of Business Unit Tarigam in presence of ADC Shabir Ahmad Bhat, Cluster Head Kul-

gam Iftikhar Abdullah Sofi, LDO Kulgam Ghulam Rasool Mir and Head Business Unit Tarigam Mir Shakeel Ahmad. Valuable customers, locals, and officials of the bank and local administration were also present on the occasion.

On the occasion, the DDC interacted with the locals and hailed the bank's management especially its Chairman and Manager Director Rajesh Kumar Chhibber for providing the financial touchpoint in the area.

12 Top Militant Commanders Prime Targets: IGP

Agencies

Srinagar: Police on Wednesday said that twelve top commanders from various outfits were “prime targets” of police and security forces in the Valley.

Addressing reporters here, IGP Kashmir Vijay Kumar said that 118 militants were killed this year including 57 from Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, 24 from Lashkar-e-Toiba and 22 from Jaish-e-Mohammad besides seven militants from ISJK and one slain from Al-Badr.

He termed as big success in killing top commanders of the militant outfits that include Reyaz Naikoo of Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, Haider of LeT, Qari Yasir of JeM, Burhan Koka of AGH and Fouji Bhai of JeM. “HM's poster boy (Junaid Sehrai) who was luring youth towards militancy raising funds was also killed.

The police officer said local militant recruitment has come down this year by about 48 per cent and termed the same a major big success for the police and other uniformed forces. “Among the 67 new recruits, 24 were killed, 12 were arrested,” he said and urged parents to appeal their children to return back. “We promise we will facilitate their return and won't lodge any case against them,” the IGP said.




He said 12 top commanders are “prime targets and said their movement is being tracked so that they are killed soon.

“The Pakistani militants include Jaish's Lambu, who is also known as Adnan Bhai, then there is Walid bhai and Ghazi Rashid, also from


Jaish. Ghazi Rashid is believed to be an ex-Pakistani army man,” he said, adding, “LeT's Usman Bhai, Ishfaq and Yousuf Kandoo, who is from Budgam, are also our targets.” He said that list also includes “Dr Saifullah, who took over command of Hizbul Mujahideen after the killing of Riyaz Naikoo, and Farooq Nali, Ashraf Molve and Zuhaib Wani, who have been involved in a number of killings of policemen,” Kumar said.

Terming Narcotic-related crimes as second important for police after militancy, he said, it spoils “our youth.

“We are doing lot on this front and don not highlight it in media. Last six months alone, 304 cases have been registered and 496 people involved in this have been arrested. 22.56 Heroin worth Rs 200 Crore as per market price beside 200 kg charu, 10 thousands bottles of syrups used by youth, 800 injections etc have been seized. Also Rs 1.37 Crore has been seized as well,” he said. The top police officer also announced that recent Handwara case is being handed over to NIA. (GNS)



OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER BUDGAM
CHAIRMAN DISTRICT HEALTH SOCIETY)



PROVISIONAL SELECTION LIST.

Provisional selection list of below mentioned candidates to be engaged on Contractual basis under National Mental Health Programme, Budgam in response to our earlier advertisement No: CMOB/NHM/19-20/2786-92 dated 09-10-2019 for the posts of Clinical Psychologist, Psychiatric Social Worker, Psychiatric Nurse and Programme Manager given below shown at annexure “A”.

ANNEXURE “A”

A. Clinical Psychologist.

Name of Candidate	S/O, D/O, W/O	Total points out
Abdul Ahad Bhat		
Firdous Ahmad Rather		

Psychiatric Social Worker:

Name of Candidate	S/O, D/O, W/O	Residence	Total points out of 100	Remarks
Mutina Rashid	Ab Rashid Wani	Kanihama		
Javaid Ahmad Malik	Khazir Mohammad Malik			Waiting 1

Psychiatric Nurse

Name of Candidate	S/O, D/O, W/O	Residence	Total points out of 100	Remarks
Mir Aabroo Mushtaq	Mushtaq Ahmad Mir			
Irshada Ali	Ali Mohd Parray	Chillyech	Chadoora	

Terms and Conditions:

- The provisionally selected candidates are directed to report to the Office of the Chief Medical Officer Budgam within 7 days from the date of publication of this list along with all the necessary original documents failing which they shall forfeit their claim for Hiring engagement without any further notice in this regard; and the candidate next in the merit list as per the unit of selection shall be considered for the contractual engagement.
- The selection is subject to the verification of original documents from the respective quarters.
- The Hiring appointee shall be terminated in case of any adverse from the verification of testimonials.
- The Hiring appointee shall be required to work at the place and against the post to which s/he has been appointed and shall not be eligible for transfer from place of posting.
- The selected candidates shall have no claim for monthly honorarium till the certificates are verified from the recognized competent authority.
- Errors and omissions are accepted.

No. CMOB/NHM/20-21/303926-33
Dated: 30-06-2020

Chief Medical Officer
(Vice Chairman District Health Society)
Budgam

DIPK-2377/20

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

M JAR

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have applied for the issuance of pesticides license under the name & style "Wani Pesticides & Fertilizers." If anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may contact Plant Protection officer Lalmandi Srinagar within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Sameer Ahmad Waqni
S/o Mohammad Ramzan Wani
R/o Shirpora (Pattan)

T PT

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
10 Zu al-Qa'dah
1441

PRAYERS

FAJR	3: 39
ZUHR	12: 35
ASR	5:35
Magrib	7:50
ISHA	9:30

This Day In History

- 1298 - Battle on Hasenbuhl (Gollheim) between German kings Adolf and Albrecht I
- 1582 - Battle of Yamazaki: Toyotomi Hideyoshi defeats Akechi Mitsuhide
- 1600 - Battle at Newport: Earl Mauritius van Nassau beats Spanish Army
- 168 - 7 King James II disbands English parliament
- 1698 - Thomas Savery patents the first steam engine
- 1794 - Second Battle of Seneffe: France-Austria
- 1823 - Bahia Independence Day: the end of Portuguese rule in Brazil, with the final defeat of the Portuguese crown loyalists in the province of Bahia
- 1839 - Slaves aboard a Spanish schooner La Amistad revolt to secure their freedom while being transported from one Cuban port to another
- 1916 - Lenin says Imperialism is caused by capitalism
- 1916 - Russian offensive in Armenia
- 1921 - Warren G. Harding signs a joint congressional resolution declaring the official end of war with Germany
- 1940 - Indian independence leader Subhas Chandra Bose is arrested and detained in Calcutta
- 1947 - Military coup discovered in France
- 1949 - The State of Vietnam is internationally recognised, governing the southern half of Vietnam, with Bao Dai as chief of state
- 1971 - USSR performs underground nuclear test
- 1972 - India and Pakistan sign Simla Agreement peace accord
- 1982 - Soyuz T-6 returns to Earth
- 1985 - Andrei Gromyko appointed president of USSR
- 1985 - European Space Agency launches Giotto (Halley's Comet Flyby)
- 2001 - Bush Administration announce that it will seek to let oil companies drill on about 1,500,000 acres of the Gulf of Mexico
- 2001 - UN Security Council, facing an almost certain Russian veto, agrees to postpone indefinitely a vote on the US-led "smart sanctions" package for Iraq
- 2006 - Sri Lanka's Sanath Jayasuriya (152) and Upul Tharanga (109) compile world record cricket ODI opening stand of 286 vs England at Headingley
- 2010 - Oil tanker truck explosion in South Kivu, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, kills at least 230 people
- 2014 - Former French President Nicolas Sarkozy is criminally charged with corruption by French prosecutors
- 2015 - 62 people are killed after the Kim Nirvana ferry capsizes off the coast of the Philippines
- 2016 - Large lorry bomb in Baghdad kills at least 125 people and wounds 150, Islamic State claims responsibility
- 2017 - World Health Organization declares Ebola outbreak in Democratic Republic of Congo over (4 deaths)
- 2018 - British divers discover 12 boys and their coach alive in Tham Luang Nang Non cave, Thailand after being trapped for 9 days by monsoon flooding

From KO Archives

Valley Rivers Swell As Glaciers Melt

Pulwama Areas Under Laar Waters

Observer News service

SRINAGAR Rivers and streams in the valley have registered an alarming increase in water levels due to the intense spell of heat gripping the region.

Several government departments have been put on alert to deal with an imminent threat of floods, even as over two hundred households have been displaced in Pulwama due to waters from the swollen Laar nullah entering inhabited areas.

Glaciers melting under the abnormally high temperatures have raised levels in the Jhelum and other rivers and streams of the valley.

In Pulwama a sudden surge in the Laar stream has inundated a large area in Jora village, displacing 250 of its six hundred households, a KNS re-ort said.

Scores of houses have come under water and hundreds of kanals of land have been submerged, the report said. People have fled their homes seeking higher ground for safety.

The Aribal area, located on the banks of the Laar too has been inundated. Water has entered dozens of residential houses the report said.

A delegation from the affected areas has met the additional deputy commissioner Pulwama to apprise him of the situation. The ADC has directed the tehsildar concerned to dispatch a team to review the situation and organise relief for the flood-hit population

Water has entered paddy fields in several places in the (utle) because of rivers over-flowing their banks.

Experts fear that a flood situation is imminent if the heat spell persists with its present intensity. The govt has ordered the departments concerned at the district level to be on alert to deal with any eventuality. The metrological department says that although the maximum temperature is 5 degrees Celsius above normal and the minimum temperature 7 degrees Celsius above normal, the present situation cannot be characterised as an intense or extraordinary heat wave

The rest of the Country is experiencing normal monsoons and rainfall can be expected in the valley within the next two to three days, a spokesman of the metrological department said.

(Kashmir Observer, 02 July, 2005)

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Point Of Order

On Monday, an order from J&K's Food department asked oil companies to stock up on LPG cylinders in Kashmir Valley. The order evoked a sense of de javu among people as they were quickly reminded of the successive government orders in the run up to revocation of Article 370 on August 5. Then also an order had called on pilgrims and tourists in the state to "immediately" curtail their stay and leave the state "as soon as possible". The order cited an unspecified looming security threat for the extraordinary measure. This had instantly triggered panic. People rushed out of their houses to stock up on the essentials. Hundreds of vehicles lined up for fuel at the filling stations. Many people without vehicles were seen carrying fuel in cans, bottles and even vacuum flasks. And then also the government had asked people not to worry and termed the order as routine. Even the then Governor Satya Pal Malik had assured people that the situation was hunky dory. But as August 5 proved it, all such assurances came to nought and there was nothing normal about the order.

Now this time again the Food department, has said the order was routine, issued to prevent a shortfall of "essential commodities". The department has said that "some people are spreading false information regarding a communication with respect to the LPG stock."

But bitten by the past experience, this assurance has hardly calmed the nerves in the Valley. People are rightly questioning the order and its timing. Kashmir has hardly witnessed such type of orders in the middle of summer. More so, when it explains the urgency of stocking up on LPG "due to closure of the National Highway on account of frequent landslides". The National Highway hardly closes during summer, nor are there any landslides.

This, in no way, inspires the confidence of the people. To cite again the example of last year, the government order asking outsiders to leave the Valley had followed within an hour of an assertion by the state's top security brass at a press conference in Srinagar that the security forces had reigned in the once runaway separatist militancy and brought the situation under control.

Former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has rightly criticized the move and asked the government "to explain these orders". And the Government should. But then the administration's credibility is now so low that even an explanation won't do. As Omar has put it, "after all the lies & false assurances last year even if/when the government explains these orders hardly any of us will take the assurances at face value". For its orders and explanations to carry faith with people, the government needs to rebuild its credibility.

OTHER OPINON

On India-China stand-off

After weeks of more diplomatic wording, the statement by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on June 26 appears to signal that patience in dealing with Beijing is reaching a dead end. The statement said publicly, for the first time since reports of the stand-off, that the Chinese build-up and clashes with Indian troops, including the Galwan Valley incident on June 15 in which 20 Indian soldiers were brutally killed, had a "larger context". Moving away from previous statements that alluded to the clashes in May as quite routine, and borne from "differences in perception" of the LAC, the MEA said that PLA behaviour "this year" was a shift from the past. It also admitted that the Chinese side had built up a large armed presence since early May, making it clear that India's strategic establishment has had much to worry about. There are other shifts of note. While each of the MEA's several references to the situation at LAC in May and June had mentioned dialogue as the way forward, its latest statement makes it clear that it is China's responsibility to restore peace and tranquillity along the LAC, without citing further dialogue. It warned that a continuation of the current situation "would only vitiate the atmosphere" for the relationship, indicating that the current status quo is unacceptable. In detailing the number of clashes, the use of unauthorised violence on June 15, and the sheer numbers of troops and weaponry "amassed", the government is pointing out that China has violated every agreement on border peace that the two sides have committed to since the 1993 Agreement. In short, the message is this — not only is the situation at the LAC of concern, but China's actions have also probably undone decades of careful negotiations on the boundary.

Given all that the MEA statement now acknowledges, it is only inevitable that the government will face probing questions on its silence when such a large troop mobilisation by China threatened Indian frontiers weeks ago, and whether it missed signals out of Beijing that this build-up was intended. Other questions remain about Prime Minister Modi's insistence and the MEA's consistent stand that Chinese troops have not come across the LAC, and that there have only been "attempted transgressions" by the PLA. Satellite pictures and media accounts point to the contrary. The government must now ensure some clarity. The nation must be apprised on the challenges and the steps planned beyond ongoing military and diplomatic exchanges, to ensure that the status quo ante, prior to May, is restored by China. Each step, whether it involves military action, international support, or sanctions by banning Chinese products or the participation of Chinese telecom and other companies, will come with serious consequences, and the government must ensure wide consultations, simultaneously preparing the people for what may follow.

The Hindu



Hindi-Chini Bye -Bye

Civilizational exchanges, insularity and national rivalries

MAKHDOOMMOHI-UD-DIN

Chinese had imperial impressions of themselves as well. There was "Sinic Core" then non-Chinese Manchus, Mongols, Uighurs, Turks and Tibetans who had to be controlled for security reasons and 'Outer Zone' of barbarians who are nonetheless expected to pay tribute and acknowledge Chinese superiority.

What has shaped the self-perceptions of Indians and Chinese? How have they viewed each other in historical past? Some allusions to this can be found in the book 'The Argumentative Indian' by Amartya Sen. The Nobel laureate writes "the reach of Buddhism and the presence of Chinese Buddhists in India would have done something to challenge the tendency to see the world in narrowly Indian terms". When in the fifth century Faxian visited Buddhist monastery at Jetavana in India, the monks were intrigued by the Chinese coming all the way from a border country.

Xuanzang, another Chinese Buddhist pilgrim travelled in India in the seventh century stayed at ancient university at Nalanda. Monks made pleas to Xuanzang to stay on and make India his home saying 'India is land of Buddha.... China is a country of mleechas of unimportant barbarians who despise the religion and the faith Buddha was not born there..... The mind of people is narrow and their coarseness profound'.

Xuanzang, the guest, exercised restraint, but overweening self-righteousness hurt his national pride. His rejoinder was stately: "in my country magistrates are clothed with dignity and laws are everywhere respected. The emperor is virtuous and subject loyal.....humanity and justice are highly esteemed".

Chinese had imperial impressions of themselves as well. There was "Sinic Core" then non-Chinese Manchus, Mongols, Uighurs, Turks and Tibetans who had to be controlled for security reasons and 'Outer Zone' of barbarians who are nonetheless expected to pay tribute and acknowledge Chinese superiority.

Traffic of ideas and people between Indian and Chinese civilizations was extensive in first millennium, but the 'balance of trade' was in favour of China. 'India was more receptive of two,' Amartya Sen cites Joseph Needham. Sino-Indian exchange of ideas in secular sciences and mathematics continued into second millennium. The creative arts, literature and languages were enriched. Even the word 'Mandarin' is derived from Sanskrit word 'Mantri' says Sanskrit scholar Sen.

China, writes Atul Kohli in his recent book Imperialism and Developing World had grown into insular, self-satisfied civilization that was wary of foreigners. Colonialism was making strides and slicing open breaches in the bulwarks of old Asian empires. India and China, suffered colonial experience. Trajectory of two, was however distinct. Colonial presence in India was long, deep, extensive and ruinous. It was not less calamitous for China. British imperialism dealt a body blow to national self-belief, cohesion and any pretence of unity. It gave rise to civil war and warlordism sapped much of the civilizational strength. Did the struggles for national liberation bring any broad cooperation between nationalist elites of two countries? Not really. The national liberation struggles have been too riveting and restrictive. Support for each other's national movement was not entirely absent, it was however spasmodic.

Rabindranath Tagore was first among the big nationalist icons of India to venture to look East and Far East. Shantiniketan, a university he founded in 1901 had staff and students from China and Far East. Tagore was received and welcomed by Chinese intellectual and nationalist Liang Qichao in 1923. Qichao was effusive in his praise: "our old brother [India] affectionate and missing for more than thousand years is coming to call on his little brother [China]". Tagore was however fiercely opposed by the Chinese radicals, booed, heckled and narrowly escaped an assault. Pankaj Mishra in his well acclaimed book 'From the Ruins of Empire' describes the Chinese mood: 'For ordinary Chinese, there were visible symbols of Indian self-subjection in their own midst; Parsi businessmen as middlemen in British opium trade with China,....Indian soldiers who helped the British quell the Boxer Risingand Sikh policemen unleashed on Chinese crowds'. Nehru had impressed Chiang Kai-Shek, Chinese leader of Kuomintang and his wife. On their visit to India during second world war, 'the Viceroy of India Lord Linlithgow', writes Ramachandra Guha 'commented, cattily that Madam Chiang was a Kittenish weakness for Nehru's

eyelashes'.

The post-colonial India of 1950 and war of the 1962, are making interesting comparisons to the present crisis. Home Minister Vallabhai Patel cautioned Nehru against dreamy idealism. The invasion on Tibet in 1950 was a rude jolt. 'Chinese ambitions in this respect not only cover the Himalayan slopes on our side but also include important parts of Assam', Patel wrote to Nehru. Nehru made a visit to China in 1954. He was greeted with standing ovations in Chinese cities. He wrote to his friend Edwinna Mountbatten: 'I had welcome in China such as I have in the big cities of Indiathat is saying something'.

Earlier border clashes and war in 1962 put Nehru on weak wicket. His fulminations against Chinese were not of any help. 'It [China] believes in the inevitability of war and does not want the tensions in the world to lessen'.

Jan Sang ideologue Deen Dayalu Upadhyay criticized Nehru 'for having more faith in Panchsheel perorations than in preparations and performance'.

Ramachandra Guha narrates an empathetic and literary illustration for Nehru's failure in Rukun Advani's novel Beethoven among Cows: "Nehru a decent man, was betrayed by perfidious communists".

Advani composed Hindi couplets to reflect the mood of times.

*Jaisedood our maliai, Hindi-Chini
Bhai Bhai
Hosh me ao, Hosh me ao, Chou Mao
Hosh me ao
Jaise noodle, vaise pulao, Nehru
saathchowmeinkhao,
Chou Mao hosh me ao, hosh me ao,
chowmeinkhao,
Hath milaogaa milao, Nehru saath-
haath milao,
Chou Mao hosh me ao, hosh me ao,
aurhaath milao,
Donobhaichou Mao, Nehru saath-
baithjao,
Baithjaouchowmeinkhao, Chou
Mao hosh me ao.*

Hindi chini Bye-bye is the clarion call in 2020 from TV studios.

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Drugs for Covid-19 infection

With ever-increasing cases of COVID-19, the situation is becoming worse in India. Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) has approved the Glenmark Pharmaceuticals' Fabiflu, the branded version of Favipiravir and Covifor, and the new version of Remdesivir. Doctors have claimed that these drugs could be used for treating early stages of COVID-19 infection. Glenmark has been given nod for experimental purpose. Favipiravir is

an oral tablet used for patients with comorbid conditions like diabetes, heart disease and other mild to moderate symptoms. The price of the generic version of the tablet is Rs 103 per tablet, with the recommended dose of 1800 mg on day one, followed by 800 mg twice for the next 14 days. Soon it will be available in the retail market for the treatment of patients infected with COVID-19. The drug had been used successfully in countries like China, Russia and Japan. The company claims that patients with less

infection will improve faster. It is less expensive than Remdesivir, and clinically successful in treating more than 80 percent of the patients. This drug can be used for emergency purposes.

However, many doctors suggest that the drug lacks robust evidence, and should undergo additional trials as it lacks the efficacy. It can be used for emergency purposes only. Since in many cases a normal person can be cured automatically in self-quarantine, many have raised questions about its 14-day trial. As of now, it is

very difficult to give a nod for the manufacturing of this drug.

The search for an ideal vaccine against COVID-19 is still incomplete. Some vaccines are in the final phase of the trial and need to be carefully examined. Post-market surveillance reports must be followed until we reach a final conclusion.

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In Kashmir, We Have Become Obituary Writers. We Grieve Our Orchards, The Fragrance Of Apples

Little boy who sat atop his grandfather’s body on roadside in Sopore took one final ride

SADIQ SHABAN

Imagine the kid’s mental state. Imagine someone suddenly taking away the love of a grandfather from you. Last week, a six-year-old boy was killed during an attack on soldiers in Anantnag. That kid was sleeping in a parked car when he was hit by a bullet. That incident too drew widespread anger and condemnation. Those images too went viral. Then everyone moved on.

How does one wrap his head around this travesty? A three-year-old, crying inconsolably, on his grandfather’s body. Surrounded by cop cars and soldiers, the child — his legs astride — sits atop the bloodied dead body. There is a powerful abruptness about this trauma.

The incident took place in my hometown of Sopore, around 50 kilometres from Srinagar, the capital of Jammu and Kashmir. The cops say the man was killed in a cross-fire between militants and soldiers. The slain man’s family says he was stopped and killed by soldiers in cold blood.

Like every time there is going to be a crossfire of versions. There is the version of the family and then there is the version of cops. By evening, these comparative narratives will take the shape of the most asinine TV debates.

For the media — there is where it ends. The news cycle will change tomorrow. For Kashmiris this will be another injustice heaped upon a pile of injustice in their collective conscience. For the family that lost their dear one, and the kid that lost his granddad today, it is an emotional void they may find hard to fill.

This is how the narrative of war plays out in the valley. The place where the car came to a screeching halt and this tragedy unfolded today is very near to an orchard where we stole apples while growing up. That era of innocence is over, I regret to inform.

We have now become a land of obituary writers. We grieve our orchards, the fragrance of apples. We mourn the innocence of three year olds.

Emotional trauma

Imagine the kid’s mental state. Imagine someone suddenly taking away the love of a grandfather from you. Last week, a six-year-old boy was killed during an attack on soldiers in Anantnag. That kid was sleeping in a parked car when he was hit by a bullet. That incident too drew widespread anger and condemnation. Those images too went viral. Then everyone moved on.

The violence in Kashmir, exacerbated after August 2019 when India’s prime minister Narendra Modi suddenly stripped the province’s limited political autonomy, has hit a new low. No one seems immune now. That includes children.

Images of the little boy, who was made to witness the killing of his grandpa today, may fade away from public memory soon. When we are done with the current orgy of sharing grisly images, we will patiently wait for the next lot.

But what all of us forget, conveniently, is this: along with our men and women who are falling to whatever frenzy this is — the luxury of innocence of our kids too is being taken away. It has come to such a pass now that something clearly seems amiss if a few mornings do not start with mourning in Kashmir.

A war of versions

Therefore this debate about whether the gentleman was made to alight his vehicle first before he was hit with



bullets or he stopped the car himself and then got off and was then killed — may continue. There will be many versions. Only the child bears the true witness, but he is just 3.

Former J&K CM Omar Abdullah, someone not known to watch his statements much these days, perhaps summed it aptly, noting the 3-year-old boy’s misery was being “broadcast to the whole world to drive home the ‘we good, they bad’ message.”

A quick look at social media and the endless stream

of politicians, activists, Hindutva hate factory bots along with pseudo nationalists are already at each other’s throats, spamming each other with their version of today’s incident.

Gut wrenching images

Earlier in the day I requested a cousin not to forward me the pictures but how long can one run away from a jinx? You try to scoot but it finds a way to confront you.

Disturbed by the images, I closed my eyes, trying to shut out the hurt. Trills of robin, singing like a drunk bard, rang in my ears. Those childhood sounds came from the orchard nearby. I remembered my own grandfather, who owned many apple trees.

For kids, grandparents are often magicians, creating magic. Sometimes they become our proverbial horses. The little boy who sat atop his grandfather’s body on the roadside in Sopore took one final ride today. Then the cops hauled him up. The images, for the lack of a better word, are already viral.

In a distance, innocence rode away.

Gulf News

Photographing The Beauty Of My Mother’s Decline

Making images of my mother as her dementia progresses is bringing us closer

CHERYLE ST. ONGE
New York Times

My mother has vascular dementia. Her brain, damaged from a slow decline in circulation, has left her with memory loss.

At 81 years old, she can climb stairs and sign her name. Knitting has fallen away, as has her use of a spoon. She can count hay bales in the field but will want to eat grain out of the horse’s bucket.

She speaks in sentences using a perfect pitch and emotion. While the words are real, they are far from correct.

From 1988 to 2003 my mother worked at the University of New Hampshire (in the United States) as an administrator in the Thompson School, an agriculture and life science college within the university. In the evenings, she worked in her studio, carving barred owls, chickadees, finches and eagles from chunks of wood.

My mother was open with me, sharing her tears and angst at being left so suddenly. We had many years of conversations about love, loss and ways to cope.

She knew every bird call, every feather, their feeding and flight patterns. When the dementia worsened, those words left, migrating elsewhere.

In the beginning, in 2015, she knew she was dying. She was at first angry, then resigned. In the car she asked me: “How can I die? Can you help me die? Why am I losing my mind?”

Hands on the wheel, I told her I had no plan. As her mind began to abandon her, those questions ebbed.

My mother and I cut our teeth on my father’s death. In 1975, he died on a surgery table after a car accident. A young driver swerved into our lane. We were in the car with him and unharmed; he had a ruptured spleen that prompted a fatal heart attack.

He was 39 years old. I was 14. My mother was 37. I am their only child. My father’s death was the lens through which I saw every aspect of my young life. I learned to appreciate the meditative qualities of knitting, of running, of being alone in a rural field, screaming in rage.

My mother was open with me, sharing her tears and angst at being left so suddenly. We had many years of conversations about love, loss and ways to cope.



‘We are loved’

“We are not struggling through life alone,” she told me. “We are loved.”

In the late 1990s, my husband built an apartment addition onto our house where my mother has lived for decades. Next to the horse paddock she planted beds of perennial flowers and rows of shrubs to attract birds.

The tomatoes she grew and canned fed us throughout the winter. She sewed dress-up clothes for my children — sequinned capes and tulle skirts — and saddle pads for each horse with their initials embroidered on the side. She drove cautiously, with snow tires in the winter.

Now my mother has no sense of consequences, no boundaries. When, in the time before the coronavirus, we saw young children at church, she would try to make them laugh, their squeals joining to inter-

rupt the sermon. When we are at a bakery, she lunges at the basket of rolls and grabs as many as she can fit in her hands.

Sometimes we will fold laundry together, dumping the mix of sheets and socks on the kitchen table. If I run upstairs to put the clothes away, she will get up from the table and dart to the pantry, breaking off one banana after another. Sometimes she eats three bananas in quick succession.

Ten minutes later she will look at the remaining few of the bunch and ask, “Can I have one of those?”

On the best days, her behaviour is amusing. Her laugh is so easy and contagious. She is effervescent and finds joy in the smallest places.

My mother hasn’t cried in four years; tears are my release. When she sways to a Dolly Parton song and tilts her head up, I sob for the person she was. Seeing this, she holds and comforts me; I feel an emotional connection.

Minutes later she will point at the shadow moving across the wall and laugh, saying, “I wonder what that is?”

Five years into her dementia, she is active and engages with life, even if the specifics of it are lost.

Lessening my depression

I began photographing my mother in April 2018. Joni Sternbach and Mary Ellen Bartley, two artist friends, suggested that my depression might be lessened if I made work.

I picked up my iPhone and found a patch of morning light in the living room. She blossomed, turning her face to the sun, pulling her shoulder in when I gestured for her to slide to the left. She seemed to enjoy the attention and the process. This was a surprise to me.

Now, hundreds of portraits later, she seems willing to try anything. She is happy to take direction and reacts to my reaction. When I am over the moon at the changing light and how her face is framed, she also smiles, happy at my happiness.

My mother doesn’t recognise her reflection, or her own image. Most adults avoid having their picture made. My mother is more childlike in that she has no concern.

With my camera, I document the joy and the light of her last years of life — the ways that she circles back home, even as she is leaving.

Cheryle St. Onge is an artist and educator. In 2009 she was the recipient of Guggenheim Fellowship in photography.

My mother was open with me, sharing her tears and angst at being left so suddenly. We had many years of conversations about love, loss and ways to cope



Agencies

People have been confined to their homes amid the pandemic and recently a Michigan State University researcher conducted a study to quantify what makes people happy with their neighbourhoods and discovered that it has almost nothing to do with the neighbourhood itself.

"It's all in our heads," said Zachary Neal, associate professor of psychology at MSU and author of the study. "Contrary to what many would think, characteristics of your neighbourhood have little to do

with how satisfied you are with it."

Published in the journal Urban Studies, Neal's research revisited findings from 27 earlier studies that spanned 11 countries in North America, Europe and Asia, and included a sample of more than 400,000 adults living in those neighbourhoods. Each study estimated how much an individual's satisfaction with his or her neighbourhood depended on the neighbourhood itself.

"I was interested in what makes people satisfied with their neighbourhoods and whether there's anything the residents or city planners could do to improve

satisfaction," Neal said. "Previous research about what matters has been mixed, which made me wonder if this research is looking for something that doesn't exist and that maybe neighbourhoods really don't have much to do with how satisfied people say they are."

By combining each study's estimate using meta-analysis, Neal computed a more precise estimate of the true impact of neighbourhoods. He found that all the characteristics of a community neighbourhood -- from curb appeal to its services, like snow ploughing -- account for just about 16% of a person's satis-

faction with the neighbourhood.

"Each study included an ICC, or intraclass correlation coefficient, which indicates how similar satisfaction is among people in the same neighbourhood," Neal said. "Across these studies, the ICC values were quite low, which means there is a lot of variation in satisfaction even among people in the same neighbourhood. That tells us something besides the neighbourhood itself is responsible for how much satisfaction each person reports having."

Neal explained that having a clear understanding of what makes people satisfied with their

communities is critical for people whose jobs are connected with building and maintaining neighbourhoods, such as local officials, developers and city planners. Additionally, enormous amounts of money go into neighbourhood maintenance; but, if people aren't so concerned with neighbourhood characteristics, then these efforts may not translate into increased satisfaction.

So, what does satisfaction depend on? Neal shared two likely prospects.

"One possible explanation is that a person's satisfaction may depend more on the person than

on the neighbourhood," Neal said. "Agreeable people are likely to be satisfied with their neighbourhood, but there will always be others who think that the grass is greener elsewhere."

The second possible determinant relates to a resident's perception of the neighbourhood as opposed to what it actually is.

"Perhaps neighbourhood satisfaction, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder," Neal said. "We might expect residents to be more satisfied with their neighbourhood if its schools are good. But, in practice, they will be more satisfied if they merely think

its schools are good, even if the schools aren't actually that great."

With millions of people staying home during the COVID-19 pandemic, Neal said there's a chance they might see their communities through a different lens.

"It's still early to tell, but the longer we are confined to our own neighbourhoods, the more perceptions of them might change," Neal said. "I'm collecting new data about neighbourhood satisfaction in Michigan during the stay-at-home order and hope to collect these data again after the order is lifted so we can understand how things are changing."

Experiences Of Cyberbullying Victims Differ By Their Ability To Handle Emotions

Agencies

While it is known the victims of bullying can have higher risks of future health and social problems, however different victims experience a broad range of responses and some may not suffer at all.

Researchers felt this implied there might be factors that could protect against some consequences of bullying. In a study of over 6,000 adolescents in Japan, they found a strong candidate in the moderation of what is known as emotional competence.

Online bullying, or cyberbullying, is not a new phenomenon, but as the world becomes more dependent on online communication, it does become a greater threat. Lead author Yuhei Urano, Associate Professor Ryu Takizawa and Professor Haruhiko Shimoyama from the Department of Clinical Psychology at the University of Tokyo and their team investigated protective factors for the adverse effects of cyberbullying victimization. They analyzed data from 6,403 adolescents aged 12 to 18 (1,925 male,



4,478 female) for their study.

"We chose users of a social networking app as participants of the study because they were likely to experience more online interactions than others," said Urano.

"The surveys explored instances of cyberbullying victimization and a cross-section of other personal and social information. These allowed us to investigate whether the ability to handle emotions, called emotional competence, correlated with the severity of the re-

percussions of cyberbullying."

What the researchers found may at first seem counterintuitive, but after careful analysis, their results showed that higher emotional skills were not always associated with better mental health; they may actually make things worse depending on the social context. It depends on the individual's specific emotional competence, defined as the ability to identify, understand, express, regulate and use emotions. There is intraper-

sonal emotional competence, the ability to handle one's own emotions, and interpersonal emotional competence, the ability to handle others' emotions.

"We thought that intrapersonal emotional competence showed buffering effects against cyberbullying because the ability to handle one's own emotions is known to have a positive impact on our mental health," said Urano. "On the other hand, we thought interpersonal emotional competence showed the opposite effect. Because the ability to understand emotional states in others may encourage individuals to dwell on the bully's intentions."

The researchers hope this study could pave the way to investigations about the different roles of intrapersonal and interpersonal emotional competence, both the positive and negative effects they may have. However, given the inherent complexity of the topic in question, they suggest that in order to correctly determine the causal relationships behind their results, more longitudinal studies should be conducted in the future.

Staring At Deep-Red Light May Improve Declining Eyesight

Agencies

LONDON- Researchers have found that staring at a deep-red light for three minutes a day can significantly improve declining eyesight.

Published in the Journals of Gerontology, the study could signal the dawn of new affordable home-based eye therapies, helping millions of people globally with naturally declining vision.

"Our study shows that it is possible to significantly improve vision that has declined in aged individuals, by using simple brief exposures to light wavelengths that recharge the lowered energy system in the retina cells," said study lead author Glen Jeffery from University College London in the UK.

"To try to stem or reverse this decline, we sought to reboot the retina's ageing cells with short bursts of longwave light," Jeffery added.

In humans, around the age of 40, cells in the eye's retina begin to age, and the pace of this ageing is caused in part when the



cell's mitochondria, whose role is to produce energy (known as ATP) and boost cell function, also start to decline.

Mitochondrial density is greatest in the retina's photoreceptor cells, which have high energy demands. As a result, the retina ages faster than other organs, with a 70 per cent ATP reduction over life, causing a significant decline in photoreceptor function as they lack the energy to perform their normal role.

Researchers built on their previous findings in mice, bumblebees and fruit flies, which all found significant improvements in the function of the retina's photoreceptors when their eyes were exposed to 670 nanometres (long wavelength) deep-red light.

For the study, 24 people (12

male, 12 female) aged between 28 and 72, who had no ocular disease, were recruited. All participants were then given a small LED torch to take home and were asked to look into its deep-red 670nm light beam for three minutes a day for two weeks.

Researchers found the 670nm light had no impact in younger individuals, but in those around 40 years and over, significant improvements were obtained.

The cone colour contrast sensitivity (ability to detect colours) improved by up to 20 per cent in some people aged around 40 and over. Improvements were more significant in the blue part of the colour spectrum that is more vulnerable in ageing.

Rod sensitivity (ability to see in low light) also improved significantly in those aged around 40 and over, though less than colour contrast, the researchers said.

"The technology is simple and very safe, using a deep-red light of a specific wavelength that is absorbed by mitochondria in the retina that supply energy for cellular function, the authors wrote.

It's About Talent, Not Platform: Tiktok Influencers Turn To Other Platforms After App Ban

Press Trust Of India

She's just 23, had 2.8 million followers on Tik Tok and was making up to Rs 30,000 a month but Niharika Jain, one of the many 'influencers' who found money and fame on the short form video app, is not complaining about the government ban. After all, it is about talent and she can quite easily switch to another platform, Jain said on Tuesday, a day after the government banned 59 apps with Chinese links, including the hugely popular TikTok, saying they were prejudicial to the sovereignty, integrity and se-

curity of the country.

"We are content creators and it is our talent that makes us popular. If not on TikTok, I can use some other platform to showcase my talent," Jain told PTI. The mass communication graduate was freelancing with different reality shows before taking a leap of faith to become a full time influencer on Tik Tok, posting videos about trending styles and fashion hacks.

She joined the platform in August and quickly gained 2.8 million followers, making Rs 15,000-30,000 for every brand video or a campaign. So yes, the government ban was a shock. "Posting videos on TikTok was

my bread and butter, but I understand the need for this government move. I completely support Mr Narendra Modi," the young woman said. There are several others like her.

They may have found stardom and even a possible career on Tik Tok but view the government ban as just a temporary setback and say they will soon find their groove on another platform.

TikTok is a short-form mobile video -- dance, lip-sync, comedy -- sharing platform. It is owned by ByteDance, a Beijing-based internet technology company founded in 2012.

TikTok had over 200 million us-

ers in India, most in the 16-24 age bracket, a company insider said. Its arrival in India in 2017 opened the doors to fame for many ordinary Indians -- be it Jain or a schoolgirl from Delhi, a couple from a town in Rajasthan or a dancer from a village in Jharkhand.

While these influencers are thankful for getting a platform to showcase their skills -- from dance and music to fashion and food -- many said the sole reason for their popularity is their talent.

Faridabad-based Sukrit Jain, also 23, created content under the handle TheGreatIndianFoodie and said he is unaffected by the ban.

"So what if TikTok is banned. Awesome content won't stop coming and will never end," the influencer said.

"It's our talent that brought us here, and I'm sure that if not on this platform, then on some other. But we will surely rise again soon," he added.

Sukrit Jain has already started expanding his content on other platforms like YouTube and Instagram.

TikTok might not have been a source of income for BJP leader Sonali Phogat but she was quite a star on the platform, where she would post videos of herself dancing. Phogat had over 280,000 followers on the platform.



Global Employment Crisis Deepening, Equivalent Of 400M Jobs Lost, Says UN

Agencies

GENEVA: The coronavirus crisis has taken a much heavier toll on jobs than previously feared, the UN said on Tuesday, warning that the situation in the Americas was particularly dire.

In a fresh study, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimated that by the mid-year



point, global working hours were down 14 percent compared to last December — equivalent to some 400 million full-time jobs.

That is more than double the number forecast by the UN organisation back in April, when it expected 6.7 percent of working hours to be lost by the end of the second three-month period of the year.

It is also far higher than the ILO estimate in late May, when it expected 10.7 percent of global working hours to vanish during the period. "Things are getting worse. The job crisis is deepening," ILO chief Guy Ryder said in an interview. "We are not through this yet," he warned.

The ILO said the new figures

reflected the worsening situation in many regions in recent weeks, especially in developing economies.

Its report pointed out that 93 percent of the world's workers live in countries still affected by some sort of workplace closures, with the Americas experiencing the greatest restrictions. The United States and Latin America are currently the areas hardest-hit by the pandemic, which has killed more than 500,000 people worldwide and infected more than 10 million.

Soaring transmission rates in the United States, which alone accounts for a quarter of all infections and deaths globally, and in countries like Brazil, which accounts more than 1.3 million cases, have hit the labour market hard.

The crisis is "hitting particularly hard the Americas, where we see the loss of jobs as being the worst in the world," Ryder said.

Overall, the Americas lost over 18 percent of working hours during the second quarter, equivalent to 70 million full-time jobs, the ILO said.

South America has shed a full 20.6 percent of all working hours, while North America has seen its working hours dip 15.3 percent, the study found. By comparison Europe, the Arab states, and most of Asia saw working hours dwindle by around 13 percent, while they fell just over 12 percent in Africa.

The crisis had also hit women harder, threatening decades of progress, said Ryder.

Saudis Stock Up, Brace For Tripled VAT In Kingdom's Austerity Push

Agencies

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Saudis braced Wednesday for a tripling in value-added tax, another unpopular austerity measure after the twin shocks of coronavirus and an oil price slump triggered the kingdom's worst economic decline in decades.

Retailers in the country reported a sharp uptick in sales this week of everything from gold and electronics to cars and building materials, as shoppers sought to stock up before VAT is raised to 15 percent.

The hike could stir public resentment as it weighs on household



incomes, pushing up inflation and depressing consumer spending as the kingdom emerges from a three-month coronavirus lockdown.

"Cuts, cuts, cuts everywhere," a Saudi teacher in Riyadh told AFP, bemoaning vanishing subsidies as salaries remain stagnant.

"Air conditioner, television, electronic items," he said, rattling off a list of items he bought last week ahead of the VAT hike.

"I can't afford these things from Wednesday."

With its vast oil wealth funding the Arab world's biggest economy, the kingdom had for decades been able to fund massive spending with no taxes at all.

It only introduced VAT in 2018, as part of a push to reduce its dependence on crude revenues.

Then, seeking to shore up state finances battered by sliding oil prices and the coronavirus crisis, it announced in May that it would triple VAT and halt a cost-of-living monthly allowance to citizens.



Trump Refuses To Lead As Pandemic Worsens And Allies Desert Him On Masks

Stephen Collinson | CNN

Washington: Most Presidents would try to stop the United States from barreling toward disaster. But Donald Trump has nothing to say and no answers to mitigate a calamity unfolding on his watch that he seems resolved to ignore.

On the day when the government's top infectious disease specialist Anthony Fauci said he would not be surprised to see the US record 100,000 new coronavirus cases per day, Trump refused to break his deafening silence.

And the day after his White House described record-breaking new infections that are sweeping the nation as "embers that need to be put out," Trump's campaign claimed credit for the "phenomenal" success of his botched pandemic leadership.

Trump is now pretty much the sole figure in authority in either party — including his major Republican allies — who refuse to wear or endorse face masks that are proven to slow the spread of coronavirus but that he has stigmatized as a liberal plot to harm

him politically.

Biden slams Trump on coronavirus: "Our wartime president has surrendered"

Biden slams Trump on coronavirus: "Our wartime president has surrendered"

"We must have no stigma, none, about wearing masks when we leave our homes and come near other people. Wearing simple face coverings is not about protecting ourselves, it is about protecting everyone we encounter," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said on the Senate floor Monday.

But Trump on Tuesday tweeted cryptically "THE LONE WARRIOR!" — apparently embracing his isolation from even political allies and the scientific approaches that have proven elsewhere to at least slow the spread of the coronavirus in the short term.

Trump's morning Twitter spree showed that his current pre-occupations involve anything but the virus, despite Fauci saying on Tuesday that "we're going in the wrong direction." The President tweeted or retweeted claims that a story that Russia put a bounty

on US soldiers in Afghanistan was a "hoax." He also fixated on protecting monuments from protestors, Joe Biden, economic growth, the stock market, cable news ratings and police reform. But he did not offer any plans for tackling the virus crisis or offer condolences to the victims.

Undeterred by the deepening national crisis, Trump is pressing ahead with plans for an early July Fourth celebration at Mount Rushmore that will bracket him symbolically and without irony alongside four of America's most revered Presidents, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt. The social distancing advised by Trump's government will not be enforced.

The White House did hold a briefing on Wednesday, but it appeared to be a premeditated attempt by White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany to fog the water around another drama rocking Trump — claims that he did nothing about a Russian military intelligence scheme to put a bounty on the heads of US troops in Afghanistan.

At Least 52 Killed In Ethiopia Protests Over Singer's Death

Agencies

Addis Ababa: At least 50 people were killed in Ethiopia's Oromiya region in protests following the fatal shooting of a popular singer, a regional spokesman said on Wednesday, laying bare splits in the prime minister's political heartland ahead of next year's polls.

Musician Haacaaluu Hundeessaa was shot dead on Monday night in what police said was a targeted killing.

Protests reflecting anger at the killing of a popular figure and a sense of political marginalisation broke out the next morning in the capital and other towns and cities in the surrounding Oromiya region.

The dead included protesters and members of the security forces, spokesman Getachew Balcha said. Some businesses had also

been set on fire.

"We were not prepared for this," he said.

Police said late on Tuesday that a policeman was also killed in Addis Ababa, and three explosions there had killed and injured an unspecified number of people.

Prominent Oromo opposition leader Bekele Gerba and media mogul Jawar Mohammed were also arrested when Jawar's bodyguards refused to disarm during a standoff with police.

Haacaaluu, whose funeral will be held Thursday, provided a soundtrack to a generation of young protesters. Their three years of bloody street demonstrations forced the unprecedented resignation of the previous prime minister and the appointment of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in 2018.

Abiy, Haacaaluu and Jawar are all Oromo, Ethiopia's largest ethnic group, which has long complained of being excluded from power.

Jawar was a prominent supporter of Abiy's appointment, but became more openly critical last year. Jawar's popular Oromo Media Network gives him the ability to mobilise support quickly across Oromiya and his power base could pose a significant challenge to Abiy's party in next year's elections.

Ethiopia's federal structure means power was traditionally derived by claiming the support of large ethnic voting blocs. Under the previous administration, voting was rarely free or fair and opposition activists were often jailed, torture or driven into exile.

PIA halts operation to Europe after EU's ban on its flights for 6 months

Agencies

Islamabad: Pakistan's scandal-hit national carrier on Tuesday announced to discontinue its operation to Europe after the EU's aviation safety agency banned its flights for six months over safety concerns.

The European Union Air Safety Agency (EASA) said that the suspension of the Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) flights would be effective from July 1. However, the PIA can appeal against it.

In a statement, the PIA said that all passengers booked on its flights to European sectors will have the option to either extend their bookings for a later date or

"PIA sincerely hopes that with reparative and swift actions taken by the Government of Pakistan and PIA Management, earliest possible lifting of this suspension can be expected," it said.

The EU ban came after Aviation Minister Ghulam Sarwar Khan in a major embarrassment to his nation told the media last week that nearly a third of the PIA pilots had fake licenses.

He also said at least three crashes in the recent history, including the latest on May 22, were caused due to negligence of pilots.

The world reacted in horror while opposition in Pakistan demanded that the minister should be sacked for washing the prover-



get full refunds.

It said that the PIA administration was in contact with the EASA to allay their concerns and to take necessary corrective measures along with filing the appeal against the decision.

bial dirty linen in the public.

The PIA grounded more than 140 pilots and wrote to foreign missions and international aviation watchdogs that it was addressing the problem but apparently everybody was not convinced. PTI

Hong Kong Makes First Security Law Arrests As Thousands Defy Protest Ban



Agencies

Hong Kong, China: Hong Kong police arrested more than 300 people Wednesday — including nine under China's new national security law — as thousands defied a ban on protests on the anniversary of the city's handover to China.

Police used water cannon, pepper spray and tear gas throughout in a series of confrontations with protesters, a day after China drew global criticism for imposing the controversial legislation on the financial hub.

Beijing said the law would restore stability after nearly a year of unrest, but instead it sparked the worst street violence in months.

Police said one officer was stabbed in the shoulder as he tried to make an arrest.

Under the new law, certain political views and symbols became illegal overnight — including showing support for Hong Kong, Taiwan, Xinjiang and Tibet independence.

Details released by police Wednesday accused those ar-

rested under the new legislation of possessing independence flags, stickers and flyers.

"Advocacy for independence of Hong Kong is against the law," security minister John Lee told reporters.

Still, many of those protesting on Wednesday chanted independence slogans — itself now against the law.

"What this authoritarian regime wants to do is to terrorise the people and stop them from coming out," Chris To, a 49-year-old protester, told AFP.

- Broken promise? -

Opprobrium over the law poured in from critics and western governments — led by the United States and Britain — over fears the law will usher in a new era of mainland-style political repression.

Under a deal ahead of the 1997 handover from Britain, authoritarian China guaranteed Hong Kong civil liberties as well as judicial and legislative autonomy until 2047 in a formula known as "One Country, Two Systems".

Goodbye Dubai: Photographer captures laid-off expat families as they leave

UBAI: Louisa Sumagui and her family wanted a final moment of their 12 years in Dubai before returning to Australia after losing jobs in the tourism industry due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The moment was captured for Sumagui, her husband and two children on a sun-drenched beach courtesy of photographer Paula Hainey, who is offering free photo sessions to some of the tens of thousands of expatriates leaving the United Arab Emirates.

The majority of the families I have been photographing are senior staff that have been fired. They have lived in Dubai for 15-20 years, its their life, and they are being sent home. But here is home," Hainey said.



The photographer, whose own business slowed as weddings were cancelled and people practiced social distancing, has done 60 free shoots and plans another 100.

Expats make up the majority of the population of the UAE, which includes Dubai emirate. Residency is tied to employment and the Gulf Arab

state does not offer citizenship routes to non-nationals.

A regional tourism and business hub, Dubai has been hit hard by the pandemic though authorities recently lifted a curfew and have removed most restrictions, including allowing foreign visitors to enter the emirate from July 7.

Trump's Niece Book That Dubs Him "Dangerous Man" Blocked By Judge

New York: A New York judge on Tuesday temporarily halted the publication of a "tell-all" book by Donald Trump's niece that dubs the US president "the world's most dangerous man."

The temporary restraining order prevents the release of the 240-page book until at least a July 10 court hearing that will see Mary Trump and her publisher, Simon & Schuster, defend its publication. The president's brother, Robert Trump, had initially asked a court in Queens to issue the temporary restraining order, which was rejected.

He said Mary was violating a non-disclosure agreement she signed in 2001 after the same court settled a contentious fight over the estate of real estate tycoon Fred Trump — the father of Donald and Robert and of Mary's father Fred Trump Jr, who died in 1981.

The Queens judge said he was not the right jurisdiction to seek an injunction against the book.



is only temporary but it still is a prior restraint on core political speech that flatly violates the First Amendment," her counsel, Theodore Boutrous, said in a statement.

"This book, which addresses matters of great public concern and importance about a sitting president in an election year, should not be suppressed even for one day."

Charles Harder, Robert's attorney who has also represented the president, said his client was "very pleased" with the order.

In the book, Mary, a 55-year-old clinical psychologist, recounts what she witnessed of the "toxic family" in the home of her grandparents, according to her publisher.

China Orders Four US Media Outlets To Disclose Finances, Staff

Beijing: China on Wednesday ordered four US news outlets to disclose details of their staff and financial operations in the country within seven days, as a media row escalates between Washington and Beijing.

The Associated Press, United Press International, CBS and NPR must report the information — as well as details of any real estate they hold in China — in retaliation for Washington's crackdown on four Chinese state media outlets, foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said.

China's actions are "entirely necessary countermeasures against the United States' unreasonable oppression of Chinese media organisations in the US," Zhao said at a regular press briefing.

The US State Department on June 22 reclassified four Chinese state media outlets as foreign missions in the United States, adding to five others designated in February.

India To Ban Chinese Companies From Highway Projects: Gadkari

India will not allow Chinese companies to participate in highway projects, including those through joint ventures, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said on Wednesday amid the border standoff with China. Gadkari also said the government will ensure that Chinese investors are not entertained in various sectors like Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). The senior minister's assertions assume significance against the backdrop of border standoff between India and China in Ladakh that also saw the deaths of 20 Indian Army personnel last month. Amid escalating tensions,



the government on Monday banned 59 apps, mostly having Chinese links, citing threats to national security. "We will not give permission to joint ventures that have Chinese partners for road construction. We have taken a firm stand that if they [Chinese companies] come via joint venture in our country, we will not allow it," Gadkari told PTI in an interview. The Road Transport, Highways and MSME minister said a policy will be out soon banning Chinese firms and relaxing norms for Indian companies to expand their eligibility criteria for participation in highway projects. Currently only a few projects which were undertaken much earlier involve some Chinese partners. When asked about this, the Minister said that the new decision will be implemented in current and future tenders. With respect to existing tenders and future bids, Gadkari said rebidding would be done if there are any Chinese joint ventures. "We have taken a decision to relax norms for our companies to ensure that they qualify in bidding in large projects. I have directed the Highways Secretary (Girid-

har Aramane) and NHAI Chairman (SS Sandhu) to hold a meeting for relaxing technical and financial norms so that our companies can qualify to work," he said. Elaborating on the decision, Gadkari said if a contractor can qualify for a small project, he can also qualify for a large project. "Construction norms are not good so I have asked to change it. We are changing it so that we can encourage Indian companies," he added. According to him, qualification norms for projects are being rationalised to ensure Indian companies do not require to enter into pacts with foreign partners to grab projects. "Even if we have to go for foreign joint venture in the areas of technology, consultancy or design, we will not allow Chinese," the Minister said. About the MSME sector, Gadkari said the effort is to enhance the capacity of local production but at the same time foreign investment is being promoted. However, he made it clear that despite decision to encourage foreign investment, Chinese investors would not be allowed. "For upgradation of technology, research, consultancy and other works, we will encourage foreign investment and joint ventures in MSMEs but in case of Chinese we will not entertain them," he said. On stopping of consignments from China at Indian ports, the minister said there is "no arbitrary stopping of goods" at Indian ports and the government is initiating path-breaking reforms to help MSMEs and businesses in a bid to make the country self-reliant. "It is a good step. The imports from China will be discouraged and the country will take large strides towards self-reliance," the Minister said and added that he is among the strongest proponents of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'.

Existing System Of Stamp Duty Payment To Continue Till Further Orders: Govt

JAMMU : The Government today clarified that the existing system of payment of Stamp duty shall continue to be a mode of payment of stamp duty in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir after issuance of The Jammu & Kashmir Stamps (Payment of Duty by Means of e-Stamping) Rules, 2020. In this connection it is clarified that the existing system of payment of stamp duty shall continue to be a mode of payment of stamp duty in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir till further order" the Government clarified.

duty in Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir after issuance of Notification SO 201 dated 24th June, 2020, regarding, The Jammu & Kashmir Stamps (Payment of Duty by Means of e-Stamping) Rules, 2020. In this connection it is clarified that the existing system of payment of stamp duty shall continue to be a mode of payment of stamp duty in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir till further order" the Government clarified.



A NOMAD GIRL CARRYING a goat in her hands enroute to greener pastures of Sonmarg on Wednesday. Pic Abid Bhat

Record 507 Covid Deaths In Single Day In India; 18,653 New Cases

NEW DELHI: India registered the highest single-day COVID-19 deaths at 507 on Wednesday with Maharashtra, Delhi and Tamil Nadu accounting for over 70 per cent of the fatalities, while 18,653 new infections were reported taking the total tally to 5,85,493, according to the Union Health Ministry data. This is the fifth consecutive day that coronavirus infections have increased by more than 18,000. The country has seen a surge of 3,94,958 infections from June 1 till date. The number of active cases stands at 2,20,114, while 3,47,978 people have recovered, and one patient has migrated, according to the updated data at 8 am. "Thus, around 59.43 per cent of patients have recovered so far," an official said. The total number of confirmed cases include foreigners. Of the 507 deaths reported in the last 24 hours, 245 are from Maharashtra, 62 from Delhi, 60 from Tamil Nadu, 25 from Uttar Pradesh, 20 from Karnataka, 19 from Gujarat, 15 from West Bengal, eight each from Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, seven each from Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, six each from Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab, five from Bihar, four from Haryana, two each from Kerala, Odisha, Puducherry and Uttarakhand and one each in



Assam and Himachal Pradesh. The country had recorded a massive spike of 2,003 deaths on June 17 following a data reconciliation exercise carried out by states and UTs which brought to the fore large number of fatalities previously reported in Maharashtra and Delhi which were not attributed to COVID-19. According to the ICMR, a cumulative total of 88,26,585 samples have been tested up to June 30, with 2,17,931 samples being tested on Tuesday. Of the total 17,400 deaths reported so far, Maharashtra accounted for the highest 7,855 fatalities followed by Delhi with 2,742 deaths, Gujarat with 1,846, Tamil Nadu

with 1,201, Uttar Pradesh with 697, West Bengal with 668, Madhya Pradesh with 572, Rajasthan with 413 and Telangana with 260 deaths. The COVID-19 death toll reached 246 in Karnataka, 236 in Haryana, 187 in Andhra Pradesh, 144 in Punjab, 101 in Jammu and Kashmir, 67 in Bihar, 41 in Uttarakhand, 25 in Odisha and 24 in Kerala. Jharkhand has registered 15 deaths, Chhattisgarh 13, Assam and Puducherry 12 each, Himachal Pradesh 10, Chandigarh six, Goa three and Meghalaya, Tripura, Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh have reported one fatality each, according to the Health Ministry.

Govt Allows Ramdev To Market Coronil

NEW DELHI: The Union AYUSH Ministry Wednesday said Patanjali can sell Coronil but only as an immunity booster, days after yoga guru Ramdev's company launched it as a medicine for COVID-19 and is now calling it a product to "manage" the disease. Patanjali Ayurved Ltd said there is no disagreement now between it and the Union ministry, which had last week asked it not to sell the ayurvedic drug till the issue it examined. At his press conference in Haridwar, Ramdev lashed out over the flak he received after the launch of the drug, saying some people are hurt by the "rise of Indian culture". "I want to tell people who want to try these medicines that there is no restriction on their sale now and they will be available in a kit everywhere in the country from today,"

Ramdev said, referring to Coronil and the two other products Patanjali is promoting together. The company claimed that the AYUSH Ministry has "categorically agreed" that Patanjali had "appropriately worked on COVID-19 management". "Now there is no difference of opinion between AYUSH Ministry and Patanjali," it added in a statement. The ministry confirmed that Patanjali can sell the product but not as a cure for the disease. "AYUSH Ministry has only given permission to sell this particular formulation as immunity booster and not as a medicinal cure for COVID-19," it said. Ramdev claimed that the ministry had asked him to use the term "Covid management" in place of "Covid treatment" and he is following the instruction. Even while backtracking on de-

scribing Coronil as a "treatment" for COVID-19, the company stuck to its claim that its trial on mild to moderately ill patients was successful. The company's statement said the trial, conducted after the necessary approvals, showed 100 per cent recovery of patients within seven days. "Some people feel research is a monopoly of those who wear a suit and tie. They think a saffron-wearing sanyasi has no right to do any research. What sort of untouchability and intolerance is this?" he said. "As per the ministry, Patanjali is allowed to manufacture and distribute its Divya Coronil tablet, Divya Swasrivati and Divya Anu Talia across India, as per the manufacturing licences granted by State Licensing Authority, Ayurvedic and Unani Services, Govt of Uttarakhand," the company said.

Govt Plans Cashless Treatment Scheme For Road Accident Victims With Rs 2.5 Lakh Cap Per Case

NEW DELHI: The government on Wednesday said it is ready with a blueprint to implement a cashless treatment scheme for road accident victims. The scheme will have an insurance coverage cap of Rs 2.5 lakh per case, as per a communication to transport secretaries and commissioners of the states. The scheme assumes significance as India accounts for about 5 lakh road accidents per annum, one of the highest globally, in which about 1.5 lakh people are killed and about 3 lakh are crippled. "Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has prepared a blueprint for implementing the scheme of cashless treatment of motor accident victims, as contemplated under the MV Act, 2019. This includes treatment of victims during the crucial golden hour," the ministry said in a statement. In this regard, the Transport Ministry has written to principal secretaries and secretaries in charge of transport in all states and union territories soliciting their views on concept note of the scheme by the 10th of this month. The scheme also includes creation of a Motor Vehicle Accident Fund. "The National Health Authority being the nodal agency for PM-JAY (Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri-Jan Arogya Yojana) and having footprint across the country with over 21,000 hospitals on board has been entrusted to implement the scheme," the statement said. The ministry further said

that the scheme envisages "to provide compulsory insurance cover to all road users in the country". The fund would be utilised for treatment of road accident victims and for payment of compensation to the injured or to the family of person losing life in hit and run cases, the statement said. The proposed modalities of the scheme have been designed in a way that they allow access to quality care at the right time for all individuals, irrespective of their capability to pay, it added. NHA's robust IT platforms which are used for implementing PM-JAY may be leveraged to provide cashless treatment for road accident victims for treatment including the golden hour (first hour of the accident), the communication to the states said. "All road accident victims of Indian or foreign nationality will be considered eligible for the scheme as its beneficiary. The scheme will have a cap of Rs 2.5 lakh/person/accident," as per the communication. Trauma and healthcare services to road accident victim will be financed through an account which will be established under the road ministry for the implementation of the scheme, it said. "The funds will have contributions from the insurance companies through general insurance council for ensured vehicles and for hit-and-run cases," the communication said and added that the ministry will pay for the accidents for uninsured vehicles.



Shopkeepers To Operate Only After Testing Negative: DC B'pora

BANDIPORA: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Zahoor Ahmad Mir Wednesday said that only those shopkeepers that test negative and attended mandatory training on COVID-19 shall be allowed to operate their businesses. He said the shopkeepers of the Bandipora town from Nussu to Kaloosa including Khadim Market, Shops on Ajar-DC Office Road shall operate on alternate days with shops located on right side (East-Side) on one day and shops located on left-Side (West Side) on other day from Wednesday onwards. The DC directed the shopkeepers to strictly ensure that they shall display their negative test reports and certificate of having attended COVID-19 training on entry of the shop and shall keep record of the customers with basic details on a daily basis. The shopkeepers have also been directed to ensure adequate social distancing among customers and shall keep sanitizers on the front desk of the shop besides keeping masks available in the shop. He however directed the shopkeepers not to sell items to those customers who are without masks.

Mir urged the shopkeepers to cooperate with the district administration to prevent spread of virus and added that the shops shall remain closed on Sundays and the business hours shall start from 9 am to 5 pm and night curfew shall continue to remain in place in the district. Earlier Mir inspected the lockdown measures and imposition of restrictions in the town amid COVID19 pandemic. He appealed to the people of Bandipora town to cooperate with the medical teams dealing with COVID by ensuring their tests are done for the wellbeing of the society. Mir said a special sample collection centre shall be established at Government Middle School Branch Bandipora for the convenience of the shopkeepers and asked the CMO Bandipora to ensure samples of shopkeepers are taken for testing. He said the precautionary measures are the only solution to break the chain of spread of virus and the situation may go out of hand if people neglect adopting precautionary measures as is being witnessed in some parts of the country.

NEWS MAKERS

Kissan Credit Card Mandatory For Every Farmer

SRINAGAR: Director Agriculture Kashmir, Altaf Aijaz Andrabi today appealed farmers, growers of the valley to get them-selves registered under Kisan Credit Card Scheme to avail benefits under it. Elaborating the facilities being provided through this scheme, he said that this scheme aims to provide hassle free credit facilities for raising crops at effective rate of interest at 4 percent (subject to the terms and conditions if repaid within a year of borrowing). He added that the scheme has been made mandatory for every farmer and no guarantee and no mortgage for KCC loan is required up to Rs.1.6 lacs. The Director said that this scheme is designed to extend credit facilities for purchase of quality inputs and its timely subsequent use for maximizing the production and productivity of sown crops for economic empowerment of farmers.

Director requested all the farmers and growers for enrolment to contact nearby Chief Agriculture Officer, Zonal Agriculture Officer, Junior Agriculture Extension Officer, Agriculture Extension Assistants or any other field functionary of respective district at an earliest. Andrabi said that in case of any query farmers or growers are requested to please feel free to contact any officer, official of the department on their mobile numbers, Altaf Aijaz Andrabi, Director Agriculture Kashmir 0194-2310675/ 9419008391/7889399102, Mohammad Iqbal Chowdhary, Joint Director Agriculture Kashmir (Extension) 9419104117, Amir ud Din Andrabi, Joint Director Agriculture Kashmir (Inputs) 9906662640, Dr. Syed Waseem Ahmad Shah, Deputy Director Agriculture (Central) Kashmir 9419309867,

Arvind Kumar Baru Chief Agriculture Officer, Srinagar 9419195832, Mohd Qasim Ganie Chief Agriculture Officer, Pulwama 9419458960, Muzafer Hurra Chief Agriculture Officer, Kupwara 9622459771, Mohammad Yousuf Shah, Chief Agriculture Officer, Baramulla 9419063283, Gh. Mohammad Dhoobi, Chief Agriculture Officer, Ganderbal 9697918511, Rafiq Ahmad Kulroo, Chief Agriculture Officer, Kulgam 9419032219, Farooq Ahmad Dandroo Chief Agriculture Officer, Bandipora 9419040056, Mohammad Iqbal Khan Chief Agriculture Officer, Anantnag 9419050568, Mohammad Syed Peer Chief Agriculture Officer, Shopian 7006950751, Mohammad Shafi Khar, Chief Agriculture Officer, Budgam 9858839577, Gh. Hassan Magray, Plant Protection Officer 9149602396, Wahid-ur-Rehman, Assistant Entomologist 7006922982.

Centre's Cyber Security Agency Cautions Users About Google Chrome Extensions

NEW DELHI: Internet users should exercise caution while installing Google Chrome extensions as the company has removed over 100 malicious links after they were found collecting "sensitive" user data, country's cyber security agency said today. The Computer Emergency Response Team of India (CERT-In), the national technology arm to combat cyber attacks and guard the Indian cyber space, said it has also been found that these extensions contained code to bypass Google Chrome's web store security scans. The malicious extensions had the ability to take screenshots, read the clipboard, harvest authentication cookies or



grab user keystrokes to read passwords and other confidential information, it said. "It has been reported that Google has removed 106 extensions of the Google Chrome browser from the chrome web store which were found collecting sensitive user data," the agency said in the advisory. "These extensions, reportedly posed as tools to improve web searches, convert files between different formats as security

scanners and more," it added. The federal cyber security agency suggested users to uninstall Google Chrome extensions with IDs given in the IOCs (organisational chart) section. Users can visit the chrome extensions page and subsequently enable developer mode to see if they have installed any of the malicious extensions and then remove them from their browsers, it said. The agency advised Internet users to only install extensions which are absolutely needed and refer user reviews before doing so. They should uninstall extensions which are not in use, it said, adding that users should not install extensions from unverified sources.

Officer masturbates in front of woman at UP police station, gets suspended after video goes viral

DEORIA: A station house officer (SHO) of Bhatni police station in Uttar Pradesh's Deoria was suspended for allegedly masturbating in front of a woman. The woman, who had gone to file a complaint in the police station, filmed the incident which has now gone viral on social media. The video then sparked controversy in the area with the local people seeking action against the officer. The woman has alleged that the officer Bhishm Pal Singh, was touching his private parts in front of her when she was taken to his chamber to lodge a complaint. The complainant woman said: "I ignored his misbehaviour for the first 2-3 times and wanted him to lodge our case in the land dispute. But then one of my relatives had said that she also faced a similar incident at the hands of this officer. This is when I decided to film him." SP Deoria Shripati Mishra said: "An FIR has been registered against him, and he has been suspended. Action is being taken." — IANS

