



Maximum : 31°C
Minimum : 17°C
Humidity : 38%

SUNSET
Today 07:45 PM
SUNRISE
Tomorrow 05:25 AM

OBSERVER

23rd year OF PUBLICATION

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News Digest

HC Resumes Functioning In Srinagar

SRINAGAR: Chief Justice Jammu and Kashmir High Court, Geeta Mittal, was today given ceremonial guard of honour by contingent of CRPF on opening of Main Wing of the Jammu and Kashmir High Court here in accordance with the Bi-annual Darbar Move for the summer season at Srinagar. Judges of High Court, Registrar General, Registrar Vigilance and other officers and officials of the Registry ● P-02

2 SSB Men Kill Each Other In Kulgam

Kulgam: Two Sashstra Seema Bal (SSB) men were on Monday evening killed in a fratricidal incident in a court complex in south Kashmir's Kulgam district. Media reports said that a SSB man resorted to indiscriminate firing from his service rifle at his colleagues, which left two SSB men severely wounded. Superintendent of Police (SP), Gurinder Pal said that ● P-02

Grenade Lobbed At Police In Baramulla

Baramulla: Suspected militants on Monday evening lobbed a grenade towards Police Post Delina in north Kashmir's Baramulla district. Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Baramulla, Abdul Qayoom said that the grenade exploded on the road, adding that no casualty was reported in the incident. Soon after the attack, the search operation was launched in the area to nab the attackers.

Lone, Raza Appointed PSC Members

Srinagar: Six days after his retirement as secretary General Administration Department, Dr Farooq Lone (IAS) was on Monday appointed as Member JK Public Service Commission. Also Zubair Ahmed Raza, district Judge Doda has been appointed as Member JK PSC, officials said. On June 29, chairman of the Commission, B.R. Sharma, administered oath of office to the four newly appointed Members. ● P-02

Pandita Appointed JKBOSE Head For 2 Yrs

Srinagar: Veena Pandita was on Monday appointed as Chairperson Jammu and Kashmir State Board of School Education for two more years, till June 30 2022, officials said. Earlier the government had extended her term as the Chairperson JKBOSE for a period of two months beyond her date of superannuation on April 30 this year.

Man Fires Upon Wife, Arrested

Jammu: A man from Dool of district Kishtwar on Monday fired upon his wife with 12 bore rifle at his home, resulting into serious injuries to her, officials said. According to reports police arrested Arif Hussain son of Akhter Hussain of Khanpora Dool soon after he fired upon his wife namely Rubina Begum (25) with 12 bore rifle. The injured was shifted to District Hospital Kishtwar and later referred to GMC Jammu for further medical treatment. SHO Kishtwar Aijaz Wani said the husband has been arrested and the rifle was seized. (GNS)

India, China Start Partial Pull Back From Galwan Valley

Agencies

NEW DELHI- In the first sign of de-escalation of tension in eastern Ladakh, the Chinese Army has removed tents and started to withdraw its troops from Galwan Valley as decided during high-level talks between the two militaries, government sources said on Monday.

Galwan Valley was the site of a violent hand-to-hand clash between the two militaries on June 15 that left 20 Indian soldiers dead.

China's People's Liberation Army was seen removing tents and structures at patrolling point 14, the sources said, adding rearward movement of vehicles of Chinese troops was seen in the general area of Galwan and Gogra Hot Springs.

They said disengagement of Chinese troops in the area has begun as per decisions arrived at during the Corps Commander-level talks.

The sources said there was clear sign of withdrawal of structures and troops from the patrolling



Image for representation

China Talks Of Progress In Talks

China on Monday said the front-line troops are taking "effective measures" and making "progress" to disengage and ease the tensions in the Galwan Valley along the Line of Actual Control with India. The remarks of China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian came after government sources in New Delhi said the Chinese Army was seen removing tents and moving back from certain areas of the Galwan Valley, in a first sign of

point 14 in Galwan Valley and that they are likely to move back more than a kilometre in the area.

The sources said it would not be possible to know immediately how much distance the Chinese

troops are going back and that there will be clarity only after a proper verification process is conducted.

The clashes in Galwan Valley took place after Indian

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.

Govt Allows Universities To Conduct Exams

NEW DELHI: The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Monday allowed universities and other academic institutions to conduct examinations during the ongoing 'Unlock 2' phase.

In a statement, the MHA said it has sent a letter to the Union Higher Education Secretary permitting universities and institutions to conduct examinations.

"The final-term examinations are to be compulsorily conducted as per the UGC guidelines on examinations and academic calendar for the universities and as per the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) approved by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare," the statement said.

Various examinations ● P-02

8 Lakh Indians May Be Asked To Leave Kuwait: Report

DUBAI- A total of 8 lakh Indians could be forced to leave Kuwait as its National Assembly committee has approved a draft expat quota bill seeking to reduce the number of foreign workers in the Gulf country.

The National Assembly's legal and legislative committee has determined that the expat quota bill is constitutional.

According to the bill, Indians should not exceed 15 per cent of the population. This could result in 800,000 Indians leaving Kuwait, as the Indian community constitutes the largest expat community in the country, totalling 1.45 ● P-02

BSF Trooper, 4 Others Die Of Covid-19 In J&K

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A Border Security Forces personnel was among five persons who died due to Covid-19 in the Kashmir Valley on Monday, taking the fatality count due to the coronavirus in the J&K to 138.

The trooper from 33 Battalion died at BSF Sector Headquarters in Panthachowk due to Covid-19, official sources said.

Previously, four persons died, including a 55-year-old woman from Uri Baramulla along with two other persons—90-year-old man from Tangmarg and 75-year-old man from Rafiabad— from the north Kashmir's district besides a 56-year-old man from Budgam.

Professor Farooq Jan, Medical Superintendent SKIMS Soura, told GNS the woman from Boniyar Uri passed away at 8 a.m. today.

"She was case of Rheumatic

Heart Disease Associated with Congestive Cardiac Failure and Respiratory Tract Infection," Professor Jan said. The woman, he said, was in "IDB on high flow oxygen and was very sick."

Regarding the 56-year-old man from Budgam district, Professor Jan said that he was suffering "HTN, CKD and bilateral Community acquired pneumonia."

"The patient was also on dialysis as well. He expired today early morning at 4 a.m," he said.

As regards the nonagenarian, a resident of Tangmarg area of Baramulla, Medical Superintendent CD hospital, Dr. Saleem Tak, said that he was admitted on June 26 and died at 2:00 a.m. today.

"He was suffering from hypertension, cardiac ailments and bilateral pneumonia," he said.

Meanwhile, the 75-year-old man from Rafiabad died at SMHS hospital here, ● PAGE 02

SHE WAS CASE OF RHEUMATIC HEART

Disease Associated with Congestive Cardiac Failure and Respiratory Tract Infection," Professor Jan said. The woman, he said, was in "IDB on high flow oxygen and was very sick."

246 Covid-19 New Cases In J&K, Tally Rises To 8675

Among Fresh Cases Include 5 Form CRPF, 3 Police, 1 Army; 63 More People Discharged Jammu and Kashmir on Monday reported 246 Covid-19 infections, taking the overall tally of the cases to 8675 in J&K. Officials said that 36 cases were reported from Jammu division while 210 from Kashmir Valley and includes five ● P-02

Davinder Singh Groomed By Pakistan As Info Conduit: NIA

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: National Investigation Agency filed a chargesheet against suspended DySP of J&K Police Devender Singh, Hizbul-Mujahideen militant Naveed Mushtaq, and four others on Monday.

NIA said in the chargesheet that Davinder Singh, who was caught travelling in a car with Hizb militants in January this year, "was being groomed by Pakistani officials for obtaining sensitive information."

The NIA said Singh was also in touch with certain officials of the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi through secure social media platforms.

Besides Singh and Syed Naveed Mushtaq alias Babu, the NIA filed Charge-sheet



File Pic

against Irfan Shafi Mir alias Advocate, Rafi Ahmad Rather (Hizb militant), Tanveer Ahmad Wani (ex-LoC trader) and Syed Irfan Ahmad (brother of Naveed Babu) ● PAGE 02

Durbar Reopens In Srinagar After 2 Month Delay

SRINAGAR: Amid heightened security, the Durbar move offices formally re-opened on Monday in Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir.

The reopening of move offices got delayed by nearly two months this year due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

For the first time in the last several decades, the government organized a traditional folk music event to welcome the annual Durbar move in Kashmir.

The folk music show was organized by Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) to revive the rich and old-aged cultural activ-

ity and attract dignitaries of Durbar move. SMC Secretary General, Mohammad Akbar Sofi said that the folk music was organized by SMC to welcome the Durbar move officers and employees.

Pertinently, every year authorities organize inaugural functions on the annual Durbar move at the Civil Secretariat. But, this year due to the COVID threat authorities organized folk music event to welcome officers. Unlike previous years, the media persons were not allowed inside the Civil Secretariat to cover the reopening ● PAGE 02

Doctor Couple Plans Kashmir Cultural Centre In New York

KO Web Desk

SRINAGAR:- A Kashmiri doctor couple living in USA are in the process of setting up a library and museum of Kashmiri art, history, and culture in New York using over 1500 books, paintings, and other artefacts collected by them over the years, Buffalo News reported.

Dr Khurshid Guru, a noted Robotic Surgeon, and his wife Dr Lubna Guru are in the process of buying a 97-year-old vacant, historic stone church at 650 Park Place in Niagara Falls, and convert the same into their new museum, which they believe will serve as the Centre for Kashmir



Drs. Khurshid and Lubna Guru- Photo credit: Buffalo News

culture and studies.

Originally from Sopore in north Kashmir, Dr Guru is the son of famous cardiologist of Kashmir, late Dr Abdul Ahad Guru.

According to Khurshid, the collection, valued at about \$2 million, is potentially the largest such collection outside of Kashmir itself. "The collection is decent to a level

that you could create a nice little museum," Guru said.

The couple is buying a vacant 97-year-old stone church, located in Niagara Falls, which they plan to convert into their new museum — the Centre for Kashmir. Additionally, they are also purchasing two houses to provide residential space for visiting Kashmiri artists, scholars and other contributors.

Born and raised in Kashmir, Khurshid graduated from medical school in India, where he met his wife. The duo came to the United States for further training and residency in Detroit and then to Buffalo. Guru acknowledged that the venture is risky, especially at the time when ● PAGE 02

Government of Jammu and Kashmir (UT)
DIRECTORATE OF AGRICULTURE KASHMIR

Organising
KISAN PAKHWADA
An initiative by the UT of J&K

w.e.f **07-21 July, 2020**

Dedicating 15 days to the farming community
in collaboration with the department of
HORTICULTURE, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY, SHEEP HUSBANDRY, FISHERIES AND J&K BANK (CONVENOR BANK, JKUTLBC)

Event to be launched by
His Excellency the Lt. Governor UT of JK
on 7th July 2020

MAIN OBJECTIVES

- 100% coverage of farmers under KCC Scheme
- Farmers include those engaged in Agriculture, Horticulture, Dairy, Fisheries Sheep Rearing etc.
- Data rectification of PM KISAN beneficiaries.
- Removal of all bottlenecks for farmers in obtaining loans against KCC in order to grow credit flow by 2.5 times this year.
- Massive push to packaging, grading and other logistic will be the corner stone of the awareness programme.
- Massive awareness campaign regarding various schemes available, technological upgradation required, new seeds and new technologies of cultivation by wayorganising Kisan Melas as part of KISAN PAKHWADA.

DISTRICT-WISE KISAN-MELA SCHEDULE DURING KISAN PAKHWADA

S.No	Date	District	Venue	Contact Person
01	07-07-2020	Kulgam	Kulgam	9419032219
02		Budgam	Khansahib	9858839577
03	08-07-2020	Kulgam	Quimoh	9419032219
04	09-07-2020	Shopian	Shopian	9797665764
05	10-07-2020	Shopian	Keller	9797665764
06	11-07-2020	Anantnag	Mattan	7889329308
07	12-07-2020	Anantnag	Dooru	7889329308
08	14-07-2020	Pulwama	Tral	9419458960
09		Pulwama	Haal Pulwama	9419458960
10	15-07-2020	Bandipora	Bandipora	9419040056
11		Ganderbal	Ganderbal	9697918511
12	16-07-2020	Bandipora	Sumbal	9419040056
13		Ganderbal	Kangan	9697918511
14	17-07-2020	Srinagar	Harwan	9419195832
15		Baramulla	Tangmarg	9419063283
16	18-07-2020	Budgam	Budgam	9858839577
17		Baramulla	Baramulla	9419063283
18	20-07-2020	Kupwara	Handwara	9622459771
19		Srinagar	Srinagar	9419195832
20	21-07-2020	Kupwara	Kupwara	9622459771

INFORMATION & PUBLICATIONS DIRECTORATE OF AGRICULTURE KASHMIR

From Front page...

3 'Teachers' Suspended In Kulgam On Rape Charges

Prime Accused Arrested, Two Others Still At Large, Efforts On To Nab Them: Police

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The School Education Department on Monday suspended three teachers of two Middle schools of South Kashmir's Kulgam district following alleged gang-rape of a 20-year-old girl.

Chief Education Officer (CEO) Kulgam, Muhammad Ashraf Rather said that the victim and the teachers are from the same village.

"The girl has filed a complaint in the local Police Station following which one teacher has been put behind the bars while two others have disappeared," he said, adding that "the victim was taken to an orchard and was molested there."

He said on Monday, the district office of the School Education Department has suspended all the three teachers after the villagers approached them with the written complaint in this regard.

Rather said that the department has also constituted an inquiry committee in this regard, adding, "the victim is said to be 20-years-old and is not studying anywhere."

Meanwhile, the concerned Zonal Education Officer (ZEO) Kulgam has issued a suspension order against the accused persons.

"On the basis of written complaint submitted by inhabitants of village Chachmulla



Image for representation regarding sexual harassment of a local girl, the teachers al-

legedly involved are hereby placed under suspension with immediate effect pending inquiry," the order reads.

Meanwhile, police in a statement said that Kulgam Police has arrested the prime accused involved in kidnapping and rape of a girl within 24 hours.

"Police Station DH Pora received a complaint stating that a girl (name with held) has been kidnapped and sexually assaulted by three individuals' residents of Chachimullah and Gandwani areas of Kulgam," police statement said, adding that accordingly, a case under FIR number 109/2020 under relevant sections of law was registered at PS DH Pora and investigation was

initiated.

"A special team headed by SHO DH Pora under the supervision of SDO DH Pora while acting swiftly arrested the Prime accused, a resident of Chachimullah within 24 hours after complaint was received. He has been shifted to PS DH Pora where he remains in custody. However, the other two persons are still at large and efforts are on to nab them," the statement added.

After fulfilling all medico-legal formalities, the girl was handed over to her legal heirs, police said, adding that an investigation into the matter is in progress.

Moreover, police said the rumours are being floated by

miscreants that police has let off the accused persons and the medical examiner was trying to convince the victim to change her statement.

However, police refuted the rumours as 'baseless' and said it is being propagated by vested interests to create unrest. "Floating rumours to instigate disturbance shall invite legal action against the erring individual. In case someone has specific information with respect to the rumours the same may be communicated to police so that necessary action can be taken," police said.

Meanwhile, swift action by police against anti-social elements has been appreciated by the locals. -With inputs from KNO

India, China Start Partial...

troops strongly opposed the erection of a surveillance post by the Chinese side near patrolling point 14.

It is not immediately known whether the de-escalation initiative has also been started in the Pangong Tso area where the Chinese side has significantly enhanced its presence, particularly in areas between Finger 4 and Finger 8.

On June 30, the Indian and Chinese armies held the third round of Lt General-level talks during which both sides agreed on an "expedient, phased and step wise" de-escalation as a "priority" to end the standoff.

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.

On Friday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a surprise visit to Ladakh during which he said the era of expansionism is over and that the history is proof that "expansionists" have either lost or perished, in comments which were seen as a clear message to China that India is not going to backoff and would deal with the situation with a firm hand.

The Indian and Chinese armies are locked in a bitter standoff in multiple locations in eastern Ladakh for the last seven weeks.

The tension escalated manifold after killing of 20 Indian soldiers in Galwan Valley. The Chinese side also suffered casualties but it is yet to give out the details.

Both sides have held several rounds of diplomatic and military talks in the last few weeks to ease tension.

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

China Talks Of Progress...

disengagement of troops from the area.

The Galwan Valley was the site of a violent hand-to-hand clash between the two militaries on June 15 that left 20 Indian soldiers dead. China's People's Liberation Army was seen removing tents and structures at patrolling point 14, the sources said in New Delhi, adding rearward movement of vehicles of Chinese troops was seen in the general area of Galwan and Gogra Hot Springs.

Asked about reports of Chinese troops pulling back from the flash point in Galwan Valley, Zhao said "there is progress made on front-line troops taking effective measures to disengage and ease the tensions." He said the Chinese and Indian troops held commander-level talks on June 30 as the two sides continued to work to implement the consensus reached at the two previous rounds of talks.

"We hope the Indian side will move towards China and through concrete actions implement the consensus and continue the close communication through military and diplomatic channels to jointly push for the de-escalation on the border region," Zhao said. According to the sources in New Delhi, the disengagement of the Chinese troops has started as per an agreement between the Corps Commanders of the two sides.

On June 30, the Indian and Chinese armies held the third round of Lt General-level talks during which both sides agreed on an "expedient, phased and step wise" de-escalation as a "priority" to end the standoff.

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. The Indian and Chinese armies are locked in a bitter standoff in multiple locations in eastern Ladakh for the last seven weeks. PTI

Govt Allows Universities...

conducted by universities and higher education institutions in the country have been suspended since March during the coronavirus-induced lockdown which first began on March 25.

Since June 1, the government has announced 'Unlock 1' for a month and again from July 1 'Unlock 2' for another month.

A host of activities have been allowed to operate during the 'Unlock' phases in all areas, barring containment zones. However, regular functioning of schools, colleges, universities and other academic institutions remain suspended.

8 Lakh Indians May Be Asked

million, the Gulf News reported, citing a Kuwaiti newspaper. The current population of Kuwait is 4.3 million, with Kuwaitis making up 1.3 million of the population, and expats accounting for 3 million.

Amid a slump in oil prices and the coronavirus pandemic, there has been a spike in anti-expat rhetoric as lawmakers and government officials call for reducing the number of foreigners in Kuwait.

Last month, Kuwait's Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Khalid Al Sabah proposed reducing the number of expats from 70 per cent to 30 per cent of the population, the report said.

Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem told Kuwait TV that he and a group of lawmakers will submit to the Assembly a comprehensive draft law calling for a gradual reduction of expats in Kuwait.

Kuwait has a real problem in its population structure, in which 70 per cent are expats, the Speaker said, adding that what is more serious is that 1.3 million of the 3.35 million expats "are either illiterate or can merely read and write", the people Kuwait does not really need, the Kuwait Times reported.

"I understand that we recruit doctors and skilled manpower and not unskilled laborers. This is an indication that there is a distortion. Visa traders have contributed in increasing this figure, Ghanem said.

The Speaker said the draft law they intend to file will propose to impose a cap on the number of expats, whose numbers must decrease gradually by stating that this year expats will be 70 per cent, next year 65 per cent and so on, the report said.

The expat quota bill will now be referred to the concerned committee for consideration. It states that the Indian expatriate community should not exceed 15 per cent of the national population, which means around 800,000 of them might be required to leave Kuwait,

the Arab News reported.

According to the Indian embassy in Kuwait, there are about 28,000 Indians working for the Kuwaiti Government in various jobs like nurses, engineers in national oil companies and a few as scientists. The majority of Indians (5.23 lakh) are deployed in private sectors. In addition, there are about 1.16 lakh dependents. Out of these, there are about 60,000 Indian students studying in 23 Indian schools in the country.

The bill will now be transferred to the respective committee so that a comprehensive plan is created. It proposes similar quotas for other nationalities. Kuwait is a top source of remittances for India. In 2018, India received nearly USD 4.8 billion from Kuwait as remittances. Foreigners have accounted for the majority of Kuwait's COVID-19 cases as the disease spread among migrant workers living in overcrowded housing.

According to latest data from Johns Hopkins University, more than 49,000 cases of coronavirus have been reported in Kuwait. Globally, more than 5 lakh people have died and over 11 million have been infected by COVID-19.

BSF Trooper, 4 Others Die...

medical superintendent Dr Nazir Choudhary said. Admitted on July 4, he said that the septuagenarian was suffering from various ailments.

With the deaths, 138 people have succumbed to the virus in J&K—124 from the Valley and 14 from Jammu division.

Srinagar district with 33 deaths has the highest fatalities followed by Baramulla (26), Kulgam (16), Shopian (13), Anantnag (11), Budgam Doda (2) while one death each has been reported from Ganderbal, Poonch, Udhampur, Rajouri and Kathua. -With inputs from GNS

246 Covid-19 New Cases...

from paramilitary CRPF, three from police and one from army besides two pregnant women and as many as minors.

Giving district-wise breakup of the cases, officials said that Srinagar reported 65, Kulgam 49, Baramulla 41, Pulwama 34, Samba 13, Shopian 12, Jammu six, Kathua five, Rajouri four, three each in Budgam Kupwara and Reasi besides one each in Anantnag, Bandipora, Ganderbal, Udhampur and Poonch.

Dr. G H Yattoo, Nodal Officer Coronavirus Control Measures at SKIMS Soura said that out of the 2234 samples were processed at the viral diagnostic laboratory of the hospital, 117 returned positive for the virus.

According to Professor Farooq Jan, Medical Superintendent SKIMS Soura they include 47 from Kulgam, 34 from Pulwama, 13 from Srinagar, six from Baramulla, five each from Budgam, and CRPF battalions, two from Anantnag besides one each from Bandipora, Kupwara, Shopian, NA (Address Not Available) and Uttar Pradesh. The cases from Kulgam include Male (36) from Watihal, Male (37) and female (40) from Gundipora, two Males (30, 30) from Gopalpora, Male (48) from Khull, Male (55) from Gadhihama, four Males (40 each) from Nehama, Male (38) from Adigen, two Male (35, 45) from Samnoo, Male (30) from Moedgam, Male (45) from Gudder, two Males (22, 24) from Nandimarg, Male (30) from Aharbal, Male (25) from Hanjan, eight Males (28, 60, 40, 20, 29, 65, 42, 30) from DH Pora, two Males (22, 24) from KB Pora, Male (44) from Wari-pora, Male (69) from Laisoo, Male (31) from Nagam, Male (30) from Kadder, female (38) from Check Hanjan, two females (20, 15) from Kulgam, Male (26) from 9 RR battalion Kulgam, eight Males (40, 37, 27, 31, 36, 37, 26, 33) from Hq/18 Kulgam and female (75) from Yari-pora Kulgam.

The cases from Pulwama include Male (37) from Khandermoh, two Males (61, 45) and female (36) from Pinglena, two Male (37, 24) and four female (28, 24, 60, 38) from Draklern Abhama, Male (06) and female (35) from Jawbhara Awantipora, female (14) from Gulzar pora, Male (24) from Chandergam Tral, Male (37) from Kund Qazigund and eight females (35, 14, 50, 35, 24, 20, 85, 14) and five Males (06, 36, 20, 10, 10) from Sharshalli Khrew, three Males (58, 28, 53) from Ladhoo Pampore, Male (34) from Malangpora Awantipora, female (25) from Wuayn and Male (22) from Awantipora Pulwama.

The Budgam cases include Male (27) from Airport, three females (44, 16, 13) from Nowgam and male (50) from Khansahib while CRPF cases include two Males (48, 39) from 179 Bn Sopore, Male (38) and female (25) from 35 Bn CRPF Humama besides Male (28) from 21 Bn Budgam. The Anantnag cases include Male (60) from Chattergul and female (18) from Sallar Pahalgam while Srinagar cases include female (70) from Soura, Male (70) from Illiahi Bagh, Male (31) from Srinagar, Male (32) from Hyderpora, two Males (43, 10) and female (41) from Jawahar Nagar, two Males (25, 29) from Parimpora, Male (27) from Rainawari, female (43) from Said Kadal, female (62) from Astanpora Rawalpoora and female (23) from Batawara.

The cases from Baramulla include Male (20, 50) from Sopore, Male (58) from Nadihal, Male (50) from Uri, female (55) from Rangwar and Male (35) from Jania Baramulla. The other cases include Male (32) from Muzafarnagar UP, Male (55) from Sumbal Bandipora, Male (21) from Kupwara, Male (26) from Shopian and Male (27) (address not available).

Dr Riyaz Untoo, Principal SKIMS Bemina, said that out of 488 samples processed at the hospital's lab, 52 tested positive for COVID-19 and includes 37 from Srinagar and 15 from Shopian.

They include males (57, 34) and females (38, 50, 48) from Jawar Nagar, F-36yrs-Saidapora Achan, F-40yrs-Khankahi Moulla, M-43yrs-Safakadal, F-42yrs-Safakadal, M-40yrs-Habakadal Karfali Mohalla, F-35yrs-Habakadal Karfali Mohalla, M-13yrs-Nishat, M-44yrs-Panthachowk, M-31yrs-Nayisadak, F-26yrs-NishatBrane, M-53yrs-NishatBrane, M-35yrs-Siada Kadal, M-56yrs-Kathi Darwaza, M-65yrs-Rainawari, M-48yrs-Bemina, three females (38, 36, 4) and male (40) from Batmaloo, seven males (10, 8, 16, 14, 10, 40) and females (32, 17, 30) from Sarai Bala, females (25, 49) from Mehjoor Nagar.

The Shopian cases include females (13, 22 and 50) and male (60) from Keegam, females (25, 28) and male (30) from Balapora, F-32yrs-Reban, M-27yrs-yari-pora, M-19yrs-Reshipora, M-32yrs-Khujjora two men (27 and 26) from police station Zainapora, M-39yrs-Chermarg and M-17yrs-Narapora.

The cases confirmed at CD hospital laboratory include male (34) from Almustafa Colony, male (45) from Noorbagh, male (52) from Khoja Sahib, female (NA) from Sangri Colony, male (40) from Seer-

jagri Sopore, female (28) from Audoora, two males (63, 19) and five female (55, 75, 18, 50, 23) from Deewanbagh, male (22) from Chandosa, female (18) from Noor-ul-Huda Market Baramulla, male (62) from Kanlibagh, male (35) from Ladoora Rafiabad, male (52) from Khoja Bagh, male (39) from Syed Kareem, male (21) from Sangri Colony, male (25) from Iqbal Colony, male (42) from Pehilpora Safapora, female (24) from Kanispora Baramulla, female (33) from Ferozpora Rafiabad, male (42) from Seerjagri Sopore Baramulla, male (23) from Warpora Sopore, male (52) from Kanlibagh Baramulla, male (48) from DPL Baramulla, female (39) from Baramulla, male (80) from Budgam, male (35) from Tangmarg, female (70) from Kulgam, male (40) from Uri, female (12) from Dhani Sayedan Uri, male (36) from Limber Baniyar, female (30) from Peerniya, male (53) from Halmatpora and male (61) from Chanapora Budgam. Meanwhile, 63 COVID-19 patients were discharged from various hospitals—eight from Jammu and 55 from Valley.

Davinder Singh Groomed...

under sections 120B, 121, 121A & 122 of the IPC, sections 17, 18, 18B, 19, 20, 23, 38, 39 & 40 of the UA (P) Act 1967, and 25 (1)(a) & 35 of Arms Act, section 4 & 5 of Explosive Substances Act in NIA Special Court at Jammu.

The case was initially registered at police station Qazigund on 11 January this year after apprehension of Syed Naveed Mushtaq, the then District Commander of Hizb for Shopian and Ganderbal, and Rafi Ahmad Rather along Devender Singh besides Irfan Shafi Mir alias Advocate near Al-Stop Naka, Qazigund while they were going out of Srinagar towards Jammu in the 120 car owned and driven by Irfan. During the search of vehicle, one AK-47 Rifle, three pistols and a cache of ammunitions and explosives were recovered, the NIA said. All the four accused were arrested by Police.

NIA took over the investigation of the case on January 17. During the course of investigation, these accused persons were interrogated thoroughly and searches were conducted at 15 places in Kashmir Valley as well as in Jammu, the NIA said.

"Three more accused persons namely Syed Irfan Ahmad, younger brother of accused Syed Naveed Mushtaq, accused Tanveer Ahmad Wani and Tariq Ahmad Mir were arrested in the case on 23.01.2020, 10.02.2020 and 29.04.2020 respectively for being part of the conspiracy to extend support to Hizb-ul-Mujahideen by way of raising and transferring funds to the (Hizb) militants, harbouring them and supplying them arms, ammunition and explosives to carry out subversive activities."

The investigation, NIA said, has revealed that accused were part of a deep-rooted conspiracy hatched by the "Pakistan-based militant organization Hizb-ul-Mujahideen and Pakistani State Agencies to commit violent acts and to wage war against the Union of India."

"The investigation has revealed that Pakistan based leadership of Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM) namely Sayeed Salahudeen, Amir Khan, Deputy Chief of Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, Khurshheed Alam Operational Head of Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, Nazir Mehmood Financial Head of Hizb-ul-Mujahideen and others alongwith Pakistani establishment is extending support to the cadre and commanders of Hizb-ul-Mujahideen based in Jammu & Kashmir," NIA claimed. "The investigation also revealed that accused Irfan Shafi Mir not only met Hizb-ul-Mujahideen leadership in Pakistan but also met Umar Cheema, Ashban Chaudhary, Sohail Abbas and others of ISI of Pakistan and he was tasked to identify and activate the new hawala channels for transfer of money for sustaining militant activities in Kashmir valley."

The investigation, NIA said, also revealed that certain officials of Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi were in constant touch with Irfan Shafi Mir who was provided with funds to organize seminars in J&K to mobilize the masses against Government of India. "Irfan Shafi Mir also used to receive instructions and money from Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi and also facilitated the visa applications for number of Kashmiris for their visit to Pakistan."

Accused Devender Singh was also in touch with certain officials of Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi through secure social media platforms. "Investigation revealed that he was being groomed by Pakistani officials for obtaining sensitive information. Investigation has revealed that ex-police Constable Naveed Babu had deserted Police force alongwith certain weapons and was responsible for various killings, including incidents in which labourers and truck drivers were killed after the abrogation of Article 370 from J&K." Naveed Babu had made efforts to recruit Muslims youths to join cadre of Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, NIA said in the statement as per GNS. "He was also receiving funds from LoC traders and accused Tanveer Ahmad Wani who was an Ex-President of LoC traders Association, was providing him funds with the help of other traders based in (PaK)."

The NIA said that its investigation has also revealed that the accused were obtaining weapons and ammunitions from across the border with the help of arms smugglers and accused Devender Singh. "These weapons were later used for militant activities," it said, adding, "Investigation has further revealed that in Feb, 2019, in order to shield HM Commander Syed Naveed Mushtaq from the heightened surveillance of security agencies, accused Devender Singh arranged safe shelter for him and his associate in Jammu." Devender Singh used his own vehicle for the movement of Hizb militants and also assured them help in procuring weapons, it said. "Investigation has further brought on record that the Pakistani establishment has been devising all possible ways and means to fund, arm and sustain the militant activities of the banned militant organization Hizbul Mujahideen," it said, adding, "Further investigation in the case is continuing against arrested accused Tariq Ahmad Mir and others in the case."

Durbar Reopens In Srinagar...

of Durbar Move offices in Srinagar. Meanwhile, Lt Governor has chaired a high level meeting of Administrative Secretaries here at Civil Secretariat wherein he stressed on close monitoring of developmental works and their speedy execution, besides releasing of pending payments under various schemes on priority.

The meeting was attended by BVR Subrahmanyam, Chief Secretary; Arun Kumar Mehta, Financial Commissioner, Finance department; Atal Dulloo, Financial Commissioner, Health and Medical Education; Bipul Pathak, Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor, besides Administrative Secretaries of various departments and other senior

officers. During the meeting, Murmu directed the Administrative Secretaries to increase the field visits, with minimum one field visit every week to get first hand appraisal of the status of developmental works, expedite all the ongoing development works for their early completion and submit Utilization Certificates (UCs) of works done from time to time. Earmark half of the days for meeting public in the Secretariat / HoD offices and also earmark time for meeting public representatives.

He further directed them to release the pending payments under various schemes targetted for individual beneficiaries on priority, besides release of wages of contractual / daily wagers within one week's period.

In view of the persistent demand of people for making available minor minerals, the Lt Governor asked the concerned officers to explore modalities for immediate short term mining permits at local levels to ensure that people do not suffer due to paucity of minor minerals.

He also emphasized on developing a robust mechanism for proper tracking of files to complement the government's resolve of ensuring responsive and accountable government. "The Government is committed to holistic development of the UT to meet the aspirations of the people of J&K and called for coordinated efforts at all levels of the administrative setup in this direction," he said during the meeting.

Doctor Couple Plans...

tourism has plummeted due to the coronavirus pandemic. He, however, is confident that visitors will come back quickly enough.

Valued at about \$2 million, it is potentially the largest such collection outside of Kashmir itself — including the biggest assortment of books on the region aside from what might be in the British Museum or the Library of Congress, Guru said.

"It's a decent collection to a level that you could create a nice little museum," Guru said.

He and his wife for years have sought to create a nonprofit museum that would act as a draw for patrons to learn more about Kashmir. As equally proud residents of East Amherst since 2005, they've not only settled on Western New York as home but also as the base of their venture.

The Gurus are buying a vacant historic stone church from Michael Suszek at 650 Park Place in Niagara Falls, which they plan to convert into their new museum, the Centre for Kashmir. Closing is scheduled for July 15. Renovations to the 97-year-old church will include a new roof, masonry repair, complete gutting of the interior and new mechanical and electrical systems.

They are also purchasing two houses on 4th Street, across Main and Walnut streets from the 9,468-square-foot church, to provide residential space for visiting Kashmiri artists, scholars and other contributors.

Additionally, plans call for art and cultural clinics for local residents, possibly in partnership with the Rapids Theatre, Niagara Arts and Cultural Centre, and Niagara University.

As part of the project, estimated to cost about \$2 million, the Gurus have applied through LSNY Holdings LLC for a 10-year property tax break and sales tax exemptions from the Niagara County Industrial Development Agency, which formally accepted the application on June 30 and set a public hearing for July 29. NCIDA officials noted that the church is located in a distressed census tract.

The project costs include \$200,000 for acquisition of the property, \$1.25 million for construction and improvements, \$250,000 for furniture and equipment, and \$300,000 for other "soft" costs. The tax incentives, if approved, would yield \$153,190 in property tax savings over a decade and \$70,000 from sales taxes. The Gurus are also seeking \$500,000 in federal and state historic tax credits, plus \$1.5 million in equity or bank financing.

Guru said he plans to donate his collection to the museum, which — according to NCIDA documents — will display 600 "original paintings, etchings, drawings and artefacts."

That's less than half of the total, which Guru said includes more than 1,200 books, manuscripts and drawings, dating from the late 1700s and 1800s. Most are written by Europeans and other travellers through the British Empire. Additionally, the Gurus possess about 150 paintings and 200 other artefacts. Guru said he also knows "a bunch of people across the world who are interested in donating other items."

Guru acknowledged that the venture is risky, especially right now, when tourism to the Falls has plummeted during the pandemic. But he expressed confidence in the region and hopes that visitors will come back quickly enough.

"Hopefully, it'll be good," he said. "It's a pretty cool project. It's a very risky project, but Niagara County has all the ingredients to be a world-class place."

HC Resumes Functioning...

besides other concerned were present on the occasion. Later, Chief Justice interacted with the staff of the High Court and lauded their dedication and commitment towards justice dispensation despite facing challenging times due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Chief Justice expressed hope that the HC staff and officers and officials of the Registry will continue to work with the same zeal and devotion.

Pertinently, this year's Darbar Move has been delayed because of COVID-19 pandemic.

2 SSB Men Kill Each Other...

two soldiers have died in the fratricide incident at Kulgam. He said that further details are being collected.

The deceased has been identified ASI Sandeep Kumar and Constable Hemant Sharma.

Lone, Raza Appointed...

Two members, Subash Gupta and Sameer Bharti were administered oath at Jammu office, while Syed Iqbal Aga and Showkat Ahmad Zargar were administered oath of office at Srinagar through video conferencing mode.

Journalists Protest Against New Media Policy, Demands Its Immediate Rollback

Agencies

Srinagar: A group of journalists under the banner of "J&K Media Guild" staged a protest against media policy and demanded its immediate rollback.

Carrying banners that read "don't gag media, we are an equally important pillar of democracy", "down with media policy 2020" etc, the protesters assembled at Press Enclave here.

"The new media policy is aimed at gagging the journalists in Jammu and Kashmir. The government and the framers of the policy must understand that we are a pillar of democracy and importantly as equally as three other pillars," they said.

"The media policy is against all newspapers, news channels and all other news platforms. The policy provides for informing the government and police beforehand before carrying any story," said a protester, Imtiyaz Ahmad, adding, "In case one fails, his newspaper registration will be canceled, FIR will be filed against him or government advertisements will be barred."

The protesters demanded an immediate rollback of the policy. "We don't want to be a mouth-piece of the government. The government must revoke and rollback this policy so that we get a free atmosphere to carry on with our job." (GNS)



JKAP expresses solidarity with J&K media fraternity

Formulate media policy in consultation with stakeholders: G.H Mir

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party (JKAP) senior leader and former minister Ghulam Hassan Mir on Monday expressed solidarity with J&K media fraternity demanding immediate rollback of new media policy in J&K.

In a statement issued to KNS, Mir urged the J&K government to go for a review of new media policy in consultation with representatives of the print, online and electronic media outlets in Jammu and Kashmir.

"The new policy related to media in J&K seems to have been superficially drafted without taking into consideration the fundamental constitutional

requirements guaranteeing the right to freedom of expression," Mir observed.

He expressed deep concern over the plight of the media industry in J&K which has been battling for survival in prevailing circumstances. "Instead of supporting the media industry including print, online and electronic platforms in its survival in these pressing economic situations, the government has started squeezing the viability of the fourth estate," Mir observed.

The JKAP leader said the government should facilitate and ensure that the media fulfills its role of opposition to government policies which are detrimental to the public welfare. "Instead of sup-

porting the fourth state to highlight the miseries of people and point out the lacunas in the governance system, the government seems to be threatening them of dire consequences for playing the role of a watchdog," Mir remarked.

He said the government should immediately roll back the proposed policy which is disadvantageous to its spirit. "A policy that has been apparently drafted without consulting the editors' bodies or association of accredited journalists in J&K is genuinely unacceptable to the media fraternity," Mir observed.

He said while there is a dire need to check fake news, subversive information and yellow journalism in Jammu

and Kashmir, but, that does not mean the journalists would be asked to go for an embedded role and forget about impartiality which is an essential prerequisite for professional journalism.

Mir emphasized on the need to enhance the advertisement rates for print as well as electronic media in view of the escalation in printing costs, growing inflation, and the COVID situation. "The government must offer incentives to media houses in view of their financial constraints due to the pandemic situation and redraft the media policy which addresses the concern of all stakeholders," he demanded. (KNS)

'Jhelum view parks', crying for maintenance, admin unmoved

Agencies

Srinagar: Chief Engineer Irrigation and Flood Control Department Kashmir Iftikhar Kakroo Monday said that non-availability of funds and less manpower in the department is a reason for Jhelum View Parks crying for maintenance.

"I will tell you, there is a problem that we only get funds for new projects. There are no funds for maintenance of the Jhelum view parks on the banks of the Jhelum," Kakroo told news agency while replying to a query.

The parks, constructed on either side of the river Jhelum from LD to Zero bridge was a part of a beautification project. It is in shambles which otherwise is meant for public amusement and recreation.

"In my opinion, construc-

tion of any project is easier than to maintain it. And we don't have a flood of gardeners here (in the department to maintain these parks). Every year people retire with no replacement," the CE said.

"It is casual, seasonal, daily rated workers and regular employees who work. Our area of work has increased but has less manpower. Our priority is other works than to maintain parks," he said. "If government can release some money for its maintenance it would be good. There is money for new projects but not a single penny for maintenance of existing projects," he added.

According to official data, Srinagar city has 169 parks covering about 287 hectares against a minimum standard of 570 hectares provided in the Urban and Regional Development Plans Formulation and

Implementation (URDPFI) guidelines, 2015.

On September 15, the J&K High Court asked the state's Chief Secretary to take a call on the letter addressed by a former judge of the Court to it suggesting to enhance green space in Srinagar.

Former chief justice of Bihar, Justice (ret'd) Bilal Nazki in May 2016 had also written a letter to the chief Justice of Jammu and Kashmir highlighting how the city lacks the green spaces. In 2017, the High Court treated the letter as Public Interest Litigation.

Except for few, Srinagar has lost many historic gardens due to indifference and apathetic attitude of successive authorities. The lost gardens include Dewan Bagh, Baghi Ali Mardan, Baghi Dilawar Khan. (KNS)

ACB chargesheets officials of edu deptt

Srinagar, July 6: (GNS) The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) presented chargesheet against officials of Education Department in engagement and regularization of ineligible Rehbar-e-Taleem (ReT) teacher..

ACB presented chargesheet against Abdul Latif Khan R/o Khanpora Budgam in Case FIR No. 16/2017 P/S VOK (now ACB), under section 5(1)(c)(d) r/w 5(2) P.C Act. Svt.2006 of J&K (amendment Act 2014 and 120-B, 201, 420, 467, 471/RPC.

The chargesheet was produced before the Court of Special Judge Anti-Corruption Court Srinagar, against: thr beneficiary Abdul Latief Khan R/o Khanpora Budgam, and officials - Gh Hassan Hakeem R/o Danger Pora Wadwan, Budgam, Abdul Aziz Malla R/o Dooru Sebdan Budgam, Gh Nabi Shah R/o Palpora Budgam, Ravindar Kumar Raina SR/o Kathwar Budgam, Noor Mohammad R/o Bathakh Pora, Nowshara Srinagar, and Gh Qadir Misger R/o Haji Bagh Buchpora Soura, Srinagar.

The investigation found that one Abdul Latif Khan R/o Khanpora Tehsil Beerwa District Budgam was engaged as Rehbar-i-Taleem (ReT) in the year 2000 at Primary School Batapora in pursuance to conspiracy by then ZEO with other concerned officers/officials and accused beneficiary.

The instant case was registered by ACB on the allegations that the engagement and regularization of ineligible Rehbar-e-Taleem (ReT) teacher was made, on the basis of fake and forged 10+2 marks certificates in Education Zone Hardapunzu, Budgam, the ACB said in a statement issued to GNS.

The investigation found

that one Abdul Latif Khan R/o Khanpora Tehsil Beerwa District Budgam was engaged as Rehbar-i-Taleem (ReT) in the year 2000 at Primary School Batapora in pursuance to conspiracy by then ZEO with other concerned officers/officials and accused beneficiary.

After a gap of three years of accused beneficiary's engagement as ReT, his 10+2 marks certificate was confirmed fake by J&K BOSE, while he was not eligible for his initial engagement as ReT, the statement said, adding that in furtherance to the conspiracy the then ZEO Hardapanzoo and CEO Budgam processed and recommended regularization of services of the accused beneficiary as General Line teacher to DSEK where from the regularization order was issued, based on the recommendations of the then CEO.

All the accused except two deceased persons, were presented before the Court of Special Judge Anti-Corruption Srinagar, for further legal action. Further trial of the case will proceed in due course, the ACB said. (GNS)

LAWDA carries out massive demolition drive in Bemina

SRINAGAR, JULY 06: The Enforcement Wing of Lakes and Waterways Development Authority (LAWDA) today carried out a massive demolition drive in the area of Rakh-i-Arth Housing Colony Bemina.

The drive was conducted by Enforcement Officer along with Executive Engineer Lake div 2nd, Magistrate (N.T) and concerned sub-divisional staff of Rakh-i-Arth.

Almost 5 to 6 illegal sheds were demolished and sign boards from plots illegally encroached upon by

the locals for graveyard were also removed.

The drive was successfully conducted with the joint efforts of the team of territorial Police Officers of Bemina, DSP, SHO and D.O, DSP.

Furthermore, earth filling was also removed in two places where the violators dumped the earth in order to develop plots illegally and it was learnt that these violators were trying to prepare plots in order to make colonies illegally in the Rakh-i-arth for their vested interests.

REMEMBRANCE



**1st Death Anniversary of
Late Mohammad Akbar Rather**

خدا کی تجھ پر رحمت ہو محمدؐ کی شفاعت ہو۔
بیے دل سے دعائیں ہماری کہ تجھے جنت کی راحت ہو (آمین)

We cried endlessly when you died but we won't let the tears mar the smiles that you've given us when you were alive.
"Your life was a blessing, your memory a treasure." You are loved beyond words and missed beyond measure.

May your soul rest in peace.

**Deeply Remembered by
Suhail Rather & Entire Family
R/o Gamroo Bandipora**

**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL
TRANSPORT OFFICER BUDGAM KASHMIR**

NOTICE



Where a application for transfer of ownership has been received from one.
Shri : Sheikh Ajaz Hussain S/o: Sheikh Gulam Mohd R/o: Hyderpora Budgam (Transferor) of LMV Santro. Vehicle bearing registration number JK04A - 1025. Chasis number 573913 Engine no. 67721 Model 2004. in favour of Shri.. Shabir Ahmad Bhat S/o.Ghulam Mohammad Bhat R/o Baghwanpora Rawalpora Sanat Nagar Srinagar (Tranferee) as well as HPA Cancellation with J & K Bank ltd B/U Hyderpora.



Now therefore it is notified for the information of the general public that objections if any to the proposed transfer of ownership shall be filed in writing in the office of the Assistant Regional Transport officer ARTO Budgam within a period of 12 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper.

Assistant Regional Transport officer
Budgam Kashmir

No. ARTO/ BUDGAM.1079
Dated 06/07/2020

M.QB

DIAL-EMMA

- TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266686
- PCR: 0194-2452092,2455883
- PDD: 0194-2450213
- FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488,2452222,2452155
- CAPD: 1800180701
- SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311 ✈

RAILWAYS

- SRINAGAR: 0194-2103259
- ANANTNAG: 01932-228243
- BARAMULLA: 0194-102029
- BJBHERA: 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**

15 Zu al-Qa'dah
1441

PRAYERS

FAJR 3: 42

ZUHR 12: 36

ASR 5:35

Magrib 7:49

ISHA 9:29

This Day In History

- 1777 - American Revolutionary War: Battle of Hubbardton
- 1798 - Quasi-War: The U.S. Congress rescinds treaties with France sparking the 'war'
- 1807 - France, Russia & Prussia sign Peace of Tilsit
- 1898 - US President McKinley signs the Organic Act to annex Hawaii
- 1929 - Romania & Vatican sign concord
- 1941 - Nazis executed 5,000 Jews in Kovno, Lithuania
- 1941 - World War II: Beirut is occupied by Free France and British troops.
- 1943 - 3rd day of battle at Kursk: Germans occupy Dubrova
- 1950 - Korean War: UN Security Council establishes the United Nations Command to combat North Korean forces
- 1953 - Che Guevara sets out on a trip through Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, and El Salvador.
- 1973 - 78 down as flash flood sweeps a bus into a river (India)
- 1978 - Solomon Islands declares independence from UK
- 1980 - Institution of Sharia law in Iran
- 1980 - The Safra massacre in Lebanon.
- 1981 - The solar-powered aircraft, Solar Challenger, successfully completes a 163 mile flight across the English Channel
- 1986 - Jordan government shuts al-Fatah offices
- 1988 - Soviet Union launches Phobos 1 to probe Martian moon (unsuccessful)
- 1988 - Five prominent anti-apartheid activists are released in Cape Town, South Africa after being detained for up to two years under the Internal Security Act
- 1990 - FIFA World Cup: Italy beats England 2-1 in football's World Cup Third Place game
- 1990 - First Three Tenors concert featuring Plácido Domingo, José Carreras and Luciano Pavarotti at Baths of Caracalla in Rome - recording of is world's best-selling classical record
- 1995 - Space shuttle STS-71 (Atlantis 14), lands
- 1996 - Space Shuttle STS 78 (Columbia 20), lands
- 2002 - A scandal breaks out in the United Kingdom when news reports accuse Mi6 of sheltering Abu Qatada, the supposed European Al Qaeda leader.
- 2003 - The United Communist Party of Armenia is formed.
- 2005 - Coordinated terrorist bomb blasts strike London's public transport system during the morning rush hour killing 52 and injuring 700
- 2005 - Influenced by Live 8, the G8 leaders pledge to double 2004 levels of aid to Africa from US\$25 to US\$50 billion by the year 2010.
- 2007 - Pope Benedict XVI issues the Apostolic Letter Summorum Pontificum, removing restrictions on celebrating the old Tridentine Mass.
- 2007 - Worldwide performances by charity event Live Earth.
- 2014 - Israel launches a "counter-terrorist operation" dubbed Operation Protective Edge against Hamas in Gaza
- 2016 - Deadlock in battle for Aleppo broken when Russian air strikes cut rebel access to the city, 250,000 people put under seige
- 2017 - Tesla Motors produces its first mass-market car, the Model 3

From KO Archives

Bid On Minster's Life In City Centre

Militants Attack Motorcade In Crowded Budshah Chowk

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Minister of state for Public Health Engineering, Syed Basheer Ahmad Andrabi, narrowly escaped a bid on his life when militants opened fire on his bullet-proof ambassador car and escort vehicle near the Budshah Chowk in the crowded heart of the city this afternoon.

Three of his security guards were injured in the attack, and the two vehicles damaged, while the attackers fled from the scene leading behind their weapons and two pherans. The Islamic Front group has claimed responsibility for the bid on the minister's life.

Two pheran-clad militants opened fire on the minister's cars from a close range when the vehicles slowed down near the old KMDA bus-stand because of traffic jam, the KNS quoted the police as having said.

The attack took place at around 4:50 p.m. when the minister was returning from the secretariat to his official residence.

Three personal security guards of the minister were injured in the firing, the initial bursts ripping the tyres of the ambassador car and the escorting Gypsy.

Windowpanes of the two vehicles were smashed by the militants' sustained firing, but the attackers fled when the minister's guards and patrolling policeman began to return the fire.

According to eyewitnesses, the militants escaped in the crowd towards Maisuma-by-lanes.

Police guards surrounded the minister and whisked him off to safety.

The police said that they had recovered two AK assault rifles, two pouches and two pherans from the Maisuma area.

The firing threw the heart of the city into panic and chaos, with people running for cover, and traffic coming to a standstill. Long traffic jams were witnessed on key crossings in the city centre, as policemen diverted vehicles and cordoned off the area in order to facilitate search operations.

The director-general of the police, the IGP, SSP Srinagar, SP East and other police officials arrived on the scene soon after the attack on the minister to oversee the operations.

(Kashmir Observer, 07 July, 2005)

KASHMIR
OBSERVER

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Mounting Virus Challenge

India has surpassed Russia as the country with the third largest number Coronavirus cases in the world. On Monday a single day jump of 24248 cases took India's tally close to seven lakh mark while the death toll has climbed to 19,693 with 425 new fatalities. Only the US and Brazil are ahead of India in terms of the total Coronavirus infections. New infections are being powered mainly by the surge in the four southern states of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

But despite the rising number of the cases, the union government has decided to unlock the economy. And it is understandable. There is no option but to open up as the tanking economy has thrown millions of people out of their jobs. The Indian economy like most other economies of the world is already in recession and persisting with the lockdown would have plunged it into depression. So, it is a wise step that the government has decided to open up the economy. But at the same time, it has to ensure that people take all the precautions while going about their business. Due protocols need to be put in place for every business and masks will have to be made mandatory.

Upcoming weeks and months will be crucial. In a letter to World Health Organization, the 239 scientists from 32 countries have said there is evidence that novel coronavirus in smaller particles in the air can infect people. They have called for the World Health Organization to revise recommendations. According to existing evidence the coronavirus disease spreads primarily from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth, which are expelled when a person with COVID-19 coughs, sneezes or speaks. But if the virus remains airborne, it should be a cause of deep concern. This makes the pandemic deadlier than any other in the past. But again while the government can't lock the country down again, it certainly can take firm steps to make people responsible.

Going forward the situation doesn't give confidence. At the current rate, the number of cases are going to be far too many in near future to be handled by our existing health infrastructure. More so, when the healthcare professionals are also now indicating that the community transmission might have already set in. The situation can only aggravate as the government takes steps to open up. This calls for an aggressive campaign backed by a strict enforcement urging people to exercise all the necessary precautions to ensure the virus doesn't spread.

OTHER OPINION

ICMR's gaffe

The worst traits of Indian bureaucracy were evident in the Indian Council of Medical Research's myopic attempt to launch a Covid-19 vaccine with an August 15 deadline. In his attempt to bridge the scientific and administrative imperatives of his office, ICMR's director-general Balram Bhargava fell between the two stools. Horrified experts pointed out that a vaccine cannot be launched by then without giving the short shrift to clinical trials. Even the most optimistic estimates are veering towards an end of year or early 2021 launch for a few vaccine candidates, after shrinking timelines to the maximum extent possible. Injecting a vaccine into the general population without rigorously ensuring safety and efficacy will be dangerously counterproductive.

Science and data cannot be subordinated to political deadlines. Yet, populist governments continue to coax domain experts down that path. Bhargava's letter to hospitals selected for clinical trials makes no secret of political pressures. He notes the indigenous vaccine jointly developed by Bharat Biotech and ICMR was among the government's "top priority projects which is being monitored at the topmost level". After strictly advising the hospitals to fast track all approvals for initiation of clinical trials and starting "subject enrolment" ("participant enrolment" would be ethically appropriate), the letter warns bluntly that "non-compliance will be viewed very strictly".

A press release subsequently clarified that the letter solely aimed to cut "unnecessary red tape" without compromising safety, best practices and rigour. But questions remain. For starters, ICMR didn't disavow the August 15 deadline. The criteria for selecting the hospitals, including their facilities, have also been questioned. Cutting red tape should not lead to a situation where hospital ethics committees are under duress, researchers go easy on informed consent for participants, outcomes are fudged or pre-decided, and dissent faces disciplinary actions.

The long rope to the politically influential Baba Ramdev, for a drug originally marketed as a corona cure and later as an immunity booster while retaining a misleading name, also fits into a pattern. The disastrous consequences of Lysenkoism, the ideas of Soviet agrobiologist Trofim Lysenko who tried to subordinate science to Marxist-Leninist principles, are pertinent to recall here. Certainly, India and the world need a cure for Covid-19 fast. But it is for science, not politics, to decide parameters that force the pace of vaccine research. ICMR must shore up its credibility for the long road ahead.

Times Of India

Reclaiming Brand Cashmere

In the West, silk and pashmina shawls are sold under the broader brand rubric of Cashmere but are not made in Kashmir

WAJAHAT QAZI

Automation and Robotics, a vital aspect of this revolution, can be the technologies that radically reorient the production process of our crafts, leading to immense cost savings, which can then make these products greatly competitive in world markets



Natural Kani Jamawar Shawl made in Kashmir. Credits: Pure Kashmir

Kashmir's handicrafts industry is in crisis. The crisis is deep, and both conceptual and structural. Unless immediate and urgent paradigm changing steps are taken, this industry or even pride of Kashmir will die. Kashmir handicrafts industry's potential extinction will not only have practical consequences- loss of livelihoods, unemployment and so on- but it will also have cultural symbolic connotations and implications: Kashmir, in the mindshare of many, is associated with pristine, unparalleled beauty that has incubated its arts and crafts; the loss of this industry will deal a body blow to this brand image.

How can Kashmir's crafts and arts be revived?

The question might be wrongly posed and formulated. Our handicrafts industry does not need a revival. It needs reinvention. The reference here is not to reinvent the proverbial wheel from scratch but to fundamentally rejig and reorient our bellwether industry in a way that allows for its comprehensive efflorescence. The first step toward this would be to revise the value and supply chain of various crafts of Kashmir and make these more efficient by weeding out structural inefficiencies. This must be complemented by consolidation of the industry. As it stands now, our handicrafts industry is fragmented, both in terms of the value and supply chain, the business to business(B2B) and Business to Consumer(B2C) formats all the way to retailing and marketing

The best way to consolidate this industry would be through vertical integration wherein there is both forward and backward integration. This does not and should not mean monopolization of the crafts by one

or two business houses. Monopolization can perhaps be avoided by creating business and industry structures along the lines of quasi-cooperatives where firms of different, varying sizes and shapes can come together for the common goal of revitalizing this critical industry of Kashmir. Vertical Integration can lead to economies of scale and scope; the attendant cost savings can be passed onto the consumer, making our crafts competitive in world markets.

But these savings would not be enough to outcompete others in similar markets and industries. For example, a silk or pashmina stole in European markets sells from 5- 12 pounds, on average, even at up marketish retailers. (It is ironical these are usually sold under the broader brand rubric of Cashmere but are not made in Kashmir). At this rate, and the margins thereof, a genuine, Kashmir crafts product cannot even make it to Europe. The cost and production price for a genuine pashmina stole will exceed this selling price. What then is needed is change and opt for production processes and production runs that are superior and that can lead to superior cost efficiencies.

Here the ongoing Fourth Industrial revolution and its technologies can be of value. Automation and Robotics, a vital aspect of this revolution, can be the technologies that radically reorient the production process of our crafts, leading to immense cost savings, which can then make these products greatly competitive in world markets. But an obvious issue arises here. The grist and mill of our handicrafts is that these are hand crafted and hence their appeal. This is a valid concern, but it need not be paralyzing or debilitating. It is only certain aspects of the value chain

that can be handled by robotics and automation, while others, like embroidery of shawls for example aided by technology but having a clear human touch to it can solve this particular problem. This is, insofar, the production process and production runs are concerned.

The other important aspect of marketing must also be seriously reviewed. Typically, Kashmiri sellers and retailers take recourse to direct and personal selling with aggressive salesmen rattling off how good the product is and so on. The review here would entail digital marketing and synthesising it with other forms of selling, promotion and sales efforts. The redeeming fact is that Kashmir (known as Cashmere in the European imagination; it goes back centuries to Napoleonic times when the Emperors wife wore the first Kashmir shawl) is already a robust brand which has been, however, cannibalized by others. This brand needs to be reclaimed and backed by substance.

In all this the artisans should have pride of place. They should be retrained, their extant skills enhanced and they be remunerated handsomely, in proportion to their hard work and efforts.

If this review of our handicrafts industry is undertaken, it will also resolve some of the ethical issues that bedevil it. The middlemen and some unscrupulous exporters, who gouge the artisans will be eliminated. Our handicrafts can then be sold under the rubric of fair trade which will attract conscientious, ethical consumers. But, if the same approaches and methods continue, the day will not be far off when there will be no such think as Kashmir handicrafts. A review that leads for a reinvention of the industry is an imperative. Let's make haste slowly and reinvent our pride and our invaluable legacy!



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An Auto Ride and clash with Verna driver

"Yes sir, I am on my way. I will probably reach in the next 10-15 minutes. You know the traffic in the city, sir," I said in a rushed manner.

There are some excuses that always work, no matter what the situation: Srinagar's traffic is one of them, especially on Monday morning.

Though I did not realize that the traffic was heavy ahead and I should have bargained for some more time. But, that was just a usual day for me.

A clumsy auto-rickshaw with a dead meter, (In Kashmir, you'll be very lucky to find an auto-rickshaw with a working meter) wallpapers of Kareena and Katrina in skimpy dresses on both sides of the seat and people poking their eyes inside the auto expecting to see a beautiful girl seated cross-legged only to be utterly disappointed on spotting a man.

"How much longer will it take?" I asked the auto driver as he stopped at a red light near J&K Bank headquarters. He instantly turned to me and replied, seemingly frustrated, "It's not me, it's the traffic, sahib..." with the last word coming after a long pause.

Perhaps it took him a while to realize that a customer is not the right person to dump his frustrations upon. This time, I noticed his face, as I'd not really seen him while hiring the auto.

This is what too much talking on your cell phone can do; you do not notice the people around you.

I was getting a fair deal and so, I hadn't bothered to notice him at all. His face had several familiar details. He must have been in his early 40s, semi-bald with a tiny moustache and an unshaven look, weary eyes and plenty of wrinkles on his face and some more on his forehead.

He was what a common lower middle-class family man would look like. In search of life.

I could feel his willingness to work although I doubted if his body was equally willing. His clothes screamed for a wash and I bet he would have liked one himself too. But here he was, holding on to the clutch, feet on the paddles and eyes on the traffic light.

Just as the signal turned green, our auto flew... like a unicorn flying with all its strength, touching all the seven skies in one go! "Oh s***," I yelled, as I tried not to fall out of the auto. For the next few seconds, I was just trying to figure if I had escaped unhurt and whether my newly purchased cell phone was fine or not. I would not have minded a scratch or two on myself but the phone was way too expensive.

If you are someone like me who

forgets to take his cell out of his pocket before entering the rivers for a dip, then you will value it more than yourself.

A shiny, black Verna was standing in front of the auto with somebody seated in. By the time I got out of the auto, the auto driver & the owner were exchanging "I-am-going-to-kick-your-a**" scowls".

The boy must have been in his late twenties, clean-shaven with a strong build, neatly dressed in a white shirt and black trousers with a cap.

Within seconds, their verbal battle began.

Had it not been for the ear-shattering horns from the traffic jam behind us, the boy would have pulled the auto driver into a fight.

Finally, after both of them had used all the slang they knew, and after the intervention of people around, they decided to go their separate ways. The auto driver did not say a word for the next five minutes. He was visibly upset with what had just happened.

It is not easy for a man to immediately recover from a hurt ego.

"These car owners think that they've purchased the entire road and that rules can be broken whenever they want," yelled the auto driver noticing that I was looking in the front mirror.

He continued in an agitated voice, "These people do not have any values nor any respect for anyone. They only value money, Had I been in a car that was bigger than his, would he have dared to speak to me like this?". His voice trembled and he wanted to say more but for some reason, he did not.

I could feel that his voice had choked, much like his self-respect just a few minutes ago.

The next ten minutes were silent... very silent. The silence was killing me. I wanted to say something to him but feared that it might agitate him further instead of calming him down.

I gave him 100 rupees and he left in a hurry, perhaps eying another customer. To a large extent, he had a valid point; people have become extremely money-minded. Money drives everything. But what can one do?

It is the harsh truth and people accept it without challenging this social mindset. After all, acceptance is much easier than trying to bring about a change.

"You are so late!" The boss had seen me. I got to work, all thoughts of the auto driver driven from my mind.

Syed Tajamul Imran is a columnist

How Facebook Stresses Out Parents In The Pandemic

We need more empathy. Shaming one another on social media isn't the answer

Laura Leigh Abby

When I'm struggling with something about social distancing, I don't go to social media groups. I turn to my family and friends for their opinions. We don't always agree, but I don't risk an onslaught of mom-shaming from strangers on the internet. That support is a privilege I am grateful for"

I joined my first Facebook parenting group when my firstborn was an infant. I used it as a resource for honest advice on local paediatricians, stroller-friendly hiking trails and home-repair professionals.

As my son grew, so did the number of groups I joined: the super-local group where I know some of the moms; the group that encompasses my entire county.

There's occasional drama within these groups, but that's a social media norm. For the most part, it's a virtual place where many of us turn to connect with family, friends and even strangers.

Facebook has a reputation for being the place where threads of people — many of whom have probably never met one another — argue about politics or economics, or disagree in ALL CAPS.

But for me and many mid-30s millennials, it's a place to post pictures of our kids, wish aunts and uncles happy birthday and generally avoid controversy. (We save that for Twitter.)

When I'm struggling with something about social distancing, I don't go to social media groups. I turn to my family and friends for their opinions. We don't always agree, but I don't risk an onslaught of mom-shaming from strangers on the internet. That support is a privilege I am grateful for

When discussions would sometimes get heated within my mom groups, the administrators of the pages usually stepped in to facilitate friendly discussion and remind us of group rules: no bullying or hate speech, be kind and courteous, no drama. It was, for the most part, an effective strategy.

A shift in tone

Since the novel coronavirus hit, though, I've noticed that the tone in these groups has shifted. Conversations initially changed to advice on where to buy a swing set or talk of home schooling resources. But then the mom-shaming began.

Though these groups exist so we can help each other shoulder the burden of parenting and shield each other from negativity, self-righteous replies and judgemental feedback were suddenly peppered throughout every thread. An innocent question about when to take the kids to visit their grandma elicited dozens of nasty responses.

Advice on where to get groceries or takeout led to arguments and name-calling. It seems that just when we need our online communities most, they've become toxic.

In the past, I appreciated these parenting groups for the variety of ways in which we could support each other. I've enjoyed tapping into the hive mind of nearby moms, where conversations usually range from where to donate children's clothes, to day-care Centre recommendations, to advice on breastfeeding, potty training and screen time, but now I wonder if the negativity outweighs the benefits.

Elizabeth, who's an administrator of a Facebook parenting group with more than 4,000 members, spoke on the condition that only her first name be used to protect the group's privacy.

She says that some group members have posted photos of people they believe are behaving "unsafely" by not following strict social distancing guidelines.



In the comments, she says, parents pile on from both sides of the argument.

Insult-slinging

"The worst has been direct shaming of people and the insult-slinging that follows," she says. Along with another administrator, Elizabeth has been moderating and removing problematic posts, but she says it has been exhausting and that her otherwise peaceful group has been tough to manage during the pandemic.

Members posting or threatening to post photos of other people's kids as a form of shaming has become a common issue in groups across the country.

In some cases, conversations have become so volatile that the administrators have archived the group, which means the group doesn't appear in searches and no new members can join.

This happened to Tiffany Pitts, of Washington state, after two parents argued about whether it was safe to travel, and one of the parents took to all of the local Facebook pages to insult the other.

"There is so much unchecked privilege in these conversations," says Cristen Pascucci, a mom, who says she's sick of the negativity in her local parenting Facebook group and wishes people would stop assuming that we're all in the same situation.

"It's not easy to just 'stay home' when you are in an abusive relationship, or a single mom with a newborn, or packed into a tiny apartment with no sunlight."

Instead of addressing these nuances and offering support or help, though, Pascucci says people are arguing with each other about what they should or should not be doing.

When it comes to parenting, every day can be a

challenge, and the coronavirus has made an already scary world feel even more threatening.

Cruelty toward other parents is not going to make the pandemic disappear, and publicly shaming everyone we disagree with has led to a lack of compassion, both online and off. And yet no one is going to get through to anyone else by resorting to name-calling or bullying.

I have continued turning to these groups for advice not related to the pandemic, such as how to get rid of carpenter ants or where I can find a second-hand baby swing.

But when I'm struggling with something about social distancing, I don't go to social media groups. I turn to my family and friends for their opinions. We don't always agree, but I don't risk an onslaught of mom-shaming from strangers on the internet. That support is a privilege I am grateful for, one that not every parent has.

The administrators and moderators in my own groups tell me that after a few heated discussions during the early weeks of social distancing, the group threads have generally been peaceful. Some members even say they've seen heightened positivity and increased kindness, which is encouraging.

That is how I try to approach social media. If I don't have a kind remark or a helpful suggestion, I refrain from commenting, and if a parent is looking for compassion, I try to provide it.

We don't know what's on the other side of the screen, and if we want to support each other, kindness is always the right response.

Laura Leigh Abby is author of "2Brides 2Be" and "The Rush"

Washington Post

The Path Less Travelled Could Lead To Success

Humanities are relegated to the lowest rung on the ladder of perceived mental ability

Navanita Varadpande | Gulf News

Are you serious? He's chosen what?" These words were soaked in shocked consternation, as if I had just touched my aunt with a coronavirus infected sneeze! I replied, "Yes, you heard right, my son has opted for commerce!"

Sudden gloom had set in, the news hadn't been received with much positivity. The reason being, the boy has selected the "pariah" of streams, as per what most Indians believe. And god save those who decide to take on humanities. They are relegated to the lowest category on the ladder of perceived mental ability.

Minakshi has literally pushed her daughter off the cliff into taking science despite the fact that the girl was most inclined towards liberal arts. The mother's plaintive cry being, "What will our relatives say?" Even though the school where the girl used to study counselled her into opting for humanities, because that's where her aptitude lay, her parents were adamant. They tried to arm-twist their way into the science stream and when that wasn't possible, they shifted the daughter to another school.

The ambition of many parents is to see the child get into the most prestigious engineering college in India called 'IIT'.

Mr. Nair even threatened the school authorities that if his son was not offered 'science' then he would sue them. "If my son doesn't become an engineer I can never ever go back to my hometown with my head held high!"

Jina, who was my student in primary school, called me the other day and lamented, "Ma'am I have always maintained 'social-distancing' from all things 'bloody' and 'creepy'. I detest biology and my folks want me to study medicine. When do I tell them, I won't be able to even dissect a cockroach they ignore my pleas."

Her parents apparently had thrown her into a swimming pool when she was small and was terrified of water, that's how she learnt to swim in spite of all the howling and fear, so the argument that they put forth is that, "These kids have to be pushed into



The ambition of many parents is to see the child get into the most prestigious engineering college in India called 'IIT'. The training begins when the child is 13 years old. They are brainwashed into thinking that it's either 'IIT' or it is a "dead end". Even if you have to become a stand-up comedian after four gruelling years at an engineering college ...

it, they will automatically learn to swim their way through." What if they 'drown'? Drown into the next miserable 40 years of doing something that they were never happy about.

I marvel at Mrs. Kohli's forthrightness, "Oh, I always thought your son was an intelligent student, then why commerce? We told our Guddu, whatever you want to do, do after you get an engineering de-

gree. The degree is as important for us as my Jimmy Choo shoes, my LV bags and our new Audi 'gaddi' (vehicle) you see!"

Obsession with 'engineering'

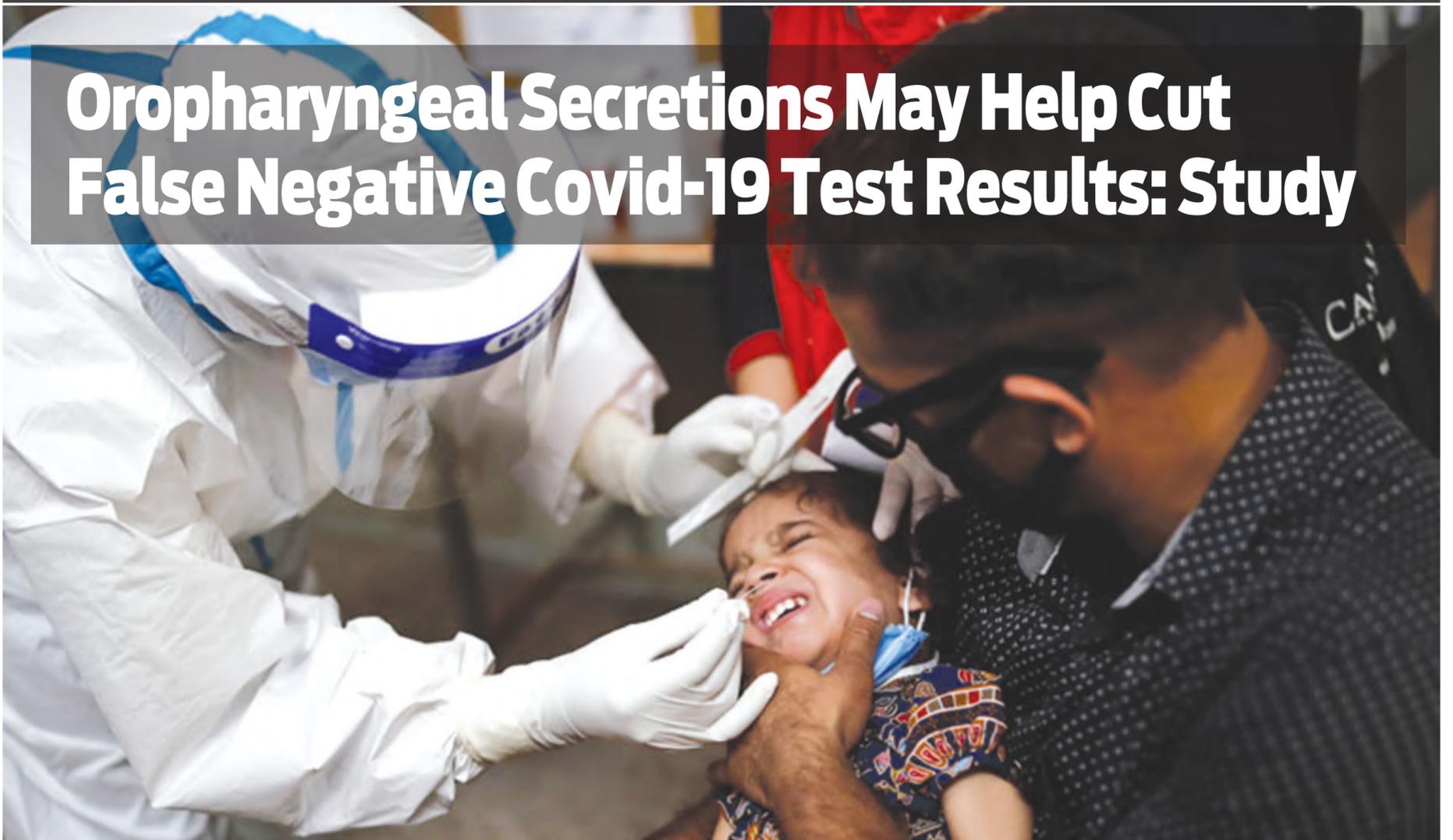
Well, the mindless rat race actually begins way before. The ambition of many parents is to see the child get into the most prestigious engineering college in India called 'IIT'. The training begins when the child is 13 years old. They are brainwashed into thinking that it's either 'IIT' or it is a "dead end". Even if you have to become a stand-up comedian after four gruelling years at an engineering college ...

Now, the societal obsession with 'engineering' can be said to be a colonial hangover. In the process of 'modernising' the umpteen backward kingdoms and princely states that made up what we now call India, the British began building railway routes, dams, roads, cities and more, in order to make governance and trade simpler processes. Engineers were responsible for this refurbishing of the country. Most of them were British and they enjoyed all the benefits given to administrative officers.

Naturally, the Indians too were drawn to this new occupation with endless opportunities for employment. When these educated Indian engineers prospered, it gave the profession a respectful tag which with time became an obsession, a one-stop solution to all of life's problems.

The first day of the online classes in Grade 11, the first session with his accountancy teacher, immediately did away with the wee-bit of self-doubt that my son had about treading the path less travelled. As the days go by, he seems more confident, his teachers further strengthen his resolve with positive affirmations. Today he reads out one of the quotes that he has collected, by Rick Warren, "Those who follow the crowd usually get lost in it." And I believe that the pot holes and bumpy phases of the ride through life dissolve when you love what you do!

— Navanita Varadpande is a writer based in Dubai. Twitter: @VpNavanita



Oropharyngeal Secretions May Help Cut False Negative Covid-19 Test Results: Study

Agencies

Testing of secretions from the mouth and pharynx of a person may reduce the number of false negative COVID-19 results from nasal swab tests of patients who have seemingly recovered from the disease, according to a study.

In the study, published in the Journal of Dental Research, a small number of patients that had tested negative through nasopharyngeal swabs (NPS) were found to be positive through the testing of oropharyngeal secretions.

It included 75 ready-for-discharge COVID-19 patients who

tested negative using two consecutive nucleic acid amplification testing (NAAT) of viral samples retrieved with NPS, according to the researchers from Huazhong University of Science and Technology, China.

Because of detection of potential false-negatives in that cohort, NAAT results of paired OS

and NPS samples collected from 50 additional COVID-19 recruits during their recovery stage were used in a second prospective study to compare the diagnostic values of the two viral RNA sampling methods.

Oropharyngeal secretions obtained from two of the 75 subjects in the first study

yielded positive results for SARS-CoV-2 nucleic acid, the researchers said.

In the second study, OS samples were significantly more sensitive for detection of the virus than NPS samples, and missed only 14 per cent of positive cases compared with 59 per cent for the NPS samples.

Sampling of OS is a simple procedure that can be performed in any quarantine setting and minimises contact between healthcare workers and patients, thereby reducing the risk of virus transmission.

"The NPS test has a risk of sending home more patients who still have the infection while

the OS test will make such errors in fewer patients," said Jingzhi Ma, from Huazhong University of Science and Technology.

"Although OS sampling improves the accuracy of SARS-CoV-2 nucleic acid testing, it must be emphasised that this conclusion is based on a very small sample size," said Ma.

As People Grow, They Are Less Likely To Share Memories: Study

Agencies

As per recent research, older people are less likely to bring up memories from the past in daily conversations. Even if they do, they will not describe the events in much detail as the younger generation.

The results of the study, conducted by researchers at the University of Arizona and published in the journal Frontiers in Human Neuroscience, echo previous findings from lab-based research suggesting that memory sharing declines with age.

The Arizona study came to the conclusion in a new way: by "eavesdropping" on older adults' conversations "in the wild."

Most research on memory takes place in a laboratory setting, where participants often are asked to memorize lists or recall and describe specific memories from the past. The University of Arizona researchers wanted to know how often older adults spontaneously bring up memories in the course of their daily conversations - outside of a controlled laboratory setting.

"This study really gives us one



of the first glimpses of people sharing these memories in their day-to-day life," said senior study author Matthew Grilli, an assistant professor in the UArizona Department of Psychology.

Over the course of four days, the daily conversations of 102 cognitively healthy older adults, ages 65 to 90, were monitored with the EAR, or electronically activated recorder - a smartphone app that lets researchers

record random samples of study participants' conversations.

Participants kept their phones on them for the duration of the study, and the EAR captured 30-second snippets every six to 18 minutes each day. The participants didn't know at which points the recordings started or ended.

The researchers then analyzed the audio and tallied the number of times participants shared autobiographical memories - or memories about their past experiences.

"We found that the older individuals in our study shared fewer memories," said lead study author Aubrey Wank. "Additionally, we found that the level of detail also decreased with older age as people were describing these memories," a UArizona graduate student in psychology.

It's important for people to recall and share memories, Grilli said. Doing so can help them connect with others. It can also guide planning and decision-making and help people find meaning in other life events and circumstances.

The reason memory sharing declines with age is not entirely clear, but it may be linked to age-related changes in the brain, Grilli and Wank said.

"There are a number of regions in the brain that seems to play an important role in how often we think about our personal past or future. These brain areas tend to show change with older age, and the idea is that because of these changes, older adults might reflect less on their personal past and future when they're talking with other people," Grilli said.

While the study focused specifically on older adults, future research might consider how that population compares with a younger sample, and if the audience to whom a person is speaking affects how often memories are shared, Wank said.

The study's use of the EAR app could have implications for how researchers study memory and cognition in the future.

Developed by UArizona psychology professor and study co-author Matthias Mehl, the EAR started as a standalone recording device designed to help researchers obtain more natural observations of people's everyday lives.

It has since evolved into a mobile app that has proven to be a valuable tool for psychologists who study social interactions.

Automated Method For Making Communications More Polite Developed

Agencies

Researchers have developed an automated method for making communications more polite. Specifically, the method takes nonpolite directives or requests -- those that use either impolite or neutral language -- and restructures them or adds words to make them more well-mannered.

For instance, "Send me the data," might become "Could you please send me the data?"

The researchers at the Carnegie Mellon University will present their study on politeness transfer at the Association for Computational Linguistics annual meeting, which will be held virtually.

The idea of transferring a style or sentiment from one communication to another -- turning negative statements positive, for instance -- is something language technologists have been doing for some time. Shrimai Prabhumoye, a PhD student in CMU's Language Technologies Institute (LTI), said performing politeness transfer has long been a goal. "It is extremely relevant for some applications, such as if you want to make your emails or chatbot sound more polite or if you're



writing a blog," she said. "But we could never find the right data to perform this task."

She and LTI master's students Aman Madaan, Amrith Setlur and Tanmay Parekh solved that problem by generating a dataset of 1.39 million sentences labelled for politeness, which they used for their experiments. The source of these sentences might seem surprising. They were derived from emails exchanged by employees of Enron, a Texas-based energy company that, until its demise in 2001, was better known for corporate fraud and corruption than for social niceties. But half a million corporate emails became public as a result of lawsuits surrounding Enron's fraud scandal and subsequently

have been used as a dataset for a variety of research projects.

And politeness varies from one culture to the next. It's common for native North Americans to use "please" in requests to close friends, but in Arab culture, it would be considered awkward, if not rude. For their study, the CMU researchers restricted their work to speakers of North American English in a formal setting.

Study Finds Asthma, Allergies More Common In Teens Who Stay Up Late

Agencies

Teenagers who prefer to stay up late and wake later in the morning are more likely to suffer from asthma and allergies compared to those who sleep and wake earlier, according to a study.

The recent study was published in the journal ERJ Open Research.

Asthma symptoms are known to be strongly linked to the body's internal clock, but this is the first study to look at how individual sleep preferences influence asthma risk in teenagers.

Researchers say the study reinforces the importance of

sleep timing for teenagers and opens up a new channel of research into how sleep affects teenagers' respiratory health.

The study was led by Dr Subhabrata Moitra from the division of pulmonary medicine at the University of Alberta, Canada, who carried out the research while at the Barcelona Institute for Global Health, Spain.

He said: "Asthma and allergic diseases are common in children and adolescents across the world and the prevalence is increasing. We know some of the reasons for this increase, such as exposure to pollution and tobacco smoke, but we still need

to find out more. "Sleep and the 'sleep hormone' melatonin are known to influence asthma, so we wanted to see if adolescents' preference for staying up late or going to bed early could be involved in their asthma risk."

The study involved 1,684 adolescents living in West Bengal, India, aged 13 or 14 years, who were taking part in the Prevalence and Risk Factors of Asthma and Allergy-Related Diseases among Adolescents (PERFORMANCE) study.

Each participant was asked about any wheezing, asthma, or symptoms of allergic rhinitis,



such as a runny nose and sneezing. They were asked a series of questions to judge whether they were 'evening types', 'morning types' or in between, such as what time of the eve-

ning or night they tend to feel tired, when they would choose to wake up, and how tired they feel first thing in the morning.

Researchers compared the teenagers' symptoms with

their sleep preferences, taking into account other factors that are known to affect asthma and allergies, such as where the participants live and whether their family members smoke.

They found that the chance of having asthma was around three times higher in teens who prefer to sleep later compared to those who preferred to sleep earlier. They also found the risk of suffering allergic rhinitis was twice as high in late-sleepers compared to early-sleepers.

Dr Moitra adds: "Our results suggest there's a link between preferred sleep time, and asthma and allergies in teenagers.

We can't be certain that staying up late is causing asthma, but we know that the sleep hormone melatonin is often out of sync in late-sleepers and that could, in turn, be influencing teenagers allergic response.

"We also know that children and young people are increasingly exposed to the light from mobile phone, tablets, and other devices, and staying up later at night. It could be that encouraging teenagers to put down their devices and get to bed a little earlier would help decrease the risk of asthma and allergies. That's something that we need to study more."

Former Nazi camp guard, 93, faces German court reckoning

Agencies

Berlin : The prosecution's closing arguments will be heard on Monday in the trial of a 93-year-old former Nazi concentration camp guard for complicity in the murder of more than 5,000 people during World War II.

In what could be one of the last such cases of surviving Nazi guards, Bruno Dey stands accused of complicity in the murder of 5,230 people when he worked at the Stutthof camp near what was then Danzig, now Gdansk in Poland.

Dey, who has appeared in court in a wheelchair, denies bearing any guilt for what happened at the camp.

His defence has insisted that he did not join the SS voluntarily before serving at the camp from August 1944 to April 1945, ending

or denial of medical care.

Dey is standing trial at a juvenile court because he was aged between 17 and 18 at the time.

- 'Emaciated figures' -

During his testimony in May, Dey told the court that he wanted to forget his time at the camp.

"I don't want to keep going over the past," he told the Hamburg tribunal. Judge Anna Meier-Goering had asked whether Dey had spoken to his children and grandchildren about the time he stood guard at Stutthof.

"I don't bear any guilt for what happened back then," Dey said. "I didn't contribute anything to it, other than standing guard. But I was forced to do it, it was an order."

Dey acknowledged last year that he had been aware of the camp's gas chambers and admitted seeing "emaciated figures, peo-



Cell 'Membrane On a Chip' May Speed Up Screening of Covid-19 Drugs

Agencies

Washington: A new human cell 'membrane on a chip' allows continuous monitoring of how drugs and infectious agents interact with our cells, an advance that may be employed to test potential drug candidates for COVID-19, scientists said on Monday.

According to the researchers from the University of Cambridge in the UK, Cornell University and Stanford University in the US, the device could mimic any cell type - bacterial, human or even the tough cells walls of plants.

The devices have been formed on chips while preserving the orientation and functionality of the cell membrane, according to the results published in two papers in journals Langmuir and ACS Nano.

They have been successfully used to monitor the activity of ion channels, a class of protein in human cells which are the target of more than 60 per cent of approved pharmaceuticals, the researchers said.

Cell membranes play a central role in biological signalling, controlling everything from pain relief to infection by a virus, acting as the gatekeeper between a cell and the outside world, they said.

The team set out to create a sensor that preserves all of the critical aspects of a cell membrane - struc-

ture, fluidity, and control over ion movement - without the time-consuming steps needed to keep a cell alive. The device uses an electronic chip to measure any changes in an overlying membrane extracted from a cell, enabling the scientists to safely and easily understand how the cell interacts with the outside world. It integrates cell membranes with conducting polymer electrodes and transistors.

To generate the on-chip membranes, the team first optimised a process to produce membranes from live cells and then, coated them onto polymeric electrodes in a way that preserved all of their functionality.

The hydrated conducting polymers provide a more 'natural' environment for cell membranes and allows robust monitoring of membrane function.

The team optimised the polymeric electrodes for monitoring changes in the membranes. The device no longer relies on live cells that are often technically challenging to keep alive and require significant attention, and measurements can last over an extended time period.

"Because the membranes are produced from human cells, it's like having a biopsy of that cell's surface - we have all the material that would be present including proteins and lipids, but none of the

challenges of using live cells," said Susan Daniel, associate professor at Cornell and senior author of the Langmuir paper.

"This type of screening is typically done by the pharmaceutical industry with live cells, but our device provides an easier alternative," said Roisin Owens from Cambridge, and senior author of the ACS Nano paper. "This method is compatible with high-throughput screening and would reduce the number of false positives making it through into the R&D pipeline," said Owens. The device can be as small as the size of a human cell and easily fabricated in arrays, which allows scientists to perform multiple measurements at the same time, said Anna-Maria Pappa, also from Cambridge and joint first author on both papers.

Given the significant risks involved to researchers working on SARS-CoV-2, the virus which causes COVID-19, the scientists said they will focus on making virus membranes and fusing those with the chips.

The virus membranes are identical to the SARS-CoV-2 membrane but don't contain the viral nucleic acid, they said. This way new drugs or antibodies to neutralise the virus spikes that are used to gain entry into the host cell can be identified, according to the researchers.

Masks Mandatory As Saudi Announces Haj Measures For Domestic Pilgrims

Agencies

CAIRO: Saudi Arabia announced health protocols to prevent the spread of the new coronavirus in the 2020 haj season, banning gatherings and meetings between pilgrims, the state news agency said on Monday.

Saudi Arabia decided in June to limit the number of domestic pilgrims attending the haj to around 1,000 to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, after barring Muslims abroad from the rite for the first year in modern times.

Touching the Kaaba, the holiest site in Islam, will be banned during the haj this year, and a social distancing space of a meter and a half between each pilgrim during the rituals including mass prayers

and while in the Kaaba circling area will be imposed, a statement by the Center for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC) elaborated.



Also, access to holy haj sites at Mona, Muzdalifah and Arafat will be limited to those with haj permits starting Sunday, July 19 till Aug. 2, 2020, and wearing masks all the time will be mandatory for both pilgrims and organizers.



up assigned there because a heart condition excluded him from frontline service.

But prosecutors argue that his involvement was crucial to the killings, as his time in the SS coincided with the "Final Solution" order to systematically exterminate Jews through gassing, starvation

ple who had suffered", but insisted he was not guilty.

The Nazis set up the Stutthof camp in 1939, initially using it to detain Polish political prisoners.

But it ended up holding 110,000 detainees, including many Jews. Some 65,000 people perished in the camp.

Iran Negotiating Strategic Accord With China

Agencies

TEHRAN: Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Sunday that Iran has been negotiating a 25-year accord with China whose terms will be announced once a deal is struck.

"With confidence and conviction, we are negotiating a 25-year strategic accord with China," Iran's top trading partner,



he told a stormy session of parliament.

China is also a key market for Iranian crude exports, which however have been dampened by US sanctions imposed after Washington's 2018 withdrawal from a nuclear deal with Tehran. An accord with China has been a hot topic on Iranian social media since populist ex-president Mahmud Ahmadinejad last month denounced negotiations underway with a foreign country.

But Zarif, who came under fire over the 2015 nuclear accord which Iranian conservatives had opposed, insisted there was "nothing secret" about the China deal.

The nation would be informed "when an accord has been concluded", he said, adding it had already been made public in January 2016 when Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Tehran.

Iran operates underground missile cities along southern shores: IRGC commander

Agencies

Tehran: Iran's Armed Forces have developed underground missile cities along the country's entire southern shores, including the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, says the commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy.

Brigadier General Alireza Tangsiri made the remarks in a detailed interview whose text was published on Sunday, noting that such cities accommodate both naval vessels and missiles.

"We [in the Iranian Armed Forces] have underground cities, which house both vessels and missiles," the commander said, adding, "Our entire shoreline [in southern Iran] is equipped with [various types



of] arms."

Tangsiri emphasized, "Our shoreline is equipped with weapons and there is no chanting about it."

He noted that the IRGC Navy has formed a marine Basij force, which is positioned along a 2,200-km coastline (excluding the Iranian islands), and so far 428 flotillas, including more than 23,000 military personnel, have been organized.

The enemy knows that there are underground cities belonging to the Army and the IRGC along the Persian Gulf and Makran coasts, but it has no accurate information in that regard, he said.

"But another thing I am going to say [to enemies] with certainty is that we are present everywhere in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman and ... in places you cannot even imagine. We are your nightmare," Tangsiri added.

He emphasized that the IRGC Navy has full information command in the Persian Gulf and is precisely aware of and monitors the location of every ship from its entrance through the Strait of Hormuz to its exit.

three dozen missile attacks which Washington has blamed on pro-Iranian armed factions.

In the first move of its kind, elite Iraqi troops in late June arrested more than a dozen Tehran-backed fighters who were allegedly planning a new attack on Baghdad's Green Zone, home to the US and other foreign embassies.

Iraqi government officials said the raid would serve as a "message" to deter future attacks, but early on Sunday, militants made another attempt.

One rocket fired at the Green Zone landed near a home, wounding a child, according to the Iraqi military.

"At the same time, our forces were able to thwart another attack and seize a Katyusha rocket and launcher that were targeting the Taji base north of Baghdad," where US-led coalition troops are based, it added.

The attempts came just hours after the US embassy tested a new rocket defence system

parliament outraged.

Deputy speaker Hassan al-Kaabi slammed the trial as "provocative" and "unacceptable" as it could put residential areas in danger.

There was no immediate comment from the embassy on whether the system was used against the rocket overnight.

US applauds arrests

Iraq has long been caught in a tug-of-war between its two main allies Iran and the US - arch enemies whose relations have further crumbled since Washington pulled out of a landmark nuclear deal with Tehran in 2018.

Baghdad carefully balances its ties to the two countries, but the repeated rocket fire risks rocking its tightrope.

The US blames the attacks on Kataeb Hezbollah, a Tehran-backed faction within Iraq's state-sponsored network of armed units known as the Hashed al-Shaabi.



NEWS MAKERS

Goodbye Dubai: Photographer Captures Expats Who Lost Jobs During Pandemic

Dubai: 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 told Reuters.

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

and plans another 100.

Paula Hainey, a photographer gives a free family photo session at a beach to a family leaving Dubai for Egypt, in Dubai.

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.

But many expatriates have no option but to leave after job losses, and for some the future is uncertain.

Muhammad, a pilot with a UAE airline, is returning to Egypt with his American wife, toddler and 3-month old son, after being made redundant.

US President Donald Trump Falsely Claims 99% of Coronavirus Cases Benign: Report

President Donald Trump is understating the danger of the coronavirus to people who get it, as more and more become infected in the U.S.

In his latest of many statements playing down the severity of the pandemic, Trump declared that 99% of cases of COVID-19 are harmless. That flies in the face of science and of the reality captured by the U.S. death toll of about 130,000. Trump also sounded a dismissive note about the need for breathing machines.

Throughout the pandemic, Trump has declared it under control in the U.S. when it hasn't been. His remarks on that subject and more from the past week:



RUMP: "Now we have tested over 40 million people. But by so doing, we show cases, 99% of which are totally harmless." - Fourth of July remarks Saturday.

THE FACTS:

This statement does not reflect the suffering of millions of COVID-19 patients. The World Health Organi-

zation, for one, has said about 20% of those diagnosed with COVID-19 progress to severe disease, including pneumonia and respiratory failure. Whatever the numbers turn out to be, it's clear that the threat is not limited to the merest sliver of those who get the disease.

Aside from that, those with mild or no symptoms also can spread the virus to others who are more vulnerable.

Asked Sunday to defend Trump's claim, Food and Drug Administration commissioner Dr. Stephen Hahn declined to do so. He instead urged Americans not to back off the federal government's public health measures urging social distancing and wearing a mask.

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