

Maximum : 34°C
Minimum : 16°C
Humidity : 45%
SUNSET
Today 07:45 PM
SUNRISE
Tomorrow 05:27 AM

News Digest

IES Officer's Body Still Untraceable

Drass: Rescue team Wednesday retrieved the body of a driver of an Indian Engineering Service officer after two weeks in Drass area of Kargil region. Pertinently, Subhan Ali, an Indian Engineering Service officer, met with an accident when the driver of his vehicle lost control and it plunged into river near Drass. Both the officer and his driver were taken away by the currents. Authorities had pressed men and machinery into service to trace the bodies. Station House Officer Police Station Drass Manzoor Hussain Mir informed that

P-02

Boy Slips To Death While Playing Cricket

Ganderbal: A 17 year old boy slipped to death in Power Canal Kangan on Wednesday. Police sources said that several boys were playing cricket when one among them in order to quench his thirst moved towards Power Canal where he slipped to death. Station House Officer, Police Station Kangan, Aftab Ahmed said that rescue operation is underway to trace the dead body. He identified the victim as Sadaqat Ahmed Tandoli son of Gulzar Ahmed, a resident of Mirgund Wudhar Kangan.

DSEK To Start Model School In Kashmir

SRINAGAR, JULY 08: Department of School Education is all set to start a state of the art model school, equipped with all the facilities as per latest global needs in Kashmir division. As per an official handout, Director School Education Kashmir, Mohammad Younis Malik said that the Government has taken up the erstwhile National School Karan Nagar Srinagar for the purpose and the school will start functioning as a model school. Giving the details, Malik said that the model school will come up with all the modern

P-02

MoS Home, LG Review Works In J&K

SRINAGAR: Minister of State for Home Affairs, G Kishan Reddy, along with Lieutenant Governor, Girish Chandra Murmu today reviewed the progress of various administrative and developmental works in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir through video conferencing. Minister of State, PMO, Dr Jitendra Singh; Advisor to the Lieutenant Governor, Sh. Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar; Sh. BVR Subrahmanyam, Chief Secretary; Sh. Gyanesh Kumar, Additional Secretary, MHA; Sh. Arun Kumar Mehta,

P-02

168 Overseas Stranded Return To Srinagar

Jammu: On Day 45 of resumption of routine domestic operations in Jammu and Kashmir, 22 domestic flights with 2,501 passengers on board today arrived at Jammu and Srinagar Airports. Besides, an International evacuation flight with 168 passengers has arrived at Srinagar under Vande Matram Mission. A total of 553 passengers aboard 8 regular commercial flights arrived at the Jammu Airport while 14 domestic flights with about 1948 passengers on board landed at Srinagar Airport today.

P-02

BJP Leader, His Father & Brother Shot Dead In Bandipora



Observer News Service



Image for representation

BANDIPORA: Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) Bandipora district president, Sheikh Waseem Bari, his father and brother were on Wednesday shot dead by the unidentified gunmen outside their residence in Muslimabad area of the district.

Police said that Bari, his father Bashir Ahmed and brother Umar Bari were shot at by the suspected militants outside their residence in Bandipora. Bari was a protected person and ten security

PAGE 02

10 PSO's Of Slain BJP Leader Arrested

Police on Wednesday arrested all the ten PSOs associated with the former district president of BJP who was killed along with his father and brother at their shop in Bandipora district of north Kashmir. "All the ten PSOs have been arrested," Inspector General of Police Kashmir Zone Vijay Kumar said.

Covid-19 Reaches Raj Bhawan As J&K Reports 330 More Cases

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir reported 330 Covid-19 infections including nine from Raj Bhawan here and 19 from paramilitary CRPF camp Hum-hama in Srinagar outskirts.

Among the cases, 59 were from Jammu Division and 271 from Kashmir valley, taking the overall tally to 9261 so far.

Giving the district wise breakup, officials said Srinagar reported 119, Baramulla 82, Anantnag 26, Rajouri 23,

Kupwara 18, Doda 14, seven each in Bandipora and Samba, five each in Budgam and Udhampur, four each in Kulgam, Ganderbal, Shopian and Reasi, two each in Pulwama, Ramban and Jammu, one each in Kathua and Kishtwar.

Among the cases also one each from DPL Kupwara and Baramulla, two from BB CANT Srinagar, four employees from JKB and one from Axis Bank besides two health worker, three pregnant woman.

J&K Records 5 More Deaths

Jammu and Kashmir Wednesday recorded five more deaths due to Covid-19 taking the total number of people who died due to the deadly pandemic to 148. Of the five deaths, two patients died at Chest Diseases Hospital and two at SMHS and one at SKIMS Soura. According to Medical Superintendent CD Hospital Dr Salim Tak a 44-year-old patient from Sopore died at the hospital after contracting the disease. "The Sopore patient was suffering from bilateral pneumonia and had respiratory failure. He was on ventilator,"

P-02

ACB Files Case Against Ex-MD DIC Pulwama

SRINAGAR: Ant-Corruption Bureau on Wednesday registered a case against former General Manager District Industries Centre, Pulwama for "misuse of official position."

"The verification revealed that Laiq Parvaiz during his posting as GM DIC Pulwama, made allotments of land in favor of various unit holders in gross violation of industrial policy 2016 as well as procedural guidelines of 2017," reads a statement from ACB. As per industrial policy of 2016, the allotment of land to unit holders and execution of lease deeds was the domain of SICOP/SIDCO.

General Manager not

PAGE 02

Who Will Be Srinagar Mayor?

Mattu, Imran To Battle It Out On July 14

SRINAGAR: Mayoral elections in the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) will be held on July 14, a notification issued on Wednesday said.

The announcement comes 23 days after the erstwhile Mayor Junaid Azim Mattu lost the floor test and was removed from the post. The corporators had filed no confidence motion against Mattu following which he failed to prove majority in the special session on June 16.

The notification for the elections of Mayor was issued by Secretary SMC under number SMC/CS/4300-4389, dated 08/07/2020



Image for representation

municipal Corporation (Procedure and Conduct of Business) Regulations, 2005, the Election of Mayor, Municipal Corporation, Srinagar will be conducted as per the given notification," the notification reads. "Forms of nomination

PAGE 02

LOC Firing Kills Woman In Poonch

POONCH: A woman was killed while another was injured on Wednesday during the cross-border firing along the Line of Control (LoC) in Balakote Tehsil in Poonch district.

Police officials said that Resham Bi, wife of Azam Ahmed and Hakam Bi, both above 60, got injured at around 3 AM when Pakistan Army resorted to heavy shelling along LoC villages of Balakote.

"Both the injured were shifted to a nearby medical facility where Resham Bi was declared as brought dead," they said, add-

The firing from across the border in Semari area of Karnah Sector started on Wednesday afternoon, drawing strong retaliation by the Indian army,"

ing that the other woman was provided first aid in local hospital and was later shifted to Rajouri hospital for advanced treatment.

Two Civilians Injured In Kupwara

Meanwhile two civilians were injured in firing from across the Line of Control in Karnah sector of north Kashmir's Kupwara district on Wednesday.

"The firing from across the border in Semari area of Karnah Sector started on Wednesday afternoon, drawing strong retaliation by the Indian army," said an army official. He said two civilians were injured during the cross-border firing.

PAGE 02

'Viral Cop' IGP Basanth Rath Suspended

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir cadre IPS officer Basant Rath has been suspended for alleged instances of "gross misconduct and misbehaviour" with immediate effect, according to a Union Home Ministry order.

The order, issued on Tuesday evening, said the 2000-batch IPS officer was immediately attached to police headquarters in Srinagar.

Rath, hailing from Puri in Orissa and currently posted as Inspector General (IG), civil defence in Jammu and Kashmir has been asked not to leave the headquarters without permission from the Director General of Jammu and Kashmir Police.

The order stated that disciplinary proceedings against Rath are contemplated in connection with repeated instances of gross misconduct and misbehaviour that have been brought to the notice of the government.

He has been placed under suspension with immediate effect, the order said.

The suspension order comes a fortnight after Rath sent J&K Police a written complaint against the J&K Police Chief Dilbag Singh, over an alleged threat Singh made to his life.



File Pic

Indian Express had reported that Rath had addressed to the SHO of Gandhi Nagar Police Station in Jammu district and urged the officer to "take note of my apprehensions about my life, liberty and bald head". Rath, a JNU alumnus, has remained in limelight ever since he took over as IGP Traffic Kashmir. During his stint as IGP Traffic Kashmir Rath gained popularity among locals due to his unconventional methods to regulate chaotic traffic in Srinagar and other towns of the valley.

Rath was labelled "Singham" - after the iconic no-nonsense cinema cop - for his tough approach to traffic violators. The MHA had then accused Rath of violating the All India Service Rules and had urged the then Mehbooba Mufti government

Rath Reacts

"Apna Tou Kaam Hai Jalaate Rahe Chiraag, Rastey Mai Chahiye Dost Ya Dilloo Ka Ghar Miley" was how 'rebellious' IPS officer Basant Rath reacted after his suspension order became public on Wednesday. Basant Rath took to twitter, his favourite public platform, and wrote: "It's our job to keep the lamp burning, whether a friend or foe's house comes on the way". The couplet actually written by eminent poet Kaleem Ajizi was edited by IPS officer and replaced "Dilloo" in place of "Dushman" (enemy)

P-02

THE SUSPENSION ORDER COMES A FORTNIGHT AFTER

Rath sent J&K Police a written complaint against the J&K Police Chief Dilbag Singh, over an alleged threat Singh made to his life.

Parks, Gardens Re-Open Amid Easing Pandemic Curbs In J&K

Visitors Screened Before Entry, Sanitisers Made Available For General Public, Low Flow Witnessed On Day-1

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The government on Wednesday re-opened the parks and gardens in Jammu and Kashmir for general public after the gap of nearly four months.

The gardens and parks were closed in wake of the deadly COVID-19 outbreak, which has claimed over 148 lives and infected nearly 9,000 people so far.

All the public parks and gardens including the Mughal Gardens like Nishat, Shalimar and Cheshma Shahi were re-opened for the general public today, an



No Photo Abid Bhat

official spokesman said. However according to reports very few people were seen visiting otherwise

popular gardens like Nishat, Shalimar and Botanical Garden. According to eyewitnesses

P-02

Doc Thrashed In Karnah, FIR Registered

KUPWARA: Police on Wednesday registered a case against three persons for manhandling and abusing a doctor at his residence in Karnah area of north Kashmir's Kupwara district.

Officials said that three local attendants, who visited a doctor on Tuesday evening abused a doctor, posted at Public Health Center (PHC) Gabara and also tried to overpower him.

A short video surfaced on Tuesday in which a doctor and attendants can be seen engaging in a duel at doctor's residence. In the video, one of the attendants can also be heard abusing the

P-02

Staggered Amarnath Yatra

500 Yatris To Have Darshan Daily

NEW DELHI: The annual Amarnath Yatra in the Himalayas will be conducted in a staggered manner and not more than 500 pilgrims will be allowed to visit the sacred cave shrine of Lord Shiva daily due to the coronavirus pandemic, officials said on Wednesday.

The issue of pilgrimages to the Amarnath and Vaishnudevi shrines, both located in Jammu and Kashmir, was discussed at a high-level meeting attended by Union ministers G Kishan Reddy and Jitendra Singh and senior officials of the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Jammu and Kashmir administration.

The Amarnath Yatra is likely to commence on July 21.



File Pic Abid Bhat

"This year's pilgrimage will be conducted in a staggered manner and not more than 500 pilgrims will be allowed to visit the shrine daily due to the COVID-19 situation," an official privy to the discussion said.

Around 9,000 people have been tested COVID-19 positive in the Union Territory and around 145 people succumbed to the

PAGE 02

KU Extends Suspension Of Class Work Till July 31

SRINAGAR: Kashmir University has notified that class work in the varsity shall continue to remain suspended till July 31.

The order issued by Registrar KU reads that suspension of class work till end of July.

As per the order the faculty members shall work from home and utilise the time online educational activities as per the approved academic calendar by the administration.

The order however asked all Deans/ Heads/Directors/ Coordinators/ Officers/ Incharges of all Schools/departments/ Campuses/ institutes/Centres/ Units/ Registry of the University have been asked to attend their duties and ensure

proper functioning in their respective administrative units after working out the rationalization/ utilization rosters of the staff.

"The rationalization/utilization/rosters shall, however, be subject to feasibility and available staff strength at a particular administrative unit office."

Meanwhile, as per an addendum to the circular, the Registrar has notified for information of all the faculty members as well as non-teaching employees "to remain available via their telephones and report to their official duties in person as and when called for the same by the concerned controlling authority".



Dispatch From Punjab: Kashmiri Students Decrying Campus Hostility

Mrinal Pathak

KASHMIRI students of Chandigarh Group of Colleges (CGC), Mohali have alleged that they're asked to pay the hostel fees for the semester which has not been even commenced yet!

A majority of the students left for their homes in mid-March, in the view COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, most of their belongings remain in their hostel rooms.

Tehleel Manzoor, president of Global Students Union, Chandigarh, told Kashmir Observer that Punjab-based private colleges are forcing the students to pay fees for the current semester when they are yet to conduct exams for the previous

semester.

"While tuition fee is being asked to be paid in installments, hostel fee is being asked to pay in one go," Manzoor said.

According to him, the authorities at CGC have told the students - 'either pay, or vacate the hostel'.

"The college administration is telling the students that they are not forcing anyone to leave, rather they are starting new bookings," Manzoor said. "But if this is not forcing one to leave, then what is?"

When contacted, Anup Singh, senior CGC official concerned with hostel management told Kashmir Observer that the college hasn't demanded any fees from students.

"We're not forcing our students to pay the hostel fees. We just want



to get a little confirmation from the students whether they want to continue with the hostel for the coming session or not," Singh said.

On the allegation that the hostel authorities have put students' belongings in the common room, Singh

said, "There is nothing of that sort." But the Kashmiri students studying in the college aren't buying this official statement.

During the current lockdown phase when economic activities have nosedived, they said, a major-

ity of parents are finding it hard to pay the fees for the new semester.

"The minimum tuition fee is Rs. 48000," Manzoor said. "And if the hostel fee is included, it will be a huge amount."

Demanding a complete fee waiver, he said the Kashmiri students are just requesting the administration to abide by the guidelines prescribed by the University Grants Commission (UGC).

According to the UGC guidelines, students are not bound to pay either the hostel fees or the tuition fees until the smooth functioning of college resumes.

"Initially," Manzoor said, "students from many colleges were facing similar problems, but through our efforts, the matter was

PAGE 02

'Withdrawal Of Chinese Troops In Hot Springs Complete; Pull Back Continues In Other Areas'

The Chinese military removed all temporary structures and completed withdrawal of its troops from the face-off site in Hot Springs in eastern Ladakh on Wednesday even as the Indian Army kept a close watch on the pull back and maintained a high-level of combat readiness in the region, people familiar with the developments said.

They said the two armies are expected to carry out a joint verification in the next few days to assess the implementation of the disengagement process once the dismantling of the temporary infrastructure and withdrawal of troops by China are completed at the friction points along the Line of Actual Control(LAC) in eastern Ladakh.

There has been thinning out of troops from Finger areas in Pangong Tso as well, they said. Pangong Tso has been a major face-off site between the two sides.

The two militaries are set to hold extensive talks on finalising modalities for restoring normalcy and bringing back peace and tranquility in the region after the verification of the disengagement exercise is completed, they said.

The disengagement process began on Monday morning after a nearly two-hour telephonic conversation between National Security Advisor



Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Sunday.

At the talks, the two sides agreed on an expeditious withdrawal of troops from all the standoff points

to bring back peace and tranquility in the region. Doval and Wang are special representatives (SR) for the boundary talks.

Following the talks, a mutual dis-

engagement process kicked off in Galwan Valley, Hot Springs, Gogra and in Finger areas in Pangong Tso. It is learnt that the mutual dis-

engagement in Gogra (patrolling point 17A) is expected to be completed by Thursday.

Gogra and Hot Springs are among the key friction points where the two armies were locked in an eye-

ball-to-eyeball situation for the last eight weeks. Military sources said the Indian Army will continue to maintain its aggressive posturing along the LAC till the Chinese side cuts down on its significant build up in its rear bases.

Both sides brought in thousands of additional troops and weaponry, including tanks and artillery guns, to their rear bases following the face-off that began on May 5.

"There is a trust factor now. We will not lower our guard at all," said a senior military official on the condition of anonymity.

As per the decisions arrived at corps commander-level talks on June 30, the two sides would create a minimum buffer zone of three kilometres in most of the areas where they were engaged in a standoff.

Government sources said the Chinese military has already removed tents and withdrew its personnel from patrolling point 14 in Galwan Valley, the site of violent clashes between the two armies on June 15 that left 20 Indian soldiers dead.

The Chinese side also suffered casualties but it is yet to give out the details. According to an American intelligence report, the number of casualties on the Chinese side was 35.

The tension between the two sides escalated manifold after the Galwan Valley clashes.

Both sides held several rounds of diplomatic and military talks to ease tension in the region but there

was no visible sign of any end to the standoff till Sunday evening. Sources said the breakthrough was achieved at the Doval-Wang meeting.

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

The first round of the Lt General talks was 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 back off and would deal with the situation with a firm hand.

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

BJP Leader, His Father...

personnel were on his guard duty. However at the time of the incident none of the security guards were present, reports said. The residence of Bari's is located just opposite of Bandipora Police Station. Hospital sources also confirmed that all the three were pronounced dead on arrival at the hospital.

A senior police officer told a local news gathering agency that there were ten security personnel on guard duty for the family but "unfortunately none of them were present at the time of the incident." They were lodged in the first floor of the house while the incident took place at their shop on the ground floor of the building, police said.

Police said that a case has been registered and further investigation are underway.

Loc Firing Kills Woman...

Both the injured civilians were shifted to SDH Tangdhar where from they were shifted to Srinagar for advanced treatment.

‘Viral Cop’ IGP Basanth Rath

to take "action" against him. In 2018 MHA sought disciplinary action against Rath for his columns in national media outlets. Finally in November same year he was removed from the post of IGP Traffic in Kashmir and transferred to the office of the Commandant General, Home Guards, Jammu. This also followed a verbal spat between him and the then Srinagar mayor and Peoples Conference leader Junaid Mattu. Lately he was active on twitter helping distribute free books among students aspiring to take competitive exams. Rath in a couple of tweets after his suspension poked fun at his opponents.

Rath Reacts...

in a tweet. Earlier Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) suspended former IGP (Traffic) Basanth Rath in connection with what it called 'repeated instances of gross misconduct'. An order issued by Under Secretary to the Government of India S D Sarkar reads, "Whereas, a disciplinary proceeding against Shri Basanth Rath (IPS: RR 2000, JK) is contemplated in connection with repeated instances of gross misconduct and misbehavior, which have been brought to the notice of the Government". "Now, therefore, the Competent Authority in the Ministry of Home Affairs, in exercise of powers conferred by clause (a) of sub-rule (i) of Rule 3 of the All India Services (Discipline and Appeal) Rules, 1969, hereby places, the said Shri Basanth Rath, (IPS: RR: 2000, JK), under suspension with immediate effect".

J&K Records 5 More Deaths

Dr Tak said, "He died today morning." About the 75-year-old Batamaloo resident, Dr Tak said that the patient was suffering from chronic kidney disease, hypertension, and hypothyroidism and had bilateral pneumonia. "He died a day after he was admitted to the hospital," he said. A 65-year-old man from Nadihal, Baramulla died at SMHS hospital. "The patient was admitted to the SMHS on July 6. He had tested positive. The patient was sick with underlying medical conditions that included bilateral pneumonia," Dr Nazir Choudhary Medical Superintendent SMHS said. He said that 70-year-old woman from South Kashmir's Shopian district was admitted in the hospital with breathing issues on July 6. "She had tested positive for the virus and died late last evening," according to Dr Choudhary. The fifth Covid death took place at SKIMS, Soura. Dr Farooq Jan, Medical Superintendent SKIMS, Soura said that a woman, aged 36 from Nehru Park area of Srinagar, died due to cardiopulmonary arrest at early morning Wednesday. "She had a history of hypertension and had gone for renal transplant in 2016. She was admitted in the hospital on June 28 after complaining of breathlessness," Dr Jan said, adding that the deceased had earlier tested positive for the virus. With the fresh five COVID deaths in the J&K, the number of people who died to the deadly pandemic in UT so far has reached to 148 of which 134 were from Kashmir region and 14 from Jammu.

Parks, Gardens Re-Open...

that the garden officials were screening the visitors before allowing them entry into the gardens. Besides, the sanitisers were also made available for the visitors at the gardens. Pertinently, the Jammu and Kashmir government on Tuesday decided to re-open all the public parks and gardens across J&K from Wednesday amid strict Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) "We have decided to re-open all the parks and gardens across Jam-

mu and Kashmir from tomorrow. People are however, supposed to follow SoPs in spirit that include wearing of masks and maintaining social distancing," Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Baseer Ahmad Khan had said.

Shutdown In Many Parts...

senior separatist leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani, but termed fake by police, had appeared on social media, calling for a shutdown on Wani's death anniversary.

ACB Files Case Against...

only issued allotment orders qua the land in violation of rules but also executed lease deeds thereof with the unit holders which in view of rules, was within the competence SICOP/SIDCO. "By acting in this manner the General Manager DIC Pulwama abused his official position for ulterior motives, in league with the unit holders and thus conferred undue benefits upon the unit holders," it said, adding, "The facts constituted Commission of offences Punishable under section 5 (1)(d) r/w 5(2) of J&K P.C Act Svt. 2006 and section 120-B RPC. Consequently, a case under FIR No. 03/2020 was registered against said General Manager District Industries, Centre, Pulwama and others in P/S Anti Corruption Bureau South Kashmir (Anantnag)." Subsequently, it said, search was conducted in the residential house of the accused GM by ACB. "Investigation of the case has been taken up."

Mattu, Imran To Battle...

paper shall be obtained from the office of the Secretary, Srinagar Municipal Corporation between 1100 hours and 1600 hours from 9th July 2020 to 10th July 2020," it added. "Nomination papers shall be delivered between 1100 hours in the morning and 1600 hours in the afternoon by a Candidate or his Proposer at the office of the Secretary, Srinagar Municipal Corporation on any day not later than 11th of July 2020", the notification mentioned. "Notice of withdrawal of candidature shall be delivered by a candidate at any time before the election is proceeded within the meeting. In the event of an election being contested, the poll will take place on 14th of July, 2020 from 1100 hours onwards," it concluded. Meanwhile, sources said that two candidates including the former Mayor Junaid Mattu and former Deputy Mayor Sheikh Imran will be contesting the elections for the Mayor post. Sheikh Imran said that a group of Corporators headed by Waheed Ahmad Dar has not taken any decision regarding the candidate. "I have no mandate to speak anything in this regard. The decision to choose a candidate will be taken by the group," he said. Waheed Ahmad Dar, however, said that the candidate by a group of 42 corporators will be announced on Thursday morning. "The candidate has not been chosen yet," he said. However, the sources within the group said that they have already chosen Sheikh Imran as their candidate while the formal announcement will be made tomorrow. Meanwhile, a close aide of Ex-Mayor Mattu said that former Mayor Mattu will likely contest the elections for the post of Mayor again. —With inputs from KNO

Doc Thrashed In Karnah,...

doctors and trying to overpower him. According to SHO Karnah, Waseem Ahmad that a case under relevant sections has been registered against the three persons for the criminal offence. He said a case under FIR number 51/2020 under sections 447 (Criminal trespass), 323 (voluntarily causing hurt) and 506 (Criminal intimidation) has been registered against three persons, who have been identified as Shafayat Bashir, Saboor and Khawaja Khushall. Sub Divisional Magistrate (SDM), Karnah, Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-din said that an enquiry committee has been constituted to probe the entire incident and the team has been directed to file the report in five days. "Tehsildar along with four other members will enquire the whole matter and submit the report," Dr. Bilal said.

500 Yatris To Have Darshan

virus so far. The route through Pahalgam is yet to be cleared as it is full of snow and the pilgrimage may be allowed only through the Baltal route this year. However, a final decision on the pilgrimage to the shrine in Himalayas will be taken later next week, the official said. The authorities are particularly concerned over the COVID-19 pandemic as the symptoms for the virus and high-altitude sickness are almost same. The doctors in the Union Territory and the armed forces are already stressed and hence, allowing a large number of pilgrims to go for the Amarnath pilgrimage will be an additional burden on medical staff and infrastructure, another official said.

In case of Vaishnodevi shrine, the visit to the temple has been suspended till July 31 and authorities are contemplating allowing it first for local people. Later, depending on the coronavirus situation, people from outside the state will be allowed, the official said. The meeting also reviewed the ongoing development works in Jammu and Kashmir.

These include implementation of centrally sponsored schemes, progress in achieving targets under the Prime Minister's Development Package 2015, issues raised during the outreach carried out by the union ministers in January this year, and issues related to implementation of J&K Reorganisation Act.

The erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir was bifurcated on August 5, 2019 into two UTs after abrogation of the special status given to it under Article 370.

The UTs -- Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh -- came into existence on October 31, 2019.

The meeting was also attended through video conference by Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor G C Murmu, Chief Secretary B V R Subrahmanyam, divisional commissioners of Kashmir and Jammu, and other senior officers.

Dispatch From Punjab...

amicably sorted." It is only the CGC, he said, that is not entertaining the 'legitimate' demands of the students. Notably, a large number of students coming from outside prefer hostels in Punjab over rented apartments 'due to safety reasons'. "It's unfair on the part of college authorities to resort to such practices in these challenging times," Manzoor, who evacuated many students from Kashmir during the beginning of the pandemic lockdown, said. "Among the outside students in the campus, 80 percent are from Kashmir." Manzoor asserted that some 'hostile campus' actions are creating fear-psychosis in the minds of both parents and students regarding future admissions. Kashmiri students of CGC, which is affiliated to Punjab Technical University (PTU), further claimed that a few days ago, the college authorities even issued a fee notification. "They are demanding Rs. 23000 as hostel fees for us," a student of CGC told Kashmir Observer on the condition of anonymity. He alleged that the college administration is forcing the students to send a mail as confirmation of leaving the hostel, "in case they're not ready to pay the fees".

A majority of the students are worried because the college administration has set a deadline of July 7 for fee submission. "I talked to many senior officials of the college administration regarding this and informed them that this is a wrong step, but they said that they had already received orders from the government," the student said.

The move, interestingly, has come at a time when Kashmiri students are already suffering from slow internet back home. Further, Kashmiri students at CGC alleged that they've been asked to pay for mess.

"If we've not eaten any food in the hostel for the last three months, how are we supposed to pay for it?" asked a student from the department of civil engineering. Many students are also alleging that the campus authorities have broken the locks of their hostel rooms without their knowledge and permission. "This is unfair and breach of privacy," the engineering student said. "The administration told us that they broke the locks for renovation purposes, but then why would they break the locks of our cupboards? There could be so many valuable things like phone or cash in the cupboards. They have put everything in the common room. And when asked, the college authorities are threatening us for highlighting the matter."

Many female students are also bearing the brunt of the current situation. Hiba Wani (not her real name) from Srinagar said that fearing the spread of the virus, the college authorities asked the students to head home before the lockdown started. "They said that they were sending us back for only 15 days," Hiba said. "Now they are breaking into our rooms where we have kept our important documents." A few days ago, a video went viral where the hostel authorities were seen breaking the locks and entering the rooms. "I along with my friends tried to contact our warden," Hiba said, "but she never responded to our calls and messages."

IES Officer's Body Still...

after two weeks the body of the driver was found under waters while the officer is still untraceable. The police official identified the driver as Parvinder Kumar. He said search operation is still in progress to trace the body of officer.

DSEK To Start Model School

teaching learning facilities which will be at par with any reputed

private school of the country and the facilities will include teaching through smart class rooms, CT laboratory, Model Kindergarten, laboratories for Physics, Chemistry, and Biology besides language labs. He said that the school which is known as National School Karan Nagar is now the property of the School Education department and the government has decided to set up a model school here and provide free quality education to the students. The Director said that the school will enroll students from Kindergarten up to 12th class and the admission process is likely to take off in near future.

MoS Home, LG Review ...

Financial Commissioner, Finance department; Sh. Atal Dulloo, Financial Commissioner, Health and Medical Education; Sh. Bipul Pathak, Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor, besides Administrative Secretaries of various departments and senior officers of MHA took part in the deliberations.

In the meeting, implementation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes, Prime Minister's Development Package, progress on issues raised during the Outreach Programme carried out by the Union Council of Ministers in January, 2020 and the issues related to implementation of J&K Reorganization Act, 2019 were reviewed. The Union Minister expressed satisfaction and appreciated the efforts of the UT administration in speeding up the execution of various projects under PMDP, CSSs and other development programmes. While reviewing the Border Area Development Programme, the Union Minister desired that the infrastructural gaps in border villages should be filled up within next two years in order to ease the difficulties faced by the border residents. The Union Minister also desired that action must be initiated in case of all the demands put forth by the public before the Union Ministers during the Outreach programme held by them in January, 2020 and the MHA be updated about the progress.

The Minister was informed that 17 projects under PMDP have been completed or substantially completed whereas work on 31 more projects is moving fast. Under Health sector, it was informed that the work on AIIMS Samba has begun while the work on AIIMS Awantipora is likely to start from August, 2020. Moreover, MBBS course classes have already started in 4 newly established Medical Colleges at Anantnag, Baramulla, Rajouri and Kathua, while as in GMC Doda, the classes would begin from this year. The Government of India has also released 1st instalment of funds for two more Medical Colleges at Handwara and Udhampur.

A detailed presentation was also given on Special Initiative to ensure 100% coverage of eligible beneficiaries under Flagship Schemes being implemented in J&K UT. The efforts of the UT administration for the special drive to cover all eligible beneficiaries under 55 schemes of the Central government were lauded. The UT has ensured 100% coverage of beneficiaries under 32 schemes and was committed to achieving the universal coverage under other schemes of the Central Government as well.

It was informed that J&K being a leader in universalization of Health Insurance, over 11 lakh Golden Cards have been generated and 3.5 lakh families have at least one Ayushman Bharat Golden Card under Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojna. Efforts for coverage of students under 14 scholarship schemes for students and saturation of Kisan Credit Cards were also praised by the Union Minister.

The meeting was also informed that the UT has launched Kisan Pakhwada with the aim of doubling rural credit and saturation under KCC; besides enhancing agricultural productivity for small and marginal farmers through technological interventions. Efforts are on to ensure area specific crop insurance for different crops and fruits, it was informed.

The Ministers of the Union Government also lauded the efforts of UT administration in effective and result oriented implementation of the Centrally Sponsored schemes under which Rs 6414 crore were spent in the UT during 2019-20.

The Lieutenant Governor informed the MHA that the UT administration is in the process of developing a web portal for comprehensive monitoring of Centrally Sponsored Schemes under implementation in J&K, which would be launched shortly. He assured the Union Minister that all the issues requiring attention would be sorted out on priority. He also briefed the Minister about the roadmap for accelerated recruitment and implementation of reservation rules in the UT. On Outreach Programme held by Union Ministers in various Districts of the UT, it was given out that a total number of 1066 demands were made by the public during the Programme, out of which action has been initiated on 440 demands, whereas 626 such demands are under consideration of the UT Government, at various levels which would be expedite to take them forward.

168 Overseas Stranded...

Pertinently, Jammu Airport Authorities have received a total of 318 domestic flights with 23,111 passengers while Srinagar Airport Authorities have received 517 domestic flights and 8 International Evacuation flights with 66,251 and 1,262 passengers since 25th of May till date.

High Court Complex closed for two days, after 2 CRPF personnel test positive for Covid-19

Srinagar: Srinagar Complex of Jammu and Kashmir High Court, was closed for two days, after few paramilitary Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel posted her were declared positive for Covid-19.

The order to this effect was issued by the Registrar General of Jammu and Kashmir High Court Jawad Ahmed, after the disclosure of some CRPF personnel posted deployed here testing positive for coronavirus.

The order issued by the Registrar General reads, "As informed by the in charge CRPF High Court of J&K at Srinagar, some CRPF personnel deployed at Srinagar wing of the High Court of J&K have tested COVID positive,"

The order further reads, "As per

Standard Operating Procedures issued by the Government, access to the High Court premises in Srinagar wing of the High Court of J&K has to remain closed for two days for sanitization purpose."

As per the order, no person except the sanitization workers will be permitted entry into the High Court premises on 8th and 9th of July, 2020.

Making a mention of pending cases listed for the two days of closure, the order reads that these shall be taken up for consideration by Srinagar wing of the High Court of J&K on 10th of July 2020, adding that dates in other matters will be given by the concerned Bench Secretary and will be posted on the website of the High Court of J&K on 11th of July 2020."



Body fished out from River Sindh after 3 days



SRINAGAR: The body of another boy drowned on Sunday was fished out from the river Sindh after three days rescue operation on Wednesday afternoon.

Reports reaching here said the body of Rashid Khan was retrieved by a joint team of SDRF, police after three days -long rescue operation at Wayil

Bridge near crusher in Ganderbal on Wednesday.

Pertinently, on Sunday two boys drowned in nallah Sindh at Kichpora Kangan while bathing.

Locals present there raised an alarm, following which a team of police reached there and carried out rescue operation, however earleir on Monday morning one body of Zahid Farooq was retrieved.

Meanwhile district administration Ganderbal has banned swimming, bathing in Nallah Sindh and its tributaries.

"In view of frequent loss of precious lives due to drowning incidents while bathing/swimming in Nallah Sindh and as a part of precautionary measure , a complete ban is hereby imposed on swimming/bathing in Nallah Sindh & its tributaries in Ganderbal forthwith, the order reads.

The Tehsildars (Executive Magistrates), SHOs & Jalshakti shall keep strict vigil in their respective areas of jurisdictions for implementation of the order in letter & spirit," the order reads.

Non-local found dead in Srinagar

Srinagar: A non-local resident on Wednesday found dead in central Kashmir's Srinagar district.

Reports said a 22-year-old Punjab resident by profession a conductor was found dead in his truck at Fruit Mandi Parimpura area of Srinagar on Wednesday.

Police said that a case has been registered in this regard and further investigation has been taken up. The officer identified the deceased as Karamjeet Singh, a resident of Punjab.

CUK's Law deptt holds webinar

Ganderbal, July 8: School of Legal Studies, Central University of Kashmir (CUK), in collaboration with National Law University, Delhi organised a one-day national webinar "COVID-19 and Justice Delivery System in India: Issues and Challenges".

Welcoming the participants, CUK Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Mehraj Uddin Mir stressed upon the role of lawyers and presiding officers in providing justice to the masses during the ongoing pandemic.

Prof. Ranbir Singh, Vice-Chancellor, National Law University, Delhi who was Guest of Honour during the event highlighted the issues of labourers and daily wagers during the COVID-19 while establishing a connection between law and justice through e-courts.

Prof. (Dr.) Balram K. Gupta Senior Advocate and Director (Academics), Chandigarh Judicial Academy in his inaugural address stressed upon the fact that "there is a need for extraordinary solutions during the extraordinary circumstances." He suggested that courts should uphold the rule of law during the situations the world is going through. He referred that justice is the promise of the Constitution, and that is the real challenge during the COVID-19 for which governments must show compassion and be firm but without being cruel.

Mrs. Gulafroz Jan, Coordinator Department of Law, proposed the vote of thanks for the inaugural session.

The first plenary session was conducted by Mr. Bilal Ahmad Ganai, Assistant Professor and was chaired by Mr. Mannohan Lal Sarin, Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of India. Speakers, Prof. Ali Muhammad Matta, Principal, Vitasta Law College, Srinagar, raised questions of what and why about the COVID-19 from an international perspective while as Prof. Rattan Singh from University Institute of Legal Stud-

ies, Panjab University, Chandigarh spoke about the role of subordinate courts in the administration of justice during COVID-19. The third speaker, Prof. Sudarshan Verma, Dean Faculty of Law, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Lucknow spoke on justice to the COVID-19 Patients v. Injustice to the Non-COVID Patients. The session chairperson, Mr. Mannohan Lal Sarin, remarked that the present situation of COVID-19 is a god-sent opportunity to restructure the justice system with the help of Information and Communication Technology, which is going to be extremely important in providing justice. The plenary session-II was conducted by Dr. Rehana Shawl, Assistant Professor and chaired by Prof. Muhammad Afzal Wani from University School of Law and Legal Studies, GGS Indraprastha University, Delhi. Speaker, Prof. B.T. Kaul, former Chairperson of Delhi Judicial Academy, referred that COVID-19 has played havoc with the rights of the workers and the government has a responsibility to provide justice to the people. Second speaker, Prof. S. Surya Prakash, Vice-Chancellor, Damodaram Sanjivayya National Law University, Visakhapatnam, talked about Migrant Labour during the Covid-19. Chairperson, Prof. Muhammad Afzal Wani, in his remarks, took a jurisprudential stance to the estimation of the present scenario of COVID-19. He suggested we have to seek justice indeed as a value, even if the situation is not conducive. He referred to the soul, to the feelings concerning the implementation of justice. He recommended that the quotes of the lords and jurists must make sense in the present life of the people during the pandemic situation.

Dr. Anil Kumar and Dr. Mudasir Bhat, Assistant Professors were conveners of the Webinar.

Div Com reviews land issues of newly sanctioned colleges

JAMMU, JULY 08: Divisional Commissioner, Sanjeev Verma today chaired a meeting of Deputy Commissioners to review the progress on land issues for newly sanctioned colleges in the districts of the Jammu division.

The meeting was attended by Director Health Services, Dr Renu Sharma; Assistant Commissioner Revenue Jammu, Vijay Sharma; Nodal Officer Director Colleges, Dr Ranvender Tickoo and other concerned officers while the Deputy Commissioners of Jammu division along with other concerned officers attended the meeting through video conferencing.

The Divisional Commissioner sought case wise details of land acquisition for newly sanctioned colleges and the Deputy Commissioners apprised him about the present status.

It was informed that most of the land issues have been resolved in all the districts, while pending cases are also under process and at differ-

ent stages of acquisition. It was also informed that land for the majority of the colleges has already been handed over to the concerned authorities for execution of works on the campus buildings in the districts.

The Divisional Commissioner asked the DCs to expedite the process and resolve all the pending cases on priority and hand over the land to concerned departments for execution of college buildings.

Meanwhile, the Divisional Commissioner sought the details of sampling capacity for Covid-19 tests in the districts. The DCs informed about the daily sampling capacity in their respective districts.

The Div Com asked the DCs to scale up the sampling capacity and conduct sampling of shopkeepers, fruit vendors, vegetable vendors, truckers and other vulnerable groups to contain the spread of Covid-19.


OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER BUDGAM KASHMIR NOTICE

Whereas an application has been recieved from one. Shri : Ghulam Mohammad Bhat S/o: Mohammad Qasim Bhat R/o: Khag Khanpora Budgam owner of vehicle bearing Registration No: JK04D-7536 for cancellation of hire purchase agreement with M/S HDFC Bank B/U Magam.. Now therefore it is notified for the information of the general public that objections if any to the proposed cancellation of hire purchase Agreement shall be filed in writing in the office of the Assistant Regional Transport office 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.1096
Dated 04/07/2020



ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
AWANTIPORA, KASHMIR.
Tele: 01933-247954/247955. Website: www.islamicuniversity.edu.in.

NOTICE

It is hereby notified for the information of all concerned who have applied for the post of Associate Professor in different disciplines in response to Advertisement Notice No. 02 of 2019 dated 20.02.2019 read with addendum/ corrigendum issued from time to time that the revised Screening Report (s), for which the representations were received for the post of Associate Professor in the disciplines viz *Islamic Studies, Journalism & Mass Communication, English Language & Literature and Chemistry*, are available on the University website www.islamicuniversity.edu.in.

No. IU/ST/Reg/Adm/E/20/550
Dated: 07-07-2020

Sd/-
Registrar

Kotwal takes stock of various revenue matters

BARAMULLA, JULY 08: Financial Commissioner Revenue, Dr Pawan Kotwal today chaired a meeting to discuss various issues and matters pertaining to the Revenue Department in Baramulla District.

The meeting also discussed progress of digitization of land records in the district that is being carried out under Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DLRMP).

The meeting took a comprehensive review of various revenue matters which included updation work of jamabandis, scanning and uploading of revenue papers and other issues of vital signifi-

cance wherein the Deputy Commissioner Baramulla Dr G N Itoo briefed the FC about the progress made in such matters.

Reiterating commitment of administration for streamlining revenue records, Financial Commissioner said that several initiatives are being taken for redressing public grievances and issues concerning revenue matters, which being the top most priority of the present dispensation.

He highlighted the role of revenue officers/officials in the overall functioning of administration and said that revenue functionaries had a pivotal role in delivering public services.

DIAL-EMMA



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

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311



RAILWAYS

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



HIGHWAY STATUS



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



HIJRI
CALENDAR
17 Zu al-Qa'dah
1441

PRAYERS

FAJR	3: 41
ZUHR	12: 35
ASR	5:35
Magrib	7:49
ISHA	9:29

This Day In History

- 1789 French Revolution: the National Assembly renames itself the National Constituent Assembly
- 1790- Russo-Swedish War: Second Battle of Svenskund - in the Baltic Sea, the Swedish Navy captures one third of the Russian fleet
- 1807- Second Treaty of Tilsit signed by France, Russia and Prussia
- 1810- Napoleon annexes the Kingdom of Holland as part of the First French Empire
- 1926- Chiang Kai-shek appointed to national-revolutionary supreme commander in China
- 1944- In World War II, US troops secure Saipan as Japan falls
- 1947 -Spain votes for Franco monarchy
- 1951 - US President Harry Truman asks Congress to formally end state of war with Germany
- 1957- Discovery of element 102 (Nobelium) announced
- 1958- Giant splash caused by fall of 90 million tons of rock & ice into Lituya Bay, Alaska washes 1,800 feet up the mountain
- 1971- Henry Kissinger visits the People's Republic of China to negotiate a detente between the US and China
- 1979- Voyager 2 flies past Jupiter
- 1989 - Two bombs explode in Mecca, killing one pilgrim and wounding 16 others
- 1992- Space Shuttle STS 50 (Columbia 13) lands
- 2002 -The African Union is established in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The first chairman is Thabo Mbeki, President of South Africa.
- 2006 -At least 122 people killed after a Sibir Airlines Airbus A310 passenger jet, carrying 200 passengers veers off the runway while landing at Irkutsk Airport in Siberia in wet conditions
- 2006 -FIFA World Cup Final, Olympiastadion, Berlin, Germany: Italy beats France, 5-3 on penalties; 1-1 after extra time
- 2011- South Sudan gains independence and secedes from Sudan.
- 2014 - Joko Widodo is elected President of Indonesia
- 2014 -Spokesperson for Medical Aid for Palestinians claims that at least 7 children have been killed by Israeli air strikes
- 2017 -CEO Elon Musk is the first owner of Tesla's first mass market electric car - the Model 3
- 2017- Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi proclaims victory over Islamic State forces in Mosul
- 2018 -Bright pink is the world's oldest biological colour according to scientists, produced by tiny cyanobacteria in 1.1bn-year-old marine shale rock from Taoudeni basin, Mauritania

From KO Archives

Valley Rivers Swell As Glaciers Melt

Pulwama Areas Under Laar Waters

Observer News service

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

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

Glaciers melting under the abnormally high temperatures have raised levels in the Jhelum and other rivers and streams of the valley. In Pulwama a sudden surge in the Laar stream has inundated a large area in Joravillage, displacing 250 of its six hundred households, a KNS re-ort said.

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

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

A delegation from the affected areas has met the additional deputy commissioner Pulwama to apprise him of the situation.

The ADC has directed the tehsildar concerned to dispatch a team to review the situation and organise relief for the flood-hit population Water has entered paddy fields in several places in the utile; because of rivers over-flowing their banks.

Experts fear that a flood situation is imminent if the heat spell persists with its present intensity. Thegovt has ordered the departments concerned at the district level to be on alert to deal with any eventuality.

The metrological department says that although the maximum temperature is 5 degrees Celsius above normal and the minimum temperature 7 degrees Celsius above normal, the present situation cannot be characterised as an intense or extraordinary heat wave

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

(Kashmir Observer, 09 July, 2005)

KASHMIR
OBSERVER

Printed & Published by Sajjad Haider on behalf of the
Kashmir Observer LLP
Published from: # 5- Boulevard, Srinagar-190001
Printed at: KT Press Pvt. Ltd, Rangreth Ind Area, Srinagar.
RNI Registration No: 69503/98
Postal Registration No-L/159/KO/SK/2014-16
Editor-in-Chief : Sajjad Haider
Legal Counsel: Tasaduq Khwaja
Switchboard: (0194) 2106304
Editorial: (0194) 2502327
Email editorial: editor@kashmirobserver.net

Bring The Tourists Back

The J&K administration has finally decided to reopen the tourism sector, the backbone of J-K's economy, that has been shut since August 5 last year when the union government withdrew the former state's special status. The decision was taken at a high-level meeting headed by Lieutenant Governor Girish Chander Murmu. J&K government spokesperson Rohit Kansal has said the detailed guidelines and Standard Operating Procedure are being put in place to ensure the tourist arrivals don't lead to further spread of coronavirus. The tourism in Kashmir has reduced to a trickle since August 5 move. And in March when the arrivals were picking up after a long hiatus, the outbreak of Covid-19 forced the government to impose yet another lockdown and ban the entry of tourists as a precautionary measure.

Now, with the union government unlocking the economy and the J&K administration following the suit, the tourism is one of the major sectors of the former state's economy that is being opened up. One of the important measures in this direction is the reopening of the prominent tourist places including parks and gardens. Government had earlier closed them to public in view of the Covid-19 lockdown. This included the Tulip Garden, one of the largest tulip gardens in Asia. However, the government has made it mandatory for every visitor to wear mask, maintain social distancing including at ticket counters. Besides, use of hand sanitizers is a must. There will also be thermal scanners at the entry points.

Tourism is one of the pillars of Kashmir economy. Tourism forms an estimated 6.8 percent of the GDP and employs over two million people in the region. It was dealt a crippling blow in the middle of the peak season last year. Looking back, 2019 as a whole wasn't good for tourism. Nothing went right for Kashmir tourism and in turn for the region's economy. An escalation in India-Pakistan tension following Pulwama bombing in February last year sent tourists packing and forced people planning a visit to defer their programme. Although by June, the situation had improved a great deal and the tourists had started returning, the revocation of the Article 370 put paid to a promising season. In less than two days, Kashmir was empty of all the visitors. This has hit the traders hard. That is, if it hasn't already. For eleven months now no tourists have visited Kashmir. It is good that the administration is finally waking up to the need to revive the sector. Kashmir has lost four straight seasons to the turmoil and the region can ill-afford further halt to the economic activities. More so, the tourism that is so critical to livelihood of a vast section of society.

OTHER OPINION

Abundant caution

After three rounds of military-level talks, a round between the two foreign ministers, and on July 5, between the Special Representatives on the Boundary Question, National Security Adviser Ajit Kumar Doval, and China's State Councillor Wang Yi, a movement towards de-escalation is said to be taking place in the military build-up at the Line of Actual Control. Chinese soldiers are said to be stepping back in three of the contentious areas — Galwan, Hot Springs and Gogra. This is a development in the right direction. However, the verification process by the Indian Army is still underway, and it should continue to be so. After all, the incident at Galwan Valley in which 20 Indian soldiers were killed, took place at a time when the two sides were supposed to be disengaging. Moreover, there appears no de-escalation at the other "friction point", Finger 4 at Pangong Lake. In any case, disengagement does not mean a return to status quo ante yet. At Sunday's Special Representatives meeting, the two officials reiterated their commitment to the maintenance of peace and tranquility in the border areas. But the distinct difference in the tone and tenor of the readouts of this meeting put out by the Ministry of External Affairs and the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs draws attention to the hazards of jumping to conclusions. According to the Chinese statement "the right and wrong of what recently happened at the Galwan Valley in the western sector of the China-India boundary is very clear. China will continue firmly safeguarding our territorial sovereignty as well as peace and tranquility in the border areas".

The challenges ahead for India remain enormous. One is the sheer length of the LAC — 4,000 km of it, compared to the Line of Control which is 740 km. Apart from the disputed portions that already exist and that both sides have discussed in several previous rounds of talks between the Special Representatives, there is now an unpredictability as China disputes portions on which there was no ambiguity earlier. India's perception of the Galwan Valley was not disputed by the Chinese before this summer. A give in one part of this long unmarked boundary may be accompanied by take somewhere else. In the latest demonstration of this unpredictability, China has now opened a new front, staking claim to territory in eastern Bhutan, close to the border of Arunachal Pradesh. This "eastern sector" had never been part of 24 rounds of boundary talks between Bhutan and China. The claim, which first came to light when China tried to block UN funding to the Sakteng wildlife reserve in that area, was reiterated by Beijing on Sunday. Even as the Indian Army is preoccupied in Ladakh, this places more pressure on it in the eastern sector, where China claims all of Arunachal Pradesh.

After Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Ladakh, and his forceful speech to the soldiers there, with its unambiguous messages for the country, Beijing and the international community, the hard slog is here: Ensuring that China keeps its commitment to peace and tranquility in the border areas.

The Indian Express

Palestine's Annexation On Pause

As per the annexation plan outlined by Netanyahu, Israeli forces were to move and occupy areas inhabited by illegal Israelis in Jordan Valley and parts of the West Bank

For the time being, one of the biggest peacetime military move against the Palestinians by the Israeli government has been temporarily shelved, according to the country's regional cooperation minister. Ofir Akunis told Army Radio that the annexation 'will certainly happen in July', but it has to be done in partnership with the US. The annexation 'it will only happen after a declaration by [US President Donald] Trump', he added.

Under its controversial plan to annex portions of the West Bank, the annexation schedule was to be declared by the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Wednesday 1 July, after its approval by either the cabinet or the parliament, as per the agreement signed between him and his defence minister Benny Gantz.

Annexation Plan

As per the annexation plan outlined by Netanyahu, Israeli forces were to move and occupy areas inhabited by illegal Israelis in Jordan Valley and parts of the West Bank. The illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank started popping up after 1969, and over the years have increased in both size and population.

Over the years the Israeli government has made it quite clear that Palestinians living in the areas of Jordan Valley and West Bank will not receive citizenship and will instead have to continue to endure second- or third-class civil rights and status.

However, the annexation plan is neither a sudden invention of Israel nor its support by the US. It has been Israel's intention since it occupied the West Bank in 1967.

Israel's right-wing has long favoured annexing parts or all of the West Bank, saying the territory is vital for the country's security and an inseparable part of the Biblical Land of Israel.

US's role

The Israeli plans got a fillip when in 2017 the US recognised Jerusalem as Israel's capital, and in 2019, the Golan Heights as belonging to Israel, both announcements were met with worldwide criticism.

Earlier, in January this year, Trump proposed a Middle East Peace Plan, recognising illegal Jewish settlements in the West Bank as Israeli soil and further allowed Tel Aviv to maintain its control over the Jordan Valley which belongs to Palestine. Immediately thereafter, a joint US-Israeli commission began the mapping process for the annexation plan.

Thus, the covert and overt role played by President Trump in this whole process cannot be denied or overlooked. While the previous US administrations used to turn a blind eye to the Israeli settlements in the occupied areas, under Trump it has become quite legit and brazen and some observers also claim that these policies are led by his business priorities.

However, Joe Biden, the presumptive US Democratic presidential nominee, wants to press Israel not to take any actions 'that make a two-state solution impossible.' to resolve the Palestinian issue.

Palestinian position

The West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is viewed by the inter-



national community as occupied territory under international law, thus making all Jewish settlements there — as well as the planned annexation — illegal.

Palestinian officials have threatened to abolish bilateral agreements with Israel if it goes ahead with annexation, which would further undermine a two-state solution. The Palestinians seek the entire West Bank as the heartland of a future independent state and believe the Trump plan would deliver a fatal blow to their fading hopes of statehood.

Among the plan's components: The Palestinians would only have limited autonomy in a fraction of territory they seek. Isolated Israeli settlements deep inside Palestinian territory would remain intact, and the Israeli military would retain overall security control over the Palestinian entity.

The Palestinian Authority has already cut off its ties with Israel as a protest to the annexation, and in absence of any peace prospects, the Palestinian Authority could see its international funding drying up or it becoming a completely impotent body.

International reactions

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has said annexation would mark a 'most serious violation of international law'. The EU's foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, has warned of 'significant consequences'. Britain has said it will 'not support' annexation, and France, Belgium, Luxembourg and Ireland have all mooted punitive economic measures in response. While China is 'deeply concerned', Russia has strongly objected to the plan and even the Vatican has cautioned against annexation.

Amongst the Islamic countries, Turkey and much of the international community do not recognise Israel's sovereignty over the territories it has occupied since 1967. Jordan has been vociferous in protest and other Gulf countries too have sounded the alarm. UAE's foreign minister Anwar Gargash has stated that the Annexation would be a 'serious setback for the peace process'. Saudi Arabia has made similar protestations.

The reactions made so far by the international community seems to be just empty rhetoric, not much else, as they have been in the past besides allowing the issue to fester while giving uncalled for concessions to Israeli moves against the Palestinians. Everyone is too busy guarding their own spheres of influence and

Arab countries — from Jordan to the Gulf — are too dependent on US military support to step too far out of line, many of them currently enjoy an unprecedented bilateral relationship with Israel from trade to commerce to medicine. We may see resolutions being adopted and passed at the UN, the Arab League, the European Parliament and ICJ, but nothing concrete or worthwhile is expected to emerge out of these antics.

Indian reaction

Though PM Modi is reported to have spoken to Israeli PM Netanyahu three times in the past four months, mainly to discuss cooperation during the COVID pandemic, there is no confirmation whether the annexation issue had been discussed between them. Earlier, in January, India had disapproved of the US-Israel peace plan, reiterating India's 'consistent support for the Palestinian cause'.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian government has called on India to oppose Israeli plans stressing that the move would end the effectiveness of any future negotiations in the conflict. Majdi El Khaldi, the Senior Diplomatic Advisor to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas is reported to have urged India to maintain its support to the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and statehood.

If the annexation is carried out then the hopes for the two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remain at risk, it may also pose a threat to the future of the Palestinian Authority besides resulting in an increase in the regional tensions and a proliferation of illegal Jewish settlements in the West bank.

If the issue remains frozen, for the time being, due to the play of internal party politics of Israel, then the time may run out on Netanyahu. In addition, the US presidential Democratic nominee, Joe Biden, has said he opposes annexation. A Biden victory in November could mean that any Israeli annexation will be short-lived. That seems to be the only reprieve.

Palestinians face a new struggle, retaining their land leading to freedom and the assertion of their national rights eventually, in one Palestine.

(Asad Mirza is a Sr journalist and commentator based in New Delhi. He was also associated with the BBC Urdu Service and Khaleej Times of Dubai. He writes on Muslims, educational, international affairs and interfaith issues. Email: asad.mirza.nd@gmail.com)



OBSERVER
MAIL

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

MAIL YOUR LETTERS

P.O. Box # 337, GPO, Srinagar-190 001
email: editpage.ko@gmail.com

Problem of Climate Change is Solvable

The last decade has been the warmest ever recorded. Deadly wildfires, hurricanes, extreme weather events in north-east India, and climate-influenced migration are now regular occurrences. Ice caps are melting, sea levels are rising, and the very survival of island nations is being threatened. Indeed, our entire ecosystem is at risk. One million animal and plant species may become extinct within a few years.

The authors, from the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), state: "There is a single species that is responsible for the Covid-19 pandemic — us. As with the climate and biodiversity crises, recent pandemics are a direct consequence of the human activity."

They warn that "rampant deforestation, uncontrolled expansion of agriculture, intensive farming, min-

ing and infrastructure development, as well as the exploitation of wild species, have created a 'perfect storm' for the spillover of diseases from wildlife to people".

They say humans have destroyed more than 85 per cent of wetlands and dedicate more than one-third of all land and most freshwater to crops and livestock production.

"Add to this the unregulated trade of wild animals and the explosive growth of global air travel, and it becomes clear how a virus that once circulated harmlessly among a species of bats in Southeast Asia has now infected almost 10.5 million people all over the world, brought untold human suffering and halted economies and societies around the world," they write, adding: "There is the human hand in pandemic emergence."

The problem of climate change is solvable. We have the technology and science. We now need the leadership—

and the courage to change the course.

Carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping gases are the main drivers of global warming. While climate change cannot be stopped, it can be slowed down.

To avoid the worst consequences of climate change, we need to reach 'net-zero' carbon emissions by 2050 or sooner. Net-zero means that, on balance, no more carbon is dumped into the atmosphere than what is taken out.

To achieve net-zero emissions, we need a massive transformation in how we produce and consume electricity. We need a newer and better transportation system. We need to stop deforestation. We need a climate-friendly agricultural system. Much remains to be done—and we need to do it as quickly as possible.

Apart from this, we need to actively remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere or offset its effects.

The easiest way to do this is affores-

tation or reforestation. Other enhanced land management practices can help, as well as new technologies that suck CO2 out of the air (direct air capture) or prevent it from leaving smokestacks (carbon capture and storage). The best policy ideas in the world are not worth it if we do not have activists, experts, and people fighting for the change. From school groups to churches; from corporate boardrooms to mayors and local leaders; we need action.

The Union of Concerned Scientists has worked on global warming solutions for over 30 years. Our experts and activists are campaigning to cut emissions from the energy and transportation sectors; highlighting climate impacts and fighting for accountability from major fossil fuel extracting companies. You can help too.

*(Arooj Ahmad Wani is a student of Aligarh Muslim University)
Email: Aahmadarooj@gmail.com*

Hajj 2020: What You Need To Know About This Year's Pilgrimage

Islamic week-long ritual has been scaled back to a limited number of pilgrims because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Touching or kissing the Kaaba, the holiest site in Islam, will be banned during the Hajj this year, and a physical distancing space of a metre and a half between each pilgrim during the rituals including mass prayers and while in the Kaaba circling area will be imposed, according to a statement by the Center for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC).

Saudi Arabia says it will allow only about 1,000 pilgrims residing in the kingdom to perform the Hajj this year, one day after it announced the annual pilgrimage would be scaled back due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Some 2.5 million pilgrims from around the world flock annually to the cities of Mecca and Medina for the week-long ritual scheduled to begin in late July. This year, no overseas visitors would be allowed.

Saudi Arabia announced on Monday it would hold a "very limited" Hajj this year, as the country is still battling with the coronavirus pandemic.

The Saudi Ministry of Hajj said the decision to curtail the pilgrimage was aimed at preserving global public health because of the risks associated with large gatherings.

This year's event is expected to start on July 28.

Who will perform Hajj?

As one of the five key pillars in Islam, Hajj is a requirement for all physically and financially able Muslims to perform at least once in their lifetime.

This year, the kingdom's Hajj ministry said the ritual would be open only to individuals of various nationalities residing in Saudi Arabia.

In a virtual news conference on Tuesday, Hajj Minister Mohammad Benteen said the government is still in the process of reviewing the number of overall pilgrims allowed, saying they could be "around 1,000, maybe less, maybe a little more".

"The number won't be in tens or hundreds of thousands" this year, he added.

Health Minister Tawfiq al-Rabiah said no one over the age of 65 or with chronic illnesses would be allowed to perform the Hajj.

What are the health protocols?

Pilgrims will be tested for coronavirus before arriving in the holy city of Mecca and will be required to quarantine at home after the ritual.

Wearing of face masks at all times will be mandatory for both pilgrims and organisers.

Touching or kissing the Kaaba, the holiest site in Islam, will be banned during the Hajj this year, and a physical distancing space of a metre and a half between each pilgrim during the rituals including mass prayers and while in the Kaaba circling area will be imposed, according to a statement by the Center for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC).



Congregational prayers are permitted, but worshippers are required to wear face masks and maintain physical distancing.

Also, access to holy sites at Mina, Muzdalifah and Mount Arafat will be limited to those with Hajj permits starting Sunday July 19 till August 2.

Has this happened before?

This is the first time in Saudi Arabia's nearly 90-year history that foreign visitors have been barred from performing Hajj.

The Hajj has been cancelled because of war and past epidemics throughout history, but not since the founding of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932.

What has the reaction been?

The response has been a mix of disappointment, relief and acceptance.

Before the Saudi announcement, Indonesia, Malaysia, Senegal and Singapore had already barred their citizens from performing Hajj this year because of coronavirus concerns.

"My hopes of going to (the holy Saudi city of Mecca) were so high," Kamariah Yahya, 68, from Indone-

sia, told AFP news agency.

"I've been preparing for years. But what can I do? This is Allah's will - it's destiny."

Shahadat Hossain Taslim, head of a group representing Bangladeshi Hajj travel agencies, said "many people will be shattered" by the decision, but it was for the best.

"Unlike other countries, the majority of Bangladeshi pilgrims are elderly people, and they are vulnerable to COVID-19," he said.

Pakistan, which usually sends nearly 180,000 pilgrims, said its diplomats in Saudi Arabia would represent the country during the pilgrimage this year.

In neighbouring India, the minister for minority affairs said more than 200,000 people had applied to go on Hajj in 2020, and that they would receive a full refund of any money deposited for the pilgrimage.

Mohamad Azmi Abdul Hamid, from the charity Malaysian Consultative Council of Islamic Organizations, said Muslim nations should have been allowed to take a "collective decision", rather than it being left to Riyadh.

Al Jazeera

MRINAL PATHAK

KAAFIR, an original Zee5 series, starring Dia Mirza and Mohit Raina as lead actors, makes an attempt to depict political conflict that has engulfed Kashmir for a long time.

Directed by Sonam Nair, the screenplay of the series is created by Bhavani Iyer, the scriptwriter of critically acclaimed Raazi.

Based on a true story, Kaafir is about an innocent Pakistani girl, Kainaaz Akhtar played by Dia Mirza who faces a jail term after the Border Security Forces (BSF) mistakenly take her as a militant.

The series is somehow successful in breaking the chain of films and series depicting a pseudo nationalist perspective on Kashmir.

Mohit Raina, who plays the role of Vedant Rathod has come out with a gripping performance to bring out a balanced perception in the growing world of intolerance.

Dishita Jain, who plays Kainaaz's daughter, Seher, has mixed her innocence with the situation to establish a flawless balance.

Talking of acting, Dia Mirza is definitely the highlight of the series, the other characters have



also adapted well to the required role plays.

At many points, even Mirza struggles to bring out the perfect Kashmiri accent to give a true essence of Kashmir to the viewers. Though the series aims to break the stereotypes attached to the place, it bolsters some at many points that come out as a contrast to its very concept.

One of the major drawbacks of the series is that it is set in Kashmir but shot almost entirely in Himachal Pradesh.

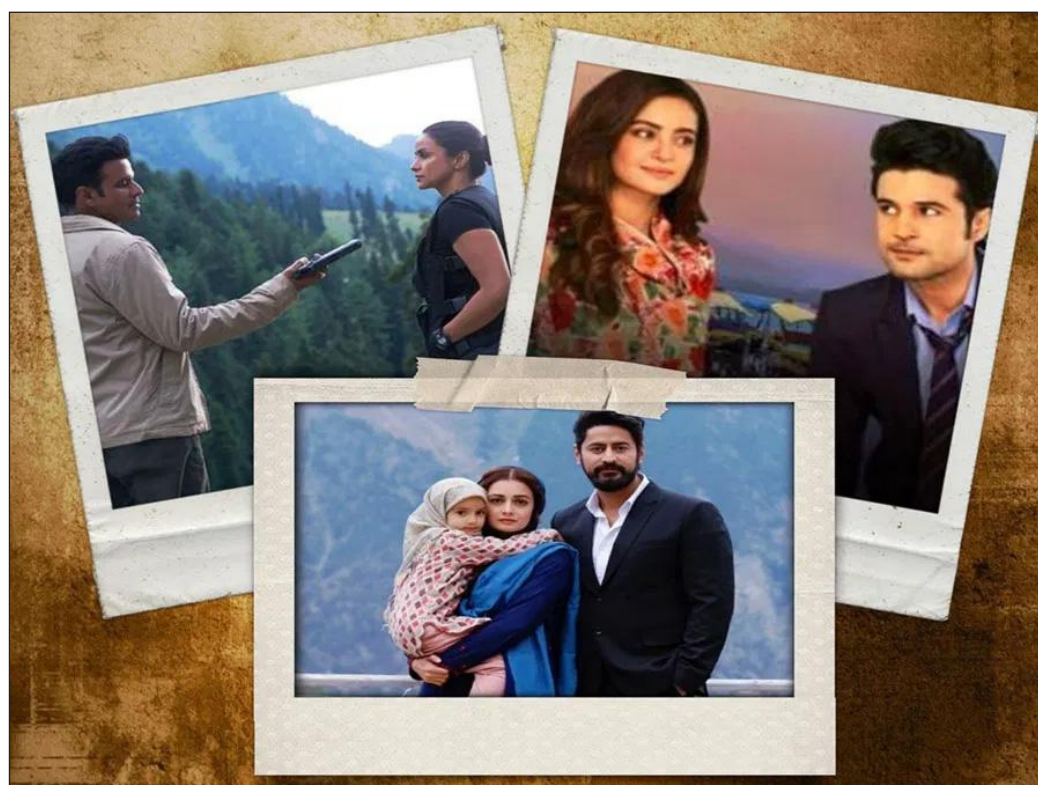
More like Raazi, Kaafir tries to capture the reality of Kashmir with a different perception. The web series is a consummate blend of a heartwarming love story and a conflict-ridden society.

Notably, there's an exponential growth of Web Series in India. The available OTT platforms are not just limited to big giants like Amazon Prime and Netflix, there're a good number of indigenously built sites such as Zee5 and Alt Balaji providing a plethora of web series to their viewers.

The growth witnessed in this sector is not only in terms of volume but also in scale.

Unlike Kaafir, Family Man, directed by Raj and DK, again sets a tone for over-en-

Set In Valley, Shot Elsewhere: Kashmir In Web Series



As over-the-top or OTT platform has emerged as a new source of entertainment for viewers around the world, Kashmir historically used by majority of Indian filmmakers to picture the so-called over-enthusiastic narrative stays the same stereotyping subject.

thusiastically patriotic narrative on Kashmir. The series is currently streaming on Amazon Prime.

Just like other Indian films set in Kashmir, the series is predictable at most of the junctures. Although the makers of the series claim to break the already set political stigmas attached to the valley, yet, instead of choosing an old straight path, the series takes a bend to re-establish the older stereotypes.

Kashmir is labelled as a 'hotbed' for all anti-national activities. The series very cleverly labels Kashmiris as 'brain-washed' kids who succumb to



the prevailing situation in the valley. The series blatantly links Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), which has hardly any presence in J&K, to the radicalisation of youth.

Instead of breaking older stereotypes, many new ones surface in the series that again show already suffering Kashmiris in a grim light.

While Manoj Vajpayee is excellent, Gul Panag, making a comeback after a long time, is equally complementing Vajpayee's role diligently, minus her fake Kashmiri accent.

Many critics are calling Family Man a resemblance of Bard of Blood, but the uncanny resemblance is a true depiction of the depths of Indian filmmakers' thought processes.

Though Family Man is quite engaging, the series is highly predictable, even for a child who watches Indian spy films and series regularly.

Talking of realistic account, Haq Se, an Alt Balaji original series, directed by Ken Ghosh is nowhere close to the reality of Kashmir. Though the plot is set in the valley, the series is shot in Manali.

Instead of debunking already prevailing myths about Kashmir, the series has given birth to many new ones.

From accent used to the lifestyle shown, the setup resembles more of North Indian or Pakistani culture and tehzeeb and not Kashmiri.



The series does not set any narrative but comes up with its own precedent that is completely detached from the harsh reality of Kashmir.

In the entire series, Kashmir is used as a 'scenic' place to depict parallel love stories and family drama.

The series has attempted to highlight the tangled socio-political conflict of Kashmir but has failed miserably in doing so. Other than Rajeev Khandelwal, none of the other characters has adapted to the role of native Kashmiris.

The tenor of narrative varies from series to series. While in series like Kaafir, the storyline is humane in nature, whereas, in Family Man, it is again over-enthusiastically patriotic and hurls a 'patriotic' stone at the dignity of a particular region.

Kashmir's celluloid distortion, sadly, remains unending.

DIP No:DIT/kM/5/20

“Without Historical Precedent”: Climate Change Turns Lakes Green In US

Agencies

Paris, France: Global warming is turning clear mountain lakes green in the western United States because of an increase in algae blooms “without historical precedent”, researchers reported on Tuesday.

The concentration of algae in two remote mountain lakes more than doubled in the past 70 years, researchers at Colorado State University found.

Their results, published in the British Royal Society journal Proceedings B, highlight the potentially harmful effects of climate change on pristine and remote ecosystems.

“Even in relatively remote lakes located in protected areas... the fingerprint of human perturbation of Earth System is evident,” lead researcher Isabella Oleksy of Colorado State University told AFP.

“Rapid warming of high elevation environments has resulted in the rapid acceleration and dominance of green algae, which until recently were found in low abundance in these lakes.”

The team of scientists led by Oleksy examined algae concentrations in lakes in a mountain range about 100 kilometres (65 miles) from Denver, using a tool called a gravity corer to collect sedi-

ment cores without damaging the lakebed.

Drawing on measurements going back to the 1950s, they found “dramatic changes” in algal abundance in the form of green algal blooms called chlorophytes, which thrive in warmer temperatures.

The high level of algae “came as an ecological surprise”, Oleksy said.

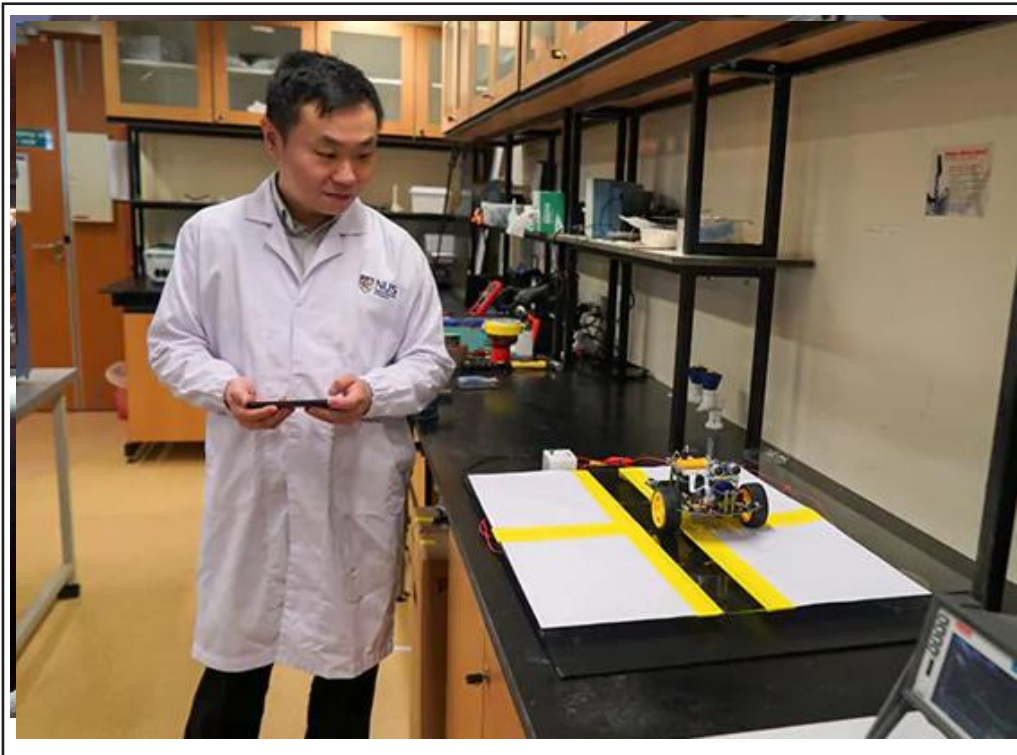
She noted that the amounts of algae documented in the study would more typically be found in highly polluted areas, such as those prone to agricultural runoff, and not in unsullied mountain environments.

“While we documented these changes in two lakes in Colorado, it is likely that this is not an isolated phenomenon,” she said.

The results are not a smoking gun, the researchers acknowledged, but point to climate change as driving the excess accumulation of nutrients – such as phosphorus and nitrogen – that cause algal blooms.

In lakes and oceans, algae blooms sicken wildlife if ingested and destabilise aquatic environments by blocking out sunlight, the United States Environmental Protection Agency says on its website.

Fresh water and marine algae blooms have a huge negative economic impact, affecting fisheries, tourism and human health.



Singapore Scientists Seek Power From Darkness Through Shadow Energy

Agencies

Singapore: Scientists in Singapore are hoping to perfect a new method of power generation driven largely by shadows, with the hope that it could one day help highly urbanised cities power themselves.

The shadow-effect energy generator (SEG) being developed by the National University of Singapore has the potential to harness power like solar cells, but without needing open spaces with uninterrupted light.

To work effectively, the SEG requires both light and dark and, like solar panels, relies on light to shine on silicon

to energise electrons.

However, using panels that feature a thin layer of either gold, silver, platinum or tungsten, the difference in light intensity drives electrons from lit areas towards the shade, creating electricity in the shaded areas.

“Our shadow effect generator comes in handy. It can be placed in those areas to harvest obstructed light,” said research team leader Dr Swee Ching Tan.

The research is still in its early stages yet Tan’s team is already thinking about the potential of establishing a company to make SEG available for home use.

The panels the team have been testing are about 6 sq cm in size and capable of producing just 0.25 volts, meaning about 20 are needed to power a light bulb, or charge a cellphone.

The ideal environment for use would be cities, Tan said, with constantly shifting levels of light and shade throughout the day from clusters of tall buildings and the sun’s changing position in the sky.

“It’s not practical to place solar cells in such cities. So the device might come in handy in places like very densely populated cities, where skyscrapers are everywhere, where shadows are always persistent,” Tan said.

Trapped Illegal Workers In Saudi See Pandemic As Only Escape Route

Agencies

Riyadh: Jobless and broke, Sudanese electrician Hatem is stranded in limbo in Riyadh like countless other illegal workers, but he hopes the fast-spreading coronavirus will offer a chance for escape.

While coronavirus drives a huge exodus of expatriates, campaigners say potentially hundreds of thousands of illegal workers remain stranded in Saudi Arabia, complicating efforts to fight the disease.

The pandemic has laid bare what activists call systemic injustices roiling the lives of blue-collar foreign workers in Saudi Arabia – overcrowded housing, exploitative employers and a lack of effective recourse.

Campaigners have called on Saudi Arabia to reform its long-criticised labour policy and offer an amnesty to poor debt-ridden workers trapped in the country, a predicament that risks fuelling the pandemic.

The problem is rooted in the “kafala” sponsorship system, described by critics as a modern form of slavery that binds workers to their Saudi employers, whose permission is required to enter and exit the kingdom as well as to

change jobs.

Employers also hold enough sway to render their status illegal, according to activists and interviews with four undocumented workers, including Hatem, a 45-year-old electrician living in hiding in Riyadh to avoid arrest.

“My six kids, my old mother, my sister in Sudan... are living in a difficult situation, but I live in much worse conditions,” Hatem told AFP in his squalid Riyadh apartment, which he shares with other workers.

“The sponsorship system is very unjust,” said Hatem, who arrived in 2016.

Calls for amnesty

Saudi Arabia, home to around 10 million expats, has expelled hundreds of thousands of illegal workers in recent years.

But many like Hatem who are stuck in a debt trap are not permitted to leave before settling their dues, even as kafala curbs prevent them from legally earning their way to freedom.

The Saudi government should offer an amnesty for irregular migrants to regularise their status or return to their home countries,” Annas Shaker, a research fellow at the ad-

vocacy group Migrant Rights, told AFP.

Holding back such workers, many of whom are forced to go into hiding, risks fanning the pandemic, observers including Shaker warned.

Saudi Arabia has reported over 200,000 infections and nearly 2,000 deaths. Hospital sources say doctors and nurses are among those dying and intensive care units are stretched beyond capacity.

Saudi nationalists online have openly demanded the expulsion of expat communities, widely blamed for spreading the disease.

A Saudi newspaper columnist called for “cleansing” the oil-rich Gulf state of excess foreign workers.

Hatem, who scrapes by thanks to the kindness of strangers, has implored Sudan’s embassy in Riyadh to push authorities to grant him the exit visa he needs to leave.

Neither responded to AFP’s request for comment.

A South Asian official told AFP he had received similar pleas for exit visas from debt-saddled subcontract workers stuck in the same predicament, many for years.

In an extraordinary announcement in March, Saudi Arabia offered free coronavi-

At Least 239 Killed In Ethiopia Protests Over Singer’s Death

Agencies

Addis Ababa: The death count from demonstrations and ethnic violence that erupted in Ethiopia last week following the murder of a popular singer from the Oromo ethnic group has risen to 239, according to a tally of police figures.

Pop star Hachalu Hundessa, a hero to many Oromo who saw him as the voice of their marginalisation, was shot dead by unknown attackers on Monday of last week, fueling ethnic tensions threatening the country’s democratic transition.

Protests broke out in the capital Addis Ababa, as well as the surrounding Oromia region which is the homeland of the country’s largest ethnic group, who have long felt economically and politically sidelined in the diverse nation.

Officials have attributed the

television on Wednesday.

Police in Addis Ababa had previously reported 10 deaths in the capital.

The death count is an increase from 166 fatalities reported at the weekend.

Mustafa also said there had been “extensive damage and looting” of government and private property.

“To control this unrest more than 3,500 suspects have been arrested. They were anti-peace elements who carried out attacks using the artist’s death as a pretext to dismantle the constitutional system by force,” he said.

“The Oromo population should be inclusive of other ethnic groups that live among it.”

- Threat to planned democracy - Hachalu’s music was the soundtrack to anti-government



deaths to a combination of lethal force by security officers and inter-ethnic violence.

“Due to the unrest that occurred in the region, nine police officers, five militia members and 215 civilians have lost their lives,” acting Oromia police commissioner Mustafa Kedir said on state

protests that swept Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, the country’s first Oromo leader, to office in 2018.

Yet, as Ethiopia prepares for elections that will test its democratic transition under Abiy, many Oromo nationalists feel betrayed, arguing the prime minister has failed to champion their interests.

Russia Tells US To “Mind Own Business” Over Media Freedom

Agencies

Moscow: Moscow has angrily told the US embassy to “mind your own business” after Washington’s diplomatic mission raised concern about curbs on media freedom in Russia.

Rebecca Ross, the spokeswoman for the US embassy, on Tuesday expressed concern

journalists who say his arrest is punishment for his coverage of Russia’s defence sector.

A member of Safronov’s defence team, Yevgeny Smirnov, has said the former journalist, who used to work for Kommersant and Vedomosti newspapers, is suspected of cooperating with Czech intelligence since 2012.

The FSB investigators believe that the Czech intelligence acts under the guidance of the United States, Smirnov told AFP.

FSB says that Safronov has collected confidential data about the Russian military, defence, and security and



about a clampdown on journalists in Russia.

“Watching arrest after arrest of Russian journalists - it’s starting to look like a concerted campaign against #MediaFreedom,” she tweeted.

“Mind your own business,” the Russian foreign ministry tweeted late Tuesday.

Earlier that day the FSB security agency, the successor to the Soviet-era KGB, arrested a respected former journalist, Ivan Safronov, 30, on suspicion of state treason.

His detention sparked an uproar among supporters and

handed it over to the intelligence of a NATO member country.

On Monday, a reporter from the northwestern city of Pskov was fined nearly \$7,000 for “justifying terrorism”, in a case that sparked an outcry.

Prosecutors had requested that Svetlana Prokopyeva be sentenced to six years in prison for a commentary about a bomb attack.

All major TV stations are under state control in Russia.

Journalists working for print and online outlets have recently complained about increasing curbs on press freedoms and pressure from the Kremlin.

Indian Man In Covid Isolation Runs Away In Auckland, Visits Mall; Faces \$4,000 Penalty, Jail

Auckland, New Zealand: A 32-year-old man, who recently returned from India and tested positive for the deadly coronavirus, will be charged with missing from a managed isolation facility in Auckland to go to a supermarket, according to media reports.

The man, New Zealand’s latest new case of COVID-19, escaped through a fenced area from an isolation facility at about 6:50 pm local time on Tuesday, the New Zealand Herald reported.

He has been sent to a quarantine facility after he was confirmed to have the coronavirus. However, the man was asymptomatic and did not appear to have come into close or casual contact with anyone, the report said.

The man, whose identity was



not immediately known, came from Delhi on July 3, it added.

Health Minister Chris Hipkins has slammed the man’s actions as “selfish” and says he will face charges, the report said.

But he wouldn’t describe the episode as a failure of the gov-

ernment’s processes, and even though those processes will now be reviewed, he said if anyone should apologise, it was the man who broke the law.

Mr Hipkins said the man appeared to have made a spur of the moment decision and dashed

through a gap where fencing was being replaced.

A security guard was observing the area but confused the man with contractors working on the fencing. The alarm was raised within minutes but security were unable to find the man.

Mr Hipkins said the man may have spent 20 minutes in the supermarket on Victoria St West, and he returned of his own volition 70 minutes after leaving, the report added.

He will be charged and now face up to a six-month jail sentence or a \$4000 fine, the report added.

After the man’s positive test result came today, the supermarket staff are now self-isolating and will also be tested for the virus, the Stuff reported.

Trump Cheated On SATs, Score Got Him Into Wharton: Niece’s Book

Washington: President Donald Trump paid a proxy to take a standardized college entrance exam for him when he was a high school student, his niece writes in a tell-all book scheduled to be published next week.

In the book, “Too Much and Never Enough: How My Family Created the World’s Most Dangerous Man,” Mary Trump writes that Trump paid someone to take the SAT, an entrance exam used by most U.S. universities, in his place, according to The New York Times.

“The high score the proxy earned for him, Ms. Trump adds, helped the young Mr. Trump to later gain admittance as an undergraduate to the University of Pennsylvania’s prestigious



Wharton business school,” reports the Times, citing a manuscript of the book.

White House senior adviser Kellyanne Conway, when asked about the book on Tuesday, told reporters at the White House that it was a family matter.

“He’s not her patient, he’s her uncle,” Conway said, apparently referring to Mary

Trump’s degree in clinical psychology. “I think family matters are family matters.”

White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany said on Tuesday: “It’s a book of falsehoods and that’s about it.”

The College Board, which administers the SAT test, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

One Nation One Ration Card In J&K 1.19 Lakh Duplicate Beneficiaries Weeded Out

SRINAGAR: Secretary Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, (FCS&CA) Simrandeep Singh, Wednesday reviewed implementation of One Nation One Ration Card scheme and Aadhar seeding of ration cards in J&K.

Various officers of the FCS&CA Department along with State Project Management Unit (SPMU) under Integrated Management of Public Distribution System (IM-PDS) attended the meeting. Secretary reviewed the targets that each district is required to meet to successfully roll out the scheme as per the timelines set by the government. It was informed that the J&K has to achieve 100% Aadhaar seeding of all Ration Cards up to the beneficiary level, for successfully rolling out the One Nation One Ration Card scheme.

As on date, Kulgam, Anantnag, Shopian, Kishtwar, Pulwama and Ramban have achieved more than 90 per cent Aadhar linking of ration cards. However, Srinagar, Baramulla, Reasi and some districts of Jammu province have low percentage of Aadhar seeding. The Secretary informed that the department has been working on mission mode on this scheme since last one month. The current percentage of Aadhaar seeding at Ration Card level is 87%, whereas at beneficiary level the seeding percentage is 71%.

In the last 20 days, the Food & Civil Supplies Department

has been able to link Aadhaar of nearly two lakh beneficiaries. Further, the department has been able to weed out 1.19 lakh duplicate/silent beneficiaries from the electronic portal of the ration cards management system. It was given out that the duplicity was on account of inter-district/ inter-state double beneficiaries. It is estimated that in next 40 days, the department would end up weeding out an estimated 2.50 lakh duplicate beneficiaries. It was also informed that electronic Point of Sale (e-POS) devices have to be installed at all Fair Price Shops in the J&K.

It was informed in the meeting that out of 6733 FPSs, the ePoS devices have been installed in 6500 shops. It is pertinent to mention that One Nation One Ration Card scheme trials were successfully held in Anantnag, Shopian, Baramulla, Budgam, Kupwara, Kulgam, Doda, Samba, Udhampur, Rajouri, Kathua and Jammu districts yesterday and a number of NFSA beneficiaries from the state of Uttar Pradesh were provided ration at all these districts of J&K.

One Nation One Ration Card scheme has to be rolled out in J&K in phased manner from July, 2020 to August, 2020.

The beneficiaries of J&K will also be required to draw their ration only after authentication of their biometrics at the Fair Price Shops, from the month of September, 2020 onwards.

J&K Exploring PRIs' Participation In Mining Through Short Term Permits

SRINAGAR: The Chief Secretary, B V R Subrahmanyam while chairing a meeting to take stock of issues being faced in mining of construction material, called for synergy and coordination between various stakeholders including Geology & Mining Department, State Environment Authority, Pollution Control Board, Public Sector Undertakings and lease holders of mining blocks. Administrative Secretaries of departments of Industries & Commerce, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Law, Justice & Parliamentary Affairs, along with HoDs of Geology & Mining, Ecology, Environment & Remote Sensing and Pollution Control Board, were present in the meeting. The Chief Secretary urged upon Commissioners/ Secretary Industries to examine and submit a proposal regarding possible devolution of mining rights to Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) on land under their jurisdiction through short term permits. The decision is aimed at empowering PRIs to raise funds through mining surpluses and address shortage of key construction material in local market, besides keeping a check on their prices.

It was also recommended that the framework for extraction procedure under local self governance mechanism,

along-with sharing of revenue between Geology & Mining Department and PRIs may also be worked out. Further, Administrative Secretary, Industries & Commerce, was asked to identify 100 locations where PRIs could be given rights for STPs and the department can apply for various permits and clearances on behalf of PRIs, besides providing them logistical support on a pilot basis. Moreover, the department was instructed to expedite approval of mining plans in all e-auctioned blocks by 20th July, 2020. Ecology & Environment Department and Pollution Control Board were directed to expedite clearances within the rules.

Similarly, Geology & Mining Department was instructed to forward mining projects of 2nd phase auction for environmental clearance by 31st July, 2020. The Chief Secretary urged Industries Department to consider streamlining of mining auction to stabilize sale prices of minor minerals by developing a long term price fixation mechanism. Regarding simplification of process of obtaining environmental clearances, Chief Secretary directed Administrative Secretary, Forest to examine the matter and revisit the checklist of required documentation and keep it to the minimum required by law.



COOL OFF: A man jumps into a countryside stream in Chattergam village in Budgam district.

At Last, WHO Acknowledges Evidence Of Covid-19 Airborne Spread

GENEVA: The World Health Organization on Tuesday acknowledged "evidence emerging" of the airborne spread of the novel coronavirus, after a group of scientists urged the global body to update its guidance on how the respiratory disease passes between people.

"We have been talking about the possibility of airborne transmission and aerosol transmission as one of the modes of transmission of COVID-19," Maria Van Kerkhove, technical lead on the COVID-19 pandemic at the WHO, told a news briefing.

The WHO has previously said the virus that causes the COVID-19 respiratory disease spreads primarily through small droplets expelled from the nose and mouth of an infected person that quickly sink to the ground. But in an open letter to the Geneva-based agency, published on Monday in the Clinical Infectious Diseases journal, 239 scientists in 32 countries outlined evidence that they say shows floating virus particles can infect people who breathe them in. Because those smaller exhaled particles can linger in the air, the scientists in the group had been urging WHO to update its guidance.

"We wanted them to acknowledge the evidence," said Jose Jimenez, a chemist at the University of Colorado



who signed the paper.

"This is definitely not an attack on the WHO. It's a scientific debate, but we felt we needed to go public because they were refusing to hear the evidence after many conversations with them," he said in a telephone interview. Speaking at Tuesday's briefing in Geneva, Benedetta Allegranzi, the WHO's technical lead for infection prevention and control, said there was evidence emerging of airborne transmission of the coronavirus, but that it was not definitive. "...The possibility of airborne transmission in public settings - especially in very specific conditions, crowded, closed, poorly ventilated settings that have been described, cannot be ruled out," she said.

"However, the evidence needs to be

gathered and interpreted, and we continue to support this."

Jimenez said historically, there has been a fierce opposition in the medical profession to the notion of aerosol transmission, and the bar for proof has been set very high. A key concern has been a fear of panic.

"If people hear airborne, healthcare workers will refuse to go to the hospital," he said. Or people will buy up all the highly protective N95 respirator masks, "and there will be none left for developing countries."

Jimenez said the WHO panel assessing the evidence on airborne transmission was not scientifically diverse, and lacked representation from experts in aerosol transmission..

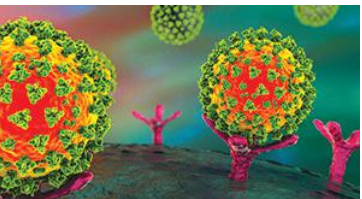
India's Coronavirus Caseload Climbs To 7.42 Lakh

With 22,752 fresh cases of COVID-19 in a day, India's coronavirus caseload increased to 7,42,417 on Wednesday, while the death toll climbed to 20,642 with 482 people succumbing to the disease, according to the Union health ministry data.

The number of recoveries stands at 4,56,830, while there are 2,64,944 active cases of coronavirus infection presently in the country, the updated data at 8am showed. "Thus, around 61.53 per cent of patients have recovered so far," an official said.

According to the ICMR, accumulative total of 1,04,73,771 samples have been tested up to July 7 with 2,62,679 samples being tested on Tuesday.

Of the 482 deaths reported in the last 24 hours, 224 are from Maharashtra, 65 from Tamil Nadu, 50 from Delhi,



25 from West Bengal, 18 from Uttar Pradesh, 17 from Gujarat, 15 from Karnataka, 13 from Andhra Pradesh, 11 from Rajasthan, seven each from Bihar and Telangana, six from Punjab, five each from Jammu and Kashmir and Madhya Pradesh, four in Odisha, three from Haryana, two each from Jharkhand and Puducherry and one each in Chandigarh, Goa and Uttarakhand.

Of the total 20,642 deaths reported so

far, Maharashtra accounted for the highest 9,250 fatalities followed by Delhi with 3,165 deaths, Gujarat with 1,977, Tamil Nadu with 1,636, Uttar Pradesh with 827, West Bengal with 804, Madhya Pradesh with 622, Rajasthan with 472 and Karnataka with 416.

The COVID-19 death toll reached 313 in Telangana, 279 in Haryana, 252 in Andhra Pradesh, 175 in Punjab, 143 in Jammu and Kashmir, 104 in Bihar, 43 in Uttarakhand, 42 in Odisha and 27 in Kerala.

Jharkhand has registered 22 deaths, Chhattisgarh, Assam and Puducherry 14 each, Himachal Pradesh 11, Goa eight, Chandigarh seven, Arunachal Pradesh two and Meghalaya, Tripura and Ladakh have reported one fatality each, according to the health ministry.

Nizamuddin Markaz: Delhi Court Grants Bail To 91 Foreigners From 21 Countries

A Delhi court Wednesday granted bail to 91 foreigners from 21 countries who were chargesheeted for attending Markaz at Nizamuddin in the national capital allegedly in violation of visa conditions, indulging in missionary activities illegally and violating government guidelines issued after the COVID-19 outbreak.

Chief metropolitan magistrate Gurmohina Kaur granted the relief to the foreigners on furnishing a personal bond of Rs 10,000 each.

The accused will file their plea bargaining applications on Thursday, said advocate Ashima Mandla, appearing for some of the foreign nationals.

Under plea bargaining, the accused plead guilty to the offence, praying for a lesser punishment. The Criminal Procedure of Code allows for plea bargaining in cases where the maximum punishment is seven-year imprisonment; offences don't affect the socio-economic conditions of the society and the offence is not committed against a woman or a child below 14 years.

During the hearing, all the foreign nationals who were staying at a hotel, were produced before the court through video conferencing.

They were identified by the concerned officials of the high commissions/embassies of the respective countries as well as the investigating officer.

The foreigners belong to Afghanistan, Brazil, China, USA, Ukraine, Australia, Egypt, Russia, Algeria, Belgium, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, France, Kazakhstan, Morocco, Tunisia, UK, Fiji, Sudan, Phil-

ippines and Ethiopia, said advocates Mandakini Singh, Fahim Khan and Ahmad Khan, appearing for the accused.

The court had on Tuesday granted bail to 122 Malaysian nationals booked in the case.

They also filed applications for plea bargaining which was allowed by the court and listed before the concerned metropolitan magistrate Siddharth Malik for early disposal of the petitions.

The court had taken cognisance of the 59 chargesheets filed against 956 foreign nationals belonging to 36 different countries in the case and summoned the accused to be produced on different dates through video conferencing.

The investigating officer had told the court that the investigation was complete against the 956 foreign nationals in the case and each has been allegedly found to have independently committed the offence for which he/she has been chargesheeted and has added that the further investigation is pending.

These foreigners had attended the event in March, following which in April COVID-19 cases across the country spiked after hundreds of Tablighi Jamaat members, who had attended the religious congregation at Nizamuddin Markaz event, tested positive.

According to the charge sheets, all the foreigners have been booked for violating visa rules, violating government guidelines issued in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic and regulations regarding Epidemic Diseases Act, Disaster Management Act and prohibitory orders under section 144 of Code of Criminal Procedure.

RGF Probe: Govt Wouldn't Have Waited For Six Years If It's Politically Motivated, Says BJP

The central government's order of a probe into transactions of trusts linked to the Nehru-Gandhi family is a "natural" outcome of information brought out in the public domain recently, the BJP said on Wednesday.

BJP general secretary P Murallidhar Rao also rejected the charge that the government's decision is politically motivated, saying it would not have waited for six years had this been true. Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government came to power in 2014 and won mandate for a second term in 2019. "These transactions are in public domain... Our government is committed to transparency. It is natural to investigate these transactions after so much information was recently brought out in public domain," Rao told reporters.

He said the Congress leadership should cooperate with the investigation. Hours after



the government initiated a probe into the funding of three Nehru-Gandhi family linked trusts, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi hit out at Modi and said those who fight for the truth cannot be intimidated.

"Mr Modi believes the world is like him. He thinks everyone has a price or can be intimidated. He will never understand that those who fight for the truth have no price and cannot be intimidated," Gandhi said in a tweet. An inter-ministerial team has been set up by the government to coordinate probe into the alleged violation of various laws like money laundering and foreign contributions by three Nehru-Gandhi family linked trusts, including the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation (RGF).

NEWS MAKERS

Family Cremates Wrong Man After Mix-Up At Covid-19 Hospital In Thane: Officials

THANE: A family in Thane city of Maharashtra accidentally cremated the body of the wrong man after a goof-up at the hospital treating COVID-19 patients, officials said.

The matter came to light after the ceremony, when the actual relatives of the man who was cremated reached the hospital and claimed he was missing.

On July 3, a family from Kopri in Thane was informed by the Global Hub Covid Hospital that their 67-year-old relative had died of coronavirus and a body was handed over to them in a sealed bag as per COVID-19 protocols, following which the cremation was organised.

However, on July 5, another family reached the hospital in search of their 72-year-old relative who was admitted for COVID-19 treatment there on June 29.

After investigation, it was revealed that the 72-year-old had died and his body was handed over to the wrong family which cremated the man, officials said. The family's actual relative was, however, alive and still in the hospital.



The family members said that they were shocked when they got a call from the newly inaugurated 1,000-bed hospital on Monday, saying that their relative was alive and was being treated in the ICU.

"A probe by a civic team found that the relatives of this family in Kopri was alive and under treatment at a COVID facility. The hospital has said the goof-up was a result of case papers of the two patients getting mixed up," an official said.

The family's joy, however, was short-lived when their relative also died of the infection late on Tuesday night, a senior civic official said.

Chief of the BJP Thane city unit and MLC Niranjana Davkhare criticised the TMC administration for the lapses.

ED Confiscates Over Rs 329-Crore Assets Of Nirav Modi Under Fugitive Law

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday said it has confiscated assets worth Rs 329.66 crore of diamond merchant Nirav Modi under the fugitive economic offenders law.

The businessman and his uncle Mehul Choksi among others are being probed by the ED on money laundering charges in connection with an over \$2 billion alleged bank fraud at a PNB branch in Mumbai.

"The confiscated properties are in the form of four flats at the iconic building Samudra Mahal in Worli Mumbai, a sea-side farmhouse and land in Alibaug, a windmill in Jaisalmer, a flat in London and residential flats in UAE, shares and bank deposits," the central probe agency said in a statement.

A special court in Mumbai had on June 8 authorised the ED to confiscate the assets.

Nirav Modi was declared a fugitive economic offender by the same court on December 5 last year.



"The ED has attached the properties worth Rs. 329.66 crore under the FEO Act, 2018 which now stands confiscated to central government," it said.

The agency till now has attached assets worth Rs 2,348 crore of Nirav Modi under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

Nirav Modi (49) is currently lodged in a UK jail after being arrested in London in March 2019 and is currently fighting extradition to India.

CANCER SOCIETY OF KASHMIR



کینسر سوسائٹی آف کشمیر

Website: www.cancersocietykashmir.org E-mail: cancersocietyofkashmir@gmail.com

Ref. No. CSK/83/2020/5426-33
Dated: 01-JUL-2020

(Auction Notice)

The last date of receipt of bids for dismantling of old structures situated at Lalnagar Chanapora is extended upto 11-07-2020. 4pm.

--sd--
General Secretary.

4-Bagh-i-Islam Colony Lal Nagar, Chanapora
Srinagar 190 015TeleFax 0194-2441899/2430899