



Maximum : 33°C
Minum : 17°C
Humidity : 45%

SUNSET
Today 07:44 PM
SUNRISE
Tomorrow 05:28 AM

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News Digest

Ram Madhav To Visit Bandipore On Sunday

Srinagar: Bharatiya Janata Party national General Secretary Ram Madhav is all set to visit Kashmir on Sunday to offer condolences to the bereaved family members of slain BJP leader from north Kashmir's Bandipora district Waseem Bari. Sources in the BJP tsaid that Madhav has confirmed his visit to Kashmir with a sole aim of visiting Muslimabad residence of slain Bari in Bandipora district. "He will meet the wife and other family members of slain Waseem Bari and express his solidarity with the bereaved. Later, Madhav will also meet party workers in Srinagar," they said, adding that the BJP General Secretary will reach Kashmir on Sunday morning and right away travel to Bandipora district. "A meeting with the BJP workers from Srinagar and other districts is also on cards with Madhav," sources said. They said that after Madhav's visit, BJP's national president J P Nadda will also visit Kashmir and meet family members of slain BJP leader Waseem Bari at Bandipora. "Nadda will come next week," a source in the BJP told KNO. Waseem, the young face of BJP in



Woman Sets Herself Ablaze In Bandipora

Bandipora: A 28-year-old woman allegedly set herself ablaze on Friday evening in Chatibandi Aragam village of north Kashmir's Bandipora district. Sources said that a 28-year-old woman (name withheld) set herself ablaze after pouring kerosene oil over her body at her home in Chatibandi Aragam. She has been shifted to District Hospital Bandipora where from she was referred to Srinagar hospital in critical condition for specialized treatment. Station House Officer (SHO) Aragam said that a case has been registered in this regard while proceedings are underway

Youth Found Dead In Daksum, Anantnag

Anantnag: A 22-year-old youth was found dead under mysterious conditions on Friday in Daksum area of Kokernag in South Kashmir's Anantnag district. A police official said that a youth identified as Muneer Ahmad Chouhan (22), son of Lal Chouhan, a resident of Gadvail Larmoo was found dead in a Behak at Bovie Daksum. He said the cause of death is being ascertained and post-mortem of the body will be carried out to determine the actual cause of death

ASI Dies In Accident In Awantipora

Srinagar: An Assistant Sub Inspector of Police died on spot when he met with an accident at Awantipora in south Kashmir's Pulwama district on Friday, officials told GNS. They said that the ASI was on his scooter when the accident took place and he died on the spot. He has been identified as Nazir Ahmad Sofi of Munwarabad area of Anantnag district.

Cases Surge As J&K Records 387 New Covid-19 Infections

Fresh Cases Include 50 Security Men, 2 Doctors, Baby; 91 Discharged

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir on Friday recorded 387 Covid-19 cases, including 97 from Jammu and 290 from Kashmir valley and with this the number of cases in J&K went up to 9888. The fresh cases include 50 CRPF, SSB, BSF and army personnel, two doctors and a 8-months old baby.

Giving the breakup of the cases, officials said that Srinagar reported 94, Baramulla 36, Kulgam 33, Shopian 14, Anantnag 11, Kupwara 34, Pulwama 47, Budgam 6, Bandipora 8, Ganderbal 7, Jammu 23, Kathua 7, Ramban 11, Rajouri 51, Samba 1, Poonch 2, Doda 1 and Reasi 1.

According to Dr. G H Yattoo, Nodal Officer Coronavirus Control Measures at SKIMS Soura, out of 2659 samples which were processed at the viral diagnostic laboratory of the institute today, 132 returned positive for the virus.

Professor Farooq Jan, Medical Superintendent SKIMS Soura said the cases include 37 from Army, CRPF and SSB, 33 from Pulwama, 24 from Srinagar, 12 from Anantnag, 10 from Kulgam, seven from Budgam, six from Bandipora, two from Kupwara and one from Baramulla.

According to Dr Riyaz Untoo, Principal SKIMS Bemina out of 394 samples processed at the hospital's lab, 62 tested positive for COVID-19, 46 from Srinagar and 16 from



File Pic: Abdul Bhat

5 More Die Of Covid-19; J&K Toll 160

Five more COVID-19 patients died on Friday in Jammu and Kashmir, thus taking the overall death toll due to the virus to 160.

An 80-year-old man from Kokernag area of the South Kashmir's Anantnag district died last night while an 82-year-old man from Habbra Kadal area of Srinagar and 36-year-old lady from Noorbagh area of Srinagar died Friday morning at CD hospital while as 75 year old man from Kupwara died at JVC and 95-year-old man from Shopian died at SKIMS (JVC) Bemina.

Medical Superintendent of CD hospital, Dr. Salim Tak told KNO that the patient from Kokernag area of Anantnag was admitted on July 4 after testing positive and patient died last night. "He said that patient was suffering from bilateral pneumonia besides respiratory failure. He added that patient from Habbra Kadal was admitted on July 7 and died on Friday morning. "He was diabetic, hypertensive and had Community Acquired Pneumonia," he added.

He further added that a 36-year-old lady from Noorbagh area of Srinagar was referred from

Shopian.

The Srinagar cases include 1.F-42yrs-FatehKadal, M-53yrs-Rainawari, M-45yrs, M-

7yrs, F-3yrs, F-7yrs, M-32yrs, F-85yrs, M-45yrs, M-1yr, M-40yrs from Munwarabad, M-60yrs-Nishat Brane, »PAGE 02

PROFESSOR FAROOQ JAN, MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENT SKIMS Soura said the cases include 37 from Army, CRPF and SSB, 33 from Pulwama, 24 from Srinagar, 12 from Anantnag, 10 from Kulgam, seven from Budgam, six from Bandipora, two from Kupwara and one from Baramulla.

Police Apprehends 2 Women For Stealing New Born Baby

HANDWARA: Police on Friday morning apprehended two women for stealing an infant from district hospital Handwara.

An official said that a baby soon after birth went missing from Handwara district hospital.

He said that the incident came to light late last evening after a woman from Natnusa Kupwara was shifted from the labour room to the ward without her just born baby.

The baby was whisked away while her mother was being shifted to the ward of the district hospital, reports quoting family said.

"Soon after the incident both police and hospital administration swung into action and launched a search for the new born," a hospital official said.

According to Deputy Medical



Image for representation

Superintendent, Dr Ajaz Ahmad police apprehended two women Friday morning and recovered the infant from their custody.

Baby was later handed over to her mother.

BJP Demands Security For Workers

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir unit of the BJP on Friday demanded security for political workers of different parties who are facing threats, asserting that they are upholding democracy in the union territory.

It said sarpanches and heads of local bodies should also be provided the security cover as Pakistan wants to destroy the democratic process in J and K.

"It is very important to provide security to all the active political workers of all the political parties — be it the NC, the PDP, the Congress or the the BJP — who have threat perception, BJP's J and K unit president Ravinder Raina said here. Those who participate in the democratic process make the democracy and law of the land stronger," he added.

Raina was speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a function at the

HC Seeks Status Report On Dumping Of Waste In Wullar Lake

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir High Court has issued notices to government of India and J&K administration on Public Interest Litigation, seeking directions for removing garbage dumped on the banks of Wullar Lake, Asia's largest fresh water lake, in north Kashmir.

A division bench of Chief Justice Gita Mittal and Justice Sanjay Dhar also sought a status report from the government on the PIL filed by Central Auqaf Committee Tarzoo-Dharmambal, an amalgam of eight Auqaf Committees of the area.

The court passed the directions after hearing Advocate Shaqfat Nazir for the petitioners who seek a slew of directions to the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and the J&K government.

The petitioners also demand that the Municipal Council Sopore be asked to stop dumping of municipal solid waste on the Ramsar wetland site situated



File Pic

NGT Also Seeks Report On Wullar Lake

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the authorities in Jammu and Kashmir to file an action taken report on alleged dumping of solid municipal waste in the Wullar Lake.

Hearing an petition filed by social activist Raja Mu-

zaftar Bhat, the NGT on Wednesday directed the collector of Baramulla district and the Pollution Control Board of Jammu and Kashmir to file a factual report and an action taken report by the next date of hearing on October 15.

"In view of the allegation

and photographs annexed, we find it necessary to require a factual and action taken report from the member secretary of state Wetland Authority, Collector of Baramulla, and the state Pollution Control Board before the next date," the tribunal said in a two-page order. »P-02

Hold Final Year Exams by Sept End: UGC

SRINAGAR: Amid surge in COVID-19 cases across Jammu and Kashmir, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has asked the University authorities to complete the examination process of terminal semester and final year examinations by September end.

The UGC said that the exams can be held via off-line that includes physical appearance of the students or through the online or blended mode following the prescribed protocols and guidelines related to COVID-19 pandemic.

The newly revised

Staff Leaves BSNL In Drones, Services Hit

Auqib Javed

SRINAGAR: If you are a subscriber to BSNL broadband in Srinagar and it stops working as a result of some fault, it is most likely you will get no one from the BSNL to set it right, no matter how many complaints you register online, no matter how many officials you beseech for help and no matter how much monthly tariff you pay the telecom company for the service.

The BSNL in Srinagar is just not interested in its subscribers.

This is what its subscribers in the city are learning to their detriment. On June 2, Riyaz Ahmad, a subscriber

from Umar Colony Wambal, found his broadband was not working. He says he contacted local linemen who didn't turn up despite promising to do so. Later he registered three online com-

BSNL had over 2 lakh employees all over India out of which one lakh took the VRS recently. In Srinagar we have over 500 employees working out of which over 300 took the VRS"

plaints, still nobody came. He rung up senior officials in the department, who all promised to send the linemen, none still came.

"It has been frustrating experience. I run up a monthly bill of Rs 1200-1500 but here my broadband is not working for the past eight

days. I have moved from pillar to post but no one has come to repair the fault," says Ahmad. "It is as if the company wants to tell you it doesn't want subscribers, so that none of its employees

has to work". Ahmad added the local linemen he talked to said it was not their responsibility and passed on the buck to other colleagues who in turn passed it back. "One of them Abdur Raheem who would come in past also refused to come," Ahmad said. »PAGE 02

Pvt Schools Compel Parents to Pay Transport, Miscellaneous Charges

Complaints Against Over 50 Pvt Schools Registered At DSEK: Officials

Agencies

SRINAGAR: In a brazen violation of government norm, some private schools in Kashmir Valley are 'compelling' the parents to pay the pending tuition, transport and other miscellaneous charges.

The parents of those wards studying in various private schools alleged that the school management has threatened them of blocking their access to appear for the online examinations if they did not pay the pending tuition and other charges.

A parent said that de-

spite government orders, the private schools are charging tuition, transport as well as other miscellaneous fees.

"My three kids are studying at one of the leading private schools of Srinagar and in the name of tuition fee, the school is minting a hefty amount by charging tuition as well as miscellaneous fee," he said, adding that the school is also demanding the transport fee of past one year.

"The school management is now demanding us to pay the transport fee from August-2019 when all schools were closed fol-

lowing the abrogation of Article-370," he said.

The parents also said that despite government directives not to charge any fee for the closed months of August and September last year, "the school management have refused to hand over the results of our wards till we pay the whole amount."

Meanwhile, the official at Directorate of School Education Kashmir (DSEK) said, "Complaints against the management of more than fifty schools of charging transport and other miscellaneous charges have been registered. »PAGE 02

New WHO Guidance Calls For More Evidence On Airborne Transmission

NEW YORK: The World Health Organization on Thursday released new guidelines on the transmission of the novel coronavirus that acknowledge some reports of airborne transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19, but stopped short of confirming that the virus spreads through the air.

In its latest transmission guidance, the WHO acknowledged that some outbreak reports related to indoor crowded spaces have suggested the possibility of aerosol transmission, such as during choir practice

Govt Relieves Sahu, SSP Traffic Jammu, SP North Srinagar

SRINAGAR: The government on Friday relieved Ajeet Kumar Sahu (IAS), Commissioner/Secretary to the Government, who has been transferred to Ladakh by Ministry of Home Affairs last month.

"Pursuant to the Order issued by Department of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India under F.No.15030/38/2020-J&K, Dated 9.6.2020 and in partial modification of Government Order No. 688-JK(CAD) of 2020 dated 30.6.2020, it is hereby ordered that Ajeet Kumar Sahu, IAS, Commissioner/Secretary to the Government, Jal Shakti

Department, under orders of transfer from UT of J&K to UT of Ladakh, shall be deemed to have

been relieved with immediate effect, with further direction to report to his new place of posting, forthwith," reads an order issued by the government.

"Consequent upon the above, M.Raju, IAS, Secretary to the Government, Planning, Development and Monitoring Department, holding additional charge of Managing Director, JKPC, Administrative Secretary, Hospitality & Protocol, Estates and Civil Aviation Departments, shall also hold the charge of Administrative Secretary, Jal Shakti Department, in addition to his own duties, till further orders," the order added.

Govt Meanwhile in a separate order government on Friday relieved Joginder Singh, »PAGE 02

Mrinal Pathak

BOLLYWOOD has once again raised its patriotic pitch after actor Ajay Devgn announced his film on Galwan showdown — that saw 20 soldiers losing their lives in a deadly clash with People's Liberation Army of China recently.

While the move drew mixed response, a Bollywood actress, who was lately seen throwing her weight behind a film on lost fathers of Kashmir, believes patriotism will always find a place in cinema, even as "Kashmir has been grossly misrepresented and underrepresented by Bollywood".

Actress Soni Razdan, wife of filmmaker Mahesh Bhatt and mother of popular actress Alia Bhatt in an exclusive chat with Kashmir Observer talks about Bollywood's cinematic

'Kashmir Grossly Misrepresented In Bollywood'

treatment with Kashmir.

As someone who has a strong connection with Kashmir, do you feel the valley is rightfully portrayed in Indian cinema?

The thing is, very few people understand Kashmir—or, are fair to it in their storytelling.

But of late, there've been some excellent films set in the valley. No Fathers in Kashmir is an example of a film made by a maker who knows Kashmir well and feels for its people. Hamid is also a beautiful film, so was Haider, which was very well researched.

Many films gloss over the details of the truth, and basically tell stories set in Kashmir, but not true to the people there. Or, they're full of propaganda.



Like in Haider and Hamid, we saw how acting plays a huge role in depicting the reality of a place. Do you think that Indian actors are doing justice to the roles played as

Kashmiris?

See, a lot depends on the project and the director and the research. It's not only the actor. It's what is demanded of him too.

Cinema and web series can play a huge role in busting myths about Kashmir but at the same time we see many movies and series revitalizing the stereotypes and stigmas attached to the region.

Yes, I agree it really can. I feel people lack moral courage, or honesty, and also do not wish to see things from the other perspective. They prefer to see what is comfortable and convenient.

Sadly, Kashmir has been grossly underrepresented or misrepresented a lot of the time.

Having said this, are Kashmiris themselves willing to look at the truth in the eye? That too takes a certain amount of moral courage.

So there're many sides to the truth in Kashmir! I'm not talking about times since 5 August 2019, but before that. Post that, sadly, we've no moral ground to stand on. »PAGE 02

PAC To Review Border Road Construction At LAC, Procurement Of High-Altitude Clothing For Troops



Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- In the wake of the recent violent clash between Indian and Chinese soldiers in eastern Ladakh, the parliament's PAC on Friday decided to review the construction of border roads at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and procurement of high-altitude clothing for the armed forces, and may call the Defense Secretary and other top officials to be briefed on the same.

Friday's meeting of the 22-member Public Accounts Committee (PAC) chaired by leader of Congress in Lok Sabha

Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury was attended by 17 out of the total 20 members. Its two seats are vacant.

Members of the PAC, in which BJP enjoys majority and is led by senior party leader Bhupender Yadav, thwarted Chowdhury's attempt to select the PM Cares Fund for examination saying its amount was not sanctioned by the parliament and therefore it cannot be taken up by the committee.

MPs from BJD and JD(U) also supported the BJP on the issue.

Meanwhile, the PAC has decided to examine various subjects with special focus being given to

the CAG report number 5 of 2017, a performance audit of the Sino-India Border Roads, and CAG report number 13 of 2019 which is on the provisioning and procurement of high altitude-clothing, equipment, ration and housing for soldiers.

As per the papers circulated among the members of the committee on Friday, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report on border roads is the top most subject for examination by the committee during the year.

CAG's Report 5 of 2017, which in the wake of the recent face-off on LAC between the soldiers

of Indian and China, "talks about the highly important issue of construction of Indo-China border roads by Border Roads Organisation seems to be reviewed and further improved upon," as per the agenda papers of the meeting.

Similarly, troops in high-altitude areas such as Siachen, Ladakh, etc need to be provided high-altitude clothing, equipment, special ration and housing facilities and the CAG report number 13 of 2019 points out at delays in procurement of clothing and equipment for troops in these regions, as per PAC's agenda papers.

Sources in the committee said the PAC may call the Defense Secretary and other top officials to be briefed by them on the same.

The PAC meeting on Friday was the first meeting of the panel in the current calendar year. It assumes significance as it was the second meeting of the Lok Sabha's standing committee after parliament was adjourned prematurely on March 23 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

On June 15, Indian and Chinese soldiers clashed along the LAC in the Galwan valley in eastern Ladakh in which 20 Indian Army personnel were killed.

Cases Surge As J&K Records 387 New Covid-19 Infections

M-48yrs-Sonwa,M-52yrs, M-34yrs, M-52yrs from AGnderbal, M-38yrs-Dalgate, M-38yrs-Soura, M-55yrs-Lasjan, F-53yrs- M-25yrs, M-18yrs, M-52yrs, F-40yrs-, F-76yrs, F-52yrs, F-45yrs, M-10yrs, M-40yrs from Rajbagh, M-32yrs-Buchwara Dalgate, M-40yrs-Hyderpora, M-28yrs-TRC, M-50yrs-Umer Colony-B, M-44yrs-Batmaloo, F-30yrs-Bemina, M-35yrs-Chanpora, M-41yrs-Sonwar, M-30yrs-Batmaloo, M-47yrs-Barbar Shah, M-28yrs-Batmaloo, M-24yrs-Batmaloo, F-33yrs-Peerbagh, F-28yrs, F-8yrs from Peerbagh, M-51yrs and M-47yrs from TRC.

Around 90 cases were confirmed at CD hospital and include nine males (38, 49, 32, 38, 38, 25, 31, 37, 41) from BSF Singhpora, male (34) from Baramulla, female (41) from Maidanpora Lolab, two males (65, 43) from Sogam, two male (45, 43) from Tangdar Karnah, male (32) and female (51) from Dardsun, male (27) and female (26) from Handwara, Male (56) from Maidan Chogal, female (20) from Tutidung, Male (40) from Handwara Darzi Mohalla, Male (20) from Rajpora, Male (28) from Branwari, Male (40) from Gushi Kupwara, female (13) from Kandi Khaas, Male (31) from Reshigund, Male (30) from Safa Kadal Srinagar, two males (35, 57) from Trehgam, male (26) from DPL Baramulla, female (75) from Stadium Colony Baramulla, male (58) from Arampora Sopore, male (50) from Sangrama, female (N/A) from Anantnag, male (40) from Pamore, male (60) from Andergam Pattan, male (40) from Pattan, male (58) from Sopore, male (45) from Habakadal, female (60) from Kulgam, Male (70) from Tulsibagh, female (37) from Qamarwari, three males (21, 21, 42) from BB CANT, female (30) from Nawakadal, female (17) and male (37) from Bemina, female (20) from Sopore, female (24) from Lal Chowk, Male (36) from Shopian, Male (27) from Naki Bagh, female (N/A) from Magam Budgam, male (12) from Habakadal, female (30) from Kak Sarai, female (40) and male (42) from Koker Bazar, Male (36) from Sopore, Male (40) from Rajbagh, Male (35) from Langate, female (70) from Hawal Srinagar, female (70) from Kulgam, female (32) and male (31) from Soura, female (80) from Naid Khai, Male (34) from Chattabal, Male (27) from Peerbagh, two male (27, 65) from Rawalpore, male (34) from Harwan, male (34) from Tulbagh Pulwama, Male (54) from Baramulla, Male (32) from Safakadal, four males (26, 45, 34, 28) from Tilgam, female (62) from Andergam, male (39) from Uri, female (13) from Dawaran, two males (24, 30) from Manigam, male (19) from Lawipora, male (41) from Giraj Ganderbal, male (42) from Kitchama, two females (15, 30) from Udoora, male (13) and two female (70, 13) from Zehanzora, male (18) and female (45) from Peerniya, male (30) from Lachipora, male (34) from 109 RCC Trehgam, female (50) from Vodpora, male (59) from N/A and female (33) from Srinagar. Meanwhile, 91 more COVID-19 patients have recovered and were discharged from various hospitals—35 from Jammu Division and 56 from Kashmir.

5 More Die Of Covid-19; J&K Toll 160...

SMHS on July 08 after she was tested positive and died at CD hospital on Friday morning. He said the patient was suffering from bilateral pneumonia and other ailments. According to Principal JVC Bemina, Dr. Reyaz Untoo the elderly man from Dadsun Kupwara who was tested positive died at JVC on Friday afternoon. "Patient was suffering from pneumonia, hypertension and diabetes," he said. Medical superintendent JVC Bemina Dr Shifa Deva said that the patient was admitted on July 04 and he died in ICU. The fifth causality took place in SKIMS (JVC) Bemina where a 95-year-old male patient died of Covid-19. "He was suffering from pneumonia and other ailments. He was admitted in the hospital on July 8," said Dr Shifa Deva, Medical Superintendent at SKIMS Bemina. With five more deaths, the death toll due to COVID-19 in J&K has reached 160 including 144 from Kashmir and 15 from Jammu division. Srinagar district with 39 deaths has the highest fatalities followed by Baramulla (31), Kulgam (18), Shopian (16), Anantnag (13), Budgam (11), Jammu (9), Kupwara (8), Pulwama (5), Bandipora (3), Doda (2) while one death each has been reported from Ganderbal, Poonch, Udhampur, Rajouri and Kathua

HC Seeks Status Report On Dumping Of Waste In Wullar Lake

at Dharnambal-Ningli Tarzoo in Sopore which falls within the delineated periphery pillars of the Wular Conservation and Management Authority (WUCMA) and also within the limits of Hygam-Ningli-Tarzoo Tourism Development Authority. The petitioner also seek a direction to Municipal Council to immediately remove the garbage "illegally dumped" on the spot. The plea urges for developing the area in planned manner given its huge tourism potential while taking care of the environmental sensitivities. It also prays that a place be identified and subsequently developed in terms of Solid Waste Management Rules for dumping of municipal waste away from the residential and environmentally sensitivity areas. The petitioners alleges that the Municipal Council Sopore since March this year has started dumping solid waste on the boundary of the Wular Lake against the Solid Waste Management Rules. The whole place has been converted into a stinky swamp, it reads. "The water from the Wular Lake as also the rainwater wash away the garbage and filth into the Wular Lake and the Jhelum and also into the premises of tourist huts". "The area which was earlier identified as the only recreational park was surprisingly converted into a dumping site without following the rules or taking any permission or NOC from the Pollution Control Board or WUCMA. "Since the land in question belongs to the Forest Department, and comes under the immediate control and management of WUCMA and HNTDA, therefore it was obligatory for the respondent Municipi-

pal Council to take prior permission from the said authorities before dumping the municipal waste on the banks of Wular Lake. "The area is environmentally sensitive and in terms of Wetland Conservation and Management Rules, 2017, no such activity can be undertaken by the respondents in the area under any circumstances." "That a Ramsar notified site and prospective tourist destination has been unfortunately converted into an open garbage dumping site notwithstanding the fact that the district administration had earlier identified and earmarked some fifty (50) kanals of land in estate Adipora for dumping of garbage which fact is evidenced by the communication of Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, to Director Urban Local Bodies Kashmir dated 30-07-2019." The petitioners said the place is having tremendous tourism potential but because of dumping of solid waste it has been reduced in to a "no-go-zone." "Not only the tourist huts constructed at the cost of public exchequer have been rendered useless but the whole area has been polluted by the respondent Municipal Council."

Ngt Also Seeks Report On Wullar Lake...

Bhat said that in the absence of waste collection sites in Sopore town of Baramulla district, the municipal authorities there have chosen the western banks of the Wullar Lake around Ningli Tarzoo to dump solid waste. "I don't understand how the government officials can make such mistakes. They ought to be aware of the laws governing the wetlands," he said.

Staff Leaves BSNL In Drove, Services Hit...

Naseer Ahmad is another subscriber from Alnoor Colony Hyderpora with a similar story. "I have filed four online complaints and have called the local lineman time and again" says Naseer. "But none has come nor do I hope anyone will". Naseer has been without broadband for seven days. Both subscribers say they are waiting for the jiofibre service to start in their areas to give up their BSNL connection. "It is a horror to be a BSNL subscriber. The company just doesn't want you as its subscriber," says Naseer. "They would rather charge for the service they would not like to give". "My landline and broadband is not working since the services were resorted in Kashmir", said Syed Shabir Hussain of Hassanabad Rainawari area of Srinagar. "I contacted the local lineman who said that your telephone pair is defunct. Then I went to Soura exchange where I was told that you have to disconnect the connection as we can't repair it," said Hussain. When contacted Public Relation Officer, BSNL Kashmir, Masood Balla told Kashmir Observer that the department lacks manpower after the Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS). "BSNL had over 2 lakh employees all over India out of which one lakh took the VRS recently. In Srinagar we have over 500 employees working out of which over 300 took the VRS," he said. Balla added following the retirement of many employees, BSNL outsourced the operations in Srinagar to three contractors, but they are I'll equipped. "Unfortunately, they were unable to deliver because they don't have skilled persons to handle the job, as a result we have witnessed a lot of complaints," Balla added. According to him BSNL has over 50,000 landline connections in Srinagar city out of which 21000 have broadband connections.

Hold Final Year Exams by Sept End: UGC...

guidelines, a copy of which lies with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) reads that UGC this month has issued revised guidelines on examinations and academic calendar for the universities in view of COVID-19 Pandemic. Moreover, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has also issued instructions for conduct of examinations wherein a detailed Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) was formulated for conduct of examinations with measures to be taken in view of the ongoing situation, duly vetted by the Ministry of Health and Family welfare. UGC in the guidelines said, "In view of the emerging situation related to COVID-19 pandemic in India, it is important to safeguard the principles of health, safety, fair and equal opportunity for students. At the same time, it is very crucial to ensure academic credibility, career opportunities and future progress of students globally." It further reads that the academic evaluation of students is very important milestone in any education system. "The performance in examinations gives confidence and satisfaction to the students and is a reflection of competence, performance and credibility that is necessary for global acceptability," UGC said. "The universities are required to complete the examinations by the end of September in offline, online or blended mode following the prescribed protocols guidelines related to COVID-19 pandemic." Stating the provision of examination through special chance, UGC said, "In case a student of terminal semester or final year is unable to appear in the examination conducted by the University for whatsoever the reasons may be given opportunity to appear in special examinations for such courses or papers." "It may be conducted by the university when feasible, so that the student is not put to any inconvenience or disadvantage. The provision shall be applicable only for the current academic session 2019-20 as a one-time measure," it reads. UGC said that the backlog of papers in respect of terminal semesters or final year students should compulsorily be evaluated by conducting examinations in offline, online or blended mode as per feasibility and suitability. "The guidelines regarding intermediate semester or year examinations will remain unchanged as notified in the previous guidelines," it reads.

SOPs for conducting exams The UGC said that in case there is a restriction on movements in certain areas, admit or identity cards issued to the students should be treated as a pass for the movement of students. State Governments should issue instructions to all local authorities to issue movement passes to invigilators and all personnel engaged in the conduct of examination. Entire examination centre floors and walls, doors, gates, should be sprayed with disinfectant. Fresh mask and gloves to be used by exam functionaries after staff verification is done. Sanitizer bottles should be arranged at the entry gate, examination rooms, staff/observer room, etc. and should be replenished regularly. All liquid hand wash bottles should be replenished in restrooms and entry gate whenever required. Candidate seating area should be thoroughly sanitized after every session. All the washrooms should be cleaned and disinfected. All door handles, staircase railings, lift buttons, etcetera should be disinfected. Exam functionaries must submit self-declaration about health status. Thermo gun temperature check must be done at the staff entrance point. If any Examination functionary fails to meet the self-declaration criteria, or thermal gun check, he or she will be asked to leave the examination centre immediately. Exam functionary needs to wear the mask and gloves at all time Wherever possible, students should be given fresh face masks by the Invigilators in the examination room itself. Avoid crowding at entry and exit points. "Senior staff should monitor the entry and exit. There should be proper markings with at least two meter distance where students stand while waiting for the opening of the college gate. Exit of students should be permitted one by one only. Thermal Screening of students, wearing of face mask, sanitizing of hands etcetera be ensured. The students should be asked to sanitize their hands before and after signing the Attendance Sheet," the SOPs read. "Students having symptoms of fever, cough and cold should be either made to sit in a separate room or given a chance to appear on another day.

BJP Demands Security For Workers...

party headquarters here. The BJP leader paid tributes to party leader Wasim Bari who was killed by militants in Bandipora district along with his brother and father on Wednesday. These killings took place on the directions of Pakistan. Pakistan has killed innocent people in Kashmir. It is responsible for the killing of over one lakh people in Jammu and Kashmir in the last 30-35 years," he said. Raina said Pakistan and militants have sinned by carrying out these killings and they will have to pay for it. "Pakistan, terrorists and separatists have become frustrated because of the increasing number of people in the valley associating themselves with the BJP and so they are killing people. "Lashkar, Jaish and Hizbul (Mujahideen) have vowed to destroy Kashmir, and Pakistan wants to make Kashmir a graveyard and shed blood here, but we will not allow it to succeed in its plans. The people of JK are Indians by heart, they are nationalists and I salute them for keeping the national flag flying here," he said.

Pvt Schools Compel Parents to Pay Transport,...

We will take strict action against the violators. Another parent said that the school management has charged the fifty percent of transport fee besides the tuition charges. "Since March-2020, the school is charging fifty percent of transport fee besides the tuition fee, however, there are clear directions from the government not to charge any fee apart from the tuition fee," he said. In May, the government directed recognized unaided private schools to charge only tuition fee on monthly basis instead quarterly basis for the COVID-19 lockdown period. The government also ordered the private schools not to hike fee during the academic year 2020-21. Principal Secretary to government for School Education Department, Asgar Samoon in a circular said, "Only tuition fees shall be charged from students on monthly basis instead quarterly basis for the lockdown period." Earlier in June, the government said that the private schools in Kashmir valley were violating the orders of Government Fee Fixation Committee (GFFC) by charging tuition fee as well as miscellaneous fee in the name of tuition fee. The government had also warned the private schools of strict action in terms of relevant provisions of law in case of any violation found against the school management. The order issued by the government in this regard stated that the administrative department has issued instructions to private schools in view of COVID-19 pandemic in Jammu and Kashmir with the directions that the last date of deposit school fees is extended up to April-30 without any late fees and no school shall either charge any fee for the online Lecturers or assignments or shall link the result of the child on the basis of home assignment. DSEK Joint Director, Aabid Hussain said, "We have appointed the deputy Chief Education Officers (CEOs) and nodal officers and the complainants can register their grievances online or offline before them." He said that the parents can also register their complaints at DSEK headquarters. "Whosoever comes with a complaint here, we take cognizance and act accordingly," Hussain said—(KNO)

New WHO Guidance Calls For More Evidence On...

, in restaurants or in fitness classes. (https://bit.ly/2Ck70Bo)

But the WHO said more research is "urgently needed to investigate such instances and assess their significance for transmission of COVID-19." Based on its review of the current evidence, the WHO said the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19 spreads between people through direct or indirect contact with contaminated surfaces or close contact with infected people who spread the virus through saliva, respiratory secretions or droplets released when an infected person coughs, sneezes, speaks or sings. The report follows an open letter from scientists who specialize in the spread of disease in the air – so-called aerobiologists – that urged the global body to update its guidance on how the respiratory disease spreads to include aerosol transmission. "This is a move in the right direction, albeit a small one. It is becoming clear that the pandemic is driven by super-spreading events, and that the best explanation for many of those events is aerosol transmission," said Jose Jimenez, a chemist at the University of Colorado who signed the letter, which was published on Monday in the journal Clinical Infectious Diseases. How frequently the coronavirus spreads by the airborne or aerosol route – as opposed to by larger droplets in coughs and sneezes – is not clear. In a press briefing on Thursday, Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the US National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said there is not a lot of solid evidence yet on airborne transmission of SARS-CoV-2, but said: "I think it's a reasonable assumption that it does occur." Although incomplete, Fauci said the evidence so far is "the fundamental basis for why we are now so intent on getting people – particularly people without symptoms – to wear masks. To be able to see if we can mitigate against that," he said. Only a very small number of diseases are believed to be spread via aerosols, or tiny floating particles. These include measles and tuberculosis – two highly contagious diseases that require extreme precautions to prevent exposure. WHO guidance acknowledges that airborne transmission of the novel coronavirus can occur during specific medical procedures that generate aerosols, such as when performing intubation. In these circumstances, they advise medical workers performing such procedures to wear heavy-duty N95 respiratory masks and other protective equipment in an adequately ventilated room. Any change in the WHO's assessment of risk of transmission could affect its current advice on keeping 1-meter (3.3 ft) physical distancing. Governments, which also rely on the agency for guidance, may also have to adjust public health measures aimed at curbing the spread of the virus. (Reporting by Julie Steenhuisen in Chicago, Michael Erman in New York, Stephanie Stephanie Nebehay in Geneva and Ankur Banerjee in Bengaluru; Editing by Shounak Dasgupta and Dan Grebler)

Govt Relieves Sahu, SSP Traffic Jammu, SP North Srinagar

SSP Traffic City, Jammu and Tahir Geelani, SP, North Srinagar. He was directed to report to the Anti-Corruption Bureau for further duties. Joginder Singh and Geelani who were under transfer to ACB have been relieved with immediate effect.

"Consequent upon above Shri Pardeep Singh, Addl. SP, Traffic City Jammu and Shri Tahir Ashraf Bhatti, SP, PC Srinagar shall in addition to their own duties hold the charge of SSP Traffic City Jammu and SP, North Srinagar respectively, till further orders," the order reads

‘Kashmir Grossly Misrepresented In Bollywood’...

OTT platforms can prove to be an excellent platform for telling true tales of Kashmir. Which steps can the Indian film industry take to present the stories without changing the realities? Basically not to censor or to stand up to censorship, we need a free and non-judgemental attitude in all creative arenas. And one that is not intimidated. But it's bit of a dream scenario. Recently we saw many people from the Indian film industry lodging their protests against unnecessary cuts. Do you think the current situation is barring Indian film and series makers to come up with genuine storylines on Kashmir? It could be a deterrent. But I would not lose hope, because these days, people are being more adventurous. Let's hope so. We've often seen Kashmir being used as a tool in making over-enthusiastically patriotic movies. Do you think this attitude of filmmakers hamper the process of depicting the reality of Kashmir through Art? Well, every film doesn't have to be a true to life depiction of reality. And patriotism will always find a place in cinema because it appeals to audiences and brings in the crowds. Many Kashmiri activists have alleged that their issues have always been underplayed by Indian cinema. The same allegation is made by many Kashmiri Pandits. What are your views on this? No matter what you do, people will always find something to complain about. They may've reason to, but well, that's the way it goes. Kashmir is from its people and not land. Do you think the voices of Kashmiris should be taken into full consideration while making films on it? If they're not, then you won't get any authenticity in your film. It's completely necessary.

Ram Madhav To Visit Bandipore On Sunday...

North Kashmir's Bandipora district was killed along with his father and brother at his shop-cum residence at Muslimabad area of the district on July 8 evening. IGP Kashmir Vijay Kumar told reporters at the residence of slain BJP leader and two Lashkar-e-Toiba militants had carried out the attack on Waseem and that the attack was pre-planned. He had stated that both the militants will be tracked down soon.

Banihal-Qazigund Road Tunnel Near Completion, To Be Thrown Open For Public Soon

RAMBAN, JULY 10: Finance Commissioner, Revenue, Dr. Pawan Kotwal, who is also the Nodal Officer National Highway Four Laning Project, today visited district Ramban and inspected NH-44 construction works being executed from Banihal to Nashri.

FC asked the NHAI and other departments to expedite the pace of construction work to complete the Jammu-Srinagar, National Highway which is priority of the government.

Deputy Commissioner, Ramban, Nazim Zai Khan, SSP, Haseeb-ur-Rahman, ADC, Ashok Sharma, Project Director (PD) National Highway Authority of India (NHAI), SDM Ramsoo, Dil Mir Choudhary, SDM, Banihal, Zaheer Abbas Bhat, other concerned officers and representatives of construction companies were present on the occasion.

During his one day tour, FC inspected construction works at Chamalwas, Nachilana, Ramsoo, Seri, Ramban, Chanderkote and Dahlwas besides directing the concerned officers for removing bottlenecks, if any, hindering the project. He was informed that the land acquisition process has been com-



pleted and all the working sites have been handed over to the NHAI to start construction works besides almost all of the structures have been removed from the acquired land.

FC was informed that construction work on 8.5 Km long Banihal-Qazigund road tunnel is near completion and after

the security and other necessary audit of the tunnel it will be thrown open for public use.

Expressing satisfaction over the pace of work on the project, he said that the ongoing works of NH-44 widening project will be completed within one and half year and construction works in the tunnels

are going on war footing. He instructed the NHAI and contractors engaged in the widening of the NH-44 to ensure proper maintenance of existing roads for hassle free vehicular movement.

FC, while addressing the media persons on the occasion, said that the process for shifting of towers of 132 KV line from Right Of Way (ROW) to safer places is expected to be completed by December. Besides, alternate land has also been provided to the TLMD for construction of the same, he added.

He said that keeping in view the tough topography of hilly terrain between Ramban and Banihal a Detailed Project Report is being formulated by NHAI worth Rs. 2000 crore to complete changed 16 KM four laning realigned project which included more tunnels and bridges to avoid landsliding and sinking areas.

Earlier, ADC apprised FC of the status of land acquisition cases, shifting of 132 KV tower lines and other structures besides other bottlenecks hindering road projects. He assured that the work would be completed as per target fixed by the Chief Secretary earlier.

Div Com chairs 251st HLC meeting of CRP Srinagar



SRINAGAR, JULY 10: The Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Pandurang K Pole today chaired 251st High Level Committee meeting of Circular Road Project Srinagar to review the progress of acquisition cases pertaining to the project.

The meeting deliberated upon acquisition, compensation and rehabilitation of the people whose residential or commercial structures have been acquired by the government to remove bottlenecks on the project.

The meeting also discussed various cases including re-

moval of bottleneck at Naqashpora junction on western Fore-shore Road, expansion of Peer Dastiger Sahib Shrine at Khyanyar, removal of bottleneck at Shah Mohalla Nawabazar on Syed Mansoor Nawab Bazaar Road, Zewan Junction to Sempora Road widening and other issues of building Community Halls and compensation to structure owners and tenants.

On the occasion, Divisional Commissioner directed SE, Circular Road Project Srinagar, to resolve the issues through negotiations with the parties.

He further ordered him to implement land acquisition law wherever necessary to remove bottlenecks on the Circular Road.

Meanwhile, Pole also interacted with the involved parties in the cases and asked them about their position and opinions regarding their respective issues.

The meeting was attended by DC Srinagar, Dr. Shahid Choudhary, ADC Srinagar, SE Circular Road Project, Srinagar, and Engineers of the project besides officers of revenue department, Srinagar.

Executive Leadership Programme for Education, Skill Development Officers held

SRINAGAR, JULY 10: As part of its 1000 Leaders program, Jammu and Kashmir Skill Development Mission and BRIDGE Institute, today organised a day-long "Executive Leadership Online Programme" focussed on capacity building of Education and Skill Development officers of the UT.

Principal Secretary, Education and Skill Development Department, Dr. Asgar Hassan Samoon and Commissioner Secretary, Higher Education Department, Talat Parvez Rohella, launched the program in presence of Director, Skill Development Department, Director, School Education Department, Kashmir, Mission Director, J&K Skill Development Mission and other senior officers of Education and Skill Development Department.

While exhorting the officers to take full advantage of this program, Dr. Samoon said, "This program is being conducted with the aim to remove the bottlenecks which we face during implementation of various programs in the field of education and skill development. It also aimed at to bring out the best in the participants, to streamline things, creating visionary

leadership besides developing team building and management skills."

While appreciating the program, Commissioner Secretary maintained, "We are facing new challenges in our daily work and this program is an opportunity to gain exposure to new leadership and management practices being implemented across the world. We need to look out for such opportunities and get the maximum out of it."

Participants of the program which included Chief Education Officers of School Education Department, Principles of Government Polytechnic Colleges and other senior officers of Education and Skill Development Department were trained on enhancement of leadership and management skills which will equip the officers in tackling new challenges and situations faced while implementing public welfare programs.

Simon Mackenzie and Shashi Kumar Velath, Directors of BRIDGE Institute coordinated the program with focus on decision making, team building, transparency, resourcefulness, resilience and strategic thinking.

Baseer Khan visits SPS Library Emphasises introduction of modern facilities

SRINAGAR, JULY 10: Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Baseer Ahmad Khan, today visited SPS Library Srinagar to oversee its functioning and facilities available to the readers. Advisor went round the premises including the Reading Room, Senior Citizens' Section, General Philosophy and Languages section and the Children's gallery. He asked the concerned authorities to ensure availability of books and other reference material required for students and avid readers.

During his visit to the Library, Advisor said that it is a huge asset and an incubation centre for scholars and researchers. This vital public utility has been raised after a very long struggle and every effort should be made for its proper functioning and maintenance, he asserted. He directed the concerned authorities that any pending engineering work should be completed at the earliest for proper functioning of the library.

The SPS Library, established in the year 1898, hosts a collection of books in English, Urdu, Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit, Kashmiri, Hindi and Punjabi languages. It also has a collection of 74 manuscripts in Persian, Sanskrit, Arabic and Urdu. SPS

library is counted as one among the 8 oldest libraries across the country.

Advisor asked the authorities to find out ways and means to upgrade the facility on modern lines so that readers are attracted to the place besides encouraging reading habits among the locals.

During the visit, Advisor also called for reviving the culture of book reading and reading rooms to enrich the intellectual capital that would in turn educate the people about the culture, history, national integration and other aspects. He said that there is a need to keep a provision for creation of infrastructure, reading rooms and mini libraries at the district level so that readers are able to access books at the local level.

He asked the concerned authorities to send a detailed proposal for upgrading the facilities at the library and related necessary works that are to be completed for its proper functioning and maintenance.

On the occasion, Director Libraries and Research, Sheikh Arshad Ayub, gave a detailed presentation about functioning of the Library and the steps to be taken for its upgradation on modern lines. He also informed about the progress on various libraries across the districts of J&K.

Ambulance driver awarded for his exemplary services

SRINAGAR, JULY 10: Financial Commissioner Health and Medical Education, Atal Dulloo today presented a certificate of appreciation along with a Shawl to Ambulance Driver of Health Department, Jameel Ahmad Digoo for rendering exemplary services during COVID-19 pandemic.

Dulloo appreciated services of the Health Department and its staff during current crisis.

He also appreciated Digoo for his exemplary services beyond the call of duty

during COVID-19 pandemic.

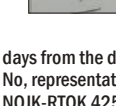
On the occasion, Financial Commissioner was informed that Digoo is not only transporting dead bodies of persons who died due to COVID-19 in between the districts but also dug graves and led funeral prayers on numerous occasion.

Pertinently, the driver has been working round the clock since the outbreak of pandemic COVID-19 without taking any leave. Interestingly, he has volunteered for such duty most of the times, the FC was informed.

OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER KASHMIR NOTICE



Where as an application for transfer of ownership has been received from Abdul Rahman Wani S/o Mohd Shaban Wani R/o Nambalabal Pampora A/P Zafran Colony Srinagar (Transferor) of Swift bearing registration No. JK01X- 2522 chasis No: 815332 Engine No: 1522398 Model 2015 in favour of Gulzar Ahmad S/o Ali Mohammad R/o Drangbal Pampore (Transferee).



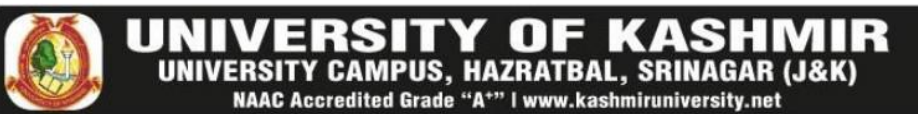
Now, therefore, it is notified for the information of the general, public that representation/ Objection, if any in connection with proposed transfer will be received within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper Kashmir Observer to the address of undersigned. No, representation/ objection shall be considered unless it is made writing it is made in the aforesaid period.

NOJK-RTOK 425
Dated: 10/07/2020



Sd/-
Regional Transport Office, Kashmir

F-KO



NOTICE

The schedule for submission of online examination forms, for MBBS 1st Prof. Batch: 2019 which shall be available on the University Website www.kashmiruniversity.net, for the eligible candidates, enrolled through Govt. Medical College, Srinagar, Govt. Medical Collage, Anantnag & Govt. Medical College, Baramulla is notified as under:-

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| i. Date of commencement of submission of examination forms/fee | : 11/07/2020 |
| ii. Last date for submission of examination forms/fee | : 20/07/2020 |
| iii. Last date for submission of print out of the examination forms/fee vouchers in the Concerned Colleges | : 20/07/2020 |
| vi. Date of submission of aggregated Examination forms by the concerned Colleges, in the concerned Examination Section | : 30/07/2020 |

No:-F(Online forms-MBBS 1st & Final Prof)/KU/2020
Dated:-09/07/2020

Sd/- Assistant Controller of Examinations
(Professional Conduct)

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER BUDGAM KASHMIR NOTICE

Whereas an application has been recieved from one. Shri : Nazir Ahmad Thoker S/o: Mohammad Baqir Thoker R/o: Bonahama Budgam owner of vehicle bearing Registration No: JK04D-3179 for cancellation of hire purchase agreement with M/S J&K Bank B/U Budgam.

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.1107
Dated 10-07-2020

MQB

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
- BIBHERA: 01932-228243
- PAMPORE: 01933-294132
- PATTAN: 01954-293507
- QAZIGUND: 01951-296153



HIGHWAY STATUS



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



19 Zu al-Qa'dah
1441

PRAYERS

| | |
|--------|--------|
| FAJR | 3: 45 |
| ZUHR | 12: 36 |
| ASR | 5:35 |
| Magrib | 7:48 |
| ISHA | 9:27 |

This Day In History

- 1991 - Total solar eclipse is seen in Hawaii
- 2001 - Iraq resumes oil exports, ending a 5-week halt in protest of a US and British-sponsored UN Security Council resolution
- 2006 - 209 people are killed in a series of bomb attacks in Mumbai, India
- 2007 - "Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix", the 5th film based on the books by J.K. Rowling is released
- 2010 - FIFA World Cup Final: Andrés Iniesta scores an extra time winner as Spain beats the Netherlands 1-0 in Johannesburg, South Africa for 1st WC title)
- 2011 - Neptune completes its first orbit since its discovery on September 23, 1846
- 2012 - Police academy suicide bombing kills 20 in Sana'a, Yemen
- 2012 - S/2012 P 1, the fifth moon of Pluto is discovered
- 2013 - 30 people are killed in a wave of bomb and gun attacks across Iraq
- 2014 - The UN Security Council calls for a special meeting to discuss the current Israel-Palestinian conflict; Israel continue attacks on Gaza
- 2015 - Wimbledon Women's Tennis: Serena Williams becomes oldest winner in Open era (33) beating Garbiñe Muguruza 6-4, 6-4

From KO Archives

J&K next to Bihar in corruption. TII, CMS blow whistle

Abul Qaisar / Observer News Service

Srinagar - Jammu and Kashmir is in the news for yet another wrong reason, that it is India's second most corrupt state, next only to Bihar, while Kerala has emerged as the least corrupt state. The startling revelation follows a recent survey titled "The India Corruption Study 2005," conducted jointly by the Transparency International India (TII) and die Centre for Media Studies (CMS) . The study sampled about 14,500 respondents from over 150 cities and 300 villages across 20 Indian states and covered about a dozen services, including police, judiciary, education and public distribution system. It has placed the state very low at 19th position, just a shade ahead of Bihar.

Apparently, die services surveyed may not have included various engineering disciplines, industries and allied sectors, revenue, agriculture and allied fields, education, healthcare, transport and traffic control. In case they were, Jammu and Kashmir should have had die dubious distinction of being die most corrupt state ahead of Bihar. While die alarming report may not have disturbed die sleep of those at die helm, die revelations must certainly not be music "to die state people's

ears. By any stretch of imagination, the scenario is greatly disturbing for a place otherwise groaning under the debilitating impact of numerous other misfortunes, natural as well as manmade. Given the tall promises held out by successive rulers to root it out, the disclosure is all die more amazing.

For the only Muslim majority state mat Jammu and Kashmir continues to be in spite of die sustained, and in some degree successful, government-inspired attempts to change its

demographic complexion, die revelations are all the more shocking. One is reminded of the story that an old women refused to believe that a Muslim had lied on something "I can't believe that a Muslim can ever tell a lie", she told her informer. It must have entailed a relentless effort by that known enemy, satan, and his countless visible and invisible followers to erase die most effective deterrent from die Muslim mind i.e. a firm belief in die Day of Judgement, even if its indicators are visible to die naked eye all over. The custodians of religion would need to ponder over die grim situation.

Pertinently, it is die government which is squarely responsible for die situation taking a turn for die worse in spite of die pledges die successive rulers made while seeking people's mandate. The incumbent regime is particularly answerable because its promises were much louder not only to eradicate die canker but even to bring the earlier swindlers and scammers to justice. The Peoples Democratic Party, which wrested power from National Conference on die main plank of eradicating corruption, took about three years to identify a pre-siding officer for die Accountability Commission even as making it visibly functional may take another three years for its major coalition partner, Congress, to make the high-profile body discernibly functional.

By now, die chief minister, Mufti Muhammad Sayeed, must have forgotten what he told die people on assuming die high office: that nobody should approach him in matters of recruitment as die process would be made absolutely transparent. 'Not only that he and several of his ministerial colleagues are accused of making backdoor appointments, the coalition partners certainly have a mischief Up their sleeves for the ensuing recruitment to over 20,000 vacancies in government departments. This is not the occasion to enumerate all the scandals that surfaced over the recent years in which the government's Conduct has been suspect, even to the extent of overt and covert complicity. Instances are galore to suggest the present rulers are worse than their predecessors.

(Kashmir Observer, 11 July, 2005)

KASHMIR
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NO HOLDS BARRED

TRUMP WANTS SCHOOLS OPEN



Lala Ded was a complex genius. She continues to unravel, inspire and intrigue and relate to us. She shows there is no dichotomy between critical intelligence and a quest for sacred. She endures, trouncing ravages of time and human amnesia

A Kashmiri Aesthete on Twitter Lite

Lala Ded, Habba Khatoon and Patriarchy.

Makhdoom Mohi ud Din.

Twitter and its smaller sibling afford chances to put aphorisms, axioms, couplets, verses and puns in public domain leaving you guessing for import. A versifier who has deftly avoided her straight face in her profile on Twitter Lite, a male preserve, challenges patriarchy on it tangentially without triggering malevolent vehemence. She has not any regular column of trolls, stalking which otherwise go into hot pursuit of gendered voices. An innocuous tweet more than a week before set off a reaction, though mild, where local twitterati tried to disabuse her of 'feminism' or any pretence of it. She decided to ignore the reaction and prevented herself from rushing into realm of eternal masculinity where matters could get complicated for her. Was she challenging male cultural hegemony by a simple tweet?

The tweet and its reaction show how we are hardwired into physical, psychological and intellectual confinement of the women. We force them to accept mediocrity and are deeply anxious and insecure about their creativity. '... her wings are cut and then she is blamed for not knowing how to fly' Simone De Beauvoir wrote in The Second Sex. Does her presence in the spaces of social media lays bare the 'con trick of blaming women for not being in accord with men's fantasies'. Social media spans seem to proffer spaces for making women themselves anew. We resort to cultural sleights of hand to gaslight them, even when they are not subversive or make any breach of rules of containment. Some recent interviews of some accomplished women of our valley have shown their parents inclination to regret their daughters are not boys. The social and political

traumas of our embattled zone is making their subjectivity and autonomy even more precarious. The long history of patriarchy has stripped them of their economic rights and there are determined efforts to deny them public spaces. It is not difficult to map out gendered spaces of social media but to effect the exclusion of the female voices even by the methods of abuse and the intimidation is not helping. They are determined to stake their positions, which are socially, politically and economically relevant to them. The virtuality of the space is helpful, even if we are not ready to jettison long held social and cultural constructs of gender. It has blurred traditional lines between, 'women with essentialised traits of emotionality and irrationality and men of self control and superior capacity for the reason'. The refusal to break the persistence of masculine and feminine constructs is not exclusive to Kashmir only.

The cases of history though for and few between afford a redeemer and a consolation. Lala Ded and Habba Khatoon, two daughters of Vitasta, essence and images of spiritual and creative steered their social and supernatural world. The invocation of two poetesses of past account for as the aesthete on the Twitter Lite is a lady. She slips into conspicuity of Twitter Lite with a verse, muse, couplet, a radical quote or an inconvenient truth. Lala Ded was a complex genius. She continues to unravel, inspire, intrigue and relate to us. Even in the phases of secular pre-eminence and rationality, she shows there is no dichotomy between critical intelligence and a quest for sacred. She endures, trouncing ravages of time and human amnesia; her legacy makes its ebbs and flows. Sir Richard Carnac Temple, who did the transliteration of Lala's poems more than a century ago paid his tributes. He admits debatably to inaccessibility to grasp of Lala Ded and keen conscious-

ness of incomprehensibility:

Lala thy ways could never be mine.
Man's ways are ever bred in his bones.
Thou didst learn only ways of thine.
Since I learnt other, shall I throw stones?

Lala stands out an epiphany when uncertain times and self doubts are nagging us:

Resilience: to stand in the path of lightening
Resilience: to walk when darkness falls at noon.
Resilience: to grind yourself fine in the turning mill.
Resilience will come to you.

(Translation Ranjit Hoskote)

In the modern times, Karen Arm strong, a world renowned author on religious studies has shown the results of unshackling from hidebound traditions. She left a Catholic convent in 1960s, awakened; she made a spiritual journey few could parallel and is respected across the world for her compassionate teachings and erudition. Lala Ded left her marriage, her house and set out on a journey fraught with suffering and agony. She remained undeterred by stigma and censure, which had a full force of social sanction. Her 'heterodoxy' continued unremittently and she had will to take the consequences:

They lash me with insults, serenade me with curses.
Their barking means nothing to me.
Even if they came with soul-flowers to offer.
I couldn't care less. Untouched I moved on.
(Translation Ranjit Hoskote)

Zoonie, a peasants daughter with a passion for poetry and flair for music from Tsandhara Pampore became a queen. She was not powerful as Sugghanda

and Dida, two tenth century queens who ascended the throne as regents. Habba Khatoon is recorded to have encouraged women to dress and decorate themselves as they wished. She revived Circassian tradition of tattooing face and hand with special dyes and powders. Habba Khatoon gives expression to transcending spatial and social confinement:

I thought I was indulging in play and lost myself.
Oh for the day, that is dying.
At home, I was secluded unknown.
When I left home my fame spread far and wide.
The pious laid all their merit at my feet.
Oh for the day, that is dying.

(Source: Tariq Ali - The Clash Of Fundamentalisms)

Yusuf Shah, Habba Khatoon's husband and chek ruler was arrested and exiled by Akbar the Great. Habba Khatoon was forced to leave the palace. She wandered from village to village and died in the shrouds of anonymity. Her songs gave expression to the desolation of her place and its people:

Who told him where I lived?
Who has he left in such anguish?
I hapless one, am filled with longing for him.
He glanced at me through my window,
He who is as lovely as my ear-rings;
He has made my heart restless:
I, hapless, one am filled with longing for him.
(Source: Tariq Ali - The Clash Of Fundamentalisms)

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Likely Scenarios For An Afghan Political Settlement

Key actors, including Pakistan, are likely to balance their support of the Afghan government and the Taliban because in their eyes, the Taliban will be an important part of the future government

BISMELLAH ALIZADA AND JUMAKHAN RAHYAB

The imminent announcement of a date and venue for possible intra-Afghan talks—the first round of negotiations between the Afghan government and the Taliban—has generated optimism about the possibility of a peaceful political settlement in Afghanistan. As both parties have acknowledged on numerous occasions, the current conflict demands an effective political solution, and the present moment may hold unprecedented potential for a settlement. This by no means suggests an easy road ahead, however, nor that peace can be taken for granted. It is likely that the process will unfold in a manner that demands both the Afghan government and the Taliban compromise their respective hardline positions. Two principal sets of challenges remain: the first—institutional ambiguities and a lack of genuine government consensus—may hinder the process ahead of the negotiations, and the second—the sensitive topics likely to appear on the negotiating agenda—might stymie the negotiation process itself.

The Civil Government's Bargaining Position and its Challenges

As both parties have acknowledged on numerous occasions, the current conflict demands an effective political solution, and the present moment may hold unprecedented potential for a settlement. Nonetheless, it is likely that the process will unfold in a manner that demands both the Afghan government and the Taliban compromise their respective hardline positions.

From the Afghan government's point of view, the most advantageous scenario would be a genuine Afghan-led and Afghan-owned process aligned with its negotiating position. The Afghan government's position in the negotiations is buttressed by support from its neighbors and other important international actors such as the United States, the European Union, Russia, China, India and Pakistan. Afghanistan's most important allies—the United States and NATO—will not withdraw their troops fully unless the conditions are met by the Taliban and unless the negotiations achieve concrete results, including a permanent ceasefire and guarantees on peace agreement implementation.

Recent developments, most notably the formation of the High Council for National Reconciliation (HCNR) on May 17, would also bode well for the government. The HCNR was born out of a political deal between the contending candidates in the controversial 2019 election, conferring Abdullah Abdullah leadership of the peace process and Ashraf Ghani the presidency. Now, nearly all political parties and

major politicians that were divided between the two camps have lined up behind the government in support of its peace agenda, projecting a semblance of national cohesion on the issue.

Despite this semblance of unity, however, organizational ambiguities and a lack of genuine national consensus threaten to undercut the government's position. The earlier U.S.-Taliban talks—which bypassed the Afghan government in negotiating the withdrawal of foreign troops—might deny the Afghan government its greatest bargaining potential.

Institutional redundancy is one of the clearest examples of this. In Afghanistan, peace and reconciliation bodies are as old as the insurgency itself. The recent HCNR is the fifth such body to have formed. Yet at least two other institutions with a similar capacity continue to operate parallel to the HCNR. These include the High Peace Council (2010-) and the State

One issue that may undercut the Afghan government's position in this scenario is U.S. capriciousness regarding its withdrawal plan and Pakistan's possible tilt towards the Taliban

Ministry for Peace (SMP) (2019-). The HCNR is meant to be a body that oversees all the peace process affairs, and the SMP is its secretariat. The HPC's status and purpose is as yet unclear. In addition, the stipulations in the agreement regarding the mandate and responsibilities of the HCNR are too ambiguous to discourage or minimize fatal disagreements and contention.

These competing and at times overlapping bodies that are shrouded in ambiguous mandates indicate a lack of national consensus. Although the political deal between the two candidates projects the appearance of alignment, a true consensus is much more complex in that it would involve agreement on contentious issues of national significance. It is clear that Afghanistan is far from such a consensus—various parties agree that they want peace but have yet to define what that peace would look like and the types of political and legal arrangements it would entail. The agenda is still unclear as is the process through which an agenda would be developed.

Similarly, political party lines do not account for the needs and perspectives of a diverse Afghan populace. Coming to a genuine consensus requires painstaking debates and discussions spanning disparate ethnic and demographic groups and social and political strata within civil society. Ethnic minorities, victims of violence, women, and some of the more peripheral political parties and media outlets ought to have more of a voice in a process that disproportionately affects them. A national consensus cannot be achieved without vig-

orous and exhaustive discussions on key parts of the agenda, including the terms of negotiation, the extent to which compromises can be made, and the manner in which we collectively envision a just society that can sustain a durable peace. This would also demand greater understanding on the form of the future government, decentralization of power, and transitional justice, which are central to this peace.

The Worst Scenario: Failed Peace Talks

If the aforementioned challenges are not overcome and left unaddressed, a worst-case scenario—the failure of talks and demise of this historic opportunity—might come to pass. If the government fails to unite and incorporate factions on its side of the negotiation table, the Taliban would likely develop significantly greater sway. Regional actors, most notably Pakistan, but also Iran and Russia, would likely throw their sup-

port behind the Taliban in an attempt to fill the void left by the United States. Alongside an escalation in violence, the Taliban would push harder for their political vision, an Islamic Emirate characterized by strict sharia law, nullification of the current constitution, and roll back of the constitutional rights of citizens. In the event that the peace talks fail, it seems unlikely that U.S. troops would remain in the country. This would be disastrous for Afghanistan. A lack of international support—in the wake of a pandemic that has brought economic downturn—might yield a humanitarian disaster and perhaps even a civil war.

However, this scenario seems unlikely, for two reasons. First, Afghanistan's allies, including the United States and the European Union, have supported the post-2001 democratic gains and may work to forestall such a scenario through some form of political and diplomatic intervention and/or mediation. The Afghan government would likely seek out such support. It has, at least rhetorically, taken on the mantle of defending the principles of the republic, including the constitution, and the constitutional rights of citizens. Second, it is likely that the negotiators would manage to arrive at some middle ground through compromise.

The Taliban have also tacitly indicated their support for the talks by continuing to release Afghan prisoners. This indicates that both parties and their allies understand the urgency of a political settlement at this particular moment.

A Middle Ground Scenario

A middle ground seems the most likely scenario for a number of reasons, including public statements from the European Union, the UN and other regional powers in support of the talks, the existing U.S.-Taliban deal, and growing regional recognition of the Taliban. The Taliban have also tacitly indicated their support for the talks by continuing to release Afghan prisoners. This indicates that both parties and their allies understand the urgency of a political settlement at this particular moment. Key actors, including Pakistan, are likely to balance their support of the Afghan government and the Taliban because in their eyes, the Taliban will be an important part of the future government. The Afghan government appears inclined to heed international messaging and engage pragmatically with the Taliban—it has already demonstrated its willingness to do so in releasing Taliban prisoners. However, one issue that may undercut the Afghan government's position in this scenario is U.S. capriciousness regarding its withdrawal plan and Pakistan's possible tilt towards the Taliban.

This middle ground would involve both parties tempering their stances vis-à-vis each other and the power balance in Afghanistan. Some sensitive topics require extensive discussion. Reaching some agreement on terms for the integration of Taliban fighters into the security forces and civilian life, transitional justice, amending the constitution, reconstruction—all tied up in rectifying the deep-rooted traumas civilians have long suffered—could take years. It will also require both parties to draft power-sharing arrangements and reconfigure the state institutions to satisfy both to some degree.

Conclusion: Prospects Dim for Now

Given this unique set of challenges, Afghanistan's peace process is likely to proceed slowly, and along a bumpy road. Even if the negotiations begin—itsself an accomplishment—managing polarized ethnic identities, reconfiguring the state and its institutions, transitional justice, reintegration of fighters, and the reality of threats from other terrorist groups will be topics of contention that can stymie the process to a breaking point. It is here that each side would have to determine the price they would be willing to pay for a possible peace agreement, and whether this would indeed engender a sustainable peace. This type of compromise demands honest political acumen, wisdom and moral courage on both sides. The heartbreaking number of casualties from years of violence and political instability in the country provide the exigent circumstances for such moral courage.

Madhosh Balhami: ‘A Chronicler of Collective Pain’

NAYEEM RATHER

A YEAR before war sirens would alarm Kashmir, Madhosh Balhami, then 34-year-old poet, had picked up an unruffled routine. It was 1998, and he would silently retreat to his prison cell at Srinagar’s Central Jail and write poetry at length. He was arrested in January that year for “his activism, and writing poetry”. But weaving verses in incarceration threw a major challenge at him — how to smuggle them out of the jail, and importantly, what to do if the jail authorities checked his writing.

And the jail authorities did check, one day. He had written a poem in Urdu, the official language of the Jammu and Kashmir. The poem was ‘overtly political’; its theme: Cargo — the city citadel of special operations group, the SOG of JK Police.

A police officer read it, and confiscated the paper and burnt it down. Madhosh was warned to not write again—at least not the political poems.

Among the confiscated writings, there were many poems on mysticism, God, and love; they were written in Kashmiri. Unable to read Kashmiri like majority of Kashmiris, the curious police officers enquired about the prisoner poet’s poems. “They’re Sufi poems,” he told them. They were left untouched.

“For the first time in my life did I rejoice at the fact that most Kashmiris can’t read or write Kashmiri,” Madhosh recalls the incident at his newly built home at Balhom, Srinagar. “It was a blessing in disguise.”

To filter through jail-time censorship, he devised a plan. “I began to write political poetry in Kashmiri language. And I would also write a dozen poems in Urdu on the themes of mysticism, and God,” says Madhosh.

“It can be said that for every political poem, I had to write a dozen poems on Love and God—the poems I no longer know.”

He would put the mystic poems on the top of the pile of papers, and slip two or three poems of political nature in between. This way, the captive’s couplets conveniently circumvented the cell shadowing. That was how he was able to write.

“Jail was the most productive time for me as far as poetry is concerned,” the unassuming poet continues to recount his poetic journey. “I had all the time, and I would just write, and compose poems.”



Before weaving verses, Madhosh had his stint with folksinging. Pic by Shabir Bhat

When he was released from jail in 2000, he carried all the poems, written in hard labour, in his bag, and wanted to publish them one day.

But in March 2018 his house was razed to the ground in a gun battle between three militants and armed forces.

“My entire corpus turned to ashes in front of my eyes—my hard labour of three decades,” the poet laments.

“My poems were like my children. However, I didn’t grieve over it; I grieved over the human loss. Death of a human being is more sorrowful than losing your poems.”

And death is from where Madhosh traces his journey as a poet. In his childhood, Madhosh was ‘captivated’ by the idea of loss, and this idea of loss encouraged him to write, and express. And pain, both personal and collective, became theme of his writings.

Madhosh was 16 when his father, Ghulam Mustafa died in 1979. “Death of my father destroyed me,” the poet says. “I felt immensely alone, and lost. I wanted to commit suicide. It was the beginning of “my journey as a writer.”

It was the period when, according to Madhosh, he was personally lost and carried a “sense of low self-esteem” within him. With no one to support his education—he was studying B.A first year at SP College, Srinagar—he began to work as a daily-wage labourer. He tried to express the loneliness but was not able to.

“I was like a ship caught in a storm, crashing with waves, not knowing where to land. There was so much I wanted to tell but couldn’t find the voice,” says Madhosh of that time.

It was during this time of his life that he accidentally discovered a book in a friend’s place. It was a collection of poems of Dr. Mohammad Iqbal, the national poet of Pakistan.

“I read Iqbal, and it had an electrifying effect on me. His ideals of self and political action galvanized me,” says Madhosh. As did another figure, Ayatollah Khomeini — the spiritual leader of 1979 Iranian Revolution.

“I found fatherly figure in Ayatollah and in Iqbal. My political consciousness grew. They led me by hand from darkness to light, from despair to hope,” says Madhosh.

“The mere thought of Iranian Revolution healed my wounds. I felt that injustice can be defeated. I felt tyrant regimes can be toppled.”

Then he began to read.



Madhosh was part of MUF. Pic by Shabir Bhat



Madhosh Balhami. Pic by Shabir Bhat

He read books on Kashmir history, notably the works of GMD Sofi, Prem Nath Bazaz and likes of Shabnam Qayoom. Apart from that, he read the works of Iranian intellectual, Dr. Ali Shariati.

The more he read, the more conscious he became politically. And then in 1980s, he became an activist with Muslim United Front (MUF) — a political amalgam of various pro-Kashmir parties, that eventually contested elections in 1987 which were infamously rigged by New Delhi.

Four years before that, while a student, Madhosh had formed a local music band, mostly singing folk songs, mystic verses at cultural gatherings. Folk bands form an essential part of Kashmiri music — known for singing eulogies of the heroes of Kashmir, both mythical and real. Madhosh played role of a vocalist, and played Rabab.

The experience as a folksinger later was to influence the way he imagined his poetry. Stylistically his poems resemble folk oral poetry that is easy to rhyme, direct, and local. Madhosh was to use this style of poetry to express his political views, and document the times he lived in.

“At the meetings with people during my MUF days, I began to recite and sing my poetry—mostly copying the style of Iqbal,” the poet recalls. “I would compose a poem a day before or at the spot and recite it. I don’t remember any poem of that era but I do remember they celebrated Muslim identity and hope for a better future.”

By 1990, Madhosh was making headway as a small poet, known, if not to a lots of people, but to important political figures of the time, including pro-freedom leaders Nayeem Khan, and Syed Ali Geelani.

According to Madhosh, the leaders loved his poetry and suggested he publish it. Madhosh was encouraged to write more. However, he was arrested in 1991—first time, and served two years in prison.

“I wanted to publish my poems but no one was willing to publish it,” he says. “I showed some poems to a local publisher and they turned it down out of fear. So did newspapers of the time. They told me my poetry is too ‘direct and dangerous’.”

Discouraged, he didn’t try again. But he kept composing poetry, recite it, and in order to not forget or lose the poetry he wrote it down.

“I wanted to preserve the poems for the generations to come, to let



Madhosh standing in front of his gutted house. Photo by Syed Shahriyar

them know how a Kashmiri lived in the times of repression, and what injustices and zulm was committed on a people,” he says.

At times, Madhosh doesn’t consider himself a poet in the conventional sense of the word. He considers himself a ‘chronicler of collective pain’ and ‘a preserver of people’s brutal history, and struggles’.

Poetry, he claims, is a sublime art, dealing in themes of life in “normal and happy times” and believes that meaning of poetry and its nature should alter according to the times one lives in.

He calls himself a ‘resistance rhymester’ which sees and records every mood of the people.

“I have never seen my people smile,” the poet says. “I can’t write about flowers, flowing streams and beauty of Kashmir. I don’t see beauty, I see blood everywhere. I see the landscape in fetters.”

The most dominant theme of his poetry is his experience as a Kashmiri.

Back in March 1990, when the poet was 24, he was dragged out from his Balhom home and tied to a willow tree on a nearby hill. “I was tortured for two hours,” he says. “My back was lashed with willow sticks and bamboo rods.” This experience changed him, and the nature of his poetry, drastically.

While descending down the hill after torture, he made a resolve to write about his experience. And few days later, he penned down his first poem that was ‘overtly political: the poem was aptly titled ‘Gashti’ — a Kashmiri word for patrolling party of armed forces.

Sukh mukhe tawan pou hai hai Gashti aaye Gashti aye, Tharr cza-ye lookan sar to pai Gashti aaye Gashti aye,

(The dread spread, with the arrival of patrolling party, the onlookers trembled, with the arrival of patrolling party...)

For the poet, the street picket is the metaphor for ‘political repression’.

The repression in Kashmir, he says, began first on the landscape—when bunkers were erected all over the place, in every nook and cranny of the valley, giving rise to immense visual suffering and altering the mindscape of the place.

“Bunkers are objects of terror,” Madhosh says. “Thousands have disappeared in them, never to return, and their sight is the reminder of our humiliation.”

In one of his untitled poems, Madhosh elaborates on the violence that turned the land into “ruined barrenness”. The poet compares his verse with the ‘songs of spring’ and reprimands himself, out of fear, not to sing spring songs amidst ‘thorns’.

Yem saasebaedh khanjar che aamit loole chaane yoer, Hanne hanne cze kadnay jaan, ma kar chaak girebaan

(These thousands of daggers have appeared to kill you with a thousand cuts...)



The poet lost his major works in a firefight. Pic by Shabir Bhat

Madhosh is disappointed with the Kashmiri poets especially the ones who came before him and witnessed the turbulent times in the valley.

They, he says, have not risen up to the occasion—and instead wrote non-political poems without mirroring the ground reality in Kashmir.

“Most of the poets didn’t write because they didn’t want to displease the state,” the poet says. “They wrote Sufi poetry and penned poems to win state sponsored awards and perks. It is the tragedy of Kashmiri literature.”

Apne qom kay dard kay qarb say be parva ho kar, Mera adeeb, mera shayir gyaanpeet ki talaash mein

(Staying indifferent to their homeland’s agony, my writers, poets are in search of literary award.)

Commenting on his poetry, Kashmiri novelist Shahnaz Bashir, states that Madhosh’s poetry is a departure from the conventional poetry of Kashmiri literature, in a sense that the poet is overtly political, and “laments our circumstances and situation”.

Echoing the views of Madhosh on established Kashmiri poets, Shahanaz says, “The history of Kashmiri intrigues me generally. Seldom in their poetry did our early poets mention, let alone lament, the situation of their times that was replete with autocratic repression”.

The author of Half Mother adds that the reason for such ignorance could be the censorship that silences poets and writers in Kashmir historically. However, Shahnaz also thinks that many contemporaries of Madhosh remained “intentionally neutral”.

“Rafiq Raaz wrote beautiful and profound poetry but you will find no mention of, or allusion to what was going on in Kashmir when he was around,” says Shahnaz.

But after his house was gutted, Madhosh has stopped to write as much as he would, especially the political poetry.

Of late, he has been writing religious eulogies celebrating the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, grandson of Prophet Muhammad [Pbuh], who, according to Islamic tradition fought against injustice that led to his martyrdom at Karbala, Iraq in seventh century AD.

The dominant theme of these poems is celebration of valour of Hussain in the face of tyranny.

“These eulogies are thematically exploring the idea of injustice and tyranny,” Madhosh says. “In a sense, the story is the same. I find Kashmir in Karbala!”



Problem-Solving Skills May Lower Stress, Boost Student Wellbeing In India

I AM ESPECIALLY EXCITED THAT THESE results show how a very low cost psychological intervention can be delivered by counsellors with no prior mental health training to students in the poorest neighbourhoods of New Delhi,"

Agencies

Problem-solving-based counselling delivered by non-specialists may prove to be a cost-effective intervention to improve an array of stress-inducing problems faced by high school students in India, according to a study.

The results from the 'PRIDE' project, published in the journal *Lancet Child & Adolescent Health*, showed that a three-week programme delivered within a school setting could be an effective first-line mental health intervention for young people in the country.

The study participants were aged 12-20 years and were selected on the basis of having

persistently high mental health symptoms linked to a variety of psychosocial problems, including difficulties experienced at school, with peers and in family contexts.

The sessions were delivered by school counsellors with no prior mental health training and centred on a well-established problem-solving approach, according to Goa-based mental health research organisation Sangath, which collaborated with researchers from the Harvard Medical School in the US, University of Sussex and London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine in the UK.

The team noted that mental health problems are a leading health concern for young

people in India, with suicide as the leading cause of death for 15-24-year-olds.

However, almost all adolescent interventions to date have focused on high-income and high-resourced settings, leaving a gap in effective programmes for low-resource settings, they said.

The PRIDE school-based intervention model has been developed on the basis of stepped care, where increasingly specialised, resource-intensive interventions are reserved for individuals, who do not respond to simpler first-line treatments, the researchers said.

Rather than focusing on a single mental health condition, the programme offers the promise of a broadly applicable, simple and scalable solution to improve

mental health outcomes within a low-income setting, the researchers said.

"I am especially excited that these results show how a very low cost psychological intervention can be delivered by counsellors with no prior mental health training to students in the poorest neighbourhoods of New Delhi," said Vikram Patel, Professor of Global Health at Harvard Medical School, and Principal Investigator of the study.

"We must now work towards improving the effectiveness of the interventions and scaling these up across the school sector," he said in a statement.

The study was conducted over an academic year at six large Delhi Government schools in

2018-19.

As part of the programme, students and school faculty were introduced to basic mental health concepts through interactive audio-visual presentations.

The students were then invited to volunteer to join the programme, according to the researchers.

The counselling itself was delivered in four or five 30-minute sessions supported by explanatory comic-style booklets, spread over three weeks.

The content of the programme was designed to help students learn problem-solving skills, they said.

The researchers explained that these skills fall under the larger umbrella of cognitive-be-

havioural therapies, which help people to develop personal coping strategies for life difficulties and associated stress.

The study found that the students who took part in counselling, reported significant reductions in their main problems and associated stress levels, compared to the control group, who received only the booklets.

The researchers said this programme could be scaled up in various languages and offered widely to schools across the country, given the low input in terms of time and resources, but high impact in terms of mental health outcomes for students.

Daniel Michelson, from the University of Sussex, who co-led the study said that a short coun-

selling programme -- involving no more than five brief meetings with a school counsellor over three weeks -- helped to reduce stressful problems faced by vulnerable teens in Delhi.

"Moreover, demand for the counselling programme was such that we filled our counselling slots ahead of schedule. The high level of interest that we observed among students runs counter to ideas that young people are reluctant to seek help for emotional, behavioural and interpersonal difficulties," said Michelson.

This, he said, has important lessons for how we can deliver cost-effective, non-stigmatising mental health support for some of the most disadvantaged young people in society.

Study Explains How Brain Activity Evolves Fear Into Anxiety

Agencies

A team of researchers has now tried to understand the brain's response to fear, and why, in some cases, it can lead to prolonged anxiety states like post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD).

A University of New Mexico research team led by Elaine L. Bearer, MD, PhD, the Harvey Family Professor in Pathology, and graduate student Taylor W Uselman has identified for the first time brain-wide neural correlates of the transition from fear to anxiety.

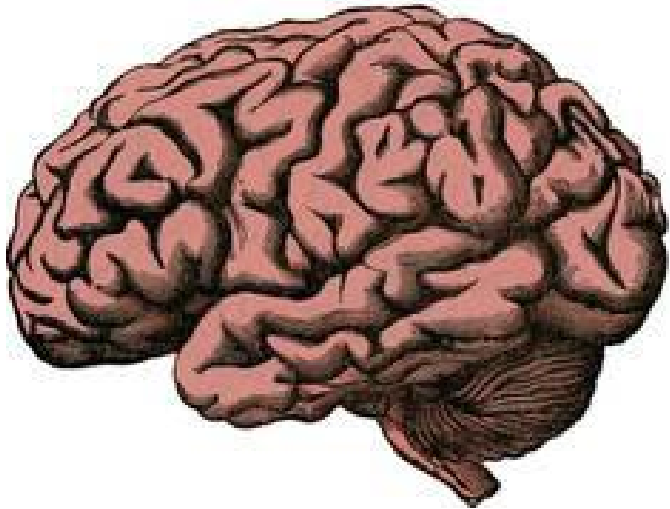
"Until now, psychiatrists had little information about what goes on in the brain after a fearful experience, and why some people don't easily recover and remain anxious, for even as long as the rest of their lives," Bearer said.

While not feasible in human subjects, fear can be provoked in rodents by exposure to a scary smell, such as a product commonly used to protect our barbecues from mouse nesting. This smell simulates a predator odor and scares mice away.

The UNM team used this trick to witness how the brain responds to scary events and discover how brain activity evolves from a scary feeling to anxiety.

In a paper published this week in the journal *NeuroImage*, they report a correlation of behavior with brain activity by watching behavior and capturing magnetic resonance images before, during, and after exposure to non-scary and scary smells.

They created vulnerability to anxiety by manipulating the serotonin transporter (SERT), which is the major target of psychoactive drugs, like cocaine, and antidepressants, like Prozac. Deletion of the SERT gene (SERT-KO)



produces vulnerability to anxiety, and thus provides a unique model to learn how frightening experiences morph into anxiety.

The UNM researchers compared behavior and brain activity in normal versus SERT-KO to identify the neural correlates of anxiety - those regions active in anxious SERT-KOs and not in normal subjects.

To highlight active neurons, they used manganese, a non-toxic ion that lights up active neurons in magnetic resonance images. Computational analyses of these brain-wide images yielded maps of activity throughout the brain before, immediately and long after brief exposure to the scary smell.

They identified differences in neural activity in 45 sub-regions throughout the brain. Some regions were activated by the scary smell, and some only came on later. Vulnerability to anxiety correlated with much more activity in many more regions.

The function of some of these regions, including the amygdala and hypothalamus, is at least partly understood, but others, such as the reward circuitry,

were not previously known to be involved in anxiety.

In anxiety, the coordination between regions was altered, which may represent a brain-wide signature of anxiety, or signify a dis-coordination between brain regions, which is often experienced when we are frightened or anxious.

"We now know that brain activity in anxiety is not the same as in an acute fear response. With anxiety, neural activity is elevated across many specific regions of the brain, and normal coordination between regions is lost," Bearer said.

What does this mean in the time of COVID? The time lag for resilient or anxious outcomes suggests that early containment of fearful responses to surges in cases, protests, and economic recession may reduce the likelihood of progression to anxiety.

The involvement of serotonin also suggests pharmacologic targets that could help in reducing the likelihood of anxiety. Meditation, music, poetry, exercise, and other stress-reducing activities that engage the reward circuitry will also likely help. Early interventions will have lasting benefits.

Pasteurising Breast Milk Inactivates Covid-19 Virus: Study

Agencies

Researchers have found that pasteurising breast milk using a common technique inactivates severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) making it safe for use.

According to the study, published in the *CMAJ* (Canadian Medical Association Journal), current advice is for women with coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) to continue to breastfeed their infants.

In Canada, it is standard care to provide pasteurised breast milk to very-low-birth-weight babies in the hospital until their own mother's milk supply is adequate.

"In the event that a woman who is Covid-19-positive do-



minates human milk that contains SARS-CoV-2, the method of pasteurisation renders milk safe for consumption," said study researcher Sharon Unger from the University of Toronto in Canada.

"Whether by transmission through the mammary gland or by contamination through re-

spiratory droplets, skin, breast pumps and milk containers, this method is safe," Unger added.

The Holder method, a technique used to pasteurise milk in all Canadian milk banks (62.5°C for 30 minutes), is effective at neutralising viruses such as HIV, hepatitis and oth-

ers that are known to be transmitted through human milk.

In this study, researchers spiked human breast milk with a viral load of SARS-CoV-2 and tested samples that either sat at room temperature for 30 minutes or were warmed to 62.5°C for 30 minutes and then measured for the active virus.

The study found that the virus in the pasteurised milk was inactivated after heating.

More than 650 human breast milk banks around the world use the Holder method to ensure a safe supply of milk for vulnerable infants, the researchers said.

The authors reported that the impact of pasteurisation on coronaviruses in human milk has not been previously reported in the scientific literature.

Study Suggests Fathers Are More Likely To Be Referred For Nutrition, Exercise Counselling

Agencies

PHILADELPHIA - Overweight, obese men who are fathers are more likely to be referred for nutrition or exercise counselling as compared to the men without children, suggests a new study published by Elsevier in the *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behaviour*.

Researchers from the UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh and the University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing studied 2,562 men visiting their medical provider for both routine and sick visits. This study corroborates other

researchers' findings that only 20 per cent to 40 per cent of obese patients report receiving nutrition or weight loss counselling.

"There's more research showing that fathers play a central role in child development but also in their weight-related health outcomes," said lead study author Alicia Boykin, MD, MS, Division of Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine, UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA, USA. "It's critical to address healthy diets and physical activity among men who are already fathers, but also among men who may become fathers soon in the future."

As previous research has



shown, fathers' commitment to their children has increased as evidenced by the increased time

(doubled) that fathers spend on a child's care. Researchers have documented that fathers are more committed to weight programs that enable them to support their children (and families) and focus on child health and well-being rather than solely on their own health. "Men are willing to make positive changes during fatherhood and the results may suggest that providers are capitalizing on this time," Dr Boykin said.

This study furthers a general understanding of weight-related practices and management during clinic visits for men, in general, and fathers, in particular.

Foreign Students Weigh Studying In Person Vs Losing Visas

Agencies

Phoenix: International students worried about a new immigration policy that could potentially cost them their visas say they feel stuck between being unnecessarily exposed during the coronavirus pandemic and being able to finish their studies in America.

The students from countries as diverse as India, China and Brazil say they are scrambling to devise plans after federal immigration authorities notified colleges this week that



Many American universities have come to depend on the revenue from more than 1 million international students, who typically pay higher tuition fees.

international students must leave the US or transfer to another college if their schools operate entirely online this fall.

Some say they are thinking about returning home or moving to nearby Canada.

"I'm generating research, I'm doing work in a great economy," said Batuhan Mekiker,

a Ph.D. student from Turkey studying computer science at Montana State University in Bozeman. He's in the third year of a five-year programme.

"If I go to Turkey, I would not have that," he said. "I would like to be somewhere where my talent is appreciated."

Mathias, a Seattle-based student who spoke on condition his last name not be used for fear of losing his immigration status, said he was set to sell his car, break his lease, and get his cat Louis permission to fly back to his home in Paris in the next two weeks.

"Everyone's very worried," he said. "We have our whole lives here."

Many American universities have come to depend on the revenue from more than 1 million international students, who typically pay higher tuition fees.

President Donald Trump has insisted that schools and colleges return to in-person instruction as soon as possible — and some universities have accused the administration of issuing the guidelines to force the schools into reopening.

Trump has alleged that schools are being kept closed for political reasons.

Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology filed a lawsuit this week to block the decision.

The guidance was released the same day Harvard announced it would keep all undergraduate classes online this fall and several graduate schools have said they would, as well. The university says the directive would prevent many of its 5,000 international students from remaining in the US.

US Bans Pak Intl' Airlines Flights Over Pilot Concerns

Agencies

Washington: The US Department of Transportation said it has revoked permission for Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) to conduct charter flights to the United States, citing Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) concerns over Pakistani pilot



certifications.

The information is contained in a revocation of special authorisation dated July 1 provided by the department to Reuters on Friday.

Pakistan last month grounded almost a third of its pilots after discovering they may have falsified their qualifications.

The European Union Aviation Safety Agency suspended PIA's authorisation to fly to the bloc for six months in a blow to the carrier's operations.

PIA was not available immediately for comment outside normal business hours.

Pakistan's Geo News reported PIA had confirmed the U.S. ban and said it would address the concerns through ongoing corrective measures within the airline.

Pakistan's grounding of pilots with dubious credentials followed the crash of a PIA jet in May that killed 97 people.



New WHO Guidance Calls For More Evidence On Airborne Transmission

Agencies

Geneva: The World Health Organization on Thursday released new guidelines on the transmission of the novel coronavirus that acknowledge some reports of airborne transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19, but stopped short of confirming that the virus spreads through the air.

In its latest transmission guidance, the WHO acknowledged that some outbreak reports related to indoor crowded spaces have suggested the possibility of aerosol transmission, such as during choir practice, in restaurants or in fitness classes. (<https://bit.ly/2Ck7QBo>)

But the WHO said more research is "urgently needed to investigate such instances and assess their significance for transmission of COVID-19."

Based on its review of the current evidence, the WHO said the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19 spreads between peo-

ple through direct or indirect contact with contaminated surfaces or close contact with infected people who spread the virus through saliva, respiratory secretions or droplets released when an infected person coughs, sneezes, speaks or sings.

The report follows an open letter from scientists who specialize in the spread of disease in the air - so-called aerobiologists - that urged the global body to update its guidance on how the respiratory disease spreads to include aerosol transmission.

"This is a move in the right direction, albeit a small one. It is becoming clear that the pandemic is driven by super-spreading events, and that the best explanation for many of those events is aerosol transmission," said Jose Jimenez, a chemist at the University of Colorado who signed the letter, which was published on Monday in the journal Clinical Infectious Diseases.

How frequently the corona-

virus spreads by the airborne or aerosol route - as opposed to by larger droplets in coughs and sneezes - is not clear.

In a press briefing on Thursday, Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the US National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said there is not a lot of solid evidence yet on airborne transmission of SARS-CoV-2, but said: "I think it's a reasonable assumption that it does occur."

Although incomplete, Fauci said the evidence so far is "the fundamental basis for why we are now so intent on getting people - particularly people without symptoms - to wear masks. To be able to see if we can mitigate against that," he said.

Only a very small number of diseases are believed to be spread via aerosols, or tiny floating particles. These include measles and tuberculosis - two highly contagious diseases that require extreme precautions to prevent exposure.

COVID-19 Causes Far More Symptoms Than First Suspected

Agencies

Paris: They call themselves "long-haulers", "long-tailers", or simply survivors.

Some have been sick almost as long as the new coronavirus is known to have existed.

Six months after the virus began to scorch its way across the planet, it is becoming clear that COVID-19 causes far more symptoms than first suspected.

Thousands of people of all ages are staying sick for weeks or even months.

British forensic psychiatrist Jenny Judge began an odyssey of illness in March with a fever, cough, headache and breathing problems.

She has since experienced waves of other symptoms including a racing heart, scalding rashes and "COVID toes", which were itchy and ulcerated.

At one point she was so delirious she heard her dogs talking, and was not particularly surprised.

"Now I am going through a belly phase," she told AFP on day 111 of her ordeal.

More than 12 million COVID-19 cases have been recorded worldwide with more than 550,000 deaths. Some six million people are listed as "recovered".

But these figures do not tell the full story.

'They feel left out'

A study of 143 recovered hospital patients in Italy, published in the JAMA Network journal on Thursday, found that 87 percent were still suffering at least one symptom 60 days after falling ill.

Fatigue and breathing difficulties were most common.

This follows research published last week by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that found of 350 people surveyed, about 60 percent of inpatients and around a third of outpatients were not back to health 14-21 days after testing positive.

People leaving hospital may need ongoing care for organ damage, injuries sustained in invasive oxygen therapy or post-traumatic stress.

But those who have coped with their illness at home often do

not have an explanation for their continuing symptoms, and may face scepticism or outright disbelief from employers and doctors.

"I think these people feel very left out and that nobody's looking after them," said Tim Spector, Professor of Genetic Epidemiology at King's College London, who is behind a large-scale symptoms-tracking project.

"Some of them can have really debilitating fatigue."

Some 3.8 million people in the UK have logged on to the app since it was launched in March, while it also has more than 300,000 users in the US and 186,000 in Sweden.

Researchers think that up to one in 10 of them still have symptoms after 30 days and some remain unwell for months.

Spector, who estimates there may be a quarter of a million people in the UK with longer-term illness, receives around 10 emails a day from people who are still ill and who feel "no one is listening to them".

Part of the problem is the sheer variety of symptoms, many of which do not appear in official health advice.

Nepal bans all Indian news channels except Doordarshan

Press Trust Of India

Kathmandu: Nepal on Thursday stopped the transmission of all Indian private news channels except Doordarshan, accusing them of airing reports hurting the country's national sentiment.

There was no immediate reaction from India on the issue. People familiar with the development said the Nepalese embassy in New Delhi apprised its views to the Indian government over coverage of Nepal's political developments by the Indian channels.

"We have stopped the distribution of all Indian news channels except Doordarshan," Dinesh Subedi, the chairman of Multi-System Operator (MSO), foreign channel distributor, told reporters here.

"We have halted distribution of India's private news channels as they have aired news reports hurting Nepal's national sentiment," he added.

The development comes

condemned some of the reports aired by the Indian news channels.

"Nepal government condemns such acts," Khatriwada said while responding to a question on the issue during a press meet on Thursday. The government will seek political and legal ways against such an objectionable act," he added.

Earlier in the day, former deputy prime minister and spokesperson of the ruling Nepal Communist party Narayan Kaji Shrestha said that the Indian media must stop the baseless propaganda against Prime Minister Oli and his government.

"The baseless propaganda by the Indian media against the Nepal government and our Prime Minister has crossed all limits. This is getting too much. Stop with the nonsense, Shrestha said in a tweet.

The India-Nepal bilateral ties came under strain after Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated a 80-km-



after some Indian channels aired reports critical of Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli and his government.

However, the Nepal government did not officially announce halting the telecast of the Indian news channels.

Minister for Finance, Information and Communication Yuvraj Khatriwada also

long strategically crucial road connecting the Lipulekh pass with Dharchula in Uttarakhand on May 8.

Nepal reacted sharply to the inauguration of the road claiming that it passed through Nepalese territory. India rejected the claim asserting that the road lies completely within its territory.

France's Notre-Dame Cathedral To Be Rebuilt As It Was Before Inferno

Agencies

proved plans to restore the cathedral to its last "complete,



Paris: Paris' centuries-old Notre-Dame Cathedral will be rebuilt as it was before being engulfed in a fire last year, the public body in charge of its restoration said on Thursday.

The April 15, 2019 blaze destroyed the Gothic landmark and major tourist attraction, destroying the spire and roof in a disaster that stunned the nation.

A national heritage and architectural commission ap-

coherent and known" state, including the spire, the restoration body said in a statement.

President Emmanuel Macron promised after the fire to rebuild Notre-Dame within five years, and later suggested that a contemporary design could be used for the spire.

Church officials hope Notre-Dame will be open for mass by 2024, when Paris is due to host the Olympic Games.

NEW MAKERS

Saudi allows raunchy Vogue Arabia photoshoot in Madina province

Saudi Arabia has stoked controversy after it was revealed that it gave permission for Vogue Arabia to conduct a raunchy photoshoot of international supermodels within the historical site of Al-Ula in the province of Madina.

Vogue Arabia, the Arab edition of the renowned US-based fashion magazine, released its 24-hour campaign photoshoot for the New York-based label Monot yesterday, which featured models such as Kate Moss, Mariacarla Boscono, Candice Swanepoel, Jourdan Dunn, Amber Valletta, Xiao Wen and Alek Wek.

In the photoshoot, named '24 hours in AIUla,' the

models were seen wearing tight dresses with thigh-slits while they posed and walked around the UNESCO World Heritage site, known as the world's largest open air museum consisting of carved rock structures similar to Jordan's Petra.

The Lebanese designer Eli Mizrahi, who organised and directed the shoot, said: "I convinced the talent that they would look back on this moment — 24 hours in AIUla — as something special. Kate Moss not only came, but she was the first one on set at 5 a.m. and the last to leave."

The nature of the shoot and the dresses worn in them are classed as immodest by many Muslims, and despite the fact that the dis-

tance of the site is around 300 kilometres from the holy city of Madina, it is within the same province which many see as inappropriate for the Saudi authorities to have allowed.

The controversial photoshoot is part of a series of reforms that the kingdom has been implementing in recent years in order to open up its economy to international tourism and modernisation. Such reforms, which include the decrease in authority of the religious police, the lifting of restrictions in gender mixing, and the stripping of the requirement for women to wear the abaya or loose gown, are also part of the Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030.

Seoul Mayor Kills Himself After #MeToo Allegation Emerges: Officials



Seoul: The mayor of Seoul, a contender to be South Korea's next president and a former human rights lawyer, took his own life a day after he was accused of sexual harassment, authorities said Friday.

Park Won-soon, whose body was recovered on a mountain in the capital, is by far the most high-profile politician to be implicated in a harassment case in South Korea, a highly patriarchal society where the #MeToo movement has led to the fall of scores of prominent men

in multiple fields.

Park offered a general apology in a suicide note -- handwritten with ink and brush -- found at his official residence and released by city authorities.

"I'm sorry to everyone. I thank everyone who has been with me in my life," he wrote, asking to be cremated and his ashes scattered at his parents' graves. "I'm sorry to my family, to whom I only caused pain."

"Bye everyone," he signed off, without referring to the allegations against him.

A heavyweight figure in the ruling centre-left Democratic party, Park ran South Korea's sprawling capital -- home to almost a fifth of the national population -- for nearly a decade.

He won three elections while promoting gender and social equality, and did not shy away from expressing his ambitions to replace incumbent President Moon Jae-in in 2022.

A Dog Life: Scientists Find New Formula For Canine Age

Washington, United States: A well-known 'rule of paw' holds that you can tell how old your pooch is in human terms by multiplying its age in years by seven.

But in fact, the real ratio changes over time, the US National Institutes of Health (NIH) said Thursday, following a study of biological changes to dogs' genomes over the course of their lives.

Dogs, humans and in fact all mammals experience the same developmental timeline: birth, infancy, youth, puberty, adulthood and death.

Scientists have identified chemical marks on the DNA that correspond to these different stages, an area of study called epigenetics.

The field is well established for humans, and some commercial companies let you send in a DNA sample to determine your biological age by reading your "epigenetic clock."

Union Minister, LG Review Jal Jeevan Mission In J&K

SRINAGAR: Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Union Minister for Jal Shakti and Lieutenant Governor, Girish Chandra Murmu today reviewed the implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir through video conferencing.

Advisor to the Lieutenant Governor, Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar; BVR Subrahmanyam, Chief Secretary; Arun Kumar, Financial Commissioner, Finance department; Ajeet Kumar Sahu, Commissioner/Secretary, Jal Shakti department; Sheetal Nanda, Secretary, Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj and other senior officers attended the meeting, in person and through video conferencing.

Timeline for achieving the target of 100% piped water supply to each household was set for the completion of First Phase by March 2021; Second Phase by December, 2021 and March, 2022 was set for the completion of the Third Phase.

The Union Minister observed that the Government of India is committed to provide assured basic services to the people living in rural areas across the country. He reiterated the commitment of Union Government to provide all assistance to the UT to achieve the set goal under JJM.

He stressed on testing of all water sources for once for chemical parameters and twice for bacteriological contamination (pre and post monsoon). He further called for imparting training to five persons, preferably, women, in every village for surveillance of water quality through Field Test Kits (FTKs).

The UT was asked for NABL accreditation of all laboratories in next few months.

The Union Minister further emphasized on preparation of village action plans as well as constitution of village water and sanitation committee/ Paani Samiti as a sub-committee of Gram Panchayat with minimum 50% women members, responsible for planning, designing, implementing and operating & maintaining of in-village water supply infrastructure. In all villages, IEC campaign along with community mobilization needs to be taken up to make Jal Jeevan Mission truly a people's movement.

Underlining the importance of sustainable infrastructure, he asked for proper maintenance and third party inspection of water infrastructure for ensuring sustainability.

Emphasis was given on convergence of Jal Jeevan Mission with Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), MGNREGA and other relevant schemes for dovetailing of funds to ensure long term availability of good quality drinking water in adequate quantity.

The Lt Governor observed that Jammu and Kashmir intends to be a leader under the Jal Jeevan Mission for providing piped water supply (Har Ghar Nal se Jal) to every household. The Government of J&K seeks to make the UT, the first among UTs / States in India to complete the Jal Jeevan Mission. The J&K Government has also allocated around Rs. 1800 crore for this purpose out of JKIDFC funding to start working on this mission, he added

Ladakh Row Figures In Rajnath Singh's Telephonic Talks With US Defence Secretary



NEW DELHI: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday held a telephonic conversation with his US counterpart Mark T Esper during which India's border row with China in eastern Ladakh and the overall security scenario in the region figured prominently, people familiar with the development said.

Mr Singh and Mr Esper also deliberated on ways to further boost bilateral defence and security cooperation, they said, adding the telephonic conversation took place at the request of the US side.

China's aggressive posturing along the Line of Actual Control in eastern Ladakh was discussed, and Singh apprised the US defence secretary about India's position on the row, they said.

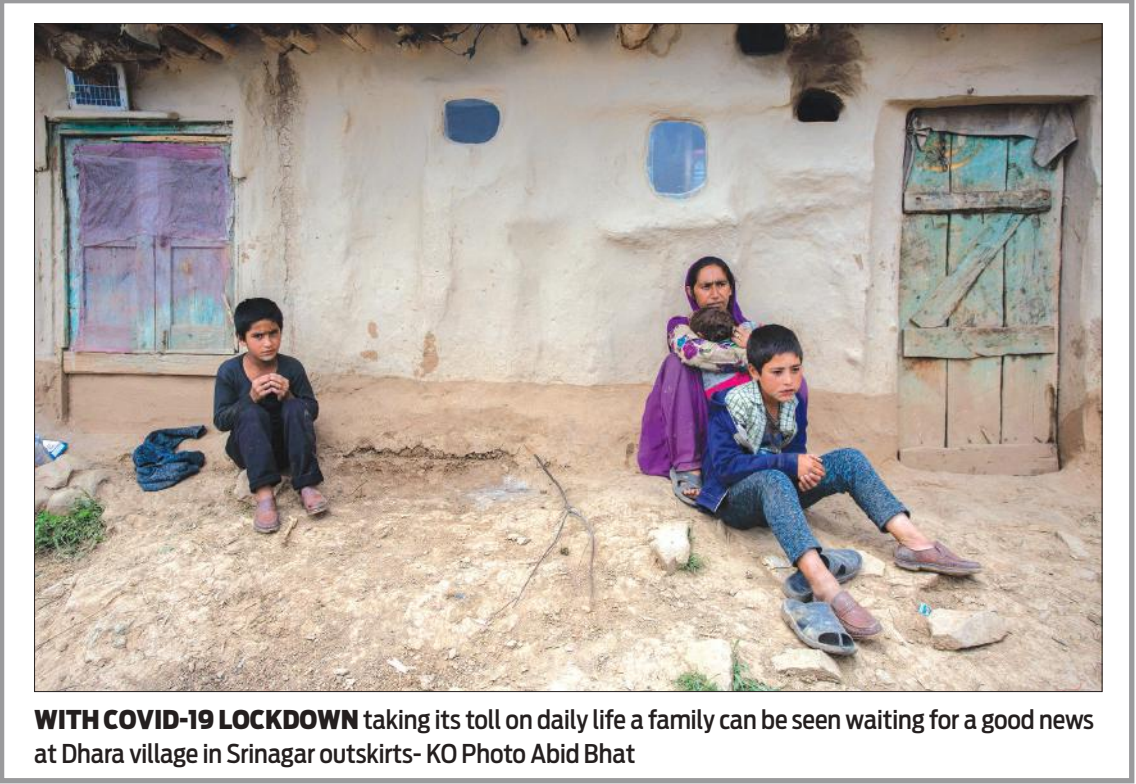
"The two ministers have

been in regular touch with each other. They have spoken several times on bilateral defence cooperation and issues of mutual interest. Today's conversation was in continuation of this exchange," said a source.

The Indian and Chinese armies were locked in a bitter standoff in multiple locations in eastern Ladakh for the last eight weeks. The tension escalated manifold after a violent clash in Galwan Valley in which 20 Indian Army personnel were killed.

In the last five days, Chinese military has withdrawn troops from three friction points in line with a disengagement understanding with Indian Army.

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



WITH COVID-19 LOCKDOWN taking its toll on daily life a family can be seen waiting for a good news at Dhara village in Srinagar outskirts- KO Photo Abid Bhat

Met Dept Forecasts Temp As High As 35 Degrees In Coming Days

Weather Cycle Gets Repeated After Six Decades: Prof Kudangar



Owaiz Gul/ KNO

SRINAGAR: As Kashmir remains under tight grip of heat wave over the past two weeks, the Meteorological department is of the belief that weather is behaving normally in the Valley and day temperatures can shoot up to 35 degrees Celsius in the in the days ahead.

The MeT claim, however, has been countered by the environmentalists who attribute weather change to the cycle that is repeated after every six decade.

Director MeT, Sonum Lotus said that in the month of July and August,

the temperature usually remains high and there was nothing new in it. "We have seen a similar kind of temperature in previous years as well," he said. Lotus said that the rise in the temperature is the outcome of no rainfall in the Valley.

"We are predicting a light to moderate rainfall in the coming days. But, there is no possibility of heavy rainfall till next week," he said, adding that in the present month, the temperature can even go up to 35 degree Celsius, which is normal.

Dr. MRD Kundangar, a prominent environmentalist said that he doesn't attribute the current weather conditions with climate change.

"In my childhood, I have witnessed such a heat wave as well," he said.

"In my opinion, the prevalent heat wave is only a weather cycle, which is repeated after every 60 years," he said, adding that people would have come to know about it, but unfortunately, there is no record available in this regard in Jammu and Kashmir.

"During the ongoing COVID-19 situation, the carbon dioxide as per the World Health Organizations in the air has also decreased. Therefore, it will not be good to attribute the prevalent weather conditions to climate change," he added.

Prof. Shakeel Romshoo Head Department of Earth Sciences also said that the present weather conditions are not unusual. "The long dry spell in the Valley is a reason behind the current weather conditions. We were witnessing rainfall every evening almost two weeks back. We can't attribute the present weather conditions with climate change. But the only reason behind it was the convective weather system," he said.

He added at present the weather conditions are not unusual but if it continues for ten more days then it will be a cause of concern

Govt Forms Panel For Realizing National Broadband Mission In J&K

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The J&K government has constituted a high-level panel headed by Chief Secretary for implementing and realizing the objectives as envisaged in the National Broadband Mission.

The mission announced by the government of India on Tuesday last and is aimed at providing broadband access in all villages by 2022, entailing investments of around RS 7 lakh crore from various stakeholders.

Besides chief Secretary as chairman, the ten-member panel comprises of administrative secretaries of Information Technology, U&DD, Public Works (R&B) and Forest, Ecology and Environment besides senior Deputy Director J&K LSA ((Licensed Service Area) Department of Telecommunication, Chief General Manager BSNL Ltd, Chief General Manager Bharat Broadband Network Limited, J&K, as well as representatives from Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) New Delhi and Towers & Infrastructure Providers Association (TAIPA) New Delhi.

The Committee has been tasked to advice the government, either suo-moto or on a request from the Governing council or Steering Committee, on the matters relating to accomplishment of the objectives of the mission concerning the Jammu and Kashmir. The panel shall also facilitate implementation of the guidelines issued by the Governing Council or Steering Committee enabling expansion of Broadband services for the socio-economic development J&K, reads a government order.

Its terms of reference also include addressing of all matters regarding Broadband Readiness Index (BRI) and to monitor and evaluate the work of mission pertaining to J&K. "The Committee shall meet once quarterly and may call other Departments of the Government and experts as per its requirement," the order said.

Under the mission, the government of India plans to lay increment

30 lakh route km of Optical Fiber Cable, while also increasing tower density from 0.42 to 1 tower per thousand of population by 2024.

The mission envisages stakeholder investment of \$100 billion (Rs7 lakh crore), including Rs 70,000 crore from Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) in coming years and "address policy and regulatory changes required to accelerate the expansion and creation of digital infrastructure and services".

"The vision of the national broadband mission is to fast-track growth of digital communications infrastructure, bridge the digital divide, facilitate digital empowerment and inclusion, and provide affordable and universal access of broadband for all," an official statement issued on Tuesday said.

Under the mission, the government of India will work with States and UTs for having consistent policies pertaining to expansion of digital infrastructure including for Right of Way (RoW) approvals required for laying of optical fibre cable.

Why Reveal Names Of COVID-19 Patients? It Involves Privacy: High Court Seeks Government's Reply

MUMBAI: The Bombay High Court today sought to know why the names of persons who have tested positive for COVID-19 should be disclosed and said the issue involves privacy rights of such patients.

A division bench of Justices AA Sayed and MS Karnik made the observation while hearing a petition filed by two persons seeking disclosure of names of coro-

rights are involved."

"The authorities declare a particular place or building as a containment zone when someone tests positive so that people are made aware, Justice Sayed said.

Isn't this enough? Why do you want to know who is the person who has tested positive? the bench questioned.

The high court also sought the Maharashtra government's response to the petition.



navirus patients to enable contact tracing and save others from getting infected.

The PIL has been filed by a law student, Vaishnavi Gholave, and a farmer from Maharashtra's Solapur, Mahesh Gadekar.

The PIL said when the fundamental right to life and right to lead a healthy life clash with the fundamental right to privacy, then the court needs to see which of these rights would advance public morality and interest.

"How far can one go in revealing the identity of the person who has tested positive (for COVID-19)? Privacy

Advocate Aditya Thakkar, appearing for the Union government, submitted that as per the guidelines issued by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), the names of COVID-19 positive persons cannot be declared so as to avoid their stigmatisation.

The petitioners' lawyer, Vinod Sangvikar, however, argued that the ICMR guidelines extended only to those who have died due to COVID-19.

The bench posted the petition for further hearing after two weeks and directed the Maharashtra government to respond to the plea.

Toyota Kirloskar Motor Launches 'Monsoon Fest' Car Service Offers

SRINAGAR- As a part of its continued commitment of providing unique customer experience through value-added services, Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) today announced the launch of its seasonal 'Monsoon Fest' campaign. The service offerings, which range from 20-point comprehensive vehicle health check-up to doorstep services, are available across select Northern Indian states starting from 1st July to 31st August 2020.

The campaign provides an assortment of exciting packages and offers" such as:

Free 20-point comprehensive monsoon vehicle health check-up

Attractive Offers for Fleet and Corporate customers

Service at the doorstep for periodic maintenance, oil change, dry wash and sanitization with prior appointments

Special prices on detox of the car cabin with Toyota Bactaklenz, an anti-bacterial fumigation treatment that removes 99.99 per cent of active bacteria

Flexible annual maintenance contracts as per customers' requirements with Smiles Flexi

Extended warranty with convenient EMI options

Commenting on the seasonal offer, Mr. Naveen Soni, Senior Vice President, Sales and Services, TKM, said, "Our aim of delivering exceptional experience across all touchpoints has inspired and guided us to innovate and energize all our actions. The offers are available at Toyota service centres in Delhi-NCR, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. Customers can contact their nearest authorized Toyota dealership for more details.

NEWS MAKERS

Mukesh Ambani, At \$68 Billion, Now Richer Than Warren Buffett

Mukesh Ambani has had a rollercoaster 2020, cutting a string of deals for his digital business, undergoing wild swings in his wealth and having his brother's finances laid bare for the world to see.

Now he can add another chapter -- eclipsing the fortune of Warren Buffett.

The chairman of Reliance Industries Ltd is now worth \$68.3 billion, surpassing Warren Buffett's \$67.9 billion as of Thursday, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index.

Shares of Mr Ambani's Indian conglomerate have more than doubled since a low in March as its digital unit got more than \$15 billion in investments from companies



including Facebook Inc and Silver Lake. This week BP Plc paid \$1 billion for a stake in Reliance's fuel-retail business.

While Mr Ambani's wealth has jumped -- he became the only Asian tycoon in the exclusive club of the world's top 10 richest people last month -- Mr Buffett's fortune dropped this week after

he gave away \$2.9 billion to charity.

The 89-year-old, known as the Oracle of Omaha, has slipped down the rankings after donating more than \$37 billion of Berkshire Hathaway Inc stock since 2006. Berkshire Hathaway's stock performance has also underwhelmed recently.

Mr Ambani, 63, is now the eighth richest person on the planet, and Mr Buffett is ninth, according to the index, which started in 2012.

Thanks to Mr Ambani's deals, India has emerged as a hot-spot for M&A this year, accounting for more than 12% of those announced in Asia Pacific -- the highest ratio since at least 1998.

Ex-AMU Student Leader Arrested Over Campus Protest Against CAA: Police

ALIGARH: A former AMU student leader and son of a varsity teacher has been arrested for his alleged role in the December 15 and subsequent violence during the campus protest against changes in the citizenship law, police said on Friday.

Sharjeel Usmani, the son of Assistant Professor Tariq Usmani of the AMU's Department of Geography, was picked by the UP's anti-terrorist squad (ATS) sleuths from his uncle's house in Azamgarh on Wednesday and was subsequently produced in a court in Aligarh which remanded him in judicial custody, they said.

He has been lodged at a temporary jail at Lodha about 20 kilometres from Aligarh, they added.

Civil Lines Circle officer Anil

Samania said Mr Sharjeel was wanted in four different cases including the violence which broke out at AMU on December 15.

He has been charged with several penal offences, including sections 147 (rioting), 148 (rioting while armed with a deadly weapon), 149 (committing offences in the prosecution of a common object of an unlawful assembly), 153 (inciting riots) and 153 A (carrying arms in a procession) of the Indian Penal Code, said Mr Samania.

The other charges are sections

188 (disobedience to public servants' order), 307 (attempt to murder), 322 (inflicting grievous injuries), 353 (assaulting public servants) and 506 (making criminal intimidation) of the IPC besides the section 67 of the Information Technology Act, he added.

Aligarh's Senior Superintendent of Police Muniraj G earlier on Friday said Mr Sharjeel has also been booked under the IT Act for trying to spread communal discord as he had on December 6 last year also posted an objectionable picture of former deputy prime minister L K Advani related to the Babri mosque demolition.

The police also claimed Sharjeel was in touch with several anti-CAA protesters at JNU, including Sharjeel Imam, who is presently in jail.

Cigarettes Worth Rs 1.56 Crore Seized At New Delhi Station From COVID Special Train

New Delhi: The customs preventive officials on Friday seized cigarettes worth over Rs 1.5 crore illegally brought by a COVID special train at the New Delhi Railway Station, officials said. They said 10 lakh cigarette sticks of "Special Gold Esse" and "Super slim Esse Light" brands were packed in 100 cartons.

These cartons were recovered from a goods compartment of a COVID-19 special train coming from Varanasi to Delhi, the officials said. Besides, around 9 lakh cigarettes of a lesser known brand and valued at around Rs 36 lakh were seized from the same train, they said. "These were misdeclared and concealed in 38 big gunny bags," an official said. The total seizure is around 19 lakh cigarette sticks valued at around Rs 1.56 crore, he said. "A person linked with the two consignments has been caught and is being questioned. Further investigation is in progress," the official said. The customs preventive officials had on Tuesday seized 4.5 lakh cigarette sticks illegally brought in a COVID special train at the Old Delhi Railway Station. The cigarettes, valued at Rs 40 lakh, were seized from the goods compartment of the train.

