

News Digest

Govt All Set To Roll Out E-Stamping In J&K

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Government is fully geared up to roll out the computerised Registration system through National Generic Document Registration System in the Union Territory. To make it convenient, transparent and public friendly, the Government has recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the Stock Holding Corporation of India Limited (SHCIL), the agency mandated by the Centre to act as the apex record keeping agency for rolling out E-stamping. To further gear up the process, Financial Commissioner Revenue and Inspector General of

LG Visits Slain BJP Leaders Kin

SRINAGAR, JULY 14: Lieutenant Governor, Girish Chandra Murmu today visited the house of deceased BJP leader Sheikh Waseem Bari at Bandipora, who along with his father and brother was killed by the militants. The Lt Governor handed over the financial assistance of Rs 20 Lakhs to the Next of Kin (NoK) of the deceased and conveyed his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family members of the victims. The Lt Governor strongly condemned the killings and said

Stranded Srinagar Man Dies In Saudi

Srinagar: A Srinagar man who was stranded in Saudi Arabia due to Covid-19 pandemic died in a hospital there. Family sources said that 87-year-old Haji Abdul Ahad Malik, a resident of Housing Colony Sanat Nagar, Srinagar had gone to Saudi Arabia for Umrah pilgrimage in February and stayed there with his daughter and son-in-law after the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic. His daughter is a gynecologist based there. Sources added that his

SKIMS Orders Patients Vacate Sarai-II

Srinagar: In wake of spike in admission cases of Covid-19 patients in Valley, Department of Hospital Administration, SKIMS, Soura ordered patients admitted in Sarai-II to immediately vacate rooms. An order issued to Security Officer SKIMS reads, In view of administrative emergency and shifting of Covid-19 patients to Sarai-II, you are advised to direct the patients/attendants staying at Sarai-II to vacate the rooms immediately without further notice. Pertinently on Sunday, authorities ordered enforcement of another lockdown after huge spike and subsequent deaths of Covid-19 patients recorded.

65 Fined For Not Wearing Masks

Baramulla: Authorities imposed fine on drivers for not wearing masks in North Kashmir's Baramulla district. A team led by ARTO Baramulla Jamshed Chowdhary initiated action against 65 drivers and even seized 4 vehicles and imposed fine on them. "All these drivers were fined for not wearing masks. The drive will continue. Today we collected a fine to the tune of Rs 50,000," Chowdhary said.

Union Home Secy Chairs JCoS Meet

Cadre Review Of AIS', Transfer Policy For UT Officers Being Finalized

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Union Home Secretary, Ajay Kumar Bhalla today chaired the second meeting of Joint Committee on Service matter (JCoS) for Union Territory of J&K and Union Territory of Ladakh.

B V R Subrahmanyam, Chief Secretary, J&K, Umang Narula, Advisor to Lt. Governor, UT of Ladakh alongwith Administrative Secretaries of Home Department, General Administration Department and Forest, Ecology & Environment Department participated in the meeting.

During the meeting, it was informed that Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, has received cadre review proposals in respect of all three All India Services (AIS)- Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Police Service (IPS),

Indian Forest Service (IFS), and the same are being expedited for early notification. As per the revised proposals, the cadre strengths of IAS, IPS and IFS have been proposed as 191, 154 and 106, respectively, excluding posts in Ladakh. It was mentioned that an extensive exercise is underway to formulate transfer policy of UT officers to Ladakh, which will be shortly finalized. It was further revealed that there will be special package of incentives to be given to the employees who will be posted in Ladakh.

Further, with regard to career progression of UT officers, it was informed that eligible officers will soon be inducted into IPS and IFS, respectively. Ministry of Home Affairs asked for early resolution of seniority issue in the Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Service for

PAGE 1 Anchor

Swati Joshi

JUST before the earthquake of 7.6 magnitude would wobble Kashmir in the rattling fall of 2005, Tufail Andrabi, 39, was casually conversing with his friends in his hometown Srinagar neighbourhood. But as ground beneath his feet shook, he saw his petrified family members and neighbours coming out of their houses by wringing their hands, beating their chests and praying with their quivering lips.

Many cried, some stood in what looked like a parting embrace, yet most hoped against the hope. "Nobody slept that night," Andrabi, now a software engineer, re-

called the trembling day of his life. "Never in my life had I experienced as intense quake as I did that day. And those periodic aftershocks further freaked everyone in that agonized autumn."

What surprised him that day were his downtown neighbourhood's rundown structures.

"That day most of us thought that they would crumble like a pack of cards anytime soon and bury us alive," Andrabi recounted the bygone horror with vivid details.

"But to everyone's wonder, while some new concrete structures developed cracks, those old structures remain sturdy."

Even today, as the low-intensity tremors are shaking the valley and



reminding many of that devastating fall, those heritage structures are still standing their ground.

With grim reminder, many wonder: Has Kashmir learned its lessons fifteen years after the quake

15 Years Later, Low-Intensity Tremors Testing Kashmir's Shaky Ground

BJP's JK Chief Tests Positive, Singh, Madhav Go Into Quarantine

SRINAGAR: BJP's Jammu and Kashmir chief Ravinder Raina tested positive for Covid-19 on Tuesday, sparking panic among the party rank and file, forcing the top leaders including Ram Madhav, Dr Jitendera Singh and Avinash Rai Khanna to go into self-quarantine.

Raina has been camping in north Kashmir's Bandipora district for the past five days in the wake of the killing of local BJP leader Wasim Bari, his father and brother on July 8. On Sunday, Raina accompanied BJP General Secretary Ram Madhav, MoS in PMO Dr Jitendera Singh, BJP's J&K affairs in-charge Avinash Rai Khanna to Bari's Muslimabad residence in Bandipora.

Raina took to Twitter and wrote: "Hello friends, I was in Kashmir/Bandipora for five days after the killing of BJP leader Wasim Bari, Omar Sultan and his father by the militants. Today I had mild fever. When tested, the report came as Covid-19 positive. No other symptoms."

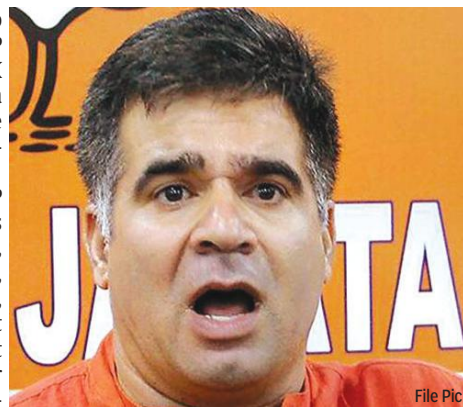
Raina's tweet triggered fear in the entire BJP unit of Kashmir with people voluntarily going for Covid-19 mapping. "I will also go for Covid test as I was with him these days in

Bandipora and also in Srinagar," said BJP spokesman for J&K Altaf Thakur. "For a time being, I have gone into self-quarantine."

Sources in the BJP said that hundreds of party workers, middle-rung leaders, district presidents, zonal heads met Raina over the past five days in Srinagar and Bandipora district. "There is total chaos all around in BJP's Kashmir unit," he said.

A senior party leader and BJP top brass including Ram Madhav, Dr Jitendera Singh and Avinash Rai Khanna have also decided to go for Covid testing as they spent almost an hour with Raina in Bandipora. Khanna said. As a precaution he and all those who were present at a condolence meeting at slain BJP leader. "We have gone into a self-quarantine," Khanna said.

Meanwhile, the party's Kashmir unit has appealed to all the workers who came in contact with the



BJP chief, to go for Covid testing. A statement issued by the party's media in-charge Manzoor Bhat said that all the workers who met BJP chief at Bandipora and Srinagar must come forward and conduct Covid tests.

A party source said that many leaders and workers met Raina without any protection, especially face masks and there is every possibility that they may have contracted the virus. "The party chief may become a super spreader for the virus within the BJP's Kashmir chapter," he said. -With inputs from KNO.

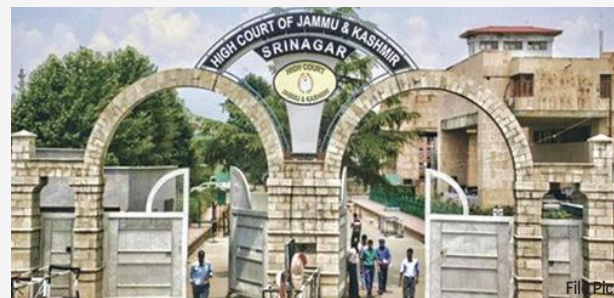
HELLO FRIENDS, I WAS IN KASHMIR/BANDIPORA FOR FIVE days after the killing of BJP leader Wasim Bari, Omar Sultan and his father by the militants. Today I had mild fever. When tested, the report came as Covid-19 positive. No other symptoms."

HC Irked By Poor Internet Speed, Summons J&K Home Secretary

SRINAGAR- Having "struggled" to conduct online hearings due to curbs on internet speed in Jammu and Kashmir, High Court Chief Justice Gita Mittal has summoned Home Secretary Shaleen Kabra to appear before a bench on Thursday via video conferencing and apprise it about the impact of the restrictions on e-connectivity of courts.

Passing an order on a "Court on its Own Motion" on Monday, a division bench of Chief Justice Mittal and Justice Sanjay Dhar expressed concern over urgent issues involving the rights of the residents of the union territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

Giving a background in its



three-page order, the division bench said that virtual hearing has been necessitated because of the strict lockdown being enforced, following a sharp spike in coronavirus cases.

"However, we find today that despite best efforts on the part

of our IT experts, it has been impossible today to have even a bare semblance of a hearing. We have struggled to have virtual/or audio connectivity with the amicus curiae (Monika Kohli) and the several counsels appearing before us. Even the

DGP, ADGP Test Negative for Covid-19

SRINAGAR: A day after the Jammu and Kashmir Police's Headquarters (PHQ) at Peerbagh Srinagar was sanitised, the swab samples of the Director General of Police (DGP) Dilbagh Singh returned negative for Covid-19 on Tuesday.

According to a police official, the PHQ building was sanitised and the swabs of several police officers, including the DGP were taken for testing, after a top-ranking police officer of Assistant Inspector General (AIG)

Along with the samples of Director General, the samples of Additional Director General have also returned Negative".

level had tested positive for the pathogen.

Samples of several more officers, including some IGP, DIGs, and SSPs, who have come into the infected officer, are being collected today for testing today, a senior police officer said on the condition of anonymity.

Confirming the negative test results of DGP, he said, "Along with the samples of Director General, the samples of Additional Director General have also returned Negative".

LG Conducts Aerial Survey Of Wular Lake

SRINAGAR: Active public participation is imperative for developmental process and the Government of Jammu and Kashmir is laying special focus on it. This was stated by the Lieutenant Governor, Girish Chandra Murmu during his visit to Bandipora district where he interacted with various delegations to take stock of the developmental needs of people of the district.

He was accompanied by Advisor to the Lieutenant Governor, Bas-eer Ahmad Khan; Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Pandurang K. Pole; IGP Kashmir, Vijay Kumar; Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Owais Ahmad and heads of various departments.

The Lt Governor also e-inaugurated six developmental projects worth Rs 8.52 cr and laid foundation stones of five projects worth Rs 21.52 cr for Bandipora



SRINAGAR CITY CENTRE wore a deserted look on Tuesday following reimposition of lockdown by the district administration to flatten the curve. KO photo Abid Bhat

Central Law On Rights Of Disabled J&K Govt Comes Up With Draft Rules

SRINAGAR: Nearly eight months after re-organisation of the erstwhile state of J&K, the administration of J&K Union Territory has come up with draft rules for implementation of "The Right of Persons with Disabilities Act-2016".

The draft rules have been put in public domain by Social Welfare department, which deals with matters concerning persons with disabilities, for feedback/suggestions.

The Rules deal with the rights, entitlements and structures at different levels for persons with disabilities in J&K UT.

According to the rules, the research committee on disability will comprise of an administrative secre-

tary, Health and Medical Education department, or head of an institution dealing in the field of science and medical research, who will function as its ex-officio chairperson.

It shall have representatives from Directorate of Health Services, Government Medical College Jammu/Srinagar, Director Social Welfare Kashmir/Jammu and others.

The panel shall also have five members as representatives from a registered Union Territory level organization representing each of the five groups of specified disabilities in the Schedule of the Act, who will be nominated by government.

According to the rules, the Deputy Commissioners of the

Oats, Rye Bran May Reduce Weight Gain, Hepatic Inflammation

Agencies

Want to lose some weight? Read on. Researchers have found that the consumption of dietary fibre from oat and rye brans increased the growth of beneficial microbes in the intestines and reduced hepatic inflammation.

In addition, diets enriched with oat or rye bran were shown to attenuate weight gain. The effects of oat and rye were partly different, but both were benefi-

cial for health.

For the study, published in the Molecular Nutrition & Food Research, the research team from the University of Eastern Finland, VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland collaborated with the University of Hong Kong.

The health benefits of oat, rye and other whole-grain products have been widely studied, and their use has been associated with decreased inflammation and improved glucose, lipid and adipose tissue metabolism in human and animal experimental



research.

In addition, they have been linked to a decreased risk of obesity, metabolic syndrome, cardiovascular diseases and type-2 diabetes. Different dietary fibres are also known to have different health effects.

In the current study, the research team wanted to investigate differences in metabolites produced by gut microbiota and their interactions with host metabolism in response to supplementation with oat and rye bran fibres.

The study was an animal experiment during which mice were fed a high-fat Western diet for 17 weeks. Two groups were fed the same diet enriched with 10 per cent of either oat or rye bran.

Among the various gut microbial metabolites, this study focused on those especially relevant to the development of fatty liver disease, which is often associated with obesity. Thus, microbial metabolites were assessed by measuring cecal short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs), ileal and fae-

cal bile acids, and the expression of genes related to tryptophan metabolism.

The findings suggest that both brans have the capacity to create a favourable environment in the gut by supporting the growth of beneficial microbes.

Both bran fibres enhanced the production of SCFAs, leading to improved gut integrity, reduced liver inflammation. "In addition, both oat and rye supplementation were shown to attenuate weight gain associated with a high-fat diet," the authors noted.

15 Years Later, Low-Intensity

credited Kashmir's unique construction—Dhaji Diwari—for showing "very good seismic performance".

An Earthquake Antidote

Dhaji Diwari is a conventional earthquake-resistant construction method in which timber frames are used for building structures. The spaces in the frame are filled by stones or bricks and plastered in mud mortar.

This 200-year-old construction technique got wide recognition after the 2005 Kashmir earthquake.

This traditional form of construction was safer due to the presence of "wood runners at each floor binding the walls together with the floors with no abrupt discontinuities or variations in stiffness in the diaphragms acting as seismic resistant structure" unlike the present form of construction which is weak, rigid and stiff, claims a study by researcher Maqbool Yusuf.

The study notes that since Kashmir has not faced an earthquake of large magnitude after 2005, the structures in the valley are unplanned, weak and unsafe, mostly constructed "without knowledge of future severe seismicity in this region".

Kashmir's present day infrastructure remains its Achilles heel. "If it was dismal at that time [in 2005]," Saleem Beg asserted, "it's catastrophic now!"

As the population of Kashmir has grown to about 7 million, the conventional structures in the valley are replaced by modern unscentific structures lacking quake immunity.

"A seven-storey hospital is constructed in Rajbagh," Beg said. "It's a prime residential area where there's no space for an ambulance to take a turn. As such haphazard construction is happening in the valley, where's the regulatory mechanism?"

Having suffered the massive jolts before, Beg said, the government should've implemented strict laws that prohibit the constructional activities which do not suffice to be earthquake resistant.

"Doing an awareness drive will not stop people from constructing their houses with modern unscentific techniques," emphasized Beg. "Awareness is no alternative for law."

He suggested that regulations make people aware and the government should be swift in employing a regulatory mechanism.

In order to understand the official preparedness, Kashmir Observer approached Disaster Management and other allied bodies. But the repeated attempts didn't elucidate any response on the groundwork in wake of any major tremor in the valley.

Fatal Positioning

Kashmir lies in Seismic Zone V which is seismically the most active region where some of the powerful earthquakes have occurred in past.

Since January 2020, 37 minor earthquakes have hit the Jammu and Kashmir region, according to the data available on the website of the National Center of Seismology.

"The epicenters of these earthquakes are in the northwestern and southeastern sides of the valley," said Dr. Afroz Ahmad Shah, Assistant Professor in Structural Geology at Universiti Brunei Darussalam.

Some of these earthquakes are most probably related to the local active faults, he said, and some have ruptured frontal portions at depth.

A fault is a fracture in the earth's crust which is formed due to stress by the movements of the tectonic plates, the professor explained. This movement, he said, may occur rapidly, in the form of an earthquake.

"Since these are small quakes, therefore, it will be hard to know which part of the fault they have ruptured," Dr. Shah said.

On being asked about the reason behind the recurring earthquakes in the valley, the young professor said that India is in collision with the Eurasian plate, which causes earthquakes.

"Kashmir is located at a point where the Indian plate meets the Eurasian plate," he said.

"The collision between the plates has resulted in the formation of the Himalayas making the region prone to seismic activity. The movements of the plates create tremendous stress to build up along faults which sometimes results in earthquakes releasing the built-up stress."

Amid the low-intensity jolts in the valley, people are skeptical that the recurring foreshocks—earthquakes which occur before the mainshock—may be a precursor to an earthquake of a bigger magnitude.

Explaining this, Dr. Shah said that previous studies have shown that some foreshocks may continue for years, and still, it's not feasible to differentiate the mainshock from foreshocks.

"Not each earthquake comes with a warning shot, the foreshock," he said. "Some major earthquakes have occurred without any foreshock at all."

Calling such events as precursors to the main event is not correct, the professor stressed.

Looking at the earthquakes that have occurred from 1970 until now (as filled coloured circles show in above picture), most of the earthquakes have struck northeast and southwest portions of Kashmir region, explained Shah.

"This means that the earthquake does occur but differentiating foreshocks from mainshocks have always been a difficult task."

Besides Kashmir, Delhi is also experiencing recurring tremors lately. On being asked about the similarity between the minor earthquakes in both the regions, Dr. Shah explained that the earthquakes in Delhi and Kashmir have occurred on two different fault systems.

"Delhi earthquakes have occurred in the Indian tectonic plates and away from the plate margin marked by the active Main Himalayan/Frontal Thrust (MHT/MFT)," he said.

MHT/MFT fault is the youngest and it also absorbs about half of the regional tectonic convergence between the Indian plate and southern Tibet which poses a severe earthquake hazard and risk to millions of people that live nearby, the professor explained.

On being asked about the proneness of Kashmir to earthquakes as compared to other regions falling in Seismic Zone V, Dr. Shah said that Kashmir is vulnerable to earthquakes, but to say it is more prone to earthquakes may be difficult to answer.

"This needs complete information on strain accumulation on faults, mapping of unknown faults, and how faults have ruptured in the past," explained Dr. Shah.

But these details are largely missing.

The Himalayan geological fault system is considered the largest and the fastest slipping continental megathrust that traverses from Pakistan through India and Nepal, covering a distance of around 2500 km along the southern side of the Himalayan mountain range.

The entire extent of the fault is active and capable of producing major earthquakes but the timing remains uncertain, Dr. Shah continued.

"Seismic zonation maps change whenever new faults are discovered, so, I would not fully rely on such maps," the professor said.

"Advanced and reliable seismic scenario maps are used in California where each fault is characterized."

Clarifying the nature of the faults, Dr. Shah said that faults work as a family where each member behaves differently, and to understand the faults better, the entire family system has to be understood.

"Kashmir is still at a very juvenile stage of earthquake research and we have to work hard to match the standards of California or Japan," the professor said.

However, according to various studies the risk of earthquake in Kashmir is real, and the region could be hit by a major earthquake in the future.

"But one can't predict it's accurate timing," Dr. Shah said.

"The best remedy is to prepare for any eventuality. But unfortunately, there are no preparations on the ground."

7 More Deaths Take J&K...

Prior to him, a 60-year-old covid-19 patient from Nadihal area of Baramulla district died at SKIMS Soura, nine days after he was admitted to the tertiary care hospital.

"He was a case of HTN, T2DM, CKD, ESRD, (bilateral community acquired pneumonia (CAP)," Professor Farooq Jan, Medical Superintendent of the hospital, told GNS. "He expired at around 4:00 a.m. today," Prof Jan added.

Superintendent SMHS Hospital Dr Nazir Choudhary told GNS that a test report of a 35-year-old paramilitary CRPF trooper from 66th Battalion Baramulla returned positive for the covid-19, a day after his death.

A resident of Nowshera Rajouri, the tricenarian was suffering from high fever and pneumonia, he added.

Meanwhile, according to Dr Majid Mahrib, Medical Superintendent GMC Anantnag, two women, both aged 60-years, from Semthan Kulgam and Anantnag died at the hospital on July 10 and their bodies were handed over to the families as per the new protocol. "Their samples returned positive late last night," he added.

With these deaths, 177 people in Kashmir and 18 in Jammu have died so far due to the covid-19.

Srinagar district with 46 deaths has the highest fatalities followed by Baramulla (37), Kulgam (22), Shopian (17), Anantnag (15), Budgam (14), eleven each in Jammu and Kupwara, Pulwama (6), Bandipora (3), Ganderbal (4) and Doda (2) while one death each has been reported from Poonch, Udhampur, Rajouri and Kathua. (With inputs from GNS)

346 New Covid-19 Cases Take

at the viral diagnostic laboratory of the hospital today, 117 returned positive for the virus.

Professor Farooq Jan, Medical Superintendent SKIMS Soura said 34 are from Srinagar, 18 from Anantnag, 16 from Pulwama, 10 from Budgam, nine from Baramulla, eight each from SSB/CRPF and Kulgam, seven from Bandipora, two each from Kupwara and Ganderbal besides one each from Shopian, Kargil and Banihal.

The cases from Anantnag include male (61) from Nanil, female (30) from Bijbehara, male (26) from Dangerpora Siligam, male (50) and female (40) from Chittergull, female (29) from Fatehpura Larkipora, male (28) from Bartgund Verinag, female (28) and male (25) from Anchidora, female (23) from Nasu, male (50) from Sallar, female (22) from Ashajipora, female (22) from Arther, male (04) from Sirgufwara, female (24) from Dahnambal, male (65) Dailgam, male (60) from Nathpora, female (28) from Phehjam.

The cases from Bandipora include male (30) from Sumbal, female (36) from Shahgund, male (20) from Safapora, female (35) from Ganastan, female (40) from Ayithmulla, male (54) from Dawar, male (5 months) from Qazipora.

The Budgam Cases include male (08) from Chaira Magam, female (42) from Kanihama, male (30) from Gondipora, male (26) from Bkpora, male (52) and female (26) from Ompora, female (50) from Chadoora, female (30) from Tilsara Cheri Shareef, two males (46, 43) from 43 Bn DPL Budgam.

The cases from Baramulla include male (65) from Baramulla, male (25) from Khandar, male (65) from Rangpora, two females (60, 64) and male (50) from Sopore, male (46) from Khawja Bagh, female (NA) from Thandipora, male (60) from Tangmarg.

The Kulgam Cases include female (34) from Salyaloo, female (42) from Chowgam, male (35) Checki Wangund, male (59) from Y.K. Pora, male (35) from Brinal, male (32) from Lammar, male (26) from H C Gam, male (30) from Yaripora.

The Srinagar cases include male (25) from Bohrikadal, female (55) from Khanyar, three males (35, 22, 75) from Soura, male (70) from Zakura, male (50) from Rajbagh, male (57) from Sanat Nagar, two males (48, 35) from SKIMS, male (56) from Bemina, male (NA) from Nowshera, male (34) from Fateh Kadal, male (35) from Mallabagh, female (37) from Lal Bazar, female (80) from Alamgiri Bazar, female (70) from Illahi Bagh, female (51) from Dalgate, female (60) from Noorbagh, female (55) and male (65) from Rangpora, female (40) from Aali Kadal, female (06 months) from Awantabbawan, male (70) from Hyderpora, male (52) from Lal Bazar, female (70) from Rainawari, three males (60, 62, 36) from Srinagar, female (60) from Botakadal, male (86) from Batamalo, female (50) from Rafiabab, female (45) from Shaheedgunj, male (35) from Naseem Bagh.

The Pulwama cases include male (32) from Pulwama, male (62) from Noorpora, four males (52, 25, 45, 50) from Rajpora, male (22) from Dangerpora, male (32) from Naira, two males (39, 42) from Police Station Sidco, five males (20, 24, 50, 50, 32) from Sidco, female (48) from Awantipora. The Kupwara cases include female (52) from Kupwara, male (29) from 105 Bn Trehgam. The Ganderbal cases include female (35) from Dab, male (NA) from Anderwan. The Shopian cases include female (45) from Haff Shirmal. The Kargil cases include male (07) from Kargil. The Banihal cases include female (59) from Wagora.

The cases from CRPF include seven males (30, 32, 32, 27, 55, 29, 28) from SSB SICC Srinagar, male (53) from CRPF 178 Bn Shopian.

Dr Riyaz Untoo, Principal SKIMS Bemina said that out of 540 samples processed at the hospital's lab, 48 tested positive for COVID-19, all from Srinagar.

The cases include F-50yrs-Buchpora, F-51yrs-Alamgari Bazar, F-20yrs-Alamgari Bazar, F-18, F-65 and F-4yrs, F-50yrs and M-38yrs from Lalbazar, M-18yrs and M-32yrs from Zaidibal, M-37yrs, M-23yrs, M-58 and M-31yrs from High Court, F-46yrs and F-38yrs from KathiDarwaza, M-50yrs-Charlie Sha-

reef, M.32yrs-183 BN CRPF, M-39yrs-18 BN CRPF, M-42yrs-18 BN CRPF, M-21yrs-Doda, M-43yrs-Chadoora, M-29yrs-Budgam, M-24yrs-Soibugh, M-34yrs, M-34yrs, M-31yrs, M-40yrs, M-38yrs, M-34yrs, M-48yrs, M-27yrs from Batamalo, F-38yrs-Gulab Bagh, M-27yrs-Shalima, M-55yrs-Basant Bagh, F-26yrs-Wanbal, M-35yrs-Hazratbal, F-25yrs, F-44yrs, F-60yrs, M-46yrs-Tankipora, F-42yrs from Tankipora and F-13yrs-Wazepora, F-65yrs, F-35yrs, M-71yrs, M-20yrs and F-45yrs-ShahkadalThe CD cases include four males(63, 49, 48, 53) from CRPF / Imamsahib, male (49) and female (45) from Hillow, female (29) from Dk Pora, two males (39, 29) from Sonerwani, male (60) and female (55) from Brar, two females (35, 17) from Ashtangoo, male (24) from Krangsoo, Six males (75, 44, 24, 24, 62, 23) and two females (NA, 57) from NA, male (20) from Arwani, male (26) from Baramulla, male (42) from Anantnag, male (45) from Pirbagh Srg, male (80) from Nowhatta Srg, female (26) from Nawa, two females (65, 55) and male (57) from Wuyan Pampore, male (13) from Chandi-gam Kupwara, male (30) from Sethar Kakapora, four males (60, 55, 65, 10) and female (36) from Khadermoh Pulwama, three females (20, 21, 62) from Wanpora Pulwama, female (26) from Uthoora Pulwama, male (45) from Nowgam Srg, male (50) from PHC Awantipora, two males (53, 19) from Bathen Khrew, male (29) from Adoor, Sixteen males (21, 22, 22, 29, 25, NA, 26, 19, 28, 28, 70, 25, 46, 24, 26, 51) from Kulgam, two males (21, 22) from Qasaigam, male (51) from Dist Jai, four males (29, 23, 37, 24) from Yaripora, two males (22, 21) from Shopian, male (25) from Khatir, male (NA) from VC Lodge Hazratbal, female (40) and male (29) from Budgam, four males (30, 45, 21, 24) from Bijbehara, male (24) from Arwani, male (27) from Lalipora, male (19) from Harman, two males (24, 30) from Safakadal, male (42) from Mahur, male (35) from Kheribal, female (65) from Kokernag, male (50) from Lalbazar Srg, female (NA) from Hajin Bandipora, female (30) from Anantnag, male (60) from Barzulla, male (33) from Natipora, female (NA) from Pulwama, male (35) from Zaina Kadal, female (30) from Balgarden Srg, female (60) from Rajbagh Srg, male (42) from Wanganpora Srg, male (39) from Alamgiri Bazar Srg, female (52) from Kargil, female (52) from Wazir Bagh Srg, male (62) from Hawal Srg, male (40) from Qamarwari Srg, female (35) from Karfali Mohalla Srg, female (50) from Safakadal Srg, two females (45, 32) from Budshah Nagar Srg, female (33) from Zainakadal Srg, male (52) from Lal Bazar Srg, female (45) from Kangan, male (27) from Harwan Srg, male (59) from Galwanpora Srg, male (70) from Kupwara, male (40) from Hyderpora Srg, male (45) from Humhama Budgam, male (37) from Zainakadal Srg, male (26) from Khanyar, two males (23, 08) and two females (50, 11) from Bemina Srg, male (51) from Sanat Nagar Srg, male (NA) from 53 Bn CRPF Baramulla, male (53) from Zaldagar Srg, male (45) from Pampore Pulwama, male (75) from Nowhatta Srg, male (82) from Nishat Srg, male (55) from Tangmarg Baramulla, male (30) from Chadoora Budgam, male (27) from Boys Hostel GMC Bemina, male (39) from Khrew and three male (60, 85, 50) from NA.

Meanwhile, 128 more COVID-19 patients have recovered and were discharged from various hospitals including 28 from Jammu Division and 100 from Valley.

HC Irked By Poor Internet...

learned Advocate General has expressed grave difficulty in joining the hearing," the order said.

The division bench noted that access to justice is a fundamental right "and cannot be impeded" while reasoning that courts remain accessible to every citizen of the union territories.

"Given the extreme difficulty being faced by us, let Shaleen Kabra, Home Secretary, appear before us through video conferencing and apprise this court about the impact of the restrictions on e-connectivity of the courts," the order said, posting the matter for July 16.

The court also referred to an order passed by the Supreme Court in May in which the apex court had constituted a committee at the highest level to undertake a review of connectivity restrictions imposed by authorities.

The Supreme Court had on May 11 ordered setting up a high-powered committee headed by the union home secretary to examine the relief sought by journalists, doctors and lawyers from Jammu and Kashmir and explore an alternative mechanism to resolve problems arising out of slow Internet speed in the union territory amid a lockdown to curb the spread of COVID-19.

The high court had taken suo motu cognisance of the difficulties faced by the public during the COVID-19 lockdown and appointed Monika Kohli as an amicus curiae in the case.

Earlier in April, the high court had asked for a status report on restoration of 4G internet facility after it was informed that non-availability of high-speed internet was hampering studies of children who were confined to their homes because of the pandemic.

The high court chief justice has been constantly reviewing the response of administrations of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh in tackling COVID-19 and holding regular hearings through video conferencing with all stakeholders involved in the fight against COVID-19.

Internet was shut in erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir on August 5 last year after the Centre announced revocation of special status of Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcation of the state into union territories of Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir.

Internet was restored in a phased manner from January this year but with a slow speed of 2G.

LG Conducts Aerial Survey...

district, besides reviewing the progress being made on various developmental projects and works under execution.

Earlier, the Lt Governor conducted an aerial survey of Wular Lake to inspect the dredging, restoration work and the overall condition of the lake. He was accompanied by Chief Executive Director, Wular Conservation & Management Authority (WUC-MA), Syed Farooq Ahmad Gillani.

In continuation to his public outreach programme, the Lt Governor met 16 delegations including deputation of BDC Chairpersons, representatives of PRLs, Urban Local Bodies, Bandipora Civil Society, Tehsil Coordination Committee Hajin, Traders Federation, Fruit Growers Association, representatives of Schedule Tribe (Gujjar and Bakerwal) community, representatives of Fisherman Community, Artisans Association, Self Help Groups of Engineers, National Youth Corps members and progressive farmers' members. He took stock of their grievances and other developmental issues of Bandipora district.

While interacting with the members of the delegations, the Lt Governor observed that the Government is taking various

initiatives to cater to the developmental needs of the people of J&K, with special focus on strengthening the grass root level of democracy through public participation in the developmental process.

Stressing on effective implementation of public welfare schemes, he asked the locals to avail of maximum benefits of various welfare schemes and sought their active participation in developmental programmes launched by the government.

The members of the delegations projected various demands pertaining to empowerment of PRLs and proper security for its members, augmentation of healthcare infrastructure, establishment of Women's Degree College in Bandipora, loans to farmers at lower interest rates, augmentation of irrigation facilities, strengthening road connectivity, augmentation of power and water supply, establishment of Training and Skill Development Centres for girls, development of tourism sector in the district, beautification and development of Bandipora town, beautification of Wular lake and its coastline, early completion of District Hospital complex, augmentation of sports infrastructure, special relief package for artisans to compensate losses due to COVID-19 lockdown, construction of Bandipora-Gurez Road Tunnel, improvement of mobile network and augmentation of Solar Power Plant in Gurez, establishment of Maternity Hospital in Gurez, insurance scheme for fishermen community, establishment of fruit and vegetable Mandi and early completion of already taken up works under different schemes including Back to Village Programme.

Union Home Secy Chairs...

inducting the eligible officers to IAS.

The meeting also discussed matters relating to interim cadre strengths of All India Services as well as State Services of both the Union Territories, proposal of split of officers, promotion of officers of AIS, transfer/deputation of non-All India Services and UT officers between the two UTs.

J&K Govt Comes Up...

concerned district shall be the designated authority under subsection (1) of section 15 of the Act to take measures for creating social awareness to support persons with disabilities in exercising their legal capacity.

"A nodal officer shall be designated in each Chief Education Office of the Department of School Education, every urban local body and in both the Directorates of Social Welfare within three months of the notification of these rules, to deal with all matters relating to admission of children with disabilities and the facilities to be provided to them in schools in accordance with the provisions of sections 16 and 31 of the Act, "reads the draft.

The framework also provides that every government establishment in order to give effect to the reservation provided to the persons with disability shall take into account four percent of the total number of vacancies in the cadre strength in each group of posts, for the purpose of computation of vacancies for the persons with benchmark disabilities

The rules also states that the joint director in the Directorates of Social Welfare shall be the competent authority under section 49 for the purpose of registration of Institutions for Persons with Disabilities and grants to such Institutions.

It also provides legal protection to disability certificates issued under the disability law of erstwhile state of J&K.

"The certificate of disability issued under The Jammu and Kashmir Persons with Disabilities Act, 2018 shall continue to be valid after commencement of the Act for the period specified therein," the rules state.

It also deals with procedure to be adopted for constitution of advisory board provided under the law—(KNO)

Govt All Set To Roll Out...

Registration, Dr Pawan Kotwal today reviewed the preparedness of introduction of e-tamping.

The J&K Branch head of SHCIL, Harmandeep Singh, apprised the FC that to roll out the e-stamping in the Union territory, the agency requires the authenticated list of SRO offices and contact detail for creation of their location based user IDs, list of licensed stamp vendors and nomination of trainers and Nodal officer for better coordination with the agency. The FC enjoined upon all the registrars and sub Registrars to provide the detail required by the agency.

Dr Kotwal also nominated Rafiq Ahmad Jaral, as Nodal Officer for better coordination with SHCIL.

The meeting was attended by Additional Inspector General of Registration Jammu, Mr Rishpal Singh, Commissioner State Taxes, Mr PK Batht and Deputy Commissioner Stamps Jammu Mr Rakesh Kumar Gupta. To introduce the E-stamping at the earliest, Dr Kotwal directed AIGR, Jammu/Kashmir, to get the things done on mission mode.

The e-stamping is electronically generated stamp paper, which could be used by the registrant public as a safe and secure method of paying stamp duty for any purpose without physical purchase of stamp paper. The e-stamping facility will not only benefit the public for a hassle-free payment of stamp duty, but the government shall also benefit out of it, as it would save the cost of printing, storage and transportation of stamp papers. The e-stamping procedure is secure, cheaper, time-saving and reliable, compared to the existing system, where you need to buy stamp papers for any kind of registration.

LG Visits Slain Bjp Leaders...

that the perpetrators of this dastardly act of violence would be brought to justice.

Such heinous act is an attempt to spread fear, and there can be no justification for such attacks, he added.

Stranded Srinagar Man Dies...

return ticket was on 25 March but due to sudden lockdown and cancellation of flights forced him to stay there.

"Since June last month, he was not keeping well and had been admitted in a hospital. His test for Covid-19 infection was found negative. He was asthmatic and died in the hospital. He was buried there in Saudi Arabia.

SRINAGAR, JULY 14: Commissioner Secretary, Higher Education Department, Talat Parvez Rohella, today chaired a meeting to review progress on accreditation of government degree colleges of Kashmir division by National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC).

The meeting was attended by Director Finance, Director Planning, Director Higher Education, Director Technical Colleges, Nodal Principal Kashmir besides Principals of the colleges which are due for NAAC accreditation.

Commissioner Secretary assessed

the colleges for the basic accreditation parameters set by NAAC like Curricular Aspects, Teaching-Learning and Evaluation, Research, Innovations and Extension, Infrastructure and Learning Resources, Student Support and Progression, Governance, Leadership and Management besides Institutional Values and Best Practices. He suggested slew of measures for all the parameters which can enhance the grading prospects of the colleges. He sought inputs from the Principals about the progress made in respect of all these parameters and asked

In order to facilitate the colleges in preparing for NAAC accreditation, Commissioner Secretary directed Nodal Principal Kashmir, to conduct a workshop involving subject experts for the Coordinators of Internal Quality Assurance Cells (IQAC) of different colleges.

Meanwhile, Director Colleges, Professor Yaseen Ahmad Shah, informed that around 50 colleges have been accredited by NAAC and the higher education department is keen to help remaining colleges for securing the accreditation with impressive grade. Prof. Ashai also shared her inputs on the ways to improve performance of colleges on different assessment parameters.

Bandipora: A 22 year old youth was electrocuted to death in Kalosa area of Bandipora District on Tuesday, while the other sustained serious injuries, after coming into contact with a live electric wire.

Officials said that two youth were seriously injured in Kalosa area of Bandipora after they received electric shock on Tuesday morning and one among the two succumbed to injuries later in the hospital.

After being electrocuted, both fell unconscious and were immediately shifted to the District Hospital Bandipora, where doctors declared Hajam dead on arrival, the officials said.

Kangan: Body of a missing woman from Kangan area was recovered from Nalla Sindh, near Akhaal in Central Kashmir District Ganderbal on Tuesday morning. Identified as Rubeena Jan, wife of Abdul Mjeed Khan and a resident of Gonchi Mohalla Akhaal Kangan had gone missing from her home on July 11 and family was desperately looking for her since then.

Officials said that a missing report was registered with the local police station; however all the efforts of searching the missing woman did not bear any fruit, till her decomposed body was recovered from Nallah Sindh on Tuesday noon, near her village Gonchi Mohalla Akhaal of Kangan block.

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party (JKAP) president Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari on Tuesday urged the government of India to establish a separate bench of Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) at Srinagar so as to do justice with thousands of employees who cannot afford to visit and stay in Jammu to pursue adjudication of their service related grievances.

In a statement issued TP CNS, Buhkari while appreciating the functioning of CAT Bench in Jammu said the employees of Kashmir division need a separate circuit bench in Srinagar in view of tough terrain and harsh climatic conditions of the region. “The effective and speedy dispute resolution process with respect to recruitment and conditions of service matters of persons against the Union or other authorities under the control of the Government demands an exclusive bench to be set up at Srinagar,” he observed.

Bukhari expressed gratitude to the union home ministry for accepting a huge public demand for keeping J&K out of the jurisdiction of Chandigarh administrative tribunal and establishing one circuit bench of the tribunal at Jammu. However, he said that a single circuit bench for the entire J&K would prove insufficient to provide succor in service matters to the disputants of Kashmir division who cannot afford to approach it in Jammu because of multiple factors. "In Kashmir division a huge chunk of service matters belong to daily wagers, casual labourers, consolidated workers, ITI and skilled workers, contractual and adhoc appointees, Class IV besides other low paid employees who can hardly afford the litigation costs, fee for lawyers, and travel and stay expenditures if their litigations are shifted to CAT bench in Jammu," he observed.

DIAL-EMMA

- TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266680
- 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
- BUIBHERA: 01932-228243
- PAMPORE: 01933-294132
- PATTAN: 01954-293507
- QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

HIGHWAY STATIONS

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

This Day In History

- 1099 - City of Jerusalem is captured and plundered by Crusader forces during the First Crusade
- 1205 - Pope Innocent III states Jews are doomed to perpetual servitude and subjugation due to crucifixion of Jesus
- 1207 - King John of England expels Canterbury monks for supporting Archbishop of Canterbury Stephen Langton.
- 1240 - A Novgorodian army led by Alexander Nevsky defeats the Swedes in the Battle of the Neva
- 1307 Duke Henrik of Prussia chosen as King of Bohemia
- 1381 John Ball, a leader in the Peasants' Revolt, is hung, drawn and quartered in the presence of Richard II of England
- Battle/Battle of Grunwald
- 1410 - Battle of Grunwald (First Battle of Tannenberg, Battle of Žalgiris), one of Medieval Europe's largest battles during Poland-Lithuanian Teutonic War. Polish King Władysław Jagiełło and Lithuanian Grand Duke Vytautas defeat Teutonic Ulrich von Jungingen
- 1915 - The Austro-German forces launch an offensive along the Eastern Front
- 1918 - World War I: Second Battle of Marne begins
- 1923 - Italian parliament accepts new constitution
- 1940 - Physicist Donald Kerst becomes the first person to accelerate electrons using electromagnetic induction, reaching energies of 2.3 MeV, when his betatron device (a particle accelerator) becomes operational
- Event of Interest/Event of Interest
- 1941 - Howard Florey and Norman Heatley present freeze dried mold cultures (Penicillin)
- 1941 - Britain's MAUDE Report edited by James Chadwick approved, concludes an atomic bomb is feasible
- 1948 - US President Harry Truman nominated for another term (Philadelphia)
- 1955 - 18 Nobel laureates sign the Mainau Declaration against nuclear war
- 1959 - The US steel strike of 1959 begins, leading to significant importation of foreign steel for the first time in United States history.
- 1961 - Spain accepts equal rights for men and women
- 1962 - Algeria becomes member of Arab League
- 1971 - US President Richard Nixon announces he will visit the People's Republic of China
- 1975 - Soyuz 19 and Apollo 18 launched; will rendezvous 2 days later
- 1991 - US troops leave northern Iraq
- 1992 - Pope John Paul II hospitalized for 3 weeks to have tumor removed
- 1992 - The Security Council of the UN examine violence in South Africa
- 1994 - Israel and Jordan agree to talks in Washington, D.C. on July 25th
- 1999 - Scientists uncover possible reason for SS Waratoh's disappearance 100 years later; The SS Waratoh was a luxury steamer which was not reach its destination in 1909, and no trace of the wreckage was ever found
- 2002 - A. P. J. Abdul Kalam is elected 11th President of India (results announced 18th July).
- 2002 - Anti-Terrorism Court of Pakistan hands down the death sentence to British born Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh and life terms to three others suspected of murdering World Journal reporter Daniel Pearl
- 2012 - 39 pilgrims are killed in a bus crash in Parasi, Nepal
- 2012 - A Russian Soyuz rocket with an international team launches for a mission to the International Space Station
- 2014 - 20 people are killed & 100 are injured after a train derailed in Moscow
- 2014 - Israel announces it has officially voted to accept the ceasefire proposed by Egypt; Hamas reject, saying they were not consulted

From KO Archives

*Hurriyat Wants Center To
Set Date For Talks*

Initiative lies with Delhi: Umar

Observer News Service

Srinagar - Chairman of the moderate faction of the Hurriyat Conference, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq on Tuesday said that his group was ready to talk to New Delhi but was upto the latter to decide about the venue and the date for such a meeting.

Talking to reporters after an extra ordinary meeting of the Hurriyat Conference, Umar said that his party was ready to open a free and frank dialogue with New Delhi but added that initiative for this had to be taken by the centre. "We are willing to resume talks with the Prime Minister. If the government is serious about the dialogue process, it should fix the date and venue for the next round of talks," he said.

Umar also indicated that the separatists would not stick to their earlier demand that New Delhi issue a fresh invitation to them for talks, saying instead they were awaiting "a communication from Delhi that would indicate the date and venue of the proposed meeting" with the prime minister.

"We don't insist on a renewed invitation by the Indian government, but since the meeting is likely to be held in Delhi, the government must communicate to us the date and venue of such a meeting," he said.

If Manmohan Singh, however, "wants to talk with us in Kashmir, we can fix the date and venue... In case the government cannot decide Hurriyat would be ready" to make arrangements, he said.

Arguing that the Indo-Pak thaw and reconciliation process could "not bring lasting peace in the sub-continent" unless the Kashmir issue was resolved to the satisfaction of the people of the state, the separatist leader said the talks should be "Kashmir-centric".

He said that Hurriyat talks with the centre would be on the same pattern on which two rounds of talks were held with the erstwhile NDA government. The proposed talks, he said, would be aimed to find some amicable resolution of Kashmir, outside the ambit of the constitution and on the basis of triangular talks as the Hurriyat has been pleading for.

Umar disclosed that Hurriyat executive will be having a meeting with the migrant Kashmiri Pandits at Srinagar on July, 19. The meeting will discuss the possible return of migrants to their respective homes, he said adding that Pandits were part and parcel of Kashmir's rich and glorious history and without them Kashmir was incomplete.

"We feel Kashmir is a political problem whose solution can only be found in accordance with the aspirations of the local people,"

(Kashmir Observer, 15 July, 2005)

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

Office of the Executive Engineer, R&B

Special Sub-Division, Uri.

CORRIGENDUM

Subject: EXTENSION NOTICE.

Reference: This Office NIT No. (22) Sr. No. (01) of 2020-21, Dated: 01-07-2020, issued under Endstt. No. SSDU/ 2020/ 913-22, Dated: 01-07-2020.

Due to continuous lockdown since 7th of July 2020 till 12th of July 2020 in Baramulla Town and its adjacent areas, including Uri as per orders of District Magistrate, Baramulla in view of surge in COVID-19 Positive Cases, the Bid Submission End Date and Date of Opening of Bids of above mentioned NIT is hereby rescheduled as under:-

1. Bid Submission End Date.	17-07-2020 up to 4.00 P.M.
2. Deadline for receiving the Hard Copy (Original Treasury Challan/ Receipt and EMD) – [The date should be one day after bid submission end date].	Hard copy shall be obtained only from the bidder who is declared as Lowest Bidder (L-1) at the time of opening. The cost of tender documents will be collected through e-challan/ receipt. However the unsuccessful bidders submit the same separately after opening of bids.
3. Date and Time of Opening of Bids (Online).	18-07-2020 at 11.00 A.M.

All other terms & conditions shall remain intact as notified in the said NIT's.

No. SSDU/ 2020/ 1011-20.
Dated: 09-07-2020.

Sd/=
Executive Engineer,
R&B Special Sub-Division, Uri.
/M. Yousuf/

DIPK-2929/20

Government of Jammu and Kashmir

Office of Commissioner Food and Drugs Administration

Subject: Extension of time period for renewal of License or Registration.

NOTICE

It is hereby notified for information of all the stakeholders associated with manufacturing, processing, distribution and sale of food products/articles that FSSAI in view of the situation arising due to Novel Corona Virus Disease-2019 (COVID-19) and difficulties being faced by Food Business Operators (FBOs) in the Union Territory of J&K, in filing the renewal applications, has allowed the FBOs, whose period of validity of license/registration has expired / to be expired during the period of 1st August 2019 to 31.07.2020, to file applications for renewal of license/registration till 31st July 2020 without any late fee as per clause 2.1.7(4) as per FSS (Licensing and Registration of Food Businesses) regulations, 2011.

It has further been ordered that in the interim period, FSSAI License/Registrations shall be deemed to be valid. However, no claim of refund of late fee paid of already applied renewal applications shall be admissible.

Sd/-
Shakeel-Ur-Rehman (KAS)
Commissioner,
Food & Drugs Administration, J&K

No. DFO/FSSA/JK/244/2020

Dated: 13.07.2020

DIPK-2918/20

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Switchboard: (0194) 2106304
Editorial: (0194) 2502327
Email editorial: editor@kashmirobserver.net

Protect Livelihoods Too

From July 13 onwards, the administration has re-imposed lockdown in Srinagar following a surge in Covid cases over the past one week. Lal Chowk and 67 other areas in Srinagar have been declared as containment zones. The authorities have sealed Ghanta Ghar at Lal Chowk and also Maisuma, Natipora and Eidgah among several areas to send a message about the seriousness of the situation. J&K has recorded over 10,000 coronavirus cases so far, majority of them in the Kashmir valley. It was only in June that the administration had gradually eased the lockdown letting the businesses partially reopen. But a few weeks into the reopening the government has re-imposed the lockdown citing the rise in cases. The decision has been taken effortlessly despite the fact Kashmir has now been under lockdown for the past year and it has wrought havoc with the economy. As a local business body has calculated, the Valley lost an estimated Rs 18000 crore in the first six months of the siege following the revocation of Article 370 in August last. There have been six more months of the lockdown since, albeit partially eased for small durations. Tourism, one of the mainstays of the local economy has come to a halt. This has hit the hotel industry and travel operators hard. It was not a pleasant sight to see the government officials asking tourists through public address system to vacate Pahalgam in two hours in a video that has gone viral on social media. Similarly, the handicrafts sector has been crushed. The fledgling IT industry and the start-ups have borne the brunt of the communication blockade and it is only now that they are picking up the pieces. Ditto for Horticulture, a Rs 6500 crore industry. Its fallout on the livelihoods of people has been far-reaching. Lakhs of people have lost jobs.

There are also lakhs of retailers who have been largely shut over the past twelve months. Similarly, the transporters, the handcart sellers and numerous other daily wage workers who have been rendered without sustainable livelihoods. For these sections of society, Covid is the lesser threat than the fast depletion of their savings and the consequent prospect of hunger. But their plight is the least that the government seems bothered about. Decisions on their behalf are taken by the people in the administration who have secure comfortable jobs. They have little monetary help to offer to the poor but they are ever ready to go for lockdowns, as some kind of a magic wand to rid us of coronavirus. And that too despite the fact the lockdowns haven't done much to ameliorate the situation. It is high time that the administration rethinks its approach to the pandemic and balances its efforts to arrest the spread of Covid with steps to protect the livelihoods.

OTHER OPINION

Covid-19 worldwide

"MOST of the world sort of sat by and watched with almost a sense of detachment and bemusement," said Helen Clark, appointed to investigate the World Health Organization's handling of the pandemic. The former New Zealand prime minister was describing the early weeks of the outbreak, and the sense that coronavirus was a problem "over there". The failure to recognise our interconnection created complacency even as the death toll rose.

It took three months for the first million people to fall sick – but only a week to record the last million of the nearly 13 million cases now reported worldwide. As England emerges from lockdown at an unwary pace, Covid-19 is accelerating globally. The WHO has reported a record surge of a quarter of a million cases in a single day. The death toll is over half a million people and rising fast.

Idlib, Syria's last rebel-held province, has reported its first case: a frightening portent, given the desperate circumstances in which people are already living. On Thursday, the head of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention said new cases were up 24% on the continent in the previous week, with cases surging in South Africa, Kenya and other countries. India, now the world's third worst-affected country, reported a record rise of 27,000 cases on Saturday, to over 800,000 – almost certainly far below the true level.

Australia and Spain have reimposed local lockdowns, and Hong Kong has shut schools again. But the economic, social and political costs of such measures are all the higher second time around. In Serbia, plans for a strict curfew were downgraded after sparking anti-government protests. Iran's president, Hassan Rouhani, has said it cannot afford to shut down again despite rising deaths.

No one can afford to be complacent; the UK's pandemic response should not be starting to "wind down", as a No 10 insider reportedly said. Nor are endless lockdowns either desirable or sustainable. But we should not conclude that the worst is inescapable – rather, that effective measures, including the use of masks, distancing, and testing and tracing, are possible and make a vast difference to outcomes.

Vietnam has recorded no deaths and fewer than 400 cases, while the US has seen 3 million cases and more than 130,000 deaths, thanks not only to Donald Trump's utter failure to prepare his country for coronavirus, but his reckless subsequent determination to push states into premature reopening. Infections are now surging in 41 states. On Friday, Florida recorded 11,433 new cases and saw its highest single day death rate, of 188.

In South America, Brazil's president, Jair Bolsonaro, has repeatedly trivialised the pandemic and defied guidelines even since becoming infected himself. His country has 1.8m cases. Peru, Chile and Mexico are also badly hit. But Uruguay and Paraguay, which border Brazil, have had fewer than 50 deaths between them.

Though in some countries the apparently low impact of coronavirus will reflect low levels of testing, the US shows that prosperity is far from the only determinant of success. Nonetheless, the difficulties of fighting the pandemic in overcrowded places with malnourished populations lacking basic sanitation or basic healthcare are obvious. Poorer nations will need support to deal with both the pandemic and its broader impact. Hunger and poverty are surging and could kill more people than Covid-19.

Leadership can't come from the US, as it withdraws from the WHO and attempts to corner supplies. Finding agreement even within the European Union is proving hard. But coronavirus has shown us that "over there" cannot be separated from "over here". For everyone's sake, we must recognise and honour our ties.

(Guardian)

WAJAHAT QAZI

“Because of a lack of access to the internet, how would the waatul's child know there are Yales, Harvards and Oxfords of the world that offer scholarships

Can A Cobbler's Son Become An Officer?

As things stand, he or she can become a peon or a clerk in a government department. This is cruel and morally wrong for it not only deprives the underprivileged of social mobility but creates intergenerational poverty traps



Two conversations - one with my favourite, wonderful, sensible and sensitive professor, an academic of academics and the other with a bright Kashmiri friend - set me thinking about meritocracy and life chances. The former, to a quasi-philosophical question about meritocracy wrote to me that, "life is unfair and the distribution of blessings and resources was not understood". The latter had posted on Facebook and to paraphrase him, that the happiest day of his life would be when the progeny of the waatul (cobbler in Kashmir) would study at Yale or Harvard. Both remarks are poignant and salient, especially in a world, especially the West, where diversity and gender parity are becoming thematic areas of concern, in boardrooms, universities, governments and so on. While both are laudable goals, and works in progress in the West, but in lesser developed contexts, there is little equality, or meritocracy or value for diversity.

To be fair, the Western university system has, to some extent stepped into the breach and disbursed some scholarships to this end. But, in the main, the beneficiaries of these, usually, are the already privileged. Consider a factual. Access to scholarships in the West presumes a degree of education, access to resources, access to the internet, referees and so on. Where would, say the child of a cobbler access these? In a hierarchical society like ours, where the term waatul has acquired pejorative connotations, who will give a reference to

the waatul's progeny? Hindered by access to resources and poor education, how is the waatul's child to write a statement of purpose that cuts ice in some Western university? Because of a lack of access to the internet, how would the waatul's child know there are Yales, Harvards and Oxfords of the world that offer scholarships?

At best, if the parents of a waatul's child are able to afford education, the progeny can suffer the shoddy and poor quality of education in a government school and if he or she is able to go beyond secondary school, he or she can become a peon, a clerk or an orderly in a government department. This is as cruel as can be and morally wrong for it not deprives the underprivileged of life chances but creates intergenerational poverty traps.

Can this condition be remedied? Maybe. One way is through affirmative action programs but the record of these is mixed. The other is broader enlightenment of society where it rises to the occasion, by first, getting rid of pejorative labelling and stereotypes and making the underprivileged equal members of society. The third, even though, by virtue of limited resources is vigorous seeking out of the underprivileged in third world contexts and helping them out through scholarships. This is doable but would require some additional efforts by universities weeding out information asymmetries and so on. If centres for exams like the TOEFL, GRE and GMAT can be outsourced and vigorously monitored, so can in-

stitutions that help poor, underprivileged students be developed to help them.

Admittedly, this can only be a drop in the ocean but it is well worth the effort, and there can be wider social returns. If, however, there is more of the same, there will be what economists call rent seeking behaviour whereby only the elite and the privileged in third world contexts can access and benefit from these resources.

There can never be total and comprehensive equality in any given society, especially in economic terms but there can be approximations to and of social and cultural equality or, in the least, equality of access to social and cultural goods, leading to an amelioration of the living conditions of the underprivileged. This can be built on and network effects created that will redound to the benefit of the poor.

In the final analysis, my gifted professor from America is right. There has been and perhaps can never be understanding of the distribution of blessings and resources, but this should not mean that human agency of some kind can redress social and economic inequalities in the world. In the context of Kashmir, a waatul's child has every right to dream of and actually be an afsar (officer) as that of a chief minister's or industrialist's or businessperson's son or daughter. It is then that society can be redeemed. But, for this to happen, the western university system can be a catalytic spur. Nothing should stop it from assuming this noble role.



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P.O. Box # 337, GPO, Srinagar-190001
email: editpage.ko@gmail.com

Let us fight the PUBG addiction

Smartphones have revolutionized modern society and made lives easy. Now, most of us cannot think of living without these electronic boxes.

Primarily developed for communication among people, mobile phones are now being misused in various ways. In this digital era, playing pointless online games has become a common trend among the youth. Rather than utilising the developments in technology as a boon for expanding one's intellectual capacity, youngsters have begun to think of cell phones as a gaming device and nothing more.

Even though some consider such gaming applications to be mood changer and others think of it as a stress buster, we must remember that what it inflicts on its users is far more harmful than the temporary relief it brings. It is a matter of serious concern that Kashmiri youngsters are addicted to a good number of such online games, PUBG being the most notorious.

PUBG (Players Unknown's Battleground) is a multiplayer online video game developed by a South Korean company called Bluehole. It was first released for Microsoft Windows in 2017, and its Android and iOS versions came out in 2018. Shortly after its release, it received a large number of downloads, winning the accolade

of the 'Best Game Of The Year' at the 2018 Steam Awards. In 2019, PUBG mobile reached 555 million players worldwide. The game's largest market is India with around 116 million downloads, followed by China at 108 million, and USA at 42 million.

This game is believed to be the most played online video game of all time. Since its inception, PUBG mobile has been attracting a lot of people towards it each day. It has gained immense prominence in the last two years.

It has become the menace to our society, which, if not tackled on time, may prove harmful for our younger generation. It isn't just the young and unmarried who are hooked to this game, as one may imagine. Even married people who have young children are addicted to it. Nowadays, there is only one subject that is discussed by Kashmir's youth - PUBG.

Whether at home or outside, Kashmiri youngsters have nothing else to discuss and care about, other than PUBG. Not only has this game distracted them from their studies, it has made them neglect their kith and kin. During the ongoing Covid-19 lockdown, families observed that their young ones were getting even more addicted to the game.

Today, these addicts are going to bed playing the game and waking up

doing the same. Some don't sleep at all. They are blindly sinking into this filth. PUBG is consuming their time, energy and health. It has been badly affecting our young generation in a myriad ways:

Violence: PUBG is a game of violence wherein the plot just requires one to fire and kill the opponents. This triggers a burst of aggressive behaviour in the player's mind. If encouraged, the player may gradually start applying such tendencies in real life as well. Breeding such a mental state is harmful for the human body. Recently, a few PUBG-addicted children suffered from cardiac arrests, although they had no reported history of any cardiac ailment. The concerned doctors have attributed the cause of their cardiac arrest to the emotions evoked while playing the violent online game.

Physical health: We all know that physical exercise is good for our bodies. Just sitting and playing PUBG all day is proving injurious to the physical health of the gamers. It tends to make the players sluggish. Headaches, fatigue, and migraines are common amongst PUBG players. Additionally, continuous screen watching and playing late at night takes a toll on the their eyes. A highly addicted gamer also deprives himself from enjoying a

goodnight's sleep.

Socially alienated: PUBG restricts a player to her home most of the time. As a result, she may grow to become socially alienated.

Mental health deterioration: Like physical health, PUBG affects the mental health of the players as well. A PUBG player gets easily irritated and suffers from anxiety and other mental health related problems. Not only are games like PUBG hindering the mental and emotional development of a user, but are also acting as life threats in a few extreme conditions.

Like any bad habit, addiction to PUBG is difficult to rid oneself of, but is not completely unachievable. There are many ways that can be helpful to overcome the nuisance. The first thing I would suggest is that people addicted to the game build a willingness to get over the habit. Habits are not broken in one go, but gradually. It may take some time to put an end to the habit and a gamer can start by reducing the playing time each day. The earlier we stop this menace, the better it is for our youth and our society as a whole.

Arif Nabi
Zoology Student at Kashmir
University
Email: arifnabi.ku@gmail.com

Period, Pads and Shame in Kashmir

SADAF AIJAZ

“The silence and shame around menstruation has caused severe problems for girls. Most girls from economically underprivileged backgrounds skip or drop out of schools after they begin menstruating.”

UZMA was 12 when she had her first menstrual period. She was at home and panicked when she found herself bleeding. “I thought I had contracted some serious illness and I was going to die. I immediately called my mother and to my surprise she looked hardly shocked. She told me that I am a grown up girl now and it’s time that I stopped playing with boys,” she said.

Uzma got very confused by her mother’s behavior and asked her if she should inform her father about it. But her mother yelled at her and told her to never openly discuss this.

It’s been a year since Uzma had her first period but after that stern warning from her mother, she has not disclosed it to anyone, even her own sister.

Uzma’s story is neither strange nor singular. In North Kashmir’s Kupwara district, I spoke to many young girls and most of them are deprived of crucial information regarding menstruation and vaginal hygiene.

Sixteen-year-old Sakeena misses two or four days of school every month which has been affecting her attendance. Being a 10th grader at Government High School Diver Lolab, Sakeena feels she has no choice but to miss classes because her school doesn’t have any sanitation facilities.

“I had absolutely no idea about menstruation. I remember seeing my mother discreetly carrying two blue packets covered in a bag, as a child. She later hid those packets inside the locker. When I asked her about it, she told me that it was my brother’s diaper. After a few years, when I had my periods I realized that those packets were sanitary napkins and not diapers” said Tabassum, a teenager from Diver Lolab.

“When I menstruated the first time, I was shocked. I felt miserable. I was too embarrassed to talk about it with my mother. I grew up in a house full of women, but we still never discussed it openly,” she added.

Since times immemorial, the discussion around menstruation has been considered a taboo. Menstruation as a topic is not up for discussion, as it is covered in layers of shame and stigma. In other words discussing menstrual issues in public is treated as shameful, disgusting and insulting. We are raised in families where even



our mothers are not prepared to have such conversations with us. Many young women grow up with different myths told to them about menstruation being a state of impurity

Besides this, some unscientific traditions disallow menstruating women from bathing as they claim that it could lead to problems for the body’s internal organs.

The silence and shame around menstruation has caused severe problems for girls. Most girls from economically underprivileged backgrounds skip or drop out of schools after they begin menstruating. A UNESCO report found that one out of every ten girls in Sub-Saharan Africa misses school during the monthly periods, while some drop out of school altogether.

While talking to them I found out that low levels of awareness around menstruation and socio-economic barriers is causing a large number of women in Kupwara to refrain from using sanitary napkins. Subsequently, they resort to appalling alternatives such as cloth bands which are proven to be highly unhygienic and dangerous to their health.

“Once I bought a pack of sanitary pads from the shop to try them out. First and foremost, I did not know how to use it. On the other hand I was told that one has to use about 2 to 3 pads every day while experiencing heavy flow. This makes them very expensive to use. I prefer cloth over pads,” said Reshma, a

25-year-old from Dardpora village.

“I honestly don’t like using cloth but I belong to a poor family and I cannot afford sanitary napkins every month,” said Jamsheeda, another teenager.

My mother used to cut up old sheets and put them in a box so that my sisters and I could use them during our periods. But the challenge was to dry those pieces of cloth,” Jamsheeda added.

The women in her family placed the washed and formerly stained clothes under other garments to hide them from men’s gaze. “It is not ethical to put them in the open,” she stated.

I asked the young girl if she used the same clothes next month during her menses. She replied in the affirmative but before I could pose any more questions she looked at me disdainfully and called me mannerless for asking her such private and weird questions. “Don’t you have any shame?” she exclaimed.

To know more I spoke to an Anganwadi worker in the same area who told me that “many women do not use undergarments as they are used to defecating in the open and sanitary napkins cannot be used without underwears.”

“If you see, a lot of girls, particularly in this area are anemic and have several health issues. They don’t have basic knowledge about their menses and fall prey to various myths concerning the same,” she added.

“Since I started working in the

social welfare sector, whenever I get a chance, I discuss it on every platform. However, the cultural and collective reluctance comes in my way”, she said. Women still refrained from buying sanitary napkins from a male shopkeeper as per her observations. She further said that women also believed in grossly wrong superstitions such as ones which claim that sanitary pads render females infertile.

“I always wrap the napkins in an opaque bag when a female customer comes to buy it. Here, you don’t buy or sell such products openly,” Muneer Ahmad, a store owner said.

It is strange that despite the advancement in science, society still considers menstruation to be something strange and disgusting. It is a biological process like any other natural phenomenon of a human body. There is nothing to be ashamed of and hide.

Even Islam does not say that the possession of the knowledge of menstruation and vaginal health is forbidden. Islam only asks women to keep away from performing religious functions when their periods are ongoing. The woman has been considered able and free to carry out daily tasks as normal.

The Islamic practice of Fiqh, menstruation is a frequently discussed topic. So, when Islam talks about it openly, why are women made to conceal this part of their lives?

With acceptance and healthy discussions, this topic will stop being a taboo and will be normalised in society.

In conclusion, I would like to say that education and awareness programmes are the key to removing the roots of this taboo. Women should be educated about their own health and possible infections that they must protect their bodies from.

Let us all remember that there is nothing in the natural process of menstruation that a woman needs to be ashamed of. To break all the myths and false trivia around it, we need to educate ourselves first. Periods are not dirty, they are essential for the maintenance of the human species.

(Names have been changed to protect the identity of the individuals I spoke to)

The writer can be reached at sadafaijaz410@gmail.com

Shadi Lal Kaul: The Veteran Actor Who Brought Smiles To Gloomy Kashmir

SWATI JOSHI

IN THE 1980s when Kashmiris were reluctant to pay for watching theatre, one man brought all of them under the roof of Tagore Hall with tickets; a man who could make people leave the football ground and make a run to get a seat in the theatre; a man not known by his name but by the characters he played in his serials; a man known for his comic timing and improvisation; a man who has the longest-running program on DD Kashmir; a man named Shadi Lal Kaul aka Shamasudin.

The famous dialogue “Begum Salal Tse Kyaazi Goye Malaal” by Shamasudin from Shabrang is still famous amongst Kashmiris.

Back in the day, Shabrang became the longest-running television show with 104 episodes.

“The dialogue became a sensational hit in Kashmir and every husband could be heard addressing his wife with that famous line,” said Ayash Arif, a veteran actor and director based in Srinagar.

Arif was 16, when he met Kaul and became his real and reel life friend.

“From where should I start, it has been 45 years since I have known him,” Arif, who founded Kalidass Theatre at Srinagar’s Chotta Bazar with Kaul, said. “We were the unbreakable Jai-Veeru.”

As an epitome of friendship, Jai-Veeru are famous characters played by Amitabh Bachchan and Dharmendra in the superhit Hindi movie, Sholay.

As a Kashmiri Pandit, Kaul had a huge fan base in the Muslim community. Arif recalled an incident when the late actor was going towards Hazratbal and people gathered around him recognizing him by his TV character, Shamasudin.

They took “Shamasudin” with them to offer namaaz at a mosque nearby and the late actor went with them without any hesitation.

“Such was the level of affection and respect he received from the Muslim community back then,” remembered Arif.

Ayash Arif with Shadi Lal Kaul

Born in the Chotta Bazar area of Srinagar, Kaul had to face many struggles while growing up. He lost his father at an early age. Being the eldest child, he was burdened by the responsibilities of his family. Later he would lose his young son to cancer.

“He was financially unstable during his son’s treatment but I never saw any sign of weakness in him,” Arif told Kashmir Observer. “Shadi Lal must be heartbroken but his acting never showed it- he acted as the script demanded. He would often say that whatever comes in life, good or bad, one has to face it boldly.”

Being a street smart, Kaul’s TV roles were inspired by common Kashmiri people like clerks, tongawalas, teachers, among others. He used to recreate



“As a Kashmiri Pandit, Kaul had a huge fan base in the Muslim community. Arif recalled an incident when the late actor was going towards Hazratbal and people gathered around him recognizing him by his TV character, Shamasudin. They took “Shamasudin” with them to offer namaaz at a mosque nearby and the late actor went with them without any hesitation.”

those roles in theatre, said Arif.

The audience connected with him because through his comedy plays, he represented some serious issues in the society- be it corruption, marital problems and other social issues prevalent in Kashmir at that time.

He was such a keen observer that during Ashura—the day when Shia Muslims commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Husayn ibn Ali—Kaul used to join his neighbours, a majority of whom were Shia Muslims to understand their mannerism and worldview, said Arif.

Later this curious nature would help him to play some of his memorable TV roles with perfection.

In his first play “Yi Janam ti Su Janam” directed by Jai Kishan Zutshi, Kaul’s role earned him rousing reception. After that he was unstoppable.

He went on to work in all three mediums: theatre, television, radio. He acted in two serials—Gul Gulshan Gulfam and Katha Sagar—which were telecasted on national TV.

Shadi Lal during his reel moment

Later he would be conferred with Life Time Achievement Award by Sadiq Memorial Society for his contribution to Kashmiri Theatre.

But back in his day, the theatre wasn’t thought as a reliable career. People had to rely on other jobs or businesses. Kaul himself worked in the Sales Tax Department. He was suspended for more than 600 times for his theatre devotion, said Arif.

“He was so attached to the theatre that he used to bunk office to rehearse,” Arif remembered.

Legend has it that during the production of “Yi Janam ti Su Janam”, Kaul would leave office early to go for recording. But after his superiors didn’t allow him, he went to SMHS hospital to put a fake plaster on his left hand.

His condition moved his superior and Kaul managed to clear decks for his recording until his real life act was caught. He came putting plaster on his wrong—right—hand one day and faced suspension.

But that never obscured his acting focus.

He went on to play his roles and cemented his place as one of the finest performers of his generation.

One of his most popular plays that started a new era in Kashmir was “Local Tax Extra” written by Dr. Sohail Lal Koul.

Kashmiris never used to purchase tickets for drama but when Kaul started charging for “Local Tax Extra” people rushed to Tagore Hall to get their tickets, said Bihari Kak, a veteran actor, producer, and director.

“Such was the craze amongst people for Shamasudin that they purchased a Rs.5 ticket at Rs. 20 in black,” recalled Kak. “This was the first time in Kashmir when I saw people were eager to buy tickets to watch Shamasudin perform.”

Local Tax Extra gave tough competition to cinemas nearby. In a first, Doordarshan brought OB Van and Multi-Camera set up to record this drama which was repeatedly telecasted on TV.

Among his audience, Kaul was popular for his perfect comic timing.

“He used to derive comedy out of nothing,” said Kamal Razdan, a veteran actor based at Srinagar. “Kaul used to create comedy from grim topics. He was a Charlie Chaplin of Kashmir!”

Before going for a particular scene, the late actor used to do rigorous rehearsals and also encouraged his costars to do it, said Razdan.

“Many senior artists used to get annoyed with him because he didn’t leave his co-actors until he thought that the rehearsal has attained perfection,” recalled Razdan.

“Any person acting with Kaul knew that they had to do rigorous rehearsals to achieve the perfection he wanted in the act.”

Kaul remained the crowd-puller, before he along with his family migrated to Jammu in 1990 because of the turmoil in the valley. Even after leaving Kashmir, he had a deep connection with his roots.

“When his son was selected for a government job, Kaul asked him to take the posting in Srinagar,” said Shabir Mujahid, a former director Doordarshan, Srinagar.

But theatre wasn’t the same in the Kashmir valley after nineties. Even as it restarted in 1996, it could never retain its audience. However, Kaul kept showing in serials and uplifted the gloom in the valley during those harrowing times.

Kaul was a street smart comedian who understood the pulse of life and times

His friend Arif had cast him in his show Gulam Begum Badshah shot in Srinagar post-1990.

One day while they were shooting in “a supposed safe place” on the backside of Botanical Garden, a vehicle came with a raging speed.

“The vehicle crossed Kaul and then came back at the same speed,” Arif recalled his petrifying moment. “Two people came out of the vehicle and hugged Kaul asking, ‘aap kaha the, aap humare Amitabh Bachchan hai (Where were you? You are our Amitabh Bachchan).’ They invited Kaul for dinner and he went to their house. This incident was emotional for everyone on the set. It left everyone teary-eyed.”

Receiving Money-Saving Gifts Makes People Feel Ashamed

Agencies

A recent study found that people reacted negatively to gifts that they were told - or that they inferred - were given to help them save money.

The study was published recently in the 'Journal of the Association for Consumer Research'.

In a series of studies, researchers found that people reacted negatively to gifts that they were told - or that they inferred - were given to help them save money.

Receiving this kind of present makes a person feel inferior to the gift-giver, the research found. People are more receptive to gifts that are intended to save them time.

"Most of us have this belief that any gift we give is going to be appreciated - but the way a gift is presented can influence how people feel about it," said Grant Donnelly, co-author of the study and assistant professor of marketing at The Ohio State University's Fisher College of Business.

While money-saving gifts often miss the mark, gifts intended to save people time are seen as a compliment, Donnelly said.

"When you don't have time, you're perceived as busy and in high demand. There's something high-status about that, compared to not having enough money, which is seen as low status," he said.

In one study, the researchers asked 405 people recruited online to recall recently receiving



a gift that they thought was intended by the gift-giver to save them either time or money.

They were asked to write a few sentences about how they felt about the gift and then completed various measures assessing their impression of the gift and gift-giver.

Results showed that those who received the gift intend-

ed to save them money were more likely to say the gift made them feel embarrassed, ashamed and bad, compared to those who recalled the time-saving gift.

The reason? Those who received the money-saving gift reported that they believed the gift-giver perceived their own status as higher than the

recipients.

"They thought the gift-giver was implying they couldn't take care of themselves and were incompetent because they needed money," Donnelly said.

The results held true in a real-world situation, too. The researchers provided 200 college students with a \$5-Starbucks gift card to give to a friend.

Half of the gift cards included the message which states -- "I know you've been stressed for money lately. I hope you'll enjoy this gift card in hopes that it will save you some money."

The other half had a message that was identical except the message was that it would save them time, rather than money. All gift cards had a survey for

the gift recipients to return to the researchers.

Results were identical to the first study: Those who received gift cards intended to save them money had more negative emotions than those who received the cards intended to save them time. In addition, those who received the money-saving cards said they thought the gift-giv-

ers believed they were higher-status than themselves.

If there was any bright spot for the people who sent the money-saving gift card, it was that their friends were just as likely to redeem the card as those who received it as a time-saver, Donnelly said.

Another study showed that people who imagined getting a gift card intended to save them money were more likely to choose to buy a higher-status item with that card - presumably to boost their self-esteem that was damaged with the money-saving gift.

"In part because people feel they have lower status if they need money, they are more drawn to buy status-oriented products that can help them bolster this deficiency they perceive," Donnelly said.

But sending your friends gifts to save them money doesn't just make them feel bad about themselves. In one study, participants felt less appreciation for a money-saving gift than for a gift intending to save them time, or a gift with no communicated motive.

Donnelly said it is important for people to consider the message they send with their gifts.

"We can have this perspective gap where we don't really consider how our gifts are received. It can harm your relationship with the recipient if you're not careful," he said.

"It may be best to give a money-saving gift without acknowledging the reason, or to find a way to make it about saving time."

Study Reveals New Strategies To Control Covid-19 Pandemic

Agencies

LONDON: Strategies for the safe reopening of low and middle-income countries (LMICs) in response to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic must recognise that preserving people's health is as important as reviving the economy, say researchers, including one of Indian-origin.

In the study, published in the European Journal of Epidemiology, the research team examined three community-based exit strategies, and recommended their scopes, limitations and the appropriate application in the LMICs.

The three approaches considered are sustained mitigation, zonal lockdowns and rolling lockdowns. "Successfully reopening a country requires consideration of both the economic and social costs," said study lead author Rajiv Chowdhury from the University of Cambridge in the UK.

"Governments should approach these options with a mind-set that health and economy both are equally important to protect - reviving the economy should



not take priority over preserving people's health," he added.

The study also revealed that strategies need to be based on the local epidemic growth rate at the time, social and economic costs, existing health systems capabilities and detailed plans to implement.

Sustained 'mitigation-only' approaches such as those adopted in the UK, Switzerland and other European countries, in-

volve basic prevention measures such as mask-wearing, physical distancing and the isolation of positive cases after testing.

Zonal lockdowns approach involves identifying and 'cordon-off' new outbreak clusters with a high number of cases, keeping contact between zones and containing the disease within a small geographic area.

However, the authors point out that any successful imple-

mentation of zonal lockdown requires regular data feedback operations in real-time to identify hotspots, including information on newly confirmed cases, updated region-specific reproduction and growth rates, and deaths by age.

Additionally, control of transmission within zones may be an enormous undertaking. For example, in India, where this approach has been employed, the infection size within a cordoned zone can be as high as 100-200 times outside the zone.

Intermittent rolling lockdowns are now advocated by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in various LMICs. These involve implementing strict social distancing for a set number of days before a period of relaxation. Rolling lockdowns may be particularly useful in LMICs with dense populations, where this is a high potential for contact, weak health systems and poor contact tracing.

"These three strategies should not be considered as one or the other. A country should further adapt and could combine them as needed," the authors wrote.

Scientists May Have Cracked The Code To Improve Human Longevity

Agencies

In a big breaking discovery, the researchers may have found the beginnings of a path toward increasing human lifespan.

The study, published in the Journal of Gerontology Biological Sciences, shows the drug mifepristone can extend the lives of two very different species used in laboratory studies, suggesting the findings may apply to other species, including human beings.

Mifepristone, also known as RU-486, is used by clinicians to end early pregnancies as well as to treat cancer and Cushing disease.

Studying one of the most common laboratory models used in genetic research - the fruit fly *Drosophila* - the researchers found that the drug mifepristone extends the lives of female flies that have mated.

"Our data show that in *Drosophila*, mifepristone either directly or indirectly counteracts juvenile hormone signalling, but the exact target of mifepristone remains elusive," said study researchers from the University of Southern California in the US.

According to the researchers, during mating, female fruit flies receive a molecule called sex peptide from the male.

Previous research has shown



that sex peptide causes inflammation and reduces the health and lifespan of female flies.

The research team found that feeding mifepristone to the fruit flies that have mated blocks the effects of sex peptide, reducing inflammation and keeping the female flies healthier, leading to longer lifespans than their counterparts who did not receive the drug.

The drug's effects in *Drosophila* appear similar to those seen in women who take it.

"In the fly, mifepristone decreases reproduction, alters innate immune response and increases life span," the study researcher John Tower explained.

"In the human, we know that mifepristone decreases reproduction and alters the innate immune response, so might it also increase life span?" he added.

Seeking a better understanding of how mifepristone works to increase lifespan, the research team looked at the genes, molecules and metabolic processes that changed when flies consumed the drug.

They found that a molecule called juvenile hormone plays a central role. Juvenile hormone regulates the development of fruit flies throughout their life, from egg to larvae to adult.

Sex peptide appears to escalate the effects of juvenile hormone, shifting the mated flies' metabolism from healthier processes to metabolic pathways that require more energy to maintain.

Further, the metabolic shift promotes harmful inflammation, and it appears to make the flies more sensitive to toxic molecules produced by bacteria in their microbiome.

Number Of Undernourished People Declines In India; Obesity In Adults On The Rise: UN

Press Trust Of India

The number of undernourished people in India has declined by 60 million in over a decade, according to a UN report which said that there were less stunted children but more obese adults in the country.

The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World report, released on Monday, estimated that almost 690 million people globally were undernourished (or hungry) in 2019, up by 10 million from 2018.

The report—considered the most authoritative global study tracking progress towards ending

hunger and malnutrition—said that the number of undernourished people in India declined from 249.4 million in 2004-06 to 189.2 million in 2017-19.

In percentage terms, the prevalence of undernourishment in the total population in India declined from 21.7 per cent in 2004-06 to 14 per cent in 2017-19, it said.

"The two subregions showing reductions in undernourishment—eastern and southern Asia—are dominated by the two largest economies of the continent—China and India.

"Despite very different conditions, histories and rates of

progress, the reduction in hunger in both the countries stems from long-term economic growth, reduced inequality, and improved access to basic goods and services," it said.

The report is prepared jointly by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

It further said that the prevalence of stunting in children under 5 years of age in India declined from 47.8 per cent in 2012 to 34.7



per cent in 2019 or from 62 million in 2012 to 40.3 million in 2019.

More Indian adults became obese between 2012-16, the report said. The number of adults (18

years and older) who are obese grew from 25.2 million in 2012 to 34.3 million in 2016, growing from 3.1 per cent to 3.9 per cent.

The number of women of reproductive age (15-49) affected by anaemia grew from 165.6 million in 2012 to 175.6 million in 2016.

The number of infants 0-5 months of age exclusively breastfed grew from 11.2 million in 2012 to 13.9 million in 2019. The hungry are most numerous in Asia, but expanding fastest in Africa.

Across the planet, the report forecasts, that the COVID-19 pandemic could push over 130 million more people into chronic hunger by the end of 2020.

In percentage terms, Africa is the hardest hit region and becoming more so, with 19.1 per cent of its people undernourished.

At the current trends, by 2030, Africa will be home to more than half of the world's chronically hungry.

The COVID-19 is intensifying the vulnerabilities and inadequacies of global food systems - understood as all the activities and processes affecting the production, distribution and consumption of food.

"While it is too soon to assess the full impact of the lockdowns and other containment measures, the report estimates

that at a minimum, another 83 million people, and possibly as many as 132 million, may go hungry in 2020 as a result of the economic recession triggered by COVID-19," it said, adding that the setback throws into further doubt the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal two, whose target is achieving zero hunger.

The latest estimates are that a staggering three billion people or more cannot afford a healthy diet. In sub-Saharan Africa and southern Asia, this is the case for 57 per cent of the population - though no region, including north America and Europe, is spared.

U.S. Navy battles for 2nd day to save burning warship in San Diego

Agencies

San Deigo: Hundreds of firefighters battled through a second day from the air, land and water on Monday to save a U.S. war vessel swept by flames while moored at a San Diego shipyard, as the number of sailors and civilians injured in the blaze rose to nearly 60.

The USS Bonhomme Richard, an amphibious assault ship whose size ranks second in the U.S. Navy fleet to that of an aircraft carrier,

Helicopters dropped water over the ship throughout Monday while fire boats on the perimeter streamed water on the hull to cool it from the outside. San Diego fire crews discontinued blasting water into the ship from shore, apparently out of concern for destabilizing the vessel's buoyancy.

meter) ship, docked for routine maintenance at its home port at U.S. Naval Base San Diego.

Since then, flames have spread upward throughout much of the ship and into the tower and other structures on the top of the vessel, Rear Admiral Philip Sobeck told a late-morning news conference.

Because it was undergoing repairs at the time, only about 160 of the ship's usual contingent of 1,000 crew members were aboard at the time, and all major munitions had already been removed from the vessel as a standard safety practice, Navy officials said.

Helicopters dropped water over the ship throughout Monday while fire boats on the perimeter streamed water on the hull to cool it from the outside. San Diego fire crews discontinued blasting water into the ship from shore, apparently out of concern for destabilizing the vessel's buoyancy.

Asked whether the ship might be burned beyond repair, Sobeck said he was "hopeful" it could be spared. "Once we get the fire out, which is our priority, then we'll make that assessment." The fire's cause was unknown, but a Navy spokesman told Reuters there was no evidence of foul play.

The Navy said 36 sailors and 23 civilians had been treated for minor injuries, including heat exhaustion and smoke inhalation, and no personnel remained hospitalized.

The Bonhomme Richard, commissioned in 1998, is designed to carry U.S. Marine Corps attack helicopters and ground troops into battle.— Reuters



Firefighters battling blaze on board USS Bonhomme

Iran General On US Navy Ship Blaze: Tough Days Await America, Israel

Agencies

Tehran: A senior commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) says a conflagration and subsequent blast that hit a huge American warship has been the result of the US government's own crimes.

Addressing a meeting of senior resistance commanders, Brigadier General Esmail Qa'ani, commander of the Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), urged the Americans "not to waste their time looking for a culprit or leveling accusations against others" over what happened to the navy ship off San Diego.

"This is a fire they (Americans) have lit themselves," he said.

He was reacting to the fire that broke out at Bonhomme Richard, an amphibious assault ship and light aircraft carrier, as

it was anchored at the US Naval base in San Diego on Sunday.

The blaze was accompanied by at least one large explosion. The US Navy said the ship had been docked for scheduled maintenance between deployments.

Amid indications that the ship could continue burning for days, hundreds of American firefighters have been busy battling the blaze for two consecutive days. Scores of American sailors and civilians have been injured.

"This incident is a response to your crimes, which has come about at the hands of your own elements," Qa'ani said. "God uses your own hands to punish you."

What is unfolding in the US today, especially the warship incident "is the [direct] result of the US administration's [own] action, behavior, and atrocities," the general again noted.

"They have been afflicted with divine wrath and retribu-

tion because they tried to skew the divine word and resorted to oppression," he added.

Tough days ahead for US, Israel

Qa'ani — who was assigned to the Quds Force after the US assassinated his predecessor Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani in a drone strike in Baghdad in early January — said both the United States and its regional ally Israel were to wage into serious hardship and adversity.

"You are still experiencing your halcyon days. You have very tough days and occurrences ahead of you," he noted.

General Soleimani's successor noted that the US military has turned into a "tired and decrepit" force, and its equipment has degraded into "scrap iron."

Washington has to accept its dire conditions and stop oppressing the humanity and its own people, he said.

7 Children, 2 Women Killed In Yemen Air Strike: UN Agency

Agencies

Dubai, United Arab Emirates: Seven children and two women were killed in an air raid in north-west Yemen, a UN agency said Monday, as Riyadh said it intercepted missiles fired by Yemeni Huthi rebels.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) also said another two women and two children were wounded in Monday's raid in Hajjah governorate.

The province near the capital Sanaa is a battlefield between Huthi rebels and pro-government forces backed by a Saudi-led coalition that provides air support.

"Initial reports... indicate that on 12 July an air strike killed seven children and two women in Washhah district of Hajjah governorate," OCHA said.

Lisa Grande, the agency's coordinator for Yemen, said it was "incomprehensible that in the

middle of the COVID pandemic, when options for a ceasefire are on the table, civilians continue

It also said its forces had "intercepted and destroyed seven drones and four ballistic mis-



being killed in Yemen". UN experts have accused both sides in Yemen's five-year-old conflict of multiple war crimes.

On Monday, the coalition acknowledged the possibility of civilian casualties during an anti-Huthi operation in Hajjah and said it was being investigated.

siles" launched by the Huthis against civilians in Saudi Arabia.

Yemen's war between the Iran-backed Huthis and pro-government troops escalated in March 2015 when the coalition intervened against the rebels who control large parts of Yemen including the capital Sanaa.

Despite coronavirus, record international study permits by Canada

Agencies

Toronto: As the US puts in place stringent conditions for foreign students, Canada is issuing a record number of study permits for international students despite the coronavirus restrictions.

As many as 30,785 new study permits were issued in May, which is more than twice the average of study permits issued in the previous three months - February, March and April.

In fact, this year's May figure is almost 11 per cent higher than the number of international study permits issued during the same period last year.

However, it is not known how many study permits were issued to students from India.

At the end of 2019, there were 219,855 Indian students out of the total 642,480 international students in Canada.

Out of these Indian students, 144,900 are pursuing post-secondary courses in Canadian colleges and 53,335 are studying in universities.

India accounts for 34 per cent of all international students in Canada, followed by China with 22 per cent.

Since Canada liberalized its study permit regime more than a decade ago following the example of Australia, the number of international students has zoomed rapidly.

Today, international students have become very crucial for Canada's economy and demographics. They pump in over \$22 billion into

the economy each year, creating thousands of jobs.

Moreover, with more than 60 per cent of them - Indians almost 100 per cent - opting for permanent residence via the Post Graduation Work Permit, foreign students have also become a big contributor to demographic growth in a country with a fast aging population and very low birth rates.



With the corona lockdown threatening their lucrative education industry, Canadian institutions have allowed newly admitted foreign students who couldn't come to Canada to instead join online classes. To keep these students happy, the time spent by them in their own country while attending online classes will be counted towards their eligibility for the Post Graduation Work Permit when they land in Canada after travel restrictions ease.

To be eligible for a work permit, a foreign student must have spent at least eight months studying in Canada.—IANS

Hagia Sophia Will Open Outside Prayer Time, Says Turkey



Agencies

Istanbul: Turkey's Hagia Sophia could open to visitors outside prayer times and its Christian icons will remain, religious officials said on Tuesday, after a court ruling paved the way for it to become a mosque.

The sixth-century Istanbul landmark's museum status -- in place since 1934 -- was revoked on Friday and control was handed to the religious authority, Diyanet.

The decision sparked condemnation from Western governments, Russia and Christian leaders -- Pope Francis saying he was "very distressed".

Hagia Sophia spent almost 1,000 years as a cathedral before being converted into a mosque in 1453 and later a museum.

Diyanet said in a statement on Tuesday that Christian icons in Hagia Sophia were "not an obstacle to the validity of the prayers".

"The icons should be curtained and shaded through appropriate means during prayer times," it said.

"There is no obstacle from a religious perspective to Hagia Sophia Mosque being open to visitors outside prayer times."

Hagia Sophia, a major tourist attraction, has been the scene of Islam-linked activities in recent years. In 2018, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan recited a verse from Koran at the building.

Erdogan, who said the first Muslim prayers in Hagia Sophia would begin on July 24, has insisted the building will be open to all, including non-Muslims.

China Says US Is Undermining Stability In South China Sea

Agencies

BEIJING: China said on Tuesday (Jul 14) the United States is a troublemaker undermining peace and stability in the South China Sea region, responding to Washington rejecting Beijing's disputed claims to offshore resources in most of the waters.



Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian told reporters during a briefing that China has never strived to build an empire in the South China Sea.

He rejected US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's comments in a statement issued on Monday.

Pompeo had said the the United States would treat Beijing's pursuit of resources in the dispute-rife South China Sea as illegal.

Those comments were followed by accusations by Japan on Tuesday, in which the country's annual defence review said China was pushing its territorial claims amid the COVID-19 pandemic

NEWS MAKERS

"Cheer Up": Hundreds Of Drones Light Up Seoul Sky With Coronavirus Messages

Seoul: Hundreds of drones lit up the night sky in Seoul for a spectacular showcase of motivational and awareness messages as the world battles the coronavirus pandemic.

Three hundred unmanned aerial vehicles were programmed to form images above the Han river -- which runs through the South Korean capital -- for the eye-catching flash mob.

The show began with messages reminding people of key precautionary measures, including wearing masks, washing hands and keeping a two-metre distance from others.

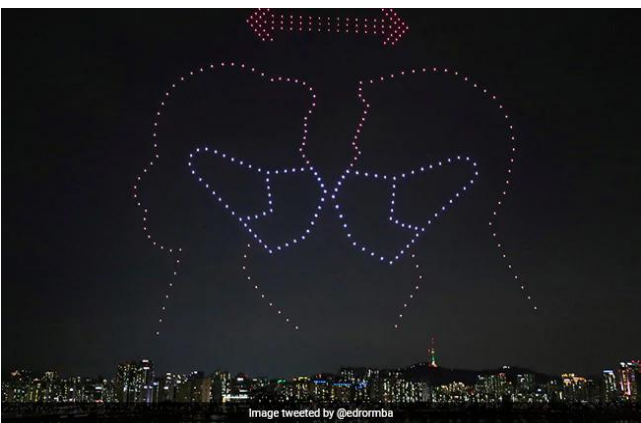
The drones created images of a mask surrounded by coronavirus particles, quickly shuffling to form two

hands and water droplets against the dark night sky.

The 10-minute show shift-

their collective efforts.

"THANKS TO YOU," the drones wrote in the sky next



ed to messages of gratitude for medical personnel in the frontlines of the pandemic as well as all South Koreans for

to a heart shape, then formed a silhouette of the Korean peninsula with the message: "Cheer up, Republic of Korea."

Pak court gives last chance to Nawaz Sharif to appear in corruption case

Lahore: A Pakistani anti-corruption court has given a final chance to former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, currently in London for medical treatment, to appear before it on August 17 in a graft case, failing which he may be declared a proclaimed offender.

The 70-year-old embattled three-time premier is currently in London for treatment after he was diagnosed with an immune system disorder.

He left for the UK in November after the Lahore High Court granted him a four-week permission to go abroad for treatment. The notice issued by the Accountability Court of Islamabad in the Toshakhana (treasure house) corruption case was displayed at Jati Umra and Model Town residences of Sharif on Monday.

"Nawaz Sharif committed offence of punishable under Section 9 read with Section 10 of the National Accountability Ordinance 1999 and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon



issued that the said accused cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused has absconded," stated the notice.

"Proclamation under section 87 CrPC is hereby made that the said accused Nawaz Sharif is required to appear before this court to answer the said reference on Aug 17," the notice added.

The Accountability Court last month issued a non-bailable arrest warrant against Sharif in the Toshakhana case. Sharif is accused of obtaining luxury cars from the treasury house by paying just 15 per cent of the price of these vehicles.

Kosovo's president quizzed by war crimes prosecutors

THE HAGUE: Kosovo President Hashim Thaci arrived on Monday for questioning by war crimes prosecutors in The Hague, saying that "nobody can rewrite history" over his role in the 1990s war.

Thaci, 52, was indicted by a special tribunal in late June for war crimes and crimes against humanity in the 1998-99 conflict with Serbia that won the province its independence.

Thaci and others are charged with being "criminally responsible for nearly 100 murders" in addition to other crimes against Serb, Roma and Kosovo Albanian victims while he was leader of the rebel Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA).

Rahul Gandhi Spells Doom, Says India's Corona Tally Will Cross 10 Lakh This Week

NEW DELHI: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday said the total number of coronavirus cases in the country will cross the 10 lakh-mark this week.

He had on Monday questioned the Centre's claims on battling COVID-19, asking if India was at a "good position" in the battle against the virus.

He has been critical of the government's handling of the situation.

"This week, the figure of 10,00,000 will be crossed in our country," Gandhi said in a tweet in Hindi.

ganisation (WHO) chief on Monday slammed some government leaders for eroding public trust by sending mixed messages on coronavirus and warned that their failure to stop their countries' spiralling outbreaks meant there would be no return to normal for the foreseeable future.

With 28,498 fresh cases recorded in a day, India's COVID-19 tally sprinted past nine lakh on Tuesday, just three days after it crossed the eight lakh-mark, according to the Union health ministry data.



The Congress leader also tagged a news report quoting the WHO chief who had said that if concrete steps were not taken, the coronavirus situation in the world would turn from bad to worse.

The World Health Or-

The total coronavirus caseload in the country surged to 9,06,752 and the death toll mounted to 23,727 with 553 people succumbing to the disease in 24 hours, the data updated at 8 am on Tuesday showed.

Indian Newspapers From 1966 Found On Melting Glacier In France: Reports

LONDON: Indian newspaper copies with headlines such as "India's First Woman Prime Minister", referring to Indira Gandhi's election win in 1966, have been recovered from the melting French glacier of Bossons on the Mont Blanc mountain range in western Europe, 54 years after an Air India plane crashed there.

The newspapers belong to the residue of an Air India plane that crashed into Europe's highest mountain on January 24, 1966, and were discovered by Timothee Mottin, who runs the cafe-restaurant La Cabane du Cerro at an altitude of 1,350 metres above the French resort of Chamonix.

"They are drying now but they are in very good condition. You can read them," Mr Mottin, 33, told the local French daily 'Le Daupine Libere', quoted by The Guardian newspaper and other agencies in the UK.

"It's not unusual. Every time we walk on the glacier with friends, we find remains of the crash. With experience, you know where they are. They are being carried along by the glacier according to their size," he said.

The Air India Boeing 707 had crashed into the range after a verbal flight control miscommunication, leading to the loss of all 177 passengers and crew.

Copies of the "National Herald" and "Economic Times" are among a dozen newspapers discovered by Mr Mottin, whose cafe is

about 45 minutes by foot from the Bossons glacier, where the plane named after the Himalayan peak of Kangchenjunga mysteriously crashed over 54 years ago.

Mr Mottin said he was lucky to discover the papers when he did because the ice in which they had been encased for nearly six decades had probably only just melted. Once the papers have dried out, they will join a growing collection of items

from the crash that Mr Mottin has put on display at his cafe to share it with visitors.

Since 2012, there have been a number of finds relating to the 1966 Air India crash emerging from the melting ice caps.

In 2012, a bag of diplomatic mail, stamped "On Indian Government Service, Diplomatic Mail, Ministry of External Affairs", was recovered, while a year later a French climber found a metal box containing the Air India logo containing emeralds, sapphires and rubies worth between GBP 117,000 and GBP 230,000.

Human remains found in the area in 2017 are also believed to come from the 1966 crash or that of another Indian plane, the Malabar Princess, that came down in the area in 1950.



BJP J&K PRESIDENT Ravinder Raina, who tested positive for Covid-19 on Tuesday, was at the mourning ceremony for the slain party leader at his Bandipora home last week. KO Photo Abid Bhat

Congress In Turmoil, Pilot Sacked As Rajasthan Deputy CM

NEW DELHI: Rebel Sachin Pilot's removal from the posts of Rajasthan deputy chief minister and Congress state unit chief on Tuesday evoked mixed reactions from the party leaders, with a section of them still hoping for resolution of the matter and the rest blaming the young leader for his haste.

Most of the leaders, however, described the turn of events as "unfortunate" and "sad".

A day after the Congress said the "doors are open" for Pilot and gave him a second chance, the party virtually closed them for him on Tuesday, sacking him as Rajasthan deputy chief minister and state party chief, three days after he mounted a rebellion against his state chief minister Ashok Gehlot.

Soon after the Congress action, party spokesperson Abhishek Singhvi said Pilot was holding constitutional post and some of his actions may not be in sync with that position.

"Some doors have to close if the open doors are not utilised for constructive closures. We still hope that closure of options will be an exception, and harmonious settlement of the rule," Singhvi told PTI.

"A constitutional government responsibility of deputy CM obviously sits uneasily with activities which are anti-party," he added.

Congress leader in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said the development was "disappointing" for the party workers who have reposed faith in the Congress party.

"It is not just disappointing for

the party, but also for the grassroot workers, who want the party to progress and do well. The biggest blow is to the common workers who have reposed faith in the party. This has certainly hurt the common workers," he told PTI.

Chowdhury said every party worker has aspirations to reach the highest post, but they should be kept within limits. He said when people see such things happening, with leaders aspiring for the top posts, they get hurt and disappointed.

Senior party leader Salman Khurshid said, "the developments are sad. I don't want to go into the specifics of apportioning blame. I wish that we would all together be fighting the challenges rather than letting such things happen."

Asked about the young leaders being unhappy and some even leaving like Jyotiraditya Scindia, he said: "I don't see young and old as a distinction. The only distinction you can make is those who go away and those who stay. We have to concentrate on fighting the BJP and it's sad that these developments have taken place."

Noting that what has happened is "unfortunate", veteran Congress leader M Veerappa Moily said the BJP is exploiting the vulnerability of young Congress leaders who are ambitious.

He also felt that Pilot should have had patience and perseverance and not been in haste.

"Pilot was made deputy chief minister and given the reins of the party in Rajasthan and the next leg was the chief ministership. But he had

no patience. The BJP made use of his vulnerability," he told PTI.

Former Union minister and Pilot's "colleague and friend" Jitin Prasada said no one can take away the fact that Sachin Pilot has long worked with dedication for the Congress.

Considered a prominent leader of the party's "young brigade", Prasada expressed the hope that the situation can be salvaged.

"Sachin Pilot is not just a colleague but my friend. No one can take away the fact that all these years he has worked with dedication for the party," Prasada tweeted.

"Sincerely hope the situation can still be salvaged. Sad it has come to this," he said.

However, a senior leader said "patience never hurts" and alleged that there is a "sense of entitlement" among the young generation in the party.

Another leader said what is happening in the party "is not good".

"Some youngsters have got more than they deserved due to extraordinary circumstances. They should be grateful and not greedy," said a senior leader, who did not wish to be named.

Shortly after he was sacked, Pilot said, "Truth can be rattled, not defeated".

He also changed his profile on Twitter, deleting all references to his positions as deputy chief minister and Rajasthan Congress chief.

He only described himself as MLA of Tonk and a former minister of IT, Telecom & Corporate affairs, Government of India. PTI

India To Acquire Israeli Heron Drones, Spike Anti-Tank Missiles: Report

NEW DELHI: Engaged in a boundary dispute with China in eastern Ladakh, India is planning to enhance its surveillance capabilities and firepower by placing orders for Heron surveillance drones and Spike anti-tank guided missiles from Israel under the emergency financial powers granted by the government.

The Heron unmanned aerial vehicles are already in the Air Force, Navy, and the Army and are being used extensively at the moment by both Army surveillance and Target acquisition batteries and Air Force in the Ladakh sector.

"There is a need for acquisition of Heron UAVs to add to the existing fleet of these drones for meeting the requirements of our Air Force fleet. We are planning to place orders for these UAVs," government sources



told ANI here without specifying the numbers to be procured.

The Heron has been in service with the three defence wings for several years now and can fly continuously for more than two days at a stretch providing reconnaissance from an altitude of more than 10 kilometres.

The forces are also working towards inducting an armed version of the UAV, as well as upgrading the existing fleet into combat UAVs un-

der the ambitious "Project Cheetah" spearheaded by the Indian Air Force.

On the other hand, the Army is planning to place orders for more Spike anti-tank guided missiles which were received by it last year from Israel under the emergency financial powers granted to the services in the Post-Balakot air strikes scenario.

Last time, the Army had gone in for 12 launchers and 200 Spike missiles.

"We are planning to acquire more of these anti-tank missiles for tackling any threat from the enemy armoured regiments," the sources said.

In the meanwhile, DRDO is working towards developing the indigenous Man-Portable Anti Tank Guided Missile (MP-ATGM) which will meet the bulk requirement of over 50,000 of these missiles needed by the Infantry units.

Kashmiri Driver Who Was Hurt Saving 20 CRPF Men 3 Yrs Back Awaits Compensation

SRINAGAR: A Kashmiri driver who saved over a dozen paramilitary personnel from a militant attack and was rendered disabled is awaiting compensation from the past three years.

Muhammad Rafiq Khushoo, a resident of Parimpora Srinagar, who drives a 407 minibus, emerged in Press Enclave on Tuesday and narrated the incident that occurred on April 3, 2017 near Sempora Pantha Chowk.

"I was ferrying over 20 security personnel for election duty from Jammu to Srinagar in my private 407 Mini Bus (JK01C-1674) when it came under fire from militants near Sempora. Initially I received a bullet in the arm while a CRPF man behind me died instantly when hit by a volley of bullets. A couple of personnel later died due to bullet injuries. I received two more bullets in my leg but kept on driving the vehicle till I navigated it to a safer place and reached police station Pantha Chowk," Rafiq recounted.

"This incident changed my life and I virtually became disabled. I am not able to walk properly, let alone drive a vehicle," said Rafiq.

"I was provided treatment at the army's 92-base hospital and police hospital, but forgotten once I was discharged. I wandered from pillar to post but didn't get any help.

Rafiq said a driver from Gujarat state was handsomely rewarded not only by his homestate but by J&K Govt for a similar act.

Muhammad Saleem, a resident of Gujarat, had saved Amarnath yatis by navigating to safety his under-attack vehicle in 2017.

"I felt deeply hurt when the driver from Gujarat was

given Rs two crore by J&K and Gujarat governments, Amarnath Shrine Board and the government of India for his bravery, but put impediments in my way for compensation".

Saleem had driven the bus carrying the Amarnath pilgrims to a nearby army camp after it came under attack at Botingoo in South Kashmir's Anantnag district on July 10, 2017.

"On the contrary when I was provided a job, the Home Department objected to it on the grounds that I was not competent for it. They said what I have done is a bravery act and for it only medals can be given," Rafiq said.

"I also drove the vehicle despite being hit by many bullets and my reward was that I have been left on the mercy of God."

Rafiq said the incumbent Special DG CRPF Zulifkar Hasan provided him monetary assistance but he spent that on medicines.

"To highlight my plight, I approached a number of Indian news channels but unfortunately they ignored me while some of them tried to exploit me. A channel instructed me to say it is difficult for me now to live in Kashmir. They simply wanted to exploit me. I met almost everyone at the helm of affairs but no help came from any side," he said.

"I have parents and a divorced sister and had taken a bank loan to purchase the vehicle. I want to meet Lieutenant Governor GC Murmu, but he will not be accessible for poor people like me. I fail to understand whom to approach now and how to seek help for myself and my family," Rafiq said. KNT

Progress On 4 Laning Of Narbal-Baramulla Road Reviewed



BARAMULLA: District Development Commissioner (DDC) Baramulla, Dr G N Itoo today chaired a meeting of concerned officers to review the pace and position of the road widening of Narbal-Uri stretch of National Highway.

The road widening plan of National Highway comprises 4 lanning of Narbal-Baramulla stretch and 2 lanning of Baramulla-Uri stretch besides the proposal also contains two bypasses at Pattan upto Palhallan and at Kanispora from Kanispora to Khanpora.

On the occasion, DDC took a detailed appraisal of various aspects during which it was informed that the joint survey has already been completed by BRO and Revenue authorities.

It was further informed that preliminary revenue

papers as per the requisite alignment and other necessities have also been completed by the concerned authorities.

Speaking on the occasion, DDC exhorted upon the concerned agencies to speed up the pace of work and sort out bottlenecks if any, so that work is completed within the specific time period.

He also directed the concerned to work in coordination and stressed to mobilize additional men and machinery for achieving desired results.

Moreover the DDC emphasized upon the concerned to strictly adhere to SOPs and guidelines pertaining to COVID-19, especially using face masks and maintaining social distancing at the project and working sites to avert any kind of eventuality.

NEWS MAKERS

Noida Twins Score Identical Marks In Class 12 CBSE Exams

NOIDA: Twins, Mansi and Manya, not only look alike, but they also managed to score identical marks in their Class 12 examination, results of which were announced by the CBSE on Monday.

The Noida-based identical twins scored 95.8 per cent each, and also received the same marks in all subjects. Both of them plan to pursue engineering and are waiting to appear for JEE Mains, which has been postponed to September because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The sisters, who also have similar habits, say they were sure about performing well in exams but had not imagined that they would end up scoring identical marks.



"Everybody remembers us for identical looks and it's only our names that differentiate us. We were confident about scoring well but were not hoping to score same marks," Mansi told PTI.

Sharing the excitement, Manya said, "I had read two years back about identical twins scoring identical marks. But then I thought it was too much of a coincidence. Still can't believe we scored exactly the same as well."

Manya says, while the competition between the two sis-

ters was always neck-to-neck, they had not scored exactly the same marks before. The sisters, who went to Aster Public School in Greater Noida, scored 98 in English and Computer Sciences, and got 95 each in Physics, Chemistry and Physical Education. Born just nine minutes apart, the twins also share a love for food and badminton.

Girls outshone boys by nearly six percentage points in CBSE Class 12 examinations based on an alternative assessment system adapted after some tests had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The board also decided against announcing a merit list this year in view of exceptional circumstances.

Mukesh Ambani Now World's 6Th-Richest, Beats Elon Musk And Google Founders

India's richest man surged past Silicon Valley tech titan Elon Musk as well as Alphabet co-founders Sergey Brin and Larry Page to become the world's sixth-richest person.

The chairman of Reliance Industries Limited, whose wealth surpassed Warren Buffett's last week, is now worth \$72.4 billion, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index. Shares of the conglomerate have more than doubled from a low in March as its digital unit got billions in investments from companies including Facebook, Silver Lake and, most recently, Qualcomm.

Mukesh Ambani is now richer than Larry Page, Sergey Brin and Elon Musk. Mukesh Ambani's energy empire is slowly shifting to e-commerce, with tech giants seeking to take a piece of India's fast-growing digital business. The world's second-most-populous nation has seen a spike of foreign interest in its economy, especially from Silicon Valley, and Google said on Monday it will spend \$10 billion in the coming years to help accelerate the adoption of digital technologies in the country. After a drop in U.S. tech shares on Monday, Page's fortune now stands at \$71.6 billion, while Sergey Brin's is at \$69.4 billion and Tesla's Elon Musk is worth \$68.6 billion. Warren Buffett's net worth dropped last week after he gave away \$2.9 billion to charity.

E-mail: tariqbhat72@gmail.com

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SATHU PAYEEN BAGHWANPORA, BARBARSHAH, SRINAGAR, KMR.