



Maximum : 32°C
Minimum : 18°C
Humidity : 47%

SUNSET
Today 07:42 PM
SUNRISE
Tomorrow 05:32 AM



News Digest

LG Visits Shopian, Takes Stock Of Situation

SRINAGAR, JULY 16: Lieutenant Governor, Girish Chandra Murmu today observed that the Government has put in place robust mechanism at all administrative levels for the redressal of public grievances, besides carrying out developmental activities in right earnest with active public participation. ● P-02

8 Recovered Patients Donate Plasma

Srinagar: Seven days after the institute conducted first-ever Convalescent Plasma Therapy in COVID patients, the authorities at Sher-e-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) on Thursday said that only seven to eight recovered COVID patients have so far donated their blood plasma. ● P-02

Non-Local Found Hanging From Tree

Srinagar: A non-local labourer allegedly committed suicide by hanging himself from a tree in As-tanpora Chatergam area of central Kashmir's Budgam district. An official said that a labourer (name withheld) of Jehangeer Pur Chhat-tisgarh was found hanging from a tree by some locals near ● P-02

IGP BSF Briefs LG About Security Scenario

Srinagar, July 16: Rajesh Mishra, IGP, BSF, Kashmir today called on the Lieutenant Governor, Girish Chandra Murmu here at the Raj Bhavan and briefed him about the security situation in the area of his responsibility. The Lt Governor and the IGP discussed about issues concerning effective ● P-02

PAGE 1 Anchor Dead Mother, Helpless Sons And A Samaritan: 'Viral' Scenes From SKIMS

Mir Faizan

AS their departed mother lied unattended and wrapped in a loose sheet, two grieving sons broadcasted their agony on social media through a harrowing video

Decrying the hospital apathy and a 'new protocol' denying plywood coffin box to COVID victims, they expressed helplessness over the decent farewell to their mother.

Over the phone, Srinagar magistrate was trying to console the

sorrowing siblings, while a police officer on the spot was fighting tears over their plight.

But when everyone seemed helpless, a volunteer from Srinagar's Bemina stepped forward with the much-needed compassionate support.

By the time Sajad Khan who heads a group volunteers for COVID burial in Kashmir received a call for help, the viral issue had already shocked the valley.

His group of volunteers isn't unknown to anyone, as since the



beginning of COVID health crisis in Kashmir, they've been acting on distress calls and helping quarantined families to bury their boxed "martyrs".

But what happened at SKIMS on July 15 even shocked them.

The dead body was lying in a loose sheet and to carry that, a dirty and dented stretcher was provided.

"These volunteers act promptly on these cases," said a medico, who previously sought the group's help in burying a COVID victim.

"Even SKIMS ambulance drivers know these volunteers. If some mindless protocol was indeed making it impossible for them, they could've easily averted the crisis by simply dialing the group's helpline number and come to the rescue of the mourning brothers."

But as the situation became a distressing crisis, Sajad Khan mounted on his bike and arrived in SKIMS for playing his routine role.

Between his arrival and the siblings' viral torment, the family's nine-day long ordeal at ● PAGE 02

Virus Claims 14 More

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The deadly pandemic claimed 14 more lives in Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday, the highest ever spike in 24 hours since the outbreak of virus, taking the total number of people who died due to the novel Coronavirus to 222.

According to the reports 14 deaths included 65-year-old man from Khawjabagh, Baramulla, 65-year-old man from Sirhama, Anantnag, 60-year-old woman from Sanbari, Kokernag, 67-year-old male from Bathra, Budgam, 75-year-old male from Batamalo, Srinagar, 60-year-old male from Karnah, Kupwara, 75-year-old male from Nishat Srinagar, 62-year-old male from Khanka-e Moula, Srinagar, a woman from Shopian, 75-year-old woman from Sonwar, Srinagar, 62-year-old male from

33 Travellers Among 490 Fresh Positive Cases

Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday recorded another spike in the Covid-19 related cases as 490 more people were tested positive for the Covid-19. They included 33 newly arrived people taking the total number of cases in J&K to above 12000 mark. With 490 fresh cases, the tally of ● P-02

Mallabagh, Soura, 50-year-old woman from Banglow, Bagh Srinagar, 62-year-old male from Baramulla and 80-year-old an from Sanbari, Kokernag was tested positive three days after her death. Officials said that a 65-year-old man from Baramulla who was suffering from Hypertension, B/L CAP, type I Respiratory failure, severe ARDS died at SKIMS at 6:40 am. Officials from Anantnag said that a 65-year-old male from Sir-

hama, Anantnag, having multiple problems died at SKIMS today. They said a 60-year-old woman from Sanbari, Kokernag was tested positive three days after her death. Officials said that a 67-year-old male from Bathra, Budgam who was admitted on 28 June at the hospital and was suffering from community acquired pneumonia died at SKIMS today. They added that a ● PAGE 02

Illegally Acquired Rs 39.69 Lakh Recovered From IAS Officer

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir administration has recovered Rs 39.69 lakh from a senior IAS officer he allegedly took from an organisation and recommended a probe into his alleged "illegal" monetary benefits, sources said on Thursday.

The Lt Governor administration put a notice to the senior IAS officer for allegedly getting illegal monetary benefits from the organisation and asked him to remit the amount worth several lakhs to it, they said.

The officer remitted an amount of Rs 39,69,359 back to the organisation recently, the sources said.

The officer further submitted that Rs 20,86,120 has been deducted as TDS and deposited with the Income Tax department, they added.

A senior officer of the administration has recommended ● P-02

Committee Constituted To Consider Restoration Of 4G In J&K: SC Told

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI- The Centre and Jammu and Kashmir administration told the Supreme Court on Thursday that a special committee has been set up as per the court's directive to consider the issue of restoration of 4G internet services in the Union Territory.

Attorney General K K Venugopal, while claiming that incidents of militancy are on the rise there, told a bench headed by Justice N V Ramana that no contempt is made out against the authorities as they have complied with the directives of the apex court.

On May 11, the top court had or-



dered setting up of a "special committee" headed by the Union Home Secretary to consider pleas for restoration of 4G internet services in J-K, saying national security and human rights need to be balanced in view of the fact that the UT has been "plagued with militancy".

High speed internet in J-K has been suspended since ● PAGE 02

ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR INDIA undertakes to file reply affidavit to the contempt petition within a week's time. He is permitted to do so. List the matters after one week, the bench said in its order.

Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
Government of India

Help us to help you

NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Are you washing your hands regularly? Soap and water work best!

Wash your hands with soap and water

- After coughing or sneezing
- Before and after caring for a sick person or treating a cut or wound
- After using or cleaning the bathroom
- After touching an animal, its food or waste
- Before and after eating or preparing food
- After touching garbage or anytime your hands appear visibly dirty/greasy

Use hand sanitizers when

- If soap and water is not available, use sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol
- Any other public place or situation where soap and water isn't available
- Before and after visiting a hospital, nursing home or any health facility

Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly for at least 20 seconds

Together we can fight COVID-19!

Help Line No.s 1075 (National Toll Free), 0191-2549676 (UT level Cell for J&K)
Jammu Division- 0191-2520982, 0191-2674444, 0191-2674115 ,
Kashmir Division- 0194-2440283 & 0194-2430581.

Issued in Public Interest by:
Health & Medical Education Department, Jammu & Kashmir

DIPK-NB-1404/20

From Front page...

...BANDIPORA KILLINGS

Fear Grips BJP Workers, 4 Resign In 8 Days

SRINAGAR: A week after the killing of BJP's youth leader along with his brother and father, fear is palpable among the Saffron party workers in Kashmir with at least four of them submitting their resignations in last eight days.

"In the past eight days, at least four ruling BJP workers/leaders resigned from the party and they include a woman worker from north Kashmir districts of Baramulla and Kupwara", a report said on Thursday.

Quoting aggrieved party leaders and workers news gathering agency KNO reported that the aggrieved workers are accusing party of failing to address their security concerns.

Mubeena Begum, a woman BJP worker, who resigned from the party said that ever since she joined the BJP, party didn't support the way it should have and the local administration too didn't pay any heed to her concerns. "This is

the reason I resigned," she said.

Aijaz Ahmad, another party leader who resigned earlier said that the local administration never accepted them as BJP leaders and workers and that became the main reason why they failed to deliver. "I still remember we have worked under immense pressure and threats but successfully managed to conduct BDC elections still we were left unrecognised," he said.

Bashir Ahmed Malik, a Handwara resident, who also resigned from the BJP party, said that there are some personal issues behind his resignation and his family members also forced him to give up the post fearing the ongoing threats.

"I have daughters back home who are my responsibility and now there are threats that actually bother me. The security apprehension is a hurdle before anyone these days", he was quoted as saying.

J&K BJP General Secretary (Org), Ashok Koul said that the life threats can't be ruled out at this time.

"There is a fear among our workers. Some posts are threatening in which they have been warned of dire consequences," he said. "These leaders were part of different political parties who in the past have worked for their benefits but BJP doesn't serve for personal interests since the local administration appropriately knows what has to be done and political leaders shouldn't interfere in those affairs."

As far as the security, Koul said that BJP has already taken up the issue with the police top brass and the security review of each and every political worker is being conducted. "Every single worker cant be provided with the security cover, but those who have genuine threats and are vulnerable, will be given a proper cover very soon," he said.

Media Should Report COVID-19 Crisis Sensibly: SKIMS

SRINAGAR: Authorities at Sher-e-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), Soura on Thursday urged journalists to cover and report ongoing Covid-19 crisis sensibly—assuring that a robust mechanism was in place at the tertiary-level healthcare institute to deal with the pandemic.

"During this Pandemic, we have to share the common responsibilities to deal with the crisis and all the more relevant to the journalists, reporting health in their stories etc. and not become the part of fake news themselves," SKIMS spokesperson said in a statement.

"We appreciate the positive role of the media for highlighting some relevant issues in the healthcare system but at the same time however when the social media has taken over the news gathering machinery, I urge the esteemed journalists and the editors of the news media organizations to at least cross check the facts," the official said.

Refuting the frivolous claims of some news media outlets, the

officials said that the doctors and paramedics at the premiere tertiary healthcare institute were working round the clock to provide quality healthcare to the in-patients, especially to the COVID-19 positive patients.

They said that a special and dedicated Infectious Diseases Ward has been recently created for catering to the huge influx of Covid-19 positive patients. "We not only have a responsibility towards ourselves but also to our families and society in general so we follow each and every guideline very religiously."

The officials said that SKIMS Administrative Block "becoming COVID-19 hotspot" was far from reality. "What is even so disgusting that at a time when the officials, doctors and paramedics who are working 24X7 are demoralized by just the social media reports and then some sections of newspapers carry the news without even verifying it from the SKIMS," they said.

The official said that normal procedural formalities and protocol are followed in each and every case.

HC Asks Govt To Reveal Gulmarg Lease Renewal Policy

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir High Court has directed government to reveal details on lease renewal policy as regards Gulmarg by August 12.

A division bench of Chief Justice Gita Mittal and Justice Sanjay Dhar passed the orders after advocate S. A. Makroo, counsel for an applicant, pointed out that despite opportunities, the Gulmarg Development Authority and others have not filed the reply and the matter was being unreasonably delayed.

He also pointed out that the authorities have failed to frame the policy with regard to lease renewal.

"Let the reply and the action taken report on lease renewal policy be filed before us by the next date of hearing, failing which Commissioner / Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, J&K, and the Chief Executive Officer, Gulmarg Development Authority, shall remain present in person," the court said as per an order. GNS

Man Shot Dead On LOC, Army Launches Ops

KUPWARA: The army on Thursday claimed to have foiled an infiltration bid by killing a militant in an ongoing operation along the line of control (LoC) at Keran sector in north Kashmir's Kupwara district. In a statement, the army said that suspicious movement of unidentified persons was detected across the LoC at Keran sector of Kupwara this morning which was intercepted during which one militant got killed. The statement said that "suspicious move of unidentified persons detected across the LoC at Keran Sector, Kupwara this morning." It said that the militants trying to infiltrate were intercepted by their own troops, contact was established and the infiltration bid was foiled. "During the exchange of gunfire, one militant got killed and one AK was recovered from the site of encounter. The operation in the area is under progress," it read.

Dead Mother, Helpless Sons...

SKIMS had already captured the searing struggle for COVID patients and their family members in health centres.

Mourning his beloved mother's departure, Tanveer Makhdoomi—who was seen in the viral video breaking down over the state of affairs at SKIMS—recalled how his mother's four-day-long fever and cough sent her to the hospital, where her Chest X-ray showed bilateral Pneumonia.

She was shortly declared as a COVID positive patient.

"My martyr mother was a brave woman," Tanveer told Kashmir Observer. "She knew the viral infection was a part of life now, but what troubled her was the hostile hospital treatment towards COVID patients at SKIMS."

On July 8, 2020, she was shifted to COVID clinic managed by junior doctors and nurses. Senior doctors, Tanveer said, were nowhere to be seen.

"Our mother was medically fit with no previous comorbidities," said Rameez Makhdoomi, Tanveer's journalist brother.

"Besides our family is well aware that COVID still has no treatment, but from giving Remdesivir, Plasma therapy to Tocilizumab, we tried all."

What shocked the family was the "cluelessness" of the COVID-designated staff in the hospital.

"The junior doctors were consulting us, as if, we were doctors," Rameez continued. "It looked awkward. They should've sought advice from their seniors."

Amid these twists and turns, their mother kept fighting for her life.

"The abysmal behaviour reached pinnacle after her demise," Rameez said. "Even after following every SOP and protocol, and waiting for three hours, we were provided half broken dirty stretcher and no coffin."

Tanveer recalled his visit to SKIMS' Control Room where, he said, he was treated as some "unwelcomed and unwanted" person.

"I was told by a bunch of giggling boys and girls there that new protocol doesn't allow coffin, helpers, and ambulance to COVID patients," he said.

"Although I had already tasked some people to prepare a final resting place for my mother, the hospital wanted me to take my mother in a community casket and thereby exposing the entire neighbourhood to infection! We were also told that no one will aid or guide burial process and that we should do it on our own, with four or five family members. This insensitivity enraged us."

After that, Tanveer, "for the first time in his life", was forced to upload a video on social media — wherein he can be seen decrying the apathetic attitude of Kashmir's tertiary care hospital.

"Sensing trouble, SHO Soura arrived on the scene. He was fighting his tears over our plight. Even he was helpless due to the hospital protocol," Tanveer said. "I also received a consolation call from DC Srinagar, Shahid Choudhary."

It was during this distressed hour, Sajad Khan arrived as a helping hand.

Along with brothers and some family friends, Sajad went to the Makhdoom Sahab area — where the family graveyard is nestled on a hillock.

"Sajad came as an angle for us at that moment," Tanveer recalled. "He accompanied us and ensured the proper burial with full Islamic rituals."

On his part, Sajad termed the incident as a pressing emergency which needed a prompt response.

"My team of 20 volunteers always remains ready for handling such crisis," he said.

"We act on a phone call. But the SKIMS incident demanded an immediate response. That's why I didn't wait for my team and went myself. But yes, I didn't do any favour for the family. We're into this crisis together. And therefore, we must fight it together by becoming each other's support."

But after drawing a raging flak and fury, SKIMS came up with an official statement, wherein it gave itself a clean chit.

"When the patient in question expired, it was conveyed to District Administration and Health authorities by control room SKIMS, Nodal officer as well as Medical Superintendent," the statement said.

"Delay in receiving team from concerned officials created anxiety among patient attendants when SHO Police Station Soura was contacted to receive dead body from SKIMS."

SKIMS did away with providing ambulance, coffin and people for burial, as "they're not part of a protocol," the statement said.

But after passing through the harrowing experience, the Makhdoomi brothers are questioning the existing norms which even make the decent burial a tormenting experience for the departed person's family.

"By providing dirty stretcher, expecting already grief-hit family to do burial and carry coffin-less body on their own, the SOP for dead body seems to have been reduced to zero SOP in Kashmir now," Rameez said.

Virus Claims14 More...

patient from Batamaloo was admitted on July 11 and was suffering from multiple ailments died at CD hospital while as patient from Karnah was suffering from bilateral pneumonia died at SMHS

The officials said that a 75-year-old patient from Nishat, Srinagar was admitted on 12 July and was suffering from bilateral pneumonia and he died at SMHS while a 62-year old chest infection patient from Srinagar was admitted on July 13 who also breathed his last today morning at SKIMS.

The officials said that a woman from Shopian was admitted on 11 July and was suffering from bilateral pneumonia. "She breathed her last at SMHS in the morning. Similarly, a patient

from Sonwar who was admitted on July 13 also succumbed to Covid at SMHS" he said.

The officials said that a 62-year-old male from Mallabagh, Srinagar which was admitted on 06 July died at CD hospital while a 50 year old woman from Banglow Bagh Baramulla who was admitted on 14 July died at GMC Baramulla and patient was suffering from bilateral pneumonia, they added.

A 62-year-old male from Baramulla was admitted in the hospital on 09 July and was suffering from Bilateral pneumonia with diabetes mellitus died at SMHS and 80 year old male from Sopore who was admitted on 10 July was suffering from bilateral pneumonia, ADRS, type 1 respiratory failure, Rh Arthritis at SKIMS.

With 14 more deaths, the death toll in J&K has reached 222 which include 18 from Jammu division and 204 from Kashmir region.

33 Travellers Among 490...

cases positive cases in J&K has reached to 12156 including 9649 from Kashmir and 2507 from Jammu. Official sources said that out of 490 new cases, 182 were tested positive at SKIMS, 51 at JVC and rest at other hospitals.

Among 490 new cases, 428 belong to Kashmir division while as 62 are from Jammu division, officials said, adding that the total number of positive cases in Kashmir division has reached to 9649 including 4846 recoveries and 204 deaths while as total number of positive cases in Jammu division have reached to 2507 including 1602 recoveries and 18 deaths.

The official sources said that total number of active cases in Jammu and Kashmir are 5488 including 4601 from Kashmir division and 887 from Jammu division.

With 109 more recoveries, the tally of total recoveries in Jammu and Kashmir has reached to 6446 which is 53.02 percent of the total cases which was over 63 percent a few days before.

"Cases tested positive in J&K include 259 from Srinagar, 21 from Kulgam, 18 from Baramulla, 42 from Shopian, 06 from Anantnag, 03 from Kupwara, 32 from Pulwama, 34 from Budgam, 02 from Bandipora and 11 from Ganderbal in Kashmir division while as 62 from Jammu division include 14 from Jammu, 03 from Udhampur, 02 from Kuthua, 33 from Rajouri, 08 from Samba and 02 from Doda," officials disclosed.

Officials said 1643 samples tested at SKIMS, 182 were tested positive. Among 182 positive cases, 10 are from BB cantonment Srinagar, 89 from CRPF, BSF, Crime branch and IGP office, 25 from PHQ Srinagar, 02 from Srinagar, 06 from Toll plaza Qazigund, 50 samples received from SKIMS, they said.

Official sources from JVC said that 51 including 35 from Srinagar and 16 from Shopian were tested positive.

As per officials figures, 2345 positive cases including 55 deaths and 566 recoveries are from Srinagar, 1399 including 48 deaths and 577 recoveries are from Baramulla, 1097 including 679 recoveries and 23 deaths are from Kulgam, 972 including 17 deaths and 720 recoveries are from Shopian, 939 including 17 deaths and 638 recoveries are from Anantnag, 818 including 523 recoveries and 13 deaths are from Kupwara, 774 including 388 recoveries and 08 deaths are from Pulwama, 662 including 340 recoveries and 16 deaths are from Budgam, 421 including 313 recoveries and 03 deaths are from Bandipora, 222 including 100 recoveries and 04 death are from are from Ganderbal.

In Jammu division, 553 including 366 recoveries and 11 deaths are from Jammu district, 307 including 285 recoveries and 01 death are from Udhampur, 378 including 230 recoveries and 01 death are from Kathua, 227 including 209 recoveries are from Ramban, 321 including 98 recoveries and 01 death is from Rajouri, 301 including 145 recoveries and 01 death are from Samba, 148 including 01 death and 121 recoveries are from Poonch, 154 including 82 recoveries and 02 deaths are from Doda, 60 including 39 recoveries are from Reasi and 58 including 27 recoveries are from Kishtwar.

As per the daily information bulletin, 323,038 persons in Jammu and Kashmir are under observation while 38,581 persons have been kept under home quarantine besides that 5488 persons are in hospital isolation while 13 persons are under hospital quarantine.

According to the bulletin, 234,857 persons have completed surveillance period and 43,875 persons are under home surveillance besides that so far results of 481,452 samples are available.

Out of 481,452 the number of samples tested negative stands at 469,296 while as 12,156 have been tested positive, among them 5488 are active and 6446 persons have recovered and 222 persons have died. With inputs from KNO

Illegally Acquired Rs 39.69...

a probe against the IAS officer as per the government rules before imposing any penalty, the sources said.

He has also recommended issuance of warning letter to the officer and closure of the case without informing the matter to the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), they said

However, Lieutenant Governor G C Murmu has refused to close the case before a probe by the DoPT, the sources said.

The Lt Governor administration has taken a serious note for "hiding" the issue from the DoPT and instructed for ordering a probe into it.

Earlier in June, the administration had written to the DoPT to take action against an IAS officer who allegedly tried to prevent the Amarnath Shrine Board officials from undertaking "pratham pooja" (first prayer) for Amarnath yatra.

This was for the first time in many years that the J and K administration has made a complaint to the DoPT against a bureaucrat, sources had said then.

The sources said that the J and K administration is yet to receive any formal reply on action taken by the DoPT over the issue.

Committee Constituted To...

August last year when the Centre had announced revocation of its special status and bifurcation of the state into two UTs — Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir.

During the hearing on Thursday, the bench, also comprising Justices R S Reddy and B R Gavi, asked the Centre and the J-K administration to file affidavits within a week detailing the setting up of committee and also decisions taken by it in reviewing the orders restricting 4G internet services there.

"Attorney General for India undertakes to file reply affidavit to the contempt petition within a week's time. He is permitted to do so. List the matters after one week, the bench said in its order.

The apex court was hearing a plea seeking initiation of contempt proceedings against the Union Home Secretary and Chief Secretary of J-K for their alleged "wilful disobedience" in complying with the court's May 11 order.

Senior advocate Huzefa Ahmadi, appearing for the petitioner, claimed that the order has not been complied with and the authorities were not responding to the representations filed against the suspension of 4G internet services.

He said since orders passed by the authorities are not being published, nobody can challenge them before the court.

To this, the bench observed the orders passed by the committee should be put in public domain.

Venugopal, appearing for the Centre, said that orders suspending 4G internet services have been passed after due application of mind.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the J-K administration, also told the bench that the special committee has already been set up.

Ahmadi told the apex court that absence of 4G internet speed has affected the people there, including in online classes for students, medical facilities, e-commerce and online shopping.

Referring to earlier statement of the Union Home Minister, Ahmadi argued he had said that militancy is at the lowest since 1990 in Kashmir.

The contempt plea, filed by Foundation for Media Professionals, has alleged that the concerned authorities have not yet constituted the special committee in line with the top court's order.

"It is respectfully submitted that such a lax attitude, especially during a health pandemic (COVID-19) and humanitarian crisis, violates both the letter and the spirit of this court's judgment.... and amounts to wilful disobedience of this court's judgment and order, which had taken judicial notice of the concerns relating to the ongoing pandemic and the hardships that may be faced by the people of Jammu & Kashmir," the plea has claimed.

It has alleged that authorities were duty bound to implement the court's direction but they have failed to notify and facilitate the functioning of the special committee.

"The directions of this court have been summarily ignored and the Respondents have wilfully disobeyed their duty to implement this court's directions, which they were bound to and had undertaken to implement, and therefore must be held in contempt of this court," the plea claimed.

It has also urged the apex court to summon the Union Home Secretary and Chief Secretary of UT of Jammu and Kashmir to explain their position with respect to the alleged non-compliance of the court's directions.

It said that Jammu and Kashmir administration had on May 27 passed an order continuing the restriction on mobile internet speeds to 2G in all districts throughout the UT without any restriction by time or region.

It said the petitioner had sent a representation to the special committee regarding the May 27 order but they have not yet received any acknowledgment of its receipt.

Besides the contempt plea, the petitioner has also filed an application seeking directions to the authorities to notify the constitution of the special committee within three working days.

The application has sought an interim direction to the authority to restore 4G mobile internet services in Jammu and Kashmir, pending disposal of the plea and also the decision by the special committee.

The court had earlier taken note of the submissions of the Centre that continuous infiltration, foreign influence, violent extremism and issues of national integrity are prevalent in J-K.

The apex court's the May 11 order had come on the pleas filed by Foundation for Media Professionals and others seeking restoration of 4G services in the UT.

LG Visits Shopian, Takes...

The Lt Governor was on his visit to Shopian district where he interacted with 17 public delegations and took stock of their demands and issues. The visit is the latest in the series of regular assessment of developmental needs of the people in the districts by the Lt Governor.

He was accompanied by Advisor to the Lieutenant Governor, Baseer Ahmad Khan; Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Pandurang K. Pole; IGP Kashmir, Vijay Kumar; Deputy Commissioner Shopian, Choudhary Mohammad Yasin, HoDs, Chief Engineers and other senior officers. Former MLC, Zaffar Iqbal Manhas was also present on the occasion.

Earlier, the Lt Governor e-inaugurated nine developmental projects worth Rs. 44.72 cr. and also laid foundation stones of four projects worth Rs. 48.77 cr.

While interacting with the members of the delegations, the Lt Governor said that the UT Government is working on the agenda of equitable development and a proportional allocation of resources has been ensured for the welfare of every section of the society.

The process of rapid development has been set in motion with various new projects of public importance being executed to benefit the public at large, he added.

The delegations included- representatives of PRLs, Fruit growers Association, Cold Store Unit Holders, Gargen Unit Holders, Traders Association, Civil Society, Non Migrant Kashmiri Pandits, NGOs, residents of villages, Sports & Youth organizations, NYC, Gujar-Bakarwal Community & Pahari speaking people projected various demands pertaining to empowerment of PRLs & proper security of its members; augmentation of healthcare infrastructure, irrigation facilities, power & water supply; establishment of Women's Degree College in Shopian; loans to farmers at lowest interest rates; strengthening road connectivity; development of Shopian Town; early completion of Girls Hostel, beautification of Jamia Masjid; augmentation of sports infrastructure & special relief package for artisans to compensate losses due to COVID-19 lockdown etc.

The Lt Governor observed that the government is taking comprehensive measures by reaching out to the people with a prompt public delivery mechanism to resolve their issues and meet their developmental needs. He asked the people to play an important part in the development process through their active participation. He issued on the spot directions in respect of the issues projected during the interaction and asked the concerned officers to remove the bottlenecks in a time bound manner.

On the demands projected by former MLC, Zaffar Iqbal Manhas with regard to road connectivity of Shadab Karewa village & macadamization of roads & other developmental works, the Lt Governor directed the concerned officers for completion of the said works within the time period of two months positively.

The Lt Governor urged the religious and spiritual leaders of the district to aware the people on adopting the necessary precautions with regard to spread of COVID-19. He also asked the Police department to make announcements through their vehicles on daily basis to spread awareness among the people and further advised the people to follow all COVID related SOP's issued by the Government.

The members of the delegations also expressed their gratitude towards the Government for commissioning of two Power Receiving Stations, one at Mastpora Keller and other at Arhamia Shopian.

The nine projects worth Rs. 44.72 cr e-inaugurated today included 12x30 Mtr Multi-span Reshinagri Bridge over Nallah Ves-hoo; 1x45 Mtr span Zainapora bridge over Nallah Tongri; 2.25 Mtr Span Rebon Bridge Grider Decked over Nallah Tongri; Gujjar & Bakerwal hostel Shirmal Shopian; WSS Nowgam Rangamarg; Water supply Scheme Shirmal Sherpathri; Hr Sec School Heer-pora; Handicrafts Office building at Gargen Shopian and Tourist Reception Centre Padpawan.

Meanwhile, foundation stones of four projects worth Rs. 48.77 cr were laid today including- Doctors Residential quarters at District Hospital Shopian (6 Sets); transit accommodation at Degam Shopian; Shirmal to Vishroo road and Narwah-Reshinagri road under PMGSY.

8 Recovered Patients...

Dr. Farooq Jan, Medical Superintendent of SKIMS said that only seven to eight recovered COVID-19 patients have so far donated their blood plasma.

SKIMS started Convalescent Plasma Therapy (CPT) for critically sick patients as one of the modalities of supportive treatment of this deadly infection that has been approved by Government of India as well as ICMR.

"The Institutional Ethics Committee of SKIMS also approved the institution of this Treatment. The Government of Jammu and Kashmir has been apprised of the recent developments in Convalescent Plasma Therapy at SKIMS wherein three critically sick patients received Plasma Therapy on compassionate grounds," the officials said.

The institute also appealed to the recovered COVID-19 patients to come up and donate their blood plasma.

However, below a dozen recovered patients have so far turned up to donate their blood plasma

So far, over 6000 people have recovered in Jammu and Kashmir and a top health official in an interview recently stated that these recovered patients by donating the blood plasma can save the lives of many

Non-Local Found Hanging...

a brick kiln where he was working as a labour.

Immediately after the incident the police team rushed to the spot and the body has been shifted to a nearby hospital for medico legal formalities.

A police officer confirmed the incident and said a case has been registered in this regard and further investigation has been taken up.

IGP BSF Briefs LG About...

security management and overall security environment in Kashmir.

The Lt Governor advised the IGP for heightened surveillance on all fronts to meet the security challenges in J&K, besides taking steps for welfare of the BSF personnel, engaged in difficult duties

He stressed on maintaining a sustained coordination between all the security forces and lauded their role in safeguarding the territorial integrity and the internal security of Jammu and Kashmir.

Speedy Bike Knocks Elderly Man To Death in Safa Kadal

Srinagar: An elderly man who was hit by a biker succumbed to his injuries this morning.

On Sunday, an unknown speed bike hit an elderly man from Ganderpora Safakadal area of Srinagar. The man identified as 80 year old Ghulam Muhammad Lone sustained head injuries and was shifted to SMHShospital.

Today he succumbed to his injuries.

The man who was a respectable figure in his locality was a Mouzzin and is survived by his ailing wife, three sons and three daughters.

Locals demanded the arrest of the bike rider. They said the elderly man became a victim of rash driving.

A police official said that a case has been registered and efforts are on to nab the accused bike rider.

NIA arrests man in connection with money laundering

Srinagar: National Investigation Agency arrested a man in an alleged money laundering case, official sources said.

They said that sleuths of NIA assisted by Jammu Kashmir Police raided the house of one Ghulam Muhammad Bhat at Hyderpora area of Srinagar city. The team arrested a man who was residing in the house on rent from past sometime.

Sources identified the man who was arrested by NIA as Afaaq Ahmed Wani son of Ghulam Rasool Wani, a resident of Rafiabab area of North Kashmir's Baramulla district.

Sources added that the arrested man is allegedly involved in money laundering and he has been charged for the same offence. (KNT)

Power shutdown in Srinagar parts today

Srinagar: As per Superintendent Engineering O&M, Circle-11, KPDCL Srinagar, in order to carry out realignment of feeders to their original route, shutdown of 11 kV feeder no. 4 and 5 of Shahteng Receiving Station shall be observed on July 18 and July 21 from 10 am to 2 pm.

To carry out installation of a substation frame of 630 KVA transformers at Iqbal Abad Bemina, shutdown of 11 kV feeders no. F 03 and F 05 of Bemina Receiving Station shall be observed as per programme given below.

The power supply shall remain affected to feeder No. F 03 of Receiving station Bemina-1st between 10 am to 11:30 am on July- 18 and for F 05 on July-19 between 11 am to 12 noon.

Similarly in order to carry out pending works under PSDf, shutdown of 132/33 kV Grid Station Sheeri shall be observed as per programme given below.

The power supply to areas fed from Installation of 132 CT set of Sheeri Delina Circuit shall remain shut on July 17 from 9 am to 5 pm and power supply to areas fed from Installation of 4 No. Isolators of LJHP Sheeri Circuit shall remain shut between July 19 and 22 on a daily basis from 9 am to 5 pm.

NC, PDP Seek Order On Merging, Closing Sick PSUs Revoked

Press Trust of India

Srinagar- The National Conference and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) Thursday asked the Jammu and Kashmir administration to rescind a six month old order to merge or close several sick public sector undertakings in the union territory.

"The J&K government's decision to close many PSUs is shocking....This order is unfair and must be rescinded," National Conference tweeted on it official handle.

The party said the administration was bent upon adding to the soaring unemployment numbers.

"Instead of creating new jobs, JK administration seems



adamant in adding to soaring unemployment numbers by terminating scores of existing gov-

ernment employees," it added. The PDP termed the move appalling.

"The decision to close many PSUs by the J&K administration is appalling. At a time when J&K is fighting unemployment & there's a need to create more jobs, the admin's move is plainly an attempt to add to the rising unemployment numbers by ceasing scores of existing govt employees!" it tweeted.

In an order issued in January this year on the directions of Lieutenant Governor G C Murmu, the administration said mineral sites should be auctioned, industrial estates be handed over to SIDCO (State Industrial Development Corporation) and the JK Cements limited be privatised after assessment of assets.

HC Declines To Entertain Omar's Plea For Early Hearing In Divorce Case

Press Trust of India

New Delhi- The Delhi High Court Thursday declined to entertain former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's plea seeking early hearing of his appeal against a 2016 trial court order, which dismissed his divorce petition, saying his estranged wife's consent was also required for advancing the date.

A bench of Justices Hima Kohli and Subramonium Prasad said the high court's Registrar General has already issued a circular stating that during the restricted functioning of courts due to COVID-19, a request for final hearing of pending matters will be entertained only if both the parties agree.

"In view of the fact that this application is not accompanied by any consent from the other side (Payal Abdullah) and nor is the counsel for the respondent present in the hearing, though we are informed that an advance copy of the application was served on him, we are not in a position to accede to the prayer made in the application," the bench said.

"The application is dismissed," it added.

Omar's lawyer told the court that the "lack of coopera-



Omar Abdullah with his estranged wife Payal - File Pic

tion" from the other side was the reason for filing the application.

On August 30, 2016, the trial court had dismissed Omar's plea seeking divorce from Payal saying he had failed to prove irretrievable breakdown of the marriage.

The trial court had said that Omar could not prove his claims of "cruelty" or "desertion" which were the grounds alleged by him for grant of decree of divorce.

"The petitioner (Omar) has not been able to explain a single circumstance to show that the supervening circumstances have erupted which has made it impossible for him to continue his relationship with the respondent (Payal)."

"Rather, evidence shows

that they were in continuous contact till the filing of the divorce petition," the court had said in its order, adding that "there is not an iota of evidence in regard to the circumstances which have prevailed to prompt the petitioner to file the divorce plea".

It had further held that Omar "failed to prove his case for divorce on ground of cruelty".

In his plea seeking divorce, Omar had claimed before the trial court that his marriage had broken down irretrievably and he has not enjoyed a conjugal relationship since 2007 and that the couple, married on September 1, 1994, were living separately since 2009. The couple have two sons who are staying with their mother.

Kundal assumes charge as MD JKPCC

Srinagar- After assuming charge as Managing Director Jammu and Kashmir Projects Construction Corporation (JKPCC), Vikas Kundal, today held an introductory meeting with the officers and officials to review status of various projects being executed by the Corporation.

The meeting was attended by Chief Engineer JKPCC, ND Khawaja, Executive Engineers of various units and other senior officials of the Corporation.

Kundal directed the officials for ensuring optimum use of advanced technology in maintenance and construction of roads and buildings in Jammu and Kashmir besides using quality material in these projects. He assessed the practical and ground level implication of the projects along with financial progress. He stressed upon the concerned officers to conduct regular site visits to stay well versed with the actual situation and impending issues of their departments.

He instructed them to speed up the pace of work on all ongoing projects for their timely completion besides directing them to avoid diversion of funds from project to project.

He instructed the officers to follow the guidelines of the World Bank strictly while dealing with JTRP projects besides putting all works to e-tendering.

47,950 Submit Online Forms For Class IV Posts in 6 Days in J&K

JAMMU: 1,13,200 registrations have been done by the candidates on JKSSB's Online Portal, since the commencement of online application submission from 10th July, 2020 and 47,950 candidates completed their online application submission process for Class IV posts.

It has been noted that about 75,000 unique visitors visited the online application portal of JKSSB yesterday.

Pertinently, the Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board has advertised 8575 Class IV posts for District/Divisional/Union Territory cadre in various departments under the provisions of the Jammu and Kashmir Appointment to the Class-IV (Special Recruitment) Rules, 2020, in pursuance of General Administra-

tion Department's Revised Indent No. GAD/Mtg/RB-IV/50/2020 Dated 22.06.2020 under Advertisement Notification No. 01 of 2020 dated 26.06.2020.

Further, the Services Selection Board has operationalized two helplines one each at Srinagar and Jammu for the convenience of aspirants. In addition, any person who finds difficulty in submission of application form due to technical issue or for any other reasons, may send a self-explanatory mail at ssbjkgrievance@gmail.com for seeking guidance, clarification etc.

انتقال پر ملال

یہ خبر نہایت ہی رنج و غم کے ساتھ دی جاتی ہے کہ نور محمد بٹ ولد عبدالرحمان بٹ ساکنہ دودھ گڑگا کالونی چھانہ پورہ سرینگر مورخہ 16 جولائی بروز جمعرات داعی اجل کو لبیک کہہ گئے۔ انا للہ و انا الیہ راجعون

مرحوم انتہائی نیک اور شریف انشس ہونے کے ساتھ صوم و صلوٰۃ کے پابند تھے۔ مرحوم کا چہارم 19 جولائی بروز اتوار کو ہوگا۔ فاتحہ خوانی ان کے آبائی قبرستان واقع منی ہاؤسنگ کالونی چھانہ پورہ سرینگر میں صبح 10 بجے انجام دی جائے گی۔

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CONDOLENCE

The whole fraternity of Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) condoles the sad demise of the Father of Dr. Irshad Ahmad Mir (Assistant Professor, Department of Arabic Language and Literature, IUST). Vice Chancellor, Deans of Schools, Registrar, Finance Officer, Islamic University Faculty Association (IUFA), Islamic University Non-Teaching Employees Association (IUNTEA) and other Staff Members of the University expressed their heartfelt condolences and prayed Almighty Allah for giving eternal peace to the departed soul and courage to the bereaved family to bear this irreparable loss.

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IMPORTANT DATES

Online Registration starts on: **8th July 2020**
Last Date for Online Registration: **31st July 2020**
Dates of Entrance Examination: **21st, 22nd & 23rd August 2020**
All dates given above are tentative subject to position of COVID-19

For further details including courses offered, eligibility, reservation policy and scholarship, please refer to the Prospectus 2020-21 hosted in the University website **www.pondiuni.edu.in**

8th July, 2020

DAVP:21232/11/0001/2021

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

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

RAILWAYS

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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

HIJRI CALENDAR

25 Zu al-Qa'dah 1441

PRAYERS	
FAJR	3: 50
ZUHR	12: 37
ASR	5:35
Magrib	7:45
ISHA	9:23

This Day In History

- 1936 - Spanish generals Francisco Franco and Emilio Mola lead a right-wing uprising, starting the Spanish Civil War
- 1944 - 2 ammunition ships explode at Port Chicago, California, killing 322
- 1948 - Israeli army captures Nazareth
- 1948 - Proclamation of constitution of Republic of (South) Korea
- 1952 - Shah of Persia Mohammed Reza Pahlavi names Ghavam Sultaneh premier
- 1958 - King Hussein declares himself head of Jordan/Iraqi federation
- 1959 - Paleontologist Mary Leakey discovers partial skull of a new species of early human ancestor, *Zinjanthropus boisei* or 'Zinj' (now called *Paranthropus boisei*) lived in Africa almost 2 million years ago
- 1964 - Great Britain performs nuclear Test at Nevada Test Site
- 1973 - Military coup in Afghanistan; King Mohammad Zahir Shah flees
- 1975 - Apollo 18 and Soyuz 19 make 1st US/USSR linkup in space
- 1976 - Indonesian president Suharto annexes East Timor
- 1980 -- Bolivian military coup; General Garcia Meza becomes president
- 1980 - Ronald Reagan formally accepts Republican nomination for US president
- 1981 -- Israeli bombers destroy PLO/al-Fatah headquarters in Beirut
- 1981 - USSR performs nuclear Test at Eastern Kazakh/Semipalatinsk USSR
- 1984 - Soyuz T-12 carries 3 cosmonauts to space station Salyut 7
- 1987 - Iran and France break diplomatic relations
- 1990 - Hussein's Revolutionary Day speech claims Kuwait stole oil from Iraq
- 1994 - FIFA World Cup Final, Rose Bowl, Pasadena, CA: Brazil beats Italy 3-2 on penalties; 0-0 after extra time
- 1995 - Forbes Magazine announces Bill Gates is the richest man in world with a net worth of \$12.9 billion dollars
- 1998 - Russia buries Tsar Nicholas II and family, 80 years after they died
- 2004 - Former South African President Nelson Mandela calls for commitment by the world to take action against AIDS
- 2007 - TAM Airlines (TAM Linhas Aéreas) Flight 3054 crashes upon landing during rain in São Paulo. Brazil's deadliest aviation accident to date with estimated 199 deaths.
- 2014 - Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 is shot down over Eastern Ukraine by a Buk surface-to-air missile launched from pro-Russian separatist-controlled territory, killing all 283 passengers and 15 crew on board
- 2014 - 5-hour humanitarian ceasefire, proposed by the UN, takes place between Israel and Hamas
- 2015 - Suicide bomber in Khan Bani Saad, Iraq, kills 120, ISIS claims responsibility
- 2015 - Scientists solve mystery of sleeping sickness in two villages in northern Kazakhstan - uranium mining had caused increase in carbon monoxide
- 2018 - Oldest evidence of bread, made from wild grains, discovered by archaeologists in 14,000 year-old dig in the Black Desert, Jordan

From KO Archives

Beigh For Alliance With Separatists

Observer News Service

Srinagar - Finance minister, Muzaffar Hussain Beig, today proposed setting up of a joint platform of separatist and mainstream parties for an effective representation of the Kashmiri people.

Addressing public meetings in the Baramulla district, Beig said that India and Pakistan had directly or indirectly included Kashmiris in the talks process, and therefore there was a need of a joint platform of pro- and anti- accession parties in which all leaders of Kashmir were included.

"The formation of a composite leadership is necessary for the effective representation of the Kashmiri people in the days to come," the KNS quoted the minister as having said.

"If this is not done, everyone will go on parroting his own line, and we will achieve nothing," he said.

"You cannot have 5 imams in a mosque. That can only lead to confusion and serve no public purpose," he said.

Beig said that efforts to resolve the Kashmir issue peacefully had begun and every Kashmiri leader must play his role.

"Now that Kashmiris have been included in the talks process, and the way cleared for a dialogue with India and Pakistan, militants should give up the gun and join the dialogue initiative," he said.

"Thirteen militants have been killed in the Gurez sector, and nine more have lost their lives in Uri. Eighty thousand people have been killed so far, and more Kashmiris are bound to die in continuing infiltration attempts," he said.

"Why should this blood shed go on when the status of Kashmiris as a party to the issue has been recognized and an invitation for talks has come," Beig said, calling upon militants to make use of the opportunity offered by the talk's process. He said that his party, the Peoples' Democratic Party, would never allow a sell-out on the honour and dignity of Kashmiris, nor would it allow the political exploitation of the Kashmiri people.

Beig emphasized on the need of forming rural development committees in villages to convey peoples' problems to the government.

(Kashmir Observer, 17 July, 2005)

KASHMIR OBSERVER

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Mirage of 4G

On Thursday, the Supreme Court sought response from the union government on a petition filed by a body of media professionals accusing Centre of contempt for not carrying out periodic review of its orders suspending internet services in J&K. In a previous order, the apex court had asked the centre to set up a special committee on restoring mobile internet services in J&K. The committee was supposed to undertake the weekly assessment of the situation in J&K to see if it was conducive for the restoration of high speed mobile internet. The petitioner, NGO Foundation for Media Professionals has claimed that no such assessments have been conducted and as such has urged the court to initiate contempt proceedings against the Centre.

However, the government through its Attorney General KK Venugopal has denied there was any contempt on the Centre's part. The Attorney General told the court that the committee had met twice since the court order in May and has asked the J&K administration to find out if relaxation was possible in curbs on internet services.

On July 9, the J&K administration had once again extended the ban on 4G mobile internet until July 19. The administration has so far showed little inclination to review the ban. In its order the administration has reiterated that banning the high speed internet was absolutely necessary "in the interest of the sovereignty and integrity of India, security of the state and for maintaining public order". The order also states that restrictions on internet have been imposed to prevent its "misuse" for various anti-national activities.

But no matter what government says, its security argument to keep 4G internet suspended isn't convincing enough. Truth is the situation in the Valley hasn't been calmer than it is now in a long time. It has been months since the Valley has witnessed a protest or a stone-throwing incident. So, to say that high speed internet will pose threat to security doesn't hold water. Besides, even if a few people are suspected to "misuse" the internet it doesn't justify the collective punishment. More so, at a time when health of people is at risk. While on the one hand, government is taking every preventive to ensure COVID-19 doesn't spread - it has recently put Kashmir under yet another lockdown - it is restricting what should have been its primary tool to create awareness about the disease. More than preventive measures, it is how much people are aware about the Coronavirus that will help the government in the fight against the disease. But the administration, it seems, doesn't want it. Its approach, as always, remains security centric when the need of the hour is to prioritize healthcare.

OTHER OPINION

Saying no to Huawei

There is no doubt that China will make Britain pay for stripping Huawei from the 5G network. When Beijing said that the reversal "must come at a cost", it didn't mean the £2bn bill cited by the culture secretary, Oliver Dowden; and it sees the UK's stance on Hong Kong as an aggravating factor. The question is how high the price will be, and how precisely the UK will pay.

China's considerations may include the risk of strengthening a Tory rebellion that could push forward Huawei's 2027 exit date from the 5G network, and the fact that other countries are looking again at Huawei's role. The UK is coming into line with other Five Eyes intelligence-sharing nations, the US and Australia, by rejecting Huawei, but could set a new direction in Europe.

Beijing is also fighting on multiple fronts. The imposition of a draconian security law on Hong Kong has caused an international backlash and highlighted other issues, including Beijing's treatment of Uighurs in Xinjiang and its increasingly harsh line on Taiwan. Its biggest battle is with Washington; on Tuesday, Donald Trump signed an order rescinding Hong Kong's special economic status with America. China is also struggling with Australia, over Canberra's calls for an independent inquiry into coronavirus and the offer of permanent residency to some Hongkongers; with Canada, over Huawei; and with India, which has banned dozens of Chinese apps after a deadly border clash. Relations with the EU are becoming more fraught.

But this proliferation of struggles reflects Beijing's increasing confidence and forcefulness. Britain also looks a good deal weaker than the last time China froze it out, following David Cameron's meeting with the Dalai Lama. Back then, trade actually increased, and diplomatic relations continued at lower levels. But George Osborne's subsequent push for a "golden relationship", with human rights and other concerns low on the agenda as long as the money kept flowing, suggested that the UK will cave whenever it feels the heat. Withdrawal from the EU has left us friendless; and a post-Brexit country weakened by the pandemic will be especially economically vulnerable. The US, despite urging other countries to pick a team, is an utterly inconsistent player.

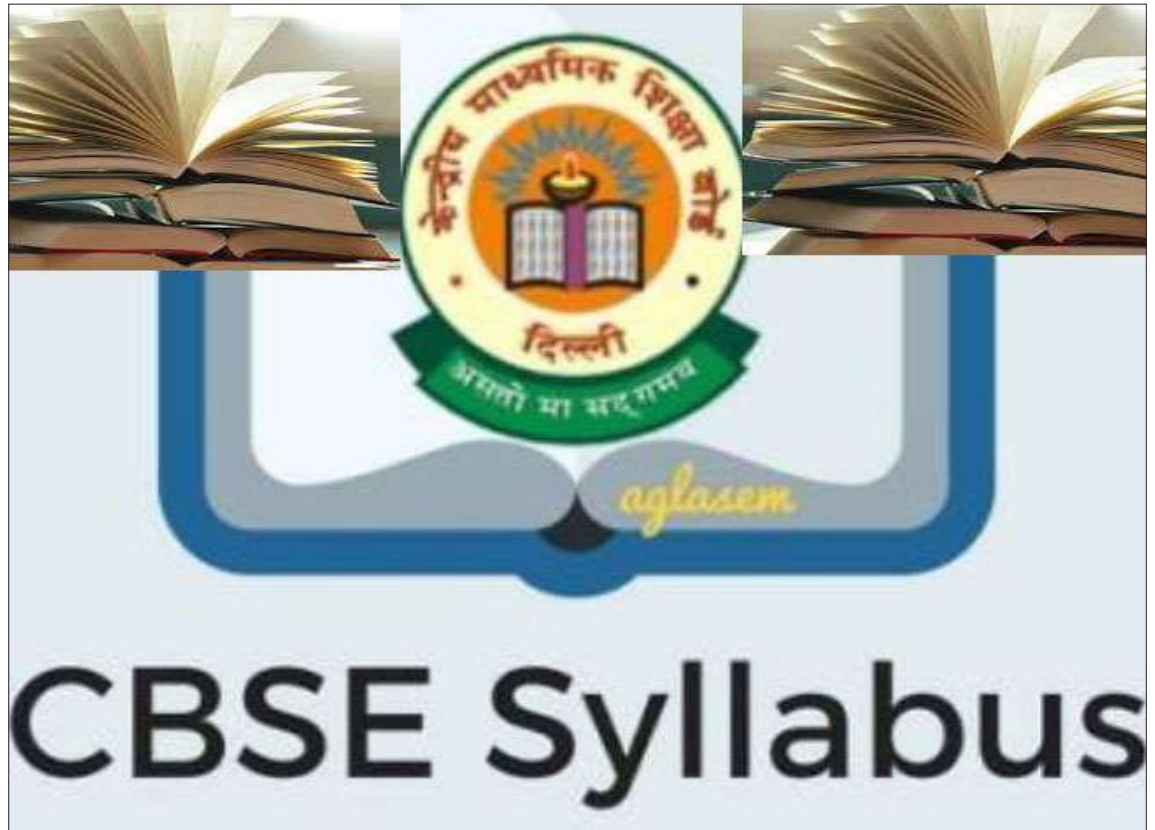
We can expect more than diplomatic snubs this time. Australia's example is interesting; it faces a ban on some exports, has hinted that China could be behind a cyber-attack, and recently told its citizens that they could risk arbitrary detention if they travelled to China. British businesses might well find they face new obstacles operating in China: HSBC had reportedly warned Downing Street that it could face reprisals if Huawei was blocked from the UK's critical infrastructure. That sounded, if anything, rather like a disincentive to keep using the Chinese firm. Why offer further leverage for the future?

But a broader reconsideration is now needed, with countries looking individually and collectively at how we came to the point where Huawei was regarded as almost indispensable for 5G, while China would not allow a foreign firm to play an equivalent role in its essential infrastructure. It might be convenient for the intelligence services to portray this as a failure of industrial policy - as Robert Hannigan, the former director of GCHQ, did on Wednesday - but there is also truth in his charge. It is time to consider what our technological and manufacturing priorities are and should be, where our companies should be concentrating their efforts, and how they can be encouraged and supported to do so.

Guardian

Tinkering with school's syllabus

CBSE has removed several chapters from various subjects in order to reduce the course load on teachers and students but most of the deleted topics form the foundation of democratic societies



ASAD MIRZA

A careful study of the topics deleted reveals that they include issues, which the current leaders do not want most people to know or discuss about. Instead it wants to insert a completely new narrative on these issues based on ideological lines.

In a completely uncalled for move, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has revised its syllabus for students of Classes 9 to 12 in the name of handling the stressful situation of teachers and students in view of the continuing Covid-19.

The Union human resource development (HRD) minister Ramesh Pokhriyal in a series of Tweets, earlier this week (9 July) said that, "Looking at the extraordinary situation prevailing in the country and the world, it has been decided to rationalise syllabus up to 30% by retaining the core concepts." This has been done for annual exams for the year 2020-21.

Deleted Topics

CBSE has removed several chapters from various subjects in order to reduce the course load on teachers and students. Some of the important chapters that have been deleted include: Federalism, citizenship, nationalism and secularism from class 11th political science subject besides India's foreign relations with neighbouring countries and citizenship. Complete chapter on Social and New Social Movements in India from class 12th political science paper. Demonetisation from class 12th Business Studies paper. Colonialism and the countryside colonial cities and understanding partition from class 12th History subject. Complete topic on GST from class 11th Business Studies subject. Complete chapters on population, democratic rights and food security in India from class 9th social science subject. Besides a chapter on girl education by renowned Hindi writer Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi has been deleted from class 10th Hindi subject.

Though the CBSE's move is purported to lift the burden off the shoulders of students and teachers in the immediate term, allowing them to pay more attention on the quality of learning. Yet, the selection of topics deleted from the textbooks makes one wonder over the rationale to pick these particular topics or chapters. Most of the deleted topics form the foundation of democratic societies and

students need to learn about these to enhance their knowledge base. The irrational exclusions smacks of a political tone also, to keep a large and young part of the population unaware of these issues. We should not forget that depriving the young generation of its right to increase its knowledge base is not only authoritarian bit it might also boomerang.

In its defence, the CBSE also issued a press statement, citing the pandemic and NCERT recommendation for the syllabus revision. So far, only the West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee from the Opposition ranks has criticised the move.

A careful study of the topics deleted reveals that they include issues, which the current leaders do not want most people to know or discuss about. Instead it wants to insert a completely new narrative

484-page NEP 2019 reveals an issue deserving of wider, more heated opposition. The words "secular" or "secularism" are not found anywhere in the NEP 2019. Though a clear reference to secular education was vital to be seen as the base for these ambitious reform proposals.

The absence of the word "secular" in the NEP 2019 becomes all the more pronounced when seen in contrast to the earlier policies of mentioning secularism as a core Indian value for the Indian education. The omission of the words "secular" and "secularism" in the NEP 2019 is ominous, along with the frequent affirmation of its aim of inculcating constitutional values in the education system, making it doubly odd.

In contemporary India, which has seen a sharp rise in caste and religious violence, the curriculum and teaching methods in Indian classrooms clearly have a key role to play

Though the CBSE's move is purported to lift the burden off the shoulders of students and teachers in the immediate term, allowing them to pay more attention on the quality of learning. Yet, the selection of topics deleted from the textbooks makes one wonder over the rationale to pick these particular topics or chapters

on these issues based on ideological lines. We should remember that Sangh ideologues had been working surreptitiously on rewriting the Indian history school textbooks for the last 25 years and they have been now made part of the syllabus. But the move didn't attract much attention due to the surreptitious manner in which it was done.

Draft National Education Policy (NEP) 2019

The overall intent and decision maker's mindset will be clearer, if we make efforts to study the Draft National Education Policy (NEP) introduced in 2019, in tandem with the latest move.

The NEP was expected to change the government funding on education, the structure of school education, the curricular design for school and higher education, the nature of teacher training and recruitment, among others.

However, a critical study of the

in making caste and religious prejudices in society irrelevant and out of times. The challenge is to find fresh and creative ways of making young minds grasp these difficult contemporary social realities.

You have to understand that you can't hide history by giving it a new twist. Even in countries like the UK there are demands to teach again the medieval history to the school students. If you feel that by hiding the truth on your controversial decisions you'll be able to be fool people or hide your misjudgements then you are wrong, as the history will ultimately judge you, whether you like it or not.

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



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No more lockdown, please!

Although I am getting paid every month still I don't support lockdown. It's easy to sit at our cosy air-conditioned rooms and give lectures for one more lockdown but do you know it affects huge population who are living from hand to mouth.

Lockdown may save the elites but who will feed the families of daily wagers, roadside vendors and labour-

ers. They don't have bank balances to make their ends meet.

I am not undermining the severity of Coronavirus. Corona is dangerous but so is lockdown. It's better we all should die through Covid19 than kill only the poverty-stricken people by shutting their small earning undertakings.

Let people make a firm pledge to keep physical distancing, use sani-

tizers, wear face masks and follow other health advisories to mitigate the impact of virus but don't impose lockdown again. It will only shoot up crimes, suicides, depression and anxiety in our society.

There are thousands in our valley who do menial jobs with a hope to earn a little amount to feed their families. We should become their hope not destroyer of their livelihood.

I humbly request the administration to look for other ways to halt the multiplication of virus but don't impose lockdown again. Lockdown will not minimize our sufferings but will only aggravate it.

Javed Ali
The author is a freelance writer and can be reached at javedaliaofkashmir@gmail.com

Six Top Reasons To Be Optimistic About Covid-19

Among all the bad news around coronavirus, there is a silver lining too

JOSEPH G. ALLEN

“Vaccine trials seem to be working, and drug manufacturers have already said they might be able to deliver doses by October. Remember, it was not a given that vaccines would work, so the fact that the early-stage clinical trials are showing positive signs is encouraging.”

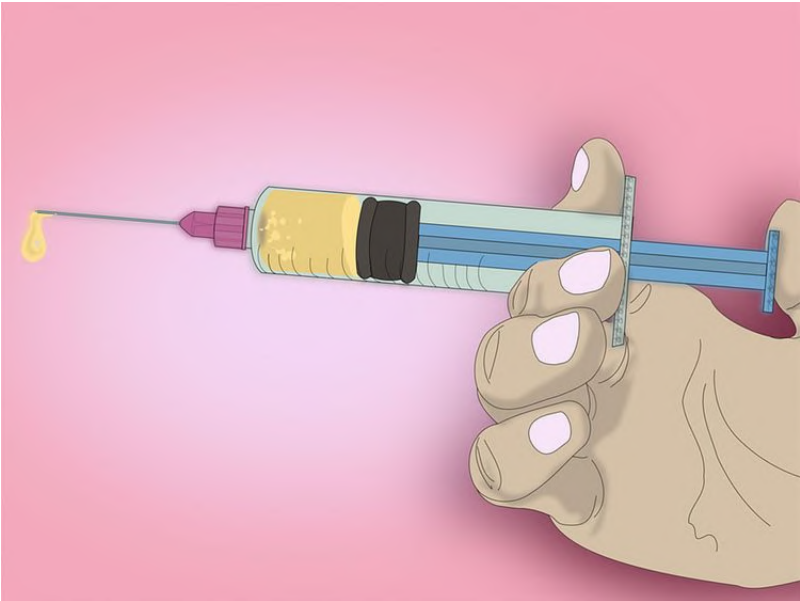
To help get through the coronavirus storm (and all the bad news), we must keep track of positive developments, too. Here are six positive developments to remind us that there is hope in this crisis:

1. Therapeutic treatments (in addition to what we already have for the most sick patients) will arrive before vaccines. When someone contracts the novel coronavirus, his or her body’s immune system launches a defence, including producing antibodies that circulate in the blood to help identify infectious invaders. These circulating antibodies offer some protection against future infection (for how long, we still don’t know). Scientists have now engineered clones of these antibodies — what we call monoclonal antibodies — and they are showing to be effective both therapeutically and to prevent infection. They work by attacking the spike protein of the coronavirus, which is how this virus gets into our cells. Stop that from happening, and the virus can’t replicate inside the body.

Also a reminder that this is lightning-fast; if we get a vaccine within 12 months, that will be the quickest vaccine ever developed — by several years. There is an important caveat: My colleague Juliette Kayyem likes to point out that vaccines don’t save people, vaccinations do

- Joseph G. Allen

2. Rapid, low-cost saliva tests are also coming, and, as my colleague Michael Mina and Laurence Kotlikoff recently pointed out, they are a game-changer. Why? These are like home pregnancy tests but for covid-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus. Imagine a test you could take at home every day, that gives you an answer in a few minutes after spitting into a vial. Such a test would change our ability to slow outbreaks where early detection is everything. It would



also help consumer confidence and slow down this economic crisis. Want to go to school or work or a Broadway production? Show that your rapid test was negative. These tests are not perfectly accurate, but the counterintuitive part is that they don’t have to be. More important than accuracy are speed and frequency of testing.

3. The debate is finally over: Masks work. It took three months, but widespread mask-wearing is catching on. What was once awkward and unusual (in the United States, anyway) has now become more accepted. More states and businesses are requiring them. And, what was once political — thanks to the US president who said people were wearing masks only to make him look bad — is quickly becoming common sense. We now see leaders in red states urging mask-wearing. (Not all masks are created equal, so fortunately, there is now guidance on what constitutes a good mask.)

4. Consensus has finally emerged

that airborne spread is happening. Scientists in my field have been warning about this for months (I have argued that airborne transmission is linked to super-spreader events), yet the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organisation have consistently failed to recognise this. This week, the tide turned when 239 scientists signed a letter to the WHO urging it to acknowledge airborne transmission. And that’s exactly what the WHO did. This means that there will be more messaging coming out from the WHO and other organisations recommending that people add a new control to their toolkit for fighting this virus — healthy building strategies, such as higher ventilation, better filtration and the use of portable air-cleaning devices.

5. There is some science showing that past exposure to common-cold coronaviruses might be playing a protective role for some people. This is a big claim — and I should caution that it is not fully resolved —

but several studies are now showing that 20% to 50% of people who had never been exposed to the novel coronavirus have immune cells — known as memory T cells — in their body that react to this new virus. The speculation is that this is due to prior exposure to common-cold coronaviruses. We still don’t know why some people fare better than others, or why a few spread the disease to many while others do not spread it at all, but these findings might hold some answers to those questions.

6. Vaccine trials seem to be working, and drug manufacturers have already said they might be able to deliver doses by October. Remember, it was not a given that vaccines would work, so the fact that the early-stage clinical trials are showing positive signs is encouraging. Also a reminder that this is lightning-fast; if we get a vaccine within 12 months, that will be the quickest vaccine ever developed — by several years. There is an important caveat: My colleague Juliette Kayyem likes to point out that vaccines don’t save people, vaccinations do.

Once we have a vaccine, the hard task of manufacturing and distributing it comes into play. So, while the signs on vaccines are good, and we might have data in hand in a few months that they work, it will still be a few more months until people have the opportunity to actually receive the vaccine. For the first time in history, nearly every scientist in the world is focused on the same problem. This is starting to pay real dividends. Joseph G. Allen is an assistant professor of exposure assessment science, director of the Healthy Buildings program at Harvard University’s T.H. Chan School of Public Health and co-author of “Healthy Buildings: How Indoor Spaces Drive Performance and Productivity.”

Washington Post

Covid-19: Why Normal Life Is Back In Some Countries, Not Others

While America faces spike in coronavirus infections, many nations are doing much better

Michelle Goldberg

If you’re lucky enough to live in New Zealand, the coronavirus nightmare has been mostly over since June. After more than two weeks with no new cases, the government lifted almost all restrictions that month. The borders are still shut, but inside the country, normal life returned. It’s coming back elsewhere too. Taiwan, where most days this month no new cases have been reported, just held the Taipei Film Festival, and a recent baseball game drew 10,000 spectators. Italy was once the epicentre of Europe’s outbreak and remains in a state of emergency, but with just a few hundred new cases a day in the whole country, bars are open and tourists have started returning, though of course Americans remain banned.

The US’ international humiliation is total; historians may argue about when the American century began, but I doubt they’ll disagree about when it ended

- Michelle Goldberg

And America? As of last week, the worst per capita outbreak on the planet was in Arizona, followed by Florida. The world is closed to us; American passports were once coveted, but now only a few dozen nations will let Americans in. Lawrence O. Gostin, professor of global health law at Georgetown, told me he doesn’t expect American life to feel truly normal before summer 2022. Two years of our lives, stolen by Donald Trump. As our country plunges into a black hole of unchecked illness, death and pariahdom, the administration is waging a PR war on its own top disease expert, Anthony Fauci, trying to convince news outlets that he can’t be trusted. The move to treat Dr. Fauci as if he were a warring political rival comes as he has grown increasingly vocal in his concerns about the national surge in coronavirus cases.

All-out attack Trump has also undercut the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, retweeting the conspiratorial ramblings of former game show host Chuck



Woolery: “The most outrageous lies are the ones about Covid 19. Everyone is lying. The CDC, Media, Democrats, our Doctors, not all but most, that we are told to trust.” There are now so many stories of Trump fans dying after blithely exposing themselves to the virus that they’ve become a macabre cliché. Gostin was part of the international panel that put together the Global Health Security Index, a report, released last year, that evaluated the pandemic readiness of every nation on Earth. No country, they found, was as prepared as the United States. But the coronavirus, he said, has shown us that “health system capacity alone is almost useless unless you have

a government that can unleash that capacity promptly and consistently.” America has long fancied itself a swaggering colossus. It will likely emerge from this calamity humbled and decrepit. all experts are as pessimistic as Gostin. Andy Slavitt, a senior health official in the Obama administration, has argued that with better tests and an eventual vaccine, life could broadly improve as soon as next year. **It will be over soon?** Others caution against making predictions. “We want to be able to give some assurance of,

‘Life will not always be this way, and it will be over soon,’ but we don’t know when that will be,” said Nicolette Louissaint, president of Health care Ready, an organisation established after Hurricane Katrina to strengthen the health care supply chain for disasters. A generation of American kids will have their educations derailed, and many parents who don’t lose their jobs due to the economic crisis will see their careers ruined by the demands of child care. The country’s international humiliation is total; historians may argue about when the American century began, but I doubt they’ll disagree about when it ended. The psychological fallout alone will be incalculable. Even before the coronavirus, researchers spoke of loneliness as its own epidemic in America. A March article in the medical journal JAMA Psychiatry attributed 162,000 deaths a year to the fallout of social isolation.

A huge trauma Now people are being told that they can socialise only under the most stringent conditions. Much of what makes life sweet is lost to us, not for days or weeks, but months or years. “We’re going to stagger out of it; we’re not going to snap back,” Gostin said of the pandemic. He added, “It’s going to take several years for us to be able to come out of all of the trauma that we’ve had.” Yet somehow there’s no drumbeat of calls for the president’s resignation. People seem to feel too helpless. Protesters can make demands of governors and mayors, especially Democratic ones, because at the local level small accountability still exists. Nationally such responsiveness is gone; no one expects the president to do his job, or to be held to account when he doesn’t. That’s how you know the country was broken before coronavirus ever arrived. This suffering wasn’t inevitable. The coronavirus is a natural disaster. The Republican Party’s death-cult fealty to Trump is wholly man-made.

Michelle Goldberg is a noted columnist, who writes on politics and ideology
The New York Times

NEW RESEARCH

Highlights Increased Loneliness In Over-70s During COVID-19 PANDEMIC

‘ALONE’S COORDINATED NATIONAL RESPONSE to the Covid-19 pandemic allowed us to respond with immediacy to the concerns newly emerging, and existing issues being elevated from older people. We worked to keep all our services operative through the adaptation of their structures. The presence of this virus in society has further solidified existing issues while further alienating some older people, as we have seen extensive increases in loneliness through the isolation experienced from cocooning.”

Agencies

A new report examines issues of loneliness and social isolation in older adults. The report offers fresh insight into the experiences of those over 70 who were advised to ‘cocoon’ as part of public health measures to curtail the spread of the Covid-19 virus.

The report was published by researchers at the Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (TILDA) and ALONE. New data from ALONE documents increased feelings of loneliness, anxiety and isolation in older adults throughout the pandemic, is compared with experiences of loneliness and isolation in older adults before the Covid-19 outbreak.

Previous research into this area has shown that strong social ties may protect people from emotional distress, cognitive decline, and physical disability, while loneliness and social isolation can cause harm to physical and

psychological well-being. Both loneliness and social isolation have been strongly associated with poorer quality of life and other measures of well-being.

The TILDA study offers unique insights into the health, habits and experiences of older adults living in Ireland through its longitudinal research, examining a variety of key areas that affect older adults such as physical and mental health as well as economic and social factors. Research from TILDA highlights the prevalence of loneliness and social isolation in its nationally representative survey of participants which gives a clear insight into the experiences of older people.

What does TILDA’s research show prior to the pandemic?

- Over 70% of TILDA participants reported that they never or rarely feel lonely; less than 25% feel lonely some of the time while just 5% reported feeling lonely often.

- Of those living alone, 31%

are rarely lonely, 32% sometimes lonely and 37% often lonely.

- Of those living with others, 49% are least lonely, 30% sometimes and 21% often lonely.

- Researchers point out that most older adults are not often lonely and appear quite resilient, while data from ALONE’s helpline suggest that the Covid-19 pandemic has taken a toll on older people.

The rise of loneliness in a pandemic

Measures introduced to curb the spread of the Covid-19 virus, including physical distancing, and self-isolation particularly affected those over 70 who were ‘cocooning’; disrupting daily routines and social interactions with friends and family. Following the outbreak of the virus, ALONE’s Support and Telephone Befriending service continued remotely with volunteers calling and sending regular texts to older people with health and well-being tips and practical supports.

Almost 500 smartphones were

distributed to older adults with limited means of social interaction. Following an increase in calls for support, ALONE established a dedicated phone line to provide help and services to vulnerable older adults who may have needed them. Report data from ALONE highlights increased feelings of loneliness and isolation amongst older people during the Covid-19 pandemic.

What does ALONE’s research show?

The ALONE national support line has received 26,174 calls during the period: March 9th to July 5th, 2020.

- 55% of callers were from the over 70s, the cohort advised to ‘cocoon’.

- 75% of callers to the helpline were living alone.

- There has been an increase in callers who are putting off medical treatment or examination, including after falls.

ALONE has seen a rise in callers reporting negative emotions, in-

cluding suicidal ideation during the pandemic. Callers have most often requested support for their physical health, befriending, and emotional and mental health needs.

The data highlights that public health measures such as social distancing and cocooning to curb the spread of the virus has increased levels of loneliness and social isolation in older people. This may have a negative effect on the well-being of older adults and suggests that public policies should be developed to ensure that these issues are addressed. Researchers suspect that current physical distancing and social isolation measures will be most keenly felt by those who rely on community or church-based social participation and engagement.

A future research project led by TILDA in collaboration with ALONE will investigate and document the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the health and general well-being of older adults.

Professor Rose Anne Kenny, Prin-

cipal Investigator of TILDA said: “This collaborative report between ALONE and TILDA offers a unique perspective into how older adults have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. TILDA research shows that most older adults are not often lonely and highlights the resilience of older adults as they adapt to an ever-changing world. The world has witnessed how older adults have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. ALONE’s research provides front-line evidence that shows the true toll public health measures have had on older people with increased feelings of loneliness, anxiety and isolation. The impact of the pandemic is now being studied in the TILDA cohort and will be reported later this year. This will more precisely inform the impact of Covid-19 on loneliness and social isolation, and areas for policy intervention.”

Sean Moynihan, Chief Executive Officer of ALONE said: “ALONE’s coordinated National Response to the Covid-19 pan-

demic allowed us to respond with immediacy to the concerns newly emerging, and existing issues being elevated from older people. We worked to keep all our services operative through the adaptation of their structures. The presence of this virus in society has further solidified existing issues while further alienating some older people, as we have seen extensive increases in loneliness through the isolation experienced from cocooning.”

“We established a loneliness taskforce to ensure we were putting provisions in place to safeguard older people, presently, and into the future. Society needs to understand that loneliness can happen to anyone and can damage both your physical and mental health. It is distressing and we want to work towards breaking down this stigma. As Ireland’s ageing population continues to develop, we must remember that there are several thousands of older people behind every percentage.”

Study Reveals Housing Conditions Affect Cardiovascular Health Risks

Agencies

People who are homeless may experience 60-70% higher rates of cardiovascular events, such as heart attacks, strokes and heart failure, compared to the general population, according to a recent study.

The study was cited in “The Importance of Housing and Cardiovascular Health and Well-Being,” a new Scientific Statement from the American Heart Association published today in the Association’s journal Circulation Cardiovascular Quality and Outcomes.

The statement reviews and summarizes current research about how housing stability, safety, affordability, lack of access to high-quality housing and neighbourhood environment affect cardiovascular disease risk. Homelessness is defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as the inability to obtain permanent housing. This includes serial renters who move often, people who temporarily live in a hotel, homeless shelter or with friends, and those living on the street.

Housing is one of several social determinants that impact cardiovascular health. Additional social determinants of health include socioeconomic factors, such as lack of education, unemployment or underemployment, and access to



health care, among others.

“The disparities in cardiovascular health among people who are homeless and marginally housed are largely due to psychosocial stressors, unhealthy behaviours used as coping mechanisms and barriers to health care, including lack of insurance and stigmatisation among this population,” said Mario Sims, Ph.D., M.S., FAHA, chair of the writing group for the scientific statement, chief science officer of the Jackson Heart Study and professor in the department of medicine at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson, Mississippi.

“Chronic housing insecurity may impact a person’s ability to eat properly, get quality sleep, schedule regular medical care or fill prescriptions due to cost. These factors

all contribute to inadequate treatment to reduce cardiovascular risk factors such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol and tobacco use, and to the greater likelihood of having a cardiovascular event such as a heart attack or stroke,” said Sims.

Among adults who were homeless and housing insecure

- 70-80% smoke cigarettes and smoking is attributed to 60% of CVD deaths in this population;
- 25% report recent cocaine use, which increases the risk of a heart attack; and
- 25% have a mental illness, which may contribute to delayed diagnosis and fragmented medical care.

Poor housing quality - including structural deterioration, insufficient heating/cooling and exposure to car-

diotoxic pollutants such as mould, lead or secondhand smoke - impacts cardiovascular disease risk factors. Studies have found that adults who live in older, public or low-income housing are more likely to have cardiovascular disease. Substandard living conditions affect mental health, which is also associated with heart and blood vessel health in both children and adults. Improving air quality, reducing dampness and living in a comfortable temperature have been shown to lower blood pressure.

Residential segregation by race and ethnicity as well as gentrification has further affected cardiovascular health by making it harder for more individuals to find affordable, high-quality housing. Gentrification is the process of revitalizing a deteriorating neighbourhood, with affluent people displacing lower-income residents.

The 2007-2010 foreclosure crisis also had a substantial effect on housing accessibility. Multiple studies found an association between foreclosures and poorer cardiovascular health, with significant differences among races. Hispanics in residential areas at risk for foreclosure had higher rates of high blood pressure and high cholesterol. Foreclosures were also associated with higher rates of heart attacks and strokes among middle-aged Black residents.

Early Life Stress May Lead To Depression In Adolescence

Agencies

Researchers have found that individuals exposed to early life stress (ELS) were more likely to develop a major depressive disorder (MDD) in childhood or adolescence. For the findings, published in the Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, the research team examined the association between eight different types of ELS and youth-onset depression.

The authors found that while some types of ELS (e.g. poverty) were not associated with MDD, other types of stress, including emotional abuse, were associated more strongly with MDD than a broader assessment of ELS.

“Researchers have documented that early life stress increases the risk of developing depression in adulthood,” said study lead author Joelle LeMoult from the University of British Columbia in Canada. “We wanted to know the degree to which it



was associated with depression earlier in life—specifically during childhood or adolescence,” LeMoult added.

Given that earlier onset of depression often mean a more recurrent course across the lifespan. The researchers found that exposure to early life stress more than doubled the likelihood someone will develop youth-onset depression. “These findings indicate that there is a narrow window between adversity and depression during which we have the opportunity to intervene,” the study authors wrote.

The findings are based on a meta-analysis of data from 62 journal articles and over 44,000 unique participants. Studies that assessed early life stress and the presence or absence of MDD before the age of 18 years were also included. Compared to youth who were not exposed to ELS, youth who were exposed to ELS were 2.5 times more likely to develop MDD. The authors also conducted eight additional meta-analyses to examine the association between different types of ELS and a diagnosis of MDD during childhood or adolescence.

Climate Change Will Cause More Extreme Wet, Dry Seasons: Study

Agencies

According to a new study, the world can expect more rainfall as the climate changes. It can also expect more water to evaporate, complicating efforts to manage reservoirs and irrigate crops in a growing world.

The study was led by Clemson University researcher whose latest work has been published in the journal ‘Nature Communications’.

Ashok Mishra, who is the corresponding author of the article,



said that the previous studies have focused mostly on how climate change will affect precipitation.

But the key contribution of the new study is that it also examined the magnitude and variability

of precipitation and evaporation and how much water will be available during the wettest and driest months of the year.

Researchers found that dry seasons will become drier, and wet seasons will become wetter, said Mishra, who is the Dean’s Associate Professor in the Glenn Department of Civil Engineering.

Most of the Eastern United States, including all of South Carolina, has high precipitation that it is well distributed throughout the year, researchers found.

From The Moon To Mars: China's March Across Space

Agencies

Beijing: After sending humans into orbit and landing a probe on the Moon, China is aiming for another milestone in its space ambitions with the launch of a Mars rover next week.

China is among a trio of nations, with the United Arab Emirates and the United States, sending a mission to the Red Planet this month, as Mars is closest to Earth during this period.

Beijing's space program has made huge strides in recent years as it scrambles to compete with the US.

Here are five things to know about the program:

'Questions to Heaven'

China's Mars probe will lift off between July 20 and 25 from the southern island of Hainan.

The mission has been dubbed Tianwen-1 (Questions to Heaven) in a nod to a classical Chinese poem that has verses about the cosmos.

egrated as it crashed back to Earth.

Following that failure, Beijing decided to try again on its own.

"Its purposes are not different from those of other countries: develop the capability, explore the universe, invest on future resource, and finally, create political influence and national prestige," Chen Lan, an independent analyst at GoTaikonauts.com, which specializes in news about China's space program, told AFP.

Remote-controlled robot

China's space program is controlled by the military, which releases little information about its missions.

But Chinese space bloggers with inside information say the robot will have six wheels and four solar panels, with a total weight of 200 kilograms (about 90 pounds).

The rover will roam Mars for three months, according to Sun Zezhou, chief engineer of the probe. The machine is supposed to



The probe aims to go into Martian orbit, land on the planet and release a small, remote-controlled robot to conduct research.

The craft will travel at least 55 million kilometres (34 million miles) to reach its destination. It will arrive seven months after launch, in February, according to an official.

Without Russia this time

It's not China's first attempt to go to Mars. A previous mission with Russia in 2011 failed because the Russian launcher was unable to get into a transfer orbit to slingshot towards the Red Planet.

The hardware partially disin-

analyze the planet's soil and atmosphere, take photos, chart maps and look for signs of past life.

Jade Rabbit

China has already sent two rovers to the Moon, Jade Rabbit One and Two (Yutu in Chinese), in 2013 and 2019. The second rover made a historic landing on the far side of the Moon, making China the first country to do so.

"The lunar Yutu rovers are good practice in many ways for a Martian rover. The terrain is broadly similar," Jonathan McDowell, an astronomer at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, told AFP.



Covid Spreading In Unexplained Ways, Nations Consider More Lockdowns

Agencies

Washington: As countries across Asia Pacific struggle with resurgences of the coronavirus, one data point is steering government responses: the share of cases with no clear indication of how infection occurred.

These patients cannot be linked to other confirmed infections or existing outbreaks by virus responders, indicating hidden chains of transmission. A growing proportion of such cases in a city's resurgence pushes governments, like in Australia and Hong Kong, to take broad and blunt action, returning entire cities to lockdown-like conditions.

"You can hardly contain the outbreak because you have no idea where they will come out next," said Yang Gonghuan, former deputy director general of China's Center for Disease Control and Prevention. "When there's more cases where the origins are unknown, it adds to the difficulty for containment."

In contrast, a low share of cases of unknown origins means that authorities can stay relatively relaxed - like in South Korea and Japan - even if total daily new infections reach the hundreds. These countries can take a targeted and

nimble approach, shutting down schools or workplaces where clusters are found, but allowing the rest of the population to live normally.

This data point is a telltale sign of whether resurgences across the world will flare up into bigger waves, and if residents need to gird themselves for a return to lockdown. Here's a breakdown of how the places fighting flareups are using the number to guide their responses:

Hong Kong: Strictest-ever Restrictions

The Asian financial hub enjoyed three months of normal life before a surprise resurgence this month that looks to set to be its worst wave ever. Infections of "unknown origins" have surged to half of all new local cases, indicating that they're emerging from all corners.

The former British colony has reacted swiftly, levying its strictest-ever restrictions on the city of 7.5 million. Schools started summer break early while bars, gyms and beaches have been shut. Public gatherings are limited to four people and those refusing to wear masks on public transport will be fined HK\$5,000 (\$645).

Melbourne, Australia: Return to Lockdown

The 5 million residents of Melbourne are in the midst of a government-mandated six-week lockdown thanks to a new wave of coronavirus infections in Victoria state, 51% of which are of unknown origins or still under investigation. The outbreak is spilling over to Sydney, raising fears that Australia's largest city will be a fresh hot spot.

The lockdown, which included the barring of 3,000 residents in public-housing tower blocks from leaving their apartments for several days until they were all tested, is reminiscent of the stringent controls imposed in Wuhan, the Chinese city where the virus first emerged. The measure made Australia one of the only western democracies to mandate that people cannot step outside their homes.

Tokyo, Japan: Worrying Uptick

Termed "infections with unknown routes" by Japanese officials, the share of such cases when the new outbreak started about a month ago was initially low at about one fifth. This was cited by the government for taking relatively little action and continuing to open up the economy and society.

"Positive News" Soon On Oxford COVID-19 Vaccine: Report

Agencies

London: Positive news on initial trials of the University of Oxford's potential COVID-19 vaccine that has been licensed to AstraZeneca could be announced as soon as Thursday, ITV's political editor Robert Peston said, citing a source.

The potential vaccine is already in large-scale Phase III human trials to assess whether it can protect against COVID-19, but its developers have yet to report Phase I results which would show whether it is safe and whether or not it induces an immune response.

The developers of the vaccine said this month they were encouraged by the immune response they had seen in trials so far and were expecting to publish Phase 1 data by the end of July. The data are

expected to be published by The Lancet medical journal.

More than 100 vaccines are being developed and tested around the world to try to stop the COVID-19 pandemic, which has killed hundreds of thousands and ravaged the global economy.

AstraZeneca's experimental vaccine is probably the world's leading candidate and most advanced in terms of development, the World Health Organization's chief scientist said in June.

The company has signed agreements with governments around the globe to supply the vaccine should it be cleared for use.

Shares in AstraZeneca traded 5% higher by 1415 GMT. There was no immediate comment from the company on the report.

A spokeswoman for Oxford

University told Reuters the team was awaiting confirmation from a scientific journal of a publication date and time for the data, but gave no further details. "(We) are not able to confirm when it will be released," she said.

Peston said in a blog post: "I am hearing there will be positive news soon (perhaps tomorrow) on initial trials of the Oxford COVID-19 vaccine that is backed by AstraZeneca."

Researchers in the United States reported on Tuesday that Moderna Inc's experimental vaccine showed it was safe and provoked immune responses in all 45 healthy volunteers in an ongoing early-stage study.

Moderna started its Phase II trial in May and expects to start a Phase III trial on July 27.

Belt And Road Re-Emerges In Pakistan With Flurry Of China Deals

Agencies

Islamabad: China's Belt and Road program has found new life in Pakistan with \$11 billion worth of projects signed in the last month, driven by a former lieutenant general who has reinvigorated the infrastructure plan that's been languishing since Prime Minister Imran Khan took office two years ago.

The nations signed deals on June 25 and July 6 for two hydro-power generation projects costing \$3.9 billion in the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir region, and another to revamp the South Asian nation's colonial-era railways for \$7.2 billion - the most expensive Chinese project yet in Pakistan.

Khan's government appointed Asim Saleem Bajwa last year to run the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Authority, which oversees more than \$70 billion in projects from power plants to highways.

He also joined Khan's cabinet in late April, becoming one of more than a dozen former and current

stall since Khan came to power, with no new projects announced in 2018 and very few in 2019.

Since Chinese President Xi Jinping launched the initiative in 2013, the World Bank estimates about \$575 billion worth of energy plants, railways, roads, ports and other projects have been built or are in the works across the globe. Its progress has slowed recently, dogged by accusations that China is luring poor countries into debt traps for its own political and strategic gain.

"The reality is that much of CPEC, like the Belt and Road more broadly, has been paralyzed," said Jonathan Hillman, a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, referring to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Pakistan "is a flagship for China's Belt and Road, so the need to show progress is even more important."

In a tweet last month, Bajwa said some detractors had given the "false impression" that



military officials in prominent government roles as the army expands its influence in the country.

The Chinese financing has helped rid Pakistan of an electricity deficit that left exporters unable to meet orders and major cities without electricity for much of the day. Still, the implementation of some investments appeared to

CPEC had been slowed. Not only has the pace of work on projects picked up recently, but a great deal of ground work has been done to launch phase two of the project that also includes special economic zones to lure Chinese manufacturers, agriculture, science, technology and tourism, he wrote.

Biden, Gates, Obama among Twitter accounts hacked in Bitcoin scam

Agencies

Washington: Unidentified hackers broke into the Twitter accounts of technology moguls, politicians, celebrities and major companies on Wednesday in an apparent Bitcoin scam.

The ruse included bogus tweets from former President Barack Obama, Democratic presidential front-runner Joe Biden, Mike Bloomberg and a number of tech billionaires including Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos, Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates and Tesla CEO Elon Musk. Celebrities Kanye West and his wife, Kim Kardashian West, were also hacked. The fake tweets tweets offered to send \$2,000 for every \$1,000 sent to an anonymous Bitcoin address.

There is no evidence that the owners of these accounts were targeted themselves. Instead, the hacks appeared designed to lure their Twitter followers into sending money to an anonymous Bitcoin account. The Biden campaign, for instance, said that Twitter's integrity team "locked down the account within a few minutes of the breach and removed the related tweet".

Obama's office had no immediate comment. The FBI said it was aware of Twitter's security breach, but declined further comment.

The apparently fake tweets

were all quickly deleted, although the Associated Press was able to capture screenshots of several before they disappeared.

In several tweets, Twitter said it believes the incident was a "coordinated social engineering attack" that targeted some of its employees with access to internal systems and tools. They were then used to take control of many high-profile and verified accounts and tweet from them.

The company said it immediately locked down the affected accounts and removed the tweets posted by the attackers. It also temporarily blocked verified users from tweeting while the company investigated the issue.

Among the political figures targeted, the hack mostly appeared to target Democrats or other figures on the left, drawing comparisons to the 2016 campaign. US intelligence agencies established that Russia engaged in coordinated attempts to interfere in those US elections through social media tampering and various hacks, including targeting the various campaigns and major party organisations.

The hack might also be a simple demonstration of Twitter's weak security controls as the US heads into the 2020 presidential election, a contest in which the service is likely to play an influential role.

India Gets Second Consular Access In Jadhav Case

Agencies

New Delhi: India on Thursday got its second consular access to former Indian Navy personnel Kulbhushan Jadhav, who has been sentenced to death for alleged espionage in Pakistan. According to TV media reports, two Indian High Commission officials were given 4 pm (PST) as the time for the meeting.

The latest development comes just four days before the deadline for Jadhav to file a review petition in his case ends. However, Pakistan had claimed that Jadhav had refused to file a review petition but only follow up on the mercy petition to the President of Pakistan.

Earlier, New Delhi had asked Islamabad to give "unconditional consular access" to Jadhav, as per sources.

"Last time what they did was insulting to his mother, father and wife and insulting to India as a whole. So we want that consular access should be unconditional," Arvind Singh, Kulbhushan Jadhav's childhood friend, told ANI.

The Ministry of External Affairs had also charged Pakistan of coercing Jadhav into forgoing his right to seek the implementation of International Court of Justice's verdict, which was in his favour.

In July 2018, the ICJ overwhelmingly had upheld India's claim of Pakistan committing an egregious violation of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations on several counts in Jadhav's case.



6-year-old gets 90 stitches saving his sister from dog attack; named 'honorary World Champ'

Chandigarh: Bridger Walker, a heroic six-year-old boy, required 90 stitches at his cheek after he was bitten in the face while trying to save his little sister from an on-rushing dog.

The heroic boy has been named "honorary world champion" by the World Boxing Council.

The WBC, which count heavyweight Tyson Fury among their champions, said they were honoring the youngster for his actions of bravery that "represent the best values of humanity."

Picture of Briger's hugging his proud sister has gone viral.

His aunt Nicole Walker posted to Instagram telling of the horrific moment a dog



charged at the pair as they were out playing in their native Wyoming.

Hollywood star Chris Evans sent a sweet video message to the young boy and promised him to send the real 'Captain America' shield.

"Pal, you're a hero, what you did was so brave, so self-

less - your sister is so lucky to have you as a big brother. Your parents must be so proud of you," Evans told Bridger.

The video was shared online by Walker.

Evans promised to send Bridger, an avid Avengers fan, "an authentic Captain America shield because pal, you deserve it".

"Keep being the man you are, we need people like you. Hang in there, I know recovery might be tough, but based on what I've seen, I don't think there's much that can slow you down," the actor said in the video.

Besides Evans, 'The Hulk' star Mark Ruffalo also spoke about Bridger's bravery, praising him as "more of man than many, many I have seen or known".

Chilean police train dogs to sniff out Covid-19

Dogs have 330 million olfactory receptors, and an ability to detect smells 50 times better than humans. They can also smell 250 people per hour

Police in Chile are training dogs to detect people that may be infected with the novel coronavirus by sniffing their sweat.

The dogs - three golden retrievers and a labrador - are between the ages of four and five. Until now they have been used to sniff out illicit drugs, explosives and lost people, police say.

The training program is a joint effort by Chile's national police, the Carabineros, and specialists at the Universidad Catolica de Chile.

It follows in the footsteps of similar efforts taking place in France, said Julio Santelices, head of the police school of specialties.



Dogs have 330 million olfactory receptors, and an ability to detect smells 50 times better than humans. They can also smell 250 people per hour.

"The virus has no smell, but rather the infection generates metabolic changes" which in turn leads to the release of a particular type of sweat "which is what the dog would detect," Fernando Mardones, a Universidad Catolica professor of veterinary epidemiology, told AFP.

Google ties more work tools into Gmail, aiming to get ahead of Microsoft

Alphabet Inc's Google said on Wednesday its corporate Gmail customers would now be able to edit documents and other files without leaving the email service, as it aims to lure clients from rivals by making its tools more integrated.

The announcement was made at Google's cloud unit's annual customer and partner conference, which has been turned into a virtual gathering over several weeks because of the novel coronavirus pandemic.

Google has been trying for more than a decade to catch up with Microsoft Corp's Office, which dominates the global market for corporate email and document-editing tools.

Both companies have been adding video-calling features and other collaboration tools to attract new business from companies operating from home during the pandemic.

Hadiqa Kiani Says Kashmir Being Silenced After Song Removed From Youtube



LAHORE: Pakistani singer Hadiqa Kiani's ode to Kashmir, a song released last week, has been taken off by Youtube.

The song, titled Daimi Bahar (Eternal Spring), was a collaboration between the Pakistani singer and Turkish artists Ali Tolga Demertas and Torgi Evren. It was released on the occasion of Kashmir Martyrs Day on July 13.

The singer took to Instagram to share the news, re-

vealing that they will stand determined against the forced silencing. The singer said it was a deliberate attempt to silence the voices on Kashmir.

"There seems to be a systematic silencing taking place but we will not be silenced because our message is of love and peace." She also informed her followers that Kashmir Civitas, an advocacy group devoted to the rights of the Kashmiris, was "actively working to re-upload the video."

Earlier, on July 2, the singer called for an end to bloodshed in Kashmir. "We cannot stand for with injustice. We need peace, we need to protect the people of Kashmir, we need a solution from BOTH sides, a solution that puts an end to the evils plaguing Kashmir," she tweeted.

19 Year Old Awantipora Student Goes Missing

PULWAMA: A family from Charsoo Awantipora of South Kashmir's Pulwama district Thursday appealed people to help them in tracing their lone son who has gone missing a couple of days ago.

Shoib Shafi Bhat, (19) a Para-medical student left his home on 12 July (Monday) this month and didn't return back. His parents said that Shoib is their lone son.

"We have filed a missing report at police station

Awantipora and police have assured us of all possible help. My son is still untraceable and we are suffering at home in his absence," his mother said.

His father said that they are unaware about the facts and don't know where his son is. "I appeal my son to come back to home. We are suffering. We appeal Shoib to think of his ailing mother who is weeping round the clock," he said. KNT

Red, Containment Zones To Be Sealed, Heavy Fine On Violators: CS

Says 700 more ventilators being procured, positive asymptomatic patients be immediately shifted to COVID care centres

SRINAGAR: The Chief Secretary, B V R Subrahmanyam while taking stock of efforts toward mitigating the COVID-19 threat, reiterated that perimeter control and complete lockdown in red zones and containment zones should be strictly enforced.

Chief Secretary impressed upon Deputy Commissioners to cautiously declare an area/cluster as a red zone on scientific basis, and ensure strict adherence of SOPs thereafter. "Aggressive testing in the red/containment zones, especially of vulnerable patients including children, old aged, pregnant ladies, patients with Influenza like Illness (ILI), Severe Acute Respiratory Infections (SARI), co-morbid conditions, service providers, healthcare professionals and police personnel; has to be ensured", he added.

Laying stress on the importance of early detection of infection, Chief Secretary directed intensifying the efforts towards smart and targeted contact tracing by utilizing information from NHM data, Swasthya Nidhi survey and Arogya Setu app.

With regard to capacity enhancement of hospitals for accommodating higher numbers of symptomatic patients, it was directed that positive but asymptomatic patients be immediately shifted to COVID care centres whereas, only moderate and severely affected patients be

admitted in COVID hospitals.

Chief Secretary informed that to augment the shortage of medical equipments, the Government is procuring nearly 700 ventilators from Government of India, which will arrive shortly. In this regard, he asked the DCs to ensure their timely installation and commissioning, besides ensuring availability of oxygen cylinders and intensive care equipment.

He further informed that wearing of masks by all and ban on spitting at public places are being included as statutory provisions in the Epidemic Diseases Act, with stringent penalties and directed the DCs/SSPs to ensure strict implementation of the same.

Chief Secretary directed promotion of good habits in people by undertaking Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities regarding precautionary measures and health related assistance in the times of COVID-19. It was decided that local level quarantine centres be established under the control of concerned Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs).

Chief Secretary impressed upon the DCs/SSPs to promote the use of Arogya Setu App by people to further facilitate contact tracing. He further said that unnecessary movement should be discouraged and proper social distancing norms be observed in public places/transaction points.



KASHMIR COUNTRYSIDE- Village women carry fodder for cattle from the fields in Central Kashmir. KO Photo Abid Bhat

Government Mulls Closure, Privatization Of PSUs

Proposes privatization of J&K Cements Limited; Merger of Handloom and Handicrafts Corporations

SRINAGAR: The Jammu & Kashmir government is mulling closure and privatization of the Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) under the administrative control of Industries and Commerce.

On the directions of Lieutenant Governor Girish Chandra Murmu, the Raj Bhavan has written to commissioner secretary Industries and Commerce to prepare a roadmap for closure, privatization and merger of PSUs.

The changes are aimed at cutting the wasteful expenditure being incurred by the Industries and Commerce Department in running these loss making PSUs/corporations.

I&C department is administrative department for these PSUs. According to the communique, the Industries and Commerce department should devise a detailed road map with defined timelines for closure/ privatization/ merger of PSU/ Corporations.

"A detailed assessment of assets of the Corporations to be closed be also made for their disposal under rules. A comprehensive plan for their rehabilitation of the staff of the corporations to be closed/ merged be also worked out by the department," the letter states.

The LG's secretariat has proposed closure of SICOP which was set up in 1975 for promotion and development of the small scale industries in Jammu & Kashmir.

"Jammu and Kashmir State Indus-

Congress Opposes Move Of Privatization, Sale Of Assets Of PSUs

Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) on Thursday lashed out at the Union Territory administration for the privatization and auctioning of the industries and assets of the J&K industries Ltd, J&K minerals and J&K cements besides closing down of the SICOP.

In a statement JKPCC has termed the decision as 'unfortunate' and against the interests of the employees and the larger interests of the people. "The

trial Development Corporation (SIDCO) should manage all the industrial estates of the Union Territory to promote large medium and small scale industries. SICOP should be closed and all the industrial estates presently managed by SICOP should be transferred to SIDCO," the communique states.

J&K SIDCO is the nodal agency for promotion & development of medium and large scale Industries in the state.

The letter also proposes closure of Jammu & Kashmir Minerals Limited which was incorporated as first PSU of Jammu and Kashmir in 1960 for exploiting the mineral resources and to establish mineral based industries in Jammu and Kashmir.

"J&K minerals be closed and the mineral sites being managed by it be auctioned as per norms," the letter states.

According to the letter, J&K Cements Limited be privatized after assessment of its assets in transparent manner. J&K Cements Limited was incorporated as a fully owned Government Company in December, 1974 in Jammu and Kashmir.

The LG's secretariat has also proposed that the J&K industries Ltd. be closed and the industrial units run by it be privatized/auctioned.

Established in 1963, J&K Industries Limited is presently managing 16 manufacturing units. The Raj Bhavan has also proposed that J&K Handicraft (S&E) corporation be merged with J&K state Handloom Development Corporation.

Meanwhile, Industries and Commerce department has constituted a committee to finalise modalities for merger of Handicrafts Corporation and Handloom Development Department Corporation.

The committee is headed by administrative secretary Industries and Commerce and comprises representatives from different departments.

86 Prisoners Test Positive For COVID-19 In Anantnag Jail

SRINAGAR: As many as 89 persons including 86 prisoners have tested positive for COVID-19 in district jail Anantnag so far, officials said.

A senior official said that out of 239 samples taken so far from Anantnag Jail, 89 samples have tested positive for COVID-19.

"Of them 86 are prisoners," he said, adding that the first case in the jail was detected on Friday. Those who have tested positive include Mohammad Rafiq Ganai, General Secretary of Muslim League, religious cleric and vice-president Jamiat-ul-Ahle Hadees, Mushtaq Ahmad Bhat (Veeri) re-

ligious cleric and vice-president Jamiat-ul-Ahle Hadees and Zahoor Ahmad Bhat of proscribed Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front.

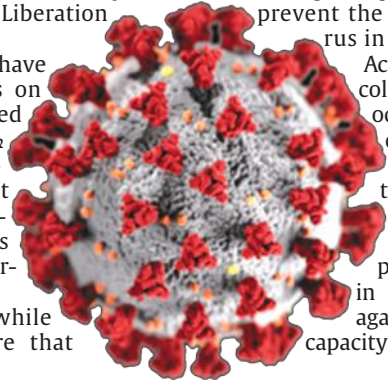
These cases have raised questions on measures initiated by the Jammu & Kashmir government to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in prisons of the Union Territory.

It is worthwhile to mention here that

the Prisons department of UT had repeatedly maintained that they are taking adequate measures to prevent the spread of the virus in jails.

According to details collected by KNO, the occupancy in jails of J&K presently is 12% more than their normal capacity.

As many as 3628 prisoners are housed in 14 jails of J&K against their overall capacity of 3234—(KNO)



99 Doctors Died Due To Covid-19, Says Top Medical Body; Issues "Red Alert"

NEW DELHI: As many as 99 doctors in the country, a majority of them general practitioners, have succumbed to COVID-19, the Indian Medical Association (IMA) said on Wednesday, and declared a red alert for medics and medical administrators asking them to raise their guard.

According to IMA National COVID registry data, of the total 1,302 doctors infected with COVID-19, 99 have succumbed to the disease. Of those dead, 73 were above the age of 50 years, 19 in the age-group of 35-50 and seven below 35 years, the data showed.

"IMA declares RED ALERT to doctors and medical administrators to raise their guard. If COVID-19 mortality has to be lessened, it has to start with doctors and hospitals," the doctors' body said in a statement.

with COVID-19, mortality is higher among elders. While this is on expected lines, there is scope for lessening deaths across the age spectrum. Meticulous adherence to norms and discipline inside hospitals will have a salutary effect," the statement said.

National President of IMA Dr Rajan Sharma said that while the medical profession remains the beacon of hope for the nation to lead the exit from the pandemic, COVID-19 death among doctors has become a matter of great concern.

"IMA strongly advocates the leadership of doctors in adopting all scientific best practices. Doctors need to take charge of the situation and ensure the safety of themselves, their families, their colleagues and staff."

Senior doctors who are



The IMA strongly advocated the leadership of doctors in adopting all scientific best practices.

This requires intense review and updating of all administrative set ups in the hospitals, including infection control protocols. Any gap in providing for the safety of doctors, nurses and staff have to be plugged, it said in the statement.

A feedback system from the doctors, employees and public needs to be put in place. Cleaning and sanitising protocols should be meticulously adhered to, the IMA said.

"Analysis of data shows that while senior and young doctors are equally infected

decision makers for the institutions have enhanced responsibility of taking care of their flock, the IMA national president said.

"Friendly and scientific batch posting needs to be implemented. Working hours should be tempered by concerns of safety. Providing for PPEs, training, physical distancing and sanitisers should be monitored on daily basis.

"Operation theaters, labour rooms, laboratories and casualties require special care. ICUs and Critical Care units deserve close scrutiny for adherence to best practices and protocols," Secretary General of IMA Dr RV Asokan said.

Mamata Offers Jobs For Kin Of Govt Employees Who Died Of Covid

KOLKATA: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday said her government will provide jobs to the family members of state employees who died while leading the fight against COVID-19.

At least 12 state government employees have died due to coronavirus infection, she said.

Ms Banerjee said that the state government will also honour the employees who died -- doctors, policemen and health workers -- with medals and certificates.

Besides, the family of dead COVID-19 warriors will be compensated with Rs 10 lakh, she told reporters at the state secretariat.

"The state government will provide one member of the family of a dead COVID Warrior with a job. The government is trying to establish a mechanism as per the person's capacity and capability. The

Cabinet has given its approval today," Ms Banerjee said.

The chief minister also said that COVID-19 warriors in the private health sector will also be considered for the honour.

"The same compensation of Rs 10 lakh, a medal and a certificate will be given in case a Covid Warrior in the private healthcare sector succumbs to the disease," a senior official of the state government later elaborated.

Ms Banerjee urged the media to play a positive role so that the common people do not panic amid this ongoing pandemic.

Advising people to observe social distancing and wear masks, Ms Banerjee said that the state government will be increasing the number of testing, tracking and tracing and eventually these will show a surge in the number of coronavirus infections.

NEWS MAKERS

Address Me As 'Sir', Not 'My Lord': Calcutta High Court Chief Justice

KOLKATA: Calcutta High Court Chief Justice TBN Radhakrishnan has said that he would want to be addressed as 'Sir' by all judiciary officers in Bengal and Andaman instead of 'My Lord' or 'Lordship', as was the practice so far.

In a letter to the district judges and chief judges of lower courts in the state and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, High Court Registrar General Rai Chattopadhyay conveyed the message of the Chief Justice, an official said today.

The Chief Justice has expressed the desire that "henceforth officers of district judi-



cials, including members of Registry of the Hon'ble High Court would address the Hon'ble Chief Justice as 'Sir' in-

stead of 'My Lord' or 'Lordship', in conformity with the applicable judicial and administrative precedents", the letter said.

Elgar Parishad Case: Jailed Activist Varavara Rao Tests Positive For Coronavirus

MUMBAI: Jailed poet and activist Varavara Rao, an accused in the Elgar Parishad case, has tested positive for coronavirus, a hospital official said on Thursday.



The 80-year-old, lodged in Navi Mumbai's Taloja jail under judicial custody, was admitted to the state-run JJ Hospital in south Mumbai earlier this week.

According to Dr Ranjeet Mankeshwar, dean of JJ Hospital, Varavara Rao's medical report came on Thursday and he was found to be coronavirus positive.

"His treatment is going on," Dr Ranjeet Mankeshwar said.

Mr Rao was shifted to the government-run hospital in south Mumbai after he complained of giddiness.

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