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News Digest

CRPF Man Shoots Self Dead

Srinagar- A Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) trooper on Monday scommited suicide after shooting himself dead with his service rifle in Rambagh area of Srinagar. CRPF spokesman in Srinagar Pan-kaj Singh said that a CRPF man posted at Group Centre Rambagh identified as Pintoo Mondal of West Bengal, shot himself dead, reported news agency KNO. He said an inquiry has been ordered as to what forced the trooper to take this extreme step. A senior CRPF official said that depression caused by the Covid-19 pandemic is one of the reasons for suicides among the force. ● P-02

Six Absconders Held In Poonch

Jammu- Police have arrested six absconders, including a woman, who were wanted in separate cases in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district, officials said on Monday. The six had been evading arrest for 6-13 years, they said. Several police teams conducted raids at different localities in Poonch district and arrested the absconders who were identified as Mohd Sahakeel, Mohammad Af-tar, Mohammad Riyaz, Khaliq, Sha-keela Bi and Mohammad Zabeer, the officials said. Khaliq had been on the run since 2007 in a criminal case, they said. The six accused were nabbed by a team of ● P-02

Teen Feared Dead After Drowning

Srinagar: A teenager is feared dead after slipping into river Jhelum in north Kashmir's Baramulla district on Monday. 13-year-old Hanan Ahmed Dar of Ravath Pora, Delina slipped into river Jhelum when he was playing with other friends on the bank, reports said. The police and the locals immediately launched an operation to rescue the minor boy, who is said to be a class 7th student. However, the rescue team could not find the boy till the last reports came in. The boy, reports said is feared to have died of drowning.

2 Injured In Bear Attack

Srinagar: Two people, including a woman on Monday were attacked and injured by a bear in Ferozpora and Ganiwani villages of Tangmarg in Baramulla district. Saja Begum of Ferozpora was working in her vegetable garden when a bear appeared there and attacked her. In the attack, the woman was seriously injured. She was removed to SKIMS here for treatment. In a similar incident, a man was attacked and injured by a bear when he was busy in his orchards in Ganiwani area. The injured identified as Hilal Ahmad Khan was also shifted to SKIMS for further treatment. (KNO)

Drug Peddler Held In Beerwah: Police

Srinagar: Police on Monday claimed to have arrested a drug peddler from Beerwah area of central Kashmir's Budgam district. Farooq Ahmad Lone of Hanjila-waypora Beerwah was arrested by police at a checkpoint and 10 kilograms of poppy straw was recovered from his possession, local news agency KNS reported. Meanwhile, police have filed a case F.I.R No 190/20 Under relevant section of law against the accused and started further investigations.

SC Weighs Option Of Mian Qayoom's Conditional Release

NEW DELHI: The Jammu and Kashmir administration informed the Supreme Court on Monday that it will not extend the current detention of high court bar leader Mian Abdul Qayoom under J-K Public Safety Act beyond August 7. The top court asked J-K administration to apprise it by July 29 as to why Qayoom cannot be released on bail till August 7, the day his current detention period expires with certain conditions. A bench of Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul, Ajay Rastogi and Aniruddha Bose asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the J-K administration, to take instruction by Wednesday on whether Qayoom can be released on bail till August 7. We can release him on bail ● P-02



Submit Button Fails Students In Online Exams

Agencies
SRINAGAR: Scores of post-graduate students of distance education on Monday failed to submit their on-line examination papers after the website developed a technical snag. The PG students of Urdu Department pursuing their degrees through distance mode complained that the submit button to file their papers did not work while they were appearing in online examinations. The disappointed students contacted examiners at Kashmir University who advised them to send an application to get the issue addressed. "Today we were frustrated and disappointed after we failed to submit our papers. The submit button developed some problems and didn't work," the students said.

The students were appearing in the third paper of the course titled 'Urdu Nazam'. The online examinations, they said began on July 21. "The examiners sent links to us through University Groups and we appeared in 60 minute multiple choice papers. Much to the frustration and shock of students, the submission button didn't function and we failed to submit the paper," the students added. The students claimed that the Coordinator Exams Dr Irfan Aalam told them to forget about today's paper and prepare for the next one. When contacted Dr Altaf said that these students need to submit an application or send a mail on examination@ddk.edu.in so that their grievance could be addressed. "There may be some technological issues and the problems arising out of those can be addressed," he said. (KNT)

No Let Down In Cross-LoC Shelling

JAMMU: The exchange of fire between India and Pakistan troops along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district continued for the eventh consecutive day on Monday. Pakistani troops violated ceasefire by resorting to small arms firing and mortar shelling on forward areas along the LoC on Monday, officials said. This is the seventh day in a row that Pakistan has violated ceasefire, they said. "Around 1030 hours today, the Pakistan army initiated unprovoked ceasefire violation by firing with small arms and shelling with mortars along LoC in Mankote sector of Poonch district," a defence spokesperson said. The Indian Army gave a befitting response, he said. Pakistani troops have been targeting forward areas along the LoC in Rajouri and Poonch districts since Tuesday.

Slain Hizb Militant's Father Goes Missing In Pulwama

Family Files Missing Report At Police Station

PULWAMA: Father of a slain Hizb Mujahideen militant commander has gone missing forcing the family to lodge a missing complaint after failing to trace him for over two weeks. Abdul Hameed Chopan (47), father of slain Hizb commander Adil Ahmad, left his home on July 16 and didn't return. His wife Gulshana Bano said: "He left home and told us that he is going to irrigate land. But he didn't return. We searched for him everywhere but couldn't find a trace of him. We later lodge a missing report at Police station Tral," news agency KNO quoted her saying. "We are now just three members left in our family—me, my daughter and my son who is pursuing Bachelor's Degree at Govt Degree

College Tral. We have no one to feed us now."

She said that they don't have any info where he is. Chopan's son Adil Ahmed Chopan alias Adil Hizbi, who was killed earlier this year. Gulshan also lost her brother, who was also a militant and was killed in 2017.

A senior police official confirmed that Chopan is missing from "last several days" and said that they are investigating whether he has joined militant ranks or he left home due to any other reason.

Police sources said that they are also investigating whether the reports about a few youth whose pictures have gone viral have joined militant group Al-Badr. "We are finding out whether pictures are real in nature," they said.

L-G Launches Jammu Ropeway Project

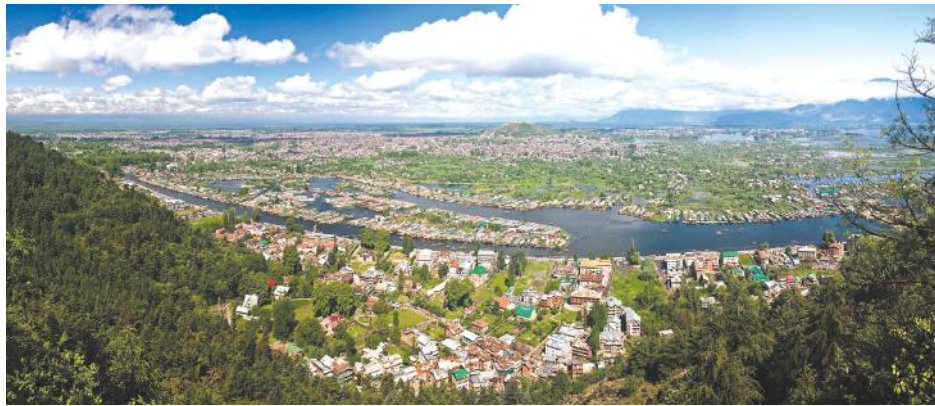
JAMMU: The much-awaited Jammu ropeway project, aimed at boosting tourism in the winter capital of the Union territory, has been launched by Lieutenant Governor G C Murmu on Monday that has brought a smile on the faces of the people of Jammu. Planned back in 1995, the project faced dozens of delays in its start, execution and date of completion but the people of Jammu feel are now happy that a prestigious project has seen the light of day after 25 years. L-G Murmu and the first lady Smita Murmu inaugurated the much-delayed project and took the first ride on the ropeway along with top officials. Murmu said the project would go a long way in promoting tourism in Jammu region, giving a fillip to the local economy by creating jobs. He said the project is of great importance and is going ● P-02

Clamour For Statehood Grows As Hints About Its Restoration Mount

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: As the first anniversary of August 5 decisions near, clamour for statehood is growing shriller among the mainstream camp in Jammu and Kashmir which was split into two union territories on that day last year.

The sudden surge in demand for statehood, already promised by the Union Home Minister, comes amid reports that the Centre was likely to announce its restoration on August 15.



Omar Hints At Contesting Polls But After Statehood Is Restored

Press Trust Of India



SRINAGAR- Upset over downgrading of Jammu and Kashmir to the status of a Union Territory following abrogation of Article 370, former chief minister Omar Abdullah on Monday said he will not contest assembly elections till full statehood is restored.

However, Omar, a former union minister in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government, made it clear he would continue to work for his party National Conference (NC) and people of Jammu and Kashmir.

"I have been leader of the as-

sembly of the state. In its time the most empowered assembly. I cannot and will not be a member of what is now one of the most disempowered assemblies in the country. It's as simple as that," Omar, 50, told PTI.

"It is not a threat or blackmail; it's not a display of me sulking. It's just a simple acknowledgement that I won't fight an election to lead the Union Territory assembly which is such a disempowered assembly."

Strongly critical of the dilution of Article 370 of the Constitution, Omar said many reasons had been given to justify abrogation of the provision that granted special status, and claimed that none of those stand any scrutiny.

Omar, who is the vice president of the NC, was critical of what had been done to Jammu and Kashmir on August 5 last year, and said his party would oppose it in the Supreme Court.

"We believe in democracy and peaceful opposition."

The abrogation of ► PAGE 02

KP Group Seeks Statehood, Special Status For J&K

Nearly a year after government of India revoked Article-370 and Article-35A and split Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories, a migrant Kashmiri Pandit organization on Monday demanded restoration of statehood and special status for the erstwhile state.

The organization called 'Reconciliation, Relief and Rehabilitation of Migrants' in a statement issued today demanded the immediate restoration of statehood and special status ● P-02

Karra Says 'Rat Race' Has Begun To Claim 4G Restoration, J&K Statehood

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: As speculations about restoration of statehood and resumption of high-speed internet are making rounds in Jammu and Kashmir, senior Congress leader and former Member Parliament Tariq Hameed Karra on Monday lashed out at certain mainstream politicians for indulging into a "rat race for taking the credit for it."

The PDP founding member took to Twitter to hit out at some political leaders from Jammu and Kashmir, who he said want to take credit for the two likely announce-



ments about the restoration of statehood and 4G in the erstwhile state.

"A highly connected friend of mine told me that the sudden outbursts and parroting by some political leaders from J&K for restoration of Statehood is a precursor to the already taken decision by chosen ► PAGE 02

Forces Don't Need NoC for Land Acquisition In J&K Now, 49 Year Old Directive Withdrawn



SRINAGAR: Jammu & Kashmir government has withdrawn a 49-year-old directive under which acquisition/requisition of land by Army and paramilitary forces required no objection certificate (NoC) from its Home department.

The move comes days after Jammu and Kashmir administration decided to notify certain locations inside the Union Territory as "strategic areas" to facilitate construction by the armed forces. Acquisition of land by Army,

CRPF, BSF and other similar agencies required NoC from Home department as per a previous state government circular issued in 1971.

But due to repeal of Jammu & Kashmir Requisitioning and Acquisition of Immovable Property Act -1968 on October 31, 2019, the Revenue department withdrew the circular which mandated the Home department's clearance, for requisition/acquisition of land by forces.

"In view of the extension of The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act-2013 to the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, the circular No. Rev/LB/71/13-A dated 27.08.1971 which prescribed obtaining of No Objection Certificate from the Home department ► PAGE 02



LOST CHILDHOOD: A young boy looks at KO lensman at the fence of his open air school in Dodhpathri- Pix Abid Bhat

HC Seeks Report On Stopping Sewage Flow Into Dal

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir High Court has directed Lakes and waterways Development Authority to submit within two weeks action taken by it before Committee of Experts ('CoE') regarding measures among others to stop sewage and polluted water flowing into the Dal lake, the flagship of Kashmir's tourism.

A division bench of Chief Justice Gita Mittal and Justice Sanjay Dhar also directed the LAWDA to submit report regarding measures taken on pollution from House Boats, boundary demarcation of the lake, protection of catchment areas, relocation and rehabilitation of encroachments and title-holders from the Lake , floating gardens to be removed, de-weeding and disposal of weeds, management of solid waste, dredging of the waterbody, court's direction regarding video graph and photograph besides petitions received for renovation, repair and reconstruction.

The directions by the court followed perusal of a report submitted by Tufail Mattoo, Vice Chairman, LAWDA, recording minutes of meeting



by the Committee of Experts regarding their recent visit to the Dal Lake. "It is heartening to note that

the installation of 150 boundary pillars on the Dal Lake based on the Survey of India Map stands completed," the court observed.

In addition, the court was informed that the Committee of Experts has held a detailed digital meeting on 20 June in which the Vice Chairman, LAWDA and his team, the Director Tourism and S. K. Jha, Retd. Vice-Admiral. The Committee had noted that no action had taken place in last three months and, therefore, reviewed time lines.

"We have carefully perused the report of the COE and the minutes. Almost four months have passed since the visit of the Committee. It is, therefore, essential to have the latest report with regard to the issues pointed out," the court observed.

The Committee of Experts had also noted several other issues pertaining to tourism, managing Houseboats, Refurbishment Work for STPs and State Pollution Control Board.

Meanwhile, the court also directed Home Secretary of the Government of Jammu and Kashmir to forthwith look into the matter regarding police assistance needed to LAWDA and ensure that the needful was done in this regard.

"Very pertinent observations have been made by the Committee of Experts with regard to the need to strengthen LAWDA's administration and capacity. It has been pointed out that two Deputy SPs were assigned to the LAWDA," the court observed. Also Tufail Mattoo submitted that since the recoding of the visit of the CoE, the one Dy. SP who had joined LAWDA, had been taken away and presently there is no police official to assist the work of LAWDA. (GNS)

Delhi Violence: Court Dismisses Bail Plea Of 3 Persons In Murder Case

NEW DELHI: A Delhi court Monday dismissed bail pleas of three persons, arrested in a case related to the alleged murder of a person during the communal violence in northeast Delhi in February.

DilbarNegi (22) died due to burn injuries when the mob set Anil Sweets shop on fire during the riots in Shiv Vihar area. He was present in the godown of the shop at that time.

Additional Sessions Judge Vinod Yadav rejected the bail applications of Ashraf Ali, Mohd Faisal, Rashid saying their release at this stage may hamper the ongoing investigation in the case.

"The riots at the scene of crime were really horrific; wherein, loss of innocent life as well as damage to the property of general public was enormous; the further investigation in the matter is on and a number of suspects who participated in the riots at the scene of crime have to be arrested and the release of applicant at this stage may hamper the further investigation...", the court said in its order.

The court, however, clarified that anything stated in the order should not be construed as expressing any opinion on the final merits of the case, as the matter was at the pre-cognisance stage.

It added that it was conscious of the fact that eyewitnesses in the matter were residents of the same locality and were presumably still frightened.

The possibility of the accused threatening them, if released on bail cannot be ruled out, the court said.

It said that though the court has its limitations in making in-depth

analysis of the statements of witnesses at the pre-cognisance stage, a joint reading of the statements of four prosecution witnesses made it amply clear that Ali, Faisal and Rashid were present in the unlawful assembly, whose objective can be deciphered from the kind of weapons they were carrying and from the acts of arsoning, looting, vandalism and torching committed by them, which has been captured in the CCTV footage.

The court said it was prima facie clear that they were part of unlawful assembly which was responsible for putting on fire the godown in which Negi was present.

During the hearing held through video conferencing, advocates Sri Singh and Abdul Gaffar, appearing for the three persons, told the court that there was an inordinate delay of about four days in registration of FIR in the case.

The police had dailed to produce any incriminating material against the accused for commission of offence of murder.

Special Public Prosecutor ManojChaudhary, appearing for the state, opposed the bail applications saying the three persons were present at the spot and had indulged in acts of rioting, arson, stone pelting including setting fire upon the godown of the shop.

Faisal was clearly visible in the CCTV footage of the scene of crime on February 24, the public prosecutor said.

Twelve persons have been charge sheeted in the case filed on June 4 under various offences of rioting, murder, unlawful assembly, promoting enmity between groups based on religion, caste, language etc.

Akal Takhtjathedar Urges Centre, Pbgovt To Stop Implicating Sikh Youths In UAPA

AMRITSAR: Akal Takhtjathedar GianiHarpreet Singh on Monday urged the Centre and Punjab government to stop arresting innocent Sikh youths in Punjab under the anti-terror law UAPA.

There is a dire need to order an independent judicial inquiry in this regard as poor Dalit youths in Punjab were being targeted, said Jathedar.

The Jathedar made the statement after meeting a deputation led by Bholath MLA Sukhpal Singh Khaira, who sought his intervention into the rampant arrest of Sikh youths after allegedly implicating them in terror cases.

In a memorandum submitted to the Akal Takhtjathedar, Khaira alleged that Sikh youths, particularly Dalits, were being booked under the draconian Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act by the Centre and the Punjab government.

Through this memorandum, we would like to bring to your notice the atrocities and excesses being perpetrated by the central government and Punjab government against Sikh youths, particularly Dalits under the oppressive UAPA, alleged Khaira.

Under the UAPA law, more than 16 FIRs have been registered in recent weeks across Punjab while 47 FIRs have been registered in the last three-year tenure of Amarinder Singh government, in which utterly poor, defenceless and innocent people have been arrested at a large scale, he alleged.

We wish to bring to your notice the fact that we have personally conducted spot visits and examined some of the recent cases registered under the UAPA which prove that most of the people arrested under the said law are innocent and have been falsely implicated by the police after declaring them Khalistani modules and terrorists, said Khaira.

HC Personal Staff Condole Demise of Colleague's Mother

SRINAGAR: The High Court personal staff association on Monday expressed condolence over the sad demise of mother of their colleague Tariq Ahmad Mota (Secretary to High Court judge). The association prayed for the departed soul and also beseeched Allah to grant patience to the bereaved family to bear the irreparable loss. (GNS)

Omar Hints At Contesting...

Article 370 was supposed to end militancy but the government had been telling Supreme Court that violence in Jammu and Kashmir was increasing, he said. Similarly, arguments touted such as lack of development and investment due to Article 370 belie facts, he added.

Asked whether his decision not to contest the assembly polls has been discussed with the leadership of his party, Omar replied, "it's my view and it's my decision. No one can be forced to fight an election against their will".

On the delimitation exercise being carried out by the administration of Jammu and Kashmir, Omar said, "NC is and will continue to explore all legal options to deal with the developments and decisions post August 5 last year."

The elections are likely to be held only after the delimitation exercise is completed in the union territory, which came into existence on October 31 last year. The erstwhile state was split into two union territories-Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

KP Group Seeks Statehood...

to Jammu and Kashmir. The organisation led by Kashmiri Pandit Satish Mahaldar said that the Indian constitution ensures right to equality that extends to individuals, communities, religions, regions and all social and political institutions.

The right to equality does not only ensure non-discrimination on basis of the religion, caste, region or any other social and political sub- categories. Never before a state has been downgraded. This is not done in a democracy. One can't have a military solution to a political situation and can't go to war with their own people," Mahaldar said.

He urged the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and parliamentarians to confer special status to Jammu and Kashmir as a 'good gesture' and by understanding the aspiration and the wishes of the people.

"It is not that J&K was the only state with special status. Other states too enjoy special category status. These are Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura and Uttarakhand," Mahaldar said.

He said a wide range of provisions were available to these 10 states that have been listed under Articles 371, 371-A to 371-H, and 371.

"Similarly, a special category status should be granted to J&K immediately on the basis of sizeable share of tribal population, strategic international borders, economic and infrastructural backwardness, non-viable nature of state finances, discriminated minorities in Kashmir and to deal with the disturbed law and order in some parts of J&K state," Mahaldar said.

He listed a number of features while seeking restoration of special status to the erstwhile state.

Among them, Mahaldar demanded that the central government bears 90 percent of the state expenditure on all centrally-sponsored schemes and external aid while the rest 10 percent should be given as loan to the state at zero percent rate of interest. He also demanded preferential treatment getting central funds, concession on excise duty to attract industries to the state besides 30 percent of the Centre's gross budget for J&K as conferred to other states

"The state should avail the benefit of debt-swapping and debt relief schemes. J&K state with special category status should be exempted from customs duty, corporate tax, income tax and other taxes to attract investment, J&K state should also have the facility that if they have unspent money in a financial year; it does not lapse and gets carried forward for the next financial year," Mahaldar said.

He also demanded special status for Kashmiri Pandits, saying that they were cultural and religious minority within the state.

"No one can ignore the demand of statehood and special status to J&K," he added.

Karra Says 'Rat Race' Has...

few in GOI for which the timeline fixed is 15th of August 2020 for initiating the process for restoration of Statehood and 5th August for restoring 4G. It is actually a rat race for taking the credit," Karra tweeted.

Meanwhile, a local news agency KNT quoted Karra as saying that Home Minister Amit Shah will make an announcement on 5th August about the restoration of 4G in Jammu and Kashmir

while Prime Minister Modi will make another announcement about the restoration of statehood on 15th of August.

"Some political leaders have also come to know about these decisions and now they want to take credit of these things and that is why they have started talking about statehood, elections and other things," Karra said.

He said that the New Delhi's decisions were calculated and were not taken under 'persuasion or pressure'.

"These decisions have been taken by the Government of India independently and on their own. If any political party will take credit for these decisions, that means dirty politics still exists in Kashmir," Karra said.

Pertinently, several mainstream political parties, including National Conference (NC) and Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party have started voicing their demand for restoration of the statehood to Jammu and Kashmir.

After a wait of nearly one year NC leader Omar Abdullah spoke his mind in a newspaper article hinting that he was ready to contest elections but only after J&K's full statehood was restored.

J&K Apni Party led by businessman-turned politician Altaf Bukhari has held a series of meetings with PM Modi and Amit Shah to press for the statehood demand. Recently, Congress leader and Member Parliament Ghulam Nabi Azad also met PM Modi and demanded statehood followed by elections in Jammu and Kashmir.

470 New Cases...

Kashmir recorded the highest of 132 new positive cases, followed by 53 in Anantnag.

They said that the total number of positive cases in Kashmir division has reached to 14457 including 8282 recoveries; while as total number of positive cases in Jammu division have reached to 3933 including 2120 recoveries and 23 deaths.

With 474 more recoveries, the tally of total recoveries in Jammu and Kashmir has reached to 10402 which is 56.56 percent of the total cases which was over 63 percent a few days before.

Pertinently, Srinagar district alone has 4133 positive cases which is more than the total number of positive cases in Jammu division where total cases are 3933

Home Quarantine...

the spokesperson said expressed that in order to achieve better compliance amongst the contacts of COVID-19 patients, it has been decided that the present practice of administrative quarantine of COVID positive contacts, shall be dispensed and the contacts shall be permitted home quarantine provided they are asymptomatic.

"However, all contacts shall be sampled and the defined protocol shall be followed in case of contacts who report positive," he added.

Chief Secretary said that keeping in consideration low positivity rate amongst the rail and air travellers (0.9%), Home quarantine would be permitted after sampling for such rail travellers who have a valid contactable phone number and have AAROGYA Setu application downloaded on their phones.

"In the event of any rail traveller turning positive, the standard protocol with regard to management of COVID-19 patients will be followed," he added.

Financial Commissioner, Health & Medical Education, Secretary, Disaster Management, Reconstruction, Relief and Rehabilitation, Director, National Health Mission, Principal, Government Medical College, Jammu, Director Health Services, Jammu, and other senior officers of Health and Administration participated in the meeting.

The official spokesperson further said that with an aim to maintain availability of beds in tertiary hospitals across Jammu and Kashmir for acute COVID-19 cases who require specialized treatment or intensive care, it was decided in the meeting, on the lines of the decision declaring SKIMS, Srinagar, SKIMS, Medical College, Bemina, Chest Diseases Hospital and SMHS Hospital as referral only hospitals for COVID-19 patients, to institute a similar mechanism in Jammu city and declare GMC, Jammu, CD Hospital and ASCOMS, Sidhra as referral only hospitals for COVID-19 patients. These hospitals shall now admit only such COVID-19 patients who have been referred to by other hospitals of Jammu Division.

Meanwhile, Gandhi Nagar Hospital and COVID Care Centre, Baghwati Nagar, shall now be primary centres for admission

of COVID-19 patients in Jammu city, the official spokesperson added.

Forces Don't Need NoC...

for acquisition/ requisition of land in favour of Army, BSF/CRPF and similar organization is withdrawn," reads the circular issued by Principal Secretary Revenue department , Pawan Kotwal.

Before re-organisation of Jammu and Kashmir, central forces were acquiring land in the state under section 21 of the Jammu and Kashmir Requisitioning and Acquisition of Immovable Property Act, 1968.

The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act-2013 became applicable to J&K Union Territory from October 31, 2019- the day when UT came into existence.

The Act is applicable to acquisition of land for strategic purposes relating to naval, military, air force, and armed forces of the Union, including central paramilitary forces or any work vital to national security or defence of India or State police.

On March 18, 2020, the Union Home Ministry notified modifications in the law to empower administration of J&K Union Territory to carry out land acquisition proceedings on lines of Puducherry. With inputs from KNO

SC Weighs Option Of Mian...

with some conditions like he would not visit Jammu and Kashmir and he will not make any statements, the bench said.

Mehta said the competent authority has decided to not extend Qayoom's current detention order beyond August 7. He was detained following the abrogation of Article 370 last August.

Senior advocate Dushyant Dave, appearing for Qayoom, said that he be released forthwith as the administration has decided to not extend the detention order.

He said the detention order is in violation of his fundamental rights.

The bench posted the matter for further hearing on July 29.

On July 23, the J-K administration has informed the top court that the issue of Qayoom's detention was under consideration and a decision will soon be taken in the matter.

It had said that the court need not go into the merit of the case as the competent authority will soon decide it and sought some time to take instructions on the issue.

On July 15, the top court had asked the J-K administration to explain the basis for detaining Qayoom who has challenged his detention under the (PSA) since August 7 last year.

The top court had asked it to take into consideration various aspects including Qayoom's age, expiry of detention period and the COVID-19 pandemic.

On June 26, the top court had issued notice to the J-K administration and sought its reply on Qayoom's plea challenging his detention order.

Qayoom has also sought a direction to shift him from Tihar jail here to central jail in Srinagar on medical ground.

He has challenged the May 28 order of the Jammu and Kashmir High Court rejecting his plea against his prolonged illegal detention under the PSA in jails outside the UT.

He said he is a Senior Advocate with more than 40 years' standing at the Bar and has served as President of the J&K High Court Bar Association for many terms, including from 2014 till the present day.

Qayoom said he was detained on the intervening night of August 4 and 5, 2019, under the provisions of Jammu and Kashmir Code of Criminal Procedure and thereafter, an order of detention under the PSA was passed against him on August 7, 2019.

He said that on August 8 he was taken to Central Jail, Agra, Uttar Pradesh, without any prior notice of intimation, where he was kept in solitary confinement. He said the high court's May 28 order is ex facie unsustainable in law as it is premised on "stale, irrelevant, remote, vague, imprecise and deficient" grounds of detention.

The impugned judgment and order concluded that most of the grounds in the detention order are somewhat clumsy which implies that the High Court too found them wanting.

Placing reliance on the doctrine of severability as enunciated by this Court in Gautam Jain versus Union of India...the High Court then proceeds to uphold the detention order solely on one ground, his appeal said.

He said the high court makes it abundantly clear that the

detention order has been upheld solely on one ground -- the four FIRs dating back to 2008 and 2010, as enumerated in the detention order.

These FIRs are stale, irrelevant and have no proximate, pertinent or live link to the present, and are thus superfluous and extraneous to the satisfaction required in law qua the tendency or propensity to act in a manner prejudicial to public order. Pertinently, even in the said decade old 4 FIRs, the Petitioner was neither arrested, nor any charge sheet ever filed by the police against the Petitioner, he added in his plea.

Qayoom said he had already been detained in 2010 on the basis of the said FIRs under the PSA, and the said detention was subsequently revoked.

Thus, the same FIRs cannot be used to pass another order of detention under the PSA, as held by this Hon'ble Court..., his plea said.

Qayoom said he is suffering from serious health ailments and is at a high-risk vulnerability for COVID-19 due to his comorbid conditions.

The Petitioner has numerous serious medical conditions for which he has been receiving treatment for the last 25 years under the care and supervision of his doctors in Srinagar, Kashmir. The Petitioner is also dependent on his family for ensuring the regular and daily intake of medicines and regular injections, he added.

As an interim prayer, he sought his transfer to Central Jail, Srinagar, during the pendency of the present petition, ensuring that all necessary medical precautions are taken over COVID-19.

L-G Launches Jammu...

to be the biggest tourist attraction (in Jammu) in the coming days. "It was following a personal intervention by the L-G that the project has been thrown open to the general public and tourists today. The L-G had directed us to complete the work and make it operational," an official said.

Initially, the project was to be operated from Bahu Fort to Mubarak Mandi Complex when it was proposed back in 1995. It was modified and the route relocated when both places were declared protected monuments.

The officials said the cable car corporation successfully conducted the trial run of the first phase of the project in April last year.

The 1.66-km-long cable car project has two phases, first from Bahu Fort to Mahamaya Park and second from Mahamaya to Peer Kho over the Tawi river, with a total length of 1,118 metres.

The cable car project would provide people a high-quality tourism experience with transportation facility, sightseeing and entertainment, they said.

The ropeway from Bahu Fort to Mahamaya has eight cabins and from Mahamaya to Peer Kho 14 cabins and the total number of towers in section one (Peer Kho to Mahamaya) and section two (Bahu Fort to Mahamaya) are nine and the critical components are all imported.

With regard to safety of the project, all standard operating procedures have been adopted as per international standards, they added.

They said the estimated cost of the project is Rs 75 crore, out of which 95 per cent of the total cost has been incurred so far.

"We are very happy that this project has seen light of day after 25 years after its beginning. Thanks to Murmu sahib that the prestigious project has been launched today", said Ravinder Singh, a Bahu Fort resident.

CRPF Man Shoots Self Dead...

Today's incident is the second such incident among the CRPF ranks in the past eight days in Kashmir.

On July 19, a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel committed suicide by shooting himself dead with his service rifle at his unit in PanthaChowk area of Srinagar.

Six Absconders Held...

Mendher police station on Monday and they were produced before a court after legal formalities, according to the officials.

The raids are part of steps taken by SSP RomeshAngral to trace and arrest absconders in order to bring down crime graph in Poonch and for speedy disposal of cases.

Man Dies in Scuffle Over Land Dispute

Police arrests brother, 4 family members

Pattan: An elderly man died during a scuffle in Nihalpura village of Pattan here in North Kashmir's Baramulla district.

According to police two brothers had a land dispute that triggered a scuffle during which an elderly man died after he was allegedly hit by a rod.

The deceased has been identified as 62 year old Bashir Ahmed Itoo son of Abdul Rahim. A police said that there

was a dispute between two brothers on a patch of land which took an ugly turn today when two sides came to blows.

"We have detained the brother of the deceased and his four family members including two minors", police said.

An FIR vide number 191/2020 under section 302 has been registered and investigation set into motion," a police official said.

Aga Hasan Discharged from Hospital

Father son duo Covid free now

Srinagar: Senior Shia leader and president Anjuman-e-Sharie Shiayan Agha Syed Hasan Al-Musavi who had been admitted to Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Science Saura after being tested positive for Covid-19 infection has been discharged from the hospital.

According to Anjuman sources, the repeated tests of Agha were found negative and he was discharged from the hospital.

Pertinently, Aga Syed Hasan

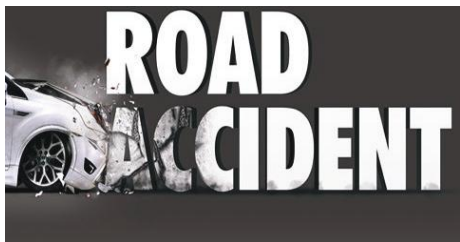
had developed complications during the intervening night of July 16 and 17 at his Budgam home, after which he was shifted to SKIMS Srinagar. He was subsequently tested and found positive for Covid-19 infection.

Earlier, Aga Muntazir, the son of Aga Syed Hasan was also tested positive and was admitted at a clinic in Nagam. The repeated tests of Muntazir were also found negative and he too has been shifted to home.

Pillion rider dies on Srinagar-Jammu Highway

Pampore: A pillion rider died on spot while another was shifted to hospital in critical condition after a Scooter collided with a Tata Mobile on Srinagar-Jammu Highway near Nambal Charsoo area of Awantipora here in South Kashmir.

Police sources said that a Vespa Scooter (JK02AS-3545) driven by one Muhammad Jamal of Razwous, Pampore collided with Tata Mobile (JK01AD-4026) near Nambal, Charsoo resulting in the in-



jury to rider and on spot death of pillion rider.

The deceased has been identified as Mukhtar Ahmad Hajam (25) of Goripora.

"Tata mobile has been seized and its driver arrested while a case has been registered in this regard," the police official said.



Students at an open air community school in Dodhpathri village in Budgam district. KO Photo Abid Bhat

Nagrota Case: NIA files charge sheet against 6 accused

Srinagar: National Investigation Agency (NIA) Monday filed a chargesheet against 06 accused involved in a module of transporting JeM militants via Nagrota.

In a statement, NIA said that it filed charge-sheet in JeM's Nagrota Infiltration-transportation module case against six accused persons namely Sameer Ahmed Dar son of Abdul Rashid Dar resident of Kesrigram, Kakapora, Pulwama, Asif Ahmed Malik son of Bashir Ahmed Malik resident of Qazigund, Sartaj Ahmed Mantoo son of Firdous Ahmed Mantoo resident of Kesrigram, Kakapora, Pulwama, Suhaib Manzoor son of Manzoor Ahmed Wani resident of Karimabad Pulwama, Zahoor Ahmed Khan son of Ghulam Hassan Khan resident of Bangund, Wanpora, Pulwama and Suhail Javid alias Suhail Lone son of Javid Maqbool Lone resident of Wagar, Khan Sahib, Budgam under section 120B 121, 121A, 122 and 307 IPC, Sections 16, 18, 19, 20, 38 and 39 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, Sections 7, 25, 27 of the Arms Act, Sections 3, 4, 5 of Explosive Substances Act and Section 6(1A) of the Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act before the NIA Special Court, Jammu.

The statement further stated

that, the case arose out of FIR No. 0045/2020 registered at Police station Nagrota, Distt: Jammu on 31.01.2020 wherein a truck carrying three freshly infiltrated Pakistani militants was stopped for checking by the naka duty staff at Ban Toll Plaza, Nagrota, Jammu on Pathankot-Srinagar Highway at 5:00 AM. While the driver Sameer Ahmad Dar and his two associates viz. Asif Ahmad Malik and Sartaj Mantoo escaped taking advantage of pre-dawn darkness, the heavily-armed Pakistani militants hiding inside the cargo cabin of the truck started firing at the police party grievously injuring one security personnel. In the ensuing search operation launched by the security forces in Ban forest area, the three Pakistani militants got killed while the driver and his two associates were arrested.

NIA took up the investigation of the case on 10.02.2020 and arrested three more militant associates of this Infiltration-Transportation module.

Searches were conducted at several places in Kashmir valley and

incriminating material including documents and digital devices were seized.

Investigation revealed that apart from their unsuccessful attempt in January, 2020, this module had received a group of three Pakistani militants in December, 2019 after they infiltrated into India from the International Border in Samba sector and ferried them to South Kashmir.

This module was in touch with Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad handlers and launchpad commanders who used to send the location of freshly infiltrated militants and also share the code-words for receiving them to driver Sameer Ahmad Dar on secure messaging apps.

The other three arrested accused viz. Suhaib Manzoor, Zahoor Ahmad Khan and Suhail Javed @ Suhail Lone were the Over-Ground Workers (OGWs) of JeM and provided safe shelter, logistics and communication back-up for the infiltration and transit of the Pakistani militants.

از نیابت چلڈرہ
عنوان: درخواست منجانب سید سہیل حسن گیلا ساکنہ راجپورہ
اہماد حصول RBA غوثیگٹ تحت SRO 294
اشیاء برکات گاہی برخاص دعام
معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصد میں سائل نے ایک درخواست باجرائی RBA غوثیگٹ دفتر ایشیاء کی ہے جو زیر کاروائی ہے۔ اس بارے میں رپورٹ بنواری طلب کی گئی تھی پچہ چتا ہے کہ سائل کنڈی میں سکونت پذیر ہے سائل کا کنڈی مندرجہ جاذب افراد پر مشتمل ہے

سید غلام حسن گیلائی	زمینداری
رقیب بیگم بی بی سید غلام حسن گیلائی	گھریلو کام
سید عمران گیلائی ولد سید غلام حسن گیلائی	زمینداری
ممتازہ بیگم بی بی سید عمران گیلائی	گھریلو کام
سید سہیل حسن بی بی سید غلام حسن گیلائی	زیر تعلیم

اس کے علاوہ کوئی افراد کنڈی میں تھلا یا گیا ہے لہذا غوثیگٹ تنذکرہ ملا بحق سائل کے اجراء کئے جانے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی عذریہ اعتراض ہو تو چار یوم کے اندر اندر دفتر خط و میں تحریری طور پر پیش کریں۔ بعد از گزرنے معیاد کوئی بھی عذر قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا
تحریر اہماد
GMS

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER BUDGAM KASHMIR NOTICE

Whereas an application has been received from one. Shri : Shabir Ahmad Ganie S/o: Ghud Din Ganie R/o: Gariend Khurd Budgam owner of vehicle bearing Registration No: JK04E-2797 for cancellation of hire purchase agreement with M/S J&K Bank B/U Budgam

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



Assistant Regional Transport officer
Budgam Kashmir

No. ARTO/ BUDGAM.1178
Dated: 27/07/2020



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

NOTICE

It is hereby notified for the information of all concerned who have applied for the post of Registrar in response to Advertisement Notice No. 04 of 2020 dated 22.06.2020 read with corrigendum issued vide No. IUSTR/Reg/Adv/E/20/558 Dated: 17-07-2020 that the Preliminary Screening Report is available on the University website www.islamicuniversity.edu.in. Objections, if any, in this regard shall be filed by the respective candidates in the office of Registrar, IUSTR by or before 30-07-2020 upto 4.00 pm along with documentary proof of their claim. Thereafter, no claim whatsoever shall be entertained. The University shall not be held responsible for any lapse on the part of the candidate/s which may affect his/her eligibility for the post/s owing to non-submission of relevant documents in support of his/her candidature within the available time period.

No. IUSTR/Reg/Adm/E/20/582
Dated: 27-07-2020

Sd/-
Registrar

Innovation of Boom Spray Machine PM Modi Appreciates MC Chairman Dooru in Mann Ki Baat

Amid rise of Covid-19 pandemic in India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his Mann ki Baat appreciated the corona warriors who performed their duties with strenuous efforts through fumigating the red zone areas and Quarantine centers.

PM Modi appreciated Municipal Committee Chairman Dooru Mohammad Iqbal Ahanger and his team for rendering their service for betterment of people in the area by distributing masks, sanitizers and spreading awareness among the people regarding the preventive measures of Covid deadly disease.

Mohammad Iqbal said it was a joyous day for him and he's thankful to PM Modi for appreciating his work.

Iqbal said that we developed our own Boom Spray machine of 2500 litres at the



cheapest cost of fifty thousand when 500 litres boom machine costs 5 lakhs. Our team developed it at low cost thus saved funds for betterment of the Nation.

Government of Jammu and Kashmir
Directorate of Handicrafts & Handlooms
Kashmir Haat, Exhibition Grounds Srinagar
dir.handicraft@jk.gov.in

SHORT TERM QUOTATION

Due to lockdown and poor response, the last date for submission of short term quotations invited vide this office No:- HD/JDHK/S/526-30 Dated:- 17.07.2020 for tracing of Textile Materials of Handicrafts Training Centres is hereby extended as per the following schedule:-

Last date for submission of Short term quotations	06-08-2020 Upto 1:00pm
Date of scrutinizing/opening of quotations	06-08-2020 At 3:00 pm

The terms and conditions shall remain same as mentioned in the notice bearing No:- HD/JDHK/S/526-30 Dated:- 17.07.2020.

Sd/-
Joint Director Handicrafts
(Kashmir)

NO:- HD/Store/43/20-21
Dated:-27-07-20.

DIPK-351/20

DIAL-EMMA



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

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311



RAILWAYS

- SRINAGAR: 0194-2103259
- ANANTNAG: 01932-228243
- BARAMULLA: 0194-102029
- BIJHERA: 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

06 Zil-Haj
1441

PRAYERS

FAJR	4: 01
ZUHR	12: 37
ASR	5:32
Magrib	7:39
ISHA	9:13

This Day In History

- 388 - Battle at Aquileia: Emperor Theodosius beats emperor Magnus Maximis
- 1148 - Second Crusade: Crusaders abandon their siege of Damascus
- 1330 - Battle of Velbuzd: Serbian forces defeats Bulgarian army
- 1741 C - captain Vitus Bering discovers Mount St Elias, Alaska
- 1808 - Mahmud II succeeds Mustafa IV as sultan of Turkey
- 1821 - Peru declares independence from Spain (National Day)
- 1851 - Total solar eclipse captured on a daguerreotype photograph
- 1858- Nadar takes 1st airborne photo (in a balloon)
- 1883-Shocks triggered by volcano Epomeo (Ile of Ischia, Italy) destroyed 1,200 houses at Casamicciola killing 2,000
- 1914- Austria-Hungary decides against mediation and declares war on Serbia - first declaration of war of WWI
- 1926- US & Panamanian pact about safeguard of Panama Canal
- 1933- Spain recognizes the USSR
- 1943- Italian Fascist dictator Benito Mussolini resigns
- 1943- World War II: Operation Gomorrah: The British bomb Hamburg causing a firestorm that kills 42,000 German civilians
- 1945- Japanese premier Suzuki disregards US ultimatum to surrender
- 1945- US Senate ratifies United Nations charter 89-2
- 1945- Physicist Raemer Schreiber and Lieutenant Colonel Peer de Silva arrive on the Pacific island of Tinian with the plutonium core used to assemble the Fat Man bomb used in the bombing of Nagasaki on August 9
- 1962- Mariner I launched to Mars falls into Atlantic Ocean
- 1964- Ranger 7 launched toward the Moon; sent back 4308 TV pictures
- 1973- Skylab 3's astronauts (Bean, Garriott & Lousma) launched
- 1976- 242,000 die in Tientsin-Tangshan (China) 8.2 earthquake
- 1976- Eldon Joers & Geo Morgan set world air speed record of 3,530 kph
- 1983- NASA launches Telstar-3A
- 1988- Jordan cancels \$1.3 billion development plan in West Bank
- 1989- NASA's Lewis Research Center, Cleve, announce new high temperature superconductors able to operate at 33 to 37 Gigahertz
- 2014- UN Security Council hold emergency meeting calling for an immediate and indefinite humanitarian ceasefire between Israel and Hamas
- 2014- Missiles strike near Gaza's main hospital and a nearby refugee camp Monday, leaving 10 dead and many wounded; Israeli Defence Force say they are not responsible.

From KO Archives

Amnesty: Children unprotected In J&K

Observer News Service

Srinagar - The unlawful killing of three teenaged boys and the serious injuries to a fourth boy during the last weekend in Bangargund village in Kupwara throws into sharp focus the lack of protection for children's right to life and safety in the state, global human rights watchdog, Amnesty International said today.

"Children are at risk of human rights violations from both state agents and abuses from armed groups" Amnesty said in faxed statement to Kashmir Observer. "Amnesty International urges both the state government and armed groups to respect the rights of children", the statement said adding the government of Jammu and Kashmir is under an international obligation to promote and protect child rights in line with India's ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Armed groups are under an obligation to abide by the standards of humanitarian law which strictly forbid the torture, killing and hostage taking of all civilians, including children, amnesty further said.

An army spokesperson stated that 'the four Juveniles, all between 11 and 15 years of age, were shot on 24 July 2005 in Bangargund village in Kupwara district when troops of the 6th battalion of the Rashtriya Rifles opened fire on the four teenagers whom they mistook for militants. The boys had started to run away when an army patrol called on them to stop in an area close to the line of control.

Villagers claimed that the juveniles were part of a marriage party and had gone for a stroll in the village in the early hours of Sunday when soldiers opened fire before the boys could reply to their commands. According to reports, there was no curfew in the area. Local villagers claim that the village elders had informed the army of the marriage party and that people were likely to move about late at night.

An army spokesperson termed the incident as 'unfortunate' and announced that the army would cooperate with a magisterial inquiry set up by State Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed. The army also ordered an internal inquiry. Police have registered a case against the army. On dozens of occasions the armed groups have perpetrated indiscriminate attacks which have affected children. They have exploded bombs close to schools resulting in the deaths of several children and causing parents to fear for the safety of their wards.

(Kashmir Observer, 28 July, 2005)

KASHMIR
OBSERVER

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Reset needed in Kashmir

In his first formal interview following the withdrawal of Article 370, the National Conference chief Dr Farooq Abdullah has called for restoration of the constitutional provision that granted J&K its autonomous position within Indian Union. Abdullah termed the changes to the law as “betrayal of the trust”. His party, he added, looked for justice from the highest court of the land because of its faith in the judiciary. Similarly, in an opinion piece in a national newspaper, Omar Abdullah termed the downgrading of J&K into a Union Territory as a humiliation. He wrote he will not contest election till statehood was restored to J&K.

This is for the first time since the revocation of Article 370 in August last that Abdullahs have spoken so forcefully against the move and sought its reversal. And in so doing they have signalled a tentative resumption of the stalled politics in the region. This is significant as over the past year, all kinds of politics has come to a stop in Kashmir, something that has engendered a deep sense of political disempowerment among people. This feeling was only deepened when Abdullah and Omar, two former Chief Ministers largely maintained silence since their release in March following months-long detention.

Following his release on March 24, Omar had said he would not talk about Article 370 till the time the “life and death” war against coronavirus was not won. But after Centre issued new domicile law which more or less opens up Kashmir for settlement by outsiders, Omar’s continued silence came in for sharp public criticism.

Ditto for other released leaders. They too have maintained silence on Article 370, lending some credence to the reports that they have made good behaviour promises to get their freedom. However, it is only when the senior leaders including Mehbooba are released that we can expect to get some sense of how they will respond to the altered state of affairs. But considering all these leaders have invariably called for peace in the Valley and affirmed their commitment to protest democratically, the government should release them and let them put their point of view before the people. Not doing so, will only prolong the current uncertainty, no matter how normal the Valley might appear on the outside.

As things stand, many leaders like Sajjad Gani Lone, Shah Faesal and others who were supposed to have been released have only been moved to their residences without a permission to hold any political activity. A year after August 5 move, it is time that the government removes bar on the movement and activity of every leader in the region.

OTHER OPINION

The big fight

Beijing has retaliated swiftly against Washington’s decision earlier this week to close down the Chinese consulate in Houston by ordering the closure of the US consulate in Chengdu in southwestern China. Beijing called it a “legitimate and necessary response to the unreasonable measures by the United States”. China had also rejected the Trump Administration’s charge that its Houston consulate was engaged in espionage and theft of industrial secrets. This is the first time since the US and China normalised relations in 1979 that the two sides are downgrading diplomatic ties. The closure of consulates in Houston and Chengdu marks a significant escalation of tensions between the world’s two most important powers and is bound to affect all major actors in the international system, including India.

Although the US-China trade war had begun two years ago, with both sides imposing punitive tariffs on imports from each other, Washington and Beijing had continuing negotiations on resolving the dispute. The two sides had announced a phase one of the trade deal earlier this year. But recent months have seen the rapid expansion of the scope and intensity of the conflict. The Trump Administration charged China with spreading the COVID-19 virus that has infected more than four million Americans and killed nearly 1,50,000. Beijing retaliated by alleging that the Trump Administration was blaming China for its own failures in dealing with the pandemic. It also floated the theory that the US Army might have been the original source of the deadly virus. Earlier this week, the Trump Administration accused Chinese hackers of trying to steal US research on anti-COVID vaccines. In recent weeks, the US stepped up its global campaign against China’s telecom giant Huawei and pressed its allies and partners to reject its technology in rolling out the 5G mobile networks.

Beyond the bilateral issues of diplomatic representation, trade, technology and the coronavirus, the conflict between the two great powers has inevitably begun to envelop other countries, especially those in Asia. Last week, the US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, rejected Beijing’s territorial claims in the disputed waters of the South China Sea as unlawful. As he sharpened the US tone on Chinese expansionism across Asia, Pompeo put Washington squarely on the Indian side in the unfolding military conflict between Delhi and Beijing in eastern Ladakh. In his address to the US India Business Council earlier this week, Pompeo underlined the importance of Delhi and Washington working together in countering the China challenge. For some in India, the Trump Administration’s muscular approach to Beijing generates deep concerns about being drawn into the escalating US-China conflict. Many others, however, welcome Washington’s uninhibited support against Beijing in the conflict that China has imposed on India. Official Delhi has been more than careful in its responses to the new US-China dynamic. The NDA government understands the gravity of the conflict on India’s China frontier and the import of the current inflection point in US-China relations. Getting the India-US relationship right is more critical now than ever before.

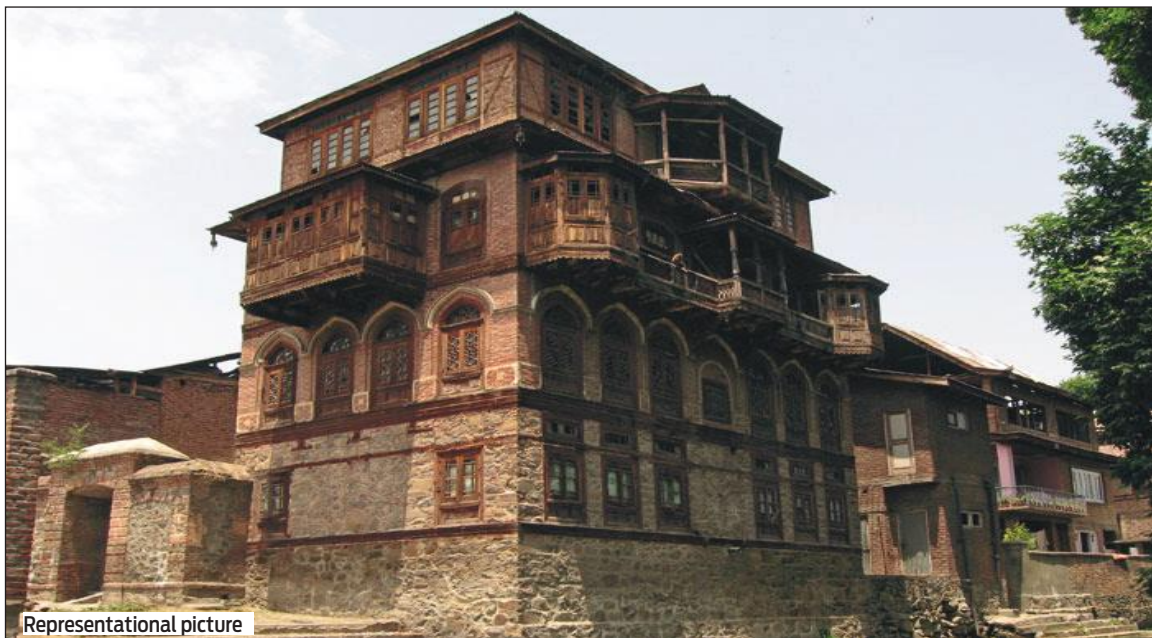
The Indian Express

Revisiting Kachrus At Kralyaar

I was a friend of Dr Kachru's family who went to take pictures of Kralyaar and their old house

FAHEEM GUNDRoo

Built in slender Maharaji bricks with intricate wood work on window panes, the structures looked in wretched state. Years of dust had piled on them, perhaps, muzzling the many echoes from far off years. Time didn't stand still here. It had taken its toll



Representational picture

Rainawari Chowk always seemed a little queer to me. Being part of the old city, where more or less the narrow alleys can confuse one, Rainawari stands out. May be it has to do with the large ancient mulberry tree that so distinctly sets it apart or may be it is the hospital, which used to be colored in red in old times; times from which I carry its memories.

I parked my car near the hospital - for want of space partly, and partly because I wanted to take a walk through the whole area: cross paths along those metalled roads, that may have been macadamized in many layers. Since those early summer mornings, when my friend must have run to catch the school bus; school bag jostling left and right. I had the address - Kralyaar, Dr. Kachru. I looked around and chose to ask an elderly person. He must have been in his early 70s, carrying an aluminum jar, a very downtown thing, filled with yoghurt from the local Goor (milkman) - its thick white cream shining under the sun. This gentleman very politely directed me towards Kralyaar: “Take first left, walk all the way down”. In the corner alley the Kachrus lived. Thinking loud while walking, I was aware many things must have changed since my friend lived here.

The old man was right, the corner alley was there. But how was I to find the house? At around 11 in the morning not many people venture outside. The summer sun was unrelentingly beating down. It was hot by Kashmiri standards. I kept looking through the houses, trying to guess which one is it. A white Koshur skull cap wearing man with thick mustaches came out from one of the houses. “That one belongs to Dr. Manto”, pointing with his finger, the thumb carrying the bead thread.

A shimmering marble plate near the main iron gate, freshly painted in rust red, read ‘Mir House’, the current owners. I re-

luctantly pushed the gate. The activity inside the compound was hurried and brisk. Open empty boxes, visibly meant to carry fruit, had filled the small garden facing the Kachru house. Is this a fruit traders house now, I wondered. Manzoor -- the owner of the house firmly shook my hand. What can I do for you? I explained. He asked few questions again, well meaning questions. Perhaps he was taken aback by what I told him. I was a friend of Dr Kachru's family who has come to take pictures of Kralyaar and their house.

Memories warm you up from the inside. But they also tear you apart, Murakami writes in Kafka on the Shore. Still taking pictures, Manzoor explained to me that the two houses in ruins still belong to Kachrus. ‘They have not sold them yet. Their ancestors lived in them’. Built in slender Maharaji bricks with intricate wood work on window panes, the structures looked in wretched state. Years of dust had piled on them, perhaps, muzzling the many echoes from far off years. Time didn't stand still here. It had taken its toll. “It may cause the family more anguish looking at the state of the house.” Little bemused, I asked Manzoor what makes him think so?

“See their's was an educated family. Well read. We are merchants who deal with dry fruits. The state of the house gives you a good indication.” Manzoor spoke with utmost earnestness. In this land of Sufis and Reshis everything may not be transparent, but there is no place to hide a dark heart. On a balmy June day, it felt good to be in this compound.

Manzoor was kind enough to escort me till the main road. Largely overwhelmed, he confessed though he wasn’t very educated, he appreciated my effort. We again warmly shook hands and bid good-byes.

My tryst with Kralyaar wasn’t over yet. The air may have been humid, the streets largely forlorn,

but persisting thoughts of my friend and his family gave color to everything around.

The roads were hard, wind came at my back. We think we have a memory, but in truth, it has us.

One of the many well known and frequently spoken structures in the old city is the Vishwa Bharti school. A visit to Rainawari was incomplete without it. Clicking pictures all around the locality, a bakers shop caught my lens. It was situated at a narrow alley with smoke emanating from the chimney at top. It had a very nostalgic feel to it. A mad-man passed along, incessantly talking to himself, pointing to the sky, where few crows had gathered, breaking the mid day lull.

While standing at the entrance of Kralyaar, walking back to my car, many thoughts pulled me in different directions.

I write these words now, many lands distant from the spot at which, those hearts that throbbed so gaily then, must have ceased to beat; in many occasions in a land unknown to them; many of the eyes that shone so brightly then, must have ceased to glow; the hands grown cold; the eyes old, must have hid their remnants in the grave; and yet the old house, the room, the merry voices and smiling faces, the jest, trivial circumstances connected with those happy meetings, crowding upon my mind.

Some sights caught through the corner of one's eye can take us back to the delusions of our childhood days; that can transfer a over-worked adult to his paper boats in rains; that can transport the sailor and the traveler, thousands of miles away, back to his own firepot and his quiet home!”

Everybody needs his memories. They keep the wolf of insignificance from the door.

Faheem Gundroo is a ICT Engineer based in Dubai, with interest in Travel, History and Culture



OBSERVER
MAIL

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

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Remembering Dr A.P.J Abdul Kalam

Life is the most difficult exam. Many people fail because they try to copy others. Not realizing that everyone has a different question paper”. Dr Kalam

Dr A.P.J Abdul Kalam was born on 15 October 1931 in a Tamil Muslim family to Jainulabdeen , a boat owner and Ashiamma, a housewife at Remashwaram Tamil Nadu. He came from a poor background and started working at an early age to support his family's income. After completing school. Dr APJ Abdul Kalam distributed newspapers in order to financially contribute to his father's income. In his school years, he had average grades, but he was described as a bright and hardworking student who had a strong desire to learn and spend hours on his studies especially mathematics.

After completing his school education at the Remashwaram Elementary School, Dr APJ Abdul Kalam went on to attend Saint Joseph's College Tiruchirapali then affiliated with university of Madras, from where he graduated in physics in 1954.

Towards the end of the course, he wasn't enthusiastic about the subject.

He then moved to Madras to study Aerospace Engineering in 1955.

While Dr Kalam was working on a senior class project, the Dean was dissatisfied with the lack of progress and threatened revoking his scholarship unless the project was finished within the next two days. He worked tirelessly on the project and met the deadline, impressing the Dean. For him becoming a fighter pilot was a dearest dream but he failed to realize it as he bagged the ninth position when only eight slots were available in the IAF. Dr APJ Abdul Kalam is popularly known as the Missile Man of India for his work on the development of ballistic missile and Launch Vehicle technology. He played a pivotal, technical and political role in India's Pokhran-II nuclear tests in 1998.

After graduating from Madras Institute of Technology in 1960, Dr Kalam joined Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) as a scientist. Dr APJ Abdul Kalam started his carrier by designing a small helicopter for the Indian Army, but remained unconvinced with the choice of his job at DRDO. Dr Kalam was also part of the INCOSPAR commit-

tee working under Vikram Sarabhai, the renowned space scientist. In 1969 he was transferred to Indian Space Research Organisation ISRO where he was the project director of the India's first indigenous Satellite Launch Vehicle PSLV which successfully deployed the Rohini Satellite in earths orbit in July 1980.

Joining ISRO was Dr Kalams biggest achievement in life. In 1970s Dr Kalam also directed two projects namely project Devil and project Valiant, which sought to develop ballistic missiles from the technology of the successful SLV programme. Despite the disapproval of union cabinet, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi allotted secret funds for these aerospace projects through her discretionary powers under Dr APJ Abdul Kalams directorship. The Pokhran-II nuclear tests were conducted where he played an intensive political and technological role. Dr Kalam served as the chief project coordinator along with R.Chitambaram during the testing phase.

Dr APJ Abdul Kalam served as the 11th President of India from July 2002 to July 2007. During his term as president, he was affectionately known as

the people's President. In his book India 2020, Dr Kalam strongly advocates an action plan to develop India into a knowledge superpower and a developed nation by the year 2020.

In May 2011, Dr APJ Abdul Kalam launched his mission for the youth of the nation called the WHAT CAN I GIVE MOVEMENT with a central theme to defeat corruption. He also had interest in writing Tamil poetry and in playing Veena, a south Indian string instrument.

Dr APJ Abdul Kalam has received the honorary doctorates from 40 universities. In 1979 Dr Kalam received India's highest civilian award the Bharat Ratna for his tremendous contribution to the scientific research and modernisation of defence technology of India.

While delivering a lecture at the Indian Institute Of Management Shillong , Dr APJ Abdul Kalam collapsed and died from an apparent Cardiac Arrest on 27th of July 2015 at the age of 83.

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‘Please Take Care of Our Children’ Farewell in Kashmir’s COVID Ward

ZAID BIN SHABIR

Along with his asymptomatic wife, he was shortly declared positive. Their two children had tested negative. The couple was referred to JVC, where Mushtaq, two days after testing positive, was put on ventilator due to breathlessness. The moment he died, Mushtaq’s son Tabish and daughter Masrat were collecting their COVID reports and discharge certificates from Chraar-e-Sharief’s Government hospital. They were finally being discharged after serving their quarantine period there.

THE long night was yet to end on July 7, 2020—when doctors wearing PPE kits, safety goggles, nitrile gloves and breathing mask, took *Rafiq from ward no. 5 of Srinagar’s JVC hospital to its ICU. Her intubated husband was waiting inside for a final farewell. The doctors aiding Rafiq stood outside the ICU. Her husband, Mushtaq, had his eyes fixed on the window room opposite to his bed. As she reached the large window, her moist eyes hooked on the smiling face of her husband, who slowly raised his right hand to greet her. The couple had last seen each other 10 days ago when they were tested Covid positive together. With an exhilarating smile towards Rafiq, Mushtaq removed his respiratory mask and said, “Now, you’ve to take my place. Please take care of our children. Ask them to never miss Namaz, and always follow the path of Islam.” The poignant conversation lasted for 20 minutes before Rafiq came out to enquire about her husband’s health. Her fretful state pacified only when doctors informed her that Mushtaq’s condition was incrementally improving and once the plasma surgery was done, he would be better. With that assurance, Rafiq was taken back to her prescribed ward. That day, opposite to the JVC hospital, her brother, Nisar, was opening his retail shop when a random call suddenly thrilled him. Some unknown Samaritan had come forward to donate his plasma for his brother-in-law. In excitement, Nisar called Mushtaq’s brother and also his friend to share the happy news. Shortly, as the doctors set the stage for his brother-in-law’s plasma surgery, Nisar went to receive the donor.



er-in-law’s plasma surgery, Nisar went to receive the donor.



But at about the same time, Mushtaq’s condition was falling in the ICU. The virus had severely affected his lungs causing shortness of breath and sinking pulse. The doctors in PPE gear immediately started to operate on him. It was 9:30 am, half an hour before plasma surgery, when an unexpected call from a doctor rang Nisar’s phone. He was on the way to the hospital along with the plasma donor. “No need for plasma donor now,” the doctor informed him. “We lost him!” Mushtaq had passed away after suffering a massive cardiac arrest. After spending nearly three months at home due to the pandemic lockdown, the deceased had organised a family trip to Chraar-e-Sharief, just a fortnight before his death. On his return, he had developed Covid symptoms. Along with his asymptomatic wife, he was shortly declared positive. Their two children had tested negative. The couple was referred to JVC, where Mushtaq, two days after testing positive, was put on ventilator due to breathlessness. The moment he died, Mushtaq’s son Tabish and daughter Masrat were collecting their COVID reports and discharge certificates from Chraar-e-Sharief’s Government hospital. They were finally being discharged after serving their quarantine period there. Shortly, an unknown number rang Tabish’s cellphone. The caller was from JVC administration, informing him that his father breathed his last. The son couldn’t believe it, as he had talked to his father just two hours ago. Mushtaq had made him believe that his condition was improving. Tearful Tabish called his uncle, Nisar, who at that time was among the seven people bury-

ing Mushtaq’s plastic wrapped body. Even though Nisar was grief stricken, he tried to calm his inconsolable nephew by terming his father’s death a lie.



Weeks after his father’s demise, Tabish sat with a glum face in the family living room. “Papa was the greatest father in this world,” he said in a low voice. “He never stopped me from pursuing my dreams but this virus took him away from us.” Married for 35 years, Mushtaq and Rafiq were a few months shy of their 36th anniversary before the pandemic changed everything for them. , the other half lives on with her departed better half’s pictures and memories. Her children and Mushtaq’s last words are the only support she has against her grief now. Names have been changed in this story to protect the identity of the Covid victim and his family members.

Disrupt Routine To Break The Cycle Of Anxiety

It's anxiety holding you back, not your personality, your genes, your lack of willpower

BOB TAIBBI

Rigidity is in the eyes of the beholder: Ask Jack about how he runs his everyday life, and he'll tell you likes his routines - they provide a familiar structure and rhythm to his day; ask his wife Annie, and she'll tell you Jack is more than a bit too rigid, too inflexible, and at times it can drive her nuts. If you're reading this you may be wondering if you are a bit too dependent on your routines, would like to be a bit more spontaneous, more flexible. Or maybe you're a partner of someone who is like Jack, and like Annie can find it hard to live with at times. The underlying driver for this type of behaviour is anxiety. Jack lives in a smaller comfort zone than Annie. While he's in it, he doesn't feel anxious, he has a sense of control, he appreciates the familiar. Where Annie would see a new experience as exciting Jack just feels anxious - out of his element, less in control, worried a bit about what might happen next. And so, it's easy to fall into a vicious cycle - Jack relies on his routines to feel calm, and the more he does, the less he is able to tolerate stepping outside of them, and so leans even more heavily on his routines to shape his everyday life. Here's how Jack (or you) can learn to loosen up: Realise that anxiety is the enemy: It's anxiety holding you back, not your personality, your genes, your lack of willpower. You're not trying to eliminate anxiety (the routines already are doing that) but expand your comfort zone and learn to tolerate anxiety better. Experiment with change: The key here is taking baby steps. Jack can keep



the structure of his Saturday but experiment with changing the order of what he does, or leaving something out. He and Annie can plan to do something different on a Saturday night to break up their takeout-and-Netflix routine. Expect to feel a bit uncomfortable:Nuff said. Practice listening to your emotions: Jack is essentially running his life on autopilot, his ingrained habits and there is little spontaneity not only because he struggles with anxiety, but he is out of touch with his emotions. Here

he wants to practice paying attention to his feelings. He may realise, for example, he doesn't really want to mow the grass on Saturday or wash his car and can experiment not doing so. If he does he needs to expect to feel a bit anxious, a bit guilty. Pat yourself on the back: And that's okay. This is about doing different, not doing right. Any steps out of your comfort zone are a success. High fives all around. How Annie can help: Annie also wants to try thinking that this anxiety and not Jack being stubborn or control-

ling or too set in his ways. Rather than building up resentment or periodically snapping and being critical of him, she can try having a calm but clear conversation with Jack about how his rigidity is a problem for her and see what and how Jack is willing to experiment with to build in more flexibility. And because Jack doesn't deal with change well, she needs to keep him plenty of notice for any upcoming changes that she'd like - mention on Monday about possibly going out for dinner on Saturday or having her sister over on Sunday (along with her vision of how

the Sunday will unfold) - rather than springing it on him on Saturday morning when he's already mentally locked into his day. This heads-up gives Jack time to mull and ponder and get used to the idea. Finally, she wants to heap on the positive feedback - making sure she thanks him for stepping up and breaking out. Are you ready to loosen up? Bob Taibbi is an author and has 45 years of clinical experience. Psychology Today

The underlying driver for this type of behaviour is anxiety. Jack lives in a smaller comfort zone than Annie. While he's in it, he doesn't feel anxious, he has a sense of control, he appreciates the familiar. Where Annie would see a new experience as exciting Jack just feels anxious - out of his element, less in control, worried a bit about what might happen next.

Study Finds Wealthier Men More Likely To Develop High Blood Pressure



SOME PREVIOUS JAPANESE SURVEYS HAVE reported that higher household income is associated with more undesirable lifestyles in men, but not in women," said Dr Yanagiya. "Our study supports this: men, but not women, with higher household incomes were more likely to be obese and drink alcohol every day. Both behaviours are major risk factors for hypertension."

Agencies

Working men with higher incomes are more likely to develop high blood pressure, reports a study.

The study was presented at the 84th Annual Scientific Meeting of the Japanese Circulation Society (JCS 2020).

"Men with higher incomes need to improve their lifestyles to prevent high blood pressure," said study author Dr Shingo Yanagiya of the Hokkaido University Graduate School of Medicine, Sapporo, Japan. "Steps include eating healthily, exercising, and controlling weight. Alcohol

should be kept to moderate levels and binge drinking avoided."

More than one billion people have high blood pressure worldwide. Around 30-45% of adults are affected, rising to more than 60% of people over 60 years of age. High blood pressure is the leading global cause of premature death, accounting for almost 10 million deaths in 2015. Of those, 4.9 million were due to ischaemic heart disease and 3.5 million were due to stroke.

Japan alone has more than 10 million people with high blood pressure, and the number continues to rise. Dr Yanagiya said: "High blood pressure is a lifestyle-related disease. As a

physician seeing these patients I wanted to know if risk varies with socioeconomic class, to help us focus our prevention efforts."

This analysis of the J-HOPE3 study examined the relationship between household income and high blood pressure in Japanese employees. A total of 4,314 staff (3,153 men and 1,161 women) with daytime jobs and normal blood pressure were enrolled in 2012 from 12 workplaces.

Workers were divided into four groups according to annual household income: less than 5 million, 5 to 7.9 million, 8 to 9.9 million, and 10 million or more Japanese yen per year. The researchers investigated the as-

sociation between income and developing high blood pressure over a two-year period.

Compared to men in the lowest income category, men in the highest income group were nearly twice as likely to develop high blood pressure. Men in the 5 to 7.9 million and 8 to 9.9 million groups had a 50% higher risk of developing high blood pressure compared to men with the lowest incomes, although the positive association did not reach statistical significance in the 8 to 9.9 million groups.

The findings were consistent regardless of age and were independent of baseline blood pressure, worksite, occupation,

number of family members, and smoking. The relationships were slightly weakened after accounting for alcohol consumption and body mass index (BMI; kg/m²), both of which were higher for men in the higher income groups.

In women, there was no significant link between income and blood pressure. However, women with higher household income tended to have a lower risk of developing high blood pressure.

"Some previous Japanese surveys have reported that higher household income is associated with more undesirable lifestyles in men, but not in women," said Dr Yanagiya. "Our study supports

this: men, but not women, with higher household incomes were more likely to be obese and drink alcohol every day. Both behaviours are major risk factors for hypertension."

He concluded: "Men with high-paying daytime jobs are at particular risk of high blood pressure. This applies to men of all ages, who can greatly decrease their chance of a heart attack or stroke by improving their health behaviours."

Dr. Yusuke Yoshikawa, the public relations coordinator for JCS 2020, said: "Hypertension is one of the most important risk factors of cardiovascular disease in Japan because the average daily salt in-

take in Japan (approx. 10 g/day) is much higher than desired. As the current guidelines² strongly recommend a healthy lifestyle to control high blood pressure, this study suggests a potential key to successful intervention for those who are at risk of heart disease and stroke."

Professor Michel Komajda, a Past President of the ESC and course director of the ESC programme at JCS 2020, said: "The ESC is delighted to be part of JCS 2020 in Kyoto. We value our special partnership with JCS and the high quality of Japanese research. Japan is among the top submitters of abstracts to ESC Congress."

Covid-19: Frontline Doctors Stressed Both At Work And Home, Study Reveals

Agencies

According to a new analysis, emergency medicine physicians in seven cities around the US experienced rising levels of anxiety and emotional exhaustion, regardless of the intensity of the local surge, amid the coronavirus chaos.

The new analysis led by researchers at the University of California, San Francisco, was published in the journal Academic Emergency Medicine.

In the first known study to assess stress levels of US physicians during the coronavirus pandemic, doctors reported moderate to severe levels of anxiety at both work and home, including worry about exposing relatives and friends to the virus. Among the 426 emergency physicians surveyed, most reported changes in behaviour toward family and friends especially decreased signs of affection.

"Occupational exposure has changed the vast majority of physicians' behaviour at both work and home," said lead author Robert M. Rodriguez, MD, a professor of Emergency Medicine at UCSF. "At home, doctors are worried about exposing family members or roommates, possibly needing to self-quarantine, and the effects of excess social isolation because of their work on the front line."

The results found slight differences between men and women, with women reporting higher stress. Among male physicians, the median reported the effect of the pandemic on both work and home stress levels was 5 on a scale of 1 to 7 (1=not at all, 4=somewhat, and 7=extremely). For women, the median was 6 in both areas. Both men



and women also reported that levels of emotional exhaustion or burnout increased from a pre-pandemic median of 3 to a median of 4 after the pandemic started.

Lack of PPE was associated with the highest level of concern and was also the measure most often cited that would provide the greatest relief. The doctors also voiced anxiety about inadequate rapid diagnostic testing, the risk of community spread by discharged patients, and the well-being of co-workers diagnosed with Covid-19.

But the survey also showed clear-cut ways of mitigating anxiety:

Improve access to PPE;
Increase the availability of rapid turnaround testing;

Clearly communicate Covid-19 protocol changes; Assure access to self-testing and personal leave for front line providers.

The responses came from faculty (55 per cent), fellows (4.5 per cent), and residents (about 39 per cent), with a median age of 35. Most physicians lived with a partner (72 per cent), while some lived alone (nearly 15 per cent) or with roommates (11 per cent). Nearly 39 per cent had a child under age 18.

The study involved healthcare providers at seven academic emergency departments and affiliated

institutions in California, Louisiana and New Jersey. Researchers noted that the majority of study sites were in California, which at the time of the survey had not yet experienced the large surges of patients seen in other areas of the country. But the study found that median levels of anxiety in the California sites were similar to those in the New Orleans and Camden sites, which were experiencing surges at the time.

"This suggests that the impact of Covid-19 on anxiety levels is pervasive and that measures to mitigate stress should be enacted universally," Rodriguez said. "Some of our findings may be intuitive, but this research provides a critical early template for the design and implementation of interventions that will address the mental health needs of emergency physicians in the Covid-19 pandemic era."

The study is longitudinal, with this first phase focused on the early "acceleration" phase of the pandemic. Subsequent studies will address stressors that have arisen throughout the course of the pandemic, including child-care and home-schooling demands, the economic impact of fewer patients overall in the ER, and possible development of long-term post-traumatic stress.

'Older Adults Who Can Distinctively Smell Roses May Have Lower Risk Of Dementia'

Agencies

According to recent research, elderly people who can smell the roses, turpentine, paint thinner, and lemons, may have a lower risk of dementia.

In a study by UC San Francisco, researchers tracked close to 1,800 participants in their seventies for a period of up to 10 years to see if their sensory functioning correlated with the development of dementia. At the time of enrollment, all participants were dementia-free, but 328 participants (18 per cent) developed the condition over the course of the study.

Among those whose sensory levels ranked in the middle range, 141 of the 328 (19 per cent) developed dementia. This compares with 83 in the good



range (12 per cent) and 104 (27 per cent) in the poor range, according to the study, which was published in Alzheimer's and Dementia: The Journal of the Alzheimer's Association.

The UCSF researchers' focus was on the additive effects of multiple impairments in sen-

sory function, which emerging evidence shows are a stronger indicator of declining cognition.

"Sensory impairments could be due to underlying neurodegeneration or the same disease processes as those affecting cognition, such as stroke," said first author Willa Brenowitz, Ph.D., of the

UCSF Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, and the Weill Institute for Neurosciences.

"Alternatively, sensory impairments, particularly hearing and vision, may accelerate cognitive decline, either directly impacting cognition or indirectly by increasing social isolation, poor mobility, and adverse mental health," Brenowitz added.

While multiple impairments were key to the researchers' work, the authors acknowledged that a keen sense of smell, or olfaction, has a stronger association against dementia than touch, hearing, or vision. Participants whose smell declined by 10 per cent had a 19 per cent higher chance of dementia, versus a one to three per cent increased risk for corresponding declines in vision, hearing, and touch.

Study Finds Men 'Less Supportive' In More Egalitarian Nations

Agencies

A new 42-country study has found that the more gender-egalitarian the country, the less likely men are to support women's causes.

The study, published in the European Journal of Social Psychology, was led by Dr Natasza Kosakowska-Berezecka from the University of Gdansk, Poland and involved a team of experts including Dr Magdalena Zawisza of Anglia Ruskin University (ARU), who was a member of the lead research group.

Gender equality benefits both men and women at individual and society levels. It is associated with greater human

rights observance, higher levels of happiness and wellbeing, and better physical and mental health, in addition to greater relationship satisfaction and economic benefits, including higher average levels of GDP.

The new research is the largest study on this topic ever undertaken, forming part of the Towards Gender Harmony project, and involved 6,734 men from 42 nations ranging from Norway, ranked second out of 153 countries for gender equality in the World Economic Forum's 2020 Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI) to Pakistan, ranked 151st.

The researchers found, regardless of nationality, that the more men believe in "zero-sum" think-

ing - that gains for women equate to losses for men - the less they are inclined to support gender equality and are more likely to express attitudes of hostile sexism.

Counterintuitively, the study also found that the higher the national level of gender egalitarianism, the fewer men are willing to engage in activities such as signing petitions in favour of workplace gender equality, endorsing gender-egalitarian political candidates, and using social media to raise awareness about gender issues. Norway, the Philippines, and Ireland were the most egalitarian countries (according to their GGGI scores) included in this study.

Dr Zawisza, Reader in Con-

sumer and Gender Psychology at Anglia Ruskin University (ARU), said: "Some men view women as competitors rather than allies, and our research found that men, regardless of their nationality, withdraw their support for gender equality when they think that women's gains threaten their own status."

"What is particularly interesting is that higher levels of gender equality within a country appear to have the effect of demotivating men from supporting gender equality causes. This could be due to a perceived threat to men's masculinity or men's belief that women are doing perfectly well on their own and do not need any extra help."

China Seizes Us Consulate In Chengdu, Retaliating For Houston

Agencies

Beijing: China took over the premises of the US consulate in the southwestern city of Chengdu on Monday, after ordering the facility to be vacated in retaliation for China's ouster last week from its consulate in Houston, Texas.

The seizure capped a dramatic escalation in tensions between the world's two biggest economies that began when employees at China's Houston consulate were seen burning documents in a courtyard last Tuesday, hours before Beijing announced that it had been ordered to leave the facility.

"The US consulate in Chengdu, in Sichuan province, was closed as of 10am on Monday, and Chinese authorities had entered the building from the front door," China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement.

On Friday, Beijing announced that it had asked the United States to close its

Chengdu post, and gave the Americans 72 hours to vacate, the same amount of time China was given to leave its Houston mission, which was shut on Friday.

"We are disappointed by the Chinese Communist Party's decision and will strive to continue our outreach to the people in this important region through our other posts in China," a US State Department spokesperson said in an email to Reuters.

At mid-day on Monday, police removed a roadblock that had restricted access to the Chengdu facility, and dozens of passersby stopped to take photos and videos.

One man stood across the street and played the Chinese national anthem from his phone. Grey sheet-like material was placed over the spot near the entrance where a plaque had been affixed, and over the place where there was large lettering saying "US Consulate General".

Tourism, diplomacy facing pushback as virus caseloads surge

Agencies

Mito : Countries are considering putting away their welcome mats to tourists and regional meetings are being put on hold as the coronavirus pandemic strengthens its grip in many of the worst-affected countries.

The biggest driver of new infections in Australia's biggest current outbreak is people continuing to go to work after showing symptoms, Victoria state Premier Daniel Andrews said.

The state on Monday reported a record 532 new cases while its biggest city, Melbourne, is almost half way through a six-week lockdown aimed at curbing community spread of the virus.

"This is what is driving these numbers up, and the lockdown will not end until people stop going to work with symptoms and instead go and get tested," Andrews said.

Australia is among many nations in the Asian-Pacific where foreign travellers are essentially banned or, when allowed to enter, required to submit to tests and strict quarantines.

The dearth of such international travel has cleared Asian skies of the jet trails that are a background sight for much of the world.

At the same time, some

countries that were preparing to let limited international travel resume are reconsidering as clusters of cases grow into new outbreaks.

Some European nations were warning citizens not to visit Spain after some of its most beloved summer venues turned into coronavirus hot spots facing renewed pandemic lockdowns.

The northeast regions of Catalonia and Aragón host the three most alarming virus clusters in Spain, prompting authorities to tighten restrictions in Barcelona, in a rural area around Lleida and in Zaragoza that were relaxed only a month ago when Spain had its devastating outbreak in check.

Facing the reality that travel restrictions would force meetings online, Vietnam postponed next week's hosting of Asia's largest security forum and an annual meeting of Southeast Asian foreign ministers by a month to September due to the pandemic.

Two Southeast Asian diplomats said Vietnam, which leads the Association of Southeast Asian Nations this year and appears to have controlled virus outbreaks within its borders, hopes to hold face-to-face meetings in mid-September.



Hezbollah Fighters Battle Israeli Troops On Northern Frontier

Agencies

Jerusalem: Israeli forces exchanged fire with Hezbollah fighters along the volatile Israeli-Lebanese frontier on Monday, the heaviest fighting between the bitter enemies in nearly a year.

The Israeli army's Arabic-language spokesperson Avichay Adraee said troops foiled the Hezbollah attack by three or four men who infiltrated a few metres over the Blue Line, which demarcates Israel's 2000 withdrawal from Lebanon.

There were no casualties among Israeli forces, Adraee said.

Hezbollah carried out the operation against Israeli soldiers in the disputed Shebaa Farms area, Reuters news agency quoted unnamed sources familiar with the situation as saying.

The raid was in retaliation after an Israel air raid near the Syrian capital, Damascus, killed a Hezbollah fighter last week, the sources said.

Residents in the area were ordered to stay in their houses and "any kind of activity in open areas is forbidden", an Israeli army statement said.

There was no immediate statement by Hezbollah. A resident of the town of Khiam, about 5km (2 miles) from Lebanon's southern border, told Al Jazeera she heard about two dozen explosions and witnessed large columns of smoke rising near Mount Hermon.

Andrea Tenenti, the spokesperson for UN peacekeeping forces in southern Lebanon (UNIFIL), said its commander, Major-General Stefano Del Col, "is in contact with both parties to assess the situation and decrease tension". "He urges maximum restraint," Tenenti told Al Jazeera.

'It's coming'

Tension has risen along Israel's northern frontier with Lebanon and Syria, including the occupied Golan Heights, after a Hezbollah fighter was killed in an apparent Israeli air attack on the edge of Damascus last Monday.

Wiam Wahab, a former Lebanese minister and a well-connected pro-Hezbollah politician, said the incident "was not an operation" by Hezbollah but may have been a reconnaissance mission.

"It's coming - but there isn't one today," he told local news channel Al Jadeed.

Nearly 100 Migrants "Still Floating In Mediterranean, Risk Drowning": UN

Agencies

Geneva, Switzerland: Around 100 migrants fleeing war-ravaged Libya have run into difficulty in the Mediterranean and could drown, the UN said Monday, urging a rapid rescue.

The arrival of summer and more favourable conditions at sea tends to lead to an increase of attempts to cross the Mediterranean, and the deteriorating situation in Libya is also prompting more migrants to take their chances at sea and reach Europe.

The International Organization for Migration warned in a

tweet that "around 95 migrants are still floating in the Central Mediterranean at risk of drowning, after attempting to flee Libya."

The UN agency did not provide any further details, but stressed that "states and shipmasters have a moral and legal obligation to respond to distress cases at sea."

More than 100,000 migrants tried to cross the Mediterranean last year with more than 1,200 dying in the attempt, according to the IOM.

Tens of thousands of refugees and asylum seekers, as well as sub-Saharan African and

Asian migrants hoping to make it to Europe, have found themselves stranded in Libya in horrifying conditions.

The overthrow and killing of veteran dictator Moamer Kadhafi in a NATO-backed uprising in 2011 sparked years of chaos that traffickers have exploited to turn Libya into a key route for illicit migration to Europe.

The situation of refugees and asylum seekers became more critical after eastern military strongman Khalifa Haftar launched an assault on Tripoli in 2019, and was further compounded by the coronavirus pandemic.

Office of the Divisional Forest Officer Sindh Forest Division Ganderbal

SHORT TERM AUCTION NOTICE

Sub: - Re-Auction of Walnut fruits from the Demarcated Forest areas of Sindh Forest Division Ganderbal excepting/excluding Soil Conservation and Wild Life areas.

For and on behalf of the Hon'ble Lt. Governor of Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, the auction of Walnut fruits from the Demarcated Forest areas of Sindh Forest Division Ganderbal excepting/excluding Soil Conservation and Wild Life areas which was previously to be carried out on **25-07-2020** and due to poor response, it is hereby re-notified that the re-auction for collection and removal of walnut fruits from below mentioned demarcated forest blocks of Sindh/Manasbal Range of Sindh Forest Division Ganderbal for the year 2020 excluding S.C closures and Wild Life areas will now be held on **06-08-2020** at **02:00 PM** at Divisional Office Sindh Forest Division Ganderbal.

Range	Block	No. of Walnut Trees (In No's)	Expected Qty. (In Qntls.)
Manasbal	Gutlibagh	02	44.70
	Chattergul	26	
	Wangeth	665	
Total Manasbal Range		693	
Sindh	Kangan Town	530	350.00
	Akhal-I	311	
	Akhal-II	723	
	Ganiwon	776	
	Gund	1235	
Total Sindh Range		4308	
Grand Total		5001	394.70 Qntls

The other terms and conditions as laid down in the original Auction Notice issued vide this office No. **985-1001/E** dated **15-07-2020** will remain same.

(Note : The prospective bidders shall have to deposit Earnest Money to the tune of Rs.5000/- (Rupees Five Thousand Only) in the shape of CDR from any Nationalized/Scheduled Bank of India payable at the respective Divisional Head Quarter and pledged to Divisional Forest Officer Sindh Forest Division Ganderbal which should reach the respective office by or before 05-08-2020.

No. _____
Dated: _____

DFO: Sindh Forest Division
Ganderbal

DIPK-3486/20

NEWS MAKERS

US Envoy To South Korea Shaves Off 'Imperial' Moustache After Controversy



Seoul, South Korea: The most controversial moustache in South Korea has fallen victim to the razor's blade, with US ambassador Harry Harris visiting a traditional barbershop months after his facial hair became the object of unusual criticism.

Seoul and Washington are security allies and the US stations 28,500 troops in the country. But their relationship has been strained in

recent years by differences in their approaches to North Korea and over cost-sharing responsibilities.

Harris has several times been the object of controversy in the South, and accused of high-handedness. Even his facial hair became an issue of debate.

The envoy's mother was Japanese and, with Koreans still bitterly resentful of Tokyo's 1910-45 colonisation of the peninsula, commenta-

tors claimed the moustache alluded to the fashions of imperial governors-general from the period.

In January Harris retorted that his grooming was a matter of personal choice, and that his critics were "cherry picking history".

But over the weekend he uploaded a video to social media of him getting the moustache shaved off at a traditional Korean barbershop, saying he did so to keep cool in the Seoul summer, while wearing a mask to fight the coronavirus pandemic.

"Glad I did this," the envoy said in a tweet.

"For me it was either keep the 'stache or lose the mask. Summer in Seoul is way too hot & humid for both. #COVID guidelines matter & I'm a masked man!"

'Gone With The Wind' star Olivia de Havilland dies aged 104



"Gone With The Wind" star Olivia de Havilland, considered the last surviving actress of the Golden Age of Hollywood, died on Sunday at the age of 104, the Hollywood Reporter said.

She died of natural causes at her home in Paris, where she had lived for more than 60 years, it said, citing her publicist.

De Havilland's acting career included two Academy Awards, a victory over Hollywood's studio system and a long-running feud with sister Joan Fontaine that was worthy of a screenplay.

She first drew attention by playing opposite swashbuckling Errol Flynn in a series of films starting in the 1930s and made an enduring impression as the demure Southern belle Melanie in "Gone With the Wind" in 1939.

UK Pet Cat Tests Positive, No Evidence It Can Spread COVID, Say Doctors

London: A pet cat has become the first UK animal to be infected with coronavirus, health officials said Monday, insisting there was "no evidence" it could pass on the disease.

The case was confirmed by the UK's chief veterinary officer after laboratory tests carried out earlier this month in Surrey, near London.

said that "all available evidence" indicated the cat likely contracted the disease from its owners who had tested positive for COVID-19. A statement from the environment ministry said the cat poses no risk. "Although this is the first confirmed case of an animal infection with the coronavirus strain in the UK, there is no evidence to suggest that the animal was involved in transmission of the disease," it said.

Efforts Underway To Conduct 10 Lakh COVID-19 Tests Per Day: PM Modi

NEW DELHI: Efforts are being made to ramp up the testing capacity in the country to conduct up to 10 lakh COVID-19 tests per day, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday.

The Prime Minister was



speaking during the launch of high-throughput COVID-19 testing facilities in Noida, Mumbai and Kolkata, in which he took part through video conferencing.

"While we had just one centre for Corona testing in January, today close to 1,300 labs are functioning across the country. More than 5 lakh tests are being conducted daily in the country today. In the coming weeks, efforts are being made to increase the number to 10 lakh tests per day," he said.

He further highlighted

that the country currently has over 11,000 COVID facilities and more than 11 lakh isolation beds.

Praising the drastic increase in the number of personal protective equipment (PPE) kits manufactured in the country

during the crisis phase, Prime Minister Modi said that currently there are 1,200 manufacturers producing more than 5 lakh PPE kits daily.

India's COVID tally on Monday crossed the 14-lakh mark with the highest single-day spike of 49,931 cases, and 708 deaths reported in the last 24 hours, said the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

The total COVID-19 cases stand at 14,35,453, including 4,85,114 active cases, 9,17,568 cured/discharged/migrated cases and 32,771 deaths, it added.

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Health Ministry To Omit Itolizumab From Covid-19 Clinical Management Protocols



The National Task Force on COVID-19 has decided against including Itolizumab drug in clinical management protocols for treating the disease even though the DCGI has approved its "restricted emergency use" in infected patients, official sources said.

Considering the unmet medical needs in COVID-19, Itolizumab, an already approved drug of Biocon, used for treating psoriasis—a skin condition—was approved for "restricted emergency use" in the treatment of coronavirus by the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) recently.

The permission to market the drug was granted for the treatment of cytokine release syndrome in 'moderate' to 'severe' Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome patients due to COVID-19.

"The issue of including the drug in the clinical protocols was discussed in a meeting held on Friday. A majority of

the members of the task force opined that there was not enough evidence currently to get the drug included in the clinical management protocols for COVID-19," said an official source.

A domestic biopharmaceutical company, Biocon, has been manufacturing and marketing Itolizumab, a monoclonal antibody, for the treatment of patients with moderate to severe chronic plaque psoriasis since 2013, under the brand name ALZUMAb, the Union health ministry had earlier said.

However, a Biocon spokesperson said, "The National Covid Task Force needs to see more evidence and we will provide them large real-world data to enable the committee to reconsider its decision on inclusion of Itolizumab in the protocol."

"Nearly 1,000 patients have used the drug across the country with good outcome data," the company spokesperson said.



NOVEL CORONAVIRUS has prompted people to adopt novel methods of teaching. At Dodhpathri an open air community school runs to full capacity with proper safeguards. KO photo Abid Bhat

Digital Divide Kills Education Dreams Of Millions In India

NEW DELHI/MUMBAI: The digital divide stretches long and deep across the expanse of India, further separating the haves from the have-nots and the tech-empowered from the tech-deprived with millions of children struggling to keep up with the challenges of online classes.

The coronavirus pandemic that forced people into their homes and forced schools and colleges to move to virtual classes has edged education dreams with conditions aplenty, a computer or at least a smartphone, proper internet connectivity and uninterrupted power supply.



The education playing field, never really level, is now potholed and bumpy as students, and their teachers, in cities, towns and villages scramble to cope with the demands of the times.

Children in a small settlement in the floodplains of the Yamuna along the Delhi-Noida border, for instance, have never had it easy. They would cross the river in a boat to reach school, just minutes away from the bright lights of the national capital and its suburb.

Four months ago, when India went into lockdown, their odds increased manifold.

Joshna Kumar, 12, has a phone but often no electricity so it is difficult to attend her online classes everyday.

Most residents of the settlement rely on Charan Singh, a cattle rearer who visits daily, to charge their phones. And so does she.

"Every evening I give my phone for charging. He brings it charged next morning," she said, sitting on a charpoy in the backyard of her home, quickly scrolling through her Whatsapp messages to take down notes and finish

her homework. To save battery, Joshna keeps the brightness of her phone low.

Her 10-year-old brother studying in the same school mostly stays away from class. When he does attend, Joshna has to miss school and catch up through pre-recorded videos. Their father is a daily wage worker and they can't afford to buy another phone.

It is a similar story in Faridabad, Haryana, where Suchi Singh, a Class 8 student, said there is only one smartphone between her three siblings and her. So, the four take turns in attending class.

That Suchi, a topper, is forced to miss class troubles her father Rajesh Kumar, a newspaper vendor, but he said he has no option. A smartphone is a luxury when he is struggling to provide for his family.

"E-classes have made life difficult," he said, pessimistic about what the future holds for him and his children.

Hundreds of kilometres away in Mumbai's Aarey Colony, Jyoti Randhe, a Class 10 student in a municipal school, shares a smartphone with her mother who takes it to work. Her classmate Roshni Nere has

Ram mandir Bhoomi Puja: Soil From RSS Headquarters Sent To Ayodhya

NAGPUR: Soil from the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) headquarters here has been sent to Ayodhya for the August 5 'bhoomi puja' ceremony of the Ram temple, a VHP functionary said on Friday.

Talking to PTI, Govind Shende, the Vidarbha prant pramukh of Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), said that soil from a temple in Ramtek and water from the confluence of five rivers, both near Nagpur city, have also been sent for the upcoming event.

"Earlier, it was decided that soil and water from different places in the country, including the religious places, would be collected and people in thousands would go for the bhoomi puja of Ram temple in March. However, due to the COVID-19



(confluence of five rivers), Shende said.

"The intention is that we will feel that we have also taken part in the bhoomi puja ceremony," he said.

According to him, the soil and water has been sent to Ayodhya by courier on Thursday.

On Wednesday, a member of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teertha Kshetra trust had said in Pune that Prime Minister Narendra Modi would attend the ground-breaking ceremony of the Ram temple on August 5.

The trust member, Swami Govind Devgiri Maharaj, had also said that in view of the coronavirus pandemic, only 200 people would attend the ceremony and all social distancing norms will be followed at the event.

India-Israel Partnership Currently Focussed On Combating COVID-19: S Jaishankar

NEW DELHI: The India-Israel partnership is currently focussed on combating the COVID-19 challenge and even as it does, the larger agenda of cooperation continues to move forward, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Sunday.

Mr Jaishankar made the comments in a tweet after focussed on his Israeli counterpart Gabi Ashkenazi.

"Pleasure to hear from FM @Gabi_Ashkenazi of Israel. The India-Israel partnership



is currently focussed on combating the #COVID challenge. Even as it does, the larger agenda of cooperation continues to move forward," Mr Jaishankar said in a tweet.

Govt Bans 47 More Chinese 'Clone' Apps



The government has banned 47 more Chinese apps, taking the total number of mobile applications banned for being prejudicial to sovereignty, integrity and defence of the country, to 106, according to a source.

The source privy to the development said that the 47 additional Chinese apps that have been banned now were clones and variants of the apps that were blocked

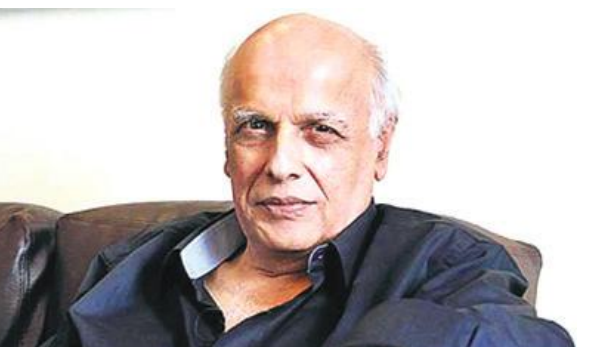
earlier.

An order to this effect was issued on Friday, the source said.

The list of additional apps that have been banned was not immediately available, and there is no official word on the matter yet.

Earlier on June 29, the government had banned 59 Chinese apps, saying they were prejudicial to sovereignty, integrity and security of the country.

Sushant Singh Death Case: Filmmaker Mahesh Bhatt Records Statement



Mumbai Police on Monday recorded the statement of noted filmmaker Mahesh Bhatt in connection with Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death, an official said.

Bhatt reached the Santacruz police station in Mumbai around noon along with his legal team.

He recorded his statement with police and left at about 2.30pm, the official said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Zone IX) Abhishek Trimukhe and other senior officials were present in the police station, he added.

Rajput, 34, was found hanging at his apartment in suburban Bandra on June 14.

The police have so far recorded statements of 38 people in connection with the case.

On Sunday, Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh said besides Ma-

hesh Bhatt, producer-director Karan Johar's manager has also been called to record the statement and if needed, Johar himself will be asked to do so.

The police are investigating allegations that professional rivalry, besides clinical depression, drove the actor to suicide.

Summons have also been sent to actor Kangana Ranaut, asking her to record her statement, the minister said.

According to police, Ranaut is currently in Manali.

After Rajput's death, Ranaut had lashed out at nepotism and cliques in Bollywood, alleging he was its victim.

So far, those who have recorded their statements with police in connection with Rajput's case include director Sanjay Leela Bhansali, filmmaker and Yash Raj Films (YRF) chairman Aditya Chopra and film critic Rajeev Masand.

NEWS MAKERS

Cafe Coffee Day's VG Siddhartha Took Out Rs 2,700 Crore: Death Probe

Coffee Day Enterprises Limited, the owner of India's largest coffee chain, has found that its late founder routed 27 billion rupees (\$360 million) out of the company through transactions first revealed in a note found after his suicide last year.

VG Siddhartha caused subsidiaries of Coffee Day to pay advances to a firm controlled by his family so he could buy-back shares held by private equity investors, repay loans and keep up with interest payments on other borrowings, the company said in a filing Friday, disclosing the results of a nearly-year long investigation.

The company will seek to recover the money from VG Siddhartha's closely held firm, Mysore Amalgamated Coffee Estates



Limited, as well as 8.4 billion in outstanding obligations disclosed previously, according to the filing.

The probe throws more light on the circumstances surrounding VG Siddhartha's death last June. His body was found floating in a river two days after he went for a walk along a bridge. Soon after, a

letter apparently signed by him was delivered to Coffee Day's board, where he described massive debts, mounting pressure from lenders and took sole responsibility for unnamed financial transactions.

The probe into VG Siddhartha's letter and some of the financial transactions was led by Ashok Kumar Malhotra, a retired senior official from India's federal law enforcement agency. It found that the demands from investors to have their stake in Coffee Day bought out, from lenders for repayment and the attachment of assets by tax authorities contributed to a "severe liquidity crisis" for Siddhartha.

"I would like to say I gave it my all," Siddhartha wrote in his last note. "I am very sorry to

let down all the people that put their trust in me. I fought for a long time but today I gave up."

Downward Spiral

The letter struck a chord in India's business community saddled with the world's worst pile of soured loans after they binged on debt-fueled growth for a decade. As consumers pared spending and banks lending, indebted Indian firms started floundering - a downward spiral made worse by the coronavirus pandemic, which has triggered a broader economic collapse.

The twin crises in Coffee Day's balance sheet and the broader economy have only increased the urgency of the asset sales the company is depending on to pare the nearly 72 billion rupees debt Siddhartha left it with.

Sale of a tech park in Ban-

galore to private equity giant Blackstone Group brought in 27 billion rupees while selling Coffee Day's stake in tech firm Mindtree Limited provided another 18 billion rupees. These and other deals have helped the company cut its debt to 32 billion rupees, the filing said.

But the company's core business is struggling amid India's coronavirus lockdown -- the biggest and one of the most stringent in the world.

Coffee Heartland

Originally an investment banker, Siddhartha was born in the coffee heartland of Chikmagalur to a family of coffee planters, and founded his chain in 1996 to keep programmers in the IT hub, Bengaluru, caffeinated, more than a decade before Starbucks entered India.

Aishwarya Rai And Aaradhya Test Negative For Covid-19, Discharged From Hospital

Aishwarya Rai Bachchan and daughter Aaradhya who were being treated for COVID-19 at Mumbai's Nanavati hospital, have been discharged. Abhishek Bachchan took to Twitter to share the news that his wife and daughter have tested negative. He tweeted, "Thank you all for your continued prayers and good wishes. Indebted forever. Aishwarya and Aaradhya have thankfully tested negative and have been discharged from the hospital. They will now be at home. My father and I remain in hospital under the care of the medical staff."

Aishwarya and Aaradhya Bachchan were admitted to Nanavati Hospital on July 17. Abhishek and Amitabh Bach-



chan are still undergoing treatment at Nanavati. Amitabh Bachchan announced on July 11 that he had tested positive for the virus and was in hospital. Soon after, Abhishek also announced that he had tested positive as well and was also in the same hospital. Jaya Bachchan had tested negative for the virus.

Earlier this week, Amitabh

Bachchan took to Twitter to dismiss rumours of him testing negative for the coronavirus. The 77-year-old actor has been connecting with his fans through his Twitter account and blog and sharing thoughts on the pandemic as he remains hospitalised. Hospital sources had confirmed that his condition was stable.