

Maximum : 32°C  
Minimum : 19°C  
Humidity : 55%  
SUNSET : 07:34 PM  
SUNRISE :  
Tommrow 05:40 AM

## News Digest

PakBreached Truce  
Along LoC: Army

Srinagar: Pakistani troops violated ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC) in Kupwara district of Jammu and Kashmir by resorting to unprovoked firing towards Indian positions on Tuesday, an Army official said. There have been no reports of any casualties so far. "Pakistan initiated an unprovoked ceasefire violation (CFV) along the LoC in Macchil and Gugaldara sectors in Kupwara in the afternoon hours by firing mortars and other weapons," the official said. A befitting response was given to the Pakistani aggression, he said.

Tipper Crushes Biker  
In Baramulla

Srinagar: A motorcyclist was knocked to death by a speedy tipper in Palhallan area of north Kashmir's Baramulla district. 30-year-old Muhammad Yousf Najar of Bagh-e-Islam locality of main town Baramulla was killed after his bike (JK05E-2435) was hit by a tipper bearing registration number JK01R-6355 at Palhallan area of Pattan area. Meanwhile, police have registered a case under relevant sections of law and started further investigations in this regard. Police have also seized the tipper after the accident.(KNO)

Teen's Body Fished  
Out From Jhelum

Srinagar: Body of a teenager on Tuesday was retrieved from Jhelum in north Kashmir's Baramulla district, a day after the boy drowned in the river. The body of Hanan Ahmad Dar was retrieved by a rescue team of police, army, SDRF and locals from Delina Ghat near Eidgah around 1:30 pm Tuesday, a police official said. The body, he said was handed over to the family for last rites after completion of legal formalities. On Monday, Hanan slipped into river Jhelum when he was playing with other friends on the banks of the river. A rescue operation was instantly launched to rescue ● P-02

Non-Local Burglar  
Held In Sopore

Srinagar: Police on Tuesday claimed to have arrested a burglar and recovered stolen property from his possession. According to a police spokesperson, a man identified as Ishfaq Ahmad Shah filed a complaint with police saying that his workshop in Noorbagh area of Sopore has been damaged and various items including tyres, batteries and other equipment have been stolen by some unknown burglars. The police, he said filed a case FIR No. 201/2020 U/S 457, 380 at Police Station Sopore and launched a manhunt to nab the culprits. The police spokesperson said that various places were raided ● P-02

500 People Fined For  
Violating SoPs

Bhaderwah/Jammu- At least 500 people were fined and two government fair price shops sealed in Doda for violating Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) put in place to check the spread of the novel coronavirus, officials said Tuesday. They said the action was taken after District Magistrate SagarDattarayDoifode visited various areas and markets in the additional district Bhaderwah to take stock of the situation. During the visit, he ordered on-the-spot fine against 500 people ● P-02



Ko File Pic And Bhat

Doctor, 13 Others Die  
Of Covid-19, Toll 335

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: At least fourteen people, including a doctor on Tuesday died of coronavirus in Jammu and Kashmir, taking the number of fatalities due to the deadly disease to 335 in the Union Territory.

While Srinagar reported five deaths, Kupwara three including a leprosy patient who was declared covid-19 positive four days after the death, two deaths were reported from Baramulla while one fatality each was reported from Kulgam, Budgam, Bandipora and Ramban—the first death due to the virus in moun-

tainous district so far.

Among the victims is a doctor, who was posted in the remote Gurez Valley of Bandipora district.

The victims from Srinagar included a 60-year-old woman from Nowhatta, a 62-year-old man from Batamallo, a woman from Rainawari whose sample returned positive after death, an 85 year-old-man from Barzulla, a 79-year-old man from Habba Kadal, a 72-year-old patient from Eidgah and a 64-year-old resident from Rangreth, who was declared brought dead at Chest Diseases Hospital after he was

HE WAS ADMITTED IN ISOLATION ward of GMC Hospital Jammu on July 21," a senior doctor at GMC Jammu said, adding, "He was a known case of Potts Spine (Spinal tuberculosis) and was on ATT for the last 10 months.

100 Security  
Men Among  
489 New Cases

Over a hundred security personnel and 79 travellers were among 489 people who tested Covid-19 positive on Tuesday in Jammu and Kashmir, raising the number of infected people across the Union Territory to 18879. According to officials 88 CRPF ● P-02

NHM Doctor  
On COVID Duty  
Catches Virus, Dies

National Health Mission (NHM) doctor from Sumbal area of Bandipora district on Tuesday died of COVID-19 at Srinagar's SMHS Hospital. Working as Medical Officer under NHM, the 45-year-old doctor was fighting pandemic in the remote Gurez ● P-02

Ruhullah Resigns As  
NC Spokesperson

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR- Senior National Conference leader Ruhullah Mehdi on Tuesday tendered his resignation as the chief spokesperson of the party following apparent differences with the leadership over its course of action in the wake of abrogation of Jammu and Kashmir's special status.

"I have sent across my resignation from the post of Chief Spokesperson of @JKNC. From here on none of my statements should be considered as such," Ruhullah said on his verified Twitter handle.

The trigger for the resigna-

Cong Demands  
Soz's Release

The Jammu and Kashmir Unit of Congress party on Tuesday demanded end to the house detention of senior leader and former Union Minister Prof Saif-ud-Din Soz without any 'further delay'.

In a statement issued here, JKPC, Vice President ● P-02

tion of the influential Shia leaders seems to be the views of party vice president Omar Abdullah that he would not contest any Assembly election as long as Jammu and

Covid-19 'One  
Big Wave', Not  
Seasonal: WHO

GENEVA: A World Health Organisation official on Tuesday described the COVID-19 pandemic as "one big wave" and warned against complacency in the northern hemisphere summer since the infection does not share influenza's tendency to follow seasons.

WHO officials have been at pains to avoid describing a resurgence of COVID-19 cases like those in Hong Kong as "waves" as this suggests the virus is behaving in ways beyond human control, when in fact concerted action can slow its spread.

Margaret Harris repeated that message in a virtual briefing in Geneva. "We are in the first wave. It's going to be one big wave. It's going to go up and down a bit. The best thing is to flatten it and turn it into just something lapping at your feet," she said.

Pointing to high case numbers at the height of the U.S. summer, she urged vigilance in applying measures and warned against mass gatherings.

"People are still thinking about seasons. What we all need to get our heads around is this is a new virus and...this one is behaving differently," she said.

"Summer is a problem. This virus likes all weather."

However, she expressed concern about COVID-19 cases ● P-02

ECI Pulls Up LG Murmu Over  
J&K Poll Remarks

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- The Election Commission on Tuesday took "exception" to the reported remarks of Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor G C Murmu on timing of polls in the union territory, and said in the constitutional scheme of things, only the EC is authorised to decide on the poll schedule.

Taking note of a media report which quoted Murmu on the delimitation exercise in J&K and holding of polls, the EC in a statement said it "takes exception to such statements and would like to state that in the Constitutional scheme of things, the timings etc. of elections is the sole remit of Election Commission of India."

The Commission also referred to similar statements of the LG reported by various media outlets in November last year and June this year.

"It would be proper for authorities other than the Election Commission to refrain from making such statements which virtually tantamount to interfering with the Constitutional mandate of the Commission," the statement said.

The poll panel said before deciding the timing, it takes into consideration all the relevant factors, including topography, weather,

sensitivities arising out of regional and local festivities in the areas where the election is to take place.

"For example, in the current times, COVID-19 has introduced a new dynamic, which has to be, and shall be taken into consideration at the due time. In the instant case, the outcome of delimitation is also germane to the decision," the statement said.

Availability of central forces and railway coaches for their trans-

portation are important factors, it pointed out.

"All this is done after meticulous homework by the senior officials of the Commission and a detailed assessment in due consultation with concerned authorities," it said.

The Commission itself schedules a visit to the concerned state whenever required and holds extensive consultations with all the stakeholders, the statement noted. ● PAGE 02

Will Verify J&K LG, Madhav's  
Statements On 4G, Govt Tells SC

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- The Centre on Tuesday told the Supreme Court that it will verify reported statements made by the Lt Governor of Jammu and Kashmir and BJP leader Ram Madhav that 4G Internet service can be restored in the Union Territory, and sought time to file a reply to the rejoinder affidavit filed by an NGO.

A bench of justices N V Ramana, R Subhash Reddy and B R Gavai adjourned the hearing for August 7, on a contempt plea filed by an NGO Foundation for

Media Professionals.

High speed Internet service in J-K has been suspended since August last year when the Centre had announced revocation of its special status and bifurcation of the state into two UTs — Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir.

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

At the outset, solicitor ● P-02

Hospital Ransacked, Doctors  
Beaten After Medical 'Negligence'

ANANTNAG: Attendants of a patient, who died due to alleged medical negligence, Tuesday morning ransacked Maternity and Child Care Hospital (MCCH) in Anantnag.

Rozzi Jan, 26, a resident of Beighbagh delivered a baby at MCCH Anantnag on Monday afternoon. She was normal till Tuesday early morning when she complained of uneasiness. "We told the doctors but no one came to see her. We were told she is alright. She eventually passed away in the morning," a family member was quoted as saying. "She could have been saved had the doctors attended on her," the family member said.

The attendants then lost their cool and ransacked the hospital infrastructure including the ambulance.



Medical Superintendent MCCH Anantnag Dr M Andrabi denied the lady died due to medical negligence. "She went unwell on Tuesday morning and we wanted her to shift to Srinagar for ventilator support. The attendants did not allow that and instead vandalised the hospital and beat up doctors and other staff members. During this time, she passed away," Dr Andrabi said.

He said one of the staff ● PAGE 02

GOI Accelerating Demographic  
Changes In Kashmir: Hurriyat

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Hurriyat Conference led by Mirwaiz Umar Farooq on Tuesday accused New Delhi of bringing new rules and amendments to accelerate the process of "demographic change" in Jammu and Kashmir and to "usurp land and livelihood" of the people.

In a statement issued here, a Hurriyat Conference spokesperson said that post-August 2019, when Modi-led government scrapped Article-370 and Article 35A, besides split the state into two Union Territories, New Delhi was changing and amending rules one after another to bring about and accelerate the process of demographic changes in J&K



"After the arbitrary and illicit domicile law was brought in, every other day new diktats are being issued to usurp the land and livelihood of the people and simultaneously change the demographic character of the state," the Hurriyat spokesperson said.

He said few days ago, government of India brought in an amendment to the Control of Building Operations Act. ● PAGE 02

Technology Infuses Ancient  
Hajj Rites Amid Global Pandemic

Agencies

DUBAI: The vast white marble floors surrounding Islam's holiest site, the Holy Kaaba in Makkah, would normally be packed with hundreds of thousands of pilgrims from around the world the day before the Haj.

On Tuesday, however, only a few officials and workers putting last minute preparations in place were seen at the Grand Mosque housing the Kaaba.

In place of the 2.5 million pilgrims who preformed the Haj last year, only a very limited number of faithful anywhere from 1,000 to 10,000 are being allowed to take part in what is largely a symbolic pilgrimage amid the coronavirus outbreak.

The select few approved for this year's Haj have been tested for the virus and are self-isolating in hotel



Picture courtesy AP

rooms in Makkah, where they will experience an ancient pilgrimage, albeit tailored this year for a modern-day global pandemic.

Amr Al-Maddah, the chief planning officer at the Ministry of Haj, is helping

incorporate the latest technology into the pilgrimage such as thermal scanners and electronic ID cards.

"Right now, technology is our black horse to developing the whole Haj journey," ● PAGE 02

Militant Trying To  
Sneak Into J&K Killed

JAMMU: An unidentified militant on Tuesday was killed while trying to sneak into Jammu and Kashmir through Line of Control (LoC) in Rajouri district, officials said Tuesday.

According to official sources, the security forces noticed the movement of a group of five militants on the other side of the fence in Samhani Baggara area in Naushera sector of the district. The movement of militants, they said was well intercepted before they could have managed to reach LoC and were engaged.

Amid engagement of militants, official sources said an explosion took place in the area after one of the infiltrators stepped over a land mine or an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) and died on the spot.

"The body of the killed militant was taken along by his four ● P-02

Aaqib Javed

WHEN Shahida Parveen woke up to the news that her "brightest" brother will be the first Indian pilot to fly Rafale, she texted him the Poet of East's celebrated couplet: "Nahin Tera Nasheman Qasr-e-Sultani Ke Gunbad Par / Tu Shaheen Hai, Basera Kar Paharon Ki Chatanon Mein (Thy abode is not on the dome of a royal palace / You are an eagle and should live on the rocks of mountains)."

The couplet, the proud sibling said, complimented the 'flying' character of her brother.

On Tuesday, Shahida's sibling, Air Commodore Hilal Ahmad Rather was seen alongside the Indian Ambassador to France, and overseeing the flight of the First Rafale jets from France to India.

The Kashmiri airman's name made rounds four years after an

## 'First Rafale Man Of India': 'Hilal Was The Brightest Among 5 Siblings'

agreement between India and France cleared the decks for India's 36 Rafale fighter aircraft.

The much-talked about flying machines took off from France's Metzgnac airbase on July 27, and will land in India on July 29 after a stopover in an airbase in UAE.

These jets will significantly boost the combat capabilities of the Indian Air Force (IAF).

As India's Air attaché to France, Hilal reportedly played a significant role in ensuring the timely delivery of the jets to India.

Once done with the deal, the IAF officer was seen with Jawed Ashraf, India's ambassador to France. The captured moment of the two Indian officers became momentous for India's Rafale deal. Hailing from Bakshiabad area of



Hilal with India's Ambassador to France Jawed Ashraf seen in the cockpit of Rafale before it left for India.

Anantnag district, Hilal was born to Mohammad Abdullah Rather, a JAKU officer who fought the Chinese in the 1962 war. Later he would be bestowed with "Sena Medal" for his bravery.

But before being awarded, Hilal's father was reported missing in the Sino-India war of Sixties.

"We received his uniform and were told that he died but then miracle happened," Shahida told Kashmir Observer. "He came back after three months but not before hoisting India's flag in the hills of East Ladakh sector."

Hilal's father later joined the J&K Police and eventually retired as a deputy superintendent of police, before breathing his last in 2013.

"It was the dream of our father to see Hill touching the skies," Shahida

said. "Not only he touched skies, but also made all of us so proud through his achievements."

Among the five siblings, Shahida said, Hilal was the brightest student.

"Our elder sister was lecturer; I, as a second sibling, retired as a lecturer; the third one is also lecturer; another brother is a Chemistry lecturer and our youngest and brightest sibling Hilal, is a pilot."

Hilal has two children — one has completed Bachelors in Economics and Psychology, other one is doing Bachelors in Business studies in Europe. His wife, Samina has done Masters in Science.

Hilal did his early schooling in Anantnag and joined the Sainik School in Jammu's Nagrota town for further studies, where he became the School Captain. Later he joined the prestigious National Defence Academy (NDA).

"He then chose Air Force and passed out as the best all ● PAGE 02



# Student Outfits, Teachers Condemn Arrest Of Delhi University Professor Hanybabu In Bhimakoregaon Case

**NEW DELHI:** A section of the Delhi University fraternity and some student outfits condemned the arrest of professor HanyBabu MT by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Tuesday, saying it was "a blatant attempt to silence dissent".

HanyBabuMusaliyarveettiITh-arayil, an associate professor in the Department of English, was arrested in connection with the BhimaKoregaon Elgar Parishad case. The NIA accused him of propagating Naxal activities and Maoist ideology and being a "co-conspirator" in the case.

The news of his arrest was "shocking", said AbhaDevHabib, a professor at Miranda House college where HanyBabu's wife Jenny Rowena also teaches.

"He has risen as the voice of marginalised students and is a

pro-democracy activist. If you put anyone in jail now (amid the CO-VID-19 pandemic), it is like giving death sentence.... We will continue to protest for his release," she said.

According to a professor, Rowena was attending a college meeting online when she got the news of the arrest and immediately left it.

Another professor, requesting anonymity, said Babu had applied for leave a few days ago to go to Maharashtra for some personal work. The news of his arrest is very "disturbing", he added. Na-lini, a student of Delhi Univer-sity's English Department, said, "Ambedkarite intellectual and anti-caste activist HanyBabu's arrest is yet another draconian attack on the democratic ethos of India and a blatant attempt to silence dissent by the Modi gov-ernment. This attack upon intel-

lectuals should alarm all progres-sive voices in the country."

"He is a much better person than he is being made out to be. We all know what is happening in the current time and how there has been a witch-hunt of activists," said a final-year student of English (Hons), requesting anonymity.

The final-year student said Ha-nyBabu was his linguistics profes-sor in third semester. Kawalpreet-Kaur, the Delhi unit president of the All India Students' Union (AISA), tweeted, "The news has hit home. Delhi University professor, Ha-nyBabu has been arrested by NIA in BhimaKoregaon case. Everyone in academic fraternity must oppose this arbitrary use of power and give unflinching support to professor. This witch-hunting against demo-cratic voices must end."

The Left-backed AISA said, "Fab-

ricated charges and lies have been the modus operandi of NIA and in-vestigative agencies. The arrest of Prof. HanyBabu proves the Modi government wants to silence and harass pro-democracy forces."

In September last year, officers of the Pune police, which was earlier probing the case, con-ducted searches at the residence of HanyBabu in Noida and seized his laptop and mobile phone.

From anti-CAA (Citizenship Amendment Act) activists to pro-democracy activists, intel-lectuals and academics, the BJP government is sparing none in its attempt to weaken democra-cy, the AISA said and demanded HanyBabu's immediate release.

The Campaign Against State Re-pression (CASR), an umbrella body of student outfits and civil society organisations, called his arrest

"blatant harassment and intimid-a-tion of persons who question the State and struggle for the rights of the marginalised and oppressed castes, classes and communities".

HanyBabu has been an anti-caste activist who has been consistently fighting for social justice within and outside the university space, it said.

CASR demanded immediate re-lease of all activists and intellectuals arrested in the BhimaKoregaon case.

The case relates to an Elgar Parishad event of December 31, 2017, organised by the Kabir Kala Manch at Shaniwarwada in Pune, where alleged provocative speeches were made, promoting enmity between various caste groups and leading to violence resulting in loss of life and prop-erty and statewide agitation in Maharashtra, an NIA official said.

## 57% Of Mumbai Slum Population Has Developed Antibodies: Study

**MUMBAI:** Asero-surveillance study done inMumbai has re-vealed that 57 per cent of slum population and 16 per cent of non-slum residents in three civic wards had developed an-tibodies, indicating many peo-ple would already be affected by COVID-19 than the official tally suggests.

The sero-surveillance started on June 3 and 6,936 samples out of an estimated 8,870 were collected from slum and non-slum population of three civic wards - R-North, M-West and F-North - in the first half of July.

It showed high proportion of asymptomatic COVID-19 infection in the city.

The study revealed that 57 per cent of slum population and 16 per cent of non-slum residents in these civic wards had developed antibodies, the BMC said on Tuesday.

"These results will be valu-

able to learn more about herd immunity," stated a Brihan-mumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) release.

The civic body is going to con-duct another survey that will pro-vide information about infection spread and throw light on herd immunity as well, it said.

The Serological Surveillance for SARS-CoV2 infection was jointly commissioned by NITI Aayog, the BMC and the Tata Institute of Fundamental Re-sults (TIFR). A serological sur-vey involves testing of blood serum of individuals to check for the prevalence of antibod-ies against an infection.

The study found high propor-tion of asymptomatic COVID-19 infection in the city.

The civic authorities claimed the sero surveillance result in-dicates that "asymptomatic in-fections are likely to be a high proportion of all infections".

## Doctor, 13 Others Die...

shifted to SMHS Hospital, officials said.

Regarding Ramban fatality, officials said, the 25-year-old youth from Suligam village was sampled for Covid-19 on July 15 and had tested positive subsequently.

"He was admitted in isolation ward of GMC Hospital Jammu on July 21," a senior doctor at GMC Jammu said, adding, "He was a known case of Potts Spine (Spinal tuberculosis) and was on ATT for the last 10 months. Besides he was also suffering from jaundice and had Rt sided thigh and Gluteal Abscess."

The doctor said that the youth was put on oxygen on July 27 and died 5.30 a.m, today. The youth's death was the first fatal-ity due to the virus in Ramban district.

The Kupwara deaths include a 72-year-old Tengchak Lolab, a 70-year-old from Batpora and a middle aged man from Marat-gam, who was working in Revenue department.

Regarding 72-year-old, they said, he was brought to Kup-wara for medical checkup where doctors advised him for CO-VID-19 test. "On July 23 he died naturally at his home as he was a hypertensive and Leprosy patient. His report came positive today," a senior health office functionary said.

Regarding the septuagenarian, the official said, he died at Wayan heath centre and his test came positive for the virus while the revenue official was admitted in Handwara hospital on July 22 and was referred to Srinagar where he died later.

Meanwhile, a 60-year-old man from Nagbalkhag Budgam, who was admitted to SKIMS Soura on July 23, as a case of "hy-pertension, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), bilateral Community Acquired Pneumonia died at 8:15 a.m., a senior doctor at the tertiary care hospital said.

Besides it, a 59-year-old man from DH Pora Kulgam and a 75-year-old man from Noorbagh Sopore and a 70-year-old man from Pattan with "bilateral pneumonia" also died of Covid-19 on Tuesday.

So far 311 deaths have been reported in Kashmir and 24 in Jammu division. Srinagar district with 99 deaths has the highest fatalities followed by Baramulla (65), Kulgam (27), Budgam (24), Anantnag (21), Shopian (20), Pulwama (19), Kupwara (20), Jammu(15), Bandipora (10), Ganderbal (6), two each in Rajouri and Doda and one each in Ramban , Poonch, Udhampur, and Kathua. (With GNS inputs)

## 100 Security Men Among 489

men, ten personnel of SSB, nine from Badamibagh cantonment, seven minors and 79 travellers were among the fresh cases re-ported from Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday.

While Kashmir reported 355 fresh cases of Covid-19 today, remaining 134 cases were confirmed by health officials from Jammu province.

There are now 7,661 active cases in the union territory, while 10,885 patients have recovered, they added.

The officials said Srinagar district in central Kashmir re-corded the highest of 138 new positive cases followed by 43 in Jammu District.

## NHM Doctor On COVID...

Valley of the district where he caught the infection, an official said. The doctor was deputed for contact tracing of COVID-19 patients in the picturesque village where he got infected.

The doctor, he said was tested positive on July 04 and recov-ered from the deadly disease after one week.

"However, last night, the doctor developed symptoms, he-moptysis with sudden fall in oxygen saturation following which he was taken to SKIMS hospital Srinagar where his sample was collected again for COVID testing," the official said.

He said the doctor was shifted to SMHS hospital for treat-ment where he breathed his last today morning, adding that the doctor was declared positive after his death.

According to the locals, the deceased doctor is survived by two minor children and his wife, who is also a medical officer.

The doctor's death has saddened the entire health officials in Bandipora district.

Meanwhile, All J&K National Health Mission Employees Association Kashmir Division has condoled the demise of Dr Shabir Ahmad Medical Officer (NHM) CHC Gurez District Bandipora due to COVID-19

In a statement, the Association office bearers expressed heartfelt grief over the demise of the doctor who was working as Medical Officer under NHM in district Bandipora and prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul.

Meanwhile, the Association has appealed the Lieutenant Governor Girish Chandra Murmu and Advisor to LG Rajiv Rai Batnagar to extend helping hand to the bereaved family by pro-viding a job and financial assistance to the Next of Kin.

They also reiterated the need for social security benefits to NHM employees in wake of such eventualities.

## Covid-19 'One Big Wave',...

coinciding with normal seasonal influenza cases during the southern hemisphere's winter, and said the Geneva-based body was monitoring this closely.

So far, she said, laboratory samples are not showing high numbers of flu cases, suggesting a later-than-normal start to the season.

"If you have an increase in a respiratory illness when you already have a very high burden of respiratory illness, that puts even more pressure on the health system," she said, urging people to be vaccinated against flu.

## ECI Pulls Up LG Murmu...

The union territory of J&K came into being on October 31, 2019 after the state was reorganised and bifurcated into two

union territories, Ladakh being the other.

There is a provision of a state legislature in the union terri-tory of J&K.

A Delimitation Commission set up by the government earlier this year has started the exercise of redrawing the assembly and parliamentary seats in J&K and some northeastern states.

Delimitation is the process of fixing limits or boundaries of assembly and parliamentary constituencies in the country.

According to the section 60 of the J&K Reorganisation Act, "...the number of seats in the Legislative Assembly of Union territory of J&K shall be increased from 107 to 114...."

Out of these, 24 seats are in Pakistan-controlled-Kashmir. So effectively, the seats will go up from 83 to 90, Chief Elec-tion Commissioner Sunil Arora had explained recently while responding to queries on the delimitation process in J&K.

## Will Verify J&K LG, Madhav's

general Tushar Mehta, appearing for the J-K administration, said that it has received a lengthy rejoinder from the petitioner on the counter affidavit filed by the Centre, which said that 4G Internet curbs have been reviewed by the special committee.

He said that some time be given to reply to the rejoinder af-fidavit filed by the petitioner.

Senior advocate Huzefa Ahmadi, appearing for the petitioner NGO did not oppose the submission of Mehta, and said that the request is reasonable as the rejoinder was served on Monday evening.

According to him, the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir had recently made a statement that 4G Internet ser-vice in the valley can be restored and similar statement was also made by BJP leader Madhav.

Ahmadi said that he requests that these statements be also looked into.

Attorney General K K Venugopal, appearing for the Centre, told the bench that the said statements need to be verified.

The bench said then it will list the matter on August 5.

Mehta intervened, and said, that it would be better to have the hearing on another date as August 5 is the date of imposi-tion of Internet curbs.

The bench accepted the request of the Solicitor General and changed the date of hearing to August 7.

On July 16, the Centre and J-K administration had told the top court that a special committee has been set up as per the court's directive to consider the issue of restoration of 4G Inter-net services in the Union Territory.

Venugopal, while claiming that incidents of terrorism are on the rise there, had told the court that no contempt was made out against the authorities as they have complied with the di-rectives of the apex court.

On May 11, the top court had ordered setting up of a "special committee" headed by the Union Home Secretary to consider pleas for restoration of 4G internet services in J-K, saying na-tional security and human rights need to be balanced in view of the fact that the UT has been "plagued with militancy".

The contempt plea filed by the NGO has alleged that authori-ties concerned have not yet constituted the special committee in line with the top court's order.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Hospital Ransacked, Doctors...

members got injured and received stitches.

The MCCH is associated hospital of Government Medical College Anantnag. It receives patients from four districts in-cluding Anantnag, Kulgam, Banihal and Kishtwar. There is no ventilator available and the hospital has just one theatre with two beds.

Principal Government Medical College Anantnag Dr Showkat Jeelani said a committee has been set up to unravel the facts. "She had delivered a baby on Monday afternoon. On Tuesday morning, her oxygen saturation dropped. The doctors decided to shift her to Srinagar for ventilator support but was not al-lowed by her family members," he said.

When asked that the family was blaming doctors for not at-tending on her, he replied, "I can't say anything right now. We have set up a committee to unveil facts."

The MCCH is associated hospital of Government Medical College Anantnag. It receives patients from four districts in-cluding Anantnag, Kulgam, Banihal and Kishtwar.

There is no ventilator available and the hospital has just one theatre with two beds. The MCCH Anantnag was also earlier in the news after the death of three pregnant women there.

## GOI Accelerating Demographic

providing a "special dispensation "for carrying out construc-

tion activities and acquisition of land in strategic areas by the armed forces.

"Another order was issued yesterday to further facilitate this process stating that the armed forces will no longer require No Objection Certification (NOC) from authorities for land acquisi-tion. J&K which already has the distinction of being the worlds most militarised zone that fact is being used as a tool for mili-tary settlements," the spokesperson said.

"This is unacceptable to the people who are further ag-grieved by such authoritarian measures being thrust upon them while they are battling the coronavirus and are under a lockdown. Nor can such measures change the reality of the Kashmir dispute and need for its resolution," he added.

Voicing concern over the continued detention of people across Jammu and Kashmir, the Hurriyat spokesperson said that Anjum-an-e-Islamia chief Parvaiz Ahmed Sheikh has been arrested and booked under sedition in Doda district, while a post graduate student Aqib Malik of Kashmir University has also been arrested

"At the time of pandemic and on occasion of Eid-ul-Azha the authorities instead of releasing prisoners arrested in August last year, continues with such inhuman policy," he added.

## Militant Trying To Sneak...

associates who returned back to the launch pad," the sources said.

They said that the group of militants was possibly a fidayeen squad and were heavily armed.

"Since the incident, searches are going on in the area for to ensure proper area dominance," the sources said

Meanwhile, India and Pakistan troops exchanged heavy gun-fire in the neighboring Poonch district, officials said.

"At about 1000 (10 am) hours today (Tuesday), Pakistan Army initiated unprovoked ceasefire violation by firing with small arms and intense shelling with mortars along LoC in De-gwar and Qasba sectors of district Poonch," a defence spokes-person said.

The Indian Army is retaliating befittingly, he added.

Pakistan troops had shelled forward areas of Mankote and Mendhar sectors of Poonch district and resorted to firing along the International Border (IB) in Hiranagar sector of Kathua dis-trict on Monday resulting in injuries to an animal and damage to a house, they said.

Pakistani troops had shelled areas along the LoC in Rajouri and Poonch districts on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday last week as well as on Monday in Bal-a-kote, Subderbani, Nowshera, Qasba, Kirni, Mendhar, Mankote, Degwar, Krishnagati and Hiranagar sector of Kathua district.

## Technology Infuses Ancient...

said Al-Maddah, an electronics engineer with a PhD in robotics and artificial intelligence.

"We are taking every step possible to make sure that this Haj will end with zero cases of Covid-19 and also with zero deaths in our total Haj numbers," he told The Associated Press.

Before pilgrims could even enter Makkah, they were given wristbands by the Saudi health ministry to monitor their movements and ensure the mandatory quarantine was ob-served. Thermal scanners are being used across the holy site to monitor people's temperatures.

Each pilgrim is assigned to a group of around 20 others. A group leader will guide them throughout the Haj to each desti-nation at a specified time, to avoid crowding in places like the Grand Mosque, where the pilgrims circle the Kaaba and follow a path traveled by the Prophet Abraham's wife, who Muslims believe ran between two hills searching for water for her dy-ing son.

While on Mount Arafat, where the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) delivered his final sermon nearly 1,400 years ago and where pilgrims will spend Thursday in deep prayer and repen-tance, pilgrims will be wearing high-tech ID cards that connect to an application on their phones.

The card and app allows the government to easily monitor the pilgrims, and gives them a way to reach out to their group leader and make special meal requests.

The card stores the pilgrims' personal information, health status, residence and other Haj-related details. In the future, Al-Maddah said the cards will be fitted with a location tracker to follow individual pilgrims' movements. The tracker will be managed by a control room, and can be used as a pay card in place of cash.

Pilgrims have also been given special attire to wear during the Haj laced with silver nano technology that helps kill bacte-ria and makes clothes water-resistant.

Al-Maddah said the measure is a precaution, even if it can affect almost nothing or has a minimal chance of improving health conditions.

It's all part of the special treatment pilgrims are receiving this year. Other perks such as meals, hotel accommodation, transportation and healthcare is paid for by the Saudi govern-ment. Typically, the Haj can cost thousands of dollars for pil-grims who save for a lifetime for the journey.

This year marks the first time in nearly a century of Saudi rule over Makkah that people from outside the kingdom will not take part in the five-day Haj, which is a once in a lifetime requirement of Muslims.

Al-Maddah, who sits on the Haj planning committee, said allowing people to enter Saudi Arabia from abroad would have posed a global health risk.

Two thirds of pilgrims this year are foreigners already resid-ing in Saudi Arabia from among the 160 different nationalities that would have normally been represented at the Haj. The other one third are Saudi security personnel and medical staff.

All pilgrims had to be between the ages of 20 and 50 with no terminal illnesses and showing no symptoms of the coro-navirus.

Each year, the Haj poses a massive logistical challenge for Saudi authorities. As recently as 2015, a stampede killed more

than 2,400 people.

Crowd control measures require the use of thousands of cameras and security officers to coordinate the movements of the more than 2.5 million people densely packed into narrow streets, walkways and paths.

Facial recognition technology and other high-tech security systems have to be advanced enough to decipher between pil-grims, dressed in nearly identical terry white cloth garments.

"For us, safety comes first," Al-Maddah said. "We are em-ploying technology to make sure that these services and these precautions are met and delivered in the highest standard."

## Ruhullah Resigns As NC...

Kashmir remains a Union Territory.

Ruhullah tweeted, "The restoration of statehood should be the least of the demands. It should be the last demand. Our main demand should be restoration of special status."

A former cabinet minister and three-time legislator from Budgam assembly constituency of central Kashmir, Ruhullah had in May removed his designation as NC party chief spokes-person from his Twitter handle bio, setting off speculation of a rift within the party.

In a series of tweets on Tuesday, Abdullah said, "I have no problem being disagreed with for what I say or do but when you invent things & put words in my mouth to attack me then that's more about you than about me.... I've simply said that having been CM of the STATE of J&K I will not fight an assembly election to the assembly of the UT of J&K. That's it. No more no less! That's a far cry from saying I'm demanding statehood be restored."

On August 5 last year, the central government announced nullification of Jammu and Kashmir's special status and bifur-cated the state into union territories

## Cong Demands Soz's Release

and former MLC G N Monga said that Soz was put under house arrest after the Centre abrogated Article 370 last August without providing a single document. He said almost a year has passed but Soz has not been informed of his grounds of detention.

"Soz sahib has been re-elected numerous times for the Lok Sabha and also served as Union Minister besides being the President of the JKPC for long time. His house detention is not only illegal, mala-fide and unconstitutional, but also ex-tremely appalling. He should be released without any further delay along with all the political leaders and activists detained since last August," Monga said.

## 'First Rafale Man Of India'...

round pilot from the Air force Academy with the Presidents Plaque and Sword of Honour," Shahida continued. "He went to Bangladesh in 2003 for a flight safety course and then in 2011 to US for the prestigious Air War College Course where he at-tained academic distinction. From US, he returned to India in 2013 and served in the HQ of Western Air Command."

Hilal was commissioned in IAF as a fighter pilot on Decem-ber 17, 1988. From a pilot officer in 1988 he subsequently rose to become flight lieutenant in 1993, Squadron Leader in 1996, Wing commander in 2004, group captain in 2010 and Air Com-modore in 2016.

According to reports, the IAF officer received Vayu Sena Medal, given for devotion to duty, when he was a Wing Com-mander in 2010 and Vishisht Seva Medal when he was a Group Captain in 2016.

Hilal has completed more than 3,000 hours of accident-free flying on MiG 21s, Mirage-2000, and Kiran aircraft. The IAF of-ficer is a fighter combat leader and a qualified flying instructor.

"He continues to work as a passionate fighter pilot and has a keen sense for detail," Shahida said. "His meticulousness and dedication must have made a definite difference to realise the Rafale project for his Air Force. Today it feels Hilal has indeed lived up to his passion, and made his family proud."

## Teen's Body Fished Out...

the boy. However, the operation was suspended owing to the darkness. The body of the teen was recovered today on the sec-ond day of the operation.

## Non-Local Burglar Held...

and many suspects were taken into custody. He said during sustained interrogation, a non-local identified as Mohammad Rufsana from West Bengal confessed the commission of crime

"On his disclosure stolen property has been recovered," the police spokesperson said.

## 500 People Fined...

for not wearing mask and disobeying lockdown orders, sealed two government fair price shops in Bhadarwah town, and lodged FIRs against those who misbehaved with officials on duty, they said.

The violators were also counselled to follow these rules so that the spread of the virus can be checked.

Some chemists and other shopkeepers dealing in essential commodities were also fined for violation of SoPs.

The sealed fair price shops are near old hospital and Pasri bus stand, the officials said.

The FIRs were filed against some villagers of Dalain who al-legedly misbehaved with and stopped officials from perform-ing their COVID-19 duties, they added.



# Woman Declared COVID-19 Positive Day After Her Death

Negligence can prove very dangerous, says expert; Will investigate matter, says MS SMHS

Srinagar: In what appears to be a sheer negligence on part of hospital authorities, a patient from Srinagar was declared COVID-19 positive a day after her death at SMHS hospital.

Sources said that a patient from Gurgari Mohalla of Zainakadal in Srinagar died on Sunday morning and was declared COVID-19 positive on Monday evening. However, they said the family was allowed to take the body for the last rites without even waiting for the fresh COVID-19 test report.

The patient's son said that her moth-

er was admitted in the hospital after she complained of respiratory issues and fever. "She was kept in COVID-19 designated isolation ward after doctors stated that she is suffering from bilateral Pneumonia," he said.

"Her sample for COVID-19 was taken, but the report was inconclusive following which her swab was taken again on July 25 afternoon," he said, adding that on Sunday morning, the patient breathed her last and they were allowed to take the body home for last rites.

He said on Sunday afternoon, she

was laid to rest at Malkha cemetery in Srinagar, adding that a number of her relatives and neighbours participated in her last rites.

On Monday evening, they received the fresh COVID-19 report of her mother wherein she was declared positive.

He questioned how the attendants were asked to take the body when the COVID report was still pending, adding that the 'negligence' of the authorities have put family, relatives and neighbors at risk.

However, he said after receiving the

fresh test report, none from the health department have so far visited them for taking necessary steps.

Meanwhile, Influenza expert, Dr Nisar-ul-Hassan said that not adhering to the guidelines may have infected all the family members of the deceased. "This is highly irresponsible and needs to be probed. The body should have been kept in GMC mortuary till COVID-19 test results would have come," he said.

Medical Superintendent SMHS, Dr. Nazir Ahmad Choudary said that he will investigate the matter—(KNO)

## Referral of patients to tertiary health care institutions SEC Issues Set Of Instructions

SRINAGAR, JULY 28: State Executive Committee (SEC) today issued several instructions with respect to the referral of COVID-19 positive patients to tertiary health care institutions IN J&K.

"In exercise of powers conferred under Section 24 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005, and in reiteration of departmental instructions on the subject, the State Executive Committee hereby issues the following instructions for strict compliance by the concerned authorities with immediate effect," an order issued in this regard stated.

"SKIMS Soura, SMHS Hospital Srinagar, Chest Diseases Hospital, Srinagar, and SKIMS Medical College & Hospital Bema, Srinagar, in Kashmir division and GMC, Jammu; CD Hospital, Jammu and ASCOMS (Batra), Jammu, in Jammu division shall be designated as Tertiary care-1 institutions and referred to as category-I referral hospitals," it said and added that all COVID positive patients with mild/moderate symptoms shall first be admitted in Category-II/III hospitals, at sub-district/dis-

trict level, or any other hospital which is not a category-I referral hospital. Such patients shall not be directly admitted to any category-I referral hospital mentioned above.

Those patients, it further added, shall be admitted and treated in Category-I referral hospitals only if they are duly referred by a concerned district level hospital or a non-category-I referral hospital. This will be ensured by all the Chief Medical Officers and supervised by the Deputy Commissioners concerned;

"Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir/Jammu with the assistance of Director, Health Services, Kashmir/Jammu, shall put in place a mechanism to monitor the compliance of the above instructions at all levels," it said.

The order also stated that Heads of the Tertiary care institutions/ category-I referral hospitals shall not deviate from these instructions without the knowledge of Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir/Jammu.

"Any deviation from this order shall attract penal action under the Disaster Management Act, 2005.

**Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir/Jammu** with the assistance of Director, Health Services, Kashmir/Jammu, shall put in place a mechanism to monitor the compliance of the above instructions at all levels

## Make Tocilizumab available for COVID-19 patients: DAK to authorities

Srinagar: Doctors Association Kashmir (DAK) on Tuesday urged concerned authorities in Kashmir Valley to make life-saving drug Tocilizumab available for critically-ill COVID-19 patients.

"The drug reduces the risk of death in seriously ill Covid-19 patients," said DAK President and influenza expert Dr Nisar ul Hassan in a statement.

Quoting a study from the University of Michigan, he said COVID-19 patients on ventilators who received a single dose of Tocilizumab injection were 45 percent less likely to die compared to those who did not receive the drug.

"Originally developed to treat rheumatoid arthritis, the drug combats the disease by quelling cytokine storm which is the hyper-immune response of the infected person to the virus," Dr Nisar said.

"Mortality in Covid-19 patients has been linked to the presence of the cytokine storm induced by the virus," he said adding that "excessive production of cytokines leads to respiratory failure and widespread



tissue damage resulting in multi-organ failure and death."

Dr Nisar said Tocilizumab suppresses the hyperimmune response by blocking receptor for a key cytokine known as interleukin-6 (IL-6) and improves survival rates and re-

duces mortality among COVID patients.

"Recently Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in its revised protocol has allowed usage of the drug for patients with progressively increasing oxygen requirements and in mechanically ventilated patients not improving despite the use of steroids," he said.

Dr Nisar said it is vitally important to know that there is no single magic bullet to treat the novel Coronavirus and several drugs in combination are needed to tackle the virus. "With the approval of several therapies, combination of them given at the right time gives a good result," he said.

"Apart from oxygen, moderate to severe patients are given steroids, remdesivir, convalescent plasma and Tocilizumab in various combinations," he added.

"Initially it was believed that deaths were happening because of poor oxygenation. Now we know that intravascular clotting can also lead to lung dysfunction and death. So heparin is given in Covid patients to prevent clotting," said Dr Nisar—

## Lt Governor e-inaugurates JMC Command & Control Centre

JAMMU, JULY 28: Lieutenant Governor, Girish Chandra Murmu today e-inaugurated Jammu Municipal Corporation's state of the art Command & Control Centre in the presence of Sh. Jugal Kishore Sharma, MP; Sh. BVR Subrahmanyam, Chief Secretary and Sh. Dheeraj Gupta, Principal Secretary Housing and Urban Development Department. Besides, launching a GPS based Vehicle Tracking Management System (VTMS), image-based mobile application for attendance of field employees, and Building Construction mobile application for Real Time Monitoring of activities undertaken by the Corporation.

Mayor, Jammu Municipal Corporation, Sh. Chander Mohan Gupta; Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Sh. Sanjeev Verma; Deputy Mayor, JMC, Adv. Purnima Sharma; Jammu Municipal Commissioner, Ms. Avny Lavasa among others were also present at the e-inauguration of the services.

Furnished with professional modular equipment, the Command & Control Centre has been equipped with industrial grade cybersecurity. The centre will also serve as a base for backend functioning & monitoring of GPS based Vehicular Tracking Management System App, GPS/ Image-based e-Attendance App for field staff of corporation and Building Construction Monitoring App and gradually for future IT-related initiatives of the corporation.

Briefing the Lt Governor, Commissioner, Jammu Municipal Corporation, noted that these initiatives by the corporation will bring efficiency in operations as 126 vehicles have been outsourced by the corporation for the door to door collection of garbage while another fleet of 142 vehicles is working on secondary transportation of the city's garbage. The GPS based VTMS helps in tracking

the sanitation vehicles hours, location, and area of operation. The system will provide a digital log book and report of the daily area covered. Further, the e-Attendance App will help keep track of Sanitation Workers and Supervisors thereby resulting in improved manpower handling.

The Lieutenant Governor was apprised that the Building Construction Monitoring App will help in uploading and mapping of approved building plans, ward-wise mapping of Enforcement Inspectors, e-Reporting of violations in approved building plans and case-wise progression of plans.

Earlier, the Lt Governor also launched the ambitious and important Project of Legacy Waste Treatment undertaken by Jammu Municipal Corporation at Bhagwati Nagar, Jammu, whereby the decades-old waste dumping site is to be cleared.

The area has been used as a Dumping site for Municipal Solid Waste for last thirty years. These huge dumps of waste now referred to as Legacy Waste is to be scientifically treated as per National Green Tribunal guidelines. Jammu City generates approx 350 MT of garbage per day and its management and treatment is a challenging task ahead.

Jammu Municipal Corporation has envisaged the Project of scientific treatment of the Legacy Waste through a multiple treatment approaches involving composting through Bio-cultures for decomposing the organic matter, establishing Material Recovery Facilities (MRF) for recyclables and landfilling the merit waste. The whole project has been designed to be cost-effective and time-bound so as to meet the National Green Tribunal deadlines, Solid Waste Management Rules, and Bye-laws.

### NATIONAL HEALTH MISSION

DISTRICT HEALTH SOCIETY PULWAMA

OLD HOSPITAL COMPLEX, PULWAMA

Telefax- 01933-241205/241275, e-mail: [nhmpulwama@gmail.com](mailto:nhmpulwama@gmail.com)

**Sub : Appointment of Staff Nurses –DNB in ,District Hospital Pulwama .**

- Whereas, a **Selection List** was issued vide **NHM/DHS/Pul/2039-2045 Dated: 06-02-2020** for Selection of **42 (forty two)** posts of **Staff Nurses** including waiting list (50%) in response to the **Advertisement Notice No: NHM/DHS/Pul/987-996 Dated: 26-11-2019.**
- Whereas, subsequently appointment Orders were issued in favor of 42 candidates vide **Order No: NHM/DHS/Pul/2039-2045 Dated: 06-02-2020** , wherein the candidates were asked to join within a period of **21 (Twenty One) Days.**
- Whereas, many candidates have not joined in scheduled period with the result another appointment Order was issued vide **Order No NHM/DHS/Pul/4083-4089 Dated : 17-03-2020** in favor of **10(ten)** candidates falling in the waiting list from S.No. 1 to 10 .
- Whereas, later on two vacancies have been accrued due to Non Joining of candidates appointed vide **Order No : NHM/DHS/Pul/4083-4089 Dated : 17-03-2020.**
- Whereas, before issuing the third appointment Order, consent from the rest of the candidates have been sought who fall in next order of merit and in response candidate figuring at Serial No: 11 , 14 , 15 , 16 & 21 are interested to join against the posts of **Staff Nurses** while as rest are not interested .

Now therefore two candidates figuring at **S.No: 11 & 14** in the waiting list of **Selection List** issued vide **Order No: NHM/DHS/Pul/2039-2045 Dated: 06-02-2020** are hereby appointed on contractual basis as **Staff Nurses** with the honorarium of Rs 14500/= per month up-to 31 March 2021 as per details given below.

S No.	Name of Candidate	S/o,D/o, W/o	Residence	Total Points achieved
1	Asmat Majeed	Ab Majeed Mallah	Booh Awantipora	<b>60.96</b>
2	Gowsia Jalal	Jalal Ud Din Reshi	Chursoo Awantipora	<b>60.90</b>

#### Terms & Conditions:

- The selected candidates are informed to report, along with all the original/relevant testimonials in the office of the Chief Medical Officer-Pulwama (Vice Chairman District Health Society-Pulwama) within **21 (Twenty One) Days.**
- The candidates selected on contractual basis upto 31 March 2021, shall have to execute an agreement bond with the District Health Society Pulwama on a prescribed format which is available in the office of the Chief Medical Officer Pulwama.
- In case at any time it is found that candidate has resorted to fraudulent means, misbehavior with the staff members, her candidature will be cancelled without giving any prior notice and is liable to punishment under relevant law/rule.
- The selection is strictly subject to the verification of the certificates from issuing authority. In case of any deficiency with reference to the eligibility etc proved at any time, the candidate shall forfeit her candidature.

No: **NHM/DHS/Pul/**  
Dated:

**Chief Medical Officer,**  
**(Vice-Chairman District Health Society),**  
**Pulwama.**

DIPK-3536/20

#### DIAL-EMMA



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

#### AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311



#### RAILWAYS

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



#### HIGHWAY STATUS



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



HIJRI

CALENDAR

07 Zil-Haj  
1441

#### PRAYERS

FAJR 4: 00

ZUHR 12: 37

ASR 5:33

Magrib 7:40

ISHA 9:14

## This Day In History

- 1693- War of the Grand Alliance: Battle of Landen/ Neerwinden - France wins
- Pyrrhic victory over Allied forces in the Netherlands.
- 1696- Louis XIV. King of France, & Victor Amadeus II, Duke of Savoy, sign Peace of Turin,
- a turning point in the War of the League of Augsburg
- 1783- Skaptar Volcano on Iceland erupts killing about 9,000
- 1786- 1st newspaper published west of Alleghanies, Pitts Gazette
- 1858- Treaty of Amity and Commerce/Harris Treaty signed between US & Japan opening
- Japanese ports to trade
- 1899 -The First Hague Convention is signed.
- 1913- Albania becomes sovereignty under prince Wilhelm von Wied
- 1914- Russia mobilize troops along Austrian boundary
- 1914- In response to Austria's declaration of war on Serbia, Russian diplomats and general
- urge general mobilization, but the Tsar calls for partial mobilization
- 1921- Adolf Hitler becomes leader of the National Socialist German Workers Party
- 1922- Greek troops defeat Turkish forces and are on their way to Constantinople, but the
- Allies forbid them taking the city
- 1927- 1st iron lung installed (Bellevue hospital, NY)
- 1932- Great Depression: in Washington, D.C., U.S. troops disperse the last of the "Bonus
- Army" of World War I veterans.
- 1944- Allied air force bomb Germany for 6 hours
- 1949- Moscow ends the blockade of West Berlin
- 1949- BBC radio begins broadcasting
- 1952- 1st nonstop transpacific flight by a jet
- 1965-Gemini 5 returned after 12d 7h 11m 53s
- 1969- Mariner 6 begins transmitting far-encounter photos of Mars
- 1978- Pioneer 11 transmits images of Saturn & its rings
- 2013- 300 prisoners are freed after a Taliban attack in Dera Ismal Khan, Pakistan
- 2014- France contributes 8 million Euros in aid to Gaza
- 2014- 100 Gazans killed overnight by Israeli strikes
- 2015- Over 3,500 immigrants over 2 days attempt to enter the Channel Tunnel at Calais, to
- cross into Britain
- 2015- Mohammed Omar, mullah and Taliban leader is confirmed dead (killed 2013) by the
- Afghan government

## From KO Archives

## Car With 100 KG RDX seized

Stolen car intercepted near Magam, was headed for Srinagar?

Observer News Service

Srinagar - Death and devastation on a large scale was averted today when the police recovered 100 kilograms of RDX from a stolen Maruti car near Magam in the Baramulla district. The driver of the car was apprehended while two other occupants managed to escape.

"The RDX was concealed in a trunk and was fitted with two live grenades fixed to detonators," Inspector General of Po-lice, Kashmir, Javed Mukhdoomi, said at a hurriedly-called press conference this evening. A wire-less Set was also found along with the explosives.

Police immediately called the bomb disposal squad who neutralised the explosive material.

"There is a possibility that the car was being driven to Srinagar for a bombing," he said, adding that a major tragedy had been averted.

The recovery was made during routine checking near Magam when a blue Maruti 800 Was stopped by line police at around 6 PM Tuesday evening. The three occupants of the car made a break for it, but one of them, the driver, identified as Zahoor Ahmad of Hanjiwera, Pattan, was caught at Mazhama on the Srinagar-Magam road after the police gave chase, the IGP said.

The car (original registration number JKE 6394) was fitted with a false number plate (DL3C 8177). It had been stolen a few days ago from Aripathan, and an FIR stands lodged in the Beeru police station, the IGP said. The interrogation of the driver was going on.

'Seizure a major breakthrough'

The Centre today described the seizure of an explosive-laden car and the arrest of its driver on Srinagar1 Gulmarg Highway a major breakthrough in the investigations into a spate of bomb blasts in the recent past. "This is a major breakthrough and we are hopeful that the security forces will be able to bust the militant network carrying out these attacks," a senior Home Ministry official said.

(Kashmir Observer, 29 July, 2005)



## KASHMIR OBSERVER

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### 4G hope

At long last, the J&K administration has told the Centre that it has no objection to restoring 4G internet services, as high-speed internet will not be a security concern. In a recent interview to a national daily, the Lieutenant Governor GC Murmu said that his government was no longer afraid of high-speed internet. "Pakistan will do its propaganda, whether it is 2G or 4G. It will always be there...but I don't see an issue," the LG is quoted to have said. This is a welcome change of heart. One can look now forward to restoration of the 4G in the near future, hopefully around Eid-ul-Azha.

The past year has played out like a horror story on many counts. Soon after the Article 370 was annulled on August 5 last year, the government placed Kashmir under a security blockade and communication blackout. It was only after a month that the least used landline phones were restored followed by re-opening of the post-paid mobile phones without texts after two and a half month. It took the government more than six months to restore internet, that too a severely curbed 2G connection with access to only a few hundred government chosen white-listed websites. This was made possible only after the Supreme Court declared the indefinite internet gag in Kashmir as impermissible and illegal. The court, however, didn't order the government to end the gag but only asked it to review it on a weekly basis. So, the government only eased the internet ban, didn't end it.

Government later gave selective access to fixed line internet to major government departments and businesses after they signed an undertaking that the service will not be 'misused'. It was only sometime later that the government allowed an unrestricted access to the broadband.

Drawn internet gag and social media ban all but halted the informal collective conversation that gives vent to and shapes up public opinion. In a severely regulated information environment, government was able to control what people know and what they don't. It also evacuated the everyday life of the play of the conventional mainstream and separatist discourses and temporarily pushed them out of collective memory.

At the same time, the lockdown and prolonged internet gag wrecked the local Kashmir economy, including IT companies and start-ups. The children couldn't study online as the 2G speed wasn't sufficient enough to access video lessons. The people in J&K would thus welcome the restoration of high-speed mobile internet. This would go a long way to normalize the life in the union territory following a year-long disruption.

#### OTHER OPINION

### Co-operate on vaccine

U.S. officials said this month that Russian hackers are attempting to steal coronavirus vaccine research. This past week, the Justice Department indicted two Chinese hackers for doing the same thing. Both attacks are condemnable acts of global aggression in a time when cooperation is essential. But this country bears the onus of cooperating, too.

Policy experts have suggested that the type of espionage in these cases isn't against any established cybersecurity rules of the road — which points to a need to establish new rules. The problem with that approach is that few of the primary players appear interested. The Chinese hackers charged on Tuesday have reportedly undertaken a years-long effort to snatch trade secrets, sometimes on their own behalf and sometimes on behalf of the state, flying in the face of the pact that government signed with the United States five years ago. President Trump, for his part, has unilaterally expanded intelligence agencies' mandate to include practices such as embarrassing hack-and-dumps that this nation has in the past condemned.

This insistence on escalation rather than cooperation is also what makes the vaccine snooping as insidious as it is unsurprising. The immediate harm of an adversary speeding the development of a lifesaving medicine amid a pandemic is admittedly unclear. But it is possible to imagine China exploiting that medicine as a domestic moneymaker, or as leverage over developing countries to whom it will play the munificent benefactor. This points to the larger problem: There are appropriate avenues for every nation to purchase vaccine candidates. There are also appropriate avenues for ensuring that when a vaccine comes, it comes to the whole world regardless of who develops it or who has the ability to pay. Yet the default approach for China and for Russia wasn't to pursue any of those avenues but, rather, to resort to criminality.

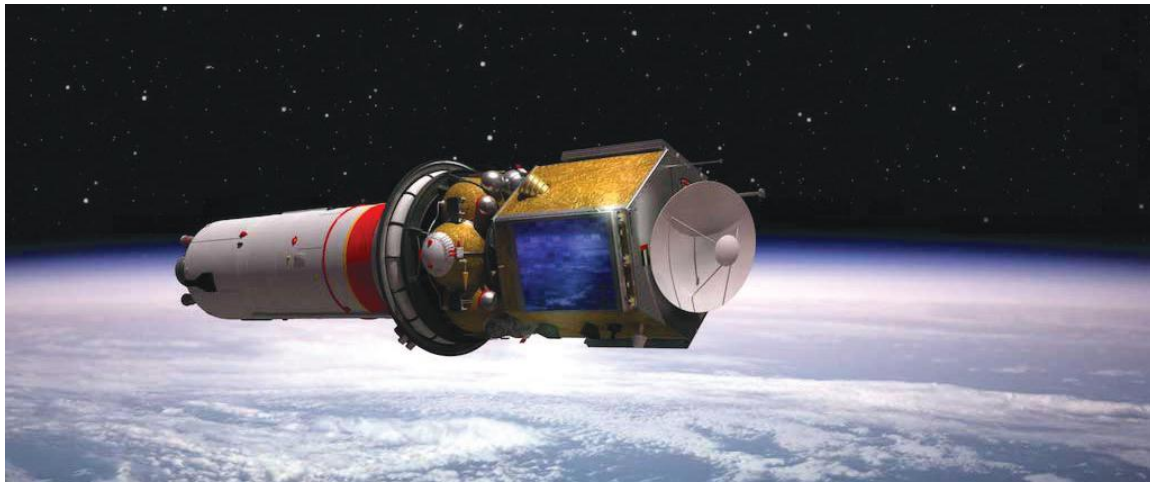
The United States would have an easier time sitting astride the moral high horse if it were contributing to vaccine-sharing efforts itself. Yet just as the White House has been unready to work on building cyber-operational norms with friends or with foes, it has sent the signal that it will pursue an "America First" approach to wiping out the disease. Rather than joining in initiatives to bolster global vaccine availability, it has announced its withdrawal from the World Health Organization and purchased nearly all available stocks of the key antiviral drug remdesivir.

The United States and China in particular have been playing a coronavirus blame game over the past few months. The reality is that every country will benefit from every other country having access to a vaccine. They should be figuring out how to share the wealth, not how to steal it.

Washington Post

## UAE's Mars Mission: Al Amal for Muslims

About 34 percent of the mission's scientists and 80% of its science team are women, significantly higher than the 28 percent represented in the Emirati workforce



The Emirates Mars Mission, the first interplanetary exploration undertaken by any Arab nation, lifted off successfully on an H-IIA rocket from Tanegashima, Japan, on 17 July 2020 and is on its way to Mars planet, where it will arrive at in February 2021, it will spend two years orbiting the red planet gathering crucial science data. The mission will also be marked as the Arab world's initial foray in space sciences and exploration.

The mission IS being carried out by the Mohammed bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC) in the UAE in collaboration with a number of global research institutions.

Mission Al Amal  
The orbiter, named 'Hope' meaning Al Amal in Arabic, carries three science instruments and will provide a unique view of the lower and middle atmosphere of the planet. The data collected will help scientists to understand the connections within and between the upper and lower atmospheres and how those connections helped to drive atmospheric escape, and Mars' evolution from a warm, cyclically wet world in the ancient past to the cold, dry planet we see today. Unique to Hope is its orbit, which enables near-complete daily and geographic coverage, providing a weather-satellite style view of all layers of the Martian atmosphere from the surface on up to space.

This mission will give scientists greater insight into how our own planet may have evolved, as well as enable greatly improved weather forecasting to help support the future human missions to Mars. Importantly, Hope addresses several key goals of the Mars Exploration Program Analysis Group (representing the consensus of the international Mars community) in regard to both science and human exploration.

#### Al Amal Team

The spacecraft, which is about the size of a small car, was constructed at Laboratory for Atmospheric and Space Physics (LASP) at the University of Colorado Boulder, US by a joint MBRSC/LASP team led by Project Director Omran Sharaf from MBRSC and deputy program manager and science lead investigator Her Excellency Sarah Al Amiri. Approximately 450 engineers and technicians worked on

the Hope probe for six years. The 734.5 million Emirati dirham (\$200 million) spacecraft, weighing in at 1,350 kilograms, is set to reach Mars on a date to coincide with the Gulf country's 50th anniversary.

The mission also shattered many other myths and societal norms. Apart from Sarah al-Amiri, about 34% of the mission's scientists and 80% of its science team are women, significantly higher than the 28% represented in the Emirati workforce.

While talking to international media outlets, Sarah revealed being 'mesmerised by space' due to its largeness and complexities and drove her to exploration. "The mission is called 'hope' because we are contributing to the global understanding of a planet," she said. "We are going above and beyond the turmoil that is now defining our region and becoming positive contributors to science. For the benefit of human understanding." Another key woman scientist at the mission is Fatma Hussain Lootah, supervisor of the team's instrument science portion.

The mission's name, Hope, was chosen to send a message of optimism to millions of young Arabs, according to Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the Ruler of the Emirate of Dubai for whom MBRSC is named.

#### Al Amal for Muslims

The Al Amal mission has also sent a very strong message to Muslims across the world. That is to embrace education in a more focused manner and garner the lost prestige of Muslims in various sciences by embracing learning and the spirit of innovation. In The Muslim 500, a list of influential Muslims around the world, scientists and technocrats who have worked in varied sectors like Digital Signature and Cryptography to DNA Repair occupy a large percentage. Also, when we speak of the past, then we can't ignore Muslim scientists like Al Razi, Al Zahrawi, Ibn Sina and Geber, aka Abu Musa Jabir ibn Hayyan, who all contributed to various fields like chemistry, pharmacy, philosophy, astronomy, geography, cartography, medicine & surgery and physics.

In fact many of the people named in The Muslim 500 have passed out from the sciences, medical and engineering departments

of the AMU and JMI. But when we consider the real percentage of these scientists and technocrats with world numbers, they are insignificant compared to the Muslim population in India and across the globe, both.

So what are we missing? We need to introspect deeply. First, the number of our young people going in for higher studies is increasing but not up to the desirable level, for this we need to initiate a community-level education programme at every tehsil and village level, to motivate parents to send their wards to schools. Secondly, a large percentage of our youngsters are getting employed in IT sector, so we need to push a little bit further and motivate and guide them towards research and development.

But to achieve this we first need to handhold, motivate and guide our youngsters. For this an all-India interactive programme could be initiated in partnership of various academic institutions and religious figures, wherein we should try to present these achievers as role models to our youngsters. At these interactions many young minds could be presented with a roadmap for their future and guided on how to achieve the results by the achievers. For this we'll also have to impress upon the achievers to become the guiding beacon for our youngsters and thus to repay back something to the community. Our academic institutions besides religious and social leaders could take the lead in this regard.

In fact the time has come for the entire Muslim world to introspect and get awakened and revisit five centuries, from 750 to 1258 AD — which is often described as the Golden Age of Islamic sciences — to be influenced and motivated by our past achievements to reinvent Islam's image of peace, human values and service to humanity through Quranic injunctions and Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) sayings (Hadiths).

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



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## Take care of the Corona warriors who take care of everyone

The corona epidemic has changed the entire world system and forced almost everyone to change their way of life.

However, for many this epidemic has forced them to not only change their professional outlook, but it has also increased the amount of their work. There has been increase in working hours, risk of job loss, and increase in stress levels. But public servants and health professionals are more at risk during this epidemic. While the whole world was living a safe life in their homes, these warriors left no stone unturned to help everyone by putting their lives on the line.

The global pandemic coronavirus has engulfed the entire world. Even today, the number of people infected with this virus and who lost their lives is increasing rapidly. Corona patients are increasing in all countries including India. At the same time, the front line warriors of Corona are fighting this virus every day. Some have even sacrificed their lives in this war while performing their duties. Endangering their own lives and the lives of their families, public servants became

frontline professionals to prevent and neutralize the corona from spreading. They are the ones who are dealing with an unprecedented situation and are trying to get us out of this crisis.

We have seen that their working hours have increased. The overworked public servants are facing a huge amount of stress and sometimes they also face public anger due to the spread of misinformation in the society. For example, police personnel and health officials in Maharashtra faced stone-pelting when going for a check-up campaign to a village. At the same time, they are also struggling with a lack of structural problems and are trying to find a way through innovative solutions. In some districts, the public servants have planned to bring back the daily lives of the citizens with new ideas, such as odd schemes to start the market, creating innovative advertisements, making people aware through songs and poems, etc.

There is no such news from all over the country that on one hand, Corona warriors are being showered with respect by showering flowers, while on the other hand they are left

to fend for themselves when infected. Nearly all the state governments of the country have made a provision of Rs 50 lakh rupees for the financial help of their families on the death of the Corona warriors, but are not conscious about the cost of hospitalization if infected. The situation has become such that even doctors, nursing staff, police officers have to plead with colleagues and relatives for treatment. The central government should maintain the dignity of these heroes by offering them every possible help. It is an important responsibility of the government and court of the country.

One must be committed to his duty to complete and carry on any task. This can be seen from the exemplary service shown by Odisha cadre IAS officer and State Health Secretary Nikunj Dhal, who returned to duty within 24 hours of his father's death. It emphasizes their commitment to duty. We bow down to their loyalty to this country service, a large part of the country's population is currently practicing segregation and working from home, or not working at all. During such a time, G Sreejana, an IAS of-

ficer and Commissioner of Greater Viskhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC), returned to work just 22 days after giving birth to the child, breaking her maternity. This act of dedication by IAS officer G Srijana gives a lesson by showing the importance of handling such a huge responsibility.

Our public servants are handling such a serious situation, so they deserve to be paid extra for their extra hours of work during Covid-19. On this, we should not get into unnecessary arguments. Recently, a school going girl from Maharashtra has written a letter praising police personnel for their service. This small act of gratitude has helped to boost the morale of police personnel. Such small tasks will not only help encourage them to do better but will also help in ending this Covid-19 epidemic as soon as possible.

*Dr. Satyavan Saurabh,  
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# ‘Rajiv Gandhi Paid a Price For Believing In Farooq Abdullah, Modi Won’t’

**A**MID the growing chorus for Statehood in Jammu and Kashmir, National Conference top leaders—Farooq Abdullah and his son Omar Abdullah—have finally ended their political silence and jumped on the bandwagon. But the timing of their talk has once again made people read some old pattern and fuelled speculations about “secret goings-on”.

Back in Eighties when New Delhi had faced a similar leadership crisis in J&K, Rajiv Gandhi government had approached his “buddy” for filling the political void in the valley.

“Rajiv was sure he could trust Farooq to end the impasse in Kashmir, and integrate the state into the Indian polity,” writes Ashwini Bhatnagar, a seasoned scribe, in his recent book, ‘The Lotus Years: Political Life In The Times Of Rajiv Gandhi’.

Published by Hachette, the book offers a “360-degree view” of politics in India during the time of Rajiv Gandhi.

“Farooq’s persuasive ways convinced Rajiv that he was the go-getter that Kashmir so desperately needed,” the author writes.

In November 1986, after months of hectic parleys mediated by Rajesh Pilot, Rajiv and Farooq signed an accord that reinstated the latter as chief minister and proposed a roadmap for “stabilizing” the state.

“Even as a caretaker coalition government was being cobbled together, silent dissent was brewing in both the Congress and the National Conference,” Bhatnagar writes. “Sections in both parties were apprehensive about the secret goings-on.”

In an exclusive interview with *Kashmir Observer*, writer Ashwini Bhatnagar talks about New Delhi’s Kashmir management, his Kashmir reporting days and why Farooq can’t be Modi’s man in Kashmir.

**Do you think Delhi has no hope other than Abdullahs in Kashmir?**

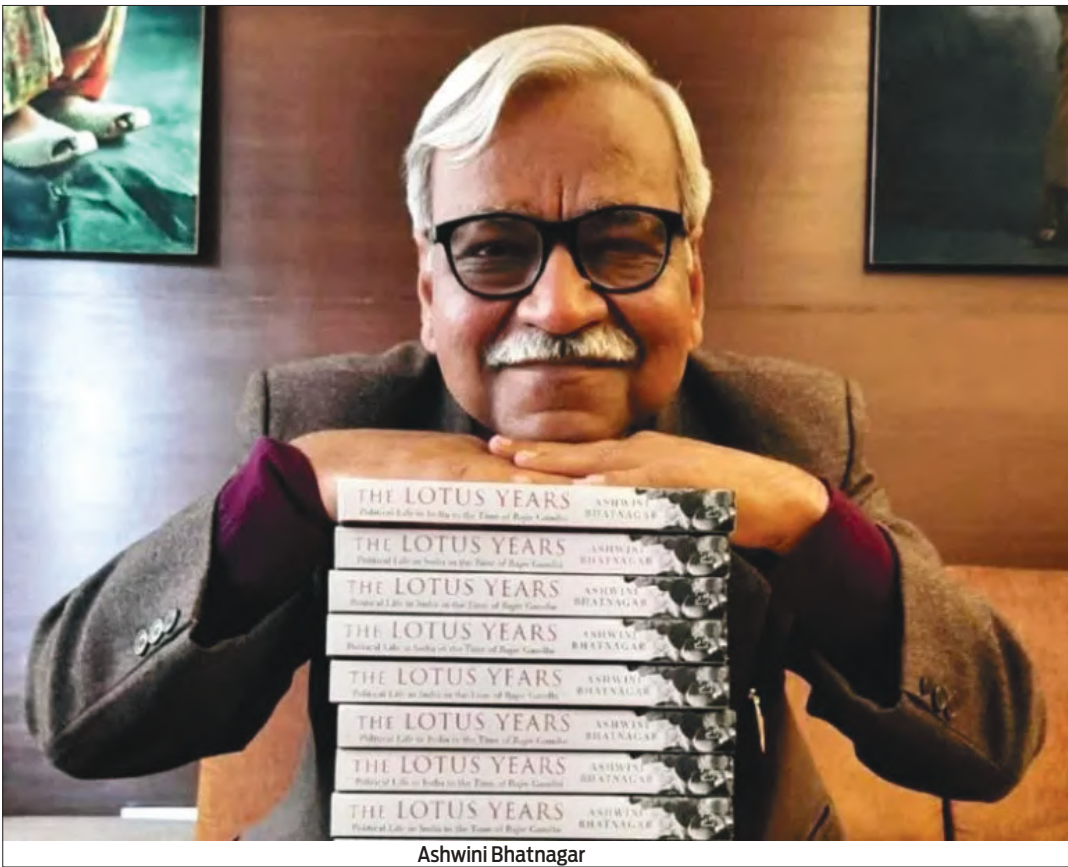
The hope lies with the people of Kashmir. The time for ‘self determination’ (in a different context) of their future as full, equal, prosperous citizens of a democratic, secular republic is now; and it has to come through new leadership.

**But do you see Modi engaging with Abdullahs in the coming future?**

It depends on a lot of factors. But as of today, I don’t think Modi will engage with the Abdullahs in any substantive way. History conclusively proves it is counter-productive to engage with them. Rajiv paid a price for believing in Farooq. I’m sure Modi has learnt the lesson well. Moreover, he’s much more politically-savvy than Rajiv ever was.

**You’ve written about the Rajiv-Farooq Accord in your recent book. How did it come about and what went wrong?**

Without doubt, Rajiv was a man of peace. From the moment he took over, he purposefully worked



Ashwini Bhatnagar

towards quieting dissonance in various parts of India – the Punjab Accord, Assam Accord, Mizo Accord, etc were his handiwork. He was committed to the bigger national picture of unity and harmony even at the expense of his party’s political interest.

The Kashmir Accord was an earnest effort on his part to give Farooq Abdullah a fair chance to address the grievances of the people of J&K. Farooq, however, failed to deliver on his promises and used the opportunity to play footsie with interests inimical to India.

Farooq could have led from the front to secure the rights of his people. That he did not became the trigger point for militant to start calling the shots. From there on it went from being bad to worse and festered for another three decades. And mind you, it is not yet over despite the new formulations at work today.

**How was the relationship between Srinagar and Delhi back then?**

The relationship was always tenuous. It will continue to be so in the foreseeable future too. There is no escape from it. Even if every political person in the Kashmir Valley wants to turn over a

new leaf, Pakistan will not allow it. Actually, since 1980, Kashmir has been on a road which goes nowhere.

If you dispassionately look at it, Delhi has gone out of its way to accommodate Kashmiri aspirations. Funds too have been poured into the former state for development purposes.

But the politicians there have always had the single agenda of stoking religious sentiments, either themselves or through militancy, to keep their coffers flowing.

**Back in those tumultuous days, how did you see Mufti Mohammad Sayeed’s role in Kashmir politics?**

It was reckless. Running with the hare and hunting with the hounds sort of a thing. I have always felt Mufti Mohammad Sayeed thought himself to be clever – it turned out he was too clever by half.

**How was your reporting experience in Kashmir then?**

Well, I started to actively report on Kashmir shortly after the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits began in the late 80s. There was no political activity as such then, only violence. Perhaps, absence of po-

litical activity was in itself politics of sorts.

In fact, Kashmir politicians, since the early 1980s, were either silent spectators or indirect collaborators to the certain forces in the Valley. It suited their purpose because they could leverage the situation to their advantage, both in Srinagar and in Delhi. It was a myopic but an expedient view which afflicted the National Conference and the Congress leaders in the state in equal measure.

Both Farooq Abdullah and Mufti Mohammad Sayeed rode the tiger, sure it was a horse, and they could command it. But, by the time they realized their misjudgment, it was too late. The tiger was riding them. Farooq panicked during the 1987 elections when it seemed that Muslim United Front had become a runaway hit with the masses. He rigged the elections and was confronted with a bigger mess.

Similarly, in 1989, when Mufti was Home Minister in VP Singh’s government at the Centre, his daughter was kidnapped by the very people he had helped to raise. Farooq and Mufti had now become hapless purveyors of the shift from their leverage politics to diktats of AK-47s.

**How was Kashmir story different for your journalism career?**

I have covered militancy in Punjab, Assam, Nagaland and Mizoram too besides Kashmir. Frankly, the tragedy and futility of it remains the same everywhere. It is always about gain for a select few and a massive loss to people at large. The young, the innocent get killed and tortured. Never the kin of the leaders. It’s the peoples’ lives that is destroyed. They live through shootings, curfews and police searches while the leaders travel for holidays abroad when the going gets rough at home. Every human story is in fact an inhuman story of political perversion. We, as people, have to escape it by forging our own models which serve societal rather than political interests.

**How do you see New Delhi’s new policy and action plan in Kashmir, especially post-abrogation of Article 370?**

Article 370 had become some sort of a totem pole around which a grotesque, ritualistic political dance was being performed now and then. It drew the people to it since it seemed sanctified in some way – may be because it had been happening for so long that it had acquired its own legitimacy. The Centre has uprooted this totem pole. I suppose it was done as part of the strategy to demystify assumed realities in Kashmir politics.

I think the Centre is moving cautiously but surely towards dismantling the scaffold that supported the key players during their bull run. Bifurcation of J&K is another definite step in this direction. Let’s wait and see what eventually happens in the long run. But one thing is sure for now – it will not be business as usual in Kashmir Valley. The fiefdoms will wither away and hopefully die providing space to alternate leadership.

## Hagia Sophia & the Fall of Kemalist Secularism

Soumaya Ghannoushi

**W**hen Mehmed II prayed in the Hagia Sophia after the conquest of Constantinople on 29 May 1453, it signalled a turning point in the power balance in Anatolia in favour of a young new force, the Muslim Turks, who had emerged from Central Asia.

Five centuries later, on 1 February 1935, when Kemal Ataturk declared the Hagia Sophia a museum, it was another turning point, announcing the age of Kemalism - of top-down, forced westernisation and secularisation.

The Hagia Sophia’s enormous, precious prayer carpet was torn to pieces. Its school annex, the first Ottoman university, was demolished. The gigantic candles that lit its prayer halls were chopped off and melted. Its small Beyazit II minaret was destroyed and the rest of its minarets were due to follow suit, had it not turned out that they supported the domes, which would then have collapsed, bringing the whole edifice down.

**The project of Kemalism**

The conversion was a resounding declaration of the project of Kemalism, which placed the elimination of Turkey’s religious heritage at the forefront. The replacement of the Ottoman Arabic script with the Latin alphabet, the ban on the call to prayer in the original Arabic, prohibition of traditional Islamic dress, and closure of hundreds of mosques, schools, shrines and religious endowments, were other manifestations of this radical project.

The Turks saw Ataturk as a great liberator, a national hero who had confronted British and French forces as they occupied Anatolia - so much so that he was known as “Gazi Kemal”, or Conqueror; a new Mehmed II, no less.

The message was clear and unequivocal: there will be no tolerance of religious expression in whatever shape or form - not even simple, mundane rituals and practices

Ataturk proceeded to use the legitimacy acquired from his role in the national liberation struggle to launch a virulent campaign against the country’s Ottoman legacy, in favour of a state-imposed modernisation and military secularisation, which revolved around his cult of personality.

When three decades later, elected Prime Minister, Adnan Menderes, though neither religious nor an Islamist, sought to reign in this ferocious assault on society’s culture and identity, for instance, by re-instituting the call to prayer (Adhan) in Arabic, which had been raised exclusively in Turkish for 18 years, he was toppled by a brutal military coup, imprisoned and taken to the gallows on 17 September 1961.

The message was clear and unequivocal: there will be no tolerance of religious expression in whatever shape or form - not even simple, mundane rituals and practices.



A man wears a shirt with the Turkish flag in front of the Hagia Sophia or Ayasofya on 10 July

**Charting a different path**

Much water has flown under Istanbul’s bridges since then. Secularism’s sacred military guards found themselves face to face with a movement of Islamisation, which sprung from the depths of Turkish society, from mosques and shrines, schools and universities.

In the 1970s and ‘80s, this vast, fast-growing grassroots movement came to assume a soft political character, which grew increasingly vocal. The young Recep Tayyip Erdogan had himself been part of this rising movement before he was elected mayor of a decaying Istanbul and began to chart a different path from that of his teacher, Necmettin Erbakan.

Erdogan’s recent decision to return the Hagia Sophia to its former status as a place of worship has, in fact, little to do with a conflict between Islam and Christianity, or church and mosque. It forms part of

the journey that has been unfolding in Turkey over the last four decades: a rejection of military secularisation and forced, top-down westernisation.

Erdogan has been seeking to renew his country’s links with its past Ottoman Islamic history, and to reclaim its symbols and legitimacy, at the heart of which lies the Hagia Sophia.

Sifting through Erdogan’s public statements and discourses since before he was Istanbul’s mayor, one cannot fail to note the frequent references to the Hagia Sophia. Though he often expressed reluctance to change the status of the iconic monument, fearing that the moment was not right, references to Hagia Sophia can be found in his discourse since before he was Istanbul mayor.

His imprisonment in 1999 followed a public speech in which he had passionately quoted the famous verses of nationalist Turkish poet Ziya Gokalp: “The minarets are our spears, the domes our helmets, mosques

our barracks, the faithful our soldiers.”

Reclaiming the Ottoman past

Just as declaring the Hagia Sophia a museum symbolised a rupture with Turkey’s Ottoman past and an affirmation of the rise of western secularisation, its reinstatement as a mosque signifies a reclaiming of the country’s past. Erdogan describes it as a return to our forefathers; a return to the past as a launching pad to the future, to a new Turkey reconciled with its Ottoman past.

It comes as a conflict of legitimacy rages around the region among different heavyweights. In Saudi Arabia, the de facto ruler, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, has been moving from a state-imposed Wahhabism to an aggressive model of state-imposed westernisation, in sharp contrast with the country’s status as the custodian of Mecca and Medina.

In Egypt next door, al-Azhar, once a powerful centre of Sunni Islam, has lost all influence and credibility. Its sheiks are now seen as little more than officials appointed by military intelligence to legitimise President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi’s policies.

The virulent hostility towards political Islam shared by the two countries (along with the UAE) has driven them to antagonism towards Islam itself.

Turkey, meanwhile, has been going in the opposite direction: affirming its credentials as a leader of Sunni Islam and investing in its symbolic capital as the heir to the Ottoman Empire.

**An inspiring model**

Though the reinstatement of the Hagia Sophia as a mosque is a domestic Turkish affair, it has resonated throughout the Muslim world. Erdogan has been hailed by his supporters as a powerful Muslim leader - the antidote to weak Arab kings and presidents who are seen as complicit in much Muslim suffering, turning their backs on Palestine, Islam and all that is sacred to their people, in order to preserve their corrupt, despotic reigns.

In their eyes, this was just another embodiment of western hypocrisy and double standards

After the Hagia Sophia decision, many Muslims commented that those outraged by the move had been undisturbed by the annexation of mosques big and small, by the conversion of mosques into cathedrals, or by the destruction and seizure of hundreds of other Islamic monuments in Spain, the Balkans, Palestine, Italy, India, Russia, or other parts of the world. In their eyes, this was just another embodiment of western hypocrisy and double standards.

For all the attacks against him in western and Arab media, Erdogan seems to have won the legitimacy contest.

Middle East Eye.



# Team Of Elite Contact Tracers Shows World How To Beat COVID-19

Heesu Lee, Bloomberg

In May, when a coronavirus outbreak hit nightclubs in the South Korean capital of Seoul, health officials quickly unleashed their version of the Navy Seals -- elite teams of epidemiologists, database specialists and laboratory technicians.

An old-school, shoe-leather investigation showed the virus had jumped from a night-club visitor, to a student, to a taxi driver and then alarmingly to a warehouse employee who worked with 4,000 others.

Thousands of the employee's co-workers, their family members and contacts were approached and 9,000 people were eventually tested. Two weeks later, the warehouse flareup was mostly extinguished and infections curtailed at 152.

The work of such so-called Immediate Response Teams offers a look at how South Korea -- once the second worst hit by the coronavirus -- has succeeded in largely quelling its spread without the lockdowns that have derailed lives worldwide. At a time when cities from Los Angeles to Melbourne to Tokyo are grappling with resurgences, South Korea's playbook offers one of the most successful blueprints yet for containing a disease that's killed more than 600,000 worldwide.

The tally of new cases in the Asian country -- which pioneered the testing blitz strategy -- has never fallen to zero, but

the number of daily new cases have largely ranged from 30 to 60 for two months after peaking at more than 800 in February. Compare that with Los Angeles county, which added 2,014 cases on Thursday alone.

South Korea's strategy is also a contrast with the harsh shutdowns instituted in parts of China or the tourism blockade implemented by New Zealand in an attempt to completely stamp out the virus. The Asian nation meticulously targets dangerous hotspots and then simply allows most people to lead lives and run businesses unimpeded.

"We step in when there's a chance of large-scale transmission and our main work is to find the connecting links between cases and prevent a flareup," said Kwon Donghyok, deputy scientific director at the country's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, who oversees the investigative squads. "Finding potential contacts and investigating the cause of infection are the backbone of what we do."

The country now has one of the lowest rates for infections with unknown origin, at about 8%, compared to more than 50% for other countries with recent virus resurgences. Flareups have shrunk from a weekly average of about a dozen to less than six this week.

South Korea has a successful strategy because it learned from the bitter experience of the past, something Western countries didn't have the benefit of. The bulk



of its more than 14,000 cases and nearly 300 deaths are related to the flareup at a religious sect in February and March. Since then, processes developed after the country's 2015 outbreak of the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome have helped it prevent a second wave of the new coronavirus.

South Korea's CDC has about 100 epidemiology investigators, up from just two during the MERS outbreak. During a large potential outbreak, several are pulled for the Immediate Response Team, which usually has about six to eight members.

On any given day, officials investigate potential flareups at di-

verse locations from church group gatherings to clubs for badminton or exotic cars. Infections at low-risk facilities are first handled by municipal health officials, while an Immediate Response Team is called in for high-risk locations.

Other nations have also taken steps to trace contacts and widen testing, with countries like Taiwan and Germany successfully screening to curb the virus. But some have had more difficulty recently. Infections in Melbourne spiked to a record this month because its efforts weren't suitably designed for its migrant population. India has had some success in following contacts and curtail-

ing an outbreak in the Mumbai slum of Dharavi, but replicating that across the breadth of a country with 1.3 billion people has proven to be hard.

"The key strength of South Korea's handling of the coronavirus pandemic is its ability to do a thorough epidemiology investigation on every patient," said Jung Ki-suck, a former CDC director and now professor at Hallym University Medical Center, referring to the detailed public health tracing conducted by officials. "The epidemiology investigation has never been so important because we can reduce the size of outbreaks and even block new

cases from occurring."

That exhaustive and meticulous investigation strategy paid off when investigators were able to trace the warehouse outbreak after following a flareup at nightclubs in the trendy Itaewon neighborhood, said Kwon, who investigated the MERS outbreak and was in Rio de Janeiro to investigate potential outbreak of the Zika virus during the 2016 Olympics.

The CDC discovered that a night-club visitor who was a private tutor spread the virus to one of his students. The student, who was unaware of the infection, used a coin-operated karaoke room, transmitting the virus to a taxi-driver singing in an adjoining room.

The taxi-driver also worked as a part-time photographer and took photos of a birthday party at a buffet restaurant in the area where the distribution center is located.

Through surveillance footage and mobile phone records, investigators contacted everyone who had been at the restaurant around the time of the birthday party. Among those who were infected at the restaurant was a woman who had worked for a day at the warehouse.

To be sure, some of the tactics used in South Korea, which has a population of about 51 million, might be difficult to replicate in vastly populated emerging countries. And the Asian country has benefitted from surveillance technology that might not be acceptable to citizens of many Western nations.

Tracing potential contacts in South Korea involved reviewing hundreds of hours of surveillance camera footage and going through mobile phone and credit card transactions. So-called CCTVs are ubiquitous in South Korea as virtually all streets and workplaces have them.

"Other countries simply don't have the capacity to do these thorough investigations on patients," said Jung, the former CDC director. "We had a smaller absolute number of cases than other nations, but more importantly, the social norm, where people are okay with their privacy being infringed for the wider public interest, allowed comprehensive investigations, which is just unimaginable in western countries."

South Korea has said it's expecting some spike in cases among construction workers returning from virus hit Iraq and more cases from a Russian ship at one of its ports. While those are mostly imported cases brought in from the outside, South Korea's virus squad knows how tenuous its gains are, and the importance of vigilance. Many countries, including Asia's financial capital, Hong Kong, have successfully beaten back the virus for months, only to see it make a sudden comeback.

"Any mass infections we have witnessed have happened in the blink of an eye," Kwon said. "If we miss a tiny piece of a link or let a small detail slip by, we'll for sure be experiencing a resurgence in cases."

## Heart Inflammation Observed In Recently Recovered Covid-19 Patients: Study

Press Trust Of India

An analysis of 100 patients who recently recovered from novel coronavirus infection has revealed that nearly 80 per cent of them have cardiac manifestations of the disease, a finding which indicates the need for further research to understand the long-term consequences of COVID-19.

The study, published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, assessed 100 patients who recently recovered from COVID-19 illness from Germany's University Hospital Frankfurt between April and June 2020.

According to the researchers, including those from the hospital, cardiac involvement was observed in 78 patients, and ongoing heart inflammation in 60 individuals.

They said the reported symptoms were independent of pre-existing conditions, severity and overall course of the acute illness, and time from the original diagnosis.

In the study, the scientists assessed recent recovery from the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 infection as determined by RT-PCR assays which check for the presence of the virus from swab tests of patients' upper respira-



tory tract.

The researchers assessed the patients' demographic characteristics, blood markers of heart health, and cardiovascular magnetic resonance (CMR) scans.

They said 53 of the patients were male, and the average age was 49 years.

According to the study, 67 patients recovered at home, while 33 required hospitalisation.

At the time of the heart scan, the scientists said the mol-

ecule high-sensitivity troponin T (hsTnT) was detectable in the blood samples of 71 of the 100 patients recently recovered from COVID-19, and significantly elevated in five of them.

They said a total of 78 patients recently recovered from COVID-19 had abnormal CMR scan findings.

The researchers also noted that heart tissue sample analysis in the patients with severe findings showed active inflammation caused by the immune system.

"The results of our study provide important insights into the prevalence of cardiovascular involvement in the early convalescent stage," the scientists wrote in the study.

Citing the limitations of the study, the researchers said the findings are not validated for the use in pediatric patients 18 years and younger.

They added that the research also does not represent patients during acute COVID-19 infection, or those who are completely as-

## Lithium In Drinking Water May Have Anti-Suicidal Effect

Agencies

It looks like we have now one more reason to drink plenty of water as scientists, including one of Indian-origin, found that naturally occurring lithium in public drinking water may have an anti-suicidal effect and linked with lower suicide rates.

Lithium, sometimes referred to as the 'Magic Ion', is widely and effectively used as a medication for the treatment and prevention of manic and depressive episodes, stabilising mood and reducing the risk of suicide in people with mood disorders.

Its anti-aggressive properties can help reduce impulsivity, aggression, violent criminal behaviour and chronic substance abuse.

Lithium is a naturally occurring element and is found in variable amounts in vegetables, grains, spices and drinking water. It is present in trace amounts in virtually all rocks, and is mobilised by weathering into soils, ground and standing water, and thus into the public water supply.

"It is promising that higher levels of trace lithium in drinking water may exert an anti-suicidal effect and have the potential to improve community mental health," said study lead author Anjum Memon from Brighton and Sussex Medical School (BSMS) in the UK.



Published in the British Journal of Psychiatry, the study collated research from around the world and found that geographical areas with relatively high levels of concentration of lithium in public drinking water had correspondingly lower suicide rates.

The study involved systematic review and meta-analysis of all previous studies on the subject - conducted in Austria, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, UK, Japan and the US - which correlated naturally occurring lithium levels in drinking water samples and suicide rates in 1,286 regions/counties/cities in these countries.

The health benefits and curative powers of naturally occurring lithium in water have been known for centuries.

The Lithia Springs, an ancient Native American sacred medicinal spring, with its natural lithi-

um-enriched water, is renowned for its health-giving properties. In fact, the popular soft drink 7-Up contained lithium when it was created in 1929.

Recent studies have also linked lithium to reduced incidence of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. This raises the potential for its preventative use to combat the risk of dementia.

This synthesis and analysis of all available evidence confirms previous findings of some individual studies and shows a significant relationship between higher lithium levels in drinking water and lower suicide rates in the community.

"These findings are also consistent with the finding in clinical trials that lithium reduces suicide and related behaviours in people with a mood disorder," the study authors wrote.

## Study Finds How Neurons Reshape Inside Body Fat To Boost Its Calorie-Burning Capacity

Agencies

The breakdown of fat molecules are actually ignited by the nerves embedded in the fat tissue, and a new study now reveals that these fat-burning neurons have previously unrecognized powers.

Many previous research papers have suggested that one can lose fat by eating less or moving more. However, despite studying it for decades, the biology underlying this equation remains mysterious.

If the nerves receive the right signal, they have an astonishing capacity to grow. That signal is the hormone leptin, which is released by the fat cells themselves.

In experiments with mice, results of which published in the

journal Nature, the researchers found that the normally bushy network of neural fibres within fat tissue shrinks in the absence of leptin and grows back when the hormone is given as a drug. These changes were shown to influence the animals' ability to burn the energy stored in fat.

"While the architecture of the nervous system can change significantly as a young animal develops, we did not expect to find this profound level of neural plasticity in an adult," said Jeffrey M. Friedman, a molecular geneticist at The Rockefeller University.

If confirmed in humans, the findings could advance research on obesity and related diseases, and potentially open the door to developing new treatments that target neurons in fat.

The team began by looking

at what happens to mice who do not produce leptin on their own, and how they respond when treated with it.

Discovered in Friedman's lab in 1994, the hormone relays signals between fat deposits and the brain, allowing the nervous system to curb appetite and boost energy expenditure to regulate body weight. When mice are genetically engineered to stop producing leptin, they grow three times heavier than normal mice. They eat more, move less, and cannot survive in what should be tolerable cold because their body can't properly utilize fat to generate heat.

Give these mice a dose of leptin, however, and they quickly begin to eat less and move more. But when the researchers treated them longer, for two

weeks, more profound changes occurred: the animals started to break down white fat, which stores unused calories, at normal levels, and regained the ability to use another form of fat tissue, brown fat, to generate heat.

It was this slower change that interested the research team, including the first authors of the Nature paper, Putianqi Wang, a graduate student in the lab, and Ken H. Loh, a postdoctoral fellow. They suspected that changes in neurons outside the brain--those that extend into fat--might explain why this part of the response to leptin took some time.

Using an imaging technique developed by the lab of Rockefeller's Paul Cohen to visualize nerves inside fat, the researchers traced leptin's effects on the fat-embedded neurons up to the

brain's hypothalamus region. From here, they found, leptin's growth-promoting message travels via the spinal cord back to the neurons in fat.

"This work provides the first example of how leptin can regulate the presence of neurons in fat, both white and brown," added Cohen.

Through this pathway, fat appears to be telling the brain how much innervation it needs to function properly.

"Fat is indirectly controlling its own innervation and thus function," Friedman says. "It is an exquisite feedback loop."

Future research will analyze the role of this pathway in human obesity and possibly provide a novel approach for therapy. Most obese people produce high levels of leptin, and show



a diminished response to hormone injections, suggesting that their brain is resistant to the hormone. Thus, bypassing leptin resistance could have a therapeutic benefit for these patients.

"In the new study we see that similar to animals lacking leptin,

obese, leptin-resistant animals also show reduced-fat innervation. So we speculate that directly activating the nerves that innervate fat and restoring a normal ability to use stored fat could provide a possible new avenue for treating obesity," Friedman said.



## Twitter Removes Coronavirus “Misinformation” Video Posted By Trump

### Agencies

Washington: Twitter said Tuesday it had withdrawn a video retweeted by President Donald Trump in which doctors made allegedly false claims about the coronavirus pandemic, after Facebook took similar action.

“Tweets with the video are in violation of our COVID-19 misinformation policy. We are taking action in line with our policy,” a Twitter spokesperson said, declining to give details on how many people had watched the video.

The video was also removed by Facebook on Monday evening, said a company spokesperson, explaining that the footage shared “false information about cures and treatments for COVID-19.”

The video, which shows

lion people on Facebook before it was removed, according to The Washington Post.

The doctors also backed the use of hydroxychloroquine, an antimalarial drug that has not been proved effective against COVID-19.

Shortly after it was removed from Facebook, Trump tweeted several clips of the video to his 84 million followers.

The Post said Trump also shared 14 tweets defending the use of hydroxychloroquine.

Twitter has begun acting against tweets by Trump that it says break their rules.

In June, the social media platform hid a tweet in which he threatened to use “serious force” against protestors in Washington, saying it broke rules over abusive content.

The latest moves escalated the battle between the White



a group of doctors claiming masks and lockdowns were not required to halt the disease, had been watched by 14 mil-

House and social media firms which Trump has accused of bias against conservatives, despite his own large following.

## 5 Pakistani commandos killed in raid on militant hideout

### Press Trust Of India

Peshawar: Police in northwestern Pakistan on Tuesday conducted a raid on a suspected militant hideout, resulting in a firefight in which five anti-terrorism commandos and two civilians were killed.



The incident took place in Chilas, a city of Diamer district of Gilgit-Baltistan.

According to Gilgit-Baltistan police spokesperson Mubarak Jan, the operation was carried out after the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) received information about the presence of the militants at a house in Ronai area of Chilas.

“Five CTD officials were killed and as many injured during the operation. Two civilians were also killed in the shootout,” the spokesperson said in a statement.

However, it did not give any

details about the militants who opened fire on the police team.

“Police cordoned off the area after the incident,” he said.

Residents of Ronai village held a demonstration and blocked the main Chilas Road to protest against the killing of two civilians.

**The Operation was carried out after the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) received information about the presence of the militants at a house in Ronai area of Chilas**

They alleged that the police and CTD had raided a house on “wrong information”.

Senior police officials reached there to persuade them to end the protest. They assured them that the killers would soon be apprehended.



## China Urges India To Join Nations Resisting US Hegemony

### Agencies

**Beijing: China has called on India to join the nations resisting American hegemony, amid increasingly aggressive anti-China posturing by the United States.**

Ji Rong, a spokesperson for the Indian Embassy in New Delhi, said on Monday that India was an emerging economy and adhered to strategic independence and should thus resist hegemony together with China and other nations.

“China and India should resolutely oppose any act of reversing the wheel of history, firmly resist hegemonism and power politics, and resolutely promote democratization and legalization of international relations,” Ji said in a series of tweets.

Relations between the United States and China have hit the lowest level in decades. The two are at loggerheads over a range of issues, including trade, Hong Kong, Taiwan, the South China Sea, and the coronavirus pandemic.

In all of those cases, Washington has been sharply esca-

lating against Beijing in recent weeks. Last Tuesday, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said President Donald Trump’s administration wanted to build a coalition to counter an alleged “threat” from China. “We hope we can build out a coalition that understands the threat,” Pompeo said in London.

Ji said some US politicians always viewed China with a Cold War mentality, stressing Beijing’s commitment to international laws unlike Washington.

“US kept turning away from international treaties and organizations and selectively applied international law. International community knows who is real trouble-maker and threat,” the Chinese spokesperson said.

The US, under Trump, has been unilaterally abandoning international treaty after international treaty, attempting often unsuccessfully to renegotiate deals on its own terms.

Commenting on Pompeo’s announcement, Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar urged Washington to learn to work in a multilateral world.

## China Discusses 4-Point Plan With Pak, Nepal, Afghanistan Amid Pandemic

### Agencies

Beijing: Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Monday held the first joint virtual conference with his counterparts from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nepal during which he proposed a four-point plan to contain the novel coronavirus pandemic, boost economic recovery and resumption of the BRI (Belt and Road Initiative) infrastructure projects.

Afghanistan’s acting Foreign Minister Mohammad Hanif Atmar and Nepalese Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali attended the virtual meeting, according to a Chinese Foreign Ministry press release.

Pakistan’s Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi did not participate in the meeting. Pakistan was represented by Economic Affairs Minister Makhdoom Khusr-o Bakhtiar.

Addressing the meeting, which is the first involving the four countries, Mr Wang proposed the four-point action plan including consolidating the consensus on unity and fight against the pandemic,

avoiding politicisation and stigmatisation of the coronavirus and firmly support the World Health Organization (WHO) in playing its due role to jointly building global health community.

Earlier this month, the Trump administration formally notified the United Nations of its decision to withdraw the United States from the World Health Organization (WHO), breaking off ties with the global health body despite the raging coronavirus pandemic in the country.

The US has accused the WHO of siding with China on the outbreak of the coronavirus, which originated in the Chinese city of Wuhan late last year, alleging the health body misled the world resulting in deaths of over half a million people globally, including over 146,000 in America alone.

Mr Wang said all the four countries should carry out regional cooperation on joint prevention and control of the pandemic drawing the experience of China and Pakistan, according to the press release.

He said when the Chinese

“I think the US really has to learn to work with a more multipolar world with more plurilateral arrangements, go beyond the alliance with which it has grown up in the last two generations,” Jaishankar said in a video conference organized by the US-India Business Council.

Meanwhile, China and India are negotiating the restoration of peace and a disengagement of troops along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) frontier, which was established after a war in 1962, in the Himalayan region. The disputed border area was the scene of a deadly clash last month, the first such deadly fighting between the two nuclear-armed neighbors since 1967.

The US has offered steadfast support for New Delhi in that dispute over the past few weeks.

In his Monday tweets, Ji stressed that Beijing was committed to exploring a path of peaceful development and win-win cooperation with other nations.

## Iran Targets Dummy US Aircraft Carrier In Gulf Exercises

### Agencies

Tehran: Iran’s Revolutionary Guards blasted a mock-up of a US aircraft carrier with missiles on Tuesday during military exercises in sensitive Gulf waters, state television said.

The exercises – dubbed “Prophet Mohammed 14th” – were held near the Strait of Hormuz, a vital shipping lane for a fifth of global oil output.

They were staged at a time of heightened tensions between Iran and its decades-old arch enemy the United States.

Footage of the war games broadcast on state television showed the Guards’ air and naval forces readying for an attack off the country’s southwest coast.

Speedboats skimmed across the water in formation before ground forces fired cannons and a missile was launched from a helicopter.

The mock-up of a Nimitz-class aircraft carrier came into view with rows of dummy fighter jets on either side of its landing strip.

The television then cut to rockets being fired out to sea from the backs of trucks, before showing damage to the hull of the mock-up aircraft carrier.

Another missile fired from a helicopter left a trail of smoke before appearing to smash into the side of the fake warship. Armed forces were then seen rappelling onto the deck of the vessel, before around a dozen speedboats circle around it.

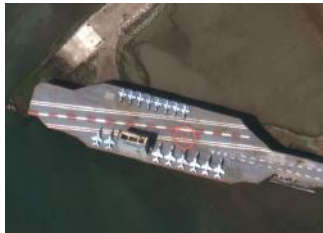
“What was shown today

in these exercises, at the level of aerospace and naval forces, was all offensive,” Guards commander Major General Hossein Salami told state television.

The war games come only days after Tehran accused US fighter jets of harassing an Iranian commercial airliner in the skies over Syria.

At least four passengers on board the Mahan Air plane were injured in Thursday’s incident, after the pilot took emergency action to avoid the warplanes. Tensions have escalated between Iran and the United States since US President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from a landmark nuclear deal in 2018.

The arch foes have come to the brink of war twice since June 2019, when the Guards shot



down a US drone in the Gulf.

Their animosity deepened after Iran’s most prominent general, Qasem Soleimani, was killed in a US drone strike near Baghdad airport in January.

One of the most recent confrontations was in mid-April, when the United States accused the Guards of using speedboats to harass its warships in the Gulf.

## Flipkart Enters Hyperlocal Service Space With Delivery In 90 Minutes



Flipkart said on Tuesday it plans to offer 90-minute deliveries for groceries and home accessories, as the Walmart-owned online retailer goes head to head with Amazon.com Inc in a key growth market for e-commerce.

Flipkart said its hyperlocal service, dubbed Flipkart Quick, will also sell mobile phones and stationery items, taking it a step further than existing quick-delivery services which mainly offer just groceries.

Flipkart Quick will debut in select locations in Bengaluru, the company said, without specifying a launch date.

The new service puts Flipkart more directly in competition with Amazon and Alibaba-backed BigBasket, both of which offer quick deliveries of groceries. Bengaluru-based Flipkart will also go up against grocery delivery upstart

JioMart, backed by Asia’s richest man, Mukesh Ambani.

Google-backed Dunzo and Naspers-backed Swiggy also offer grocery deliveries in India, and the service could be lucrative for companies during the COVID-19 pandemic, which is making more Indians order essential items such as groceries online.

“Halfway through the year of the pandemic, supply chains have transformed drastically,” Flipkart said in a statement. “The hyperlocal category, known for being a convenience for many, has now emerged to be a long-term essential service for the country.”

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Last week, Flipkart said it had acquired Walmart’s local cash-and-carry business in an effort to strengthen its wholesale offerings to mom-and-pop-stores.

## 26 Rohingya feared drowned found hiding on Malaysian islet



children, officials said.

Mr. Zawawi said the Rohingya were believed to have been transported by local fishermen from a main vessel further out at sea and let off near Langkawi so they could sneak

in undetected.

The Rohingya have been detained for further investigation and will be handed to the immigration department, he said in a statement. Two other Rohingya migrants

were also arrested for suspected trafficking.

Hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Muslims have fled Buddhist-majority Myanmar due to a military crackdown, and many live in densely crowded refugee camps in Bangladesh.

Muslim-dominated Malaysia has been a common destination of boats arranged by traffickers who promise the refugees a better life abroad.

Last month, Malaysian authorities detained 269 Rohingya and found a body on board a suspected smuggling boat off Langkawi that they said had been intentionally damaged so it couldn’t be turned back to sea.

The Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency later said that the 269 were transferred from a larger vessel on which dozens of people were believed to have died and their bodies thrown into the sea.

## Israel PM Netanyahu’s son apologises after his tweet offends Hindus



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s eldest son Yair has apologised to Hindus after he faced flak from some Indians who found one of his tweets to be “quite offensive”.

On Sunday, the 29-year-old Yair, who is very active on social media and often defends his father’s policies, posted a picture of the Hindu

goddess Durga, with the face of Liat Ben Ari, the prosecutor in his father’s corruption cases, superimposed over the goddess’ face.

Her many arms were also raised giving the middle finger.

“I’ve tweeted a meme from a satirical page, criticising political figures in Israel. I didn’t realise the meme also portrayed an image con-

nected to the majestic Hindu faith. As soon as I realised it from comments of our Indian friends, I have removed the tweet. I apologise,” Yair said in a tweet.

Attorney General Avichai Mandelblat’s face was superimposed over that of a tiger accompanying the goddess under a caption that said, “know your place you despicable people”.

The Twitter users were split in their reaction over the post with some Indians harshly criticising him for the offensive tweet while others giving him the benefit of doubt and attributing it to general ignorance about the Hindu faith in the West.

They were believed to have been transported by local fishermen from a main vessel and let off near Langkawi so they could sneak in undetected

Malaysian authorities said Monday they found 26 Rohingya Muslims, including women and children, hiding on a northern islet after they were initially feared drowned after jumping off a fishing boat.

The Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency launched a search for the group after one Rohingya migrant found Saturday on the islet off the northern resort island of Langkawi told investigators that at least 24 other Rohingya were missing.

Following further interrogation, the agency found 26 Rohingya refugees hiding on the islet on Sunday, said senior agency official Zawawi Abdullah. The group included 12 men, 10 women and four

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