

Maximum : 33°C
Minimum : 18°C
Humidity : 48%
SUNSET
Today 07:28 PM
SUNRISE
Tomorrow 05:45 AM

News Digest

Panch, 2 Cops Injured In Militant Attacks

Srinagar: A Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Panch and two policemen on Tuesday were injured in separate militant attacks in south Kashmir's Kulgam and Pulwama districts. Official sources said that the militants attacked a Panch identified as Arif Ahmad near his residence at Akhran Qazigund. The injured Panch, they said was shifted to emergency Hospital Qazigund with firearm injury in neck. Official sources described his condition 'life threatening' Meanwhile, militants attacked ● P-02

Pak Shells Forward Areas In Poonch

JAMMU: The Pakistan Army on Tuesday opened heavy fire and shelled forward areas along the LoC in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district, drawing retaliation from Indian troops, officials said. They said the Pakistan Army also heavily shelled forward areas along the LoC in Dabraj belt of Mankote sector. "At about 0700 hours, Pak army initiated unprovoked ceasefire violation by firing with small arms & intense shelling with mortars along LoC in Krishnagati sector of district Poonch", a defence spokesman said. The Indian Army is retaliating befittingly, he said. ● P-02

IED 'Diffused' On Baramulla Highway

Srinagar: State forces on Tuesday detected and diffused an improvised explosive device (IED) on Srinagar-Baramulla road in north Kashmir, police said. Army personnel found the IED by the roadside at Hamrey in Pattan area of Baramulla district around 5 am, a police official said. He said a bomb disposal squad was rushed to the spot and the IED was destroyed without causing any harm to life or property.

'Juvenile' Driving SUV Hits Minor Girl

Srinagar: A minor girl is battling for her life at the SMHS hospital here after being hit by a vehicle driven by a 'juvenile' in Sonawari area of Bandipora district. Eight-year-old Nahida was crossing the road at Sarie Dangerpora in Sonawari on Saturday last, when a speeding car (JK01AM-19) hit her, reports said Tuesday. The minor girl was critically injured in the accident and was removed to the SMHS hospital for treatment. She was later put on ventilator support after her condition deteriorated. Nahida's father Bilal Ahmed alleged that the car which crushed his daughter was driven by a minor, identified by Kamran Zahoor Lone from Muju Gund Pattan. He said the accused ● P-02

Teenager Dies Of Drowning

Srinagar: A teenager died while another was rescued by the locals on Tuesday in Kuloosa area of north Kashmir's Bandipora district. According to officials, Sameen Shabir, 15, and Firdous Ahmad, 16, both residents of Nowpora were taking a bath in Nallah-Madhumati on Tuesday when they drowned. Soon after the incident, locals and the police immediately started a rescue operation during which both were evacuated and taken to district hospital Bandipora, officials said. However, the doctors there ● P-02

HC Notice To Govt Against 100% Job Reservation To J&K Domicile

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The J&K High Court on Tuesday issued a notice to government on a plea challenging legal provisions which provide 100 per cent reservation to domicile of the Jammu and Kashmir in public employment.

A bench of Justice Tashi Rabstan issued the notice returnable within four weeks on the plea filed by two residents of Haryana and one from Ladakh.

The petitioners have challenged Sections 3A, 5A, 6, 7 and 8 of Jammu and Kashmir Civil Services (Decentralization and Recruitment) Act, 2010, on the ground that the same

are violative of Article 14, 16, 19 and 21 of the Constitution of India."

They said that section 5A of the law which says that only domicile of the J&K shall be eligible for appointment to any post was violative of Article 16 (3) of the Constitution which guarantees equal opportunity in employment.

The plea further said that the reservations contemplated in Article 16 should not exceed 50 per cent.

The petitioners have also contended that the Parliament has never delegated the law making power of Article 16(3) of Constitution to the Central Government under ● PAGE 02

THE POWER DELEGATED UNDER SECTION 96 was only for the purpose of facilitating the applications of already prevailing law in former State of Jammu and Kashmir or to make laws applicable to new Union

PAGE 1 Anchor

Auqib Javeed

FOR some time now, Lt Gen DS Hooda (ret'd), the former General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Indian army's Northern Command, has been talking Kashmir on various forums and during prime time TV debates.

Among other things, the Indian military veteran is endorsing the 'need to strike the right balance between security and the human needs of Kashmiris'.

In an exclusive chat with Kashmir Observer, the retired general talks about the fallouts of Article 370 abrogation, the military man-

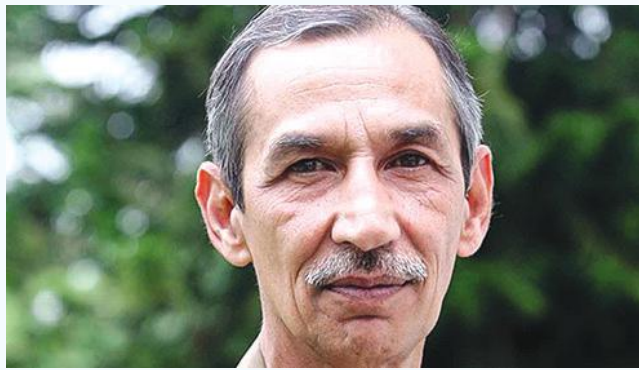
agement of Kashmir, and the need for the political process.

How do you see the situation in Kashmir post abrogation of Article 370?

There were two narratives that were in vogue post the abrogation of Article 370.

The first was that the step would lead to normalcy and greater economic development in the state while the second narrative predicted a sharp rise in violence and protests.

Largely, the violence in Kashmir has remained under check. However, the strict lockdown in the name of security has caused enormous distress to the common man. I think we need to strike the right



balance between security and the human needs of the citizens.

Initially, you supported the revocation of special status by

saying "any step that leads to greater integration of J&K with the rest of the country should be welcomed". But lately, we're see-

ing some change of heart.

There's really no change of heart. I firmly believe that there should be a greater integration of J&K with the rest of the country.

However, I do feel that our strategy has been more security-centric rather than being people-centric.

The government should initiate a genuine outreach to the people that is transparent and builds confidence and trust.

Ultimately, that is the path towards resolving the problem.

Has the last summer's 'unilateral' step now made Beijing part of the bargain in the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir?

The border problem between

New Delhi and Beijing has existed since India's independence and is not a new occurrence.

However, China has no role to play as far as the internal problem in J&K is concerned.

But as a military veteran, how do you see the Dragon's moves and motives in Ladakh now?

The current standoff in Ladakh is extremely serious and has the potential to adversely affect the complete trajectory of India-China relations.

While we hope that the crisis will be resolved peacefully, the Chinese attitude is not very encouraging. India needs to stand very firm on its demands. ● PAGE 02

Kashmir Locked Down On August 5 Anniversary

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: Restrictions were enforced in the Kashmir valley a day ahead of the first anniversary of revocation of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir which has not been accepted by mainstream regional parties with the National Conference dubbing it as a "day of mourning".

The Srinagar administration, which had announced a 48-hour-long curfew beginning Tuesday morning, issued a fresh order in the evening saying the curfew had been lifted as the day remained incident free but made it clear that restrictions would continue in view of a spike in COV-19 cases.

An order was issued by Deputy Commissioner Shahid Choudhury on Tuesday saying that after assessing the situation in the area, it has been decided to prematurely end the curfew which was slated to continue till Wednesday night. The order, however, states that restrictions ordered earlier under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code and ● PAGE 02



SECURITY PERSONNEL blocking lanes in uptown Srinagar to curb public movement on the eve of August 5

Farooq Calls Meet To Chalk Out Future Strategy

Former Chief Minister and National Conference President Dr Farooq Abdullah has convened a meeting of several mainstream parties on Wednesday to ● P-02

Kargil Parties To Observe August 5 As 'Black Day'

Various religious and political parties, including Congress and National Conference have called for protest and shutdown in Kargil district of ● P-02

Eight More Die Of Covid-19 In Kashmir, J&K Toll 417

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: At least eight more people died of coronavirus in Kashmir valley on Tuesday, taking the total number of fatalities across Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory to 417, officials said.

They said that two among the deaths—a 65-year-old woman from Magam Budgam and a 75-year-old man from Srinagar's Khaniyar area—were reported at CD hospital, one of the exclusive facilities for the management of the covid-19 patients in Kashmir Valley.

Also, two residents, a 65-year-old and a 55-year-old from Attina and

6 Cops Among 390 New Cases

Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday reported 390 covid-19 cases including 48 travelers, taking the total tally to 22396. Among the cases 152 were reported from Jammu division and 238 from Kashmir including six policemen, two pregnant women, four minors and a prisoner. ● P-02

Dregam Kremshore areas of Budgam died at SKIMS Soura and SMHS hospital respectively, they said. Regarding the sexagenarian ● PAGE 02

All Kashmir Districts 'Red' Except Bandipora

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir government has classified the districts into red, orange and green zones depending on the severity of COVID-19 spread in the areas and declared the entire Kashmir region, except Bandipora, as a "red zone".

The categorisation has been done to implement restrictions after August 5, when the current phase of lockdown in the union territory ends, according to an order issued

Religious Places To Open On August 16

The Jammu and Kashmir government on Tuesday allowed to open religious places across the Union Territory from August 16, four months after a ban was imposed over Covid-19 surge. The announcement regarding it was made by the government spokesperson Rohit Kansal in a post on his Twitter handle. "Major decision by J&K Government. ● P-02

by the chairperson of the State Executive Committee.

The order declared all districts of Kashmir, except Bandipora, and Ramban district of Jammu as red zones.

Kathua, Samba, Bandipora, Reasi, Udhampur, Poonch, Rajouri and Jammu districts are in orange zone and Doda ● PAGE 02



been released by Prime Minister Imran Khan. This is an ● PAGE 02

Pak Shows Kashmir As Its Part In New Map, India Fumes

Press Trust Of India

ISLAMABAD/NEW DELHI: Pakistan on Tuesday unveiled its new political map showing the entire Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh as its territories, drawing the ire of India, which dismissed it as ridiculous assertions that have "neither legal validity nor international credibility."

"We have seen a so-called political map" of Pakistan that has

16 From Erstwhile J&K State Crack UPSC Exam 2019

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: At least sixteen aspirants from erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir state have cracked the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) civil service exam-2019.

The list of 829 successful candidates made public by the UPSC on Tuesday included 16 from the erstwhile state including two from Ladakh, reported GNS.

Among them include Abhishkek Augustsya from Jammu is ranked at 38 followed by Sunny Gupta (148), Dev Ahuti from Jammu (177), Parth Gupta (240), Asrar Ahmad Kitchloo (248), Asif Yousuf Tantray (328), Namgyal Angmo (323) Nadia Beigh (350)—Kupwara, Aftab Rasool (412)—from Trehgam Kupwara, Sabzar Ahmad Ganie (628)—Hailing from a remote village of Gheebom Kokernag,

4% Reservation For Ladakh Students In J&K Colleges

The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Tuesday announced reservation of 4 per cent seats in its engineering and medical colleges for students hailing from the Ladakh Union Territory. The decision to this effect was taken at a meeting chaired ● P-02

Majid Iqbal Khan (638)—a resident of Shangus Anantnag, Stanzin Wangyal (716), Rayees Hussain (747), Mohammed Nawas Sharaf Uddin Sharafuddin (778), and Syed Junaid Adil (822). The UPSC has declared the final list of selected candidates ● PAGE 02

HRW Slams GoI Over 'Human Rights Abuses' In Kashmir

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The international rights body Human Rights Watch on Tuesday slammed government of India for continued harsh and discriminatory restrictions in Jammu and Kashmir, one year after the revocation of the erstwhile state's constitutional status on August 5, 2019.

In a statement issued from New York, the international human rights body said that the government's unwarranted restraints on the rights to free speech, access to information, health care, and education have been intensified by the Covid-19 pandemic in Jammu and Kashmir. On August 3, 2020, the HRW statement said, the au-



thorities issued an order restricting movement for two days to prevent "violent protests" against last year's decision to revoke constitutional autonomy.

"Indian government claims that it was determined to improve Kashmiri lives ring hollow ● PAGE 02

‘A Long-Term Kashmir ...

Even after the revocation of Article 370, Kashmiri youth continue to join militancy. Has the move alienated the valley further?

It is true that local recruitment continues, although figures suggest that it has been reducing in the last two years. Local recruitment has been one of the primary concerns of the army and all efforts are made to wean the youth away from terror. We understand that the killing of local youth increases the sense of alienation. I think the civil society also cannot escape responsibility and has to play a big part to stop this bleeding of the youth.

Has a military solution failed in the valley?

The armed conflict in J&K is more than 30 years old and the army understands that tackling the situation goes beyond just killing terrorists. It is a whole of government approach where all elements of the government work together to target the root causes that sustains terrorism. This involves political steps, economic empowerment, meeting aspirations of the people, and ensuring security. Looking at this merely through the lens of a “military solution” would be wrong.

There's a general impression among people that the army is in direct war with them in Kashmir. How would you respond to that?

If such an impression exists, it is completely wrong. The army has never hesitated to reach out to the local population during times of distress. I have personally been involved in two of the largest disaster relief operations during the earthquake of 2005 and the floods of 2014. The army's approach to Counter Terrorist operations is based on the foundation of people friendly operations. We are conscious of the challenges faced by the Awaam due to the terrorist threat and the curbs due to the consequent security measures. This is an unfortunate reality of conflict zones, but the attempt is always to minimize any collateral damage.

After, what many call, ‘Winning Hearts and Minds’ merely got reduced to a slogan, has “operation Sadbhavana” failed in the valley?

Winning of ‘Hearts and Minds’ is not merely a slogan, but an essential element of our strategy. Those criticizing ‘Sadbhavana’ must travel to those remote far-flung areas and border regions which are inaccessible and cut off for months. Sadbhavana initiatives provide critical succour and support in these areas. More than 10,000 students are studying in Army Goodwill Schools in Kashmir and the attempt is to provide them quality education. Just because some local youth pick up the gun is no reason to declare ‘Sadbhavana’ a failure and shut down the schools and other programmes.

During the 2016 summer protests, you had said that the situation in the valley was disturbing, and that the army needs to introspect. Can you please elaborate on it further?

What I had said after 40 days of unrest in 2016 was that everybody, who is in any way involved in J&K, needs to introspect and see what we can do to stop it. I had appealed for calm and mentioned that no one is going to get away from it unhurt. I could repeat the same thing today. Everyone in Kashmir has a role in ensuring peace. Merely criticizing the government or security forces will not start us on the path to conflict resolution. As I mentioned earlier, civil society must also play its part, particularly in ensuring that the youth do not resort to violence.

Do you think that there is an urgent need to start a political process in Kashmir?

Without a political process, we will only be left with trying to contain or manage the situation, primarily through the efforts of the security forces. A long-term solution will have to be mainly political in nature.

Kashmir Locked Down On...

the Disaster Management Act, in view of the prevailing situation due to COVID-19, will remain enforced across the district as directed through an order issued on July 31.

Choudhury said avoiding public gatherings is an important part of the efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19 and urged the general public to ensure strict compliance with all preventive guidelines and protocols that the government has issued in regard to it. He has directed for strict adherence to the restrictions as ordered. Curfew was imposed in Srinagar for two days, beginning Tuesday, as authorities apprehended violent protests in view of plans of separatists and Pakistan-sponsored groups to observe August 5 as black day. Police and CRPF personnel have been deployed in strength across the Valley to ensure that the plans of separatists to disturb peace do not succeed, officials said.

In other districts, the administration has imposed strict restrictions on the movement of people over the next two days. The reason given by the authorities for these restrictions was containment of COVID-19 infection. Barricades were set up at hundreds of places in the Valley including Srinagar city to regulate movement of essential services and during emergencies while concertina wires have been laid to block some parts of the roads, the officials said. Meanwhile, political parties in Kashmir have maintained that constitutional changes affected last year in respect of Jammu and Kashmir were not acceptable to the people.

National Conference spokesperson Imran Dar said the party will mark August 5 as the “day of mourning” and said his party would continue to fight for the people's rights constitutionally and legally. “Although the people of JK have been at the receiving end, we don't want to put them through added trepidation. Our struggle has always been peaceful, we will continue with that proclivity of ours until our rights are restored,” he said. Dar said August 5 is “the darkest patch in the history of Jammu and Kashmir marking the forcible, illegal and unconstitutional infringement of the rights of its people” and added that actions of last year were betrayal and breach of faith. He said the measures have destroyed the space for mainstream leaders in J&K and ditched their cause “which they have nurtured with their blood over the years”.

Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Conference said the decision of the Union government to revoke special status of the erstwhile state was not acceptable to the people. “Decisions taken on and after August 5 (2019) are not acceptable to people. These decisions have been thrust on the people of Kashmir and are bereft of any acceptance or legitimacy amongst the masses,” Peoples Conference said in a statement. CPI(M) leader Mohammad Yusuf Tarigami said all the promises made by the Centre at the time of abrogating article 370 last year proved to be a mirage.

“It has been a year since the BJP government scrapped J&K's special status under Article 370, 35A, demoted the erstwhile state into two Union Territories. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah justified the decision on the floor of the house saying it would end decades-long militancy, separatism and corruption in the region and bring development, jobs and prosperity. “However, one year down the line, promises proved to be a mirage and the claims a hoax. None of the aforementioned claims pass the test of reality,” Tarigami said in a statement issued Tuesday.

Farooq Calls Meet To Chalk ...

chalk out strategy on ‘retrieving’ special status of Jammu and Kashmir. Abdullah has sent out invitations to many mainstream party leaders asking them to attend a crucial meeting at his Gupkar residence tomorrow, news agency KNS reported. The agenda of the meeting, the report said was to deliberate over the prevailing political mess in J&K and to discuss future strategy about how to retrieve special status. Quoting an unnamed mainstream leader, the report says that the meeting will be attended by leaders of Peoples Conference (PC), Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Congress, Awami National Conference (ANC), CPI (M), PDF and J&K Peoples Movement headed by former bureaucrat turned politician Dr Shah Faesal. The meeting is scheduled to start at 11am.

“Besides Dr Farooq Abdullah, former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, MPs Justice (retd), Hसनain Masoodi and Mohammad Akbar Lone, Dr Sheikh Mustafa Kamal, Sajad Lone Muzaffar Shah, Gulam Ahmad Mir, Mohammad Yusuf Tarigami and Dr Shah Faesal are likely to attend to meet,” he said. However, authorities have deployed police and other paramilitary forces personnel in

strength in and around the residences of political leaders ahead of first anniversary of abrogation of Article 370 & 35(A).

ANC senior vice-president Muzaffar Shah confirmed the restrictions around his residence. “My gate has been shut by forces and police van has been deputed outside. I have been informed about two-days of house detention by cops,” he said. When asked how scheduled meeting is possible amid restrictions by authorities he said, “Gupkar Declaration is alive and we will never compromise on it. We will fight democratically against decisions taken on August 5, 2019” Shah said. As Modi led BJP Government on Wednesday is celebrating the first anniversary of abrogation of Article 370 and 35(A), authorities of J&K have imposed strict curfew across Srinagar district to avert any untoward law and order situation at the occasion.

Meanwhile from past few weeks, political parties across the divide have upped the ante for restoration of statehood. Few members of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) on Monday addressed media and said party will protest on August 5 against the ‘unilateral’ decisions taken last year.

Kargil Parties To Observe...

Ladakh Union Territory on Wednesday against the revocation of Jammu and Kashmir's special status and splitting the state into two Union Territories by government of India last year. In a joint statement issued to the media, senior NC leader Qamar Ali Akhoun and Working President Congress Committee Ladakh, Haji Asgar Ali Karbalaï urged the people of Kargil to observe August 5 as a ‘black day’ as a mark of protest against central government's decision.

The decision regarding it was taken in a joint meeting of the major political parties of Kargil district, called to deliberate upon the situation arising after government's August 5 move. The BJP leaders, the statement said, however did not attend the meeting.

“In the meeting, the NC and Congress decided to declare August 5 as the darkest day in the history of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. These two parties have strongly condemned the division of the erstwhile state and have appealed reintegration of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh and complete restoration of statehood,” the statement said. It added that the two political parties also condemned the loss of social and political rights of the people of Ladakh and its cultural identity as a result of August 5 decision. “The parties have also decided that in the near future, they will formulate a future course of action in this regard. They have appealed to the general public and religious and social institutions of Kargil to wholeheartedly extend their support in the coming action plan in the interest of the region,” the statement said.

Meanwhile, Anjuman-e-Sahab Zaman- a socio-religious organization of Kargil has also urged people to mark the day as ‘black-day’ and observer a shutdown. “People of Kargil condemn and reject what was taken without the consent of the people of Jammu & Kashmir and against their aspirations. Our struggle to get justice will continue,” the Anjuman said. Pertinently, Modi-led government on August 5, last year revoked Article 370 and Article-35A, that granted special status to Jammu and Kashmir, and split the state into two Union Territories. The decision was followed by a harsh curfew and crackdown in the erstwhile state during which thousands of political workers, including three former Chief Ministers were detained.

Top Indian Military And...

Shringla and Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar.

It is learnt that Gen. Naravane apprised the meeting about deployment of troops and necessary arrangements that will be required for stationing the soldiers in the high-altitude region during the harsh winter months when the temperature goes down below minus 20 degree celsius. “There is no question of lowering our guard at all,” a person aware of the deliberations at the meeting said without elaborating. At the fifth round of military talks on Sunday, the Indian army categorically conveyed to China's PLA that it will not compromise on India's territorial integrity, and that the disengagement of troops from Pangong Tso and a few other friction points in eastern Ladakh should be completed at the earliest. The Indian delegation also very clearly and firmly communicated to the Chinese side that restoration of status quo ante in all areas of eastern Ladakh was key for overall ties between the two countries, and that Beijing must ensure complete disengagement of its troops from the remaining friction points, sources said. They said there was no option for the Chinese military but to disengage from the friction points as demanded by India. “We are ready for a long haul,” said an official on the condition of anonymity.

There have been indications that the negotiations may not have produced very encouraging results, and that both sides will hold more talks to resolve the border row, they said.

Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesman Wang Wenbin, meanwhile, said the two sides should always place the boundary issue in an “appropriate position” in bilateral relations, and avoid differences escalating into disputes. Wang made this remark at a media briefing in Beijing when asked to comment on Minister Jaishankar's comments in a recent interview to a leading English daily in India that the state of the India-China border and the future of the ties between the two countries cannot be separated. The question was posed by a representative of the Chinese official media. The Chinese army has pulled back from Galwan Valley and certain other areas but the withdrawal of troops has not moved forward from the Finger Four and Eight in Pangong Tso as demanded by India. The mountain spurs in the area are referred to as Fingers. China also has not completed withdrawal of troops from Gogra areas.

The focus of the Sunday talks was on finalising the modalities for further de-escalation, and disengagement of troops from various friction points, sources said. The Indian delegation was led by Lt Gen Harinder Singh, the commander of the Leh-based 14 Corps, while the Chinese side was headed by Major General Liu Lin, commander of the South Xinjiang military region.

The previous round of Corps Commander-level talks had taken place on July 14 and it lasted for nearly 15 hours.

The Sunday military talks on the Chinese side of the LAC took place 10 days after both sides held another round of diplomatic talks on the border standoff.

The formal process of disengagement of troops began on July 6, a day after a nearly two-hour telephonic conversation between National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on ways to bring down tension in the area.

The first round of the Lt General talks was held on June 6 during which both sides finalised an agreement to disengage gradually from all the standoff points beginning with Galwan Valley.

However, the situation deteriorated following the Galwan Valley clashes on June 15 in which 20 Indian Army personnel were killed as the two sides significantly bolstered their deployments in most areas along the LAC.

The Chinese side also suffered casualties in the June 15 clashes but it is yet to give out the details. According to an American intelligence report, the number of casualties on the Chinese side was 35.

The second round of talks took place on June 22.

In the third round of military talks on June 30, both sides agreed on an “expedientious, phased and step wise” de-escalation as a “priority” to end the standoff.

Following the Galwan Valley incident, the government has given the armed forces “full freedom” to give a “befitting” response to any Chinese misadventure along the LAC. The Army has sent thousands of additional troops to forward locations along the border following the violent clashes.

The IAF has also moved air defence systems as well as a sizeable number of its frontline combat jets and attack helicopters to several key air bases.

Pak Shows Kashmir As...

exercise in political absurdity, laying untenable claims to ter-

ritories in the Indian State of Gujarat and our Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and of Ladakh, the Ministry of External Affairs said in a brief statement in New Delhi.

“These ridiculous assertions have neither legal validity nor international credibility. In fact, this new effort only confirms reality of Pakistan's obsession with territorial aggrandisement supported by cross-border terrorism, it asserted.

Earlier, Prime Minister Khan released the new political map of Pakistan and said it was approved by the federal Cabinet on Tuesday.

The new map showed Pakistan frontier clearly marked with India with the entire Kashmir as its territory. However, the part of Kashmir and Ladakh border with China was not marked and described as Frontier Undecided.

Similarly, the Line of Control had been extended to the Karakoram Pass, clearing showing Siachen as part of Pakistan. The LoC had been marked by a red dotted line.

The J&K had been described as Disputed Territory Final status to be decided in line with relevant UNSC resolutions .

Another change in the map showed that the international border lines lies along the eastern bank of Sir Creek, which was previously along the western bank.

The Pakistan cabinet also approved the decision to rename a major road in Islamabad as Srinagar Highway. The road was previously called Kashmir Highway.

The controversial changes in the map by Pakistan were made a day before the first anniversary of India's decision to revoke the special status of Jammu and Kashmir on August 5, 2019.

Massive Explosion Rocks...

St George Hospital showed patients walking among badly damaged corridors.

There was also no immediate casualty count. Graphic amateur video from the scene showed bodies strewn on the ground, with their clothes blown off.

A journalist at local newspaper The Daily Star uploaded a video of its newsroom approximately 1.5km from the explosion, showing massive destruction inside.

Eight More Die Of Covid-19...

woman from Budgam, they said, she was shifted from SMHS hospital to CD hospital on August 3 with underlying ailments like hypertension diabetes and “severe pneumonia with respiratory failure”.

“She was shifted to ICU and put to ventilator. However at 4 a.m. today, the woman suffered a sudden cardiac arrest and died,” a senior doctor at the CD hospital said.

Regarding other death, the doctor said that besides being hypertensive, the man was suffering from chronic kidney disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) severe pneumonia.

The man developed sudden cardiac arrest at 1:45 a.m. and was declared dead subsequently, the doctor added.

Meanwhile, regarding the elderly from Attina Budgam, officials said that he was having underlying ailments and died at the tertiary care hospital early today.

As regards the man from Dregam, a doctor at SMHS said he was admitted with bilateral pneumonia on July 29 and died today.

Sources said that besides elderly from Budgam, a 59-year-old man from Basantibagh area of Srinagar died at SKIMS. “Both of them had underlying ailments,” sources said. One death was reported from Bandipora district, officials said.

With these deaths, the fatality count due to the virus has risen to 417 in J&K—387 in Kashmir and 30 in Jammu.

Srinagar district with 138 deaths tops the list followed by Baramulla (73), Budgam (31), Kulgam (29), Anantnag (26), Shopian (23), Pulwama (24), Kupwara (21), Jammu (21), Bandipora (15), Ganderbal (7), two each in Rajouri and Doda and one each in Ramban, Samba, Poonch, Udhampur, and Kathua. (GNS)

6 Cops Among 390 New Cases

Giving district-wise breakup of the cases, official sources said that Srinagar reported 99 cases, 14 each in Baramulla and Pulwama, Kulgam 1, Shopian 11, Anantnag 37, Budgam 9, Kupwara 20, Bandipora 5, Ganderbal 28, Jammu 41, Rajouri 21, Kathua 4, Udhampur 26, Samba 11, Doda 7, Poonch 14 and Reasi 28.

In Kashmir, Srinagar tops the list with 5432 cases followed by Baramulla with 1954, Pulwama 1968 , Kulgam 1524, Shopian 1485, Anantnag 1411, Kupwara 1161, Budgam 1345, Bandipora 820, and Ganderbal 518.

Jammu division, Jammu district has 1300 cases, Rajouri 741, Ramban 574, Kathua 551, Udhampur 581, Samba 457, Doda 299, Poonch 248, Reasi 198 and Kishtwar 155. With the new cases, the tally overall has risen to 22396—17292 in Kashmir and 5104 in Jammu.

Meanwhile, 824 more COVID-19 patients have recovered and were discharged from various hospitals—291 from Jammu Division and 533 from Kashmir Valley.

All Kashmir Districts ‘Red’...

and Kishtwar are in green zone.

The Lakhampur containment zone on the national highway will be a red/containment zone with a 500-metre buffer, the order stated.

It said the classification of districts has been done after a detailed review of the COVID situation with top officials, and it will be reviewed periodically.

The review included the recent spike in new cases in view of the movement of people to J&K and between districts.

On Tuesday, Jammu and Kashmir recorded 390 COVID-19 cases, taking the total number of infections to 22,396. Ten fatalities in the last 24 hours pushed the death toll from the disease to 417, officials said. They said all the 10 deaths were reported from Kashmir Valley.

Religious Places To Open...

All religious places and places of worship to open in Jammu & Kashmir from August 16, 2020. Religious processions and large religious gatherings remain strictly prohibited,” Kansal tweeted.

The Jammu and Kashmir government had banned religious gatherings in March this year after coronavirus cases started shooting up in the Union Territory.

“DCs and SPs advised to strictly caution all religious leaders not to call any gatherings. Public gatherings are a major source of social contact and spread of the virus,” Kansal had tweeted.

HC Notice To Govt Against...

Section 96 of Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019.

“The power delegated under Section 96 was only for the purpose of facilitating the applications of already prevailing law in former State of Jammu and Kashmir or to make laws applicable to new Union

Territories of J and K and Ladakh,” they said, adding, “Every modification or adaptation of any law shall be done in that reference only and not beyond. Petitioners further contend that the power delegated under Section 96 shall not be in any manner construed as delegation of parliamentary power of Article 16(3) of Constitution of India.”

On July 15, the Supreme Court had asked petitioners to move the J&K High Court with the plea.

“Therefore, if any reservation has to be granted in the UT on the basis of residence, the same may be done only in consonance with Article 16(3) of the Constitution,” the plea said.

In March, the government issued the J&K Reorganization (Adaptation of State Laws) Order 2020 which notified changes

in the Jammu and Kashmir Civil Services (Decentralization and Recruitment) Act.

Section 5A of the Act stated that Level 4 posts will be reserved for domiciles. (GNS)

HRW Slams Gol Over ‘Human

one year after the revocation of Jammu and Kashmir's constitutional status,” said Meenakshi Ganguly, South Asia director at Human Rights Watch.

“The authorities instead have maintained stifling restraints on Kashmiris in violation of their basic rights,” she added.

Quoting a report of Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society, the HRW statement said that over 400 people remain in custody under the draconian Public Safety Act, after the August 5 move.

“There also have been several allegations of new arrests, torture, and ill-treatment by security forces. The government has also used harsh counterterrorism and sedition laws to clamp down on peaceful critics,” the statement said.

The statement also accused government of harassing businessmen and journalists, besides bringing in new media policy in Jammu and Kashmir to take punitive action against media outlets, journalists, and editors.

“The government crackdown adversely affected livelihoods, particularly in the tourism-dependent Kashmir Valley,” Human Rights Watch statement said.

It quoted Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industries as estimating that the first three months of a lockdown to prevent protests since August 2019 cost the economy over US \$2.4 billion, for which no redress has been provided.

“Losses have nearly doubled since the government imposed further restrictions to contain Covid-19 in March,” the HRW said.

“The pandemic has made access to the internet crucial for information, communication, education, and business. However, the authorities have only barely complied with Supreme Court orders in January to treat access to the internet as a fundamental right, permitting only slow-speed 2G mobile internet services,” it added.

Referring to the continued ban on high speed internet, the HRW said that the doctors and students were facing tough time due to the continued ban on the 4G internet in the Valley.

Indian authorities should take immediate steps to protect rights by releasing political detainees; upholding the right to free speech, including by withdrawing cases against journalists and activists; restoring full internet access; and holding to account officials responsible for rights violations, Human Rights Watch said.

“Even as the pandemic is forcing the world to address discrimination and inequality, the Indian government is persisting with its repression of Kashmiri Muslims,” Ganguly said, adding “The government should reverse its abusive policies and provide remedies for those whose rights were violated.”

16 From Erstwhile J&K State-

based on the result of the written part of Civil Services Examination, 2019 held in September, 2019 and the interviews or Personality Test held in February-August, 2020.

UPSC conducts the Civil Services exam every year for selection of candidates to Indian Administrative Service, Indian Foreign Service, Indian Police Service and Other Central Services.

From this year, unlike past years, there will be no upper-age relaxation for applicants taking the civil services examination 2020 who are domicile of Jammu and Kashmir between 1980 and 1989, according to a notification issued by the UPSC. The UPSC had announced 796 vacancies in the India's bureaucracy to be filled through the civil services examination 2020.

According to last year's civil services exam notification, the upper-age limit of 32 years to take the test was further relaxable for up to a maximum of five years if a candidate had ordinarily been domiciled in the Jammu and Kashmir during the period from January 1, 1980 to December 31, 1989.

The Civil Services exam 2020 was scheduled to be held on May 31. The exam has been rescheduled to October 4 in view of the coronavirus crisis.

4% Reservation For Ladakh

by Chief Secretary B V R Subrahmanyam here to review status with regard to reservation of seats for students belonging to the Union Territory of Ladakh in professional institutions, for the academic year 2020-21, an official spokesman said.

He said the reservation in professional institutions is governed in terms of Jammu and Kashmir Reservation Act and Rules which have been amended post reorganisation of Jammu and Kashmir. The Act and Rules do not apply to Union Territory of Ladakh.

“Keeping in view the non-availability of professional institutions in the Union Territory of Ladakh and recommendations of the Advisory Committee constituted by the Government of India, a decision was taken earlier to reserve 4 per cent seats in both engineering as well as medical colleges of Jammu and Kashmir for students from UT of Ladakh.

“Accordingly, 24 seats from engineering colleges and 35 seats from medical colleges will be deducted from total number of available seats and the reservation for the residents of J&K will be calculated on remaining seats as per the provisions of JK Reservation Act and Rules,” the chief secretary said.

Subrahmanyam asked the General Administration Department to inform the Ladakh Administration accordingly.

Regarding the seats reserved for Ladakh students, the chief secretary directed the Jammu and Kashmir Board of Professional Entrance Examinations (BOPEE) to take up the matter with Ladakh Administration in terms of admission policy and reservation policy to be adopted for selecting their candidates.

Panch, 2 Cops Injured In...

a police party in Pulwama district this evening, injuring two personnel. Sources said militants lobbed a grenade at the police party near Wanpora Pulwama, injuring head constable Khurhsid Ahmad and SPO Ishfaq Ahmad. The duo suffered splinter injuries and were taken to hospital. “Both are stable,” they said. A senior police officer confirmed the attack and said that both of them suffered “minor injuries and are stable.” (GNS)

Pak Shells Forward Areas...

Pakistani troops violated the ceasefire 47 times last month and shelled areas along the LoC in Rajouri, Poonch, Kupwara and Baramulla districts on a daily basis in July

‘Juvenile’ Driving SUV Hits...

escaped from the spot after the accident.

“Police have arrested his father but we demand action against the father-son duo,” he said.

“What disturbs me is that the culprit is roaming free. The son should be booked for the accident while his father should be booked in a separate case as to why he allowed his minor son to drive the vehicle,” he said.

When contacted, a top police official told news agency KNT that he will check the details. “So many accidents take place here. Let me check, I will get back to you,” he said.

Teenager Dies Of Drowning...

declared Shabir dead on arrival. The condition of Ahmad was stated to be stable.

The officials said that teen's body was handed over to his family after conducting all legal formalities,

Illegal constructions at Patnitop

CBI searches 11 places in J&K

SRINAGAR: Central Bureau of Investigations (CBI) raids are underway at 11 places in Jammu and Kashmir in connection with the illegal constructions and encroachments at famous tourist resort Patnitop, of-

ficials said.

They said that Central Bureau of Investigation is conducting searches at 11 locations that include Jammu, Udhampur, and Kathua districts at the offices, residential premises of public

servants including then CEOs, Patnitop Development Authority etc in an ongoing investigation of a case, registered on the allegations of large scale illegal construction/encroachment of land in the tourist location of

Patnitop area of Udhampur District (J&K)

“A Preliminary Enquiry was earlier conducted on the directions of Hon’ble High Court of J&K in the matter,” a CBI official said.

LG Calls for Measures to Restore Ecosystem of Dal Lake

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 04: Lieutenant Governor, Girish Chandra Murmu today held a meeting, through video conference, with the Committee of Experts (CoE) to discuss the modalities for taking effective conservative measures to restore the pristine glory of water bodies like Dal & Nageen.

A detailed deliberation was held on various important measures required to be undertaken for restoration, maintenance and preservation as well as all ancillary issues including securing the banks of the Dal Lake. A brief was also given on the present status of DPRs prepared for STPs.

The members of the Committee suggested that any planning and development in and around the Dal Lake has to be in consonance with the High Court directions and requirements satisfying the points raised in various deliberations of the Committee.

They also made several recommendations and suggestions pertaining to empowering the Vice Chairman of J&K Lakes and Waterways Development Authority for effective administration and better coordination.

The Lt Governor stressed on taking all the requisite



measures to restore the ecosystem of Dal Lake and preserve its unique biodiversity. He further said that all the suggestions from the CoE would be incorporated in the future plan of restoration, preservation and maintenance of the lake.

Pertinently, pursuant to the directions of the Committee members, machinery was purchased from Delhi Metro Rail Corporation for

an amount of Rs 4 cr which includes barges and weed harvesters. In addition to it, aerial drone survey within 200 metres from the lake is under process to check illegal constructions. Purchase of Bio-digesters for 100 households and large sized Bio-digesters for 10 households each on Pilot Basis has been finalised with financial implications of Rs 3.50 cr.

The meeting was at-

tended by members of the Committee of Expert (CoE) including Former MD, Delhi Metro Rail Corporation, Dr. E Sreedharan; Former Additional Chief Secretary, Government of Kerala, Dr Nivedita P Haran; MD Delhi Metro Rail Corporation Ltd, Dr Mangu Singh; Sh. M.C. Mehta, Environmentalist and other senior officers, through video conference.

LG Grooms Successful J&K UPSC Candidates

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 04: Lieutenant Governor, Girish Chandra Murmu today congratulated the candidates from the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir for cracking the Civil Services Examination.

In a congratulatory message, the Lt Governor conveyed his warm felicitation to all the successful candidates for the commendable accomplishment and expressed hope that they would discharge their duties with utmost dedication, commitment, rectitude and sincerity to uphold the highest traditions of the Civil Services.

He said that this accomplishment is the true recognition of their sincere efforts and hard work and wished them high success in their future endeavours.

“Their achievement would certainly motivate and inspire many more youths from J&K to take the country’s prestigious Civil Services Examination in years to come”, he added.

He also conveyed his warm greetings to the family members and parents of all the successful candidates.

CONDOLENCE

With deep sorrow and grief, we inform the demise of **Haji Gh Ahmad Bhat son of Ab Samad Bhat of Kalashpora** has left for heavenly abode on (Tuesday) 4th August, 2020.

His Fateha Khawani will be held on (Friday) 7th of August, 2020 at their graveyard near Khanqah-e-Moula, Srinagar at 9.30 am.


BEREAVED
Noor Mohammad, M Yousuf, Dr Shabir Ahmad

Prof. Afzal reappointed Registrar CUK

Ganderbal, Aug 4: Prof. Mohammad Afzal Zargar has been reappointed as the Registrar of the Central University of Kashmir (CUK) for five years for the second time. He took over the charge as Registrar on Monday.

Prof. Zargar had earlier joined as second Registrar of the Central University of Kashmir in September 2013 and was very instrumental in kickstarting the construction activities and augmenting the spectrum of academic activities of the varsity. At present, he was working as the Profes-

sor of Biotechnology, Dean School of Life Sciences and the Director of the Nunar Campus of the CUK. He is and has been the member of various Statutory and decision making bodies of the Central University of Kashmir including Executive Council, Academic Council, University Building Committee (UBC), Planning and Monitoring Board and was the member secretary of the Court and Chairman of the School Boards and Board of Studies. Prof Zargar is also a member on the statutory bodies of the other universities too.


Government of Jammu & Kashmir Union Territory
Mechanical Division, Srinagar.
Tel: 0194-2497056 Email: xenmds@gmail.com

GIST OF NOTICE INVITING TENDER
NO. MDS/TENDER/2020-21/ 47 ; DATE: - 03.08.2020
Sealed tenders affixed with Rs. 5/- revenue stamps are invited for and on behalf of Lt. Governor of Jammu & Kashmir Union Territory from registered firms/Contractors for:-

Description of the work	Est. Cost (in Rs.)	Earnest Money Deposit	Cost of Tender document	Time of completion
Supply Installation Testing and Commissioning of 05 ton capacity Double Acting Hydraulic Cylinder with hoses and allied works for fabrication of 2 No. V-blades for vehicles of Border Road Organisation.	50,000/-	Rs. 1,000/-	Rs. 200/-	07 days
Date of sale of tender documents	03-08-2020 to 13-08-2020 (up to 4.00 pm)			
Last date of receipt of tenders	14-08-2020 (up to 2.00 pm)			
Date of opening of tenders	14-08-2020			
Tender receiving & opening authority	Executive Engineer, Mechanical Division Srinagar			

The Tender document can be had from the office of the undersigned during working hours against cost mentioned above, in the form of IPO/Demand Draft or cash payment. The tender documents shall be issued subject to production of following documents:

- Self attested copy of **Certificate of GST Registration.**
- Application for issuance of Tender Document from the firm duly signed and stamped by the Proprietor, however, in case the Proprietor of the firm wishes to purchase the tender document through his representative, a valid authorization letter duly signed and stamped by the proprietor shall be produced prior to purchase of the document.

In case the last date of receipt of tenders happens to be a non-working day due to any reasons, the tenders shall be received in this office on next working day.

Note: Tender fee deposited for the NIT NO: **MDS/TENDER/2020-21/ 40 ; DATE: - 14.07.2020** for similar description of the work shall be acceptable for the retendered description of work invited vide No: **MDS/TENDER/2020-21/ 47 ; DATE: - 03.08.2020.**

Sd/-
(Er. Abdul Rashid Bhat)
Executive Engineer
Mechanical Division, Srinagar.

NO: MDS/TS /1585-89
Date: 03 -08-2020
DIPK-3739/20

Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER IRRIGATION DIVISION ANANTNAG
NOTICE INVITING E-TENDERS
Notice Inviting Short Term e-Tenders - NIT No.17 of 2020-21.

For & on behalf of the Lt. Governor J&K Union Territory, e-tenders in single cover system are invited **on item rate basis** from Registered PWD Contractors card Holders whose registration cards are valid in terms of standing rules for the following work:-

S No	Name of work	Est. cost of work	Earnest money	Time for completion	Class of contract	Cost of Tender Document	Major Head	Tender Receiving Authority	Position of funds
1	Re-Construction of Damaged Retaining wall of Martand Canal from RD 28268 mtrs and 29600 mtrs of Bawan Pad.	3.23	6520/-	15 days	DEE	300/-	2701 M&R	Executive Engineer Irrigation Division Anantnag	

i	Date of issue of NIT	04.08.2020 from 9.00 am
ii	Bid submission start date	04.08.2020 from 1.00 Pm
iii	Bid submission end date	11.08.2020 from 2.00 Pm
iv	Bid opening date	11.08.2020 at 3.00 PM

- The bids shall be opened online on above mentioned date by the **Executive Engineer** in presence of the bidders who may wish to be present.
- Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copies (in black & white option on 100dpi) of all necessary documents like CDR/Cost of Tender document in the form of **Treasury Challan / GST clearance certificate ending June 2020 /Registration card duly renewed**. The hard copies of bidding documents are not necessary to be deposit in the Divisional office as per standing Govt. instructions. After opening of tenders online, the 1st lowest bidder shall be asked to deposit the uploaded CDR & cost of tender document in the form of Treasury challan in physical form. The CDR of the successful bidder shall be released after completion of the defect liability period of 6 months.
- Contractor who shall be allotted the work has to start the work within (1) one day after the date of allotment as the work is of very emergent nature and due to the unlock three, in view of the COVID-19 Pandemic, work has to be executed in a Systematic manner keeping in view over all Hygiene and Social Distancing aspects.
- The department shall not be responsible for delay in online submission due to any reason what so ever.
- The tenders shall remain valid for 90 days.
- As soon as the contract is fixed with the successful bidder, he has to enter into an agreement with the department. However, non-drawl of agreement will not prevent the contract from being enforced upon him.
- The earnest money shall be forfeited if:-
 - Any bidder withdraws his bid during the period of bid validity or makes any modification in terms & condition of the bid.
 - The successful bidder fails to start the work within one day from the date of fixation of contract.
- In case of non-availability of cement, steel or B.A. wire crates in the departmental store, the cement, steel and B.A. Wire crates to be used shall be approved by the Executive Engineer & shall confirm to relevant standards at the time of its use.
- The tender opening authority reserves the right to accept/reject the bid without assigning any reason thereof.
- No mobilization / equipments advance shall be made.
- The work is to be completed within the limit specified in the NIT. In case of delay in completion of work due to contractors fault beyond stipulated time of completion "penalty of maximum 10% of contract value shall be imposed upon the contractor". However, the time of completion will also increase/ decrease in proportion to additional/ deletion of quantum of work depending upon the actual quantum of work. Request for extension of time shall be made by the contractor in writing before 10 days of the stipulated time of completion. The contractor shall also indicate in such request the period for which extension of time is required. On contractor's representation based on the grounds as details above the time for completion of the work may be extended by a period considered reasonable by the Department. Extension of time shall be also admissible in the event of temporary suspension of work.
- No price escalation will be paid for completion of the work within stipulated time or extended date of completion due to any reason whatsoever.
- Retention money/Security deposit shall be 10% of the contract value which shall be released after the expiry of defect liability period of 6(six) months.
- All items of works shall conform to Specifications as per Relevant IS codes and as directed by the Engineer-in-Charge or his representatives.
- The contractor shall be solely responsible for carrying out the mandatory tests required or as decided by Engineer-in-charge for the quality control at his own costs. The cost of conducting all tests shall be borne by the contractor and shall be deemed to have been included in the item rates for various items of work and percentage rate tendered. Nothing extra shall be payable on this account.
- In case of tie for the position of 1st lowest bidder the bids should be out rightly rejected and the work shall be put to fresh tenders.
- Watch & ward of depnl. Material issued for the work shall be exclusively the responsibility of the successful contractor/bidder & in the event of any loss/theft of the materials, the same shall be the responsibility of the bidder, the cost thereof shall be recovered from the bidder @ double the stock issue rates.
- The employer may terminate the contract if the contractor causes a fundamental breach of the contract. The fundamental breach of contract will include:-
 - Continuous stoppage of Work for a period of 03 days without authorization of Engineer in-charge.
 - Pursuant to the process of termination of defaulted contract, the employer reserves the right to invite fresh tender for the balance work at the risk and cost of defaulter contractor. If in case contractor fails to start/complete the work, within the stipulated time period, the performance deposit shall be forfeited after termination of the contract. Besides, defaulting contractor shall be debarred from taking part in future tendering process in Irrigation Department at least for one year.
- Any kind of damage which may occur to any work during the course of execution due to torrential rains/heavy snow fall/cyclone/floods etc. shall be the responsibility of the bidder till the work is finally handed-over to the Department.
- The taxes viz. Income tax, GST & Cess shall be deducted from the bidders' claims as admissible under rules.
- The bidders are advised not to make any change in BOQ (Bill of Quantities). In no case they should attempt to create similar BOQ manually. The BOQ downloaded should be used for filling item rate inclusive of all taxes & it should be saved with the same name as it contains.
- The unit rates & prices quoted by the bidder shall be entirely in Indian Rupees and the rates quoted shall be deemed to include price escalation and all taxes upon completion of work unless otherwise specified.
- If the bidder does not quote rate for any item of the BOQ, such item/items shall be deemed to be the part of the overall/total contract value and no rate shall be allowed for such item/items.
- The payment shall be made only after the funds are received on this account from higher authorities.
- The date of start of work shall be reckoned within one day from the date of issuance of LOI/Contract allotment as the case may be.
- Defect liability period of works shall be 06 months, which shall start after submission of completion report of the work in all respects from the concerned Asstt. Executive Engineer. CDR and Bill deposit of the work shall be released after the expiry of defect liability period on the recommendations of concerned Asstt. Executive Engineer that no damages have occurred or damages (if any) have been restored/make good at the site of work by the contractor who has executed the work.
- Photographic evidence during the execution of work by the angle cam is a must and shall be the sole responsibility of the contractor.
- Other terms & conditions shall be the same as laid down in the PWD Form-25 double/FC-31.

No: JDA /1917-43
Dtd: 04.08.2020
DIPK-3734/20
Executive Engineer
Irrigation Division Anantnag

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

HIGHWAY STATUS



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



HIJRI
CALENDAR

14 Zil-Haj
1441

PRAYERS

FAJR	4: 06
ZUHR	12: 37
ASR	5:31
Magrib	7:35
ISHA	9:07

This Day In History

- 1864 - Battle of Mobile Bay, won by the Union Army led by Rear Admiral Farragut with the cry "Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead!" (US Civil War)
- 1890 - British and French accord to divide African colonization
- 1891 - world's 1st traveler's cheques issued (American Express)
- 1905 - First meeting of the Russian and Japanese peace commissioners takes place in US President Theodore Roosevelt's home at Oyster Bay, New York
- 1914 - Cuba, Uruguay, Mexico and Argentina proclaim neutrality in WW I
- 1914 - Battle of Liège: first battle of WWI, massive German assault on forts around Belgium city of Liège led by Erich Ludendorff
- 1914 - Montenegro declares war against Austria-Hungary in World War I
- 1914 - US and Nicaragua sign treaty granting canal rights to US
- 1915 - Warsaw, evacuated by the Russians, is occupied by Germans
- 1918 - World War I: the last German air raid on England occurs, with four Zeppelin airships dropping bombs in the Midlands and North East England
- 1921 - Treaty of Berlin: US and Germany sign separate peace treaty
- 1942 - British government cancels agreement of Munich
- 1942 - German troops cross Kuban River
- 1943 - World War II: at around 11 A.M during the Battle of Troina, Mount
- Etna erupts sending ash and lava miles into the sky.
- 1944 - US troops occupy Vannes, Brittany
- 1947 - Netherlands ceases political action in Indonesia, due to UN pressure
- 1963 - Britain, USA & USSR sign nuclear test ban treaty
- 1973 - USSR launches Mars 6
- 1974 - US President Richard Nixon admits he withheld information about Watergate break-in
- 1989 - NASA Venus probe Magellan launched from Space shuttle, 1st to do so
- 1991 - Sergei Bubka of USSR sets pole vault world record (6.10m) in Malmö Sweden
- 1994 - Antonov-12 crashes at Boda, Eastern Siberia, 47 killed
- 1997 - Korean Air 747 with 331 aboard crashes in Guam, 29 survive
- 1997 - Soyuz TM-26 crew of Anatoly Solovoyov & Pavel Vinogradov launched
- 2011 - NASA launches its Juno spaceprobe from Cape Canaveral to orbit and study Jupiter
- 2013 - 160 people are killed by flash floods across Afghanistan and Pakistan
- 2014 - Obama signs The Iron Dome Bill providing \$225 million in additional funding for Israel's Iron Dome defense
- 2015 - Torrential rains and flooding leave at least 178 people dead in India, in the wake of Cyclone Komen.

From KO Archives

Officer shifted for 7th time, goes on leave

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR - The principal secretary, revenue, Sonali Kumar, has proceeded on leave following the recent transfers and postings in the state administration. The high-ranking bureaucrat has been transferred for the seventh time in the changes announced yesterday. During the two-and-a-half year tenure of the coalition government, Kumar has been shifted \$ax times from her posts. Before the coalition government" came to power, Sonali Kumar had been made the commissioner secretary, education, on May 1, 2002.

Soon after the new government took over, she was transferred to the technical education department as commissioner secretary in November.

2003. In February the next year, she was transferred to industries and commerce, and four months later, in July 2003, to the higher and technical education department. After serving on that post for one year, she was transferred again in July 2004, and made the principal secretary of the forest department. The government shifted her again in April 2005, this time to the health and medical education department.

Yesterday's revamp, which made her the principal secretary of the revenue department, was the sixth time she was transferred in 2-and-a-half years.

Fed up with the repeated transfers and postings, Sonali Kumar, has gone on leave in protest, sources told the KNS. She has asked the government to grant her leave till October.

(Kashmir Observer, 05 August, 2005)

KASHMIR
OBSERVER

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August 5

It is one year to the day when New Delhi rescinded J&K's semi-autonomous status, bifurcated the state into J&K and Ladakh and downgraded the two regions into union territories. It was an unprecedented development with local, regional and geo-political repercussions. Locally, the decision completely altered the situation in erstwhile J&K, both geographically and politically. Some observers argue the situation has also been altered geopolitically. And it has. The annulment of Article 370 that granted J&K its autonomy under India's constitution has changed the nature of the conflict in and over Kashmir. As for the issue within Kashmir, it has now become more about a concern for the identity than a struggle for the resolution of the Kashmir issue. A place that has been a site of a struggle for three decades for a better political deal has with revocation of Article 370 been downgraded beneath what was already an unacceptable status quo. J&K is now not even a state now. Instead of being governed by an elected local government with a semi-autonomous status to boot, it is being ruled directly from New Delhi. We can only hope that the central government reviews this decision at the earliest and restores the statehood.

And then there is Pakistan factor. New Delhi's withdrawal of Kashmir's special status stunned Islamabad which seemed to have war-gamed for everything in relation to India other than this move. By integrating Kashmir, New Delhi displayed a contemptuous rejection of Islamabad's claim over the state that basically stems from the 1948 United Nations resolutions calling for a referendum to allow people in J&K to choose to join either of the two countries. Though decades down the line, the neighbours agreed to resolve Kashmir bilaterally, Pakistan hasn't let go of the UN resolutions. What form the longstanding tug of war between the two countries over Kashmir takes in future is still in the realm of speculation. As for the last year, the neighbours have stayed short of getting into confrontation over the altered situation. And here's hoping it stays this way and the two countries rather choose a return to engagement and dialogue. There is an urgent need for a dialogue, one on the lines of the 2003-07 Musharraf-Manmohan Singh process but this time brought to a logical conclusion. This will change the fate of not just Kashmir but subcontinent as well.

And as for centre's approach towards Kashmir, it is now important that the tack is changed from a security-centric approach to one of political engagement that takes stock of the existing grievances in the former state and seeks to meaningfully address these. Over last year and also over the past three decades, Kashmir has witnessed too much of violence and suffering. The effort by New Delhi should be to do everything that ends this cycle of bloodshed once and for all.

OTHER OPINION

Education Policy

The new National Education Policy approved by the Union Cabinet promises a transformational shift, infusing an element of joy and purpose in learning. On paper, the proposals offer students a flexible academic journey where they can pick and choose, and not be confined to set patterns. The loftier goals are to bring two crore out-of-school children into the mainstream and integration of vocational education, with internships from Class 6 onwards. Replacement of the 10+2 structure aims to include the uncovered age-group of three to six years under the school curriculum.

Mother tongue would be the medium of instruction till Class 5. While this would address any misgivings over imposition of Hindi in some parts of the country, if the adherence is limited to state education boards, the others' English medium advantage would only widen the divide. Board exams, under the revised policy, would test core concepts and application of knowledge, instead of rote learning. Report cards are meant to be an analysis of skills and capabilities, and not just marks. A four-year undergraduate programme will have multiple exit options. A convincing roadmap overall, but implementation would be a humungous exercise.

To make higher education focused and research-oriented, a single regulator will look after institutions that have 3,000 or more students, barring medical and law colleges. A target has been set to almost double the gross enrolment ratio to 50 per cent by 2035, and ensure that all higher education institutions become multidisciplinary in another five years. A game-changer could be the decision to allow the top 100 foreign universities to set up campuses. Quality education, innovative methodologies and the time-tested models that demand a freshness of ideas and approach would give a huge impetus to 'Make for India' and 'Make in India' projects. Keeping a check on the fee structure would present a challenge. A welcome chapter of the policy is the emphasis on moving towards convergence of science and arts, and therefore, holistic education. The HRD Ministry is now the Education Ministry. It has its task cut out.

The Tribuneindia

WAJAHAT HABIBULLAH

“We must work with the Indians of J&K and Ladakh in making democracy and secularism real for them. Only then might we redeem the pledge made to his people by Abdullah at Srinagar's Lal Chowk at the time of the accession to India of the then princely state of J&K in face of a Pakistani invasion, in the words of the great Indian poet Amir Khusro: “‘Mun tu shudam tu mun shudi / Mun tun shudam tu jaan shudi (I have become you and you me / I am the body, you the soul).’”

Send your write ups and feedback at
editpage.ko@gmail.com

Kashmir After 8/5

Indians must today ask ourselves the question that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah raised in his speech at Mujahid Manzil on the eve of the 1975 Indira-Sheikh Accord: 'Do you honestly feel that the foundations of democracy and secularism are more stable than before?'

As five fighter jets, the first batch of the 36 Rafale fighter aircraft that India has bought from France for Rs 59,000 crore in 2016 as an emergency purchase, took off for Air Force Station, Ambala, Air Commodore Hilal Ahmad Rather, India's Air Attaché to France, whose name tells us that he is a Kashmiri, was among the senior officials present at the Dassault Aviation Facility, Merignac, France, on Monday 28 July, which included India's Ambassador to France Jawed Ashraf and Eric Trappier, Chairman Dassault Aviation

Almost simultaneously The Forum for Human Rights in Jammu and Kashmir released its first report Jammu and Kashmir: The Impact of Lockdowns on Human Rights covering the year following upon August 5 2019. Among the retired Justices of the Supreme and High Courts, ex-civil servants, former Generals, academics and campaigners for human rights who constitute the Forum is Air Vice Marshal Kapil Kak, whose name also announces his nativity.

Dr. Vijay Sazawal, another Srinagar born and raised native, an eminent nuclear policy analyst living in Washington who advised the U.S. Government on the Indo-U.S. Civil Nuclear Agreement and is also an advisor to the U.S. Government on the Kashmir issue laments:

“Chances are that most non-valley based folks-including the Kashmiri Pandits- know nothing about the trials and travails of the 800 odd families of KP's that call Kashmir valley their home today. They are landowners tending orchards, shopkeepers, teachers in public and private schools, various government departments, hospital employees, and a few are working as real estate agents. Some work for Dharmarth and Batra Trusts, and yet others work at Yatri Niwas group of hotels catering to religious tourism. They was (sic) mostly unknown until one of them, a Sarpanch named Shri Ajay Pandita, was killed by terrorists on 8 June 2020.

The “non-migrant” KPs have survived in spite of being ignored by the rest and while their future looks bleak, they have shown persistence and resilience of the highest standards” (Kashmir Images Those Who Stayed Back July 12, 2020)

What Sazawal says of the Kashmiri Pandits is sadly true of the relationship of all India with those Indians who call themselves Kashmiris. Our concern for Kashmir is aroused solely by acts of terrorism. After 5th August 2019, the Concerned Citizens Group of which I am member, has made two visits to Kashmir on Sept 17-18 and Nov 22-26 last year. We observed in our statement of August 202: “A year later, J&K continues to be in a social, economic, political and communication lockdown. None of the stated goals of the government - of bringing Kashmir closer to India, ending militancy, bringing development to the state - have been achieved. Instead the Kashmiris have lost any faith they had in the Indian political leadership and the judiciary. The Supreme Court has still not found time to take up the petitions challenging the legal and constitutional validity of the J&K Reorganization Act. While many political, busi-

ness leaders and lawyers have been released in the recent past, many continue to be in detention, the most prominent among them being former Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti.” Attempts to incubate artificial political processes - through village and local body elections and facilitating the launch of a new political party have failed to rouse political interest.

The findings of the Forum that I have mentioned are devastating:

- Counter-insurgency concerns have been given absolute priority bringing across-the-board violation of human rights and the violation of the rule of law, even arrest and detention of children in defiance of the Juvenile Justice Act. There has been denial of the right to bail and fair and speedy trial, with rampant misuse of draconian legislation, such as the Public Safety Act (PSA) and the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), to stifle dissent.

- The eleven months of lockdown saw incessant closures, harassment at barricades and checkpoints, and suspension followed by limits placed on mobile telephony and internet, which have crippled delivery of public health, bringing widespread post-traumatic stress disorder even to children.

- Education has been struggling. With the limiting of networks to 2G online classes have become dysfunctional. Graduate students and teachers have been hard put to participate in conferences or have their papers published, in violation of constitutional rights to education.

- Massive losses have beset every sector of commerce and industry large and small. Companies reliant on 4G networks that are available in the rest of the country, such as tourism and cottage industries, are out of business. The new domicile rules introduced by the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Jammu and Kashmir administration have eroded local employment.

- Journalists have been harassed often having draconian charges slapped on them even under the UAPA. Dozens have lost their jobs. Censorship by the Directorate of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) has been introduced in coordination with security agencies

- There is a pronounced expansion of the military presence.

It has to be admitted that the personnel appointed to administer the two Union Territories born from the erstwhile state of J&K were, with some exception, of great merit. The officer chosen as LG of the UT of Ladakh, having served as Chief Information Commissioner of India when that position enjoyed the status of the Chief Election Commissioner of India, having himself served in the military, accepted a demotion in rank in serving the nation. But after becoming a Union Territory (UT), Ladakh stands side-lined with its administration working out of makeshift accommodation with minimal staff, without a recruitment agency to fill gazetted posts, no formal bank, with its elected Hill Development Councils dysfunctional in dispute over the location of its headquarters - Muslim majority Kargil or Buddhist majority Leh in a Muslim majority UT. And many residents protest that their lands have been occupied by China.

Although the officer appointed LG J&K was a nondescript bureaucrat of the Gujarat cadre, he was assisted by an array of outstanding advisors. The administration won popular appreciation for the manner in which it was able to arrange the return of students stranded abroad including in Bangladesh where there are over 800 medical graduate students, and Iran and their rehabilitation observing all rigours of quarantine in hotels requisitioned to supplement limited government resources. But COVID-19 has spread uncontrolled thereafter exacerbated by the import of migrant labour by government to work with the PWD many of whom have tested positive, and the abandon with which young men and women roam the streets of Srinagar, among the worst affected districts, without mask or social distancing in defiance of government advice.

Government has been busy issuing sanctions. As many as five medical colleges including two All India Institutes of Medical Science have been inaugurated and colleges of nursing sanctioned. Announcements are regularly made of the LG sanctioning a host of hydel projects in a state gravely deficit in power, which nonetheless is a major contributor to the national power grid, long pending road construction projects have been approved. But educational institutions are shut with no provision for distance learning except in the single DPS in Pulwama, owned and managed by a Kashmiri. Power supply is fitful and roads are awaiting repair for years including the vital Krishna Ghati link road between Mendhar and Poonch townships along the LoC. And pervasive corruption has ensured that new investment, which the constitutional amendment was expected to encourage has found few takers either at local or national level.

Indians must today ask ourselves the questions that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah raised in his speech at Mujahid Manzil, that served as his party's headquarters, on the eve of the 1975 Indira-Sheikh Accord that brought him back to government after over twenty years in the political wilderness following his ouster from power in 1953. Referring to the state of integration since 1953, Abdullah asked, 'Do you honestly feel that the foundations of democracy and secularism are more stable than before? Can you honestly dare say that the shackles of distrust between Kashmiris and India are broken? ... Have the people here got the clean administration which they have long yearned for? Were they freed from the morass of unemployment and poverty?'

The answers are not flattering. They can come only from working with the Indians of J&K and Ladakh in making democracy and secularism real for them. Only then might we redeem the pledge made to his people by Abdullah at Srinagar's Lal Chowk at the time of the accession to India of the then princely state of J&K in face of a Pakistani invasion, in the words of the great Indian poet Amir Khusro, “‘Mun tu shudam tu mun shudi / Mun tun shudam tu jaan shudi (I have become you and you me / I am the body, you the soul).



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

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Role of a social activist

We often come across with the term 'social activism' or 'social activist'. What does social activism entail? As the word itself indicates, social activist is a person whose main concern is society. A social activist fights for many issues such as child labor, universal right to education and child abuse etc. A social activist essentially engages in advocacy, confronting the dynamic social challenges through constitutional means. But for successful advocacy or social activism a lot will depend on the socio-political environment within which a social activist must operate.

Activism literally means an effort or action with the intention to address issues and basic demands for the society under the socio-political system. It primarily involves advo-

cacy of an activist which enhances the functionality mechanism so that the activist would advocate much beyond his/her services. In contrast to a volunteer he is by far helping poor by supplying basic essentials to meet their demands during any contingency. But social activist has divergent areas to perform in the same domain. They both are not at par in approaches and roles. So activist plays an efficient and unparalleled role in bringing about social change while articulating genuine demands for social and political development.

In addition, a social activist also aims at fighting against all kinds of social disparities in the society with actual realization and understanding in compliance with the social principles and norms. He maneuvers to address social issues on a wide platform cov-

ering wide range of issues which ultimately compels the government to pay attention. However, his role lies in the diversified system to serve the society on humanitarian grounds.

He should have adequate understanding of social and political system of a state so that he could plausibly work for redressal of issues. Those who are quite familiar with the existing social and political system of a state could play a significant role in this field. Activist lives with the spirit, love for the people without interfering in belief, religion, caste and creed. In fact, he has to be moderate and rational to articulate genuine concerns. Acknowledging and representing of issues is the main valuable character of an activist. Such issues are very difficult for the common people to represent in order to get them resolved.

Therefore, social activist could help people more professionally.

A social activist is likely to be a good professional with a profound knowledge regarding various issues of society. He can be Lawyer, Sociologist, Anthropologist etc and should be mindful of the detrimental fallout of Racism, Untouchability, Casteism, and Marginalization. He works for the development of society with a better and clear articulation of the issues and their representations to the government. His intention is to awaken the government to start necessary development initiatives in all walks of society which are fundamental to the prosperity of the society.

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5th August and a Lover’s Predicament



HUZAIFA PANDIT

In the afternoon, came the news of scrapping of Article 370. For the first few weeks, the silence was maddening. The radio just kept relaying congratulatory news about people celebrating the abrogation of Article 370. But there was no news about Kashmir and a screen of silence prevailed.



For Kashmiris lockdowns are a part of life: Two elderly Kashmiris sit on the banks of desolate Nageen Lake in Srinagar- KO Photo

As the lore goes, narrated by every Kashmiri, “On August 5, I woke up and realized that not only had internet been suspended but phone networks too” — and so began a long siege.

As a Kashmiri, lockdowns are a way of life. However, the 2019 August lockdown will always stand out from the rest for its sheer scale of misery, helplessness and anger that it caused. It was a hot august day, and the doom and gloom of the day seemed too much to bear. The radio announced nothing, and since my television network subscription had expired, there was no way to know what was in the offing.

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All day I would sit holed up in my room trying to distract myself with books. The first book I picked up was Rushdie’s “Satanic Verses”. The eerie transformations and sense of dislocation were weirdly familiar. In between reading, I kept wondering about my partner in Pune, and how she must be coping with this routine of silence.

I was determined, however, to not let the period stay undocumented. During the initial days I started writing letters to my partner that I hoped to

deliver someday. In the first of them I described my condition thus:

“Each minute hangs like a bulbous daze in the summer air that hangs around my neck in sweat beads. I pass the day flapping hopelessly reading novels that only remind me of my ache. I ache in my eyes, my arms, my throat, my chest – your voice teases me, and I seek to brush it off to distract myself, to forget you are half a world away from me

As I read, I fall into a stupor, where you fade in and out of my dreams. I pray and am indeed convinced I will live to see you read this letter, as my eyes tear up in gratitude at having you restored again.”

However, I soon gave up the letter project and instead resorted to what I know better – writing poems. Here is the first poem I wrote five days into the siege:

Like a curfewed road
Hungama hai kyun barpa
Like a curfewed road, I stare at my lack. I stare at the olive green men twiddling their broken thumbs around their ash-white cudgels, as if these were the staff of an exotic prophet – no sooner would they graze the road, fed on broken bricks, then a giant screeching snake will rise, spitting peppered venom, its gaping mouth the exact circumference of a pellet gun, lashing out at everyone with the shrapnel of warnings, broadcast in lieu of afternoon news. Who should we trust to pull out a sword from an old karakul in our chambers of fear?

Like a curfewed dusk, I stare at the gradual red in the sky. The novels swear by all our old gods that it is the convenient shame of the condemned. I stare at the condemned, content with reading scriptures of false hope on the screens of wooly smoke, which billows out of the bereaved sky. Have I been disgraced too? They are too far to tell. When I was not dead, I paid no heed to sifting friends from the enemy. Who can I trust then to tear my shame apart?

Like a curfewed disease, I stare at the emergency crucifix painted on the hospital roof – an amulet painted to stave off the evil eye of a bombing forecast in cremated newspapers. My cousin delights in retelling the story of a future bombing he whispered to scare a Bihari out of his wits. Did the scared usurper not know of talismans? Who can I trust to telegram or phone our toothless talismans to pincodes of obsolete isles salvaged from oceans of barbed wire?

On announcement of curfew I wrench the hems of my poem apart cooped inside my writer’s block. When restrictions are eased, I darn the poem with banned rhymes.

Chori tau nahee ki hai, daaka tau nahee daala

Huzaifa Pandit is the author of the recently published Green is the Colour of Memory, which won the first edition of Rhythm Divine Poets Chapbook Contest 2017. He holds a PhD on poetry of resistance from University of Kashmir.

Take Heart, Your Pain Has A Purpose

When we embrace pain, we release the power it has over us.
We turn it into fuel to unlocking our most authentic selves.

LAURA BERGER & GLEN TIBALDEO

Much of the discourse around the recent job loss, which has capped 40 million, revolves around the financial strain on individuals, and for obvious reasons. However, the implications can be far more damaging. In a culture that values career over all else, a job loss can mean a loss of self-worth. This presents an opportunity to dismantle your attachment to your career because you are not your work. You are so much more.

When I worked in corporate, I shrouded myself in my high-power career. When that was gone, rebuilding my self-worth became the new task. And in a culture that values career over passion, doing so was an arduous journey.

It turns out that our brains are hardwired to avoid discomfort. It is what scientists refer to as information-seeking behaviour. In other words, we are inclined to stay in our comfort zones. And when life throws us something like a pandemic, we will do anything to avoid an emotional breakdown. Enter social media, TV, food, and [insert your comfort zone enabler here]. You know the expression, “You can run, but you can’t hide?” We can’t outrun our emotions forever. Covid-19 may have fast-tracked that inevitable outcome for many of us.

you have unexpectedly lost your job and sense of identity, you have the power to rediscover who you are and your real purpose. Below are ways to bounce back better than ever:

Accept what you cannot change. It is the first step to personal freedom. Covid-19 and its tidal wave of collateral damage are largely out of our control. Accepting our present reality, no matter how painful, allows us to take action.

Reflect and record. Set a timer for two min-



utes, close your eyes, and let whatever thoughts, feelings, or sensations surface. Observe them without judgment. Then, spend the next few min-

utes reflecting on what came up for you by putting pen to paper. Writing has the unique power to unearth thoughts and feelings that we other-

wise may not be able to access.

Be the grateful observer. First and foremost, your pain has a purpose. Choose to let it direct you to ultimate bliss and self-discovery. Knowing what freedom and happiness lie ahead, how can one not feel grateful for adversity? Whenever it starts feeling overwhelming-when your self-judgment appears-say to yourself, “I am grateful for this moment because I choose to go toward my best life.” Remember that sadness, anger, and resentment are all human emotions.

Get curious. This is where it gets fun. In Costa Rica, there were no networking luncheons. Nobody asked me what I did for a living. They wanted to know me. So, I had no choice but to discover who I was. It was not easy. Some days were unpleasant, to put it lightly. Being in a foreign environment nurtures curiosity. As a result, I tapped into my childlike tendencies. And life suddenly took on a whole new meaning. It was fun! I liked myself! No frills. No suits. No recognition. Just me. In a tree.

Your values are gospel. Write down all your values. This excellent guide will help you do so methodically and thoughtfully. Knowing precisely what is essential will help us narrow down the careers that align with those core values. Then, write down all the reasons why you will not go back to your former life, no matter what. When we embrace pain, we release the power it has over us. We turn it into fuel to unlocking our most authentic selves. Using the steps above takes you on an incredible journey to the professional life of which you have always dreamt.

...
This is an extract from the Radical Sabbatical, the Amazon Kindle bestseller by Laura Berger and Glen Tibaldeo.



CORONAVIRUS

LOCKDOWN STUDY REPORT SURGE IN HEALTH ANXIETIES

WHAT OUR RESEARCH FOCUSED IN ON IS HOW SOME INDIVIDUALS have struggled to tolerate and adapt to these uncertainties - much more so than in normal times. These results have important implications as we move to help people psychologically distressed by these challenging times in the weeks, months and years ahead,"

Agencies

New research into people's coping strategies faced with COVID-19 highlights the mental health toll for those shielding.

Coronavirus and the imposition of lockdown this year 'significantly raised' mental health challenges, particularly so for the most vulnerable groups, including those shielding, according to the first study to look at people's coping styles in face of the pandemic.

The new research has been published in the journal American Psychologist.

It draws on survey responses from over 800 people recruited online and via social media who answered questions over a ten-day period when the UK was in full lockdown (from 17 - 26 April 2020).

The study from psychologists at

the University of Bath is the first study to substantiate extensive media debate that health anxieties were heightened as a result of the pandemic, and it is also the first study to indicate that those in vulnerable groups are clinically more distressed as a result.

Results suggest that a quarter of all participants revealed significantly elevated anxiety and depression, exacerbated by lockdown and isolation. Nearly 15 per cent reached clinical levels of health anxiety, which reflects that health-related anxiety has become distressing and is likely to be causing preoccupation and disruption to normal activities.

Health anxiety focusses on the fear of having or contracting a serious illness despite medical reassurance.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has caused global uncertainty which

has had a direct, detrimental effect on so many people across the UK and around the world. People have been unsure when they would see relatives again, job security has been rocked, there is an increased threat to many people's health and government guidance is continuously changing, leading to much uncertainty and anxiety," said Lead author, Dr Hannah Rettie from the University of Bath's Department of Psychology.

"What our research focused in on is how some individuals have struggled to tolerate and adapt to these uncertainties - much more so than in normal times. These results have important implications as we move to help people psychologically distressed by these challenging times in the weeks, months and years ahead," added Rettie.

Deeper analysis reveals that those in vulnerable groups -

classified according to the UK government 'vulnerable' categories - report twice the rates of health-related anxiety than the general population.

Those who identified themselves in these categories were on average more anxious and depressed, with anxiety and health anxiety specifically significantly higher than in non-vulnerable groups. Those who are in the vulnerable group are at risk both physically and psychologically.

Average age of participants in the study was 38 years old, 22 percent of whom had a pre-existing medical condition. The majority of respondents were female (80 percent female; 20 percent male).

The team who led the work hope their findings can help inform clinical practice in dealing with the mental health aftermath caused by

these tumultuous past six months. They suggest one of the most important findings concerns those in vulnerable groups who demonstrate significantly higher levels of distress yet are also those most likely to have shielded for longest.

This needs to be addressed by policymakers to ensure adequate and appropriately tailored provision of mental health services moving forwards, they say.

The researchers suggest that clinicians could use their findings to target intolerance of uncertainty as part of standard psychological therapies, focussing on developing coping skills to reduce distress.

This could also be extended to public resources, drawing out individuals' abilities to manage uncertainty and reduce reliance on less effective coping strategies, for example denial or self-blame.

"This is important research which looks at the potential mechanisms in COVID-19 related distress, a recently prioritised area of research. These findings can help us to tailor our existing psychological treatments to help those most in need but may also be useful in considering what coping strategies might be particularly helpful at a new time of uncertainty," said Research lead Dr Jo Daniels also of the Department of Psychology at Bath, who has written and spoken extensively about health anxiety and how this relates to coronavirus.

"We are also now better informed as to the likely number of the population that are experiencing clinical levels of health-related anxiety. This may serve to normalise distress at this difficult time and promote the uptake of emerging models of COVID-19

related distress for those who may need support at this time of uncertainty," added Daniels.

"While this research offers important insights into how common distress was during 'lockdown', it is important to stress that anxiety is a normal response to an abnormal situation such as a pandemic. It can be helpful to mobilise precautionary behaviours such as hand-washing and social distancing," Daniels said.

"Yet for many, as reflected in our findings, anxiety is reaching distressing levels and may continue despite easing of restrictions - it is essential we create service provision to meet this need, which is likely to be ongoing, particularly with current expectations of a second wave. Further longitudinal research is needed to establish how this may change over time," Daniels added.

'Moist Heat Treatment Of N95 Masks Eliminates Covid-19'

Agencies

Scientists have found that moist heat treatment of N95 masks eliminates the novel coronavirus which causes COVID-19, an advance which could allow reuse of these scarce resources in hospitals and long-term care facilities.

According to the study, published in Canadian Medical Association Journal (CMAJ), moist heat treatment of masks for 60 min at 70 degrees Celsius in a humid condition did not damage their structure or affect function.

"A single heat treatment rendered SARS-CoV-2 undetectable in all mask samples," the scientists, including those from the University of Toronto in Canada, wrote in the study.

"This low-cost reprocessing strategy can be applied 10 times without affecting the mask's filtration, breathing resistance, fit and comfort, and thus may help to alleviate the global shortage during the COVID-19 pandemic," said study co-author Gregory Borschel from The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) in Toronto, Canada.

In the study, the researchers tested four com-



mon models of N95 masks at various temperatures and humidity levels to determine whether the virus could be detected on the treated masks.

They assessed masks subjected to multiple cycles of thermal disinfection for structural integrity using powerful microscopes, and for protective functions using standards of the US National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health for particle filtration efficiency, breathing resistance and respirator fit.

They also analysed fibre samples for structural integrity and assessed function of the masks after treatment with heat.

"After 10 disinfection

cycles, masks maintained fibre diameters similar to untreated masks and continued to meet standards for fit, filtration efficiency, and breathing resistance," the study noted.

The researchers believe the process could be used in hospitals and long-term care facilities with commonly available equipment to mitigate the depletion of N95 masks.

"Thermal disinfection of N95 masks may provide a low-cost, effective method for regions with fewer resources to extend their supply of these critical resources, thereby protecting vulnerable front-line workers from job-related risk of infection," Borschel said.

Laugh Out Loud To Keep Stress At Bay: Study

Agencies

A new study has suggested that people who laugh frequently in their every day lives may be better equipped to deal with stressful events -- although this does not seem to apply to the intensity of laughter.

The findings of the new research by the University of Basel were published in the journal PLOS ONE.

It is estimated that people typically laugh 18 times a day -- generally during interactions with other people and depending on the degree of pleasure they experience. Researchers have also reported differences related to the time of day, age, and



gender -- for example, it is known that women smile more than men on average.

Now, researchers from the Division of Clinical Psychology and Epidemiology of the Department of Psychology at the University of Basel have recently conducted a study on the relationship between stressful events and laughter in terms of perceived stress

in everyday life.

Questions asked by the app

In the intensive longitudinal study, an acoustic signal from a mobile phone app prompted participants to answer questions eight times a day at irregular intervals for a period of 14 days. The questions related to the frequency and intensity of laughter and the rea-

son for laughing -- as well as any stressful events or stress symptoms experienced -- in the time since the last signal.

Using this method, the researchers working with the lead authors, Dr Thea Zander-Schellenberg and Dr Isabella Collins, were able to study the relationships between laughter, stressful events, and physical and psychological symptoms of stress ("I had a headache" or "I felt restless") as part of everyday life. The newly published analysis was based on data from 41 psychology students, 33 of whom were women, with an average age of just under 22.

The intensity of laughter has less influence

The first result of the observational study was expected based on the specialist literature: in phases in which the subjects laughed frequently, stressful events were associated with more minor symptoms of subjective stress. However, the second finding was unexpected. When it came to the interplay between stressful events and intensity of laughter (strong, medium or weak), there was no statistical correlation with stress symptoms. "This could be because people are better at estimating the frequency of their laughter, rather than its intensity, over the last few hours," as per the research team.

Aerobic Exercises Could Help Fatty Liver Issues: Study

Agencies

A new study highlights that fitness may be a more important clinical endpoint for improvement in patients with fatty liver diseases during exercise trials, rather than weight loss.

The research was conducted by Trinity College Dublin and its findings were published in the medical journal Alimentary Pharmacology and Therapeutics.

Metabolic associated fatty liver disease (MAFLD) is a condition characterised by a build-up of fat in the liver. The liver is central to a suite of vital processes in the body including digestion, blood clotting and energy production.

If left untreated, MAFLD can lead to serious complications like liver fibrosis (scarring), cirrhosis, liver failure and liver cancer, as well as cardiovascular and metabolic issues. Risk factors for developing MAFLD include



type 2 diabetes and obesity. The global estimated prevalence of MAFLD is 25 per cent, making it the leading cause of chronic liver disease worldwide, and is quickly becoming the leading cause of cirrhosis and liver cancer in liver transplant candi-

dates in the western world.

Up to now, due to the lack of approved pharmacological interventions, treatment has been a combination of prescribed weight loss and physical activity, with a weight loss target of 7-10 per cent being the primary treatment endpoint. There is some evidence that exercise training alone without significant weight loss can reduce liver fat content (assessed using non-invasive methodologies such as transient elastography and ul-

trasound) in MAFLD patients. However, the independent effects of exercise alone on biopsy-measured outcomes (the gold standard for diagnosing and assessing MAFLD) have been unknown.

The study further stressed that increased fitness, the result of aerobic exercise participation, maybe a more important clinical endpoint for improvement in MAFLD patients during exercise trials, rather than weight loss.

China will not accept US 'theft' of TikTok: State media

Agencies

Beijing: China will not accept the United States' "theft" of a Chinese technology company, state media said, adding that Beijing has ways to retaliate against Washington's pressure on Chinese-owned app, TikTok.

The Trump administration's pressuring of ByteDance, TikTok's parent company in China, to sell its US operations to Microsoft or risk closure amounts to a "smash and grab", the state-run China Daily newspaper wrote in an editorial on Tuesday.

While Beijing will likely be "cautious" in imposing equivalent restrictions on US companies in China, it has "plenty of ways" to retaliate, the paper said.

Microsoft said on Monday it was in discussions with ByteDance to buy parts of TikTok after US President Donald Trump gave the companies 45 days to reach a deal.

Trump has threatened to ban TikTok in the US on national security grounds by September 15, whether or not a deal with Microsoft is reached.

TikTok has as many as one billion worldwide users, who make quirky 60-second videos with its smartphone app.

'Outright bullying'

Also on Tuesday, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin accused the US of "bullying" over TikTok, accusing the Trump administra-

tion of trying to financially benefit from the deal.

"This goes against the principles of the market economy and the [World Trade Organization's] principles of openness, transparency and non-discrimination," Wang said. "It's outright bullying."

The popular app has been under formal investigation on US national security grounds, because it collects large amounts of personal data on users and is legally bound to share it with authorities in Beijing if they demand it.

"It's got to be an American company... it's got to be owned here," Trump said on Monday. "We don't want to have any problem with security."

Beijing slammed the move as "political manipulation".

Wang told a regular press briefing Tuesday: "The US, without providing any evidence, has been using an abused concept of national security... unjustifiably suppressing certain non-US companies," said Wang.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said over the weekend that Washington may take action "shortly" against TikTok and other Chinese companies believed to share data with the Chinese government.

ByteDance said in a statement on Monday it was still committed to being a global company despite "complex and unimaginable difficulties", including the "tense" international political environment.

Israel Launches Air Strikes On Syria After Foiled Border Attack

Agencies

Jerusalem: Israeli fighter jets, attack helicopters and other warplanes late Monday struck Syrian military targets in southern Syria, a day after thwarting an attack in the Golan Heights,



the Israeli army said.

"The targets struck include observation posts and intelligence collection systems, anti-aircraft artillery facilities and command and control systems in SAF (Syrian Armed Forces) bases," the army said in a statement.

Syrian state media said Syria had activated its air defences against "hostile targets" near the capital Damascus.

The Israeli army said earli-

er it had killed four men laying explosives late Sunday near the Israeli-occupied sector of the Golan Heights, the latest security incident on the tense northern borders.

The Israel Defence Forces confirmed the incident prompted the air strikes.

"In response, a short while ago, IDF fighter jets, attack helicopters and aircraft struck military targets in southern Syria, belonging to the Syrian Armed Forces," the IDF said in a statement.

"The IDF holds the Syrian government responsible for all activities on Syrian soil, and will continue operating with determination against any violation of Israeli sovereignty," it said.



Covid pandemic once in a century, but still in our hands: WHO

AGENCIES

Geneva: The chief of the World Health Organization (WHO) said that the COVID-19 pandemic is "a once-in-a-century health crisis," but it is still "in our hands."

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said at a virtual press conference on Monday that the world has never seen anything like this pandemic for decades, and

its effects might last for decades more, Xinhua news agency reported.

"Since we started probably recording, this is the first ever coronavirus-caused pandemic which has two dangerous combinations: it moves fast, and at the same time it's a killer," the WHO chief explained.

However, he noted, although the crisis is very severe, there are still solutions and hopes.

"I'm not saying there is no solution now. Whatever happens in the next few months or years, I also believe that it's in our hands," he said.

"Since the outbreak started, many countries have shown that it can be controlled, or serious transmission can be suppressed," Tedros said, adding that he has mentioned many such countries in the past, including Spain, Italy, China and South Korea.

'US doing 'very well' against Covid-19, India has a 'tremendous problem'

Agencies

Washington: President Donald Trump has said that as compared to big countries, America is doing "very well" in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic, while India is having a "tremendous problem" battling the disease and China is witnessing a "massive flare up" in infections.

India's Covid-19 tally increased to 18,55,745 on Tuesday with 52,050 people testing positive for coronavirus infection in a day.

China on Tuesday reported 36 new cases across the country, down from 43 the previous day. The country's Covid19 cases crossed the 100-mark on July 29, for the first time in over three months, sparking the fear of a rebound.

"I think we're doing very well. I think that we have done as well as any nation. If you really look, if you take a look at what's going on, especially now with all these flare ups and nations that they were talking about," Trump told reporters at a news conference here on Monday.

As such, compared to larger countries, the US is doing much better in the fight against the coronavirus, he said. "Don't forget, we're much bigger than—other than India and China. China is having a massive flare up right now. India has a tremendous problem. Other countries have problems," he said in response to a question.

"And I noticed that in the



news, in the evening news, I never read about that. In any news, I don't read about the other countries. You're starting to see that other countries are having very big flare ups, countries that thought they were over it, like we thought we might be over in Florida, and then all of a sudden it comes back. They do come back," he said.

The US is the worst-hit country from the pandemic with over 4.7 million cases and more than 155,000 deaths.

The US, Trump said, has tested over 60 million people for coronavirus.

"No other country is even close to that. We've tested 60 million people -in many cases about 50 percent, now rapid fire, meaning five to 15 to 20-minute tests where you get the results almost immediately. Nobody has anything like that. Nobody. And I think we're just doing very well," he said.

Trump said that the US is beginning to see evidence of

significant progress. Nationwide, the number of positive cases has declined by nearly six percent from the week before, and the positive test rate has also dropped from 8.7 per cent to 8 per cent over that same period of time.

"Hotspots across the South and West; we have seen slow improvements from their recent weekly peaks," he said, adding that Arizona's weekly case counts have dropped 37 per cent that is a tremendous drop and the governor and the state have done a fantastic job down 37 per cent, Texas down 18.7 per cent, and Florida 21.2 per cent drop.

"As we begin to contain the virus in these states, we must focus on new flare ups in the states where the case numbers have risen, including Georgia, Mississippi, Tennessee, Oklahoma, Missouri, and I think you will find that they are soon going to be very much under control," he said.

Trump Signs New Order On H-1B Visa Hiring, Blow To Indian Professionals

Agencies

Washington: In a huge blow to Indian IT professionals eyeing the US job market, President Donald Trump on Monday signed an executive order preventing federal agencies from contracting or subcontracting foreign workers -- mainly those on H-1B visa -- from hiring.

The move came over a month after the Trump administration in June 23 suspended the H-1B visas along with other types of foreign work visas until the end of 2020 to protect American workers in a crucial election year. The new restrictions took effect from June 24.

The H1B visa, most sought-after among Indian IT professionals, is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in speciality occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise.

The technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China.

"Today I am signing an executive order to ensure that the federal government lives by a very simple rule, higher American," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office of the White House before signing the order against hiring H1B visa holders for federal

contracts.

Trump told reporters that his administration will not tolerate firing of hardworking Americans in the pursuit of cheap foreign labour.

"As we speak, we're finalising the H-1B regulation so that no American workers be replaced ever again. H-1B should be used for top highly paid talent to create American jobs, not as inexpensive labour programmes and destroy American job," said the president who was surrounded across the Cabinet Room table with individuals campaigning against job outsourcing.

Prominent among them were Sara Blackwell, founder and president of Florida-based Protect US Workers organisation; Jonathan Hicks, a software engineer in the Tennessee Valley Authority; and Kevin Lynn, founder of Pennsylvania-based US Tech Workers.

The executive order requires all federal agencies to complete an internal audit and assess whether they are in compliance with the requirement that only US citizens and nationals are appointed to the competitive service. As a result, the Department of Labour will also finalise guidelines to prevent H-1B employers from moving H-1B workers to other employers' job sites to displace Americans workers.

Chinese Artificial Intelligence Company Files \$1.4 Billion Lawsuit Against Apple

Johnson & Johnson's Spravato has been approved as the first antidepressant for actively suicidal people, as doctors are becoming increasingly concerned about Covid-19's effect on the mental health of Americans.

The Food and Drug Administration approval means the quick-acting nasal spray will be available to people with suicidal thoughts and a plan to put them into action, said Michelle

said. In its studies, J&J found those who got the drug had a rapid reduction in the severity of their thinking, although the results didn't differ in a statistically significant way from patients given a placebo.

The data from studies of the drug shows it "may offer clinicians a new way to provide support to patients quickly in the midst of an urgent depressive episode and help set them on the path to remis-



Kramer, vice president of J&J's U.S. neuroscience medical-affairs unit. That constitutes 11% to 12% of as many as 17 million Americans who have major depressive disorder.

Spravato has been used by about 6,000 people for treatment-resistant depression since its approval in March 2019, Kramer said. J&J's decision to study it in depressed people actively contemplating suicide bucks a trend among drugmakers who routinely exclude such patients from trials.

Part of the thinking behind the decision was that Spravato's ability to act quickly could mean it works differently than older antidepressants that can take weeks to kick in, Kramer

said. Gerard Sanacora, director of Yale's Depression Research Program and a trial investigator.

America has been in the throes of a suicide crisis even before the pandemic, with the rate rising 30% from 1999 to 2016. Covid-19 closures limited the number of people given the spray as a depression treatment in-person at specified centers.

Ultimately, though, the numbers improved as patients and centers adapted and concerns grew within the mental health community that physical distancing and social isolation of quarantine may exacerbate people's existing problems or introduce new ones.

3 men rescued from Pacific island after writing SOS in sand

Wellington Three men have been rescued from a tiny Pacific island after writing a giant SOS sign in the sand that was spotted from above, authorities say.

The men had been missing in the Micronesia archipelago for nearly three days when their distress signal was spotted Sunday on uninhabited Pikelot Island by searchers on Australian and U.S. aircraft, the Australian defense department said Monday.

The men had apparently set out from Pulawat atoll in a 7-meter (23-foot) boat on July 30 and had intended to travel about 43 kilometers (27 miles) to Pulap atoll when they sailed off course and ran out of fuel, the department said.

Searchers in Guam asked for Australian help. The military ship, Canberra, which was re-



turning to Australia from exercises in Hawaii, diverted to the area and joined forces with U.S. searchers from Guam.

The men were found about 190 kilometers (118 miles) from where they had set out.

"I am proud of the response and professionalism of all on board as we fulfill our obligation to contribute to the safety

of life at sea wherever we are in the world," said the Canberra's commanding officer, Capt. Terry Morrison, in a statement.

The men were found in good condition, and an Australian military helicopter was able to land on the beach and give them food and water. A Micronesian patrol vessel was due to pick them up.

Richard Branson Space-Bound In Early 2021 Says Virgin Galactic

Washington, United States: Richard Branson could shoot into space on his Virgin Galactic aircraft as its first passenger early next year, the company said, potentially blazing a path for commercial flights.

The company has repeatedly pushed back the date it will take the first tourists outside earth's atmosphere and said 600 people have forked out \$250,000 to reserve a seat.

Virgin Galactic said Monday it "expects to advance to the next phase of its test flight program" in the fall with two manned flights.

"Assuming both flights demonstrate the expected results, Virgin Galactic anticipates Sir Richard Branson's flight to occur in the first



quarter of 2021," the company said in a statement.

The groundbreaking flight by Branson -- Virgin Galactic's founder -- would pave the way for commercial voyages to begin.

The programme has been hit by serious snags, however, with a devastat-

ing crash in 2014 caused by pilot error delaying the development of passenger aircraft SpaceShipTwo.

Getting tourists into space is not a simple exercise.

The spacecraft will be taken up by a special plane and released at high altitude. Seconds later, the spaceship

-- part plane, part rocket -- will ignite its engine and blast upward with an acceleration of 3.5 g, meaning three and a half times that of Earth's gravitational force.

It will then cut off the engine, which will create a feeling of weightlessness for a few minutes as the spacecraft reaches its highest point, about 80 kilometers (50 miles) above the planet, and then begin its descent.

It will glide to land at Spaceport America, built in the New Mexico desert.

Branson has set a series of aviation and nautical adventure records, although he failed, despite numerous attempts, to become the first person to circumnavigate the globe non-stop in a balloon.

N E W S M A K E R S

Violent Protests At Lakhanpur Toll Post, Curbs In Kathua

JAMMU: Authorities on Tuesday morning imposed restrictions in areas falling under jurisdiction of two police stations in Kathua district after violent protests broke out at newly established Toll Post at Lakhanpur leaving four people injured.

"Restrictions are being imposed in the jurisdiction of Police Station Kathua and Police Station Lakhanpur," Senior Superintendent of Police Kathua Shailendra Mishra said. "Stay at home and stay safe. Any gathering shall attract police action."

Official sources said that on Monday late evening, few local men from Lakhanpur had verbal duel with staff of toll post against the alleged overpaying of toll and verbal duel turned into scuffle in which three local men sustained multiple injuries.

"Soon after the news of injuries to local men spread in the area, people rushed to the toll post and vandalized the toll past damaging it's infrastructure," said sources.

They added that a police force rushed to the spot to calm the tempers. "Senior



Meanwhile, violent protests broke out in the Lakhanpur area on Monday late evening.

Superintendent of Police Kathua himself reached the spot and managed to pacify the protesters," sources said.

RESTRICTIONS ARE BEING IMPOSED in the jurisdiction of Police Station Kathua and Police Station Lakhanpur," Senior Superintendent of Police Kathua Shailendra Mishra said.

"Covid Will Disappear": Shiv Sena's Dig On Ayodhya Event Amid Pandemic



Mumbai: The COVID-19 crisis in the country will disappear with the blessings of Lord Ram, the Shiv Sena said today, and pointed out that veterans like LK Advani and Murlī Manohar Joshi won't be present in Ayodhya for the temple 'bhoomi puja' ceremony.

An editorial in the party mouthpiece 'Saamana' took a dig at the August 5 ceremony being held amid rising cases of coronavirus in the country, reported news agency Press Trust of India.

"There is no other golden moment like the one when Prime Minister Modi performs the 'bhoomi puja' at Ayodhya, the Sena said. "Coronavirus is there, but will disappear with Lord Ram's blessings," it added.

Mr Advani and Mr Joshi, key leaders associated with the Ram temple construction campaign, will witness the ceremony via video conferencing from Delhi, the editorial noted.

They were advised not to attend the ceremony in view of their age and the outbreak of COVID-19 in Ayodhya, it said.

Uma Bharti, another prominent leader attached to the campaign, will also not be present at the ceremony and will instead watch it "from the banks of the Sarayu river through the eyes

of her mind", the Sena said.

There is excitement in the country in view of the 'bhoomi puja' ceremony, the Sena said. "Coronavirus has spread in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh and the entire country. This crisis, too, will fade away with the blessings of Lord Ram," it said.

The responsibility of security arrangements in Ayodhya was with the Home Ministry, but it is unfortunate that Home Minister Amit Shah tested coronavirus positive, it said.

Despite the presence of the Prime Minister, the RSS Chief, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister and others, the ceremony will be lacklustre without Amit Shah, the Sena said.

It said Amit Shah participated in a public event in Delhi last Saturday and attended the cabinet meeting last Wednesday observing social distancing norms, and has asked those who came in his contact in the past few days to isolate themselves and get tested for coronavirus.

The entire Council of Ministers needs to be isolated, if the Home Minister is saying this, it said.

Amit Shah is close to PM Modi but nothing will happen to the Prime Minister and the Home Minister due the blessings of Lord Ram, it said.



SECURITY PERSONNEL were seen enforcing curfew in Srinagar on the eve of August 5 on Tuesday.Ko Photo Abid Bhat

Silver Bricks, Hanuman Garhi Temple Decked Up Before Ayodhya Bhoomi Puja

AYODHYA: The famous Hanuman Garhi temple in Ayodhya is decked up for the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the bhoomi puja of Ram Temple on Wednesday. As soon as PM Modi reaches Ayodhya, he will first go to this temple as it is believed that before visiting Lord Ram one should pay respect to Lord Hanuman. The priests of the temple are disheartened that they will not be able to meet PM Modi due to the protocols in place for coronavirus.

"At the temple, all of us had made a lot of preparations to present a 'gada' (mace), mukut (crown), silver brick, stole and a turban to the Prime Minister. But, this will not be possible now due to COVID-19 rules. Our plan to give him the gifts is now cancelled," Mahant Raju Das of Hanuman Garhi temple told news agency PTI.

"The Chief Minister visited the temple on Monday. Now the Prime Minister will pray on Wednesday but all the priests will remain at a distance and no one will be allowed near him. PM Modi is likely to stay here for 5-7 minutes," Mahant Raju Das said.



Preparations are almost complete for the bhoomi puja. It will be a historic day for Ayodhya, the priest said. On the significance of visiting the Hanuman temple first, the Mahant said, according to legend it is believed that no work is complete without the blessings of Lord Hanuman.

Seventy-six steps lead to Hanuman Garhi, which is one of the most popular Hanuman temples in north India. The shrine houses Hanuman's mother, Anjani, with a young Hanuman on her lap. "When Lord Ram returned to Ayodhya after conquering Ravana, he gave this place to Hanuman ji to live, so its called Hanuman Garhi or Ha-

numan Kot. From here, it is believed that Lord Hanuman used to protect Ramkot", the Mahant said. The construction of the Ram temple will start a new era for Ayodhya, which has witnessed many "tense moments" in the past, according to the priest. "Not only us, all Ram bhakts are happy with the new beginning. It is not just due to religious reasons, but the people here are happy because their city will now have more opportunities and development," the Mahant said. The Vedic rituals started in the temple on Monday and will continue till the bhoomi puja. After that the construction of Ram temple will start with full speed.

Union Home Secy Reviews COVID-19 Management J&K Has Better Than National Average Testing, Lower Spread Of Disease

SRINAGAR: The Union Home Secretary, Ajay Kumar Bhalla, today chaired a high level meeting to review the management of COVID-19 pandemic in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Chief Secretary, J&K, B V R Subrahmanyam, Financial Commissioner, H&ME, Atal Dulloo, Additional Secretary (UT), Govind Mohan, Joint Secretary, Punya Salila Srivastava, Joint Secretary (JK), Manish Tiwari and Mission Director (NHHM), Bhupinder Kumar were present in the meeting.

At the outset, the Health and Medical Education Department gave a presentation on the prevailing situation in the UT. The meeting was informed that J&K is performing reasonably well in mitigating COVID-19 pandemic with 53,323 tests per million population, 1,746 cases per million population, doubling rate of 27.2 days, 3.3% positivity rate, 61.3% recovery rate, and 1.8% mortality rate. It was mentioned that the UT has so

far conducted 6.5 lakh tests and currently has 21,416 confirmed cases, 7893 active cases, 13,127 recovered cases and 396 deaths.

Union Home Secretary while reviewing the COVID death audit report observed that most of the critical patients die within 72 hours of hospitalization. He emphasized on the need to tackle the issue.

Regarding testing capacities, the Chief Secretary said that the related infrastructure has been ramped up and against the WHO recommendation of 140 tests per million population per day, J&K is now conducting 900 tests per million per day. For this, 5 additional testing laboratories, 4 CBNAAT facilities and 15 TRU-ENAT laboratories were established in government medical institutions, besides augmenting the RTPCR tests with Rapid Antigen Tests. Further, the Government is also in the process of procuring 3 COBAS 6800 fully automated systems to enhance

per day testing capacity, which is currently at 12,000 tests per day.

Further, Chief Secretary informed that the Government has recently revised home quarantine guidelines to permit such isolation in favour of asymptomatic patients with no comorbidity and have Arogya Setu app downloaded for better monitoring, adding that they are being provided with Government sponsored oxymeters with the instruction of reporting to hospitals if their oxygen saturation level dips below 90%. "This will reduce the burden on healthcare institutions and will pave the way to better monitoring of critical cases", he said.

While sharing the data on the surge of bilateral pneumonia cases in the valley, the Chief Secretary sought help of the Union Government through a technical team of experts for analysing such cases and advising on probable containment of its spread.

BJP Dashes Hopes, Aspirations Of Jammu: NC

JAMMU: National Conference today described August 5, 2019 political moves in Jammu and Kashmir as emotionally tortuous for the Jammu region in particular, saying the trauma is unabated with people nurturing the feeling of being politically and socially disempowered and marginalised.

"Emotionally, we feel tormented with the largest state getting dwarfed into a Union Territory, a move unprecedented and unheard of in the history of independent India", senior National Conference leaders said in a joint statement issued from Sher-e-Kashmir Bhavan, adding that the hopes and aspirations of the Jammu region have been dashed by the BJP.

"Conversion of the state into Union Territory amounts to belittling the glorious Dogra pride", the National Conference leaders said, adding this is the last thing the self respecting Dogras, irrespective of caste, creed and religion, had expected.

They said dilution of permanent resident laws brought in by the visionary Maharaja Hari Singhji in 1927 to insulate the state, especially the Jammu region from the hegemony of afflu-

ent business houses from the neighbouring states having proximity to the Duggarland is yet another onslaught unleashed by the insensitive BJP, which has been working against the interests of Jammu. The snatching of this law will open up floodgate for big businesses to decimate small businessmen, industrial units and traders thus leading to economic slavery of Jammutes. Similarly, the jobs exclusively meant for the unemployed educated youth will have to be shared under the new concept of Domicile Rules, which are unjust, unfair and arbitrary. They questioned the promises made a year ago about safeguarding the jobs and lands of the permanent residents, saying that instead of taking any step towards this direction, the Domicile laws were brought in against the wishes of the people, who feel threatened of losing their holdings and snatching the jobs. Due to apprehensions about sharing of jobs with non-permanent residents and failure in undertaking any recruitment drive during the past one year, the educated employed youth are getting desperate, they added.

Khan: Pakistan Mediation Staved Off Iran-Saudi Military Escalation



Prime Minister Imran Khan says Pakistan's mediation prevented a military escalation between Iran and Saudi Arabia, and that Islamabad has not stopped efforts to ease the tensions.

In an exclusive interview with Al Jazeera due to be aired on Wednesday, Khan said a military confrontation between the two regional powers would constitute the worst possible scenario for the Middle East.

"Our mediation between Iran and Saudi Arabia has not stopped and we are making progress but slowly," Khan said.

Tensions have been running high between Riyadh and Tehran over several regional issues, mainly the deadly war that the Saudi regime and its allies have been waging against Yemen since early 2015.

The tensions reached a peak in mid-September 2019, when Yemeni armed forces launched a series of retaliatory drone and missile raids against Saudi Arabia's Aramco oil facilities.

Saudi Arabia, the US and their allies accused Iran of being behind the raid, an allegation categorically rejected by Tehran.

Earlier that year, Riyadh and its allies had blamed Tehran for a series of suspicious attacks against oil tankers in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, without offering

any substantial evidence.

In a hostile measure, they also moved to form an anti-Iran naval coalition based on a US proposal under the pretext of "ensuring security" in the Middle East's strategic water ways.

Tehran rejected those accusations as well, saying the attacks seemed to have been a false flag devised to frame Iran. As tensions ratcheted up, a number of countries, most notably Iran's neighbors Pakistan and Iraq, sought to mediate between the two sides. As part of those efforts, Khan traveled to Iran and Saudi Arabia in October 2019 and held talks with the two countries' senior officials.

The visit came after The New York Times quoted officials of Iraq and Pakistan as saying that Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman had asked the leaders of those two countries to speak with Iranian officials about de-escalation.

Iran has time and again expressed readiness to hold talks with Saudi Arabia — with or without mediation — over regional security and neighborly relations.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said in October 2019 that Iran would be a companion of Saudi Arabia if the kingdom changed course and pursued regional issues at the negotiating table instead of "killing people."

NEWS MAKERS

Bihar Government Can't Recommend CBI Probe: Actor Rhea Chakraborty's Lawyer

MUMBAI: Actor Rhea Chakraborty's lawyer today said the Bihar government cannot recommend a CBI probe in actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death when police from that state do not have any jurisdiction to even investigate the case.

The Bihar government has recommend a CBI inquiry in the case of Sushant Rajput's death after his father made a request for it, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar said today.

"There cannot be transfer of a case which had no legal basis to begin with for the Bihar police to get involved. At the most, it would be a Zero FIR which would then



be transferred to Mumbai Police," Rhea Chakraborty's lawyer Satish Maneshinde said in a statement.

The transfer of a case, in which they (Bihar police) had no jurisdiction, to CBI has no legal sanctity, he said.

He said the Bihar government, realising that it does not have the jurisdiction to probe the case, is

now adopting this "illegal method" of recommending the case to be handed over to CBI. Rhea Chakraborty earlier filed a petition in the Supreme Court, stating that the Bihar Police have no jurisdiction to probe the case as the Mumbai Police have already registered an Accidental Death Report (ADR).

Sushant Singh Rajput, 34, was found dead at his apartment in suburban Bandra on June 14.

Mumbai Police had registered an Accidental Death Report (ADR) and an investigation is underway in the case. Till now, the Mumbai Police have recorded statements of 56 people, including Sushant Rajput's sisters, Rhea Chakraborty and some other film personalities.

Sushant Rajput's father KK Singh last week lodged a complaint with Patna police against Rhea Chakraborty and her family members, accusing them of "abetment of suicide" in the Sushant Rajput case.

Rs 30 Lakh Raised Online For Mumbai Couple Who Fed Poor During Lockdown

MUMBAI: An online crowd-funding platform has raised Rs 30 lakh from donors for a Mumbai-based couple who had donated their own savings to feed around 1,500 people during lockdown.

Faiyaz Sheikh said he was overwhelmed by the response.

He said the platform has asked him and his wife, Mizga, to submit a projection about their future plans.

"We are very happy that our work has been recognised. During the lockdown, we spent Rs 5 lakh. But after a report was published in news-



papers about our work, we received a donation of Rs 4 lakh from an industrialist," he said.

The Sheikh, based in Malwani in western suburb of Malad, run a school in a slum area where about 350 students are studying.

"We will provide them various facilities including healthcare and ration (from Rs 30 lakh)," he said.

Mr Sheikh said his school lacked a wash-room forcing teachers and students to use public toilets. The school also needs a library, desktops and audio-visual aids, he said. "Even benches and blackboards in our five-room school are in a bad shape," he added.

Theatre Doyen Ebrahim Alkazi Dies At 94



NEW DELHI: Theatre doyen and legendary teacher Ebrahim Alkazi died on Tuesday afternoon after suffering a heart attack, his son said. He was 94. Alkazi, who was the longest serving director of the National School of Drama, produced plays such as "Girish Karnad's 'Tughlaq' and Dharamvir Bharati's 'Andha Yug'."

He mentored generations of actors, including Naseer-uddin Shah and Om Puri.

"Dad died this evening at 2.45 pm after a massive heart attack. He was admitted to the Escorts hospital the day before yesterday," his son Feisal Alkazi said. — PTI