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Minum : 20°C
Humidity : 61%

SUNSET
Today 07:25 PM
SUNRISE
Tomorrow 05:47 AM

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News Digest

Soldier Falls Into Gorge, Dies

Srinagar: A soldier was killed after he slipped into a gorge in Macchil sector of north Kashmir's Kupwara district, army said Friday. 27-year-old Rifleman Amir Hussain Wani of south Kashmir's Anantnag district was on patrol duty along the Line of Control in Macchil sector, when he slipped and fell into a gorge, an army spokesperson said. The soldier, he said was rescued by his team, provided immediate first aid and evacuated to nearest army medical facility for treatment. "However he succumbed to his injuries," the army spokesperson said. He added that Wani had joined the Army in 2012 and is **● P-02**

'Abducted' Soldier's Clothes Found

Srinagar: Government forces on Friday intensified operation in Shopian to rescue an 'abducted' soldier after his clothes were recovered from an orchard in the south Kashmir district. The clothes of Rifleman Shakhir Manzoor were recovered by state forces this morning in an orchard in Landora village of Shopian, official sources said. The recovery, they said prompted the government forces to intensify the operation to rescue the soldier. On Monday, suspected militants intercepted Manzoor's car **● P-02**

Arms Recovered From Militant Hideout

Jammu: Security forces on Friday busted a militant hideout during an operation in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district and seized two AK-47 rifles and four magazines, officials said. Poonch Senior Superintendent of Police Ramesh Angral said the hideout was busted during a joint Cordon and Search Operation by the Army and the Special Operations Group of Police in upper Kalsia forest area of Mangnar top. Two AK-47 rifles and 4 magazines were recovered, he said. **● P-02**

SMC To Resume Dog Sterilisation Program

Srinagar: Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), the city's civic body is soon resuming the animal birth control and anti-rabies programme to keep a check on canine population. The sterilization programme will be shortly resumed by SMC in collaboration with veterinary faculty of SK University of agricultural sciences at its Animal Birth Control AR facility at Shuhama. "The programme which was temporarily on hold due to the restrictions in place because of COVID 19 Pandemic **● P-02**

3 Drug Peddlers Held With 60 Kg Poppy

Jammu: Three men alleged to be drug peddlers were arrested and 60 kilograms of poppy recovered in Jammu and Kashmir's Udhampur district on Friday, police officials said. During a routine checking, a police team stopped a Punjab-bound truck on the national highway at Jakhani, they said. During the vehicle search, 60 kg of poppy was seized from its driver identified as Sukhpreet Singh along with Jagdev Singh and Jagroop Singh, they added. The accused persons were arrested and the contraband was also seized, they said. A case was registered at Udhampur police station and further investigation is underway.

Dialogue Soon, Says Manoj Sinha After Taking Oath As J&K LG

'August 5 Is A Very Important Day In The History Of Jammu & Kashmir'



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir administration will soon initiate direct dialogue with the people to end the situation of uncertainty and militancy, the union territory's new lieutenant governor Manoj Sinha said on Friday soon after being sworn in.

The 61-year-old, who was administered the oath of office by Jammu and Kashmir High Court Chief Justice Gita Mittal at a simple function in the Raj Bhavan, also said he wants to accelerate development in the union territory,

Cong Leader Questions Murmu's Resignation

Leader of the Congress in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury on Friday sought to know why G C Murmu resigned as the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu & Kashmir, and alleged the former IAS officer paid the price for "venting his views". The Election Commission had on July 28 taken exception to Murmu's reported remarks on the timing **● P-02**

carved out of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir last year. "August 5 is a very important day in the history of Jammu and Kashmir. After years of isolation, Jammu and Kashmir joined the national mainstream. I have been told that many works which

could not be completed in years have been completed in the past one year." Sinha told reporters after taking oath.

"I want to accelerate that development," he added.

On August 5, 2019, Jammu and Kashmir's special **● PAGE 02**

J&K, Ladakh May See Temperature Rise Of 7 Degrees: Study

SRINAGAR: Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh may witness a temperature increase of up to 6.9 degrees Celsius by the end of the century due to climate change, according to a study which warns that the glaciers in this Himalayan region could shrink by 85 per cent if the projections come true.

The study, published in the journal Climatic Change on July 29, predicted the impact of future climate change in the Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh Himalaya, by the end of the twenty-first century using an ensemble of 11 models under three greenhouse gas emission scenarios.

It also highlights the changes in the distribution of the **● PAGE 02**

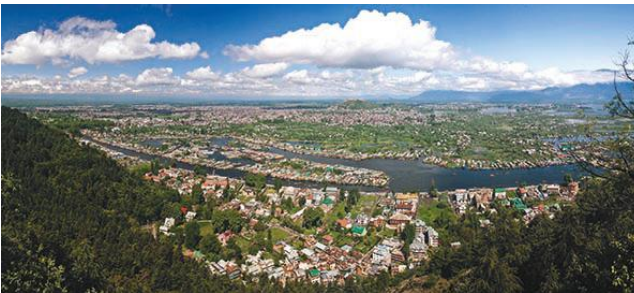
Centre Mulls New Law To Protect Land Rights Of J&K Locals

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: In a bid to allay the fears of locals, the Centre is likely to bring a new law which will protect the land rights of the people belonging to Jammu and Kashmir, an official said on Friday.

A senior government official privy to the development said the new law will be passed in parliament as election to the newly created Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir is yet to be held.

"Land rights for the locals in Jammu and Kashmir is coming up. Work is on for enacting a new law that will allay all fears of the



people of Jammu and Kashmir," the official said.

Once the legislation is passed by parliament, the fear of losing rights over land will be over in Jammu and Kashmir, the official said.

The fears of Jammu and Kashmir domicile people arose after the abrogation of Article 370 in August 5, 2019, which ended the exclusive rights of the locals over lands or immovable property and jobs. **● PAGE 02**

SC TO J&K: Come Up With Final Stand On 4G Internet By 11 August

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Friday asked the Jammu and Kashmir administration to explore the possibility of restoring 4G services in certain areas.

The Jammu and Kashmir administration sought time to take instructions on the restoration of high speed internet service, saying a new Lt Governor has been appointed in the Union Territory.

Manoj Sinha has been appointed the new LG of Jammu and Kashmir after G C Murmu resigned from the post.

High speed Internet service in



J&K has been suspended since August last year when the Centre had announced revocation of its special status and bifurcation of the state. The top court told the administration that with the change of LG, nothing changes as the special committee is there to look into the issue.

A bench of Justices N V Ramana, R Subhash Reddy and B R Gavai adjourned the hearing for August 11, on the contempt plea filed by an NGO seeking restoration of 4G internet service in the UT. **● PAGE 02**

NC Leader's Son Bought Assets Abroad With JK Bank Loan: ED

NEW DELHI: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday claimed that Hilal Rather, the son of former Jammu and Kashmir minister Abdul Rahim Rather, "siphoned off" money loaned to his company to splurge on foreign tours and acquiring personal assets in India, Dubai and the US.

The central agency conducted raids at 17 locations in Srinagar, Jammu, Delhi and Ludhiana on Thursday in connection with a money laundering probe against the junior Rather linked to an alleged Rs 177 crore loan fraud involving Jammu and Kashmir Bank.

"Several incriminating documents and digital evidence **● PAGE 02**

LoC Flare Up: 2 Civilians Killed, 5 Injured In J&K

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Two civilians were killed while five others, including a woman were injured on Friday as India and Pakistan troops traded heavy gunfire along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir.

In Kashmir Valley, the cross-LoC shelling started in Nowgam sector of the border district Kupwara in the early hours of Friday, witnesses told Kashmir Observer. After Nowgam, the armies of the two nuclear countries traded fire in Karnah, Keran and Macchil sectors in the frontier district.

"The cross-border shelling was so

frightening that the villagers did not dare to step out of the house. The deafening sounds of explosions created fear and anxiety among the villagers," said Shabir Ahmad of Karnah.

He said the intense shelling between the two sides continued for several hours due to which several shells landed in the villages of Bagh-bela, Shamspora. Ahmad said three people were injured in the cross-LoC shelling when the trio were working at a under construction house.

He identified the trio as Syed Rafiqat Hussain, Mohammad Yaqoob Mir and Anif Ahmad Chichi of Shamspora. Chichi succumbed to his injuries at the district hospital Kupwara. **● PAGE 02**



File Pic Abid Bhat

7 More Covid-19 Deaths In Kashmir, J&K Toll 450

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: Seven more people succumbed to coronavirus infection in Kashmir valley on Friday, taking the number of fatalities since the outbreak of pandemic in the Union territory to 450.

While Srinagar reported three new deaths, two each were reported from Anantnag and Baramulla districts, official sources said. A middle-aged pharmacist from Pulwama was also among the new deaths reported today.

Among the latest Covid-19 victims in Srinagar include a 60-year-old man from HMT who was admitted to hospital on August 3 and a 65-year-old woman from Dal-

55 Security Men Among 473 New Cases

Jammu and Kashmir on Friday reported 473 new cases of coronavirus, including 55 security personnel and 52 travelers thus taking the total number of people infected in the Union Territory to 23927. **● P-02**

gate, admitted on August 5 with "bilateral pneumonia, diabetes".

The three deaths reported from SKIMS Soura include a 65-year-old woman from Sarnal and a 55-year-old man, a pharmacist by profession, from Chersoo area of Awantipora **● PAGE 02**

People Not Bothered About Art-370, J&K CS Tells Visiting Journalists

'Not A Single Soul Cried When Leaders Were Detained Last Year'

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: People in Jammu and Kashmir have to keep patience to enjoy a whole lot of benefits of the Centre's move to nullify Article 370 as many positive initiatives have not been rolled out fully yet, Chief Secretary BVR Subrahmanyam has said.

Jammu and Kashmir was a "broken state" and there was "no system" in place due to years of misgovernance, corruption and "unbelievable levels of fraud" committed by leaders of mainstream parties and separatist organisations, he said.

Therefore, not a "single soul had

'Panchayat Bypolls After Covid Situation Improves'

By-elections to all vacant posts of Panch and Sarpanch in Jammu and Kashmir will be held as soon as the coronavirus situation improves, Chief Secretary BVR Subrahmanyam has said. About 12,600 posts of panch and sarpanchs, out of **● P-02**

cried" over the detention of political and separatist leaders in August last year, when the Centre **● PAGE 02**

Lockdown Letters: When Obsolete Practice Saved The Situation In Kashmir

Rakshanda Afrin

AHAD DAR, 28, wept like a child when he received the 'most-awaited' news of his life amid lockdown last year. His cries echoed in his city home where he got stuck when New Delhi scrapped Jammu and Kashmir's semiautonomous status on August 5, 2019, and subsequently forced the communication clampdown in the region.

Before the trader would cry his heart out, he had an unexpected visitor from his hometown Shopian.

The homeboy practicing medicine in a city hospital had arrived with a letter that Dar's younger brother had sent through him.

"A baby daughter was born on August 28," the letter, Dar received

on September 4 that year, read. "Both your wife and newborn are safe and healthy. We hope you can come back soon!"

Dar had last talked to his family on August 4 when clampdown rendered cellphones inoperable in the valley. The concern for his family living in one of the turbulent belts of Kashmir throughout made him restless. "But with that letter," Dar recalls his captive feelings a year later, "I felt life back in my veins."

Till he managed to return to his family that year, Dar would read the contents of that letter every night just to stay hopeful.

But when all this was happening, Kashmir had become a poet's lament. 'The Country without Post Office'

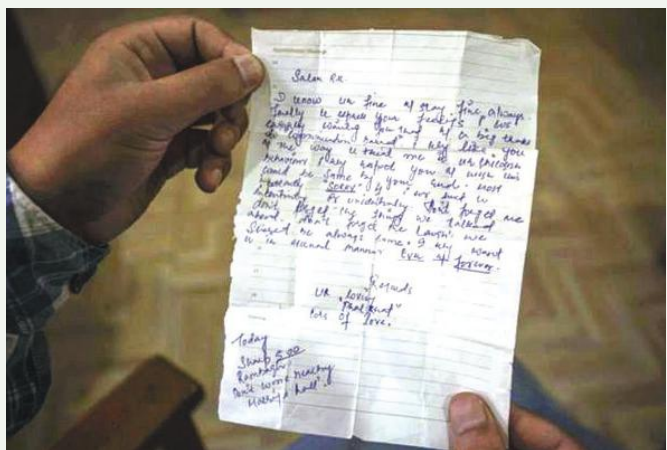
As desperate times were calling for desperate measures, the junked

routine—the art of letter writing—once again took roots in the valley. "The idea [of writing letters] was haunting as well as heartening," says Saba Rizvi, a scholar who wrote a pile of letters to her friends in lockdown last year.

In one of her letters, invoking a 'beloved' bard, she writes: "Now what to do in 'The Country without Post Office', where mountains of letters pile up but no mailman to deliver them to their destination."

Each post office is boarded up. Who will deliver parchment cut in paisleys, my news to prisons?

Only silence can now trace my letters to him. Or in a dead office the dark panes. "It wasn't just writing letters, but also delivering them to their addresses," Rizvi says.



"Since pigeons or mailmen weren't around anymore, so the natives themselves became the messenger of their letters."

Letters of Longing

In the times of curfew and uncertainties, those letters slowly became sources of assurances, happi-

ness and hope in the valley.

Adeeb and his friend, both university students, had no means to talk amid blockade. The letters between the young lovers were being delivered for months by their trusted aid and a mutual friend.

"I felt like a John Keats in the age of Internet," laughs Adeeb. "Meetings were not a possibility either. Sitting at our homes, left with no options, we started exchanging letters to talk every once in a week."

'Redemption' Moment

The iconic line—"Brooks was here"—from the movie The Shawshank Redemption is enough to invoke emotions in any cinephile.

Akin to an old captive carving the line on his hotel room wall, an anxious banker Amjad had written a similar note and pasted it on his

office wall last year.

It was his idea of letting his colleagues know that he had walked to the office and was doing well, but worried about others.

A week later, when he went back, his colleagues had pasted a stark note: "We were, we are, and we will be here..."

With no working networks or connectivity, this note exchange became handy for the band of bankers amid lockdown.

"There're many profound and moving stories of how the valley found refuge in these handwritten letters as they were clouted with uncertainties and troubled times," Amjad says.

"It was a resilience to reconnect with each other when every one of us was pushed to the wall."

BJP, Cong Question Each Other Over Their Alleged China Links

NEW DELHI: The BJP and the Congress on Friday targeted each other over their alleged connections with China and its firms, with the ruling party president J P Nadda seizing on Supreme Court's observations on a matter to launch a fresh attack on the opposition party's leadership.

While refusing to hear a PIL that had sought a probe into a 2008 agreement between the Congress and the Communist Party of China, the Supreme Court bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde expressed its sur-

prise at the issue, saying "within our limited experience, we have never heard of it that a political party is making an agreement with other country."

Latching onto it, Nadda sought explanation from Congress president Sonia Gandhi and party leader Rahul Gandhi.

"Even the SC is surprised at the MoU signed by the Congress party with the Chinese Gov...Mrs Gandhi & her son, who led the signing, must explain. Does this explain donations to RGF and opening Indian market for the Chinese in re-

turn, which affected Indian businesses," Nadda asked in a tweet.

Hitting back, the Congress alleged that the BJP used Chinese companies during elections that may have compromised user data and asked the ruling party as to what was its compulsion for doing so. Congress spokesperson PawanKhera took a swipe at Prime Minister NarendraModi at a briefing, "When explosive information of the ruling BJP having partnered with those Chinese companies, which have now been banned by the Union government for their links with

the Chinese establishment, comes in public domain, the country is forced to start seeking answers of your silence in such information."

"What was the compulsion of involving the same company for elections which you had red flagged two years ago," he also asked.

Attacking the government over the ongoing border row with China, he claimed that attempts were made by the government to "intimidate" those who question the prime minister.

"Why did you compromise the data security and privacy of

crores of Indians by involving Chinese companies linked to the People's Liberation Army," the Congress leader asked.

"Today, a party or a person, who is quiet, is the one who has to, has a lot to hide. Not people like us, who are on a daily basis asking tough questions on China. We expect you to have a tough response towards China," he said.

Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Singh Surjewala also took a dig at Nadda.

"Dear Naddaji, absurdity is your speciality. Misrepresenta-

tion your style.Canards your habit. PI read what CJI said again, & stop brandishing lies," he tweeted, tagging a news report.

BJP spokesperson SambitPatra claimed in remarks to media that the apex court's observations have "validated and vindicated" his party's concerns on the agreement between the Congress and China's ruling party. He alleged that Sonia and Rahul Gandhi are "conspirators in chief".

"We dare them. If their conscience is clear, they should come out and take questions. If they

have something to hide, they will not speak," he alleged. "The country is surprised. The Supreme Court is surprised. The Congress has still not answered," he said.A few weeks ago, the BJP led by Nadda had launched an attack on the opposition party over the agreement and also raked up the issue of alleged donations to the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation from the Chinese embassy. The Congress had then accused the ruling party of adopting "diversionary" tactics to deflect people's attention from its "mishandling" of economy and the coronavirus crisis.

Dialogue Soon, Says Manoj Sinha

status under Article 370 was revoked and the state bifurcated into the union territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

Outlining his priorities, Sinha pitched for peace and stability and said the powers of the Constitution will be used for the betterment of the people and the development of Jammu and Kashmir.

We need to establish a dialogue with the common people of Jammu and Kashmir.

We don't have any agenda in that. There will be no discrimination against anyone. Constitution will be Gita in that," he said.

Sinha said the process of direct dialogue with the people will start in a few days.

"There should be peace and stability in Jammu and Kashmir. The situation of uncertainty should end, terrorism should end. Achieving all this along with accelerated development will be our aim, our mission," the lieutenant governor said.

Less than 150 people were invited for the swearing-in ceremony. Social distancing norms were observed with all invitees seated away from each other and everyone wearing masks in view of the COVID-19 pandemic. Sinha and the chief justice briefly took off their masks for the oath-taking.

Sinha succeeds former IAS officer Girish Chandra Murmu, who resigned on Wednesday night and was appointed Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) on Thursday.

The National Conference stayed away from the ceremony for which both Farooq Abdullah and Omar Abdullah were invited.

The National Conference has said the process of democracy should begin by releasing their detained leaders as well as former chief minister and PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti.

"On August 5, we were not allowed to meet. Two days later, we are asked to participate in the oath taking ceremony," an NC leader said. Advisors to the previous lieutenant governor, including Farooq Khan and Baseer Khan, as well as senior bureaucrats and policemen were present at the function in the Raj Bhavan, at the foothills of the Zaberwan range.

Rajya Sabha member Nazir Ahmed Laway, BJP Lok Sabha member Jugal Kishore Sharma and Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party leader Ghulam Hasan Mir were also present.

Sharma, who is known for his connect with people, particularly in rural areas, will have to tackle several pressing issues. He will have to work towards ending factionalism within the bureaucracy in the union territory, with some senior IAS officers recently found to be publicly indulging in verbal spats.

He will also have to focus his attention on the state intelligence department, which has of late failed to anticipate events. In the last three days, a panchayat member and a sarpanch have been attacked in south Kashmir's Kulgam district in two separate incidents.

Known in some circles as 'vikas purush' (development man), Sinha is a three-time Lok Sabha MP who was minister of state for communication in 2016 when the telecom industry was engaged in the sale of spectrum. He was elected to the lower house for the first time in 1996 and then in 1999 and 2014. However, he lost the election from Ghazipur in 2019.

A B.Tech in civil engineering from the Institute of Technology (now known as IIT-BHU), Sinha has been credited with overcoming the menace of call dropping by holding widespread consultations with telecom operators.

Sinha, an agriculturist, is the first politician to be nominated LG of the union territory.

The Centre had earlier appointed Satya Pal Malik, a politician, as governor of the erstwhile state.

Sinha was a frontrunner for the post of Uttar Pradesh chief minister after the party walked away with 265 seats in the 403-member assembly in 2017.

Born in Mohanpura in Uttar Pradesh's Ghazipur district, he began his political career after being elected president of the Banaras Hindu University Students Union in 1982.

Cong Leader Questions...

of polls in the union territor and said, in the constitutional scheme of things, only the poll panel is authorised to decide on such matters. Murmu, who quit as the Lt Governor of Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday, has been appointed as the new Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India.

"The question is, why the 1st LG of UT JAMMU AND KASHMIR has tendered his resignation? Voluntary or instructed? Whether he has been failed to hoodwink the people that everything is going hunky-dory?" Chowdhury tweeted.

"I think he has committed a great wrong by venting his views much to the embarrassment of the govt and got axed. You may term it as #MurmuSyndrome," he added.

Former Union minister Manoj Sinha was on Friday sworn in as the new lieutenant governor of Jammu and Kashmir, the first political leader to take charge of the Union Territory.

The Union Territory of J&K came into being on October 31, 2019, after the state was reorganised and bifurcated into two union territories, Ladakh being the other.

Air India Plane With 191...

the early hours of Friday. Nearly 15 people had died because of this landslide. Several politicians have expressed their distress over the incident.

The flight is said to have made 2 attempts to land, by circling the airport, before the fateful landing. After overshooting the runway, the disastrous incident took place.

LoC Flare Up: 2 Civilians Killed,...

"Six people were injured in shelling by Pakistan troops. Of them, one succumbed to his injuries. The condition of a few is critical." SSP Kupwara Ambarkar Shriram Dinkar told Kashmir Observer. Mohammad Iqbal, a resident of Rangwar TP said that three people were injured in the shelling that started around 9:30 and continued till 2pm. Among the injured, he said were two brothers identified as Zakir Hussain Khan and Naseer Hussain Khan and a woman Ha-meeda Begum

"We have could hear around 300 explosions. Many shells exploded just 100 metres away from my house," he said.

"Over a dozen people also suffered injuries due to fall when they were trying to save themselves from the mortar shells. I have never seen such an intense clash between the two armies," he added. Iqbal said that several houses were also damaged in the cross-LoC shelling that continued for several hours.

Guns also roared in the Uri sector of Baramulla district on Friday afternoon.

Officials said that Pakistani troops violated ceasefire and resorted to heavy mortar shelling on army posts in Boniyar Uri.

The army, they said, retaliated effectively to unprovoked provocation by Pak troops.

The officials said no reports of injuries were received in the cross-LoC

shelling in the border town.

Meanwhile, a 65-year-old man was killed in cross-LoC shelling in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district: officials, PTI reported on Friday night. The deceased has been identified as Muhammad Sidiq of Mendhar.

J&K, Ladakh May See...

prevalent climate zones in the region.

"The study has been carried over the entire region of Jammu and Kashmir, including Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh, Gilgit-Baltistan, Aksai Chin and other regions across the Line of Control (LoC)," noted Professor Shakil Ahmad Romshoo, Dean of Research at the University of Kashmir.

"The average annual temperature is projected to increase by 4.5 degrees Celsius, 3.98 degrees Celsius, and 6.93 degrees Celsius by the end of the twenty first century under three different scenarios, respectively," Romshoo, lead author of the research, told PTI. The temperature increase of 6.9 degrees Celsius for the Jammu and Kashmir Himalayas is way more than the projected average rise in the global and national temperatures by the end of the century. Romshoo added that if the current emission rates of greenhouse gases are sustained, the global average temperature is likely to rise by nearly 5 degrees Celsius by the end of the twenty-first century under the worst case scenario.

Similarly, the average temperature over India is projected to rise by approximately 4.4 degrees Celsius under such a scenario, he said. Romshoo noted that there will be significant impacts on almost every sector of the economy in Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh due to this climate change driven temperature increase.

"The glaciers, the most important resource of the region, are going to shrink by around 85 per cent by the end of the century if the projections come true," the professor at the Department of Earth Sciences, University of Kashmir, noted.

He explained that this would lead to significant depletion of the streamflows in the Indus basin, the waters of which are shared between several countries in South Asia.

Similarly, the impacts on agriculture, horticulture and even tourism shall significantly threaten the livelihood of the dependent population in the region, the environmentalist warned.

The researchers, including Jasia Bashir and Irfan Rashid from the Department of Earth Sciences, University of Kashmir, noted that the drivers of climate change are primarily the increasing emission rates of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

Greenhouse gas emission is directly related to fossil fuel use, industrialisation, deforestation, air pollution, and other environmental unfriendly activities across the globe, they explained.

"Though, the mountainous regions like Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh are the least industrialised, unfortunately, they are bearing the brunt of the climate change as the phenomena has global dimensions and footprint," Romshoo noted.

The projected climate change under the three emission scenarios also indicates significant changes in the distribution of prevalent climate zones.

The projected climate change under different scenarios revealed that the subtropical and temperate climatic zones would expand while the cold desert climate zone is projected to shrink significantly under all the three scenarios, the researchers noted.

"The cold desert climate zone in the Ladakh region would shrink by 22 per cent and correspondingly the subtropical and temperate zones would expand due to the projected climate change," the researchers noted in their study.

"The projected changes in the climate and climate zones by the end of the twenty-first century would have significant impacts on various sectors in the region which might lead to the redistribution and changes in the composition of vegetation, enhancement of snow depletion and glacier recession," said Romshoo.

He noted that the situation would also lead to an increase in the frequency of climate extremes, changes in streamflows, in the faunal and floral biodiversity, plant invasions, changes in agriculture and horticulture productivity.

This is in addition to the loss of hydropower generation, ecosystem services, and impacts on other key economic sectors in the region, according to the researchers.

"The vital information generated in this research would inform policymaking for framing robust strategies for adaptation and mitigation of the impacts of climate change on various socioeconomic and ecological sectors in the region," Romshoo added.

Centre Mulls New Law...

In April, the Union Home Ministry had reversed its order on new domestic rules for Jammu and Kashmir within a week after the amendment triggered protests in the Valley.

Under the revised order, only domiciled residents of the Union Territory will be eligible to apply for recruitment there.

The fresh order, issued on April 3, made government jobs in the Jammu and Kashmir administration out of bounds for non-residents. Earlier, in the order issued on March 31, the home ministry had reserved jobs for domiciled residents only in Group D and non-entry gazetted government posts.

This meant that people from any part of the country could apply for jobs in the higher categories.

Under the new definition of domicile for Jammu and Kashmir, a person residing there for at least 15 years will be eligible to be a permanent resident of the Union Territory.

The government notification also extended domicile rights to central government employees who have served in the state for ten years and also to their children.

Before August 5, 2019, when the government abrogated the erstwhile state's special status given under Article 370 and divided it into two Union Territories, the Jammu and Kashmir assembly was constitutionally empowered to define a resident of the erstwhile state. These defined residents were alone eligible to apply for jobs or own immovable property.

However, the home ministry amended a 2010 legislation the Jammu and Kashmir Civil Services (Decentralisation and Recruitment Act) on March 31 by substituting the term "permanent residents" with "domiciles of Jammu and Kashmir".

7 More Covid-19 Deaths...

Pulwama who was admitted on July 31 and 46 Anantnag.

With these deaths, the overall tally has risen to 450 in J&K, 34 in Jammu and 416 in Kashmir.

Srinagar district with 147 deaths tops the list followed by Baramulla (77), Budgam (34), Anantnag (30), Kulgam (29), Pulwama (28), Shopian (24), Kupwara (22), Jammu (23), Bandipora (17), Ganderbal (7), two each in Rajouri, Doda and Udhampur besides one each in Ramban, Samba, Poonch, and Kathua. (With GNS inputs)

55 Security Men Among 473 ...

While 345 new cases were reported from the Valley, the remaining

128 cases were confirmed Covid-19 positive by the officials in the Jammu province.

Among the cases reported from Valley include 36 men from CRPF, 11 from army, five from BSF and three from IRP.

Giving district wise breakup of the cases, official sources said Srinagar recorded 123 cases, highest among all districts, Baramulla reported 32, Pulwama26, Kulgam16, Shopian 8, Anantnag 13, Budgam 24, Kupwara 28, Bandipora 48, Ganderbal 27, Jammu 61, Rajouri 3, Ramban 1, Kathua 9, Udhampur 23, Samba 11, Doda 3, Poonch 1 and Reasi 16.

In Kashmir, Srinagar tops the list with 5822 cases followed by Baramulla with 2073, Pulwama 1769, Kulgam 1593, Shopian 1508, Anantnag 1498, Kupwara 1209, Budgam 1462, Bandipora 962, and Ganderbal 630.

In Jammu division, Jammu district has 1473 cases, Rajouri 754, Ramban 576, Kathua 574, Udhampur 618, Samba 478, Doda 302, Poonch 253, Reasi 214 and Kishtwar 159.

"Moreover, 510 more COVID-19 patients have recovered and discharged from various hospitals, 142 from Jammu Division and 368 from Kashmir Division," the officials said.

People Not Bothered About...

announced its decision to revoke Jammu and Kashmir's special status under Article 370 of the Constitution, he added.

Subrahmanyam, a 1987-batch IAS officer who was hand-picked by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to "clean up" the Jammu and Kashmir administration, said mis-governance and corruption had continued for so long that the system collapsed from inside.

"People have to be patient to get a whole lot of benefits after the abrogation of Article 370 as what had happened on August 5 last year, have not been rolled out fully (yet)," he told a group of visiting journalists here.

On August 5 last year, the central government had announced abrogation of Article 370 provisions and bifurcation of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir into Union Territories (UT) -- Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

Subrahmanyam said before he came to Jammu and Kashmir in June 2018, he met the prime minister and sought his guidance for his new assignment.

"The prime minister told me: Go, clean up the administration, rebuild it and hand over the 'amanat' (precious possession) to the local people," he said.

The chief secretary said he has been working sincerely to create a robust institutional infrastructure which is free of corruption.

"There was a terrible situation here. Things were designed for corruption. Mis-governance and corruption were for so long that the system has collapsed from inside. The whole state was a big ponzi scheme," he said.

Subrahmanyam said there were scores of incomplete projects, land acquisition was a big scam and there were instances when doctors working in the Middle East were drawing salaries in Jammu and Kashmir as it had no system of monitoring.

He said frauds in Jammu and Kashmir were at "unbelievable levels". "There were frauds in jobs, frauds in projects, frauds were everywhere".

"The JK Bank CMD was the scamster number one. Twenty families or a maximum 30 families milked the JK Bank. There was no accountability. All other PSUs (public sector undertakings) in other states submit their report to the assembly, the PSUs in other states come under RTI. CVC (Central Vigilance Commission). But the JK Bank is accountable to none," he said.

The chief secretary said Jammu and Kashmir was a "broken state, the governance was broken badly, there was no system, no rules and the decay began a long time ago".

"We are reconstructing things which were crumbling," he said.

Asked about how people felt one year after the abrogation of Article 370, Subrahmanyam said common men are not bothered about Article 370, what they expect is jobs, growth and development and the administration is working in that direction.

He said once the administration delivers development, create jobs, people will realise the positive sides.

"Delivery will happen. Reconstruction of the UT is not an overnight work. It takes time. The work is on," he said.

The chief secretary said three stages of transition have been going on in Jammu and Kashmir.

They are transition from Jammu and Kashmir Constitution to Indian Constitution, bifurcation of the State and then transition from State to UT.

"There have been lots of changes. Separation of three lakh employees were done in just 15 days. The UT rules were made. We had to prepare a budget for five months from October 30 to March 31. Then again budget from April for the whole financial year. Division of assets and liabilities have not been finalised yet," he said.

Subrahmanyam said Rs 6,500 crore worth of projects had been lying incomplete that include a 26-year-old project to construct a bypass in Baramulla. "We have already sanctioned Rs 2,500 crore to complete all these incomplete projects," he said.

Asked about the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir, Subrahmanyam said, "The day I can drive down to Pulwama just with my driver without police escort and pilot, we can safely say that the peace has returned to Jammu and Kashmir."

Pulwama is considered to be a hotbed of militancy. A bus carrying CRPF jawans was blown up by a militant in Pulwama in February 2019, killing 40 personnel.

‘Panchayat Bypolls After...

nearly 40,000, are currently vacant.

The vacant posts are mostly in Kashmir Valley.

"We will hold bypolls to the vacant gram panchayat posts once COVID-19 goes off. Infact, we had plans to hold the bypolls by February-March. But coronavirus delayed the whole process," the Jammu and Kashmir chief secretary told a group of visiting journalists.

Describing the panchayat elections, held in 2018 as "good elections", Subrahmanyam said funds were flowing to the panchayats where different development works were carried out for the benefit of the people.

According to an official estimate, 11,457 panch and 887 sarpanch seats are vacant in Kashmir, while 182 panch and 124 sarpanch seats are vacant in Jammu division.

When the bypolls to the panchayats will be held, they will be the first elections in Jammu and Kashmir after the abrogation of Article 370 and bifurcation of the state into two Union Territories in August, 2019.

NC Leader’s Son Bought...

have been seized during the search operations," the ED said in a statement issued on Friday.

It said raids were carried out at the premises of Abdul Rahim Rather, a former minister of finance, agriculture and rural development of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir and a National Conference

(NC) leader, in Srinagar and that of his son in Jammu.

"A substantial part of the loan was siphoned off by Hilal Rather by transferring the funds from the loan account of Paradise Avenue (his company) to various entities and re-routing the funds back to the firm's current account from where it was further withdrawn and transferred for purchase of movable and immovable assets in India, Dubai and the USA and also spent on foreign tours and other personal activities," the ED alleged.

It added that three flats in the name of Hilal Rather and family members were "acquired in Dubai and one bungalow was acquired in the name of Hilal Rather and his wife in North Carolina, USA" by allegedly misusing the loan amount.

The central probe agency has filed a money laundering case against Hilal Rather and others, under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), taking cognisance of a case filed by the Jammu and Kashmir anti-corruption bureau against him.

The CBI and the Income Tax Department too are probing him in this case.

The ED said its probe found that a loan of Rs 177.68 crore was sanctioned by J-K bank, without verifying documents and in violation of guidelines of RBI, to Paradise Avenue for construction of a residential housing project in Jammu.

The CBI has alleged that Hilal Rather entered into a criminal conspiracy with the then officials of the Jammu and Kashmir Bank to get loans of about Rs 177.68 crore in alleged violation of rules and guidelines.

"The loans that were sanctioned for construction of flats were allegedly diverted and misappropriated by the accused using the bank accounts of his employees," the CBI had alleged.

It was further alleged by the CBI that the accused submitted forged certificates and bills to the bank.

In a charge sheet filed before a special court in Jammu this March, the CBI had named two former branch heads of J&K Bank's New University Campus branch, Iqbal Singh and Arun Kapoor, apart from Hilal Rather.

Detailing alleged omissions on the part of bank officials, the CBI had said they "did not" verify certificates and helped Hilal Rather in siphoning off the loan amount and laundering of money.

The I-T Department too had raided him in June last year on charges of alleged tax evasion.

"During the search, it was detected that the tax evader (referring to Hilal and his group) has been given illegal benefit of Rs 60 crore by J-K Bank. His outstanding loan of Rs 190 crore was settled at Rs 130 crore, although he did not deserve any concessional treatment," the Central Board of Direct Taxes had then said in a statement.

The CBDT is the policy-making body for the I-T Department.

Referring to Hilal, the CBDT statement has alleged that "he is also holding and operating a foreign bank account".

"Neither his interest in the Dubai company nor the foreign bank account has ever been disclosed by him in his tax returns," it had said. It added that Hilal Rather and his group "sold/booked part of his real estate project of Paradise Avenue near Jammu against unaccounted cash."

SC TO J&K: Come Up With...

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

At the outset, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the J-K administration told the bench that he needs to take instructions as the LG has changed and new LG has taken over yesterday.

The bench said that with the change of LG, nothing changes as the high powered committee is there to look into the issue.

It said that the court cannot say what the situation is on the ground level but the issue is that the matter should not be delayed.

The bench asked Mehta to take instructions on whether 4G services can be restored in certain areas.

Mehta said that there is no intention to delay the issue as the top court's order has been complied with in letter and spirit and he would take instructions.

The bench told Mehta that he has to explain under what circumstances the LG had reportedly said that the 4G internet service can be restored and what was the basis of that statement by the LG.

Senior advocate Huzefa Ahmadi, appearing for the petitioner NGO raised the issue of time sought by the respondents repeatedly in the matter.

The bench told Ahmadi that he must also be aware about the changes and asked him to wait for two more days.

It said that strictly speaking, the matter can be disposed of but the court needs to see under what circumstances that statement was reportedly made (by the LG).

The bench told Mehta that there is no question of further adjournment and he should take instructions on the issue.

Mehta said earlier they had filed response to the petition and then there was some subsequent interview given by the LG.

On July 28, the Centre and the J-K administration had told the top court that it will verify reported statements made by the Lt Governor of Jammu and Kashmir and BJP leader Ram Madhav that 4G Internet service can be restored in the Union Territory, and sought time to file a reply to the rejoinder affidavit filed by an NGO.

A contempt plea has been filed by an NGO Foundation for Media Professionals seeking action against authorities for not complying with the apex court's direction on restoration of 4G internet services.

Soldier Falls Into Gorge, Dies...

survived by his wife.

"The mortal remains of Rifleman Amir Hussain Wani were taken for last rites to his native place, where he would be laid to rest with full military honours," he added.

‘Abducted’ Soldier’s Clothes...

when he was on his way to join back duty after spending Eid festival with his family. A soldier in Territorial Army's 162 battalion, Manzoor was reportedly whisked away by the suspected militants after his personal car was set on fire.

No militant outfit has claimed responsibility for the alleged abduction of soldier.

Arms Recovered From Militant...

He said the operation was carried out on a specific input and it helped foil militants plans of creating disturbance in the area.

SMC To Resume Dog...

shall now be resumed in the coming week said,"SMC Commissioner, Gazanfar Ali said.

"Initially areas with overpopulation of dogs and complaints coming from the red zone areas shall be attended," he added.

He said all the necessary arrangements have been kept in place and surgeries shall be conducted strictly as per the Covid-19 protocol in place.

CB Starts Probe Into Illegal Structures, Shopping Malls In Srinagar

‘Checks Being Conducted at Several Places, Those At fault Will Be Dealt As Per Law’

Agencies

Srinagar- Crime Branch Kashmir is conducting “checks” at a number of places in Srinagar regarding illegal structures including shopping malls amid complaints about the involvement of top Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) officials.

Official sources said that the Crime branch Kashmir started conducting checks across the city since early Friday morning.

Confirming it, a senior Crime Branch officer said that there have been numerous allegations that SMC top brass has allowed illegal structures including shopping malls to come up without following the due procedures against illegal gratifications.

“There also are complaints that some shopping complex have been allowed without provision of mandatory parking spaces. Also numerous complaints have been received that where the officials of the SMC have allowed large deviation of building permissions,” the officer said, adding, “At instances, there are complaints that some structures have been allowed without even permission.”

All the complaints, the officer said, are being looked into.

“Presently we are conducting checks at several places and those found at fault, whether officials or locals will be dealt with in accordance with law,” he added. (GNS)



Family registers missing report after youth goes missing

Sopore missing youth traced

Srinagar: A Srinagar family has lodged a missing report after a 24 year old youth has gone missing.

Reports said that a youth from Barzulla Srinagar identified as Saqib Manzoor or left his home on 5th of August and didn't return. All efforts to trace the missing youth proved futile. His phone is also switched off.

A police official from Police Station Saddar said that a missing report has been received from one Manzoor Ahmed Dar son of Ghulam Ahmed Dar, a resident of Old Barzulla in which he has stated that his son Saqib Manzoor is missing since August 5.

“Efforts are on to locate the missing youth,” he said.

A purported video is viral in which the family members of the missing youth can be seen requesting Saqib to return home.

Meanwhile, Sopore police has traced a missing youth who had gone missing on 5 August. The youth who has been traced is identified as Muhammad Abbas Shah son of Mushtaq Ahmed of Takia Panzala Sopore. (KNT)

23 more Kendriya Vidyalayas to be setup in J&K

Srinagar, AUGUST 7: To augment the school education infrastructure in Jammu and Kashmir, 23 Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVs) would be setup in remote areas of J&K.

Principal Secretary School Education, Dr Asgar Hassan Samoon today in a meeting highlighted the role of KVs in imparting education in remote areas of Jammu and Kashmir.

Dr Samoon said that J&K has 36 functional KVs and setting up of 23 KVs are being pursued with Government of India for augmentation of education infrastructure here.

The proposed places of KVs include Verinag, Ranipora, Gandoh, Kastigarh, Ganderbal, Jagti, Bani, Ramkote, Kupwara, Azote, Galander, Rinipora, Nowshera, Doongi, Ramban, Gool, Reasi, Katra, Kakryal, Vijaypur, Shopian, Shadat Karewa, Mantalai.

He directed the Deputy Commissioners to expedite the process of identification of land for the purpose besides finalizing the temporary suitable accommodation for these KVs which is prerequisite for the sanction by Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan GOI.

Dr Samoon stressed on the close coordination between the Director School Education Kashmir and Jammu with concerned Deputy Commissioners for speedy completion of all modalities for their establishment.

Spate of Resignations After Killing of BJP Sarpanch

New LG knows how to deal with situation, says BJP's Sofi Yusuf

Srinagar: The killing of a Sarpanch affiliated with BJP has once again sparked fear among the party workers with many submitting their resignations or publically disassociating from the mainstream parties in South Kashmir.

On Thursday, suspected militants shot dead a BJP Sarpanch Sajad Ahmad Khanday in Qazigund area of Kulgam district. While on Wednesday, a BJP Sarpanch Arif Ahmad was shot at, leaving him critically injured.

These attacks have sparked fear among political workers, panches, sarpanches, and councilors across South Kashmir. Many have fled their homes and taken refuge in comparatively safer areas, according to reports.

“We put our lives at risk after contesting polls but nobody is bothered about our security. We live under constant fear. The recent attacks on Sarpanchs have triggered a fresh fear among workers on the ground,” a Sarpanch from South Kashmir was quoted as saying.

Several political workers mostly associated with the BJP have resigned.

Muhammad Rafiq Bhat, BJP General Secretary for Dooru constituency in

South Kashmir's Anantnag district, announced his resignation from the party on Thursday.

Independent Sarpanch Muhammad Iqbal from Chandan Pajan area of Devsar, Kulgam uploaded a video on social media announcing his resignation.

Several BJP workers from Kulgam and Anantnag resigned from the party on Thursday seeking 'forgiveness' from people. On Wednesday, three BJP workers from Qazigund had announced their resignations.

Defying militant threats, the Panchayat members contested the Panchayat polls during November-December 2018 with an assurance by the government that Panchayat members will be provided security, said a Panch.

The Panchayat election in 2018, was largely boycotted in Kashmir. In the Valley out of 20093 Panch and Sarpanch seats, only 6162 Panches and 1366 Sarpanchs were elected, most of them uncontested. Year on 12565 constituencies remain vacant. The authorities have failed to conduct elections on these vacant seats, so far.

Several BJP leaders have also resigned from the party in North Kashmir. This comes after a BJP youth leader

Waseem Bari along with his father and brother was killed in North Kashmir's Bandipora district last month.

Senior BJP leader Sofi Yusuf said many party workers have resigned because of the fear.

“Militants are attacking BJP workers and leaders. Panches and Sarpanchs don't have proper security. They are resigning for their safety. There are many elements in Kashmir who don't want the strengthening of BJP,” Yusuf said.

“BJP workers will fight. We celebrated the first anniversary of the abrogation of Article 370 on August 5. We told previous Lieutenant Governor G C Murmu to provide security to Panches, Sarpanchs, and Councilors. But we now have a political leader who is LG of J&K who knows well how to deal with the situation,” he said.

He said Manoj Sinha has been appointed LG of J&K as the Centre knows where to utilize services of such people.

“I have been saying a political process shall be started which is for betterment of J&K. There are some people who do politics on fake promises. But people are educated and they know the politics of these politicians,” he said. (KINS)

CUK faculty listens to PM Speech online

Ganderbal, Aug 7: Central University of Kashmir (CUK) Vice Chancellor, Prof. Mehraj ud Din Mir along with Deans of Schools and other faculty members Friday attended the online Conclave on “Transformational Reforms in Higher Education” under National Education Policy-2020 here.

Registrar, Prof. M Afzal Zargar, Controller of Examinations, Prof. Parveen Pandit, Finance Officer, Prof. Fayaz A Nika also attended the conclave which was organized by the University Grants Commission (UGC).

In his inaugural address, Prime Minister, Mr. Narendra Modi said the National Education Policy was approved after extensive deliberations over 3-4 years and brainstorming over lakhs of suggestions. He said

that healthy debate and discussions are taking place on National Education policy across the country. National Education Policy aims at making the youth Future Ready while focusing on the National Values and National Goals.

The Prime Minister said that for years our education system remained unchanged leading to lopsided priorities where people were focusing on either becoming a doctor, an engineer or a lawyer. He said there was no mapping of the Interest, Ability and Demand.

The Prime Minister questioned how could critical thinking and innovative thinking develop in the youth, unless there is Passion in our education, Philosophy of Education, Purpose of Education.

He said the Policy was formulated keeping in mind two biggest questions: Whether our education system motivates our youth for Creative, Curiosity and Commitment Driven Life? And whether our education system empowers our youth, helps in building an Empowered Society in the country? On this he expressed satisfaction that National Education Policy takes care of these pertinent issues.

The Prime Minister said that India's education system needs to change according to the changing times. The new structure of a 5 + 3 + 3 + 4 curriculum is a step in this direction, he added. He said that we have to ensure that our students become Global Citizens and also remain connected to their roots.

Kia Motors unveils the Sonet – an all-new smart urban compact SUV

New Delhi: Kia Motors Corporation, one of the world's largest automakers, revealed the Kia Sonet to the world today in a digital presentation. Manufactured at Kia's state-of-the-art production facility at Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh, the Sonet is Kia's all-new smart urban compact SUV, and the brand's latest made-in-India global product after the Seltos. The new Sonet marks Kia Motors' entry into the burgeoning compact SUV segment, and sets new benchmarks with its first-in-class features.

The world premiere of the production-ready model follows the global unveiling of the Sonet concept at the Delhi Auto Expo in February 2020. Sales of the new car will commence soon in India, with sales in many of Kia's global markets due to follow.

“Kia Motors continues to be recognised globally through products which offer exquisite design and world-class quality, along with ‘The Power to Surprise’.

Everything about the all-new Sonet is uniquely Kia and is sure to delight both



drivers and passengers,” said Ho Sung Song, President and CEO at Kia Motors Corporation. “With its aggressive and modern design language, fun-to-drive dynamics, and Kia's latest high-tech features, the Sonet puts an exclamation point on our ambition to make Kia the brand of choice, especially among millennial and Gen Z consumers. The Sonet fills a need in the growing SUV market, in India and further afield, and will attract a wider number of consumers to the Kia brand.”

ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

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SELECTION NOTIFICATION

Pursuant to the interaction/presentation of NET candidates held on 6th of August 2020, the following candidates have been provisionally selected for Admission to Ph.D programme in Arabic for the Academic session 2019-2020.

Selection List:				
S. No.	Form No.	Name	Parentage	Address
1	405953	Sabeena Mohammad	Ghulam Mohammad Rather	Watergam Payeen Rafiabad Baramulla
2	405966	Kaffeel Ahmad Bhat	Gh Ahmad Bhat	Katoo Bijbehara Anantnag
3	405991	Manzoor Ahmad Shah	Javaid Ahmad Shah	Cheyana Adigam Devsar Kulgam
4	405992	Rayees Ahmad Baba	Gh Mohammad Baba	Huklatrri Ramhama Beerwah Budgam
5	405994	Tanveer Ahmad Mir	GhMohd Mir	Aripaathen Beerwah Budgam
6	405999	Humaira	Mohammad Farooq Bhat	Makerpora Kawdara Srinagar

The above mentioned candidates are hereby informed to report to the Office of the Dean Academic Affairs, IUST Awantipora on any working day by or before 13-08-2020 (Except on Saturday & Sunday) along with original documents/copies thereof and fee of Rs. 22,500/- for completion of admission formalities.

The selection of the candidates is strictly provisional and shall be subject to the verification of their eligibility/documents. In case of any discrepancy found at the time of admission or later stage, the selection/admission of such candidates shall be cancelled.

No: IUST/ARB/Ph.D-ADMISSION/20/107
Dated: 06-08-2020

Sd/-
I/C Head, Department of Arabic

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

17 Zil-Haj
1441

PRAYERS

FAJR	4: 13
ZUHR	12: 37
ASR	5:27
Magrib	7:30
ISHA	9:00

This Day In History

- 1983 - Military coup in Guatemala, Dictator and former General Efraín Ríos Montt flees
- 1984 - Future 5-time America's Cup winner Russell Coutts of New Zealand wins the Finn Class sailing gold medal at the Los Angeles Olympics
- 1985 - Japan launches Planet A, a probe to Halley's comet
- 1986 - Altuf Hussain's address at Nishtar Park Karachi, announcing the establishment of the MQM political movement.
- 1988 - Angola, Cuba & South Africa sign cease fire treaty
- 1988 - Discovery of most distant galaxy (15 * 10 ^ 12 light yrs) announced
- 1988 - Russian troops begin pull out of Afghanistan after 9 year war
- 1988 - Ceasefire between Iran & Iraq takes effect after 8 years of war
- 1989 - US space shuttle STS-28 launched
- 1989 - New Zealand Prime Minister David Lange resigns after 5 years on a no confidence issue
- 1990 - Iraq annexes Kuwait as its 19th province

From KO Archives

Concern Grows Over Fragile Talks As Deadline Nears

Hizb threatens to 'Stun' India

Agence France Presse

Islamabad: Hizbul Mujahideen today threatened to "stun" India if it fails to agree to unconditional three-way talks with Pakistan ahead of Wednesday's ceasefire deadline.

Hizb supreme commander, Syed Salahuddin, in a letter to diplomats here Monday, accused India of dodging the group's central demand for peace talks involving Pakistan and pleaded for foreign help to "give peace a chance".

He also said other mujahideen groups which are still fighting Indian rule in Kashmir could be "convinced" to make peace if India agreed to allow Pakistan a seat at the proposed talks.

"Let the world community decide by itself who is laying the impediments," Salahuddin wrote in the letter, a copy of which was sent to AFP. "We are still in a position to continue our targeted com-bat missions and stun India but we kept our guns silent temporarily (to wait for) a proper response."

CONCERN OVER FRAGILE TALKS

Meanwhile, concern grew Monday over the future of fragile peace talks in Kashmir, as the Indian government and the Hizb struggled to find a common framework for dialogue.

The two sides held an initial round of discussions here on Thursday, agreeing to set up negotiating teams for further talks on cementing a formal ceasefire.

Since then, however, the Hizbul Mujahideen militant outfit has accused Indian secu-rity forces of violating the cur-rent temporary ceasefire, and reiterated a Tuesday deadline for India to agree to tripartite talks outside the framework of the Indian constitution.

TALKS UNCONDITIONAL, BUT...

New Delhi, meanwhile has been sending mixed signals over the crucial issue of whether the talks will be held within the framework of the Indian constitution, which rules out Kash-mir's secession from India.

Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee failed to clarify the issue on Monday when he told parliament that there were "no conditions" for the talks, but then added that any agreement would be bound by the constitution. "While the talks with the Hizbul Mujahideen are uncon-ditional, no decision will be taken outside the constitu-tion," Vajpayee said. The Hizb leadership has in-sisted that "unconditional" should mean without any con-stitutional con-straints. Vajpayee's latest formula-tion was an apparent attempt to balance the militant demand that the talk; can cover any issue including secession against political pressure not to compromise on the constitution. The prime minister had art to signal a move in the government's stance last week when he argued that the main touch-stone for peace talks should not be the constitution but "insaniyat (humanity). On the question of a Pakistan role in the dialogue, Vaj-payee reiterated Monday that Islamabad could not take part so long as it sponsored militant groups fighting in Indian Kashmir. "We have always main we are willing for talks, for warmer relations, but first we need an environment for these talks to take place. He reiterated that Islamabad could not take part as long as it continued to sponsor the Muslim separatist groups which have

waged a bloody rebellion in the Indian zone of divided Himalayan territory since 1989. "We have reached out several times to Pakistan and been betrayed," Vajpayee said.

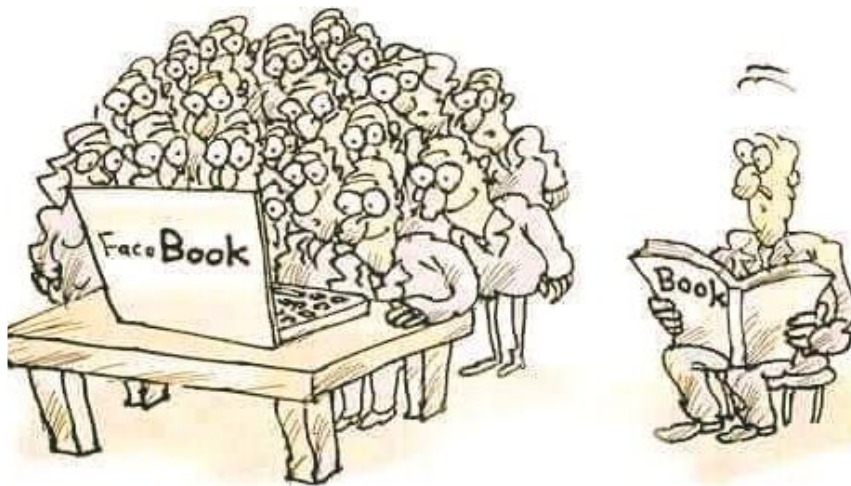
Hizbul Mujahideen Syed Salahuddin has set the deadline of 5 p.m. on Wednesday for India to sit for three-way talks to resolve the & spite. After the initial optimism, that followed Thursday's first round of mood in Srinagar has more muted

(Kashmir Observer, August 08, 2000)

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NO HOLDS BARRED



Testing the vaccine safety is of paramount importance in addition to its efficacy in the development of immunity and protection from the said disease. An Investigational New Drug application, Pre-licensure vaccine clinical trials, A Biologics License Application (BLA), Inspection of the manufacturing facility, Presentation of findings to the controller from the controlling authorities and finally the usability testing of product labelling

In Search Of Vaccine

There are around 100 vaccines being developed against Covid-19 by research teams in companies and universities across the world

PROF UPENDRA KAUL

With the total number of cases in India of COVID-19, mounting TO around two million with about 40,000 deaths the situation has assumed alarming proportions. The situation in Kashmir valley is also very scary. We really need an early breakthrough in the form of an effective and safe vaccine

Vaccination is a simple, safe, and effective way of protecting people against harmful diseases, before they come into contact with them. We now have vaccines to prevent more than 20 life-threatening diseases, helping people of all ages live longer, healthier lives. Immunization currently prevents 2-3 million deaths worldwide every year from diseases like diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough pertussis, influenza and measles etc. It makes the body's systems immune to get infections against which vaccination has been done.

The term vaccine is related to Edward Jenner to denote cowpox, Variolae vaccinae (smallpox of the cow), which he discovered in 1798 and used for small pox prevention. In 1881, to honour Jenner, Louis Pasteur proposed that the term should be extended to cover the new protective inoculations then being developed and the term thus stayed.

All these vaccine development programs are complex and have several stages; Exploratory stage, Pre-clinical stage, Clinical development, Regulatory review and approval, Manufacturing and Quality control. Clinical development is a three-phase process. During Phase I, small groups of people receive the trial vaccine. In Phase II, the clinical study is expanded and vaccine is given to people who have characteristics (such as age and physical health) similar to those for whom the new vaccine is intended. In Phase III, the vaccine is given to thousands of people and tested for efficacy and safety. Many vaccines undergo Phase IV formal, ongoing studies after the vaccine is approved and licensed.

Testing the vaccine safety is of paramount importance in addition to its efficacy in the development of immunity

and protection from the said disease. An Investigational New Drug application, Pre-licensure vaccine clinical trials, A Biologics License Application (BLA), Inspection of the manufacturing facility, Presentation of findings to the controller from the controlling authorities and finally the usability testing of product labelling.

What about COVID 19? There are around 100 vaccines being developed against SARS-CoV-2 by research teams in companies and universities across the world. Researchers are trying different technologies, some of which haven't been used in a licensed vaccine before. At least six groups have already begun injecting formulations into volunteers in safety trials; others have started testing in animals.

All vaccines aim to expose the body to an antigen that won't cause disease, but will provoke an immune response that can block or kill the virus if a person becomes infected. There are at least eight types being tried against the coronavirus, and they rely on different viruses or viral parts. The four groups - with each having 2 sub-groups are: 1. Virus-Inactivated or weakened, 2. Viral Vector- replicating and Non-Replicating, 3. Nucleic Acid based- DNA or RNA, 4. Protein based- Protein subunit and Virus like particles.

Just to give an update of some recent reports in prestigious international Journals. New England journal of medicine carried an original article based upon a mRNA vaccine on July 14th this year, in a phase 1, dose-escalation, open-label trial including 45 healthy adults, who received two vaccinations, 28 days apart, with mRNA-1273 in 3 different escalating doses in 15 participants each. The vaccine mRNA- induced anti-SARS-

CoV-2 immune responses in all participants, and no trial-limiting safety concerns were identified. These findings support further development of this vaccine. The financial support of this ambitious program is from National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and others sources of US federal government.

The other very talked about vaccine is the Oxford vaccine the preliminary report of its Phase 1 and 2 came in on July 20 last month, in the LANCET. It showed an acceptable safety profile, and homologous boosting increased antibody responses. The vaccine was the chimpanzee adenovirus-vectored vaccine (ChAdOx1 nCoV-19). These results, together with the induction of both humoral and cellular immune responses, support a large-scale evaluation of this candidate vaccine in an ongoing phase 3 program, which is a time-consuming program involving several thousand subjects assessing safety and efficacy.

On the other hand we also hear about a Russian vaccine from Moscow's Gamaleya Institute which according to their health minister has completed clinical trials, and 'paperwork' for its 'registration' with the country's regulatory body was underway. He also announced that a mass vaccination programme, presumably using this vaccine, would be launched in Russia in October and that doctors and teachers would be among the first groups to be vaccinated. A news report by Russia's Tass news agency in the second week of July had said that this candidate vaccine had entered phase 2 of clinical trials on July 13. A phase in which the vaccine is tested for its ability to trigger immune response in human beings, usually takes a few months to be completed.

Although the vaccine programs for COVID are being fast tracked but jump-

ing phase 3 is a dangerous gamble which most scientific authorities do not agree to. Only a very small number of vaccines that are developed actually get the approval to be used. In the case of the Russian Coronavirus vaccine, however, a regulatory approval is being taken almost for granted. Because of these reasons, there is some amount of scepticism with regard to the Russian vaccine. This scepticism was expressed by top infectious disease experts internationally. Same concerns are being raised against the Chinese Vaccine which is also according to Chinese news reports around the corner.

Zydrus Cadila of India is working with 2 COVID vaccines, one using DNA and the other using Replicating Viral Vector. Both are in very early stages. The Serum Institute of India vaccine based upon live attenuated virus is also in early stages. They are partnering with Codagenix vaccine which is in pre-clinical trials and their, Novavax candidate is only a few months behind the AstraZeneca Oxford vaccine. They plan to announce its availability possibly by the end of 2021.

With the total number of cases in India of COVID-19, mounting TO around two million with about 40,000 deaths the situation has assumed alarming proportions. The situation in Kashmir valley is also very scary. We really need an early breakthrough in the form of an effective and safe vaccine and not just a political rhetoric. We are experts in the field of deriving political mileage from premature and unscientific jargons.

(Author is a Cardiologist, recipient of Padmashri and Dr B C Roy Award . The author can be contacted at Kaul.upendra@gmail.com)

We Will Not Falter From Our Ideal

The relationship of the only Muslim majority region with India was contingent on the depth of Indian democracy

NYLA ALI KHAN

For those who labour under the delusion that the curtailment of civil liberties in Kashmir and persecution of minorities in Delhi are "internal" matters of the country: India chose democracy, secularism, and socialism as its goals in 1947.

The first milestone on this road is democracy. Democracy entails a lot more than merely conducting elections every five years. In substance, democracy is a way of life and a way of thinking.

In a democracy, the majority will prevail, but it is equally incumbent on the majority to respect and defend the legitimate interests and sentiments of minorities and to dispel their apprehensions.

The greatest test of the success of a democracy lies in the extent to which its minorities feel secure. In this perspective, democracy and secularism in India will remain failed experiments so long as minorities are marginalized and brutalized.

I am not saying this as a Kashmiri Muslim, but as a South Asian and, more so, because I have never reconciled with the communalization of politics.

Muslims are part and parcel of South Asia's history — past and future — and I am of the firm conviction that every inhabitant of India must be given a sense of participation in the country's affairs.

In light of the complex political history of India, it becomes all the more important to ensure that the minorities of the country are satisfied with their relationship with mainland India.

It is regrettable that this complex political history of the subcontinent is being deliberately ignored by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

This grave lapse is responsible for breeding extremist national chauvinism, thereby weakening the secular character of the Constitution and the country.

Amidst incidents of shootings, beatings, arsons and lootings in Delhi, several unsung heroes are fighting to protect our common humanity. From the Hindu man who sacrificed his life saving his six Muslim neighbours from the conflagration that engulfed them, to the Muslims who formed a human chain around a temple to prevent its desecration, such heart warming instances demonstrate that humanity hasn't perished.

Despite the apathy of law enforcement in Delhi and incendiary speeches of head honchos of the BJP,

We, the people of Kashmir, maintained that the special position accorded to Jammu and Kashmir could alone be the source of a closer association between the former state and mainland India. The autonomous status guaranteed to us by the Constitution of India was not meant for Kashmiri Muslims alone, but for the Hindus of Jammu, the Buddhists of Ladakh, and the Sikhs and Christians of the region as well

several people have kept themselves away from the despicable influence of communalism.

Communalism and its propagation should be regarded as a sin against humanity. Even today, there are people who do not tolerate an outlook that makes a distinction between communities and people.

Many of us were taught not to discriminate between Hindus and Muslims. We were taught that the life of a Hindu was as sacred to us as that of a Muslim. We were taught that any harm to a Hindu should be prevented at the cost of our lives, for our religion teaches us that it is our duty to defend and help our neighbour. I am proud to see people like the Muslims of Chand Bagh, who chose to protect a Hindu religious site, amidst the inferno.

Stories of Muslims saving Hindus and protecting their religious sites; Hindus warding off frenzied

mobs, and giving refuge to endangered Muslims; and Sikhs opening relief camps for the sick, wounded, and vulnerable are manifestations of the indivisibility of the human bond.

Hindutva politics effectively challenges secular ideas and forces of unity among two major communities of the country by preaching Islamophobia and demonising 200 million Muslims.

People who recognize the inherent human dignity of one another and are not swept away by the communal mob frenzy are the real heroes. They en-

sure that the State and its appendages cannot claim monopoly of every human relationship.

Those who have been in the political arena for a long time must recognize that there is no politics without negotiation. And the ultimate negotiating authority is always the citizens.

The ruling BJP has been brazenly muzzling political voices that are antithetical to its agenda of making India a Hindu Rashtra. But real democracies thrive on differences of opinions, not on gagging those who might not be on the same page. But what we are witnessing in India especially the BJP ruled states, is a systematic attempt at deterring the growth of democracy by depoliticising citizens.

The Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB) brings to the fore forces of fundamentalism with unabated vigor.

The CAB seeks to give citizenship to only non-Muslim religious minorities from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan, who are supposedly fleeing persecution. It does not accord the same privilege to Muslim minorities, who might be fleeing religious persecution as well.

In effect, the Citizenship Amendment Bill flouts the principle of secularism and rights relating to life, liberty, and freedom of expression guaranteed by the Constitution for non-Muslims and Muslims alike. The reaction of the bloodthirsty mob to those legitimately protesting the CAB has been culpable. The unabated violence inflicted on peaceful protesters, including women, by fringe elements that are being mainstreamed by the BJP makes one cringe at the unabashed erosion of democracy.

Nevertheless, the stories of sanity, human compassion and mutual trust that have shone in the wake of targeted violence against Muslims in Delhi, remind me that the BJP is not India, and every Indian is not a Modi-devotee.

The relationship of the only (up until now) Muslim majority region with India was contingent on the depth of Indian democracy. We, the people of Kashmir, maintained that the special position accorded to Jammu and Kashmir could alone be the source of a closer association between the former state and mainland India. The autonomous status guaranteed to us by the Constitution of India was not meant for Kashmiri Muslims alone, but for the Hindus of Jammu, the Buddhists of Ladakh, and the Sikhs and Christians of the region as well. We will not falter from our ideal even if we are left alone in this great battle for democracy and humanity.

(The writer is a Kashmiri-American academic and granddaughter of first Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Sheikh Abdullah)

How To Prepare Kids As Schools Open

GIL NOAM

Pay attention to your child's mental health needs: Although young people possess amazing powers of resilience, it is important to look out for signs of anxiety, loneliness, and behavioral problems. Keep this in mind as they renavigate the norms and structures of school life, virtually or otherwise.

Many people are extremely hesitant about sending their children back to school, citing fears around the transmissibility and manifestations of the virus in children, particularly after new research suggests children can carry the virus at high levels. Others worry that extended school closures and virtual learning could lead to potentially stunting their children's social, emotional, and academic growth, as pediatric associations have warned. Wherever they stand, all parents I know are exhausted from the triple duty of working, parenting, and teaching their children for almost half a year.

As difficult as this coming year may be, it also presents an opportunity to build up connections after a summer of limited contact and isolation. So, no matter how schools return in the fall, there are things that families can do to prepare their children for the scenarios that lie ahead and to decrease harm to their natural exuberance, curiosity, and capacity to thrive—the psychology of opening school.

1. Relationships come first: For students to have an engaging learning experience online, in person, or some combination of both, parents and teachers must come together to form positive relationships in the months ahead. Parents must advocate for their child's needs and provide input wherever possible through organizations, forums, or other means. This is not a time to stay passive. If you have the time, make contact with your school, volunteer to advise the principal, create a parent council, or ask to be put on one.

Your relationship to your child's teacher will be key this coming school year. Arrange regular check-ins and ask how you can support their teaching success with your child. Make sure to mention how your child adapted during lockdown and what your child will need to thrive. Ask them to share their observations and try not to be defensive.

2. Pay attention to your child's



mental health needs: Although young people possess amazing powers of resilience, it is important to look out for signs of anxiety, loneliness, and behavioral problems. Keep this in mind as they renavigate the norms and structures of school life, virtually or otherwise.

I am often asked when a parent should become concerned about their child's mental health. Indeed, it can be difficult to differentiate between sadness and depression, frustration and aggression, or problems of focus and ADD. However, children and adolescents often share their feelings more readily than adults. One way to make the distinction is by using your own instincts.

Some questions you should ask yourself are: Do you feel something has changed? Does your child's demeanor feel different to you? Has

your child's mood or behavior shifted for a prolonged time?

To receive support, you can reach out for advice from doctors or counselors—it will make you feel less alone. For more serious concerns, reach out to your child's pediatrician, or your health and mental health clinic as soon as possible and don't let things linger. Do not allow shame or stigma hold you back—we all are struggling and seeking help is a strength, not a weakness. Engage with the school's student support team, the person in charge of counseling, or the teachers if your child needs help.

It is important not to forget that significant mental health problems evolve over time, and the best way to prevent is to make sure the schools are going to support your child not only academically but a whole child, socially and emotionally. As a par-

ent, ask the school how the wellbeing of children is prioritized during this hard period. Communicate with other parents so you can figure out how you can support the school so it becomes a place of laughter, joy, and learning where your child or adolescent belongs and feels welcomed.

Relational and mental health needs are now truly essential for children and families—not just the choice of school leaders and faculties especially at a time when we must create resilient communities, schools, and afterschool programs where we can all heal and help those who have truly been traumatised.

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The author is a psychologist

Khaleej Times

IN 2017, Amitabh Bachchan sent a legal notice to Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Kumar Vishwas for reciting one of Harivansh Rai Bachchan's poem in a video. The notice also demanded that Vishwas reimburse Bachchan whatever earnings he received for the recitation.

Vishwas, in response to the notice, deleted the video and promised to pay Bachchan Rs 32 he earned from it.

This set off a storm on social media and rightly so. Nobody expected Bachchan to sue an enthusiast for a mere recitation of his father's work, much less demand reimbursement, rather than expressing humility for what's essentially an honor.

"What his baritone voice, impeccable language, recitals of his father's poetry, dilly-dallying with powers that be and pretentious laughter could never hide, was Bachchan's pettiness and complete lack of grace," a user of social media, Celine Mary, wrote in her Facebook post.

Bachchan's recent belligerence, aggressiveness and reacting in a manner unbecoming for the dignity of a global celebrity that he is—on an nameless faceless troll's wishing him death—quickly eroded sympathy and support for him.

"Now with his 'thok do saale ko', he yet again displayed what he really is – a troll himself, as contemptible as the one who wished him death," Mary reacted to Bachchan's rant.

The megastar took to his blog, addressing one "Mr Anonymous", and wrote that the troll was trying to gain a sense of self-importance by attacking a star like him.

"If I die, you won't get to write your diatribe anymore, by weathering your remark on a celebrity name. Pity, for, the reason of your writing to be noticed was, because you took a swipe at Amitabh Bachchan, that shall no longer exist.

The 77-year-old actor, along with son Abhishek, was admitted to Nanavati Hospital on July 11 after he tested positive for the novel Coronavirus. Less than a week later, his daughter-in-law, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, was also admitted at the hospital, after testing positive for coronavirus on July 12. Her daughter Aaradhya had also tested positive for the virus.

While the megastar wrote his blogpost in English, he chose Hindi to write the "thok do saale ko" cuss phrase as if addressing a specific audience. Bachchan said though he has not asked his fans to take any action against the troll, if he survives Covid-19, he will. However, he pledged to "exterminate" such trolls once out of hospital by asking his millions of fans to turn on them.

"That extended family shall in the flash of an eye become 'extermination family'," he wrote while describing his fans as his kin.

Bachchan, after a few decades of demigod status in Bollywood, is the very baritone of authority in the Indian film industry. The iconic actor is a household name in India who has been extensively involved in campaigns like Swachh Bharat, Covid-19, malnutrition, etc. and helped mobilize millions of Indians in the right direction. These campaigns, by virtue of his massive following, have been wholeheartedly welcomed by the entire nation.

Big B Et Tu?

FAROOQ SHAH



Given the polarised situation of the country today, with some of the bigots spewing venom through hate speeches, I really think that Amitabh replying to some anonymous troll with such strong words, is not in good taste, it is very unfortunate"

It is most definitely unusual for a man with such enormous power to address an anonymous troll and use phrases as pedestrian and incendiary as "thok do saale ko" so openly. For a celebrity who has worked for more than half a century in the film industry, to lose his cool in such indignant manner, is quite appalling as well as disturbing. In a country like India where extremist ideologies, of late, have been promoted with due patronage from the ruling class, the kind of outburst as expressed by Mr Bachchan shall have far-reaching consequences.

Describing Bachchan replying to the troll as "unfortunate" and "not in good taste", Ahmadabad based human rights activist, Fr. Cedric Prakash, senses an undercurrent of dark foreboding as to how it might translate into action.

"Given the polarised situation of the country today, with some of the bigots spewing venom through hate speeches, I really think that Amitabh replying to some anonymous troll with such strong words, is not in good taste, it is very unfortunate," Fr Prakash said. "He would have added some 'value' points to his own battered image—if he just ignored it."

In her tweet, senior editor Times of India, Bharti Jain, who reports on home ministry and security affairs, wrote: "Thok do saale ko" sounds a bit too filmy even for a film star. Surely you can overlook the few crazy critics among your 90 million followers."

Author of the article "Lynching has become the new normal in India," on siyosat.net, Fr Prakash however believes Amitabh has already stirred a hornet's nest and some of his 'chelas' would certainly

add to the rant and rave.

"Whatever s**t you write, at least don't instigate the mob to take law in their hands," Deeptangshu, @DeeptangshuK, echoes similar concerns. "The 'Rule of Law' situation is already extremely precarious in this country."

Co-founder Newslandry, Abhinandan Sekhri (@AbhinandanSekhr), while reacting to the noted journalist and TV anchor, Vir Sanghvi's tweet, "Amitabh Bachchan gives it back to a troll who wishes him dead & you can hardly blame him," retorted: "Completely disagree. I read the piece and his outburst. It should be called out for its pettiness, regressive insult and violent threat. Can't be condoned. Can't be given a pass just cos his work brings joy to millions."

"From 'khoon kaa badlaa khoon' then to 'thok do saale ko' now, no surprises from the nation's #1 WhatsApp Uncle," Managing editor, Scroll.in, Sundeept Dougal, wrote in his Twitter post, adding: "Quite in keeping with the 'golii maaro saalon ko' crowd."

Pertinently, a prime witness in 1984 anti-Sikh riots, Jagdish Kaur, had told Times of India that "every-one who had been watching Doordarshan saw how superstar Amitabh Bachchan provoked the rioters".

"I wonder why no one in India lodged case against Amitabh Bachchan for provoking killing of Sikhs," Kaur said.

Amitabh Bachchan was summoned by the federal court of Los Angeles for allegedly instigating violence against the Sikh Community in 1984. The petition against Bachchan was filed by Sikhs for Justice legal advisor Gurpatwant Singh Pannun. According to the petition, Bachchan instigated the attacks. He allegedly raised slogans saying, "Khoon ka Badla Khoon se lenge" ("Blood for Blood") after former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was assassinated.

Another twitter user, Harshit Agarwal @Citizen_Agarwal, said: "I strongly think think #SupremeCourt #bombayhc should consider this statement under suo moto cognizance because it seriously undermines the rule of law and promotes anarchy."

"Doesn't this amount to inciting violence," questioned another user.

India's national capital saw its worst violence in seven decades in February, with two and a half days of rioting leaving at least 53 dead, many more injured and thousands affected.

Section 153A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) criminalises and punishes making statements, speeches or acts which have the effect of disturbing public tranquillity or law and order by promoting enmity or creating fear or alarm between classes of people on basis of difference in religion, caste, language or place of birth.

Given the recent uptick in prejudicial and violent sentiments against minorities and critics of the government in the prevailing political climate, it is important that people of reasonable authority maintained their cool in order not to vitiate a peaceful environment. They should contribute more towards building national harmony and win hearts rather than allowing themselves to be a target of hate-mongers and trolls.

Author is a senior journalist

SLIDING WALLS, HIDEABLE OFFICES

How Pandemic Could Change Home Design



Agencies

When Spain's coronavirus lockdown ended in late June, one thing was at the top of Teresa Silvi's priority list - to sell her apartment and find somewhere more suitable for her family to live now they were spending far more time at home. Three months of remote working with a toddler and a husband was a challenge, especially given the lack of dedicated workspace, the university researcher told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "I can't concentrate if I see toys or dirty dishes lying around. It is really important to be able to carve out a working space so you can have your own separate identities," said Silvi, who lives in Barcelona's upscale Sant Antoni neighbourhood. "When my baby was crying, I just had to sit there with these noise-cancelling headphones on trying to work."

As city dwellers around the globe rethink how they want to live following months of lock-

down, architects are reflecting on how flats can be redesigned to suit remote working, for instance, with sliding walls and hideable office space.

"If people now are going to be able to work from home on a far more regular basis they need to have the ability to have a real work-life space and structure at home," said Greg Verabian, design director at architecture firm HKS in Los Angeles.

"I don't think you feel comfortable sitting in your kitchen all day long taking conference calls," he said in a phone interview.

Silvi said her family wants an open-plan home with flexible areas that can be closed off or opened up, to serve as office space or playrooms, depending on their needs that day.

It is important to make apartments more adaptable, especially for families and people living in medium or high-density blocks, said Andre Brumfield, a Chicago-based director at global design firm Gensler.

"Flexibility is key, especially for

multi-family units. The question is how can you allow a family to be together but also have their moments of refuge on their own within that unit," he said.

'EVERY INCH IS UTILISED'
HKS is trying to blend the technology and structure of the office environment into apartments without increasing square footage, to keep the price down, Verabian explained.

The firm's new designs include a height-adjustable workspace that can be used variously by an adult working, a child playing or a teenager doing homework.

It has a storage area beneath the desk behind moveable panels at the end of the day.

The prototypes were in part inspired by Japanese apartments where "every inch of space is utilised", he said.

French-Moroccan architectural design practice Studio Belem has taken the concept of flexible spaces further, with sliding panels instead of walls and integrated furniture systems to make

living as fluid as possible.

Their "aula modula" apartment block concept is aimed at young families and flatshares, where the number of inhabitants may vary, said Edouard Bettencourt, one of the firm's co-founders.

"There are no corridors, as this is wasted space," he said. "The bedrooms are all set next to each other. You use slidable panels, which can completely open or close rooms as you like."

A room could be used as a yoga space or a children's playroom in the morning, then turned into a bedroom at night, or a living room could be enlarged by sliding back the doors of a bedroom, if guests are coming for dinner, he said.

Although initially designed for Paris, the concept would work in any city and the firm is currently adapting it for Morocco, said Bettencourt.

"We would need to analyse the context of the place and the way that people live there, but this model can be modified and that's actually part of the concept," he said.

While wealthier city dwellers rethink home living, cities in both

the developed and developing world are grappling with a dire shortage of affordable housing.

For example, a surge of coronavirus cases in foreign-worker dormitories across Singapore and in the slums of India has drawn attention to the squalid housing conditions of migrant labourers.

"The pandemic has exposed the growing gap in wealth inequality globally, but it has always been difficult balancing design, policy and market forces in building affordable housing," said Brumfield.

BRINGING OUTSIDE IN
Spanish architecture firm Estudio Lamela unveiled a post-pandemic apartment prototype in June based around six concepts: air, light, greenery, safety, connectivity and flexibility.

The design removes all unnecessary doors and walls, and the rooms are placed in a line, to cut down on unused space, improve ventilation and let in as much light as possible.

These light and plant-filled apartments aim to bridge the gap

between interior and exterior for city dwellers deprived of outdoor space, the firm said on its website.

"The concept is fairly experimental... and all about well-being. I think these elements will be incorporated into apartments little by little," said Carlos Lamela, a leading Spanish architect and owner of the firm.

The pandemic will have a lasting impact on residential building design, he added, with flats evolving to feel closer to nature - but not immediately.

"There will be a very gradual revolution," he said. "The pandemic has given us time to reflect and mature, and accelerate these changes, like more outdoor space, fresh air and natural elements."

For example, balconies have become more important than ever, said Verabian at HKS.

"Balconies should be a right and not a privilege, especially for families in a multi-family environment... but they have to be useable," he said.

That means they should be about 6 feet (1.83 metres) deep

and at least 8 feet (2.44 metres) wide to make sure there is space for a table and chairs even with the door swung open, Verabian noted.

In medium and high-density housing blocks, often situated downtown where access to parks is scarce, more communal green space is also essential, said Brumfield at Gensler.

"We need to think about how we can provide these other safe havens or moments of refuge so people feel they're in a very safe, controlled environment that is accessible from where they live in their unit and also part of the development," he said.

Sprinkling smaller outdoor spaces throughout the grounds of a building, rather than just one large green area, would provide better protection against the spread of viruses, the architect noted.

But it will take time to make these adjustments, he said.

"We're all still trying to understand what the world is going to be like - not only through this pandemic, but on the other side of it as well," Brumfield said.

Study Says Childhood Connection With Nature Has Many Benefits But Is Not Universally Positive

Agencies

Having a connection with nature supports multiple areas of young people's wellbeing. However, according to a recent study nature connection is not universally positive.

The review, published in the British Ecological Society Journal People and Nature, is the first to focus on nature connection in children and adolescents.

In the article Dr Chawla comprehensively reviews the full scope of literature on the topic, covering peer-reviewed articles, books and studies by environmental organizations.

"There is strong evidence that children are happier, healthier, function better, know more about the environment, and are more likely to take action to protect the natural world when they spend time in nature," said Dr Chawla.

Several studies found that children's connection with nature increased with time spent in natural environments.

Time spent in this way was also a predictor for active care for nature in adulthood. These findings support strategies and policies that ensure that young people have access to wild areas, parks, gardens, green neighborhoods, and naturalized grounds at schools.

However, a connection with



nature is not universally positive. "My review shows that connecting with nature is a complex experience that can generate troubling emotions as well as happiness," said Dr Chawla.

"We need to keep in mind that children are inheriting an unraveling biosphere, and many of them know it. Research shows that when adolescents react with despair, they are unlikely to take action to address challenges," Dr

Chawla added.

Thankfully the review finds that there is overlap in the strategies used to increase children's feelings of connection with nature and supporting them with difficult dimensions of this connection.

These strategies include helping young people learn what they can do to protect the natural world, as individuals and working collectively with others, and sharing examples of people who care for nature.

The research covered in the review finds that young people are more likely to believe a better world is possible when friends, family and teachers listen sympathetically to their fears and give them a safe space to share their emotions.

One of the most surprising findings from the review was the complete disconnect between researchers studying the benefits of childhood connection to nature and those studying responses to environmental threats.

"People who study children's connection with nature and those who study their coping with environmental risk and loss have been pursuing separate directions without referencing or engaging with each other. I am arguing that researchers on both sides need to be paying attention to each other's work and learning from each other," said Dr Chawla.

Here's How Common Cold Infection May Train Body To Recognise Covid-19

Press Trust Of India

The immune system's memory helper T cells which recognise the common cold virus and help the body fight it off, also identifies some parts of the novel coronavirus, according to a study whose findings may explain why some people have milder COVID-19 cases than others.

The research, published in the journal Science, noted that the immune system's memory T cells keep track of the viruses they have seen before, giving the cells a head-start in recognising and fighting off repeat invaders.

However, the scientists, including those from La Jolla Institute (LJI) in the US, cautioned that it is too soon to say whether such pre-existing immune cell memory affects COVID-19 clinical outcomes.

"We have now proven that, in some people, pre-existing T cell memory against common cold coronaviruses can cross-recognise SARS-CoV-2, down to the exact molecular structures," said Daniela Weiskopf, a co-author of the study from LJI. "This could help explain



why some people show milder symptoms of disease while others get severely sick," Weiskopf said.

Alessandro Sette, another co-author of the study from LJI, noted that the reactivity of the immune system may translate to different degrees of protection.

"Having a strong T cell response, or a better T cell response may give you the opportunity to mount a much

quicker and stronger response," Sette said.

An earlier study by Sette and his team had shown that 40 to 60 per cent of people who were never exposed to the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 had T cells that reacted to the virus.

According to the study, the immune systems in these individuals recognised fragments of the virus it had never seen before - a finding which was also reported among people

in the Netherlands, Germany, Singapore, and the UK.

In the current research, the scientists assessed samples collected from study participants who had never been exposed to SARS-CoV-2.

They defined the exact parts of the virus that are responsible for the cross-reactive T cell response. Their analysis showed that unexposed individuals can produce a range of memory T cells that are equally reactive against SARS-CoV-2, and four types of common cold coronaviruses.

Based on the finding, the scientists said fighting off a common cold coronavirus could teach the T cell compartment to recognise some parts of SARS-CoV-2 as well. They believe this process provides evidence for the hypothesis that common cold viruses can, in fact, induce cross-reactive T cell memory against SARS-CoV-2.

"We knew there was pre-existing reactivity, and this study provides very strong direct molecular evidence that memory T cells can 'see' sequences that are very similar between common cold coronaviruses and SARS-CoV-2," Sette said.

Pakistan Lifts Virus Restrictions As Cases Drop

Agencies

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Thursday announced it would be lifting most of the country's remaining coronavirus restrictions after seeing new cases drop for several weeks.

All restaurants and parks will be allowed to re-open from August 10, as will parks, theatres, cinemas and public transport, said Asad Umar, who heads Pakistan's task force to fight the coronavirus.

peaked at about 150 in June.

But the number has steadily dwindled and on Thursday only 21 new fatalities were reported.

In all, Pakistan has confirmed more than 280,000 cases including more than 6,000 deaths, though observers say that with only limited testing, the real number is likely much higher.

Schools and universities are slated to reopen September 15 subject to a final review, Umar said.



"Pakistan's situation has improved significantly compared to other countries in the region", Umar said.

According to government data, Pakistan's daily virus deaths

He also warned the government could reimpose restrictions if businesses and other establishments don't enforce social distancing and other measures.

Family of Muammar Gaddafi demand body of late Libyan leader



Agencies

BEIRUT: Ahmed Gaddaf Al-Dam, the cousin of the late Libyan leader and political official of the "Libyan National Struggle Front", asked his country's authorities to hand over the body of Muammar Gaddafi to his relatives.

According to RT, Gaddaf Al-Dam said in a statement that the Libyan Government of National Accord should hand over the bodies of supporters of the late Libyan leader to their families, and allow Gaddafi supporters to return to their

country.

Gaddaf Al Dam, who was the coordinator of relations with Egypt during the Gaddafi era, pointed out that thousands of them are forced to live abroad because they cannot return to their homeland.

The late Libyan leader's cousin also stressed the need "for the immediate release of all Libyan prisoners who have been detained for nine years."

Muammar Gaddafi was killed in Sirte, his hometown, on October 20th, 2011, after anti-government forces surrounded his positions.



Lebanon Prez Michel Aoun Says Negligence Or Missile May Have Caused Blast

Agencies

BEIRUT: Lebanon's president said Friday that a cataclysmic port blast was caused either by negligence or a missile attack, but rejected widespread calls for an international probe.

The explosion that killed more than 150 people and wounded at least 5,000 on Tuesday could have been "negligence or foreign interference through a missile or bomb," Michel Aoun told reporters.

It was the first acknowledgement by a Lebanese of-

ficial of the possibility that Tuesday's earth-shaking blast may have been caused by an attack.

Authorities had said a fire at the port had ignited tonnes of ammonium nitrate stored for years in a warehouse.

Lebanese nationals, advocacy groups and foreign heads of state had called for an international investigation into the blast to ensure impartiality, but Aoun rejected such an initiative.

When asked by a journalist during a televised interview if he thought an interna-

tional probe would obscure the truth, the president answered "of course".

Moments later on his Twitter account, Aoun spelled out his position further, saying: "the goal behind calls for an international investigation into the port issue is to dilute the truth." The ageing president did call for "swift justice," vowing the government's probe would spare neither top-level officials nor regular employees.

He confirmed that 20 suspects were being interrogated already.

What Is The Ideal COVID-19 Response? These 3 Countries Got It Right

Agencies

WELLINGTON: The ideal governmental response to Covid-19 would combine the testing policy of New Zealand, the schools policy of Denmark, and the communications strategy of Uganda, according to a study of different countries' responses.

Research by Michael Barber, a former adviser to U.K. Prime Minister Tony Blair, and Idris Jala, who did a similar job for Malaysia's Najib Razak, has looked at how different countries have handled the global pandemic in an effort to help others to learn from the most successful.

Among the examples they pick out are New Zealand's extensive testing, which has seen more than 7,000 tests for each confirmed case, and South Korea's contact-tracing, which uses data from security cameras and credit card transactions to follow people's movements. Uganda's use of radio call-in shows to engage the public in a country with poor internet access is praised, along with Denmark's successful reopening of schools.

But they note that coordination between countries has



been poor, especially when compared with the global financial crisis of 2008, when leaders including Britain's Gordon Brown helped pull together an international response.

'Homework Assignment'

"For the first time in history, every government on the planet has been set the same homework assignment at the same time," Barber said in an interview. "That should be a great opportunity for global learning, but there's surprisingly little going on."

This should be addressed as the world prepares to face the next set of challenges around vaccine distribution and economic rescue packages, he said.

And not every solution works everywhere. South Korea's contact-tracing program is far more invasive than many populations would accept, for example. Though Barber pointed to a successful work-around in Australia, which passed privacy laws to reassure people their data would not be misused.

Saudi Crown Prince Sent "Hit Squad" To Assassinate Ex-Spy In Canada: Lawsuit

Agencies

Washington: A former senior Saudi intelligence official said in a US lawsuit Thursday that the country's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman tried to have him assassinated in 2018, just weeks after dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi was murdered in Turkey.

Saad Aljabri said Prince Mohammed sent a "hit squad" to Canada, where he lives in exile, to kill and dismember him in the same way that Khashoggi was murdered allegedly by the prince's agents in Istanbul in October 2018.

"To fulfil his murderous desire, Defendant bin Salman has personally orchestrated an attempted extrajudicial killing of Dr. Saad, an attempt that remains ongoing to this day," Aljabri charged in the lawsuit filed in federal court in Washington.

Aljabri said that Prince Mohammed wants him dead because he is close to rival prince and former Saudi security chief Prince Mohammed bin Nayef, and because he has intimate knowledge of Prince Mohammed's activities that would sour the close relationship between Washington and Riyadh.

"Dr. Saad is uniquely positioned to existentially threaten Defendant bin Salman's standing with the US government. That is why Defendant bin Salman wants him dead," the suit said.

Aljabri was already abroad in June 2017 when Prince Mohammed seized power in the palace, removing Mohammed bin Nayef as crown prince and placing him under house arrest.

After his children in Riyadh were hit with travel restrictions, Aljabri refused entreaties to return, fearing he would meet the same fate as Prince Nayef, and moved to Canada where a son lives.

Since then Riyadh tried unsuccessfully to use Interpol to gain custody of him. And he

says they sent a team of agents to the United States to track him down.



Thirteen days after Khashoggi's murder on 2 October 2018, a team from what Aljabri called in the lawsuit Prince Mohammed's "personal mercenary group, the Tiger Squad," arrived in Canada.

The team, he claimed, included forensic specialists and equipment similar to the group that dismembered Khashoggi's body, which was never found.

He said Canadian security became suspicious and disrupted the plot, but that efforts to kill him continue, and that Prince Mohammed obtained a religious fatwa, or command, for his death from clerics.

In March his two children in Saudi Arabia were taken away and haven't been heard from.

The suit against Prince Mohammed plus 12 named and another 11 unidentified people was filed as a claim of attempted extrajudicial killing under the Torture Victim Protection Act.

Aljabri asked the court for unspecified damages for "severe emotional distress," anxiety and hypertension, and other ailments, and punitive damages against the defendants as well.

He also asked the court to declare that the defendants violated the "law of nations" under the Alien Tort Statute.

"This court can begin the process of holding defendant bin Salman and his agents accountable for their actions," the suit said.

Rajapaksa brothers win by landslide in Lanka's election

Agencies

Colombo: Sri Lanka's powerful Rajapaksa brothers have secured a landslide victory in the country's parliamentary election, according to final results.

Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa's Sri Lanka Podujana Party (SLPP) won 145 seats and can also count on the support of at least five allies in the 225-member legislature, ac-

has accused the government of corruption, censorship and intimidation.

Al Jazeera's Minelle Fernandez, reporting from the capital, Colombo, said despite criticism of "authoritarianism and dominance" people have opted for the governing party.

"Mahinda Rajapaksa was voted out of office essentially just one term ago. The previ-



cording to the results released on Friday.

The SLPP's main opponent obtained just 54 seats in Wednesday's vote, which saw more than 75 percent of the 16.2 million eligible voters cast their ballots.

The prime minister is most likely to be sworn in the same position by his younger brother, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, and the huge win on Friday could enable them to change the constitution and strengthen the dynastic rule.

"Sri Lanka People's Front has secured a resounding victory according to official results released so far," Gotabaya Rajapaksa said in a Twitter message. "It is by belief that that the expectation to have a Parliament that will enable the implementation of my 'vision for prosperity' policy will be reality tomorrow."

Critics fear the siblings - renowned for their crushing of Tamil separatist rebels to end a decades-old conflict in 2009 - want to end presidential term limits, bring the judiciary and police under their direct control, and extend their dynastic power to a new generation.

Sri Lanka's opposition

ous government came to power on the promise of change but it failed miserably. They did carry forward some constitutional reforms but ultimately, they were such a big disappointment that people of this country have gone back to the Rajapaksas.

"The handling of coronavirus crisis by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has invoked a lot of confidence in the people in contrast with the shambles the last government made following the Easter bombing attack last year."

The Indian Ocean Island has largely contained the spread of the novel coronavirus with 2,839 confirmed cases, including 11 deaths.

However, analysts say any attempt by Gotabaya Rajapaksa to push for changes that will strengthen presidential power at the expense of those of the prime minister may trigger sibling rivalry.

Gotabaya was elected president last November after projecting himself as the only leader who could secure the country after bombings of churches and hotels on Easter Sunday killed 269 people in 2019.

NEWS MAKERS

Lebanese Rally To Assist Those Affected By Beirut Explosion

Beirut, Lebanon - After Lama Masri felt the shockwaves of the massive explosion that ripped through Beirut on Tuesday, she knew that people in the city would need help.

"I went immediately to the pharmacy, grabbed a first aid kit and ran to help. When something like this happens, it's your first instinct - you're in crisis mode," the 32-year-old told Al Jazeera.

Masri, a software developer based in Beirut, was among thousands of Lebanese nationals who have been actively taking matters into their own hands to provide aid to those affected by the explosion, which killed 137 people and wounded some 5,000 others according to the government.

"I could see literally at least 60 percent of our population on the streets, helping people, whether they're organisers or just coming in on their own as volunteers," she told Al Jazeera.

"I had 11 workers helping out and I'd left for a bit to get them sandwiches. [Since] nothing was open - everything was shattered; some people came out on motorcycles to distribute food," said Masri. "I ended up with 11 boxes of free food."

The country has been shaken by multiple crises in recent months. Last October, protesters took to the streets to call for a political overhaul as finan-



cial and economic crises worsened in the country.

According to ICRC spokeswoman Rona Halabi, there has been increasing concern that the situation will worsen in the aftermath of the explosion, which devastated the port of Beirut - a vital location for food and aid imports.

"We usually get all our aid through the port, so this may affect our work," Halabi told Al Jazeera. "But we, of course, are here to provide as much as we can to the families of the victims and the injured."

Meanwhile, people are coming together as part of volunteer organisations, and even individually, to assist stricken communities. Halabi says providing medical assistance has un-

doubtedly been critical.

"This city and everyone is shaken to the core," she said. "Several hospitals are still damaged; the ones that are still working have been overwhelmed [with people] who've had injuries. And there's still a big need of assistance."

But as hospitals struggled with the influx of wounded people - many had to look for medical treatment elsewhere.

"My colleague was injured with her mother and she went to the hospital in Beirut ... They were then able to receive medical support in another hospital because there were more serious injuries that needed those hospital beds," said Halabi. "A lot of patients were also being treated in

parking lots."

Volunteers who have provided assistance on the ground, like Masri, said they used tweezers to help remove glass pieces from people's wounds.

"You can't just sit at home and say, I'm safe here, when others have lost everything. I can't see devastation and not react," said Masri.

Global Solidarity Movement

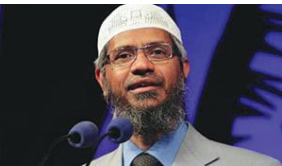
Campaigns focused on spreading awareness of the situation on the ground have since gained international attention. A large number of charity organisations, like non-profit group Impact Lebanon, have put together fundraisers to respond to the crisis. Several initiatives have also been launched to direct potential donors and volunteers to reliable organisations.

Ghida Beydoun, 22, Dania Khara-zi, 20, and Nour Abi Fadel, 19, recently came up with the idea of a platform to help spread awareness about the availability of services catering to those in need.

"We're creating an Instagram account called VolunteerBeirut outlining the different areas of help," said Abi Fadel.

"[Its purpose] is to increase equity in the digital space so everyone is aware of current volunteering initiatives, and they can determine how to help as well."

Not Many Countries Willing To Accept Zakir Naik: Former Malaysian PM Mahathir Mohamad



KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia was looking for a country except India to send Zakir Naik, but not many countries are willing to accept the controversial preacher, former prime minister Mahathir Mohamad has said.

Naik, a 54-year-old radical Islamic preacher wanted by the Indian authorities for alleged money laundering and inciting extremism through hate speeches, left India in 2016 and subsequently moved to the largely Muslim Malaysia, where he was granted permanent residency when Mahathir was the prime minister.

Claiming that the fugitive Islamic preacher “would not be safe from the Indian public”, the 95-year-old politician, who is eyeing a comeback, said he would like to send Naik to some country “where we feel he will be safe”.

“For the time being he

(Naik) can stay here but we would like to send him to some other country where he would be safe. Unfortunately, not many countries are willing to accept him,” Mahathir was quoted as saying by the WION news channel.

When asked whether he would extradite Naik if he becomes the Prime Minister of Malaysia again, Mahathir said, “Well, we would like to send him to some country where we feel he will be safe”.

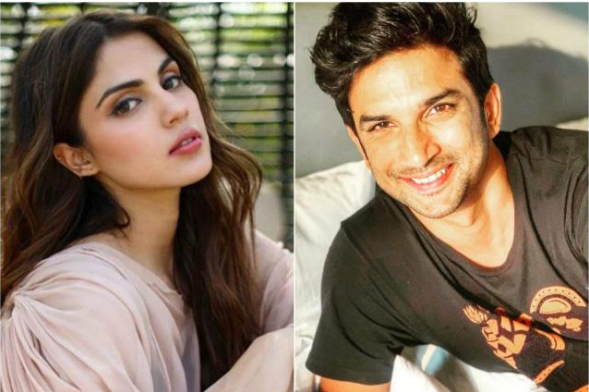
He once again refused to send Naik to India, saying “at this moment we feel that he would not be safe from the Indian public”.

Naik has been banned from any public activities in the multi-ethnic country after his controversial remarks against Malaysian Hindus and Chinese last year.

When Mahathir was the prime minister he had said that his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi did not request the extradition of Naik during a bilateral meeting in Russia in September 2019, a claim contested by India which has sought the extradition of the fugitive preacher. PTI

FOR THE TIME BEING HE (NAIK) can stay here but we would like to send him to some other country where he would be safe. Unfortunately, not many countries are willing to accept him,”

Sushant Singh Rajput Death Case: Ed Grills Rhea Chakraborty For Money Laundering



MUMBAI: Hours after the Enforcement Directorate (ED) rejected Rhea Chakraborty's request for deferring her questioning, the actor appeared before the financial probe agency in Mumbai on Friday.

Rhea arrived at the ED office here along with her brother Showik Chakraborty at 11.50 a.m. for questioning. The ED will record her statement under the Prevention of the Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002.

It will question her about financial dealings and investment into properties. The ED will also question her about the financial transactions from the late actor's bank account in the last one year.

The ED on July 31 registered a money laundering case against Rhea and her family members. The case pertains to “suspicious transactions” worth Rs 15 crore in connection allegedly from the late actor's account.

Sushant's father K.K.

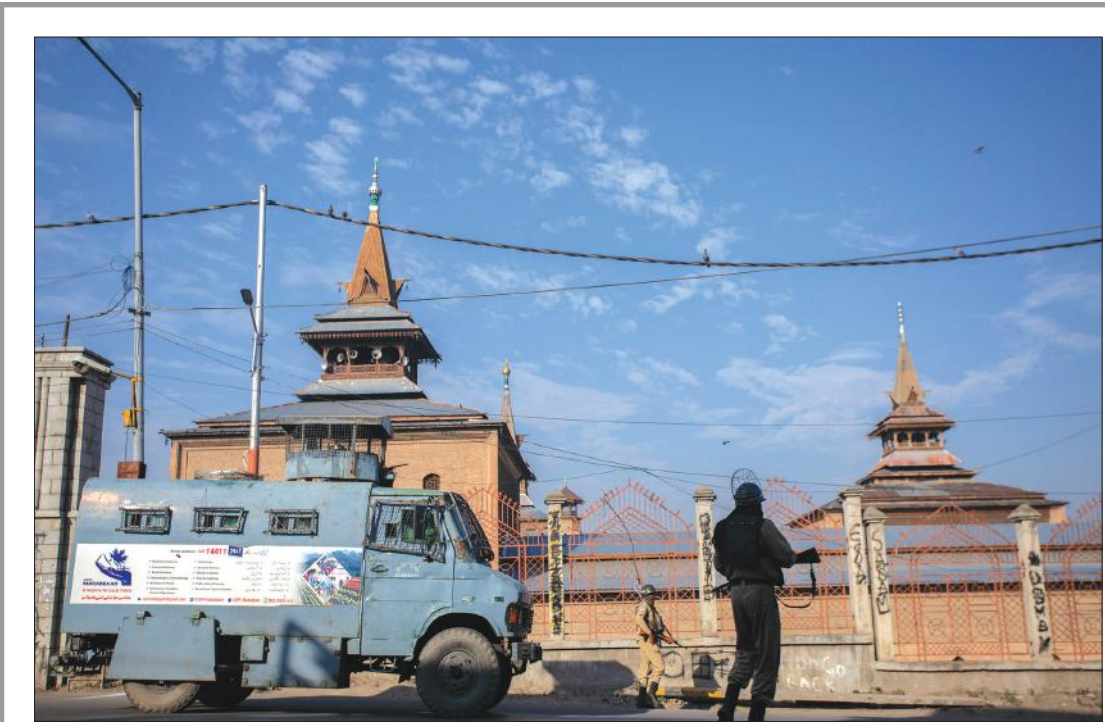
Singh filed an FIR in Patna on July 25, accusing Rhea, Indrajit Chakraborty, Sandhya Chakraborty, Showik Chakraborty, Samuel Miranda and Shruti Modi of abetment to suicide, fraud and holding Sushant hostage.

The ED named Rhea and her family members in the case on the basis of the FIR filed by the Bihar Police.

The ED has also sought details of the financial transactions of the firm -- Vividrage Rheelityx, in which Rhea is a director; and Front India For World, in which her brother Showik Chakraborty is a director.

Earlier in the day, Rhea requested the ED to defer her questioning in connection with the money laundering probe involving the death of Sushant and call her only after the Supreme Court hearing.

On Thursday, the CBI booked Rhea and her family members in the death of the 34-year-old actor in his Bandra flat on June 14.



GRAND MOSQUE remained shut for prayers as unannounced lockdown closed the area on Friday. KO Photo Abid Bhat

In Just 21 Days, India Adds Another Million COVID-19 Cases To Its Tally

Registering over 60,000 cases in 24 hours for the first time, India's COVID-19 tally galloped past 20 lakh on Friday, while the number of recoveries surged to 13.78 lakh, according to Union Health Ministry data.

The coronavirus infection tally had crossed 19 lakh just two days ago. It took 110 days for COVID-19 cases in the country to reach one lakh and 59 days more to cross the 10-lakh mark. Thereafter it took just 21 days more to go past 20 lakh.

This was the ninth day in a row that the tally increased by more than 50,000.

According to the health ministry data updated at 8 am, 62,538 cases were added in a day taking the total coronavirus caseload to 20,27,074.

The death-toll climbed to 41,585 with 886 people succumbing to the infection in 24 hours, the data showed. At the same time, the number of patients who recuperated from the disease surged to 13,78,105 on Friday taking the recovery rate to 67.98 per cent.

There are 6,07,384 active coronavirus cases in the country presently which comprise 29.96 per cent of the total caseload.

The Union health ministry said India continues on the path of COVID-19 management boosted by two significant achievements -- continuously rising recovery rate and reduc-



ing Case Fatality Rate (CFR) which is much below the global average. The Recovery Rate on Friday was recorded 68%, while the CFR dropped down to a new low of 2.05 per cent.

Ramped up hospital infrastructure and emphasis on efficient treatment of hospitalised patients through the Standard of Care incorporated in the Clinical Treatment Protocol issued by the Centre, have effectively ensured improvement in the recovery rate.

According to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), a cumulative 2,27,88,393 samples have been tested for coronavirus infection up to August 6 with 6,39,042 being tested on Thursday.

Of the 886 new deaths reported,

316 are from Maharashtra, 110 from Tamil Nadu, 93 from Karnataka, 72 from Andhra Pradesh, 61 from Uttar Pradesh, 56 from West Bengal, 27 from Gujarat, 26 from Punjab, 17 in Madhya Pradesh, 15 from Delhi and 12 from Rajasthan and Telangana.

Ten fatalities have been reported each from Odisha and Jammu and Kashmir, nine in Jharkhand, eight in Bihar, five each in Tripura, Puducherry and Assam, three each from Kerala Haryana, two each from Goa and Andman and Nicobar Islands and one in Manipur.

Of the total 41,585 deaths so far, Maharashtra has reported the maximum at 16,792, followed by 4,571 in Tamil Nadu and 4,059 in Delhi, 2,897 in Karnataka, 2,583 in Gujarat, 1,918 in Uttar Pradesh, 1,902 in West Bengal, 1,753 in Andhra Pradesh and 946 in Madhya Pradesh.

So far, 757 people have died of COVID-19 in Rajasthan, 601 in Telangana, 517 in Punjab, 458 in Haryana, 436 in Jammu and Kashmir, 363 in Bihar, 235 in Odisha, 145 in Jharkhand, 126 in Assam, 98 in Uttarakhnd and 97 in Kerala.

Chhattisgarh has registered 77 deaths, Puducherry 70, Goa 66, Tripura 36, Chandigarh 20, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands 16, Himachal Pradesh 14, eight in Manipur, seven in Ladakh, six in Nagaland, five in Meghalaya, the ministry data showed.

US Lifts Travel Advisory, India Remains On List

The US has lifted the highest level of its global health travel advisory for Americans due to the coronavirus pandemic and restored the previous country-specific system, without changing the status of over 50 countries, including that of India and China.

The US state department issued the Level 4: Do Not Travel advisory—the highest level of travel advisory—on March 19, urging American citizens not to travel overseas due to the coronavirus pandemic. India remains on the Level 4 of the travel advisory along with more than 50 countries, including China. This means that the US urges its citizens not to travel to India due to the increasing coronavirus cases.

The state department, in its latest travel advisory on India issued on Thursday, said, “Do not travel to India due to COVID-19. Exercise increased caution in India due to crime and terrorism”. The Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued a Level 3 (avoid non-essential travel) Travel Health Notice for India due to COVID-19, it said. Travellers to India may experience border closures, airport closures, travel prohibitions, stay-at-



home orders, business closures and other emergency conditions within India due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it said.

Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs Carl Risch told reporters during a conference call that the State Department, in close coordination with the CDC, has lifted the Global Level 4 Health Advisory and has returned to the previous system of country-specific levels of travel advice, with levels from 1 to 4 depending on country-specific conditions. The CDC has similarly removed its Level 3 Global COVID-19 pandemic notice. This important change reflects the reality that health and safety conditions are improving in some countries while potentially deteriorating in others, he said. By returning to the country-specific travel advisory system, the US is able to give Americans detailed and actionable

information to make informed travel decisions, he said.

“The COVID-19 pandemic poses significant risks for travellers, and our destination-specific advisories take into account the latest data and public health and safety analysis on COVID-related risks,” Risch said.

Among other countries that have been put on the Level 4 of travel advisory include Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Mexico, Egypt and Brazil.

Although the guidance from the state department has been lifted, American travellers continue to face travel restrictions in countries worldwide due to the rising cases of the deadly disease in the US.

According to Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center, the contagion has infected over 19 million people and killed more than 713,000 across the world.

The US is the worst-affected country with over 4.8 million cases and more than 1,60,000 deaths.

The European Union has blocked the entry of the US tourists, and the UK requires travellers from the US to quarantine for 14 days.

Won't Attend Mosque Inauguration, Says Adityanath; SP Asks Him To Apologise

LUCKNOW: The Samajwadi Party on Friday sought an apology from Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath over his remark that he would not attend the inauguration of the mosque to be built in Ayodhya, replacing the demolished Babri Masjid.

After the bhoomi puja for a Ram temple in Ayodhya, Adityanath had said on television that “as a yogi and as a Hindu” he couldn't go for the inauguration of a mosque.

Reacting to the remark, the opposition SP said he should seek an apology from the people of the state. When contacted, a UP Congress spokesperson, however, refused to comment on the chief minister's remarks over the mosque.

“If you ask me as a chief minister, I have no problem with any belief, religion or community. If you ask me as a yogi, I will definitely not go because as a Hindu I have the right to express my 'upasana vidhi' (way of worship) and act accordingly,” Adityanath had said.

“I am neither 'vaadi or 'prativali' (petitioner nor respondent). That is why neither will I be invited, nor will I go. I know, I won't be getting any such invitation,” he said.

The day they invite me, secularism of many will be in danger. That's why I want that their secularism should not be in danger and I continue to silently work to ensure that everyone benefits from government scheme without any discrimination,” he said.

He claimed that the Congress never wanted a solution to the dispute. “They wanted the dispute to continue for their political benefit.”

“Attending roza-iftar with a skull cap is not secularism. People also know that this is drama. People know the reality,” the CM said.

SP spokesperson Pawan Pandey criticised Adityanath



over his remarks, charging that he has violated the oath he took while assuming charge as the chief minister.

“He is the CM of the entire state, and not only of the Hindu community. Whatever the population of Hindus and Muslims in the state, he is the CM of all. This language of the CM lacks dignity,” he said.

“He should seek an apology from the people for this,” Pandey said.

UP Congress media cell convenor Lalan Kumar said, “We don't have any comments on his mosque statement.”

But he credited the then prime minister Rajiv Gandhi for opening the locks on the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid.

Referring to the ruling BJP, the Congress spokesperson said, “They play politics of fake Hindutva. The Congress has always talked about whatever is in the interest of people.

“Lord Ram is everyone's, but the BJP wants to show that Ram is theirs alone,” he added.

Yogi Adityanath had attended the groundbreaking ceremony Wednesday for a Ram temple in Ayodhya, where Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the main guest.

Last November, the Supreme Court had settled the Ayodhya land dispute, allowing the construction of the temple at Ram Janmabhoomi by a trust.

The apex court had also ordered the allocation of a five-acre plot of land elsewhere in Ayodhya for the construction of a mosque, in place of the Babri Masjid which was demolished by 'kar sevaks' in 1992.

A trust has been formed by the Sunni Waqf Board for building this mosque. PTI

Court Seeks Centre's Reply In Kafeel Khan's Detention Case



PRAYAGRAJ: The Allahabad High Court has asked the Centre and the Uttar Pradesh government to file their replies in a case seeking the release of Dr Kafeel Khan, who is detained under the National Security Act (NSA) for allegedly giving a provocative speech during anti-CAA protests.

A bench of justices Manoj Mishra and Deepak Verma passed the order on Wednesday in a petition filed by Nuzhat Parween, the mother of Khan, seeking her son's release. The court fixed August 19 as the next date of hearing in the case.

According to the petitioner, Mr Khan was granted bail by a competent court. However, he was not released for four days and subsequently, the NSA was slapped on him.

Hence, his detention is illegal. The plea has challenged Mr Khan's detention for four days even after he secured bail in all the cases registered against him.

Mr Khan has been in jail since January 29 after a speech he delivered at the Aligarh Muslim University on December 10, 2019 during the anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) protests. The speech was deemed “provocative” by the BJP-led government in Uttar Pradesh, which booked Mr Khan under the NSA.

Mr Khan hit the headlines after the 2017 tragedy at Gorakhpur's Baba Raghav Das (BRD) Medical College, in which several kids died due to a lack of oxygen cylinders. Initially, he was hailed as a saviour for the children for arranging emergency oxygen cylinders but later, faced action, along with nine other doctors and staff members of the hospital, all of whom were released on bail later.

NEWS MAKERS

What Indians Have Been Spending On During Pandemic

Months of lockdown have altered the habits of Indian consumers: Their spending patterns reveal just how deeply concerned they are with protecting their health and fortifying their store-cupboards, warding off boredom and keeping their homes (and themselves) neat and tidy. And where new routines look likely to stick, some companies stand to gain a lot.

Here are a few of the products shoppers in the world's biggest open consumer market have been stocking up on.

Immunity Boosters

Consumers around the world are showing an increased interest in safeguarding their health and boosting their immunity. In India, that often means ayurveda, the country's ancient system of medicine.

Companies such as Dabur In-



dia Ltd. and The Himalaya Drug Co. are witnessing high demand for traditional products like chyawanprash (a cooked mixture containing Indian gooseberry or amla, honey, sugar, ghee, herbs and spices) and proprietary supplements like Septilin, which combines ayurvedic ingredients including licorice and guduchi.

Chyawanprash sales across the industry grew 283% in June and branded honey rose 39%, according to Nielsen Holdings

Plc. Dabur, one of India's largest ayurvedic products suppliers, said its chyawanprash sales surged 700% from April to June. The surge in spending is likely to last well beyond the next few months, according to Sameer Shukla, west market leader at Nielsen South Asia. “We saw very clear trends in terms of consumer ask - people would like to spend more on immunity boosters, health hygiene and stuff like that,” Shukla said. “This kind of ask is

not a short-term one.”

Shiny Bhowmik, a working mother of two daughters, has been using chyawanprash for years. Since the onset of the pandemic, the 49-year-old's family have begun to use the product too. “I like to include immunity boosters like chyawanprash, honey and cloves in my family's diet,” she said. “I often end up taking spoons of the brown herbal product throughout the day.”

Patanjali Ayurved Ltd., the company associated with celebrity yoga guru Baba Ramdev, also reported high net sales between April and June, according to Brickwork Ratings. In June, the Indian government ordered the company to stop claiming that its “Corona Kit,” consisting of three herbal medicines, can cure Covid-19.

Delhi Airport Develops Online Portal For International Passengers

The Delhi airport has developed an online portal that will allow international passengers to fill a mandatory self-declaration form. Eligible passengers can apply for exemption from compulsory institutional quarantine for coronavirus, said the Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) on Friday.

This will make traveling contactless as they won't have to fill physical copies of self declaration and quarantine exemption forms when they arrive in India. From Saturday onward, a total of five categories of passengers can get exemption from the mandatory seven-day institutional quarantine. These five categories include pregnant women, those who have had bereavement in their families, people suffering from serious illnesses, parents accompany-

ing children below 10 and those who have COVID-negative certificate from test done 96 hours before the journey.

Passengers who are allowed exemption would have to undergo 14-day home quarantine. All other international passengers arriving in India have to follow the usual process of undergoing mandatory seven-day institutional quarantine, at their own cost, followed by seven days of home quarantine.

“Passengers seeking exemption under the five specific categories will need to fill the e-form available on www.newdelhairport.in. They will have to submit it along with supporting documents, including a copy of their passports, at least 72 hours before boarding their flights,” DIAL said.

According to rules, every passenger has to submit a



self-declaration form saying they have not tested positive for COVID-19 three weeks prior to the flight. A copy of approval or rejection of exemption requests on specific grounds will be emailed to the passengers.

“Those eligible for exemption from mandatory institutional quarantine can show the approval certificate at the transfer area after landing and walk out hassle-free,” said the DIAL. This will not only help flyers but also reduce congestion at the arrival hall of the airports, according to DIAL. The portal has been termed ‘Air Suvidha’ and it can

be accessed through Delhi airport's official website.

This facility will be available for international passengers from Saturday. The online forms have been developed in collaboration with various state governments, Ministry of Civil Aviation, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of External Affairs. Scheduled international passenger flights continue to be suspended in India since March 23 amid the coronavirus pandemic. However, special international repatriation flights and charter flights have been permitted by the aviation regulator.

Since May 6, special international flights have been operated by Air India under the Vande Bharat Mission to help stranded people reach their destination. Private carriers have also operated under this mission.