



Maximum : 33°C
Minimum : 20°C
Humidity : 53%

SUNSET
Today 07:20 PM
SUNRISE
Tomorrow 05:51 AM

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News Digest

CRPF Inspector Shoots Self

Srinagar: A Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) officer on Wednesday was critically wounded after he allegedly shot himself with his service rifle in this capital city. M.Damodar from CRPF 141 battalion shot himself with his service weapon at his camp here on Wednesday, reports said. He was moved to the SMHS hospital where his condition was said to be stable. "He shot himself with his service rifle," Srinagar based CRPF PRO Pankaj Singh said. An investigation has been started by the CRPF in the incident.

3 Arrested For 'Funding' Militancy

Srinagar: Police on Wednesday claimed to have busted a militant funding module of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) by arresting three people in north Kashmir's Bandipora district. Irshad Ahmad Sheikh, Mohamad Junaid Wani and Raj Mohammad Khan were arrested by Bandipora police on the basis of a credible input, a police spokesperson said. The trio, he said were running a militant funding module of LeT and were in touch with their handlers in POK. "Incriminating materials including cash Rs 4 lakhs have been recovered from their possession and Rs1 lakh in bank." P-02

53 New COVID-19 Cases In Ladakh

Leh: A total of 53 fresh COVID-19 cases were reported in Ladakh, taking the Union Territory's tally to 1,770, officials said on Wednesday. Ladakh accounted for nine coronavirus-related deaths, while 1,255 patients have recovered from the disease since its outbreak in March. The officials said while 28 fresh cases of the infection were detected in Kargil, 25 were reported in Leh district. Among the 1,770 cases recorded in Ladakh so far, 931 were reported in Kargil and 839 in Leh, they said, adding that 742 patients (82 per cent) recovered. P-02

Police Rescue Abducted Girl

Srinagar: Police on Wednesday failed an attempt of a youth to abduct a girl in north Kashmir's Baramulla district. According to the reports, a police team noticed a speedy vehicle passing through Chinad area of the district in which a girl was seen crying. The police chased the vehicle and rescued the girl, who was allegedly being abducted by a youth identified as Irshad Ahmad Hajam of Putkha. Quoting an unnamed police officer, news agency KNS reported that the driver fled from the area after the cops chased him. P-02

Police Cracks Theft Cases, 2 Held

Srinagar: Police on Wednesday claimed to have solved two separate theft cases by arresting two burglars in Baramulla district and recovering stolen property from their possession. A police spokesperson said that a woman Nusrat Manzoor of Khanpora, Baramulla reported in police post Delina that during intervening night of 26/27.07.2020 some unknown burglars broke open the institute of information technology near higher secondary ground Delina and took away 04 laptops, 02 computers, UPS 02 no's, 04 chargers. P-02

Hizb Commander, Soldier Killed In Pulwama Encounter

Militant Ambush Leaves Army Man Injured In Sopore

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A top commander of Hizbul Mujahideen and an army man were killed while a soldier was injured on Wednesday in two separate gunfights in Pulwama and Baramulla districts of the Valley.

State forces launched a search operation in an orchard in Kamrazipora village of Pulwama in the early hours of the day on receiving information about the presence of militants there, they said.

The officials said the search operation turned into an encounter after militants opened fire on the personnel, injuring two soldiers.

The injured were rushed to army's 92 Base hospital in Srinagar, where one of them succumbed to his injuries, they said.

In the gunfight, one militant was also killed, they added. Director General of Police Dilbagh Singh identified the militant as Hizb Commander Azaad Lehari of Pulwama.

"Azaad Lehari was involved in the killing of police head constable Anoop Singh on 22 May 2020 at Prichu Pulwama where he fired at a Naka party," Singh said. He said six FIRs. P-02



Guns Roar Along LoC In Rajouri

India and Pakistan troops on Wednesday exchanged heavy gunfire along the Line of Control (LoC) in Rajouri district of Jammu province. The Pakistani army violated ceasefire by using heavy fire and mortar shells to target forward areas along the LoC in Rajouri district, prompting a befitting response from the security forces, officials said. P-02

Lashkar Militant Held In Hajin: Police

Police on Wednesday claimed to have arrested a Lashkar-e-Taiba militant from Hajin area of Bandipora district. P-02

Searches Conducted In City Centre

Government forces on Wednesday carried out a search operation in Abi Guzar area of the City Centre. A posse of Special P-02

Russia Rejects Safety Concerns Over Covid-19 Vaccine

MOSCOW: Russia said on Wednesday the first batch of its Covid-19 vaccine would be ready for some medics within two weeks and rejected as "groundless" safety concerns aired by some experts over Moscow's rapid approval of the drug.

President Vladimir Putin said on Tuesday that Russia had become the first country to grant regulatory approval to a COVID-19 vaccine, after less than two months of human testing.

The vaccine has not yet completed its final trials. Only about 10% of clinical trials are successful and some scientists fear Moscow may be putting national prestige before safety.

"It seems our foreign colleagues are sensing the specific competitive advantages of the Russian drug and are trying to express opinions that in our opinion are completely groundless," Health Minister Mikhail Murashko said on Wednesday.

He said the vaccine developed by Moscow's Gamaleya Institute would be administered to people, including doctors, on a voluntary basis, and would be ready soon.

"The first packages of the medical vaccine against the coronavirus infection will be received within the next two weeks, primarily for doctors," he said.

Alexander Gintsburg, director of the Gamaleya Institute, said clinical trials would be published once they have been. P-02

8 More Covid-19 Deaths In J&K, Toll Reaches 500

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: Coronavirus fatalities crossed 500-mark in Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday as eight more people succumbed to the deadly infection in the Union territory during the last 24 hours.

Srinagar, this capital city reported three new Covid-19 deaths, while Kupwara two and one each from Baramulla, Pulwama and Ganderbal districts, official sources said. The victims from Srinagar included a 70-year-old man from Lal Bazar who was admitted to SKIMS Soura on July 24.

The other two fatalities include a 60-year-old man from Nawab Bazar, admitted with Pneumonia to the hospital on August 4, and a 68-year-old man from Rainawari who was admitted to SMHS hospital on August 6, sources said.

Regarding the latter, a senior doctor at the hospital said

DAK Prez, Senior Police Officer Among 482 New Cases

Jammu and Kashmir reported on Wednesday 482 new cases of Covid-19, including President Doctors Association (DAK) Kashmir, a senior police officer and ten security personnel, taking the total number of infected people across the Union territory to 26413. While 376 new cases were reported from the Kashmir valley, the remaining 106. P-02

that he was suffering from Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and bilateral Pneumonia.

Regarding Pulwama victim, sources said the 80-year-old woman from Waspora Murran came positive for covid-19 today. She had underlying renal failure and died on way to district hospital Pulwama, the sources added. P-02

REGARDING PULWAMA VICTIM, sources said the 80-year-old woman from Waspora Murran came positive for covid-19 today. She had underlying renal failure and died on way to district hospital Pulwama, the sources added.

AI Calls Shopian Killings 'Extra Judicial Murders'

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Prominent human rights body Amnesty International on Wednesday demanded an independent and transparent probe into the alleged fake encounter of three Rajouri youth by government forces in south Kashmir's Shopian district last month.

"Amnesty International India calls for the extrajudicial execution to be investigated and prosecuted by independent civilian authorities. Civilian investigations and trials offer a degree of transparency and independence that is missing from the military justice system," Executive

Director Avinash Kumar said in a statement issued to media on Wednesday.

The Amnesty statement further said that the UN Human Rights Committee, which monitors the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which India is a state party has stated that in cases of human rights violations by security forces, investigations should be carried out by civilian authorities in order to ensure independence.

"This has also been affirmed by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers. The Supreme Court P-02

Army Considers Resettling Kashmiri Youth Who Give Up Arms

Agencies

NEW DELHI: India is considering offering young Kashmiri militants an escape from a life of violence by temporarily resettling them in more peaceful parts of the country, according to the top military commander in the Kashmir Valley.

Lieutenant General BS Raju revealed the plan for a new scheme to offer a way out of militancy

during a telephone interview from his headquarters in Srinagar, Kashmir's main city.

He told Reuters that recommendations had been submitted to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government and that the plan, while not finalised, was in an advanced stage.

"These are young boys who need to be taken care of for a period of time," Raju said, adding

that could involve temporarily settling them outside of Muslim-majority Kashmir.

Past efforts to persuade fighters to put down their guns have had mixed success. But Raju said that the military had recommended that the scheme take a longer-term approach to rehabilitate ex-militants.

"The bottom-line is that it will have a structure that will P-02

THESE ARE YOUNG BOYS WHO NEED TO BE TAKEN CARE of for a period of time," Raju said, adding that could involve temporarily settling them outside of Muslim-majority Kashmir.

Fate Of 'Abducted' Soldier Unknown

SRINAGAR: Ten days after he was abducted by suspected militants in south Kashmir's Shopian district, the fate of a Territorial Army soldier remains unknown.

A resident of Shopian's Reshipora village, Rifleman Shakir of 162 Battalion (TA) was abducted by suspected militants on August 2 and his vehicle was found abandoned and burnt in south Kashmir's Kulgam. Three days later, his clothes were found in Landoora area of Shopian.

"Every morning my relatives and locals search several kilometers inch by inch in order to find any clue about my son, but to no avail," Shakir's father Manzoor Ahmad said Wednesday.

Since August 2, Ahmad says he and his family have. P-02

MCI Declares Medical Degrees Obtained From PaK Invalid

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: In a significant move the Medical Council of India (MCI) has declared the medical degrees obtained from Pakistan administered Kashmir (PaK) will not be registered and persons possessing such certificates will not be allowed to practice modern medicine in India.

In a notice, R.K. Vats, Secretary General of MCI, said: "This is to inform all concerned that the entire territories of UT of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh are an integral part of India. Pakistan is in illegal and forcible occupation of a part of the territory".

The notice further states that "accordingly, any medical institu-



tion in Pakistan occupied Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh (POJKL) requires permission/recognition under IMC Act, 1956. Such permission has not been granted to any medical college in POJKL".

"Therefore, any qualification obtained from medical colleges located in these 'illegally occupied areas of India' shall not entitle a person for grant of registration. P-02

No Respite From Heat Wave For Now: Weatherman

SRINAGAR: Kashmir valley will continue to be in the grip of a heat wave and there will be no respite from the scorching heat for the next one week, a senior weather department official said Wednesday.

Director MeT, Sonam Lotus said Wednesday that there is no prediction of any major rainfall activity in the next one week.

He said that the weather conditions across Kashmir would remain hot and humid, adding that there is possibility of light rainfall in some areas also.

"But, there is no. P-02

We Need To Introspect What J&K Has Got In The Past 70 Years: LG

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: The newly appointed Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha said on Wednesday that there was a need to introspect what Jammu and Kashmir had got in the past seven decades.

Addressing an official function here at SKICC, Sinha said that the month of August has a great significance in the history of India.

"We must introspect what J&K has got in the past 70 years. A new beginning of change has been witnessed by J&K and the UT Government is trying to push the agenda of development and progress forward. J&K's development and the

LG Assures Better Security To Panchayat Reps

Newly-appointed Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday promised better security arrangement for grassroots level elected leaders but asked them to take precautionary measures as well.

"Many people have spoken about security issues. We have lost several colleagues recently...My sympathies and the administration stand with their families. "Whatever possible security arrangements have. P-02

No Loan, Oil Supply For Pakistan: Saudi

Agencies

LONDON: With Saudi Arabia ending loan and oil supply to Pakistan, the decade-long friendship between the two countries has finally ended, reported Middle East Monitor.

Pakistan was also made to pay back USD 1 billion to Saudi Arabia, which was part of a \$6.2 billion package announced by Saudi Arabia in November 2018, which included a total of \$3 billion in loans and an oil credit facility amounting to \$3.2 billion.

The deals were then signed when Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman made a visit to Pakistan in February last year, the Middle East Monitor reported.

This development came after Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi had given a blunt warning to Saudi Arabia-led Organisation of Islamic

Pak Seeks US Help On Kashmir, Again

Pakistan on Tuesday urged United States to intervene and diffuse tensions with India over the lingering Kashmir issue. In a virtual conference with Ambassador David Hale, US Under Secretary for Political Affairs at the US State Department, Pakistan Foreign Secretary Sohail Mahmood said that it was imperative to take steps to prevent escalation of tensions. P-02

Cooperation (OIC) for not taking a stance against India over the Kashmir issue.

Qureshi was quoted as saying by the ARY channel, "If you cannot convene it, then I'll be compelled to ask Prime Minister Imran Khan. P-02

Interview | Shah Faesal: 'I Want To Move On And Live A Productive Life'

Auqib Javeed

AS his recent resignation continues to draw online fun and fury, former bureaucrat in his defense says that he's just accepting his weaknesses and moving on.

But Shah Faesal's decision has already made him "a disillusioned monk who once sold his Ferrari" for the "cause best known to him" for his detractors.

However, the doctor-turned-bureaucrat-turned-politician-turned... terms the rage over his reason as gratuitous.

In a chat with Kashmir Observer, Shah Faesal talks about his departure from politics, his frizzled defiance, and his desire for a 'productive life'.

Do you call yourself now - a separatist or a stooge?

One side has been calling me separatist and the other side stooge. That is a proof I am neither of the two.

Detractors accuse you of being an inconsistent man with no clarity of purpose.

Detractors are welcome to replace me and jump into my shoes. If I failed in doing something they are welcome to do it.

From a doctor to bureaucrat to politician and now what? Why this turnaround?

Life is a journey. I experimented with life and got many successes and many failures. There is no turnaround. I'm just accepting my weaknesses and moving on.

There're reports in New Delhi



media that you will be part of an advisory council? I have absolutely no idea.

We saw stalwart politicians biting the dust on August 5. Do you think you can still make a difference?

There is nothing like biting the dust. Mainstream politics will always remain important in a democracy. Same people will rule again tomorrow. Wait and watch.

Can we call you a failed politician now?

You can call me anything. It doesn't hurt you. I'm a better human being now. Even if I'm a failed politician.

Social media is abuzz with people wondering whether you will return their money and assets they donated you when you launched the party?

We got six lac one hundred rupees. Those who are used to abusing me will go to any extent in spreading lies. I have not spent a penny on myself and the facts are in public domain. P-02

From Front page...

Gypsum Extraction: Uri Locals Demand Action End Dust, Noise Pollution

Zaffar Iqbal

BARAMULLA: Residents of Uri, clogged with air and noise pollution linked to gypsum extraction in their neighborhood, today demanded immediate action by the government against violators.

Uri is a town in Baramulla which is surrounded by the mountains that are excellent sources for gypsum mining. In fact, out of the 19 mining leases granted by the department of geology and mining in Kashmir, most, almost 70%, fall in the bowl-shaped

region encompassing several villages including Nalooosa, JabadarBijhama, Zamboor Pattan, Bagna, DaraGutliian and DachinaSalamaba. However, the mining processes have environmental repercussions and health hazards for the village residents.

"We are facing a grave problem of air pollution with gypsum dust," said Aiyaz Farooq, a social activist from Bagna. "We suffer from chest-related disorders due to the dust emanating while gypsum is extracted and due to subsequent transportation," said another resident Liyaqat Ali.

"A number of people already have disorders related to dust. We have learnt that T.B cases are on increase in our area," Aiyaz Farooq said.

At the beginning, the residents said, the pollution was limited to certain areas in the vicinity where extraction processes were carried. "Now you can see dust all over the region which continues to pose threat to the residents," said Aiyaz Farooq.

"Backbone of our economy is walnut and due to pollution it is completely destroyed," said another resident.

The locals said that there is jar-

ring increase in the noise pollution caused by heavy machinery used in the extraction processing as well as due to the number of trucks passing through their neighbourhood.

"Very heavy machinery is used for the extraction, creating loud sounds. Heavy trucks used to ferry the gypsum adds to it. Peace in our lives has been taken away," the residents said. "See the condition of roads. They are completely dilapidated and worsen everyday as heavy trucks are allowed to ply by officials," adding,

"We had one bridge which connect

our village to district and tehsil. This bridge has capacity of load 8-10 tons but these trucks take load of 30-50 tons. The day is not far when this bridge caves in and we will lose the connectivity to outside world."

The residents say that while extraction processes were hard to be stopped given the fact it generates revenue for the government, "it should not be at our peril."

"There should be measures which take care of our genuine grievances. The government should repair the road and ensure water is spread

on the roads on daily basis so dust does not spread," they said, adding, "There should be ban on extraction in the areas which are close to habitations and school. In fact, the school falls around 100 meters away from the lease location," they said, adding, "Measures should be ensured so that forest are not affected. The extraction processes have already taken a heavy toll on them."

They also demanded that the grazing land should be kept free for livestock so that "only source of income for many families is ensured in the long run."

Experts say that gypsum mining can lead to destabilizing slopes that can lead to soil erosion. "The water table also gets affected," the experts say.

"Once the areas are mined, scars are left there, completely disrupting the landscape and it is visible even from a distance."

The experts say while mining can't be stopped altogether, "It ought to be regulated in the scientific, technical and legal manner to ensure minimum soil erosion, less health hazards and to preventing the pollution." (GNS)

Hizb Commander, Soldier...

were against Guns Roar Along LoC In Rajouri Jammu: India and Pakistan troops on Wednesday exchanged heavy gunfire along the Line of Control (LoC) in Rajouri district of Jammu province.

The Pakistani army violated ceasefire by using heavy fire and mortar shells to target forward areas along the LoC in Rajouri district, prompting a befitting response from the security forces, officials said.

"At about 1950 hours today, the Pak army initiated unprovoked ceasefire violation by firing with small arms & shelling with mortars along the LoC in Nowshera sector of Rajouri district", defence spokesman said.

The Indian army retaliated befittingly, he said.

him for militant related killings.

"Earlier he was detained under PSA as OGW and became active again," the DGP said, adding that charge sheet had been filed against him in two cases earlier.

In a statement issued here, a police spokesperson said that keeping in view Covid-19 pandemic, the body of Hizb commander will be sent to Baramulla for his burial and last rites after completion of medico-legal formalities.

"The nearest family members of the killed militant were allowed to participate in the last rites at Baramulla," the police spokesperson said.

He said a case under relevant sections of law has been registered in Police Station Rajpora and investigation has been initiated.

"People are requested to cooperate with police till the area is completely sanitized and cleared of all the explosive materials, if any," the police spokesperson added.

Meanwhile, a soldier was injured in a militant ambush in north Kashmir's Sopore on Wednesday afternoon.

Official sources said that suspected militants attacked an army vehicle from an orchard near Hygam leaving a soldier of 15 Garwal injured.

The injured soldier was evacuated to hospital, where his condition is said to be stable.

Soon after the incident, the state forces cordoned off the area and launched a manhunt to nab the attackers. (With GNS inputs)

Guns Roar Along LoC...

"At about 1950 hours today, the Pak army initiated unprovoked ceasefire violation by firing with small arms & shelling with mortars along the LoC in Nowshera sector of Rajouri district", defence spokesman said.

The Indian army retaliated befittingly, he said.

Lashkar Militant Held...

Aquib Ahmad Rather alias Jana of Sahipora, Handwara was arrested from Hajin on the basis of a reliable information about the plans of attack by militants and through ground investigation by a joint team of SOG Handwara, SOG Bandipora and 13 RR, 32 RR and the personnel of 92 battalion CRPF, a police spokesperson said Wednesday.

"Incriminating materials including arms and ammunitions were recovered from his possession," the police spokesperson said. He said that a case FIR No. 77/2020 U/S 7/25 I. A. Act, 13 18, 20 ULA (P) Act has been registered in Police Station Kralgund and further investigations taken up.

Searches Conducted In City...

Operation Group (SOG) of police personnel appeared on Abi Guzar bund and started searches of house boats on the stretch from footbridge to Abi Guzar, reports said. The location where searches were conducted houses the office of Jammu Kashmir Apni Party headed by Syed Altaf Bukhari.

Quoting eyewitnesses, news agency KNT reported that the SOG personnel thoroughly conducted searches during which identity cards of those residing in houseboats were checked.

Russia Rejects Safety...

assessed by Russia's own experts. He said Russia plans to be able to produce 5 million doses a month by December-January.

Kazakhstan plans to send government officials to Moscow later this month to discuss possible deliveries of the vaccine, its presidential office said.

8 More Covid-19 Deaths...

As regards the fatality from Ganderbal, sources said that 60-year-old man from died at SKIMS Soura.

Regarding the Bandipora fatality, sources said that a 65-year-old COPD patient from Baktoor village of Gurez died on the way to the hospital.

One of the victims from Kupwara district, they said, was a 47-year-old man from Langate who had been admitted SMHS hospital with bilateral pneumonia. The other victim, they said, a 70-year-old man from Kralgund Handwara.

With these deaths, officials said, 500 people have succumbed to the virus in Jammu and Kashmir so far—463 from the Valley and 37 from Jammu division. Srinagar district with 160 deaths tops the list followed by Baramulla (85), Budgam (36), Anantnag (35), Kulgam (31), Pulwama (33), Kupwara (30), Shopian (24), Jammu (26), Bandipora (19), Ganderbal (10), two each in Rajouri, Doda and Udhampur besides one each in Ramban, Samba, Poonch, and Kathua. (With GNS inputs)

DAK Prez, Senior Police...

were confirmed positive for coronavirus by the officials in the Jammu region and included a senior police officer posted in Kathua.

Giving district-wise breakup of the cases, official sources said Srinagar 88, Baramulla 26, Pulwama 52, Kulgam 17, Shopian 1, Anantnag 53, Budgam 29, Kupwara 42, Bandipora 29, Ganderbal 39, Jammu 42, Rajouri 4, Ramban 5, Kathua 14, Udhampur 2, Samba 4, Doda 7, Poonch 16, Reasi 7 and Kishtwar 5.

In Kashmir, Srinagar tops the list with 6438 cases followed by Baramulla with 2257, Pulwama 1949, Kulgam 1659, Budgam 1638, Shopian 1537, Anantnag 1665, Kupwara 1348, Bandipora 1197and Ganderbal 773.

In Jammu division, Jammu district has 1727 cases, Rajouri 771, Ramban 616, Kathua 626, Udhampur 633, Samba 533, Doda 324, Poonch 305, Reasi 242 and Kishtwar 175. Moreover, 544 more COVID-19 patients have recovered and discharged from various hospitals, 88 from Jammu Division and 456 from Kashmir Division.

AI Calls Shopian Killings...

of India has also criticised the military justice system and recommended reforms on a number of occasions. Military law experts in India have acknowledged inherent defects within the Indian military justice system, particularly its lack of independence," the Amnesty statement said.

It added that Amnesty International India has previously documented the 'propensity' of army authorities to almost categorically dismiss allegations of human rights violations against their personnel.

"In its latest Situation Update and Analysis from Jammu and Kashmir, Amnesty International India has documented the closure of the State Human Rights Commission along with six other commissions, including the State Commission for Protection of Women and Child Rights, which has left the people of Jammu & Kashmir with absolutely no redressal for their human rights violations. This is a violation of their right to remedy as guaranteed by the ICCPR," the renowned rights body said. The Amnesty statement said that it has repeatedly called for repealing of AFSPA since it "facilitates immunity and impunity for human rights violations".

"The Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), which is in force in Jammu and Kashmir, is an abusive law that feeds a cycle of impunity for human rights violations. The law grants virtual immunity to members of the security forces from prosecution for alleged human rights violations," the statement said. Referring to the statement of the Ministry of Defence on 2018 in Parliament, the Amnesty said in the last 26 years zero permissions have been granted to prosecute soldiers in J&K, including the cases of soldiers accused of unlawful killings, torture and rape.

"In Jammu and Kashmir, ensuring accountability would include ensuring access to information for victims and families during police investigations, and guaranteeing due process when victims attempt to bring complaints against their abusers," the statement added.

Army Considers Resettling...

help and give confidence to the people who are opting to surrender," Raju said.

More than 50,000 people have died during more than three decades of an insurgency that New Delhi accuses neighbouring Pakistan of fuelling, by using militant groups to wage a proxy-war across the disputed border dividing the Himalayan region. The Centre has flooded the valley with security forces - about 200,000 military and paramilitary troops are deployed there. And Raju said that militant attacks have dropped by nearly 40 per cent compared to last year.

AROUND 180 ACTIVE

Last August, PM Modi changed the political landscape by taking away Jammu and Kashmir's status as India's only Muslim majority state, splitting it into two federally-controlled territories and removing the special privileges afforded to Kashmiris.

Promising a concerted effort to develop the region economically, PM Modi said that the move was needed to integrate Kashmir more fully with the rest of the country, but critics said it would further alienate Kashmiris.

Pakistan, which maintains a long-standing territorial claim on Kashmir though it denies accusations that it materially helps the militants, has denounced PM Modi's action. Since the start of the year, Indian security forces have killed around 135 militants, most of them recruited locally. The military estimates that there are currently around 180 militants operating with various groups active in the Valley, Raju said.

Some 70 local Kashmiris are reckoned to have been recruited by these groups since the start of the year, about a dozen less than during the same period a year ago.

"We wish that this should drop further, and finally cease altogether," Raju said.

Currently, most surrenders are conducted in line with a 2004 policy that provides a lump sum payout of 150,000 Indian rupees (\$2,000), a small monthly stipend, free vocational training and cash payments for weapons handed over.

The New Delhi-based South Asia Terrorism Portal estimated that more than 400 insurgents have surrendered since 2004, but after 2007 the numbers came down to a trickle, with only two dozen men giving up arms in the last three years.

Kuldeep Khoda, a former Kashmir police chief, said the scheme had partly failed because the vocational training provided by the government was inadequate.

"If you ask me very frankly, there was hardly any training being given. They were just kept there for a few months," he said. "It was just a formality which was being completed."

Fate Of 'Abducted' Soldier...

searched an area of around 40 kilometers from the place where the soldier was abducted, but to no avail.

"I am at present in an orchard where I am in search of my son. We have searched Karewas, orchards, barren land, canals, rivers and other fields but have failed to trace him," he said.

Besides the family, government forces have also been conducting search operations at different places in the area in order to trace the abducted soldier.

Pertinently, a few days ago, an unverified audio message had surfaced in which the speaker claiming to be a militant, had stated that the abducted soldier has been killed and buried at an undisclosed location, the way militants are buried at undisclosed locations in view of Covid-19 pandemic. (KNO)

MCI Declares Medical Degrees

under the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956 to practice modern medicine in India."

Earlier in June this year, the Centre had advised students of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh against taking admissions in colleges or universities in Pakistan-administered-Kashmir (PaK) as the educational institutions there were not recognised by India.

No Respite From Heat...

forecast of any major rainfall activity in the next one week. On Wednesday, Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 34.7 degrees Celsius. The season's highest temperature at 35.4 degree Celsius was recorded on August 7.

Pertinently, the Kashmir Valley has been witnessing prolonged dry spell as the previous month (July) recorded lowest ever rainfall since the last four decades.

Srinagar district has received just 7.0 mm rainfall in the month of July, which is lowest ever from the last four decades.

As per the data, Jammu and Kashmir has also received deficit

rainfall during the period of 61 days from June 01 to July 31.

We Need To Introspect What...

rural empowerment and reach out to the masses with the common objective i.e equitable development," he added.

On this occasion, the LG also launched the Coffee Table Books of UT, Districts and Departments highlighting the major developmental interventions being made in J&K in the past one year, during an event 'Synergy - progress through people'.

Stressing on zero tolerance for corruption, he emphasized on optimal utilization of public money on the welfare of the people only. Quoting that change begins with self, the LG maintained that we need to change ourselves so that others emulate us. He exhorted the officers to implement the best administrative practices to restore faith of the general public in accountable governance, an official spokesperson said.

Sinha, according to the official spokesperson said that the people of J&K have high expectations from the Government and the present generation is looking at us with hope.

"He called for committed efforts from all the stakeholders to meet the expectations of the people of J&K. The UT of J&K has no parallel in terms of resources and natural beauty, and all we need is to put in coordinated efforts to reach the new heights of development," the official spokesperson said.

On the occasion, Sinha also paid tributes to the people who sacrificed their lives while upholding the democratic values.

Speaking on security related issues of elected representatives, the LG assured that their security and safety is the responsibility of the Government and it will be taken care of.

He also felicitated 20 COVID warriors for their role in the fight against the pandemic. Six national level awardee Sarpanches and a couple of ULB Representatives were also felicitated by the LG for best practices and outstanding work in their respective Panchayats and Municipalities.

"The role of Panchayats and ULBs in communication, social awareness, supporting the health system and in public functions like sanitation is praiseworthy," Sinha said.

He urged the people to take precautionary measures and follow all the COVID-19 related SOP's issued by the Government to prevent the transmission of the deadly disease.

While speaking on the occasion, Advisor to the LG, Baseer Ahmad Khan highlighted the major developmental activities being undertaken by the Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj over a period of one year on various fronts for the welfare of the people living in rural areas, besides various initiatives taken by the department to strengthen PRIs, the official spokesperson said.

He said Sarpanches & ULB Representatives also spoke on the occasion and gave a brief about their working and liaisoning with the Government departments, besides monitoring their functions.

"They termed the Back to Village programme a historic initiative by the Government and also provided feedback about works being executed under B2V," the official spokesperson said.

On the occasion, a short film highlighting the major developmental works being executed on the ground, was also exhibited, besides Panchayat & Rural Development theme song was played to mark the day.

Advisors to the LG Kewal Kumar Sharma, Farooq Khan, Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar and Baseer Ahmad Khan; BVR Subrahmanyam, Chief Secretary; Arun Kumar Mehta, Financial Commissioner, Finance department; Atal Dulloo, Financial Commissioner, Health and Medical Education; Bipul Pathak, Principal Secretary to LG, besides Administrative Secretaries of various departments along with Deputy Commissioners and senior officers were present on the occasion.

LG Assures Better Security...

been made, these have also been reviewed. I want to assure you that we will make our efforts to provide best security arrangements to you," Sinha said while addressing a function to felicitate COVID warriors here at Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC).

The lieutenant governor urged sarpanchs, panchs and other elected members to adopt precautionary measures for their own safety.

"I will not enlist those measures publicly but these will be conveyed to you by authorities in one way or the other," he added. Sinha was responding to concerns raised by grassroots elected leaders about their security, following killing of several panchayat members and some BJP workers by militants in Kashmir over the past one month.

Four Bharatiya Janata Party workers or office-bearers have been targeted by militants in the last one month.

BJP's district president for Bandipora Waseem Bari, his father and brother were shot dead by militants last month.

A BJP panch was shot at and injured on August 4 while another sarpanch from the party was shot dead two days later in south Kashmir's Kulgam district.

A BJP worker was shot at by militants in Budgam district on August 9 and died a day later.

The target killings has led to nearly a dozen BJP leaders resigning from the party in just past three days.

No Loan, Oil Supply For...

to call a meeting of the Islamic countries that are ready to stand with us on the issue of Kashmir and support the oppressed Kashmiris."

"I am once again respectfully telling OIC that a meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers is our expectation," he further stated.

As Pakistan pulled out of the Kuala Lumpur summit after Saudi Arabia's "request", it now expects Riyadh to "show leadership on this issue," he added.

Islamabad has been pushing for the foreign ministers' meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) since India abrogated Article 370, which gave special status to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir.

After Pakistan failed to gather support from the OIC members on Kashmir on May 22, Prime Minister Imran Khan said, "The reason is that we have no voice and there is a total division amongst (us). We cannot even come together as a whole on the OIC meeting on Kashmir."

Though Pakistan reportedly made attempts to push its narrative of raising the issue of rising Islamophobia in India in its agenda, Maldives, an ally of India, thwarted the move and said, "Isolated statements by motivated people and disinformation campaigns on social media should not be construed as representative of the feelings of 1.3 billion."

Maldives Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Thilmezza Hussain, said that alleging Islamophobia in the context of India would be factually incorrect.

"It would be detrimental to the religious harmony in the South Asian region. Islam has existed in India for centuries and it is the second-largest religion in India, with 14.2 per cent of the country's population," she said.

Pak Seeks US Help On...

in South Asia and to facilitate a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir issue. Pakistan has been trying to garner international support against India for withdrawing Jammu and Kashmir's special status and bifurcating it into two Union territories.

Mahmood held wide-ranging consultations with Ambassador Hale. The two sides reviewed the bilateral relationship, its present trajectory, and future direction and also exchanged views on peace and stability in South Asia, the Pakistan Foreign Office said in a statement. Pakistan's Ambassador in Washington Asad Majeed Khan and US Charge d'affaires in Islamabad Ambassador Paul Jones along with senior officials from both sides attended the virtual consultations, it said.

Mahmood said Pakistan attached high priority to its relationship with the US with a focus on enhanced economic engagement and people-to-people contacts.

He reiterated Pakistan's desire to forge a strong and mutually beneficial economic partnership with the US and added that a broad-based and enduring partnership between the two countries, as envisioned by Prime Minister Imran Khan and President Donald Trump, is a factor of stability in the region, the Foreign Office said.

The two sides also shared their perspectives on the progress made in the Afghan peace and reconciliation process.

The Foreign Secretary reaffirmed Pakistan's steadfast support for an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned process and expressed the hope that the Afghan parties would seize this historic opportunity and secure an inclusive and comprehensive political solution through intra-Afghan negotiations, the statement said.

Interview | Shah Faesal...

In a Facebook post on 09 January 2019, which prompted your resignation, you mentioned "unabated killings in Kashmir and the rise of Hindutva forces in the country". What has changed now?

I have changed. My resignation created more problems than it solved.

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

In a democracy, the political process might slow down but it can't end. I'm sure in the coming days we will see political activity again.

Has New Delhi betrayed mainstream political parties in Kashmir?

I don't think I have an opinion on that.

What are your plans now? And what will you suggest to the thousands of youth who pinned hope on you?

I want to move on in life and live a productive life. How and where I have no idea at present.

Are you still under detention? How did you spend the time under detention?

I read a lot and spend time with my child.

Kannan Gopinathan, who quit IAS in August over restrictions imposed in Kashmir, wished you luck on twitter, how would you respond?

Kannan is a great human being. But we are different individuals in dialogue with different audiences. You can't compare what he is doing with what I have done.

According to reports, you cited your supporters not speaking regarding your detention post August as one of the reasons, but wasn't everyone suffering post 5 August?

Absolutely not. I don't expect anyone to protest against me. I just said I expected some respect when we were in prison.

What, in your view, is the path ahead for the political formations in Kashmir given the fact that BJP enjoys power in Delhi? Is engagement with BJP inevitable?

I repeat, in a democracy it will be the people who will get to decide the government.

Modi-led government seems to be in no mood for dialogue. Do you see any chances of the dialogue process?

I don't think I have any idea about this.

How would you describe revocation of special status to J&K now? It is a fact of life now. A year has passed since. I realize I can't do anything about it.

3 Arrested For 'Funding'...

accounts have also been seized," the police spokesperson said. As per investigations, the spokesperson said the trio had received Rs14 lakhs out of which Rs9 lakhs have been distributed by them for financing militancy activities in district Bandipora and Kupwara.

"The said module was activated for carrying out militant activities in district Bandipora and Kupwara," he said.

Accordingly, Case FIR No. 29/2020 under relevant sections of law has been registered in Police Station Aragam and further investigation into the matter is going on, the police spokesperson said.

53 New COVID-19 Cases...

from COVID-19 in Kargil and 513 (61 per cent) in Leh. They said the number of active cases in the region stands at 506, of which 321 were reported in Leh and 185 in Kargil.

While five coronavirus patients died in Leh district, four others died of the infection in Kargil district. Eight of the deaths had occurred in the past three weeks, the officials said.

Police Rescue Abducted Girl...

In this regard a case FIR number 126/363 has been registered and a manhunt has been launched to arrest the accused driver

Police Cracks Theft Cases,...

and wi-fi device.

"Accordingly, Case FIR No 64/2020 U/S 457,380 IPC has been registered and investigation taken up," the police spokesperson said.

He said on August 11, a man identified as Mubashir Ahmad Tanga of Noorbagh Baramulla lodged a written complaint that during evening hours some burglars took away hand cash of Rupees 80,000 from the shop located in main market Baramulla.

"Both the incidents were investigated and culprits were arrested and during investigation 04 laptops, 02 computers, and other accessories approx. value of Rs. 2 lacs 40 thousand were recovered. The stolen cash of Rs. 80000 has also been recovered, Police Station Baramulla acted swiftly and cracked both the cases in a short span of time," the police spokesperson said.



Lt Governor Sinha launched Coffee Table Books of UT, Departments and Districts and felicitated COVID Warriors in Srinagar on Wednesday

Install All Procured Ventilators By August-15: Div Com to DCs

Chairs weekly Covid-19 review meeting

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 12: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Pandurang K Pole today chaired a weekly Covid-19 review meeting with all Deputy Commissioners, Health Officers and other concerned.

While taking review of preparations, the Div Com directed DCs to ensure installation of all newly procured ventilators available with them by August-15 for better patient care in emergency cases.

He instructed concerned health officers to ensure training to the designated staff for smooth functioning of these ventilators in hospitals.

Emphasizing on decongestion of Srinagar hospitals, the Div Com said that GMC Baramulla



and GMC Anantnag shall cater to north and south Kashmir and stop unnecessary referrals to Srinagar tertiary care hospitals.

Directions were given that DCs shall ensure increase in the number of bed capacity as per

the requirement.

The Div Com stressed on concerned to focus on patients in home isolation and home quarantine for their effective recovery. He emphasized on proper monitoring of these patients,

their regular thermal checkups and sensitization on following the Covid-19 protocol religiously.

He also instructed concerned to provide Oximeters to all home isolated patients for their daily checkup of their saturation level and prompt response to the patients in case of any emergency and added that as mandatory all shall download Arogya Setu app.

He further emphasized on aggressive contact tracing of covid patients and their timely quarantine.

Div Com asked DCs to raise the number antigen testing in all districts.

He said that those covid centers which are not in use at present can be created as a stay

facility for protected persons.

He also took stock of availability of covid medicines, oxygen cylinders, availability of beds and other related facilities in all districts.

Pole stressed on daily updation of tested and discharged patients in all districts.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Principal GMC, Director Health Services Kashmir, Administrator Associated Hospital Srinagar, Incharge Covid Control Room, Divisional Nodal Officer ISM Covid-19 Kashmir and others concerned.

Director SKIMS Soura, DCs and SSPs of all districts and other concerned attended the meeting through Video Conferencing.

Commissioner SMC initiates long pending Bemina Drainage Project

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 12: Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) Gazanfar Ali today reviewed Muharam ul Haram arrangements at Khomeini Chowk and several other adjoining Shia dominated areas

The Commissioner on the occasion visited Imambara to take stock of sanitation, functioning of street lights and drainage networking in the said area.

Directions were passed on to put in place all the necessary arrangements so that the devotees do not have to face any inconvenience during the Muharam days and directed for deployment of men and machinery round the clock.

In the absence of drainage networking in one of the areas the Commissioner directed S.E Drainage to prepare DPR in the first instance and immediately make necessary arrangements thereof.

He further directed that all the Shia populated areas shall be inspected properly to see whether the street lights installed are in functional mode and if there is any requirement of installing more lights ahead of Muharam days.

The Commissioner during the visit was accompanied by Joint Commissioner Works, Ishtiyaq Ahmed Shah, S.E Drainage and Chief Sanitation Officer besides other concerned officers.

CUK's IT deptt holds webinar

Srinagar, Aug 12: The Department of Information Technology, Central University of Kashmir (CUK) Wednesday organized a webinar "From Dissent to Elation at Work."

Dr. Tasaduq Hussain Mir, presently working as faculty in the Department of Family and Community Medicine at UT Southwestern Medical Center, Dallas Texas USA, delivered a lecture during the webinar, which was inaugurated by Registrar, Prof. M Afzal Zargar and hosted by Er. Afaq Alam Khan, Department Coordinator. Students and faculty members from IT and other Departments of the varsity participated in the event.

Dr. Tasaduq Hussain Mir, in his speech discussed, the problems and conflicts arising especially in academic institutions with matters related to teaching learning activities, faculty interactions and participation and those related to

administration and its officials. He emphasized that despite differences of opinions, problems can be smoothly addressed and sorted out by adopting an attitude of showing respect, appreciation, understanding views and feelings of others and arriving at solutions which appear possible, logical and within the overall constraints of the situation. "Many a times, this approach would lead to the resolution of the conflict accepted as a win-win solution."

Earlier, Prof. A. M Wani in his address pointed out that this was a third such webinar organized by the Department. The previous one, also by the same speaker was on "Education and a Higher Purpose" wherein the speaker discussed the burnout problem affecting individuals while the present webinar concerns the society.

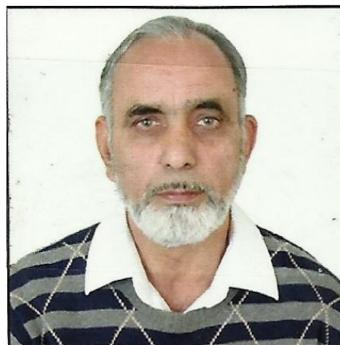
PUBLIC NOTICE

My Date of Birth in PNB Metlife Policy number 1200800698848 has been wrongly entered as 01-12-1957 while my Correct Date of Birth is 01-04-1955. Now I want the same to be corrected if anybody has any objection in this regard He/ She may file his /Her objection in the Office of the PNB Metlife Anantnag within a period of seven (7) days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Name:- GH MOHD BHAT
S/O AB AZIZ BHAT
R/O KALIPORA KULGAM

MJA

SAD DEMISE



With profound grief we inform the sad demise of Mohammad Amin Tibet Baqual S/O Abdul Salaam Tibet Baqual R/O 35, Haji Bagh Buchpore, Srinagar on August 8, 2020. We shall receive condolences for three days and there will be no congregational fateha khwani. All are requested to pray for the departed soul.

BEREAVED

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

22 Zil-Haj
1441

PRAYERS

FAJR	4: 20
ZUHR	12: 37
ASR	5:24
Magrib	7:24
ISHA	8:53

This Day In History

- 1516 - The Treaty of Noyon between France and Spain is signed. Francis recognises Charles's claim to Naples, and Charles recognises Francis's claim to Milan.
- 1521 - Spanish conquistadors under Hernán Cortés capture Aztec Emperor Cuauhtémoc in Tenochtitlan marking the end of the Aztec Empire
- 1642 - Dutch astronomer Christiaan Huygens discovers Martian south polar cap
- 1923 - Turkish National Congress selects Mustafa Kemal Atatürk Pasha as President
- 1937 - Second Sino-Japanese War: Japanese forces begin the Battle of Shanghai, a conflict that will last 3 months and involve 1 million troops
- 1940 - Battle of Britain: Hermann Goering's "Adlertag" (Eagle Day) offensive happens, intending to destroy the Royal Air Force; 47-48 German aircraft shot down, the RAF loses 25 planes
- 1943 - Red army recaptures Spas-Demensk
- 1944 - British 8th Army occupies Florence
- 1944 - Allied generals Bernard Montgomery, Miles Dempsey and Omar Bradley discuss a future breakthrough in the European theatre during World War II
- 1951 - Great Britain & Iraq sign new oil contract
- 1953 - 4-5 million French go on strike against economic actions
- 1959 - US Military satellite Discoverer 5 launched (into polar orbit)
- 1960 - USSR withdraws advisors from China
- 1961 - Construction of the Berlin Wall begins in East Germany
- 1977 - 1st test glide of space shuttle
- 1984 - Morocco & Libya sign "Arabic-African Union" treaty
- 1989 - US space shuttle STS-28 lands
- 1996 - Microsoft releases Internet Explorer 3.0
- 2014 - Israeli and Palestinian cease fire agreed to on August 8 is extended for another 120 hours to provide time for further negotiations
- 2014 - Iranian mathematician Maryam Mirzakhani is the first woman to win the Fields Medal in mathematics
- 2015 - 76 people are killed & 212 are wounded by an ISIL truck bomb in Baghdad, Iraq
- 2019 - Measles cases have tripled worldwide in 2019 according to WHO with 364,808 reported against vs 129,239 in 2018

From KO Archives

Major ground offensive on in Pir Panjal

Agence France Presse

JAMMU: Army launched a major offensive Thursday against Mujhiddeen hideouts in southern Kashmir, military commanders said. The Indian air force also deployed planes to help the sweeping military campaign on the higher reaches of southern Kashmir, officials said. Air force, sources said Russian-designed helicopter gun-ships were being used for 'casualty vacations, re-induction and re-location of ground forces' in the rugged mountain areas of Doda and Banihal.

"So far, we have not engaged in direct combat but if necessary there will be a combined ground-air operation," a highly-placed air force source said in New Delhi.

Meanwhile, Major General P.P.S. Bindra, commander of the elite counter-insurgency Delta Force, confirmed to AFP the offensive had been launched in Doda and Banihal.

"We have launched helicopter mounted operations in Doda and other areas of Pir Panjal ranges to sanitise the entire belt against militant attacks", the general said here.

The helicopter operations in Pir Panjal were being carried out with ground support from heavily-armed paramilitary forces and commandos from Kashmiri police who are familiar with the terrain, other officials said.

The operations in southern Kashmir came as Indian soldiers shot dead five Muslim fighters in the northern district of Kupwara, a defence ministry spokesman also said Thursday.

He claimed two were from the Lashkar-e-Taiba, the other three belonged to other groups, adding that all five were gunned down late Wednesday night.

In Jammu, Indian officials said the army's counter-offensive was also aimed at providing a 'security blanket' to people living in remote areas in southern Kashmir.

Thousands of federal border guards, paramilitary forces and police deployed in the region have been placed on maximum alert in the districts of Doda, Poonch, Rajouri, Udhampur and Kathua, the officials said.

Night patrols have been intensified in and around Hindu-dominated districts and military installations and government offices to stem militant counter-attacks, the officials said. Security barricades were also being installed at 31 localities without local self-defence committees.

(Kashmir Observer, August 13, 2000)

KASHMIR
OBSERVER

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Kashmir Economy Needs Help

While the first anniversary of the rescinding of Article 370 witnessed an overwhelming focus on the political fallout of the move, the impact on the economy has received scant attention. More so, when the region's economy has been under a complete lockdown for a year now. According to the estimate by the business bodies this has led to a loss of over Rs 50,000 crore. The Covid-19 lockdown that was enforced in March over and above the prevailing security siege has inflicted a crushing blow to the state turned union territory's economy.

Tourism, one of the mainstays of the local economy came to a halt and is unlikely to emerge from the slump anytime soon. This has hit the hotel industry and travel operators hard. The handicrafts sector that is tied to tourism has too been crushed. The IT industry and the start-ups that had been wiped out are only now attempting to revive. Horticulture, a Rs 6500 crore industry, that employs around three million people has suffered the heaviest loss. During its harvest time last year, successive killings of the traders and labourers associated with the apple industry had for a while stopped the export of the trees outside the Valley. And this year again the coronavirus pandemic doesn't augur well for the harvest season.

This has created a desperate situation. More so, with uncertainty deepening over the world's and especially India's ability to control the pandemic in near future. India's Covid-19 cases are now one of the fastest growing in the world. With over 2 million cases, the country's healthcare system has reached a point of collapse. In Kashmir too the exponential rise of cases has strained the medical infrastructure. The consequent need for a lockdown has killed the hope for an early revival of the economy. The region can hardly endure the closure of businesses any more. Kashmir economy is thus in desperate need for a government support. It needs a bit of help over and above what has been given to country's economy in recent stimulus.

Kashmir is now looking forward to a post-Coronavirus period and hopes it remains peaceful. The region has already been through a long period of disruption, so businessmen are pinning hope on near future. We can only hope that world is able to get a handle on this deadly virus and we get back to a normal life. The region can ill-afford further halt to the economic activities.

OTHER OPINION

Poetry in schools

Had we but world enough, and time..." The opening line of Andrew Marvell's To His Coy Mistress sums up the dilemma of the English exam regulator Ofqual, which this week decided the Covid-19 crisis means that next year GCSE English literature students will, if they wish, be able to drop poetry completely. Ofqual feels that, with no certainty of a full return to school in the autumn, it will be "extremely challenging" to teach a full syllabus. It worries that students would struggle "to get to grips with complex literary texts remotely".

is no doubt true, but Ofqual's solution is perverse. Study of a Shakespeare play has been deemed sacrosanct - no doubt making Shakespeare optional would have caused a tempest. The other three time-honoured components - the 19th-century novel, post-1914 British fiction and drama, and poor old poetry - will be optional, with students having to pick two from three. Modern fiction and drama is likely to be a default choice for many, leaving a straight fight between Donne and Dickens.

and teacher Kate Clanchy, recent winner of the Orwell prize for political writing for her memoir Some Kids I Taught and What They Taught Me, explained earlier this week why this decision risks damaging the wider cause of the humanities, because of the signal it sends about them being disposable extras. She also pointed out that Ofqual is out of step, since poetry is riding a wave of popularity among teenagers. Judith Palmer, director of the Poetry Society, highlighted the diversity of contemporary poets as another factor in the subject's favour. And she is right that it would be a step backwards to cut it just as an increasing number of writers of colour are making it on to syllabuses - and poetry is, in defiance of some people's expectations, holding its own against other cultural forms amid ferocious online competition.

The unresolved, open-ended nature of so much poetry, where meaning has to be extracted from intense engagement with language, is all too appropriate for our present age of uncertainty. The particular joy of reading it in groups is learning to enjoy the thrill of the chase after meaning, and to recognise that different interpretations are valid. Children's author Michael Rosen summed it up: "Poetry offers a view on humanity, society and the world that is playful, contemplative, mysterious, questioning, and one that is often interested in giving readers the chance to hold several different ideas in our heads at the same time."

Rather than streamlining reading lists, it might instead be time to change the way students are examined. Read Marvell because he is marvellous, not as a means to passing an exam. If the pandemic is making the current exam system unworkable, find another way of encouraging young people to study - and, better still, to love - literature. Poetry is about response, not regurgitation; the joy of intellectual inquiry; the free play of the spirit. That is what Ofqual should be protecting.

Guardian

About-Face Under Pressure?

The problem is Shah Faesal's anti-people rant to rationalize his decision to quit politics

Gowhar Geelani

Should the people have faced bullets and pellets for his personal and professional ambitions? Many Kashmiris are rotting in prisons for over two decades and they do not have such unfair expectations from the people, but Faesal has



On August 9, 1953, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was unceremoniously dismissed as Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir and subsequently jailed for twenty two years in separate stints. It took over two decades for Sheikh to describe his entire political struggle as "political wilderness" ('Siyasi Awaragardi').

On the contrary, it took Shah Faesal a little less than a year to call it quits. And then bizarrely blame the dispossessed people of Kashmir for his own failings and contradictions. Those harbouring contempt for their own society and people cannot and do not deserve to serve them.

Academic Ather Zia notes in A Desolation Called Peace: Voice From Kashmir that Sheikh Abdullah was seen as an "unrelenting figure of Kashmiri nationalism". Sheikh has been credited for socio-political and economic awakening of the Kashmiri masses at various stages and the one who used Muslim imagery and symbols to mobilize public opinion against the autocratic Dogra regime. It is another matter that he had a fall from grace, first in 1947 and then again in 1975. If Sheikh was 'Sher-e-Kashmir' (Lion of Kashmir), Faesal even failed to prove himself as Cub of Kashmir.

It is rather a tough ask to describe Faesal in one sentence or in a single paragraph. Like many fellow human beings, Faesal too is a man of many contradictions and flaws. He came as a storm. He opted for an undignified exit. And once the storm is over, it is perhaps time for the people to understand what caused it in the first place, how to survive the future storms and how not to place trust in something that doesn't belong to them.

Should one refer to Faesal as a former bureaucrat-turned-politician or a former politician-turned-bureaucrat? Should one depict him as a former 'role model' and Delhi's 'poster boy' who failed to achieve what was expected of him? Or, an impulsive wild card who wanted instant coffee-like results without going through the grind? Or, should one portray him as a man who changes his opinions on important matters a la chameleons who change colour with the aim to communicate or regulate their body temperature? Or, is he just a faint-hearted human being who neither appreciates the path of struggle nor is willing to offer any sacrifice? Or, is he someone who wants to taste success while refusing to walk on a thorny pathway?

The issue here is not what he wants to do with his life. He has

every right to become a doctor, top the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) competitive examinations, resign as a civil servant, float a new political party and rejoin as a bureaucrat or go back to Harvard to complete his research study. All of that is absolutely fine. No one should have objection with his decisions that concern his personal or professional life.

The problem is his anti-people rant to rationalize his surrender. What is unacceptable is his unfair expectation that the people in the Kashmir Valley should have come out on the roads to protest his temporary detention. Did he not know that not a soul was allowed to move in Kashmir after August 5, 2019? Did he not know that all lines of communication were cut, internet services were shut, and thousands were jailed and many shifted to outside prisons?

What favour has he done to the 'ungrateful' people of Kashmir by becoming a doctor, a bureaucrat and a politician or possibly a bureaucrat again? Should the people have faced bullets and pellets for his personal and professional ambitions? Many Kashmiris are rotting in prisons for over two decades and they do not have such unfair expectations from the people, but Faesal has.

Did he consult the people of Kashmir before appearing in his M.B.B.S. or the IAS exams? Did he consult the people of Kashmir before floating a political outfit with someone's blessings? Are the people to be blamed for not supporting his venture - 'PDP part-II' - and not helping him become the 'youngest Chief Minister' of Jammu and Kashmir? Are the people responsible for his unsuccessful attempt to cultivate a new political elite in Kashmir?

Faesal is neither a game-changer nor someone people can trust on his word. In cold January of 2019, he created a storm of sorts by announcing his resignation as a civil servant, citing "the unabated killings in Kashmir and the marginalization and invisibilization of around 200 million Muslims at the hands of Hindutva forces (in India)" as a reason.

On August 14, 2019, Faesal told BBC's Stephen Sackur that "People like me who wanted to find some meaning in electoral politics, who believed that some sort of resolution to this dispute (Kashmir) is still available within the framework of Indian Constitution, I think all those people have been slapped on August 5, 2019. Now there are only two ways to do politics in Kashmir. You will either have to be a stooge or you will have to be a separatist."

In BBC's Hardtalk programme,

he said that "... I am extremely disappointed the way the international community has responded to this issue (August 5, 2019 move). Kashmir is a nuclear flashpoint. This cannot be left unattended... We just hope that the entire international community will rise up to the occasion and take notice of the human rights violations which are happening in Kashmir due to this unprecedented curfew which has been placed and the unconstitutional act which has been done in the parliament of India in recent times." He argued that Kashmiris should have the agency to decide their future, adding that "I am ashamed of myself that I am free when all political leaders are jailed."

In one of Faesal's articles that he co-authored with another Kashmiri Mehboob Makhdoomi that was published in The Indian Express on 3 January, 2019, the predominant argument was that "at the root of the political problem in Kashmir is the paradox that those who represent the sentiment do not participate in the electoral process and those who participate in the electoral process do not represent the sentiment. Elections have been held regularly since 1996, but there is a feeling that the elected representatives are either a disempowered lot, a group of helpless "daily-wagers" with the Government of India or that the elected representatives are misrepresenting their electorate by not speaking out about the basic Kashmir issue. This needs to change."

He now describes all his previous statements, co-authored articles and arguments that he made in several interviews as "some of my problematic utterances".

Some of his admirers are of the opinion that Faesal has his heart at the right place, that his intentions are good, and that he is incorruptible. There were some who had never voted in life but were willing to take a risk to give him a chance to prove his credentials as a new-age politician. Some of them were worried about his galloping pace, though. They thought he was taking too many decisions too fast. This lot wanted him to invest in long-term politics and a mass movement which, according to them, could have then possibly represented the larger political aspiration of Kashmiris.

But he has disappointed his fans and detractors, alike. In short, he has failed to show character under pressure.

(Disclaimer: Opinion is author's own)



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MAIL YOUR LETTERS

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Islamophobia in India in Times of Covid

The recent incident of the lynching of a Muslim man accused of carrying beef in Gurgaon has rightly unnerved many. It was hardly surprising though. In recent years, the violence against Muslims in India has risen exponentially and the pandemic hasn't deterred it. The contagion, on the contrary, was used to vilify Muslims. They are blamed for spreading it. Muslim journalists, students and anti-CAA activists have been and continue to be detained under Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) - a strict clause under which security agencies can keep a person behind bars with-

out filing charges up for to 180 days and the defendants cannot be released even on bail.

Various international organizations such as the World Rights Body have asked New Delhi to drop charges and free all those imprisoned for exercising their right to freedom of expression. Various Non-governmental organizations such as the Indian Muslim Federation, Sri Guru Ravidass Global Equal Organization, and the UK-based Indian Diaspora South Asian Solidarity Group have also expressed their concern and extended their solidarities.

However, little is being done to en-

sure the release of those wrongfully detained. In fact, no action has been taken against the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) politicians Kapil Mishra, Paresch Verma, and central minister Anurag Thakur for issuing threats and indulging in hate speeches against Muslims. Even Manish Sirohi, the person who attacked the peaceful gathering of Muslims was taken into custody, only to be released soon after. Thereby giving an impression that these stringent laws are applied selectively and are meant for Muslims only.

While countries across the globe are releasing prisoners intending to

curb the spread of this deadly virus; in India prisons are filling up with more and more activists, journalists, scholars and intellectuals. Islamophobia has aided to rationalise these arrests which are mostly directed towards Muslims. These incidents are quite unsettling as they establish the unfortunate realisation that hate might last longer than the pandemic.

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FORMER star bureaucrat turned 'quixotic' politician's fresh farewell to politics has fuelled speculations of his probable "Ghar Wapsi" in the valley. Shah Faesal's dramatic career flip-flop is only reminding many of his onetime IAS colleague—who akin to the Lolab medico carried "fluent and freethinker" image on social media—before hanging his Babu boots over the abrogation of Article 370 last summer.

But unlike Shah whose return to the administrative ranks remains a rampant rumour in the valley right now, *Kannan Gopinathan*, ex-Indian Administrative Service officer, has clearly refused to resume work after the Centre summoned him to return to duty in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic early this year.

Gopinathan is very vocal about certain issues such as violation of fundamental rights and the newly enacted citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). "Our urge to express is very fundamental to us," he says.

A strong advocate of human and fundamental rights, Gopinathan has taken the current government upfront on various issues. In an exclusive chat with *Kashmir Observer*, the ex-civil servant talks in detail, why J&K was the reason for his resignation from his job.

J&K was the reason you quit your job, what is your stand now on the current situation?

There're certain principles you abide by, those are what the country stands for.

One of those principles which are non-negotiable is the principle of fundamental rights. We saw how blatantly fundamental rights of people of J&K were taken away. For enforcing the decision, the entire state was put under lockdown; all sorts of freedom of expression and freedom of movements were halted. Without even invoking the emergency, the government did all this.

They did not even think that there would be an outrage, and unfortunately there was no outrage anywhere in the country against this. They put all sorts of restrictions to prevent the protests. This is not acceptable in any democratic country. There is a right to react to the citizens against any government decisions. Even in Hong Kong when protests went violent, the violence was separately dealt with but the protest was allowed.

This is not the kind of government I would like to work for and even validate with. I have a lot of faith in our institutions, be it the judiciary, be it the media, be it our civil society and political parties.

Suddenly, at that time I felt that the judiciary is not even ready to hear various corpus petitions. The media was outrightly lying that people were celebrating in Kashmir. It became entirely the propaganda of the government at the hands of so-called free media. The civil society is completely drained with their propaganda and that was proven by their victory in the 2019 elections. The country right now has a feeling that questioning this government is dangerous. I feel this trend is very dangerous.

It does not matter whether it makes any sense or it will make an impact, I wanted to come out and say this is not done, this is not acceptable. I do not want to be associated with the actions and decisions of this government. It did not just end there. It went on to CAA protests and then riots took place.

J&K was a place where they brazenly imposed everything and thought that no one would oppose. They froze constitutional activities there for such a long period.

I strongly believe that it is not people in power who make the dictatorship, it is citizens who decide whether they want to have a dictatorship or not. When citizens become lazy, they stop asking questions and when citizens take a step back that is when the government starts thinking that they can do whatever they want. If the citizens keep on questioning, that is for the larger good of the democracy.

I am not just upset with what the government did in J&K, but with citizens, because they did not protest against the government's actions in J&K.

As a nation we are failing. Now, I am receiving so

'I Travel Across Country To Speak On Kashmir'

Mrinal Pathak



Kannan Gopinathan

many messages from Kashmir, that now the lockdown is slightly normal. So, it takes an entire nation to come under a lock down to relax Kashmir's lockdown.

Country is not just geography; a country is its people. The pride and values take us forward and these values are inscribed in the constitution. We say that J&K is part of our country and then why these values don't apply there.

I am travelling across the country. I have travelled to more than 70 districts in 19 states. There, I speak on various issues. I speak on Kashmir as the reason for my resignation. I ask people, what we have achieved with it. I tell them that we have hurt our emotional bond with the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

We should always make the government accountable. It should never feel that it will just leave without being questioned, that is a dangerous thing, that is how government starts feeling powerful instead of accountable. People called me foolish, they told me I could have done better by remaining in service. People called me a coward; one thing I realized is that just resigning will not be of anything.

After resignation I decided to go to people and tell what we are doing in Kashmir is wrong.

You said that recently you travelled a lot in India, did you see any change in people's perception regarding this?

I asked questions. I asked them why they were happy with the abrogation of Article 370. They told me three points: first, to end terrorism, second, development and third, national integration. I just did not go to the cities but also Talukas and other rural pockets.

People say, 'Bharat ko ek karna hai'. I countered, 'Do you think people of Kashmir will get closer to us after so many restrictions are being imposed there?'

Then people say, 'Nahi woh hamse door chale gaye hain'. Then I asked regarding Article 370, 'Has the situation improved in Bihar, which doesn't have 370. They said, 'No'. I asked if there are jobs in the states which don't have Article 370.

Then people realized what is wrong or right, because a large section of the country is in a poorer state

than Kashmir. I ask people, 'Do you think militants read Indian Constitution? How come the removal of Article 370 will stop terrorism?'

The conversations helped. There were elections in four states after abrogation of Article 370. The results clearly showed that this move did not have any impact.

The government said that your resignation has not been accepted yet, and it wants you to rejoin the service, what do you have to say on this?

I resigned in August 2019. They haven't processed my resignation so far and they want me to come back for this COVID-19 pandemic. But, I took the decision on principles. It is difficult for me to continue now. I don't find the letter given by the government in any good faith. I feel that it is just to further harass us. I doubt the intention of the government.

I told the government, I am ready to work as a volunteer and not as an IAS officer.

Recently, the Supreme Court has said that the current situation in J&K needs to be reviewed, what is your take on this? Do you think it will bring some relief to the people?

It is so unfortunate. It took months for Supreme Court to come and say in respect to internet services and it is a matter of protection of fundamental rights and even then there was no immediate relief given by the Supreme Court.

Why the Supreme Court is taking so long, it is not a minor issue, but a matter of utmost importance. It should be on the priority list by the highest judiciary and that is to ensure the right of the citizens.

The job of the apex court is not to further the interest of the government but to protect the rights of citizens. That is not the way a judiciary should function. I am disappointed because I expected much more from our judiciary. It should have been reviewed months earlier.

I think our judiciary has somewhere started being assistant to the executives instead of being a protector of the citizens' rights. The judiciary must be critical of the government.

As a citizen, what is there to fight against the

government? It is the judiciary! Where will the citizens go, if judiciary starts taking soft stands on the government's version. The media believes what the government is saying; the judiciary believes what the government is saying, so where will the citizens get relief from?

Do you have some hope now, after what the Supreme Court said?

I don't know. This government is not afraid of any major institution in this country. Just see what just happened with the Sabrimala case. At first, Supreme Court gave the verdict and later it was transferred to a larger constitutional bench.

If the government believes that there are miscreants or bad elements then it is unfair to deal with the entire population in the same manner. That is not how you treat people in a democracy.

During pandemic, everyone is advised to work from home. Even students are advised to take classes online. Do you think the slow internet is a hindrance in this direction in J&K?

There is a need to restore the high speed of the internet in J&K. Even before the pandemic, internet is the right. People use internet to express their views. Now people are advised to work from home and students are advised to take online classes. And why just these things?

Internet should be restored on moral grounds. Just pandemic should not be the reason to restore the internet, it should have been restored way before it. Pandemic has made the situation even worse and citizens should be given relief in this regard.

J&K's mainstream political camp faced crackdown last summer for expressing their views against Centre's moves. Do you think that the government should now allow the free flow of political dissent in the region?

Political dissent is a right. It should have never been stopped. How can such a decision be taken without taking into consideration the views of previous Chief Ministers. Would it have happened in other states like UP and Haryana?

Do you expect this incident to happen in other states, where influencers are sent to jail? You can say political aspects and etc. If their influence creates a negative impact then it is the government's failure and the government should be answerable for it and the citizens should not suffer because of this.

Do you think opposition played its part rightly on the matter?

I made my point in the beginning only. My disappointment was not only with the government. It was with various political parties also. I had my disappointment with the judiciary.

I suddenly felt that as a nation we decided to keep quiet. You know something is not right and even then you decide to keep quiet. You have a right and duty to call out that this is not correct. Because, this is the reason we have a constitution. This is the difference between a constitutional democracy and a monarchy.

Many are celebrating, many are giving mixed responses, many are saying let us just support the government. This government functions in this way only. Any decision they take is portrayed in the larger interest of the nation and they say it should not be questioned.

First you blatantly take decisions and then you say anyone that questions is an anti-national. It is very dangerous according to me, no government's decision is unquestionable, and we are not in a war-like situation.

Any decision taken should be questioned so that the pros and cons can come out. If you call anyone anti-national then we are shutting down the discourse.

Be it judiciary, be it political parties, we must realize that this is a very dangerous situation for the country. These are not our country's constitutional values. It is our responsibility to voice our opinion in the strongest possible way.

Why Kamala Harris is a solid US Vice President Choice

The top Democratic leader fits both the demographic and diversity pledge made by Biden

Jonathan Bernstein

Donald Trump has often seemed particularly eager to attack women and Black people, especially Black women. Since he's found little success running against Biden so far, he may choose to spend more time attacking the vice-presidential candidate than would typically be the case — even if it's counterproductive for him

On the one hand, Joe Biden — who is running as the candidate who promises to make the presidency boring again — made the most obvious — that is, boring — selection for his running mate on the Democratic ticket.

California's Kamala Harris was the logical choice all along — a nationally known senator from a big state who had run for president and acquitted herself well, even though she dropped out early. That speaks well of Biden. Logical selections are the ones that have performed well over time.

On the other hand? The fact that Harris — who is Black and South Asian — was the safe choice based on normal criteria is, let's not forget, astonishing. She's only the second Black woman in the Senate (after Carol Moseley Braun) and the first ever female senator of South Asian ancestry.

Yet she fits all the things that the Democratic Party in 2020 would look for in a running mate for Joe Biden. Unlike Geraldine Ferraro in 1984 and Sarah Palin in 2008, Harris is already a national figure.

Comfort level

Yes, she's only had four years in the Senate along with a career in local and state government. But the magic of running for president, and her obvious comfort level during that campaign, means she's apt to have far fewer questions about her qualifications — far fewer people unable to imagine her as president-if-necessary — than Ferraro, Palin, Dan Quayle and some other previously obscure choices had to overcome.

If it's correct then that's a sign of some real national progress.

Her selection also tells us a lot about the Democratic Party, especially if we think of these decisions at least as much as the party's choice as the nominee's.

Biden may have made the call to narrow the field down to women, a decision that probably handed it to Harris from the start, whether he realised it or not.

But in making that choice, Biden was doing what Biden always does: finding the middle of the Democratic Party and sitting squarely in wherever that is. And the big energy in the party ever since November 2016



has been from women.

That's why Democrats have nominated record numbers of women at all levels in 2018 and 2020, and why many more women ran for the Democratic nomination than had run for major-party nominations combined up through 2016. From the very beginning of the election cycle, most observers assumed that Democrats would not nominate an all-male ticket.

To be clear: It's a case where party actors, many of whom are women and almost all of whom support politically empowering women, nominate people they support.

Represents ethnic diversity

And the same is true of the ethnic diversity Harris represents. Biden was never as certain to embrace ethnic diversity as he was certain to pick a woman, but again that's where a lot of the energy in the party is. And that meant many of his potential choices were Black or Latina or Asian-American.

This is not about voter choice or even voter turnout. There's not a lot of evidence that running mates do anything about that. It's about demonstrating who the party is right now. All of this is an enormous change

from what the Democratic Party was as late as the 1990s, when the party at best made very little effort to diversify its politicians.

Now we'll see how these things hold up through a fall campaign. In a normal cycle, and barring scandal, vice-presidential picks tend to dominate the news right up to when they are selected and then disappear rapidly after their convention acceptance speech.

Even those political scientists who find some indirect effects from the selection don't think it amounts to much, and there's almost no evidence that people vote for the bottom of the ticket and not the top.

Could it be different this time? Perhaps. Many in the media may believe that the first Black woman on a national ticket is such a big story that it drives coverage in a way that most running mates don't.

Donald Trump has often seemed particularly eager to attack women and Black people, especially Black women. Since he's found little success running against Biden so far, he may choose to spend more time attacking the vice-presidential candidate than would typically be the case — even if it's counterproductive for him.

It's also possible that Biden's advanced age will make the media more focused on the second slot (although that didn't happen in 2016, when both nominees at the top of the ticket were unusually old, and it doesn't appear to be happening with Trump now). And the oddities of electioneering during the pandemic might throw off all sorts of media norms.

Of course, it's always possible that some scandal will turn up that everyone missed during Harris's earlier presidential run and that Biden's vetting team also missed. But the advantage of selecting someone who has already been in the race makes surprises less likely.

So my bet is that Biden has successfully made a solid, boring selection. She's qualified for the presidency if necessary, and she's unlikely to harm his chances at winning. And she reminds us again that Biden is, above all, a mainstream Democrat.

Covid-19: Pandemic Has Shattered Global Class Of 2020'S Hopes For Landing First Job

“ALL THE JOBS HAVE ALL DRIED UP - EVERYWHERE,” SHE SAID.
She knows graduates from previous years who have been fired or furloughed and is prepared to get a job at a bar. “It’s still hard to be hopeful when you’re not seeing anyone doing well at the moment.”

Agencies

British fashion school graduate Phoebe St. Leger’s dream of landing a job at a design label is on hold. Like many others in the global Class of 2020, the pandemic is clouding her career ambitions. The coronavirus forced the cancellation of her university graduating class’s final-year fashion show, removing the chance to show her knitwear collection to people in the industry, some of whom might have liked her work enough to offer her a job. Instead, St. Leger, 23, returned to her family home in Winchester, southern England, and submitted her coursework online. She has applied for about 40 jobs and received only rejections. “All the jobs have all dried up - everywhere,” she said. She knows graduates from previous years

who have been fired or furloughed and is prepared to get a job at a bar. “It’s still hard to be hopeful when you’re not seeing anyone doing well at the moment.” Around the world, young people armed with new degrees, diplomas and professional qualifications are struggling to enter the workforce as the pandemic pushes the global economy into recession. COVID-19 has thwarted hopes of landing first jobs - important for jumpstarting careers - as employers cut back graduate recruiting plans or even revoke job offers. The latest U.S. job numbers Friday underscored the murky outlook: 1.8 million jobs were added in July, a sharp slowdown in employment growth from the month before. It means the world’s biggest economy has regained just 42% of jobs lost to the coronavirus.

U.S. careers website Glassdoor says the number of jobs advertised as “entry level” or “new grad” was down 68% in May from a year ago. In Britain, companies plan to cut student recruitment by 23% this year, according to a survey of 179 businesses by the Institute of Student Employers. The wave of delayed employment will ripple out through the economy, says Brian Kropp, chief of HR research at consultancy Gartner. Many grads will have student loan debts they won’t be able to start paying off until they find a job, he said. “If you can’t get an entry level job today, that means that you don’t move out of your parent’s house, you don’t develop real work experience, you don’t buy your first home until later, and you don’t get married until later.” Michael Welch, 22, has been scouring LinkedIn, Monster and Indeed for postings and

connections after earning a University of Connecticut engineering degree. He hadn’t planned to start his job search until after graduation. “That plan was disrupted because I was planning to go into a good job market,” he said. “Suddenly I was in one of the worst job markets in recent history.” Welch, who moved back home with his parents, worries about online interviews and starting a job remotely. “Remote jobs are great for someone who doesn’t have to commute and already has a job,” he said. But “for someone entering the job market it is a scary prospect. It’s difficult to learn technical skills when you’re in a remote setting.” Noah Isaak, a 2019 grad and newly certified teacher, has been applying for jobs in the Chicago public school system and has done a few interviews but they didn’t lead anywhere. Most of the

people he knows from his program are having trouble, too. Now he’s considering applying for minimum wage jobs at Target, Costco, coffee shops and Amazon. “I’m stressed,” said Isaak, 23. “Nothing is really going how we expected it to go. It’s comforting that it’s not a personal flaw and other people are going through the same struggle. But it is difficult not knowing.” One important long-term effect for young graduates who take longer to find good first jobs is lower pay over the course of their careers, experts said. Someone who takes a year or more to find their first job lags behind their peers when it comes to promotions and also competes with younger people who come on to the job market later. The problem, like the pandemic, is global. Graduate job vacancies for

July are down from the previous year in 10 countries, according to Adzuna, a job postings search engine. Britain, India and the Netherlands have seen the biggest declines, with postings down by more than half from a year ago, but other countries including Austria, Australia, Brazil, and France are also seeing double digit percentage drops. Graduate jobs are expected to shrink in 21 countries, with most unlikely to recover next year, according to a separate report by Britain’s ISE. Maria Jose Casco, a newly qualified doctor, hasn’t found work after graduating in Ecuador in April. Casco, 24, said she’s been searching for health-related jobs as well as work in other industries. Even though the pandemic means more need for health services, she found employers aren’t hiring for full time jobs.

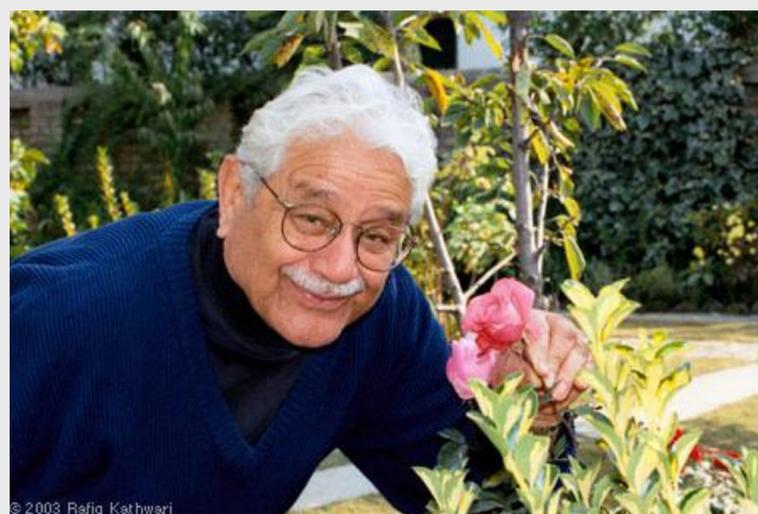
“They’re looking for temporary staff they can easily fire,” Casco said. She and her husband are living off savings and his \$480 monthly salary and, like others, are considering emigrating. “Because there is no future, many of my colleagues are looking at the possibility of leaving Ecuador.” The pandemic is compounding problems for young people in countries plagued by chronic economic instability. Two years after graduating with from Zimbabwe’s Midlands State University, 24-year old Emmanuel Reyai is no closer to his goal of getting a job related to his degree in local governance. His search is stymied by both the African country’s economic collapse and the coronavirus outbreak. “I have applied more than 40 times - nothing,” he said, clutching a plastic folder containing his academic certificates.

Rich Tributes Paid To Agha Ashraf Ali

'Agha Ashraf Ali Loved His Intellectual Independence'

SRINAGAR: Renowned scholar, educationist and public intellectual Agha Ashraf Ali was remembered during a webinar here today. The webinar was attended by various eminent personalities. Speaking on the occasion, Dr Asgar Samoon, Principal Secretary, Education & Skill Department, J&K, said that Agha Sahab was an emancipated and liberated soul whose extempore, bold and fearless way of talking will live with us for a long time to come. “He was an inspiration for youth. His first and last love was education and his aim was to turn literacy into education in a way that will benefit our society,” said Samoon. “He was one of the few living intellectuals of Kashmir whose vision if realised will do wonders for us.” Samoon said that the education department will sponsor any author who wants to write a book on Agha Ashraf Ali. “In addition to it we will work on including a chapter on his life history in our school syllabus,” said Samoon. “Our biggest tribute to him will be to strengthen our education sector. We are already working on training teachers, skill development courses for students and other such things. We will take forward his ideas and strive for better education of our children.” Senior lawyer and philanthropist, Zaffar Shah, while sharing his tributes, said that “Agha Sahab was a fearless man”, adding “he would say what he wanted to. Not all people are able to say what they wish to. Education was very close to his heart, and he would often bring grassroots education in his conversations. He was rich with his own self. His self respect, his honour did

not flow from the official position he held. He had his own personality and charm. What made him great was his cherished dream that all our young people should have a very good quality education.” He said that Agha Ashraf’s life revolved around education and tribute to him will be to convert his house into museum and research institute, where young people can come and get inspired from his personality and work. G. R. Sufi, former Chief Information Commissioner, J&K, while reflecting on his experience of knowing Agha Sahab as a public intellectual and as a neighbour, said that “when he first met him, he felt as if he had known Agha Sahab for years.” “He was an educationist at the core and education was all over his heart and mind. Lately, I have been reading his Urdu memoir “Kuch toa kahiye ki loag kehte hain”. It is a book that reflects 70-80 years of history or education in J&K. He has also slightly touched upon politics and has not minced words in that expression”, Mr Sufi added. Prof Siddiq Wahid, former vice chancellor of Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST), while recalling his interface with Agha Sahab during his initial days, said that he has known Agha Ashraf Ali as someone who loved his intellectual independence, and that was something that was “common between them.” “One of my regrets is that I, as the Vice Chancellor of IUST, never invited him to speak at the university”, he said, emphasising that “we need to recognise people like him and recognise them completely, not to idolise them



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but to know the spirit and the ideas they had and presented to us. They were the kind of people who embraced knowledge wherever it was coming from.” Anuradha Bhasin, Executive Editor of Kashmir Times, spoke at length about her family’s long association with Agha Sahab and his family. “In order to take forward Agha Sahab’s great legacies, it is important for us to understand those legacies. He was larger than life. We are not only talking only about his intellectualism but also the values that he espoused and we need to preserve those which ever way possible. The other thing is education, that was the prime motive of his life. It is also bringing his vision about quality education. He would often say that he hates it when people buy books and keep

those to themselves. He believed in sharing knowledge. And that is what we need to do to take his legacy forward”, she said. Arjmand Hussain Talib, Executive Member of the Agha Shahid Ali Writers Cooperative moderated the webinar and shared the story of the library movement he and some of his friends initiated in Kashmir in their college days in early 2000s, which was mentored by Agha Sahab. “When we discussed the idea of the library with him, he shook us, by telling us the history of the Reading Room movement of Fateh Kadal, which, he said, was a precursor to Sheikh Abdullah’s political career. He almost jolted us by asking if we had any idea about what we guys were up to”, Arjmand recalled. “He was so delighted to join the move-

ment that he took an active part in the library campaign and collected books for that.” Chairman, INTACH, J&K, for former Director General, Tourism, Saleem Beg likened Agha Sahab’s work in ensuring right to education in Jammu & Kashmir to the “Land-to-Tiller” watershed event in J&K’s history. “Just like the Land-to-Tiller Movement has a major contribution in ensuring relatively better socio-economic situations in J&K, Agha Sahab’s work in the field of education helped ensure right to quality education here”, Mr Beg said, adding “he have had the distinction of studying comparative education, the knowledge of which greatly empowered him in implementing great educational ideas in Kashmir. “And let me also say this that

Agha Sahab didn’t have a comfortable career here. During his active lifetime, we have had ten vice-chancellors for Kashmir University but Agha Sahab was never made the vice chancellor of any university despite having the best credentials to be one”, Mr Beg said. Farooq Nazki, famous Kashmiri poet, writer and broadcaster, while paying his tributes to Agha Sahab, said that while “a man is usually known in the time of his difficulties, and not in happiness, he got to know Agha Sahab more profoundly after the loss of his beloved son Agha Shahid Ali.” “Agha Sahab’s loss had impacted him deeply, but he never let that tragedy overwhelm him. Such was the strength of his spirit, Mr Nazki said, adding that it is unfortunate that no political regime or administration gave him the due respect and position which he deserved. Former Commissioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation and Registrar Cooperatives, J&K, Dr G. N. Qasba, who also has the credit of registering Agha Shahid Ali Writers’ Cooperative and providing it the initial financial support, said that “Agha Sahab was a doctor of books. He would sort of examine a person and then recommend a book to him with the message that it will improve your life.” As far as our tributes to him are concerned, we will have to remember him and the best tribute to him will be to promote quality education in Kashmir, Dr Qasba added. Vijay Dhar chairperson Delhi Public School (DPS) Society, recalled his association with the Agha family and how Agha Ashraf’s pearls of wisdom reshaped his life. “Agha Sahab’s contribution to education in

J&K is enormous, and he believed that if teachers were not educated, children will not be educated,” said Vijay while recommending that the College of Education at Srinagar be named after him, as a tribute to him for establishing that institution. Dr Nusrat Andrabi, former Principal Govt Women’s College, Srinagar, whose family is amongst the ones with the close ties with the Agha family recommended naming the road from the Lal Ded Hospital to Zero Bridge as Agha Shahid Ali Bridge, which, she said, was a cherished wish of Agha Ashraf Sahab. Dr Shafi Ayub, who teaches at that tragedy overwhelmed him. Such was the strength of his spirit, Mr Nazki said, adding that it is unfortunate that no political regime or administration gave him the due respect and position which he deserved. Former Commissioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation and Registrar Cooperatives, J&K, Dr G. N. Qasba, who also has the credit of registering Agha Shahid Ali Writers’ Cooperative and providing it the initial financial support, said that “Agha Sahab was a doctor of books. He would sort of examine a person and then recommend a book to him with the message that it will improve your life.” As far as our tributes to him are concerned, we will have to remember him and the best tribute to him will be to promote quality education in Kashmir, Dr Qasba added. Vijay Dhar chairperson Delhi Public School (DPS) Society, recalled his association with the Agha family and how Agha Ashraf’s pearls of wisdom reshaped his life. “Agha Sahab’s contribution to education in

Iran's Irgc Reveals 'Main Reason' Qassem Soleimani Was Assassinated

Agencies

BEIRUT: The head of the Political Bureau of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), Yadallah Jawani, revealed the "main reason" for the assassination of the commander of the Quds Force, General Qassem Soleimani, by the U.S., claiming that "it was a strategic goal through which they sought to stop the resistance in the region and change the course of developments that were in the interest of the resistance."

ment of the Iranian Leader Ali Khamenei during his meeting with the Iraqi Prime Minister that "the Islamic Republic of Iran will never forget the case of the assassination of the martyr Soleimani and the martyr Abu Mahdi Al-Muhandis, and we will definitely deal a blow to the Americans."

Jawani added: "The Americans estimated that the main reason for their defeats over the past two decades in the region was Iran, especially the Revolutionary Guard, particu-



Jawani said, in an interview with the Fars News Agency, that "when the resistance in the region becomes strong, this means weakening the anti-it movement in our region represented by the Zionist entity and reactionary regimes associated with foreign powers as well as foreign powers, the counterpart of the United States in the region."

He referred to the state-

larly the Quds Force, whose activity revolves around the axis of the martyr Qassem Soleimani, and from here they believed that striking Soleimani would enable them to stop the course of developments and change them."

Soleimani and Mohandis were assassinated on January 3rd, when a U.S. drone struck their vehicle near the Baghdad International Airport.

'Sheer Gangster Logic, Daylight Robbery': China On US TikTok Threat

Agencies

Beijing: The US threatening to force a sellout within 45 days or ban TikTok is "sheer gangster logic and 'daylight robbery'", said Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying on Wednesday on Wednesday.

signed executive orders halting all transactions with Chinese applications TikTok and WeChat within 45 days, citing national security concerns.

Citing Huawei's example, US Secretary of State Michael Pompeo earlier had stated that the US



"Without producing any solid evidence, the US administration is taking actions against TikTok based on the presumption of guilt, and threatening to force a sellout within 45 days or simply ban it. The 'deal' is sheer gangster logic and daylight robbery," Ms Hua tweeted.

Ms Hua further said, "The moves are utterly disgraceful. The whole US govt is ganging up like tigers preying on a rabbit. Also with fabricated allegations, it's hunting down Huawei around the world. It pursues a digital gunboat policy, a clean network and turns the Internet into a self-serving US-net."

On August 7, Donald Trump

has stopped recognising the Chinese tech giant as an "innocent telecommunications company" and has called it a "national security threat," while adding that Washington has taken appropriate action in this regard.

"We know now that trading with China is not like trading with a normal and law-abiding nation. Beijing treats international agreements as suggestions, as conduits for global dominance. Doing business with a CCP-backed company is not the same as doing business with, say, a Canadian company. They do not answer to independent boards or pursue profit," he added.



Science And Politics Tied Up In Global Race For A Vaccine

Agencies

WASHINGTON: No, Russia is not having a Sputnik moment.

The announcement Tuesday by Russian President Vladimir Putin that his country was the first to approve a coronavirus vaccine did not provoke the awe and wonder of the Soviet Union's launch of the first satellite into orbit in 1957. Instead it was met by doubts about the science and safety.

But it also underscored how, like the space race, the competition to have the first vaccine is about international rivalries as well as science. The first nation to develop a way to defeat the novel coronavirus will achieve a kind of moonshot victory and the global status that goes along with it.

That's valuable to Putin, whose popularity at home has declined amid a stagnant economy and the ravages of the virus outbreak.

"To be the first one out of the block with a coronavirus vac-

cine would be a real — pardon the pun — shot in the arm for the Kremlin," said Timothy Frye, a political science professor at Columbia University who specializes in post-Soviet politics.

Certainly, Russia is not alone in viewing a vaccine in this light. China, where the virus first emerged, has also raced to make progress on a vaccine. A state-owned Chinese company is boasting that its employees, including top executives, received experimental shots even before the government approved testing in people.

And President Donald Trump, whose handling of the coronavirus pandemic has put his political fate in grave jeopardy, is hoping to get credit for his administration's aggressive push for a vaccine, ideally one that arrives before Election Day in November.

It's far from clear at this point whether Putin has beaten Trump to this medical milestone.

Putin said the Health Min-

istry gave its approval after the vaccine underwent the necessary tests and said one of his two adult daughters had been inoculated. "We should be grateful to those who have taken this first step, which is very important for our country and the whole world," he said.

No proof was offered and scientists in Russia warned that more testing would be necessary to prove it is safe and effective. Nonetheless, officials said vaccination of doctors could start as early as this month and mass vaccination may begin as early as October.

Scientists around the world have been cautioning that even if vaccine candidates are proven to work, it will take even more time to tell how long the protection will last.

"It's a too early stage to truly assess whether it's going to be effective, whether it's going to work or not," Dr. Michael Head, senior research fellow in global health at the University of Southampton.

Covid-19: One in two youths subject to depression, anxiety, says ILO survey

Agencies

United Nations: Half of the world's youth population are subject to anxiety or depression-causing circumstances and more than a third are uncertain of their future career prospects due to the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a survey by the International Labour Organization.

The ILO's 'Youth and COVID-19: impacts on jobs, education, rights and mental well-being' survey found that if urgent action is not taken, youths are at the risk of suffering severe and long-lasting adverse impacts from the pandemic.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted every aspect of our lives. Even before the onset of the crisis, the social and economic integration of young people was an ongoing challenge. Now, unless urgent action is taken, young people are likely to suffer severe and long-lasting impacts from the pandemic," the report said on Tuesday.

The ILO survey aimed to capture the immediate effects of the pandemic on the lives of youths (aged 18 to 29 years) with regard to employment, education, mental health, rights and social activism.

Over 12,000 responses were received from 112 countries, with a large proportion coming from educated youths with access to the Internet.

The survey found that one in two (i.e., 50 per cent) young people across the world are possibly subject to anxiety or depression, while 17 per cent are probably affected by it.

"Severe disruption to learning and working, compounded by the health crisis, has seen a deterioration in young people's mental well-being," the survey said.

Mental well-being is lowest for young women and younger youths between the ages of 18 and 24 years.

Young people whose education or work was either disrupted or had stopped completely

were almost twice as likely to be affected by anxiety or depression as compared to those who continued to be employed or whose education was not affected.

"This underscores the interlinkages that exist between mental well-being, educational success and labour market integration," it said.

Among those who thought that their education would be delayed or might fail, 22 per cent were likely to be affected by anxiety or depression, compared to 12 per cent of students whose education remained on track.

According to the report, 38 per cent of young people are uncertain of their future career prospects, with the COVID-19 crisis expected to create more obstacles in the labour market and to lengthen the transition from school to work.

The coronavirus, which first emerged in China's Wuhan city, has claimed over 7.4 lakh lives with more than 20 million confirmed cases across the world so far.

North Macedonia police find 148 migrants, including 81 Pakistanis, in trucks

Agencies

Islamabad: Police in North Macedonia say they have discovered 148 migrants crammed into trucks in two separate operations in central and northern parts of the country, and have arrested two men on suspicion of trafficking migrants.

Police said their patrol stopped a truck and accompanying passenger car near the town of Demir Kapija, about 110 kilometres south of the capital Skopje, on Wednesday. They found 103 migrants, including 29 children, packed into the truck. The majority — 81 people — were from Pakistan, while 10 were

North Macedonia from.

Another 45 migrants from Syria, Bangladesh, Somalia, Pakistan and the Palestinian territory were found in an abandoned truck near the northern village of Vaksince, near the border with Serbia, late Wednesday.

Police said the truck driver fled the scene.

The Greek border with North Macedonia was closed earlier this year due to the coronavirus pandemic. But trafficking networks remain active, ferrying migrants who make their way from Turkey into Greece and then attempt



from Afghanistan, eight from India, two from Egypt and one each from Iran and Syria. Two men from North Macedonia were arrested as suspected smugglers.

The migrants were transferred to a migrant shelter in the southern border town of Gevgelija pending deportation to Greece, where they are believed to have crossed into

to head north, through Serbia to more prosperous countries in the European Union.

Police said that in July alone they had detained a total of 567 migrants attempting to illegally transit North Macedonia and had arrested nine people, including three Serbian nationals, suspected of migrant trafficking.

Israel closes key Gaza crossing to 'all goods'

Agencies

Jerusalem: Israel shuts down the Gaza Strip's border crossing that hosts most imports into the Tel Aviv-besieged territory as a punitive measure against alleged launches of "incendiary balloons" from the Palestinian enclave towards the occupied territories.

Kerem Shalom Crossing was closed on Tuesday after at least four rounds of aerial and ground attacks against the territory under the same pretext.

Before closing the terminal, the regime claimed that more than 30 fires had erupted across Gaza's border with the occupied territories as a result of the alleged balloon launch, Reuters reported.

"Kerem Shalom Crossing will be closed for the passage of all goods, with the exception of the entry of essential humanitarian equipment and fuel," Israel's Ministry of Military Affairs said in a statement.

Palestinian officials said the closure in particular affected construction materials.

Tel Aviv besieged Gaza in 2007 after the Palestinian resistance movement of Hamas rose to power there. Ever since, the enclave has been receiving its bare essentials through Kerem Shalom as well as two other

crossings, including one with Egypt, which is being strictly controlled by Cairo.

Last Monday, the regime launched a set of airstrikes on Gaza, accusing Hamas of flying fire balloons towards the occupied territories.

The regime repeated the strikes on Thursday and this Monday. The aerial bombardments were intervened by a round of tank fire targeting the territory on Sunday.

Hamas, which has been defending Gaza against such repeated incursions, has called the increase in Israeli violence "a message of escalation and aggression" and an attempt by the Israeli regime "to export its internal crises to the strip."

The escalation comes as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is entangled in a political and legitimacy crisis that boils down to his trial on charges of bribery, fraud, and breach of trust.

Israelis regularly hold thousands-strong rallies outside his residence, asking him to step down.

In recent weeks, thousands of protesters have also rallied, mainly in Tel Aviv and the holy occupied city of Jerusalem al-Quds, against Netanyahu's mishandling of the COVID-19 outbreak.

NEWS MAKERS

Men May Be 'Insulted' By Biden Picking Woman As VP: Trump

"I learnt about my popularity in Pakistan from Instagram. I had so many marriage proposals," laughed actor Cengiz Coskun.

Endorsed by Prime Minister Imran Khan himself, it is no surprise that Dirilis Ertugrul has been breaking records and proving to be one of the most popular television series airing in Pakistan in 2020.

In a recent talk show hosted by Waseem Badami, one of the show's most sought out characters Turgut Alp (played by Cengiz Coskun) was invited to talk about his experience with the show's unexpected popularity in Pakistan.

With his past associated with sports, the Turkish actor instantly hit it off on a friendly note with Shahid Afridi and



the duo shared warm invites and excitement at the prospect of meeting each other soon.

"I used to play basketball for ten years," revealed Coskun. "Played professionally for three years, but when I got injured, I started modelling, then acting, and now I'm here in front of your eyes."

While he asked Boom Boom

to teach him how to play cricket, the former national team captain was pretty sure he wasn't going to take up acting.

"No chance, it's not my domain and I don't know how to act," shared Afridi. "I do TV commercials with great difficulty. It's not my job at all."

However, he did express a keenness to learn how to use the axe, from Alp himself - and like every other Pakistani, Afridi too admitted to being a huge fan of the show.

"Some of my friends were pushing me to watch this drama. When they told me it had 500 episodes, I said, 'Are you crazy?' My schedule was very busy. But once I went to Bangladesh for matches, that's when I started watching it, and

this was one and a half years ago. I liked the drama so much, I finished it in just 40 days."

"My daughters were always saying, 'Papa you're not giving us attention' and I would tell them it's addictive. 'Once you watch it, you'll see'. And now I'm rewatching it with them. When Halime died and Ertugrul cried, that made everyone cry in my home," said Afridi.

Surprisingly, Cengiz too admitted to watching every episode of Ertugrul.

"I was checking what I did, didn't do, where I went wrong," he admitted, revealing that using an axe wasn't part of his character's history but his own choice, in order to stand out as unique.

The inspiring story of US Senator Kamala Harris and many firsts

WASHINGTON: Indian-origin Senator Kamala Devi Harris scripted history when she became the first Black woman to be appointed as running mate by Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden in the November presidential elections.

Biden on Tuesday picked Harris as his running mate, recognising the crucial role Black voters could play in his determined bid to defeat President Donald Trump in the US presidential election.

The 55-year-old California senator becomes just the third woman to be selected as the vice president on a major party ticket. Then-Alaska Governor Sarah Palin in 2008 and New York Representative Geraldine Ferraro in 1984 were the other two.

A searing critique-turned ally of her former rival Biden, Harris had her own presidential dreams, which she suspended by the end of 2019, saying she lacked the financial

resources to continue her campaign.

She is one of only three Asian Americans in the Senate and she's the first Indian-American ever to serve in the chamber.

Harris is known for many firsts.

She has been a county district attorney; the district attorney for San Francisco - the first woman and first African-American and Indian-origin to be elected to the position.

She would be several firsts in her role as vice president also: the first woman, the first African-American woman, the first Indian-American and the first Asian-American.

Harris was born to two immigrant parents: a Black father and an Indian mother.

Her father, Donald Harris, was from Jamaica, and her mother, Shyamala Gopalan, a cancer researcher and civil rights activist from Chennai.



India's Shortage Of Remdesivir Is Easing, Says Producer Cipla



BENGALURU: India's supply of antiviral drug remdesivir and generic equivalents is stabilising after shortages of the vital COVID-19 medicine at hospitals, according to a top executive at one of the country's big drugmakers, Cipla Ltd.

Remdesivir, made by U.S.-based Gilead Sciences Inc, has been in high demand globally, and a handful of companies including Cipla are authorised to make and sell generic versions in 127 developing nations.

Cipla's launch of remdesivir in late June, along with subsequent launches by others, has helped ease supply bottlenecks in India, Cipla's Global Chief Financial Officer, Kedar Upadhye, told Reuters.

"Of late, some of the complaints for supplies, and the number of panicky calls that I used to get, have come down dramatically," Upadhye said. "Looks like things have settled."

COVID-19 cases in India, the world's third-worst hit country, have surged in the past month, with new infections topping 50,000 daily.

Yet while hospitals previously reported they were struggling to get their hands

on the drug, leading to black market sales, Mr Upadhye said the indications from his supply chain were that pressure had eased.

That suggested severe cases had not surged as much as the overall numbers, he said.

Government data at the end of July showed about 0.3% of the country's active coronavirus patients were on ventilators, while 1.6% on intensive care unit support and 2.3% on oxygen support.

Severe cases likely amounted to under 3% of all infections, said Giridhara Babu, an epidemiologist at the Public Health Foundation of India.

India, one of the world's biggest producer of generic drugs, recommends remdesivir for moderate to severe COVID-19. Doctors also use other drugs, including favipiravir, another antiviral approved for the disease.

Cipla, which is also free to export the drug, supplies it in South Africa and plans to expand access to "several sub-Saharan African countries", it has said. India had previously blocked exports of another drug, hydroxychloroquine, used by some doctors in treating the disease. The ban has since been lifted.

Cipla declined to comment on the number of vials of remdesivir it had shipped so far, but said it had started making the drug at a plant in Goa in western India to ramp up production.



VILLAGE WOMEN return home after days of hard work in Kashmir countryside. KO Photo Abid Bhat

Three Killed As Police Open Fire In Bengaluru; Govt Says Violence A Well Planned Act

Three people were killed after police opened fire to quell a mob that went on a rampage in a city locality irked over a social media post allegedly put out by a Congress legislator's relative, with the Government terming the violence as a "well-planned act."

"Three people have died (in police firing)," Bengaluru Police Commissioner Kamal Pant told PTI. Further, 110 people have been arrested in connection with the rioting at Pulakeshi Nagar here.

Scores, including around 50 policemen, were injured in the violence that erupted on Tuesday night and continued till the wee hours of Wednesday, apparently triggered by the online post. Pulakeshi Nagar MLA Akhanda Srinivasa Murthy's residence and a police station at D J Halli were among those targeted by the angry mob.

The house of the MLA, who was not at home at the time, was allegedly set on fire. "The manner in which the riots were perpetrated shows that it was a well planned act and was intended to



spread to other parts of the city.

These are traitors," Revenue Minister Ashoka told reporters after meeting Congress MLA in his office at Vidhana Soudha. The Minister said the MLA's house was completely damaged, belongings including sarees and jewels were looted and rest was set on fire including vehicles.

"It is clear from the intensity of vandalism that the intention was to attack and finish off Srinivasa Murthy. It has to be investigated whether any corporator or anti-social elements from within the state and

outside were involved," Ashoka said.

Tourism minister C T Ravi said: "It is clear and evident that yesterday's violent attack was carried out by a Muslim mob in a pre-planned manner." Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai said six companies of the Central Reserve Police Force are being dispatched to the violence-hit areas of Bengaluru. Three companies from Hyderabad and three from Chennai will be deployed in DG Halli and K G Halli police station limits, he told reporters at Udipi before leaving for Bengaluru.

He said the situation is now under control and additional police forces are deployed in the area. Rapid action force and the 'Garuda' force are also being deployed, the minister added.

Meanwhile, the state government on Wednesday announced that a district magistrate would conduct an inquiry into the violence. The government also decided to recover losses caused to public property during the violence from the rioters.

11 Pakistan Migrants' Alleged Suicide: Victim In Video Accuses 'Gang' Of Harassment, Police Of Not Acting

JODHPUR: Days after the death allegedly by suicide of 11 members of a family of Hindu migrants from Pakistan in a village in Jodhpur district, a video has surfaced in which one of the victims gives a detailed account of the harassment they were facing at the hands of their relatives and a purported gang.

The one and a half hours long video was in the mobile phone of Laxmi, one of the victims, that was found in the shack where the bodies were discovered, police said.

According to Laxmi's account in the video that has been viewed by PTI, after the family came to India in 2015 due to fears of religious persecution in the neighbouring country, they got embroiled in a row with their relatives here as well as a gang that allegedly tried to control their lives.

We had no idea that we would be subjected to a new ordeal in India not only by others but by our own people, Laxmi said in the video.

She said the family fled Pakistan and came to India on the insistence of Dhandali, the now estranged wife of her brother Kewal Ram who is the



alleged gang members also wanted the sisters to marry as per their wish.

Laxmi and her sister Priya were both qualified nurses, but while Priya had been working in a nearby clinic, Laxmi could not work as her certificate was destroyed by this alleged gang, she said. Laxmi also alleged that the family had approached the police but they did not take any action.

She said the family had shifted to Dechu tehsil to work in farms to escape the harassment in Jodhpur but it did not help. She also said she filed a complaint with the Dechu police but the police also allegedly harassed her family.

The police cases began with the first case registered by Dhandali in Mandore police station on July 16, 2019 accusing her husband Kewal Ram and his sisters of harassment.

This was followed by a series of cases and counter cases from both the sides against each other, Laxmi stated in the video.

A police officer from Jodhpur commissionerate said, The last case was filed by Dhandali again on August 7, which was to be investigated but this incident happened before police could do anything.

Sanjay Dutt Diagnosed With Stage 3 Lung Cancer, To Fly To Us For Treatment



MUMBAI: Bollywood actor Sanjay Dutt has been diagnosed with lung cancer of Stage 3. Dutt, 61, was admitted to Lilavati Hospital after complaining of breathlessness on August 8. He was later discharged from the medical facility on Monday.

Dutt had tested negative for COVID-19. "Just wanted to assure everyone that I'm doing well. I'm currently under medical observation and my COVID-19 report is negative. With the help and care of the doctors, nurses and staff at Lilavati hospital, I should be home in a day or two. Thank you for your well wishes and blessings," he had tweeted on the day of his admission to the hospital.

On Tuesday, the actor posted a statement on Twitter, announcing that he would be taking a "short break" from professional commitments to focus on medical treatment.

He also urged his fans not to worry or unnecessar-

ily speculate, saying that he would be "back soon" with people's love and support.

"I am taking a short break from work for some medical treatment. My family and friends are with me and I urge my well wishers not to worry or unnecessarily speculate. With your love and good wishes, I will be back soon!" his post read.

Noted film journalist and editor-in-chief of Film Information, Komal Nahta, shared the news on his Twitter. "Sanjay Dutt diagnosed with lung cancer. Let's pray for his speedy recovery," he tweeted.

As per the report, the actor will soon fly to the US for treatment.

Dutt's upcoming movie Sadak 2, which was slated to hit theatres this month, will now premiere on Disney+Hotstar. The actor was last seen in three films in 2019 - Ashutosh Gowariker's period drama Panipat, Karan Johar-produced Kalank and political drama Prasanthanam.

NEWS MAKERS

Sushant Singh Rajput More Famous After Death: Memon; NCP Disapproves Remark

MUMBAI: NCP leader Majeed Memon on Wednesday said actor Sushant Singh Rajput was not as famous during his lifetime as he is after death, a remark which did not go down well with his party which quickly distanced itself from it.

The NCP said it was Memon's personal opinion and not of the party. Memon, who is a former Rajya Sabha member and a prominent lawyer, also said the media space that the late actor is occupying nowadays is perhaps more than "Indias Prime Minister and US President."

As reactions came in on the social media following his post, Memon said his comments do not insult the late actor in any way. Rajput, 34, was found hang-



ing at his apartment in Bandra area here on June 14.

A tug of war has been going on between the governments of Bihar and Maharashtra over the case. Maharashtra has been contending that Bihar had no jurisdiction in the matter since the death took place in Mumbai.

Mumbai Police have so far recorded statements of 56 people in-

cluding Rajput's sisters, his friend and actress Rhea Chakraborty and some other film personalities in connection with his death. Rajput's father K K Singh on July 25 lodged a complaint with Patna police against Chakraborty and her family members, accusing them of abetting the actor's suicide. An FIR has been registered by Patna police against Chakraborty and others under various IPC sections.

"Sushant was not as famous during his lifetime as he is after his death. The space in media he is occupying nowadays is perhaps more than our PM or President of US! Memon tweeted.

Memon said secrecy has to be maintained when a crime is at the investigation stage.

Pranab Mukherjee's Condition Continues To Remain Critical

NEW DELHI: Former President Pranab Mukherjee's health condition continued to remain critical after undergoing emergency surgery for a brain clot and was on a ventilator currently, the Army Hospital, where he has been admitted, informed on Wednesday.

Presently, he is hemodynamically stable and on a ventilator. On Tuesday, Army Hospital stated the former president who underwent life-saving emergency surgery for brain clot on August 10 has not shown any improvement and his health status had worsened.

Mukherjee, 84, said on Monday on Twitter that he had also tested positive for the novel coronavirus. "On a visit to the hospital for a separate procedure, I have tested positive for COVID-19 today. I re-



quest the people who came in contact with me in the last week, to please self isolate and get tested for COVID-19," Mukherjee tweeted.

Light Combat Helicopters Deployed For Operations At Leh, Confirms HAL

The Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) confirmed on Wednesday two Light Combat Helicopters (LCH) produced by it have been deployed for operations at high altitude (Leh sector) at short notice to support IAF missions, "in the light of the prevailing situation on the border."

"It is the lightest attack helicopter in the world designed and developed by HAL to meet the specific and unique requirements of Indian Armed Forces reflecting the crucial role of HAL in 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat,'" HAL's CMD R. Madhavan said.

The Vice Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshal Harjit Singh Arora took part in one such operation along with HAL test pilot, Wg Cdr (Retd), Subash P. John recently by taking-off from high altitude location to a forward area for a simulated attack on a high altitude target, the Bengaluru-headquartered company said in a statement.

"This was followed by a landing at one of the most treacherous helipads in the region. The LCH successfully demonstrated its quick deployment prowess to forward locations in extreme temperatures," it said.

LCH is a potent weapon platform because of its state-of-the-art systems and highly accurate weapons that are



capable of hitting any type of target by day or night, according to HAL. The other features of LCH include its ability to operate in the complete Area of Responsibility (AOR) and altitudes.

It has capability to carry adequate weapon load at high altitudes under varied conditions. All these characteristics make it most suitable for hot and high altitude operations, the statement added. The IAF and the Indian Army together need around 160 LCHs, HAL said.

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) had approved the proposal for initial batch of 15 LCHs, the statement said. The IAF issued Request for Proposal (RFP) for 15 Limited Series Production (LSP) helicopter (10 for IAF and 5 for Army) and HAL had submitted its response, it said, adding, technical evaluation and the price negotiations have been concluded and the order is expected shortly.

"However, as a proactive measure, HAL has launched production of LSPs in anticipation of orders at its Bengaluru facility," the statement said.

Private Trains Should Have Sliding Doors, Talk-Back, Coach Surveillance: Railways' Draft Specification



NEW DELHI: Electronic sliding doors, windows with double-glazed safety glass, Braille signages, emergency talk-back mechanism, passenger surveillance system, and information and destination boards. These are some of the specifications the Railways has demanded from private operators in trains that they will be running on the Railways network.

A draft specification for private trains, shared by the Railways on Wednesday, also says these trains would provide noise-free travel to passengers and be capable of running at a speed of 160 km/hr. "The train shall be designed so that they can operate safely at a maximum speed of 180 kmph during testing. Train shall be capable of accelerating to a speed of 160 kmph from 0 kmph in a maximum of 140 seconds on level track," says the draft.

These trains will be fitted with an emergency brake which can bring them to a standstill in less than 1,250 m when travelling at 160 kmph, it says.

It also says that the trains should be designed for a life of 35 years. "Each coach shall have minimum four electrically/pneumatically powered, plug type doors, two on each side," it says.

The door mechanism shall have safety provision whereby the train shall not start unless all doors have been closed and electrically locked. "Provision shall be made for passengers to open doors to permit evacuation from a stopped train in an emergency," the draft says.

"There shall be an internal and external manual release mechanism on one door per side in each coach. All windows shall be provided with double-glazed safety glass," it says.

Stressing the need for hazard-free environment for users, the draft also says that adequate handholds shall be provided throughout the car. The document also says normal and emergency equipment and controls which the users or crew may operate shall be clearly identified, and operating procedures presented in both text and graphic formats. "Passenger emergency signs shall also be embossed in Braille raised typeface," it says.

The trains shall be designed to keep the noise emissions as low as possible and designed to prevent drumming, rattles or vibrations throughout its life. The draft says the train shall provide a public address (PA) facility so that the loco pilot or guard can make announcements to passengers from driving/non-driving cab.

BGGI @ 2020

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