



Maximum : 32°C
Minimum : 21°C
Humidity : 61%

SUNSET
Today 07:18 PM
SUNRISE
Tomorrow 05:52 AM



News Digest

Soldier Shoots Self Dead

Srinagar: In another alleged case of suicide in armed forces, a soldier on Friday shot himself dead with his service rifle in central Kashmir's Budgam district. Lance Naik Om Prakash ended his life by shooting himself with his service rifle at Old Air Field in Rangreth area of the district on Friday morning, official sources said. The soldier died on the spot. Official sources said that reason behind the extreme step by the soldier was not immediately known. Meanwhile, police have taken cognizance of the incident and started proceedings in this regard.

Hunter's Fire Kills Bengal Youth

Srinagar: A non-local youth was killed after being hit by a hunter's fire in Trenz area of south Kashmir's Shopian district, officials said Friday. 27-year-old Amir Hussain of West Bengal was collecting scrap in an orchard in Wanpora village of Trenz on Thursday evening when a cartridge fired by a hunter hit him, they said. The youth sustained serious injuries in the incident and was removed to Srinagar's SMHS hospital for treatment. However, he succumbed to his injuries on Friday afternoon. The non-local youth, they said was putting up in Khanda Chadoora. A police ● P-02

ACB Arrests Police Officer For Taking Bribe

Srinagar: The anti-corruption bureau (ACB) on Friday arrested a police officer while he was accepting bribe from a truck driver in Batamalo area of the uptown city. Sub-Inspector Farooq Ahmad Abassi posted at police station Batamalo was arrested by the sleuths of ACB while he was accepting Rs 3000 bribe from a truck driver to release the documents of his truck he had confiscated earlier, an ACB spokesperson Friday. The police officer, he said was arrested after the truck driver approached ACB with a written complaint mentioning ● P-02

Elderly Man Injured In Bear Attack

Srinagar: An elderly man on Friday was attacked and injured in a bear attack in south Kashmir's Pulwama district. 60-year-old Abdul Gani Sheikh of Khangund Tral was grazing cattle in the upper reaches of Tral when a black bear attacked him, officials said Friday. In the attack, he said the elderly man received serious injuries in the bear attack. "The injured was shifted to Sub District Hospital Tral where he is undergoing treatment," the official added. (KNT)

Army Recovers Arms In Baramulla

Srinagar: The Army recovered a cache of arms and ammunition during a search operation in Baramulla district of Jammu and Kashmir, an official spokesperson said on Friday. The search operation was launched in Trenarian in Dogi Pahad area of the north Kashmir district on Tuesday based on inputs about the presence of a cache of weapons and ammunition in the area, the Army spokesperson said. The cache was recovered on Thursday, he said. According to the spokesperson, three pistols with magazines and ammunition, 73 AK rounds, two detonators, 15 grenades and Pakistani currency were recovered during the operation.

DIG Who Nabbed Davinder Singh Awarded Gallantry Medal

Press Trust of India

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir police's Deputy Inspector General Atul Kumar Goel, who broke a police-militant nexus by arresting now-suspended DSP Davinder Singh, is among 81 personnel of the force who have been awarded police medals for gallantry. Overall, the J&K police's 81 medals are the maximum awarded to any police force this year, followed by the CRPF's 55.

Goel, a 2004-batch IPS officer, had personally laid a police picket on a national highway on January 11 this year after intelligence reports indicated that Davinder Singh, along with an over ground worker of militant groups, was ferrying two militants to Jammu to escape the harsh winters.

After a brief altercation, when Singh attempted to throw his weight at the

policemen at the checkpoint to escape, Goel, according to eyewitness, stepped out of his vehicle and slapped the erring DSP, following which he was arrested. The NIA, which took over the case subsequently, has already filed a charge sheet and alleged that the suspended DSP was being groomed by officials of the Pakistani High Commission in India to get more sensitive information. Tahir Ashraf Bhatti, a Superintendent of Police in the Special Operations Group, a specialised anti-militancy unit of the JK police, was also awarded the gallantry medal for his counter-militancy work in the Kashmir valley. A law graduate, hailing from Poonch area of Jammu, the officer has been in charge of the SOG for the past two years. He simultaneously looks after the cyber cell, which monitors anti-India propaganda on the internet. The force also been given ● PAGE 02

2 Cops Killed, Another Injured In Srinagar Militant Attack

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Two policemen were killed and another injured on Friday in an audacious militant attack in Nowgam area on the city outskirts on the eve of I-day, police said.

Early Friday morning, unidentified militants appeared in Nowgam area of the city outskirts and opened fire upon a group of policemen who were deployed in the area as part of the August-15 security bandobast, a police official said. In the surprise militant attack, three policemen were injured.

The injured cops were shifted to a hospital where two of them succumbed and the third was undergoing treatment, the official said.

The official identified the slain duo as Ishfaq Ayoub and Fayaz Ahmad, both from IRP's 20 battalion. While Ayoub had bullet wounds on right side of chest and leg, Fayaz had injuries on right thigh, he said.

The injured cop has ● PAGE 02



SECURITY personnel searching a house in Nowgam on Friday following a militant attack.

DGP Blames Pakistan

Pakistan and its proxies cannot tolerate the peaceful atmosphere in Jammu and Kashmir, Director General of Police (DGP) Dilbag Singh said on Friday after militants shot dead two ● P-02

2 Jaish OGWs Held In Tral: Police

Police on Friday claimed to have arrested two militant associates of Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) from south Kashmir's Pulwama district. The militant associates were nabbed ● P-02

Stringent Security Across Valley For I-Day

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Surprise checks, rampant frisking and identification checks were held Friday in most parts of the Kashmir Valley on the eve of I-day, amid apprehensions of militant strikes to disrupt the celebrations.

Police and CRPF personnel

further intensified the security apparatus in Srinagar and other parts of Valley to ensure trouble free August 15 celebrations after a militant attack early Friday morning left two cops dead and another injured in Nowgam here, reports said.

Forces, reports said conducted surprise checks and identification

parades at many parts of the city to keep a close watch on the activities of the suspicious persons.

Here in this capital city, scores of mobile bunkers have popped up, where people are being subjected to frisking and identification checks, reports said.

Reports said heavy deployments have also been ● PAGE 02

Wrong Decisions Post-47 Created Resentment Among Kashmiris: LG

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Newly appointed Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday invoked Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence saying that the people of Jammu and Kashmir stood against those forces who tried to divide this land on communal lines too during the country's partition.

In his message to the people of Union Territory on I-day, Sinha said that the



philosophy of Ahimsa propounded by Mahatma Gandhi has been the guiding light of India's movement for independence and this insistence of non-violence has always been consistent with the ethos of Jammu and Kashmir.

"Those responsible for the partition of the country did try to divide this land too on communal lines, but the people of this land have always steadfastly rejected this bigoted ideology. The rejection is directly a consequence of the fact that the labels 'Hindu' and 'Muslim' have always been only descriptions rather than manifestation of a division in Jammu and Kashmir," Sinha said. He said the ● PAGE 02

HRW Seeks Independent Probe Into Shopian Encounter

Says No End To 'Cycle Of Violence' If Forces Aren't Held Accountable

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Human Rights Watch (HRW) on Friday asked government to immediately order an independent and impartial investigation into the alleged extra-judicial killing of three Rajouri men, saying that there can be "no end to the cycle of violence in Kashmir if security forces are not held accountable for their past



and current abuses". "Security forces have long operated with impunity in Kashmir, and past army investigations have been more focused on

shielding those responsible for abuse than providing justice," said Meenakshi Ganguly, South Asia director at Human Rights Watch in a statement ● PAGE 02

1000 Vehicles Stranded On Kashmir Highway

JAMMU: The Jammu-Srinagar Highway remained closed for the second consecutive day on Friday due to a massive landslide triggered by heavy rains in Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban district, officials said.

Vehicular traffic on the 270-km highway, the only all-weather road linking Kashmir with the rest of the country, was suspended on Friday, leaving hundreds of trucks and other vehicles stranded, officials said.

The highway was blocked by a major landslide in Mehar area on Thursday, they said.

The clearance operation is going on in full swing to restore traffic movement, the officials said.

Over 1,000 vehicles were stranded on both sides and traffic was stopped at Qazigund and Udhampur Chanderkote soon after the highway was blocked.

Palestinians Unanimously Reject UAE-Israel Deal

Gaza City - Palestinians reacted with shock and dismay after US President Donald Trump unveiled an agreement between the United Arab Emirates and Israel to normalise ties.

The deal pledges full normalisation of relationships between the two countries in the areas of security, tourism, technology and trade in return for suspending Israel's annexation plans in the West Bank.

Both the Palestinian leadership and public were caught by surprise when the announcement came on Thursday.

"We absolutely had no prior knowledge of this agreement," Ahmed Majdalani, the Palestinian Authority's (PA) minister of social affairs, told Al Jazeera. "The timing and speed of reaching this agreement were surprising, especially that it came at a critical moment in the Palestinian struggle."

Former PA minister Munib al-Masri noted Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, who ruled Abu Dhabi for more than 30 years before his death in 2004, had always been a strong supporter of the Palestinians.

"The late Sheikh Zayed was a dear brother to me, I knew how much he was proud of his support for Palestine... I never imagined that in my lifetime I would see the day in which the UAE would simply sell the Palestinians out for the sake of normalisation," al-Masri said. "It's very shameful. I can't believe it until now."

Other Palestinian officials said though the news came abruptly, it was not much of a surprise.

"We were not surprised that much because the ● P-02

At Galwan, Bravery In Combat Proved Our Resolve: Kovind

NEW DELHI: President Ram Nath Kovind on Friday said while India believes in peace it is also capable of giving a befitting response to any attempt of aggression as shown by its troops in Galwan Valley in eastern Ladakh after "some in our neighbourhood", a veiled reference to China, tried to carry out their "misadventure of expansion".

In his address to the nation on the eve of the 74th Independence Day, Kovind also spoke about the 'Aatmanirbhar' initiative launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and allayed fears of foreign investors saying India's self-reliance means being self-sufficient without alienating or creating distance from the world, with which it



would continue to engage.

Touching upon the COVID-19 pandemic, Kovind said the nation is indebted to doctors, nurses and other health workers who have been continuously on the forefront of the fight against the disease which has disrupted all activities world over and taken a huge toll. India's COVID-19 caseload surpassed 24 lakh on Friday after 64,553 more people tested positive and the ● PAGE 02

8 More Covid-19 Deaths In Kashmir, J&K toll 520

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: Coronavirus claimed eight more lives in Jammu and Kashmir on Friday, five among them women, taking the total number of fatalities across the Union Territory since the pandemic outbreak to 520.

Among the victims of this deadly disease, six were the residents of Srinagar, one each from Anantnag and Baramulla districts of the Valley, officials said.

They said a 65-year-old man from Batamalo Srinagar, who was admitted to Srinagar's SMHS

60 Travellers Among 540 New Cases

At least sixty travellers were among 540 people who tested Covid-19 positive in Jammu and Kashmir on Friday, raising the number of people infected by the virus in the Union Territory to ● P-02

hospital on August 4, died today. "He was having comorbidities besides ● PAGE 02

Heartiest Greetings
to the people of Jammu & Kashmir
on
74th Independence Day

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

DJPK-4092/20

CMYK

From Front page...

2 Cops Killed, Another Injured...

been identified as Mohammad Ashraf and has bullet injuries on right hand. Soon after the attack, IGP Kashmir Vijay Kumar and SSP Srinagar Haseeb Mughal rushed to the spot to take first-hand account of the situation. The state forces also launched a combing operation in the area with an aim to nab the assailants. Talking to the reporters at the shootout spot, IGP Kashmir Vijay Kumar said that two Jaish-e-Muhammad militants appeared from a narrow lane and fired indiscriminately at the cops deployed in the area in view of August 15. "The cops were wearing bullet proof vests and helmets. The militants came from behind and fired indiscriminately at our boys. In the attack, two policemen were killed and another injured," Kumar said. "We have identified these militants from Jaish-e-Muhammad. They will be neutralized soon," he added. Kumar further said that the police had inputs about a militant strike in in any area ahead of August 15 celebrations and on the same basis security was beefed up. "Our boys exercised maximum restraint and didn't retaliate to militant fire due to the movement of people in the lane," Kumar said, while denying any loophole that could have prevented the attack. "Not just August 15 or January 26, every day is a challenge for police in Kashmir," he added. Meanwhile, several mainstream parties condemned the killing of two policemen, saying violence in any form is unacceptable and inhuman. Expressing deep anguish and sorrow over the killings, the National Conference (NC) said violence does not provide a solution to any problem. Violence in all its forms is despicable and has no scope in the contemporary world. It only leaves behind the account of inevitable loss and prolonged grief, an NC spokesperson said.

He said the party expresses solidarity with the kith and kin of the slain policemen and prays for eternal repose to the deceased. Condemning the killing of the two policemen, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) said the violence of the past more than three decades has taken a heavy toll on the people in terms of death and destruction, tearing apart of the social fabric and inflicting massive losses. In a statement, the party said such attacks further aggravate the situation for the people of Kashmir. The party also posted a tweet saying, Vehemently condemn the attack on @JmukmrPolice personnel. Such attacks further aggravate the situation for Kashmir's already reeling under double disaster post August 5. We join the families of deceased in mourning their loss." The Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) described the attack as senseless and shameful, and demanded exemplary punishment to the killers. In a statement, a party spokesperson said, Kashmir continues to bleed due to the mindless militant attacks, which is very unfortunate and matter of serious concern. Former minister Sajad Lone-led Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Conference (JKPC) also condemned the attack We strongly condemn the killing of two policemen in a dastardly and inhuman acts of violence at Nowgam today. Our sympathies and prayers are with the families of the deceased in this hour of grief, the party said on its official Twitter page. The Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party (JKAP) said, Violence is not a solution but a gigantic impediment that spreads hatred. In any of its manifestations, violent extremism is unacceptable in a civilized society, regardless of political, ideological or religious motivations, a JKAP spokesman said. He said it is highly unfortunate and heart-rending that Kashmir continues to lose precious lives to senseless violence which has only aggravated the sufferings of the people over the years. The attackers have no respect for human lives and are only adding to the tragedies of the ill-fated families which must be condemned by one and all, he said, extending condolences to the bereaved families and wishing a speedy recovery for the injured personnel. Expressing solidarity and sympathy with the bereaved families, the Jammu and Kashmir BJP said the police must track down the perpetrators and punish them sternly.

DGP Blames Pakistan...

policemen and wounded another on the outskirts of Srinagar. Singh, however, asserted that the efforts to strengthen peace in the union territory would continue. The DGP was speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a wreath-laying ceremony of the two police personnel killed when militants fired indiscriminately upon a police party in Nowgam area here earlier in the day. We have placed extended deployments at many places in the city and outside it for the August 15 (I-Day) function. We were also increasing the deployment on the outskirts (of the city). It is unfortunate that a deployment team was attacked on the outskirts of the city in Nowgam and two jawans were killed and another injured, Singh told reporters. The DGP said Pakistan and its proxies cannot tolerate the peaceful atmosphere in Jammu and Kashmir and often create hurdles in the path towards peace. We are all aware of the situation in Kashmir where the militants regularly try to target civilians, police and forces and sometimes they succeed, but at the same time, the police and forces keep on taking actions to improve the situation, he said. We will intensify the (anti-militancy) operations in the coming days, but such incidents take place because Pakistan and its proxies cannot tolerate the peaceful atmosphere here. Such conspiracies are hatched from across the border and they try to create hurdles in the way to peace. However, I am confident that our efforts to strengthen peace will continue, he added. Singh said the state forces are focused on strengthening security in the valley for the I-Day function on Saturday. Talking about the arrangements, he said, We will use drones and camera-fitted vehicles to monitor the situation. We are trying to improve the use of gadgetry and in the coming days, CCTV coverage in the city and other places will be increased. The other things like physical deployment and surveillance are being employed, he said.

2 Jaish OGWs Held In Tral...

by state forces from the district's Tral area, a police spokesperson said. They have been identified as Reyaz Ahmad Bhat, a resident of Amirabad Tral and Mohammad Umer Tantray, a resident of Aripdal Tral, he said. According to police records, the two were involved in providing shelter, logistics and other support to Jem militants besides transporting arms and ammunition to militants operating in Tral and Awantipora areas, he added. Incriminating material, including explosive material, has been recovered from their possession, the spokesperson said. A case has been registered and further investigation has been initiated, he said.

Stringent Security Across...

made in uptown Batmaloo, Hari Singh High Street, Jehangir Chowk, Qamarwari, Rambagh, Maisuma and other areas to meet any possible protests or militant attacks. Posse of policemen in full battle gear has been deployed around the historic Ganta Ghar, Budshah Chowk, SK Park, M A Road, Dalgate and other areas of the city to prevent any untoward incident on I-day. At M A link road, forces conducted day-long searches and subjected the people to frisking and identity checks. Similar reports were received from other parts of this capital city. SK Cricket Stadium, the main venue of August 15 celebrations has virtually been turned into a fortress. Three tier security has been thrown around the venue, where newly appointed Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha will hoist tricolour and take salute of I-day parade, an official told Kashmir Observer. He said CRPF and policemen have been deployed in and around the venue to ensure incident free I-day. "The movement of people is also being constantly monitored through the close circuit cameras (CCTVs) that are installed at various places in the city. Besides it sniffer dogs and bomb disposal squad have also been kept on standby to ensure peaceful conduct of I-day celebrations," the official said. Ariel surveillance is also being maintained with the help of UAVs, he said. According to witnesses, security has also been beefed up across downtown Srinagar. The forces at Rainawari, Nowhatta, Khanyar and other places of the downtown were seen frisking the people and subjecting them to identification checks. The police also carried out surprise check of the vehicles on all the entry and exit points in this capital city. Security has also been beefed along the 300-km Srinagar-Jammu highway to foil any possible militant attack. Sensitive stretches of the highway from Pampore to Khanabal has been covered with thick blanket of security. Alert cops and paramilitaries holding automatic rifles are closely monitoring the movement of people. Meanwhile, reports of heightened security have also been received from Baramulla, Bandipora and Kupwara districts of north Kashmir. In Baramulla and Sopore, police and troops were seen carrying out searches of all the passenger and private vehicles on the Kupwara-Baramulla and Baramulla-Srinagar highway. Similar reports poured in from Shopian, Anantnag and Kulgam districts

Palestinians Unanimously...

Emirati army was never on the borders ready to fight Israel," said

Khalistani Flag Hoisted On Moga Admin Building Amid I-Day Alerts

CHANDIGARH: Amid the Independence Day alerts, two miscreants managed to hoist a Khalistani flag atop Moga administrative building after removing the tricolour, prompting Chief Minister Amarinder Singh to order the state police chief to ensure their immediate arrest. Following the incident, the Punjab police announced a reward of Rs 50,000 to anybody for giving any information leading to the arrest of the duo, even as Chief Minister Singh vowed to "teach a lesson" to anti-India elements like terrorist Gurpatwant Singh Pannu and his US-based pro-Khalistan outfit "Sikhs for Justice". You try to come to Punjab and I will

Mustafa al-Barghouti, leader of the Palestinian National Initiative and member of the PA parliament. "We've been seeing recent strange moves by the UAE such as sending direct flights to Israel, and there were leaks of secret accords between the two in terms of scientific and economic cooperation. It is clear that these were preliminary steps to absorb yesterday's shock." Rejecting the agreement The PA and all Palestinian factions, including Hamas and the Islamic j-had, issued official statements denouncing the UAE-Israel agreement. Palestinian leaders who spoke to Al Jazeera called it a "stab in the back". "We already knew that there has been normalisation going under the table, but to formalise and legalise it that way at this critical moment is shocking. It's a stab in our back and the back of all Arab nations," said Majida al-Masri, former PA minister of social affairs. Al-Barghouti emphasised the deal "doesn't introduce any change or progress, it's far from being genuine peace". "This is an attempt to enforce the 'deal of the century' that aims to liquidate Palestinian national rights, it represents a denial of Palestinian, Arab and Islamic rights," he said. Palestinian leaders said the deal was "a free gift to Israel" and was made to help the re-election of Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. "The UAE's position, in terms of its timing and essence, can only be understood as giving Israel leverage for free," said Wasel Abu Yousef, member of the PLO's Executive Committee and leader of the Palestine Liberation Front. "There's no reasonable justification for it except that it gives more power to the occupation and increases its crimes against the Palestinians." Normalising de facto annexation Although, Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Zayed said the agreement "was reached to stop further Israeli annexation", Palestinians saw little credibility to this claim. "The UAE is trying to deceive and mislead the public by re-packaging this shameful agreement as a service to the Palestinians and claiming that it halts annexation, but that's merely throwing dust in the eyes," Majdalani said. Al-Masri said annexation was "already going nowhere because the entire world was standing against it". "So using annexation as a pretext is an exploitation of Palestinians to cover up what's been done here," al-Masri said. "But neither the UAE nor other countries are entitled to speak in the name of Palestinians. "The format of the agreement implicitly approves of Israel's annexation of Jerusalem. It only opposes 'further annexation' while approving what's been annexed already." Palestinian leaders argued the agreement will not stop Israel from extending sovereignty to the West Bank. "Instead of de jure annexation, Israel is furthering its creeping annexation. It's accelerating and increasing its aggression on the ground in terms of settlement construction, home demolitions and what's happening in the Ibrahimiy and Al-Aqsa mosques, and in lands that fall in area C," said al-Masri. Palestinians noted that Netanyahu had kept the door open to annexation and merely said it was temporarily delayed. "Netanyahu responded directly to this point and said that annexation is still on the agenda," al-Masri said. "This is a slap in the face of the UAE - to prove them wrong and embarrass them."

Breaching Arab positions

Al-Barghouti called the agreement "a divergence from the Arab peace initiative" and "a stab in the back of Arab positions". "It even contradicts the interests of the Emirate people themselves and goes against the historic position of the UAE's previous rulers such as Sheikh Zaid," he said. Majdalani said the deal aims to reshape the Arab approach to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. "It allows Netanyahu to say that he can achieve peace in return for peace with the Arabs without withdrawing from any territories." Al-Barghouti said he fears the agreement will give a pretext to countries such as Germany and the United Kingdom - which welcomed the deal - to look away from the situation. "But we're surprised that Arab governments like Bahrain and others would openly express support for this deal. Did they forget the Palestinian people and their rights? Did they forget Jerusalem and Islam?" he said. Added Abu Yousef: "The world should see Israel's accelerated and increased crimes on the ground in the occupied territories, not just the threat of annexation." **'Struggle will continue'** Despite the disappointment, Palestinians emphasised Thursday's announcement will not affect their determination to end the occupation. "Our sacrifices that we gave in confronting this occupation will not go to waste, we will strongly hold on to our rights and principles, supported by all the free people of the world," said Abu Yousef. Majdalani the Palestinian leadership was looking a way to respond. "We took an immediate decision to recall our ambassador to Abu Dhabi and we're currently having all options on the table to consider." Palestinian officials urged the Arab world and international community to act. "The best response to the deal can only come from fellow Arab nations," al-Masri noted. Abu Yousef said the PLO "calls on Arab states to issue a unified position against the UAE's decision, so that there wouldn't be space for other Arab countries to follow its lead in weakening Arab positions and support to the Palestinians". He said the UN's International Criminal Court (ICC), which may soon announce an investigation into Israeli actions in occupied Palestine, must now act. "The international community, particularly international organisations like the UN, are now urged more than ever to take responsibility in stopping these crimes and empowering our people. Hence, we call on the ICC to expedite its ruling on holding the occupation accountable," Abu Yousef said. Al-Masri concluded: "We still have hope on the Arab people, including the Emirati people who unfortunately cannot express their mind due to terrible state repression. The Arab public still rejects such normalisation."

At Galwan, Bravery In...

recoveries rose to over 17 lakh, according to the Health Ministry. He also complimented the Modi government, noting it is very reassuring to note that the Centre while anticipating the tremendous challenge responded effectively and well in time. "For a country so vast and diverse with high population density, meeting this challenge requires super-human efforts." Without taking China's name, the President said "while the world community needs to fight together against the greatest challenge(COVID-19) before humanity, some in our neighbourhood tried to carry out their misadventure of expansion." He saluted the brave soldiers who laid down their lives defending the country's borders. "Those worthy sons of 'Bharat Mata' lived and died for national pride. The entire nation salutes the martyrs of Galwan Valley. Every Indian feels grateful to their family members," he said. Twenty personnel of the Indian army were killed during clashes with the Chinese PLA in Galwan Valley in eastern Ladakh on June 15. "Their bravery in combat has demonstrated that while we believe in peace, we are also capable of giving a befitting response to any attempt of aggression. We are proud of the members of our Armed Forces, paramilitary forces and police personnel who protect the borders, and ensure our internal security." The President also said construction of the temple at Shri Ram Jammabhoomi in Ayodhya "was indeed a moment of pride for all". Prime Minister Modi performed the 'Bhoomi Pujan' for the Ram temple on August 5. "People of the country maintained restraint and patience for a long time and reposed unflinching trust in the judicial system. The issue

teach you a lesson, said Singh, daring

Pannu and adding that any attempt to disturb peace in Punjab would be dealt with an iron hand. The CM also urged youths not to be swayed or misled by anti-national forces.

The two youths managed to sneak into the Moga administrative complex along with the employees reporting for duty at office opening hours and managed to reach the terrace of the four-storied building and hoist a saffron Khalistani flag, said Moga Superintendent of Police Harmanbir Singh Gill.

The accused hoisted the Khalistani flag after removing the tricolour from the building, he said, adding the police have the CCTV

of Ram Jammabhoomi was resolved through judicial process." All concerned parties and the people respectfully accepted the verdict of the Supreme Court and displayed before the world, Indian ethos of peace, non-violence, love and harmony, he said. Talking about the economy, the President said it has been the tradition of India that "we do not just live for ourselves, but work for the well-being of the entire world. "India's self-reliance means being self-sufficient without alienating or creating distance from the world. It implies that India will continue to engage with the world economy while maintaining its identity." President Kovind said the overwhelming support India got at the elections for the non-permanent seat of the United Nations Security Council is a testimony to the goodwill we enjoy internationally. The year 2020 had taught some tough lessons to the world as the "invisible virus has demolished the illusion that human being is the master of nature", he said, adding he believed it is still not too late for humanity to correct its course and live in harmony with nature and ensure that 21st century is remembered as the century when humanity put aside differences and collaborated to save the planet. The pandemic, like climate change, has awakened the global community to our shared destiny. In my view, 'human-centric collaboration' is more important than 'economy-centric inclusion', in the present context, he said, adding "the greater this change, the better it will be for the humanity.

He said the second lesson was that "we are all equal before nature and we primarily depend on our fellow residents for survival and growth.

"Coronavirus does not recognize any artificial divisions created by human society. This reinforces the belief that we need to rise above all man-made differences, prejudices, and barriers. Compassion and mutual help have been adopted as basic values by the people in India. We need to further strengthen this virtue in our conduct. Only then can we create a better future for all of us." He also said it was time for augmenting health infrastructure as public hospitals and laboratories have been leading the fight against COVID-19. "Public health services have helped the poor cope with the pandemic. In view of this, public health infrastructure needs to be expanded and strengthened," he added. The President, while speaking about the lessons learnt, mentioned that the pandemic has highlighted the need to accelerate developments in science and technology. "During the lockdown and subsequent unlocking, information and communication technology has emerged as an effective tool for governance, education, business, office work and social connect. It has helped meet the twin objectives of saving lives and resumption of activities," he said. He highlighted that government offices as well as judiciary has been extensively using virtual interface to discharge their functions and technology has enabled certain establishments in government and private sectors to work overtime to keep the wheels of the economy running. "Thus, we have learnt the lesson that adoption of science and technology, in harmony with nature, will help sustain our survival and growth," he said. Kovind also spoke about the New Education Policy unveiled recently, and said he was confident that with the implementation of this policy, a new quality education system will be developed and this will transform the future challenges into opportunities, paving the way for a New India. He said when India won freedom, many predicted that our experiment with democracy will not last long...."but we have always nurtured them as our strengths that make the largest democracy in the world so vibrant. India has to continue playing its leading role for the betterment of humanity". He complimented people for showing patience and wisdom being demonstrated in coping with the pandemic has been appreciated all over the world.

"I am confident that you will continue to maintain caution and act responsibly," the President said. India has a lot to offer to the global community, especially for intellectual and spiritual enrichment and promotion of world-peace, he said and added, "With this spirit, I offer a prayer for the well-being of one and all".

8 More Covid-19 Deaths...

Community Acquired Pneumonia," a senior doctor at the hospital said. Also, a 75-year-old woman from Bemina and a 50-year-old woman from Nishat besides sexagenarian woman from Budgam, who was a cancer patient, died at the hospital, he added. The remaining deaths were reported from SK Institute of medical sciences Soura and include a 62-year-old man from Anantnag, a 65-year-old woman from Srinagar, an 85-year-old man from Sopore, a 73-year-old man from Zadibal and a 55-year-old woman from Srinagar. A senior doctor at SKIMS said that all the patients were having underlying ailments besides bilateral pneumonia. With these deaths, officials said, 520 people have succumbed to the virus in Jammu and Kashmir so far—481 from the Valley and 39 from Jammu division. Srinagar district with 169 deaths tops the list followed by Baramulla (86), Budgam (38), Anantnag (37), Kulgam (31), Pulwama (35), Kupwara (32), Shopian (24), Jammu (27), Bandipora (18), Ganderbal (11), two each in Rajouri, Doda, Poonch and Udhampur besides one each in Ramban, Samba, and Kathua.

60 Travellers Among 540...

27,489. While Kashmir valley reported 421 new cases of coronavirus, the remaining 119 were confirmed by the officials from Jammu division, officials said. With today's new cases, the total number of positive cases in Kashmir division has reached to 21,320 including 15,427 recoveries while as total number of positive cases in Jammu division has reached to 6,169 including 4,515 recoveries and 39 deaths. Officials said that total number of active cases in Jammu and Kashmir were 7,027 including 5,412 from Kashmir division and 1,615 from Jammu division. With 640 more recoveries, the tally of total recoveries in Jammu and Kashmir has reached to 19,942 which is 72.54 percent of the total cases. Pertinently, Srinagar district alone has 6,680 positive cases which is more than the total number of positive cases in Jammu division where total cases are 6,169.

Wrong Decisions Post-47...

people of Jammu and Kashmir dissociated themselves from the communal riots of partition, and "fully immersed themselves in upholding the spirit of national integration". He said everyone is familiar with the contribution and role of the people of Jammu and Kashmir in the struggle for India's liberty and innumerable heroes from the erstwhile state have offered the ultimate sacrifice in service of Mother India. "Unfortunately, some wrong decisions were taken after independence. These decisions inevitably led to resentment in the hearts of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, and distanced them from the rest. This distancing led to the widening of fissures and cracks. Generation after generation was sacrificed at the altar of hatred," he said "Instead of countless doors that should have opened for the people in Independent India, numerous doors closed upon the people, and distances increased," he added.

The J&K LG said that former Prime Minister's Atal Bihari Vajpayee laid great emphasis on Insaniyat, Jamhoriyat and Kashmiriyat. "But hu-

manity conceded defeat to militancy for decades in Kashmir, democracy suffered at the hands of vested interests, and Kashmiriyat was massacred to appease the hatred that ensued," Sinha said

"It is a matter of great sorrow that the legacy of cultural syncretism has been eclipsed by the vicious story of sectarianism. But we want to transform the narrative once again. We want to make development, peace, progress and social harmony the most integral part of the narrative of Jammu and Kashmir," he added.

Referring to the abrogation of Jammu and Kashmir's special status, Sinha said that after the constitutional change enacted in 2019, the central government took not one or two, but historic 50 decisions to transform the face of the region. "A new era of normalcy and development has dawned due to the changes effected in the last year; a new journey has been undertaken," he said. He said the government has earmarked five targets to be achieved, including a just and transparent system of governance, establishing a thriving grassroot level democracy and ensuring every person benefits from government schemes. "Fourthly, we are committed to accelerate the development of Jammu and Kashmir. Lastly, Economic development, creation of employment opportunities and livelihood will be our primary priority," the LG said. He said the government will try to make Jammu and Kashmir an attractive destination for investment. To achieve it, he said new medicity, educational centers and IT Hubs will be developed.

"A land bank of 6000 acres has been created for it. This will open new avenues of employment for our youth. The process of filling 11000 posts has been started to provide employment. In addition to this, 10,000 more vacant posts will be filled soon. The interview for Class III and IV posts has been abolished," Sinha said. To promote tourism, he said new destinations are being developed and unprecedented investment is being made in the sports sector. "Jammu and Kashmir has long suffered from scarcity of development. We have to remove this scarcity. Electricity, water and roads shall be made available to every house and village. We have to create a healthy and educated society here. We have to create ultramodern and world class infrastructure here. We have to transform Jammu and Kashmir into a world class tourism destination. We have to create a peaceful environment here. I expect the full cooperation and support of people here that we may create a new Jammu and Kashmir," Sinha said. He added that it was the dream of Sardar Patel that whole India should not just exist as a political map, but also move forward together at the same time, and conquer new milestones of development and progress.

HRW Seeks Independent...

issued today. "There can be no end to the cycle of violence in Kashmir if security forces are not held accountable for their past and current abuses," she added. The HRW statement that the army claims that the three were militants and killed in a retaliatory gunfight after they fired on the security forces during a search operation on July 18 in Shopian district, and were then buried in Baramulla district. "But their families in Jammu, who identified them from photographs of the killings circulated on social media, said they were laborers who had gone in search of work. Following demands from political parties for an inquiry, on August 10, the army said it will investigate," it added. The statement further said that the families of those killed identified them and said they last had contact with them on July 17, after they reached Shopian to look for work. "The families assumed they may have been quarantined when they could not get in touch after that. They identified their relatives from the photos uploaded on social media of those killed in the Shopian armed encounter and have since filed a missing person report at the police station," the HRW statement read. The police, the handout said have said they are also investigating the killings. "Any army investigation into the recent killings will be meaningless, because the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) gives the security forces effective immunity from prosecution for serious human rights abuses. It grants the military wide powers to arrest, shoot to kill, and occupy or destroy property in counterinsurgency operations," the Human Rights Watch said. "Since the law came into force in Jammu and Kashmir in 1990, the Indian government has not granted permission to prosecute any security force personnel in civilian courts," it added.

Human Rights Watch statement said that the rights body and others have long documented how the law has become a tool of "state abuse, oppression, and discrimination", and called for its repeal. It added that the affected residents, activists, government-appointed committees, politicians, and United Nations human rights bodies have criticized the law.

"Indian officials claim that troops need such powers because the army is only deployed when national security is at serious risk from armed groups. However, the Supreme Court has said that all killings by security forces should be investigated and that such force was not permissible even in an area declared as a disturbed area under AFSPA and against militants, insurgents and terrorists," the statement said. The HRW further added that there have been numerous allegations of extrajudicial killings in Jammu and Kashmir, most of those summarily executed are falsely reported to have died during armed clashes between the army and militants in what are euphemistically called "encounter killings." "A well-known example is the murder of five men in Pathribal who were identified by the police and army as the militants responsible for the massacre of 36 Sikhs in Chattisinghpora in Kashmir in 2000 and then killed in a supposed armed encounter," the HRW statement said.

"Forensic tests ordered by the state government later showed them to be local villagers who were innocent of the Sikh massacre. However, in January 2014, the army said it was closing the case for lack of evidence against the accused army officers," it added. Termining the court martial in 2010 Macchil fake encounter as a rare case of justice, the HRW statement said that in November 2014, the army reported that a military court sentenced five soldiers, including two officers, to life in prison for faking an armed encounter and executing three innocent villagers. "But in July 2017, a military tribunal suspended the punishment of all five soldiers, once again highlighting the culture of impunity," the hand-out added. The HRW said that the latest allegations of extrajudicial killings also come amid the government's ongoing crackdown in Kashmir since it revoked Jammu and Kashmir state's constitutional autonomy in August 2019 and split it into two federally governed territories. It added that hundreds of people remain detained without charge, critics are threatened with arrest, and access to the internet is limited. The statement also said there also have been several allegations of new arrests, torture, and ill-treatment by security forces besides government's harsh counterterrorism and sedition laws to clamp down on peaceful critics. "The Indian authorities have failed the Kashmiri people and have long denied them justice for decades of abuses by security forces, leading to a cycle of unending violence," Ganguly said. "The government should repeal AFSPA, ensure a civilian and independent investigation into the latest killings, and reverse its ongoing restraints on basic rights," she added.

DIG Who Nabbed Davinder...

13 medals for meritorious and distinguished service. Among the meritorious service awardees is Awantipora Senior Superintendent of Police Tahir Saleem Khan, who looks after the highly volatile area of South Kashmir. Many militants have been killed during his tenure. A 2001-batch officer of the Jammu and Kashmir Police Service, Khan has been awarded the police medal for meritorious services in leading his force and elimination of militants which included the longest surviving militant Riyaz Naikoo of Hizbul Mujahideen. This is Khan's second posting in Awantipora during which successful operations have led to the killing of nearly 30 militants.

Hunter's Fire Kills Bengal...

official told news agency KNO that an investigation has been started into this incident.

ACB Arrests Police Officer...

that the documents of his vehicle were compounded by the Sub-inspector after his demand of bribe was rejected. On the basis of the complaint, a caseFIR No.09 of 2020 U/S 13 & 7 PC Act r/w 161 IPC was registered in P/S ACB Srinagar "Accordingly a trap was laid near Kaman Post Batamaloo and the Sub was caught red handed while receiving the bribe money of Rs.3000/- in lieu of releasing the documents of the said vehicle which he had retained," the ACB spokesperson said. The accused officer, the spokesperson said has been shifted to police station Shaheed Gunj after obtaining the police remand "Further investigation of the case is going on," the ACB spokesperson added.

Government Medical College. Srinagar

10-Karan Nagar, Srinagar Kashmir, 190010 Phone No. 0914-2504114 Fax No 0194-2503115

Advertisement Notice No. 15 of 2020

Dated: 11-08-2020

Applications on the prescribed format are invited from the (in-service/ on-PSC doctors) eligible candidates for the post of Registrar/Demonstrator on (tenure basis) in the following disciplines. However, the services of Non PSC candidates shall be hired on Academic Arrangement basis under SRO. 24 of 2019 Dated. 10-01-2019 and the PSC confirmed candidates shall be governed by the relevant rules as envisaged in the J&K Civil Service Rules 1979, initially for a period of one year extendable upto 03 years subject to better performance of the candidate during their 1st and 2nd years of engagement, which can be obtained from the respective hods after completion of 1st and 2nd year of Registrarship/ Demonstratorship, as the case may be:-

S. NO.	Name of Discipline	Essential Qualification
1.	Pathology	MD/DNB/Diploma from an Institution duly recognized by the MCI in the concerned discipline
2.	Anatomy	
3.	Blood Bank	
4.	Physiology	

Candidates interested in applying for Registrar/Demonstrators posts at Government Medical college, Srinagar should download the respective application form from Government Medical College, Srinagar website <http://www.gmcs.edu.in/> between 16-08-2020 to 31-08-2020 or the same may be collected from the Photostat Section of Government Medical College, Srinagar. The application forms should be accompanied with a non-refundable bank receipt of Rs 300/- (Rupees three hundred only) from J&K Bank, GMC, Srinagar (account No. 7655). Application forms complete in all respects should reach the office of the Registrar Academics upto 31-08-2020.

TERMS & CONDITIONS:-

- incomplete application form(s) in any respect or not attached with relevant certificates shall be rejected without further communications.
- conditions for PSC/ Non-PSC Candidates:-

For in-service (PSC confirmed) candidates:-

- The in-service doctor shall be paid salary as per their lpc.
- Applicants working in Health and Medical Education Department are required to submit their application forms along with No Objection Certificate from their parent Department without which their application forms shall not be entertained as envisaged in Government Order No. 164-HME of 2012 Dated. 02.03.2012.
- Those PSC confirmed doctors who have already completed their tenure as Registrar/Demonstrator In any discipline need not to apply and their application forms shall not be considered.

3. For Non-PSC candidates:-

- The Non PSC doctors shall be paid stipend as per under SRO. 24 of 2019 Dated. 10-01-2019.
4. The application forms should be accompanied with the following self attested copies of the documents:-
- MBBS/Diploma/MD/MS/DNB/MCh/DM qualification certificates of the respective specialty.

- internship certificate.
- MCI/State Medical Council Registration Certificate
- Physical active field service certificate after PG/Rural service prior to PG certificate issued by the Director, Health Services, Jammu/Kashmir in respect of in-service doctors.
- Attempt certificate 1st, 2nd, pre-final and Final MBBS examinations issued by the University of Kashmir concerned.
- Distinction/National Scholarship/Honors/Medals/Academic Merit certificates.
- House Officer (House job) experience certificate issued by the Principal concerned or equivalent recognized authority.
- Diploma certificate/postgraduate degree certificate.
- Date of Birth Certificate
- Professional publications in a standard medical journal, if any.

5.. The candidates has to produced an Affidavit duly attested by the Judicial Magistrate declaring that:-

- the applicant has not done Registrar-ship/Sr. Residency earlier within or outside J&K union Territory (only for PSC confirmed candidates).
- he/she is a Non-PSC candidate (the information if found wrong he/she shall be punished under Rules) (only for Non-PSC candidates).

6. The selected candidate has to submit an affidavit to the effect that he/she is not on the rolls of any Medical Colleges/institutions of the country which is pre-requisite in terms of MCI norms.

7. Maximum age for eligibility to apply shall be 50 years as on 01-08-2020

8. The Competent Authority reserves the right of any amendment, cancellation and changes to this advertisement as a whole or in part without assigning any reason or giving notice.

9- The decision of the competent authority regarding selection of candidates will be final and no representation will be entertained In this regard.

Separate application form is to be filled for each post and fee is to be deposited separately for each post, applied for.

11- In case of any declaration by the candidate is found false or if the candidate has willfully suppressed any material/information relevant to his/her appointment, his/her selection will be cancelled ab-intio liable for action as warranted under rules.

12. Candidates meeting the eligibility criteria and producing all the prescribed documents will be interviewed.

13. The selected candidates shall have to execute an agreement that he/she will not leave the Department before the completion of Registrarship/ Demonstratorship term, however abandoning/terminating of the arrangement in the Specialty will require one month prior notice on either side failing which the salary shall not be paid for one month to the incumbent which shall always remain in deposit with the Department and shall be released on completion of sanctioned term.

The selection of the candidates will be made on the basis of combined academic merit and performance at the interview.

NO TA/DA will be admissible for appearing in interview.

NO: AR/MC/R/D/AdV/7823-35/MC

Dated: 11-08-2020

DIPK-4114/20

Principal/Dean
Government MEDICAL COLLEGE. SRINAGAR

**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL
TRANSPORT OFFICER BUDGAM KASHMIR****NOTICE**

Whereas an application has been recieved from one.

Shri : Rafiq Ahmad Teli

S/o: Ghulam Mohammad Teli

R/o: Badipora Chadoora Budgam owner of vehicle bearing Registration No: JK04E-9748 for cancellation of hire purchase agreement with M/S J&K Bank B/U Magam Budgam..

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

No. ARTO/ BUDGAM.12558

Dated 14/08/2020

Assistant Regional Transport officer
Budgam Kashmir

**GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR****OFFICE OF THE BLOCK****MEDICAL OFFICER KULGAM**

Old Hospital Kulgam Pin Code 192231 Phone 01931-260112

Email:- bmokulgam@gmail.com , bpmukulgam@gmail.com

Sub: - Poor response regarding the receipt of tenders for spectacles under National Program of Control of Blindness.

NOTICE

Due to poor response, the date of receipt of tenders for spectacles under National Program of Cofntrol of Blindness for the year 2020-21 vide NIT number BMOK/NHM/170-171 dated 20-07-2020 is hereby extended up to 24-08-2020 at 3:00 PM and same will be opened on 25-08-2020 at 11:00 AM in presence of any intending supplier/ any other authorized representative who may want to be present. If there is any holiday on 25-08-2020 the schedule of opening of tenders will be on the next working day.

BMOK/NHM/191-192

Dated: 14-08-2020

DIPK-4097/20

Block Medical Officer
Kulgam



Ministry of Information & Broadcasting
Government of India



Independence Day
Greetings to all fellow citizens

Jai Hind

“15th August is a day to pay homage to all those greats who worked hard for India's freedom. Their struggles continue to give strength to millions. Independence Day is an occasion to reaffirm our commitment to build an India that would make our respected freedom fighters proud.”

- Narendra Modi

KASHMIR OBSERVER

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NO HOLDS BARRED

Back to school Supplies...



US would need great-
er support from South-
east Asian nations if it want-
ed to send a message that
China should not dominate
the South China Sea.

Indian Muslims At Crossroads

But the issue to ponder is whether the community should blame itself or others for its current situation

Asad Mirza

From 1990 onwards, the right-wing forces representing the majority community in the country, which had got emboldened after the demolition of the Babri Masjid in 1992, further made headways in consolidating themselves on the political landscape of the country

Seventy three years after attaining independence, in the struggle for which it played a crucial role, the Indian Muslims community is standing at a crossroad one again. In 1947, it was the question of whether one should migrate to Pakistan, a country created by the Britishers in the name of Muslims, or continue to stay in a country where our forefathers lie buried. And which promised equal rights and duties to all of its citizens. Instead after 73 years that question has turned into an existential one instead of whom to support.

However, it would be better if the Muslim community instead of turning the issue into an existential one, introspects and find the areas and issues, where it has floundered to be seen as part of the country's mainstream. Following it with judicious and committed planning and strategising, so that these difficulties could be overcome and after the next 26 years, when we'll be celebrating the century of our independence, we can proudly say that the community has fulfilled the aspirations of its followers and countrymen, both.

Indian Muslims after the partition

The initial years after independence, the Indian Muslims while continuing to wish away the negative repercussions of the partition tried to organise themselves politically, educationally and in business. The community leaders like Rafi Ahmad Kidwai, Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani, Maulana Hifzur Rehman, Maulana Azad and Dr Zakir Husain tried to provide as much succour and guidance to a community, which was feeling orphaned, as the crème de la crème of the community had migrated to Pakistan and the vast multitudes of Indian Muslims were left rudderless. They paid particular attention to its educational development. But during this time the leadership, which was desired to be provided by the religious leaders of the community was not forthcoming.

A rudderless community

From 1970s till 1980s, the Muslim community was completely rudderless, as most of its stalwart leaders had passed away by 1969; it had no political leader of any stature to lead the whole community. Unfortunately, the community leadership passed on to amateur and sycophants, who had no political vision



or strategy to lead the community except self-aggrandisement.

During this phase, the gold rush in the Middle East started and a big percentage of Muslims from the coastal states of Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra migrated to these countries in search of lucrative jobs. The money remitted by them was used in educational development of the community, but only a very small percentage. Though even this small investment paid big dividends in the long term in increasing the educational level of the community and its economic progress and social development in the aforementioned states.

But this was not accompanied by the reforms required for the upliftment of the Muslim society as a whole. At the political front pygmy and amateur leaders represented the community, and on religious front also they were not united. Instead, what happened was that the flow of easy money from the Gulf further subdivided the community into many more sub-sects religiously.

Betrayal by secular forces

From 1980 till 1990, the Muslim community as a whole faced a plethora of politico-religious issues, and unfortunately once again it was let down by its religious and political leaders and country's secular leaders both. But, economically the

community was on the road to progress, based on its achievements in the educational fields. The credit for this little progress should be given to the countless number of faceless Muslims who worked passionately for the emancipation of the community, without any mature or visionary leadership or a cohesive plan.

Rise of anti-Muslim elements

From 1990 onwards, the right-wing forces representing the majority community in the country, which had got emboldened after the demolition of the Babri Masjid in 1992, further made headways in consolidating themselves on the political landscape of the country.

Muslims were being pushed to the margins of the political stage of the country. The right wing forces continued to consolidate themselves on the basis of ideological and psychological tactics and political brinkmanship. It scored its greatest victory when AB Vajpayee became the country's prime minister in 1996.

1996 onwards, the right-wing BJP continued to consolidate itself in various Indian states and was ultimately able to form the government with a majority in the lower house of the parliament in 2014. From 2014 onwards Indian Muslims have faced an onslaught of attacks one after the other. Yet the response of the community leaders had not been up to the mark, as a whole.

The way ahead

This leads us to ponder over the main question again, what the Indian Muslims should do now?

The answer lies in introspection and analysing the issues, which have held the community down. This should lead to prioritising the issues at hand. Altruistically speaking, first, it should try to present a unified image, not beleaguered by sectional differences. Secondly, it should adopt a proactive approach not a reactionary approach to handle issues at hand. People who do not represent the community at any level should not be seen as representing the community at any level, instead they should be excommunicated. Thirdly, it should try to forge sustainable links with other minorities in the country like Parsis, Sikhs and Christians. Further it should try to learn from these minorities, as to how they have fared well in educational and economic sectors, utilising the community's donations and guidance by experts.

Fourthly, it should engage in self-introspection and try to reform itself of practices, which are detrimental for the growth of the community as a whole, such as curbing wasteful expenditure on marriages and other religious functions. And lastly, the message to change the community's psyche and approach on issues facing it should be conveyed in a logical and easily understandable format to all, by a committee of elders representing all the factions and schools of thought of the community besides the political and social activists.

At the political front, Muslims should adopt a multi-dimensional strategy, strengthening the secular and democratic forces of the country, assured of the support of 63% secular and right thinking population of India.

Until and unless the Muslim community as a whole decides to change its psyche and reform itself, nobody can help the community survive the present onslaught.

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

US Has Lost Southeast Asia to China

The major claimants in the South China Sea dispute - Vietnam, Malaysia, Philippines, and Brunei, have refused to be dragged into the US-China tussle

Asif Ullah Khan

After giving China a free hand in Southeast Asia, the United States is trying to regain the lost ground. This is evident from US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo's recent phone calls to foreign ministers of many ASEAN countries. But, is it a case of too little, too late?

US President Donald Trump lost Southeast Asia to China on day one of his presidency when he scrapped the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade deal. Senators across the party line had criticised the decision with late John McCain (Republican) calling it "a serious mistake that will have lasting consequences for America's economy and our strategic position in the Asia-Pacific region" while Democrat Senator Sherrod Brown said, "it would ultimately give China more influence over the region".

The TPP, conceived by President Barack Obama, was seen as a crucial move to counter China's economic and military influence in the Southeast Asia region. China was deliberately kept out of the deal to give 11 nations more leverage and a better economic alternative.

Kishore Mahbubani, the dean of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore, and author of 'Has China Won?: The Chinese Challenge to American Primacy' had predicted at that time that, if the US walks away from

TPP, the biggest winner will be China. There's no doubt about that now. Following the withdrawal of TPP, China has ramped up its economic and political influence in the region.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was more forthright when he said: "There's no doubt that the focus will shift" to the China-led deal. And after that, trade negotiators from China, Japan, Australia, India and 12 other Asian nations got down to stitch the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). With the US missing from the deal and India withdrawing at the last moment, China has been given greater leverage in being the largest economy in a now regionally focused East Asian system.

The 35 ASEAN summit in Bangkok, held in November 2019, provided further evidence of how the US is neglecting its strategic interest in the region. Mark J Valencia, writing in The South China Morning Post said the United States had lost ground, yet again, in its struggle with China for the hearts and minds of Southeast Asia. According to him, the US diminished its clout by sending a delegation headed by US National Security Adviser Robert O'Brien and Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross to a summit attended by Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "The lower-level representation of the US delegation embarrassed summit host Thai-

land, a traditional US ally, and confirmed suspicions that ASEAN does not figure prominently in US strategic thinking and that US commitment to the region is unreliable.", added Valencia.

This perception was confirmed in the "State of Southeast Asia 2020" report issued by the Singapore-based Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS). As many as 47 per cent of respondents to the ISEAS survey had little or no confidence in the United States as a strategic partner and provider of regional security. More than three-quarters believed that US engagement with Southeast Asia has declined under the Trump administration, and 79 per cent held that China is the most influential economic power in the region.

This is the reason why Pompeo's phone calls to foreign ministers of Singapore, Indonesia, Brunei, and to the vice-president of Vietnam failed to evoke a positive response.

The major claimants in the South China Sea dispute - Vietnam, Malaysia, Philippines, and Brunei, have refused to be dragged into the US-China tussle. Malaysian foreign minister Hishammuddin Hussein has said that Malaysia does not want to be 'dragged and trapped' in a geopolitical tussle between superpowers while Philippine's president Rodrigo Duterte has ordered the Philippine navy not to join US-led military exercises in the South China Sea. Brunei, on the other hand, has never asserted its claim strongly.

The lone voice of dissent comes from Vietnam, which is facing intense pressure from China. Recently, Vietnam had agreed to pay around a billion dollars to two international oil companies after cancelling their South China Sea operations following pressure from China.

Singapore and Indonesia, who are not claimants in the South China Sea, have clearly steered away from the dispute. A statement issued by the foreign ministry said: "Singapore is not a claimant state and we do not take sides on the competing territorial claims". Similarly, Indonesian foreign minister Retno Marsudi posted on Twitter about her call with Pompeo, saying that she had raised two issues - vaccine production as well as the strengthening of trade and investment. Most analysts say that Retno's leaving out of the South China Sea dispute was part of Indonesia's 'balanced' approach in the US-China rivalry.

Hikmahanto Juwana, a professor of international law at the University of Indonesia also added that the US would need greater support from Southeast Asian nations if it wanted to send a message that China should not dominate the South China Sea.

Asif Ullah Khan has held senior editorial positions at Khaleej Times and Brunei Times.

Interview: ‘The Ghosts of Past Still Haunting Masses in Kashmir’

Rakshanda Afrin

“After many failures, Kashmiris saw an awakening in the beginning of the twentieth century under some external and internal influences. They started asserting to once again find some place in history so that they carve out some respectable space in the comity of nations.

IN Shah Faesal’s sudden and snappy political step, many see the shades of the Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah who “came out as a changed man from his detention”. But while some, especially National Conference loyalists, dismiss such comparisons as far-fetched and absurd, the debate has once again resurrected the contested legacy of the unionist politics in Kashmir.

Academician Dr Altaf Hussain Para is someone who recently captured some of the fascinating accounts of Sheikh’s political life, and his conduct as “the tallest leader of Kashmir” in his critically-acclaimed book, *The Making Modern Kashmir: Sheikh Abdullah and the Politics of the State*.

Published by Routledge in 2018, the book presents an inside-view of the history of modern Kashmir through the life and times of the much enigmatic yet complex mass leader and analysis of events which led to the emergence of a contested identity of the region.

Currently busy working on an oral history project and a textbook on Kashmir History, *Dr Para* in a candid chat with *Kashmir Observer* throws light on why one needs to understand the past rationally, talks about the Sheikh’s contradictory stances and U-turns, and expresses his views on the major developments of the valley as well as present day affairs.

Looking back at the history, do you think most of the bygone historical and political occurrences to present day developments have only contributed to the ‘tragic story of Kashmir’?

Let me begin by underlining that every contemporary society of the world has its share of tragic historical experiences with only a slight difference in time span and intensity and Kashmir is no exception to this historical generality.

Now what makes Kashmir, including few other societies of the world, somehow different with regard to its experiences with the past is the fact that while most of the nations have overcome their tragic pasts including the menace of colonialism, the ghosts of the past are still haunting the masses in Kashmir.

Despite having a glorious past with a recorded historical experiences and contribution to world thought, governance, technology and art, Kashmiris have been subjected to the worst kind of humiliations, negligence and dehumanization since the Mughal conquest of the Valley.

Kashmiris were thrown out of the history by Mughals, Afghans, Sikhs and the worst came when the entire nation was sold by British to a courtier of Sikh Darbar.

After many failures, Kashmiris saw an awakening in the beginning of the twentieth century under some external and internal influences. They started asserting to once again find some place in history so that they carve out some respectable space in the comity of nations.

In nutshell, one needs to understand Kashmir history rationally without any prejudice if one really wants to know why Kashmir is what it is today.

What do you feel about Kashmir’s general discontentment or dissatisfaction with the Abdullahs and other top political players? And what’s your opinion on the recent backlash on Omar Abdullah’s statehood demands?

Sheikh Abdullah who emerged as the face and



symbol of Kashmiri resistance against autocracy, feudalism and communalism in the thirties of the twentieth century and an undisputed leader to shape their destiny, has been accused for making frequent U-turns and somersaults and using mass aspirations to advance his political power.

For instance, while he vigorously championed the case of democracy and socio-economic justice during the anti-colonial and anti-autocracy movement in Kashmir, he himself supervised an administration from 1948 to 1953 with least regard to democratic and constitutional values. People who disagreed with him were subjected to worst kinds of tortures and discrimination.

Also after his dismissal, he patronized a two-decade long movement creating a deep-rooted secessionist mass psyche among the people which he failed to eradicate when he negotiated terms with Indira Gandhi to regain power.

He even caused a huge disrespect to his supporters by calling the movement, which saw the death of hundreds and imprisonment of thousands of his followers, as political wilderness.

Although Omar Abdullah has issued some clarifications with regard to his recent statement, some people see in him a politician who can make any compromises to occupy some position in power. Although it appears an unpalatable reality, ever since Sheikh Abdullah tasted the forbidden fruit in 1975, political class across the board in Valley is still struggling to gain a popular trust and that is unfortunately one of the dimensions of the problem as well.

Do you think the Kashmir issue is largely demonized and contested because of narratives based on selective history and biases by the certain ‘custodians of knowledge’?

I must say that all political leaders and political parties across the globe have been dishonest to the his-

torical episteme. They selectively quote history to suit their ideologies.

If past is unpalatable, they either manufacture ‘facts’ or fictionalize the history to fit it to their agendas. ‘If there is no suitable past,’ as they say, ‘it can always be invented’. Also there is no single perspective to the past.

In fact there is no history; there are histories. Past cannot be judged through a single perspective. If you do, you will end up capturing only one dimension of a picture like a group of blindfolded men giving a contradictory description of an elephant.

People cutting across their ideological positions need to look at the past rationally if we really want to make decisions regarding our present and future wisely.

As a historian, do you see any plausible end to the crisis of Kashmiris?

Looking at past experiences based on my engagements with historical events, I must say I am optimistic with regard to the future.

Post Covid-19, I see a better and peaceful world emerging with human life being valued more. Now the world is experiencing how difficult it is to live in lockdowns and under constant threat to life. This will definitely reduce bitterness around and will create better conditions for a peaceful and dignified co-existence.

Already a year has passed since the abrogation of Article 370, what will it mean for the region in the course of history?

The abrogation of Article 370 last year was only the first step in order of a chain of other such steps the union government is taking since then. Things are still unfolding and it will be too early to have an opinion about its impact in future.

Take A Deep Breath, Do Nothing And Change The World

Abhishek Sengupta

So an Indonesian man last month had an epiphany. He got up on what looked like his bed, sat in front of the camera in a dimly lit room and recorded himself doing ‘absolutely nothing’ to become an overnight YouTube sensation.

Five centuries ago when a young Isaac Newton sat under a tree doing absolutely nothing, he was bonked on the head by a falling apple. In a ‘eureka moment’ next, he came up with the law of gravity and changed the world forever. But if the art of lolling needed a twenty-first century setting and a modern-day poster boy in the history of human evolution, then Muhammad Didi should get the crown four weeks after making the video with over 2.7 million views. Daft? Yes, but with 2.7 million views and counting, it’s a crude reminder that ‘nothing’ does mean ‘something’ for today’s people.

For someone who’s spent over 15 years making videos with gimbals, lights, cameras, and other important props including humans but with or without such viewership, it’s a heart-breaking realisation that good, compelling content isn’t any longer the king but it is the size and degree of absurdity (of-

ten sheer stupidity by some standards) that attracts attention. And that’s how last year’s semi-ripened banana secured to a wall with a duct tape fetched a tag of \$120,000 in the name of art at an exhibition. Both simple and minimalistic yet as ludicrous and brainless as they may seem but both celebrated and feted with views, newsprint, and spotlight.

Inspired, I stood at the balcony on Saturday evening with a cup of coffee to look out to the evening vanilla sky for my moment of honing the art of ‘doing nothing’. But the monotony got to me in a couple of minutes and so I dumped the plan wondering if doing nothing was even a thing and if it was as easy as people make it out to be. After all, most of

us have at some point in time and in some capacity been accused of ‘doing nothing’. The boss at work has said this to me often and if I did a secret snap poll, I am pretty sure most of my colleagues would think so too. The missus at home who thinks I am up to no good has levelled such allegations as well and we the people as tax-paying voters back home in our country have often directed similar insult and insinuation at an incumbent leader or a past government, depending on our leanings and points of view! But not all allegations are true of course. Some half-baked, some part of libellous and malicious pursuits of people and some the result of men like me who fail to masquerade their downtime

well enough to be caught out. Yet some moments of doing ‘absolutely nothing’ remain terribly classy.

One of Samuel Beckett’s lesser-known works is *Breath*, an unusually brief play that lasts about 35 seconds or about as long as Usain Bolt’s Jamaican team took to set the world record in the 4 x 100 metres relay in 2012 Olympics. And during that entire passage of time, there’s just the sound of a birth-cry, followed by an amplified sound of somebody slowly inhaling and exhaling, accompanied by an increase and decrease in the intensity of the light. The play ends with a second identical cry. No actor, no director, no call of honour at the end; just plain nothing like what many of Andy Warhol’s pop art would seem to most of us - minimalistic and abstract minus the expressionism. But both Beckett and Warhol are institutions who changed the world in their own little way like Newton did with works that arose out of presumably ‘doing nothing’.

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Khaleej Times

Don't Miss Your Health Check-Ups For Fear Of Covid

Joshua S. Yamamoto

Frank Herbert wrote the epic novel ‘Dune’ (which I recommend everyone read before the blockbuster film comes out). When the novel opens, the hero is being tested to determine if he is truly ‘human’. The test goes something like this: His hand is placed in a box. The box creates intense pain, which he knows full well is a phantom pain - no real damage is happening. If he has the will power to keep his hand in the box, then he proves that he is human. If he pulls his hand out before the test is over, he dies.

OK, this is perhaps a brutal test, but it is a work of fiction. However, it does demonstrate an important lesson about what makes us human. We have free will, and we can make decisions to overcome our more basic instincts. In *Dune*, the hero knows that his hand is not being hurt, but his instincts are telling him to pull away from the pain. He has to use his mind to overcome his fear. He recites a mantra that he has been taught, “Fear is the mind killer...” and he wills himself to endure. Spoiler alert, he passes the test.

How is this story relevant today? I am a preventive cardiologist who is mostly concerned with managing the natural aging process so that people do not become demented (have brain damage) or heart failure. What does this have to do with fear? Coronavirus is on pace

to be the third leading cause of death this year, after heart and vascular disease. If you add strokes, which are almost entirely related to the heart and vascular changes that happen naturally with age, and if you add in dementia (dementia is always made worse if you do not have adequate blood flow to the brain), then heart and vascular disease really still tops out the list of things that are most likely to kill us.

It is also the thing most likely to injure or damage us. Most of my patients would rather die than be disabled by a stroke or fade away from vascular dementia. And who wants to be parked in a nursing home in times like these?

We should not have to die prematurely from heart or vascular disease. You can prevent a stroke. And when you preserve blood flow to the brain, you prevent a lot of senile dementia. But, to do this you need to work with your doctor.

And, this is where the fear comes in.

In general, fear is a good thing. It’s what keeps us from getting killed in dangerous situations. Cowards (like me) have a knack for survival. But, like the hero from ‘Dune’, sometimes we have to overcome our fear when there is something more important to worry about, like your health.

Since the start of the pandemic, there has been a great fear, especially among the elderly, to go out and

seek medical care. We have heard that we should put off non-emergent medical care. But, nothing about cardiovascular health is elective. Just because something is not an emergency doesn’t make it optional.

To be specific: we all need to keep up on our medical care. Skipping out on ‘routine’ checks is a recipe for disaster. We manage health, especially cardiovascular health for a reason. When we are under stress (like an infection) we need our bodies to be prepared to meet the challenges. Keep your medical appointments.

If you don’t have a doctor, get one. If you wait until you are really sick before you have someone to turn to, you might as well just be using the emergency room. That is the last place you want to go. Medicare has finally changed the rules so doctors are now allowed to talk to their patients over the phone. Keep in touch. Some things must be done in person, so do that.

The higher risk you are for Covid, the more important it is to maintain your health. But, every day fear prevents people from seeking out medical care they need. What to do?

First, tend to the practical things. Every single health care facility now has a plan to prevent the spread of infection. There are many steps to this plan, and they work. If you want to know what your doctor’s office is doing, call and ask.

Know that this is an airborne virus. It spreads in

the air. Masks and distancing work. The best masks are the ones that protect you (as opposed to ones that just decrease the likelihood of spreading the virus to others). If you really don’t want to spread the virus, don’t catch it. Protect yourself. Go online and buy an N-95 or N-99 mask, and wear it. And wear it properly. I don’t care if it’s uncomfortable, or you don’t want to cover your nose; you can wear it long enough to leave your home and get the health care you need.

I suppose the truly hard part is overcoming the fear. Everyone needs their strategy for that. Some people rely on their faith, or at least faith in Anthony Fauci. Some people rely on logic or think about the balance of risks and benefits. Some people even do math. Some people get so frustrated being stuck at home that they finally go out with the logic that, “if I can’t see my doctor, who can I see?” I’ll take that, it’s a start.

FDR would not be right in this case. We have more to fear than fear itself. We need to fear the virus, but we cannot let that fear own us. If we do, then fear will keep us from getting the health care we need. As we grow older, our heart and circulation will age, and if we don’t tend to that, then we will have strokes. Thus, fear is truly the mind killer.

But we are human, so it doesn’t have to be.

-Psychology Today

Silence from Saudi Arabia as UAE hails Israel accord

Agencies

Abu Dhabi: As media and people in the United Arab Emirates hailed the Gulf state's deal to normalise relations with Israel as a diplomatic victory — which they say helps the Palestinians — silence reigned in Saudi Arabia, longtime figurehead of regional policy towards Israel.

Analysts see the surprise UAE-Israel agreement announced on Thursday as a strategic boost for the UAE's regional and global standing that could put it ahead of its powerful Saudi neighbour and ally, especially in critical relations with Washington.

Saudi Arabia is the Gulf's largest economy and the world's biggest oil exporter, but the UAE has in recent years become increasingly assertive in its own foreign policy, especially in regional hot spots such as Libya, Sudan and Yemen.

In July last year, the UAE said it was withdrawing its troops from Yemen where it had jointly with Saudi Arabia led a Western-backed coalition fighting the Iran-aligned Houthis since 2015.

The accord was a rare triumph for US President Donald Trump in Middle East diplomacy ahead of his November

3 re-election bid. But, should he be defeated by Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden, the UAE could gain an advantage over Riyadh in relations with the United States.

"The move positions the UAE nicely should Biden win, as it will help smooth things over with (the US) Congress and, by doing so, leave Saudi Arabia outflanked and more exposed than ever before," said Neil Quilliam, associate fellow with Chatham House and managing director of Azure Strategy.

"This must be the real concern for the Saudi leadership right now — and the lead calculation on how to respond to the UAE-Israel move."

Last year, Congress passed legislation to block sales of some weapons to Saudi Arabia and the UAE in an attempt to pressure the Gulf states over civilian casualties in the Yemen war. The legislation was vetoed by President Trump.

While there has been no official comment from the Saudis on the UAE-Israel pact so far, Twitter users in the kingdom shared pictures of the late King Faisal, who during the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war led an oil embargo that aimed to punish the United States and other countries for their support of Israel.

US Will "Collapse" If Biden Is Elected President, Says Trump

Agencies

Washington: President Donald Trump has said that the US would collapse and become the world's laughing stock if the Democratic Party's presumptive nominee Joe Biden wins the November 3 presidential elections.

Trump said Biden's proposed policies were not good for the country.

"Today, we saw Joe Biden continue to politicise a pandemic and to show his appalling lack of respect for the American people. That's what it is. At every turn, Biden has been wrong about the virus, ignoring the scientific evidence and putting left-wing politics before facts and evidence," Trump told reporters on Thursday at the White House.

"The world will be laughing and taking full advantage of the United States if Joe Biden ever became President. Our Country would COL-LAPSE!" Trump said in a tweet.

Trump's tweet included a Fox News video clipping in which its news anchor was critical of Indian-American Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal for praising Biden.

The Fox News anchor described Jayapal as socialist and a genuine radical.

"Sleepy Joe opposed both the China and the Europe travel bans. You know that. He opposed the China travel ban that I instituted very early and the Europe travel ban that I instituted quite early. If I listened to his advice, hundreds of thousands more people would have died. This is according to many people," the

president said.

Trump alleged Biden wants to fling open American borders, allowing the pandemic to infiltrate every American community.

"He wants to have ridicu-



lous open borders. I've been saying from the first day I started campaigning for this great office that if you have open borders, you don't have a country. You don't have a country, with open borders. So he wants open borders. The Democrats want open borders," he said.

While Biden will allow rioters, looters and millions of illegal aliens to roam free in our country, he also wants the federal government to issue a sweeping new mandate to law-abiding citizens, Trump alleged.

"He wants the President of the United States, with the mere stroke of a pen, to order over 300 million American citizens to wear a mask for a minimum of three straight months. He thinks it's good politics. Different states are different, both in terms of the atmosphere and also in terms of the coronavirus problem," he said. "If the President has the unilateral power to order every single citizen to cover their face in nearly all instances, what other powers does he have," Trump asked.



West Bank annexation still 'on the table', says Netanyahu

Agencies

JERUSALEM: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Thursday he agreed to delay annexation in the occupied West Bank as part of a normalisation deal with the UAE but the plans remain "on the table".

Netanyahu said that in agreement with US President Donald Trump he had "delayed" West Bank annexation plans, but that he would "never give up our rights to our land".

Netanyahu, like many in the Jewish state, refers to the occupied West Bank as Judea and Samaria and claims the territory as part of the historic homeland of the Jewish people.

Agreement removes time-bomb of annexation: UAE

"We will definitely not locate anything in Jerusalem. West or East. Unless there is a final agreement between the Israelis and Palestinians," Gargash urged the Israelis and Palestinians to return to the negotiating table but said that the issue was not in the hands of the UAE.

The United Arab Emirates' Senior official Anwar Gargash said the deal had helped defuse what he called the ticking time-bomb of Israel's planned annexation of settlements in the occupied West Bank that was threatening a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Gargash, minister of state for foreign affairs, said the agreement was a bold but necessary step to take in the region.

"The region is very polarised. You will hear the usual noise but I think it is important to move forward," he told reporters in a briefing. Delegations from Israel and the UAE, a regional business and investment hub, will meet in coming weeks to sign bilateral agreements on investment, tourism, direct flights, security, telecommunications and other issues, the statement said.

Iran calls UAE-Israel deal 'shameful'

Iran's Tasnim news agency, which is affiliated to the country's elite Revolutionary Guards, said Thursday's deal between Israel and the United Arab Emirates on normalising ties was "shameful". Iran's clerical leaders have yet to react to the deal.

Israel and the UAE reached a deal on Thursday on seeking the full normalisation of diplomatic relations between the two Middle Eastern nations, in an agreement that US President Donald Trump helped broker.

Israel-UAE deal 'does not serve Palestinian cause': Hamas

The Gaza Strip's Islamist leaders Hamas on Thursday rejected a historic agreement between Israel and the UAE saying it did not serve the Palestinian cause.

"The agreement with the

UAE is a reward for the Israeli occupation and crimes," Hamas spokesman Hazem Qasem said.

Johnson welcomes deal

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson welcomed an agreement between Israel and the United Arab Emirates that will lead to a full normalisation of diplomatic relations between the two states.

"The UAE and Israel's decision to normalise relations is hugely good news," Johnson said on Twitter. "It was my profound hope that annexation did not go ahead in the West Bank and today's agreement to suspend those plans is a welcome step on the road to a more peaceful Middle East." Foreign minister Dominic Raab said it was "time for direct talks between the Palestinians and Israel, the only route to lasting peace."

Sisi praises deal

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi on Thursday praised the US-brokered deal between Israel and the United Arab Emirates that would halt Israeli annexation of Palestinian land.

"I read with interest and great appreciation the joint statement between the United States, the brotherly United Arab Emirates and Israel concerning the halt of Israel's annexation of Palestinian land," Sisi said in a tweet, adding that this would help bring "peace" to the Middle East.

Iran, Turkey Lash Out at UAE Over Deal with Israel

Agencies

BEIRUT: Iran and Turkey Friday lashed out at the United Arab Emirates over its decision to normalise diplomatic relations with Israel in a US-brokered deal, accusing it of betraying the Palestinian cause.

Iran's Foreign Ministry called the deal a "dagger that was unjustly struck by the UAE in the backs of the Palestinian people and all Muslims". Turkey said the peoples of the region "will never forget and will never forgive this hypocritical behaviour" by the UAE.

The UAE, which has never fought Israel and has quietly been improving ties for years, said the agreement put a hold on Israel's plans to unilaterally annex parts of the occupied West Bank, which the Palestinians view as the heartland

of their future state.

Tehran, in the foreign ministry statement on Friday, called the normalising of ties between the two countries a dangerous, "shameful" measure and warned the UAE against Israel interfering in the "political equations" of the Gulf region.

"The UAE government and other accompanying governments must accept responsibility for all the consequences of this action," the statement said.

The move was an act of "strategic stupidity from Abu Dhabi and Tel Aviv that will undoubtedly strengthen the resistance axis in the region", it added.

"The oppressed people of Palestine and all the free nations of the world will never forgive the normalising of relations with the criminal Israeli occupation regime and

the complicity in its crimes."

Earlier President Trump's special envoy Brian Hook said the deal is a "nightmare" for Iran.

'Glass palaces'

In a veiled reference to its main regional rival and Emirati ally Saudi Arabia, Iran's foreign ministry slammed rulers who harm the people of Palestine and Yemen "from their glass palaces".

Establishing diplomatic ties between Israel and Washington's Middle East allies, including the oil-rich Gulf states, has been central to US President Donald Trump's regional strategy to contain Iran.

Ellie Geranmayeh, analyst at the European Council on Foreign Relations, argued on Twitter the normalisation is unlikely to be a "game-changer" for Iran.

Timeline — Israel, UAE deal follows years of failed peace initiatives

Agencies

Jerusalem: A deal between Israel and the United Arab Emirates intended to fully normalise relations follows a history of peace efforts between Israel and the Palestinians and their Arab allies that have failed to overcome decades of distrust and violence.

Most Arab nations, including the UAE, have not recognised Israel or had formal diplomatic or economic relations with it because of what they regard as Israel's thwarting of Palestinians' aspirations for a state of their own. Here are the main initiatives undertaken by the parties themselves and international mediators since the 1967 Middle East War, when Israel captured the West Bank and East Jerusalem, the Sinai peninsula and the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights:

1967 — UN Security Council Resolution 242

After the Six-Day War, UN Security Council Resolution 242 calls for the "withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict" in return for all states in the area to respect each other's sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence. The resolution is the foundation for many peace initiatives but its imprecise phrasing — is the reference to all territories or just some? — has complicated efforts for decades.

1978 — Camp David agreement

Israel's Menachem Begin and Egypt's Anwar Sadat agree on a framework for regional peace that calls for an Israeli withdrawal in stages from Egypt's Sinai and a transitional Palestinian government in the West Bank and Gaza.

1979 — Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty

The first peace treaty between Israel and an Arab country sets out plans for a complete Israeli withdrawal from Sinai within three years. In 1981, Sadat was assassinated by Islamist revolutionaries at a military parade in Cairo.

1991 — Madrid summit

Representatives of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) attend a peace conference. No agreements are reached but the scene is set for direct contacts.

1994 — Israel-Jordan agreement

Jordan becomes the second Arab country to sign a peace treaty with Israel. But the treaty is unpopular and pro-Palestinian sentiment is widespread in Jordan.

1993-1995 — Declaration of Principles/Oslo Accords

Israel and the PLO hold secret talks in Norway that result in interim peace accords, calling for the establishment of a Palestinian

interim self-government and an elected council in the West Bank and Gaza for a five-year transitional period. Israeli troop withdrawals and negotiations on a permanent settlement.

2000 — Camp David summit

US President Bill Clinton convenes Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak at Camp David. They fail to agree. Another Palestinian uprising ensues.

2002-2003 — Bush Declaration

George W Bush becomes the first US president to call for the creation of a Palestinian state, living side-by-side with Israel "in peace and security".

2002 — Arab League's peace plan

Saudi Arabia presents an Arab League-endorsed peace plan for full Israeli withdrawal from occupied territory and Israel's acceptance of a Palestinian state in return for normal relations with Arab countries. The United States, the European Union, the United Nations and Russia present their own roadmap to a permanent two-state solution to the conflict.

2007 — Annapolis summit

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert fail to reach a deal at a US-hosted summit. Olmert later says they were close to a deal but a graft investigation against him and a Gaza war in 2008 scupper any agreement.

2009 — Netanyahu's Bar-Ilan address

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says he would be prepared for a peace deal that includes the establishment of a demilitarised Palestinian state. He also sets another condition: Palestinian recognition of Israel as the "state of the Jewish people".

2013-2014 — Washington peace talks/negotiations collapse

US Secretary of State John Kerry coaxes Israelis and Palestinians to resume talks. They fail and are suspended in April 2014.

June 2019 — Trump economic plan announced

Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law, launches its preliminary stage in Bahrain. He takes an "economy first" approach, calling for a \$50 billion investment fund to boost the Palestinian and neighbouring Arab economies. Palestinian leaders dismiss it. Netanyahu says he intends to annex West Bank settlements, and much of the Jordan Valley if elected. Later, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo effectively backs Israel's claimed right to build Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank by abandoning a four-decade-old US position that they were inconsistent with international law.

Michael Cohen claims Trump 'cheated' in 2016 Election in bombshell new book

Agencies

Washington: Donald Trump "cheated" in the 2016 US presidential election, his disgraced former lawyer Michael Cohen will claim in an upcoming bombshell book.

Mr Cohen promises to reveal the "skeletons" in the president's closet in Disloyal, a Memoir, which is due to be released in September.

A foreword published online on Thursday says: "Trump had cheated in the election, with Russian connivance, as you will discover in these pages, because doing anything - and I mean any-

thing - to 'win' has always been his business model and way of life."

It adds: "My insatiable desire to please Trump to gain power for myself, the fatal flaw that led to my ruin, was a Faustian bargain: I would do anything to accumulate, wield, maintain, exert, exploit power."

"In this way, Donald Trump and I were the most alike; in this naked lust for power, the President and I were soul mates."

The foreword, which runs to some 3,700 words, does not reveal anything new about Russia's alleged interference in the 2016 presidential election.

NEWS MAKERS

How did Israel and the UAE get to normalising relations?

Linah Alsaafin | Al Jazeera

Back in October 2018, Israeli Culture and Sports Minister Miri Regev became the first Israeli to visit Abu Dhabi in an unprecedented official state visit.

She witnessed for the first time the Israeli national anthem being played at a judo tournament and later visited the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, where she wrote "I wish a good life and peace for all" in Hebrew in the visitor's book.

Regev, a former chief Israeli military spokeswoman, is known to Palestinians and critics for her more egregious statements, such as describing African migrants in Israel as a "cancer", and calling on her government last year to revive its policy of assassinating Palestinian leaders.

Her visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) was a clear sign of

the UAE working to push its covert relations with Israel out in the open.

Since Regev's visit, the Israeli Communications Minister, Ayoub Kara, as well as Foreign Minister Yisrael Katz have also travelled to Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

"I will continue to work with the prime minister to push for the policy of normalisation that we're leading based on Israel's capabilities in the issues of security, intelligence and different civil opportunities," Katz said at the time of his visit in July 2019.

Translation: The Israeli Foreign Minister Yisrael Katz visited Abu Dhabi and participated in the UN Climate Change Summit. Katz held several meetings, including a meeting with a senior official in the Emirates.

Clandestine relations - including intelligence sharing and direct and indirect flights - between Israel and the UAE have been going on for decades.



According to Adam Entous, a reporter for The New Yorker, the think-tank and government-backed Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research was established in 1994 for academic research but later "became

a conduit for contacts with Israel".

The think-tank was the perfect cover to establish Israeli communications, and was born out of Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed's (MBZ) desire to buy fighter jets from

the United States in 1990, and had dreaded Israeli objections to the sale.

Sandra Charles, who was working for bin Zayed at the time and was a former official in the George HW Bush administration, arranged an off the record meeting between Emirati academic Jamal S al-Suwaidi - who later established the think-tank - and Israeli diplomat Jeremy Issacharoff. This led to then Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin to give the green light for the US fighter jets to be sold to the UAE, where a "sense of trust" was built between Israel and Abu Dhabi, Entous reported US officials as telling him.

'Unlikely geopolitical significance'

Fast forward to now and the official announcement of Israel and the UAE's formal relations on Thursday has followed through years of backroom talks and under the table meetings, analysts say.

The agreement, which was brokered by the US, is known as the Abraham Accord, and vows to work towards a "full normalisation of relations". The UAE has become the third Arab country to recognise Israel, but unlike Egypt and Jordan, does not share a border nor has it fought any wars with Israel.

Subsequently, the agreement is "unlikely to have geopolitical significance, in the sense that it does not have a serious impact on the balance of power either regionally or internationally," Mouin Rabbani, the co-editor of Jadaliyya, said.

Diana Buttu, a Haifa-based analyst and former legal adviser to Palestinian peace negotiators, said the UAE did not agree to normalising relations with Israel because it needed to take back a part of its territory - such as in Egypt's case with the Sinai Peninsula - or because they believe that peace is on the horizon.

LG Asks VCs to Adopt J&K Centric Changes As Per New Education Policy

Seeks Suggestions On How J&K Could Benefit From New Education Policy, Promotion Of J&K's Rich Culture

SRINAGAR: Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha today asked the Vice-Chancellors of the Universities to prepare a roadmap for bringing qualitative improvement in the overall functioning of the Universities and adopt J&K centric changes as per the New Education Policy, besides imparting training to the teachers within the Universities and outside the UT for the transformation of learning system.

The Lt Governor was chairing a meeting to review the functioning of the Universities here at the Raj Bhavan.

Kewal Kumar Sharma, Advisor to the Lieutenant Governor; Bipul Pathak, Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor; Prof. Manoj Kumar Dhar; Prof. Talat Ahmad; Dr. Nazeer Ahmed; Prof. (Dr.) Ravindra Kumar Sinha; Prof. Javed Musarrat and Prof. Mushtaq A Siddiqi - Vice-Chancellors of University of Jammu; University of Kashmir; Cluster University, Srinagar; Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST) Kashmir; Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University (SMVDU), Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University, Islamic University of Science & Technology (IUST), respectively, besides Sh. Talat Parvez Rohella, Secretary, Higher Education and other senior officers attended the meeting.

The Lt Governor sought suggestions and recommendations from the VCs on how J&K could benefit from New Education Policy and what are the challenges in its implementation.

He stressed on the high importance of preparing an effective strategy for implementation of grants under RUSA and asked the VCs to submit a detailed report on five unique initiatives taken by the Universities in last One, Two and Three years and the impact of these initiatives on teaching-learning programmes.

He directed the VCs to submit a report on faculty recruitment and promotion against sanctioned strength, number of admissions against approved seats, the status of statutory body meetings, besides any issues pending with

Chancellor's office like nominations, approval etc.

The Lt Governor observed that J&K has a rich Culture and ancient history and sought suggestions for its promotion.

He called for enhancing the quality of education while ensuring Gender equality and educational welfare of down-trodden and underprivileged sections of the society. He enquired about the extension of benefits of the Universities to locals and the UT.

He asked the VCs to maintain transparency in transfers and recruitment process with strict adherence to the Reservation and Recruitment Rules.

On technology-based learning, the Lt Governor stressed on optimum utilization of all available technology-based learning platforms, besides updation of e-learning tools and other ICT technology-based teaching programmes to connect the students and Faculty with the enhanced educational resource platforms. He sought the feedback on how effective and pragmatic these plans are.

He further called for laying special focus on linkage with local and outside industry, capacity building, job-oriented courses for the students to meet the modern-day requirements, besides focusing on new and traditional skill development simultaneously.

Emphasizing on effective student feedback system, the Lt Governor enquired about the improvements being made through the established feedback system. Student Feedback on Teaching is a global practice and it helps lend perspective to the teaching and pedagogical standards and practices of a University, he added.

He enquired about the implementation of Student centric schemes like 'earn while you learn' and mechanism laid down for placement of students, Alumni cells, campus placement, outreach programmes, anything similar to Atal tinkering labs etc.

ACB Arrests Police Officer While Taking Bribe From A Truck Driver

SRINAGAR: Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) team arrested a police officer while accepting bribe from a truck driver here in Kashmir capital Srinagar.

Sources said that sleuths from ACB caught a police officer when he was taking a bribe of Rs 3,000 from a truck driver.

An ACB official while confirming it said that the accused police officer with rank of Sub-Inspector, posted at police station Batamalo Srinagar has been taken into custody and a formal case of corruption has been registered against him.

Divulging more information about the incident, the ACB official said that despite showing the relevant documents, the

police officer demanded bribe from the truck driver who approached Anti Corruption Bureau Srinagar with a written complaint to this effect.

"An FIR vide number 9/2020 was registered in police station ACB Srinagar. Accordingly a trap was laid near Kaman Post Batamalo Srinagar and the Sub Inspector, a resident of Uri Baramulla was caught red handed while receiving the bribe of Rs.3000 in lieu of releasing the documents of the said vehicle which he had retained with him without any reason or rhyme."

Subsequently, after obtaining the police remand, the accused has been shifted to police station Shaheed Gunj Srinagar for his lodgement.



DAUGHTERS GREAF: Family members mourn at the funeral of one of the two slain policemen in Srinagar. KO Photo Abid Bhat

"Don't Fear Food, Packaging": WHO After China Virus-In-Frozen Food Claim

Two cities in China have found traces of the new coronavirus in cargoes of imported frozen food, local authorities said on Thursday, although the World Health Organization downplayed the risk of the virus entering the food chain.

A sample taken from the surface of frozen chicken wings imported into the southern city of Shenzhen from Brazil, as well as samples of outer packaging of frozen Ecuadorian shrimp sold in the northwestern city of Xian, have tested positive for the virus, local Chinese authorities said.

Shenzhen authorities identified the chicken as originating from a plant owned by Aurora, Brazil's third-largest poultry and pork exporter.

As confirmed COVID-19 cases continue to rise globally, the discoveries raise fresh concerns that the coronavirus that causes the disease can spread on surfaces and enter the foodchain. A day earlier, officials started investigating whether the first COVID-19 cases in New Zealand in more than three months were imported by freight.

Viruses can survive up to two years at temperatures of minus 20 degrees Celsius, but scientists and officials say there is no strong evidence so far the coronavirus can spread via frozen food.

"People should not fear food, food packaging or delivery of food," the World Health Organization's head of emergencies programme Mike Ryan told a briefing.



The U.S. Food and Drug Administration and Agriculture Department said in a joint statement "there is no evidence that people can contract COVID-19 from food or from food packaging."

Brazil's Aurora, which is unlisted, said it had not been formally notified by the Chinese authorities of the alleged contamination. The company said it takes all possible measures to prevent the spread of the coronavirus and there is no evidence it is spread through food. Brazil's agriculture ministry said it was seeking clarification from Chinese authorities.

Reuters could not immediately reach the Ecuadorian embassy in Beijing. Shenzhen's health authorities traced and tested everyone who might have come into contact with potentially contaminated food products, and all results were negative, the city's notice said.

"It is hard to say at which stage

the frozen chicken got infected," said a China-based official at a Brazilian meat exporter.

The Shenzhen Epidemic Prevention and Control Headquarters said the public needed to take precautions to reduce infection risks from imported meat and seafood.

The health commission of Shaanxi province, where Xian city is located, said authorities were testing people and the surrounding environment connected to the contaminated shrimp products, which were sold in a local market.

In addition to screening all meat and seafood containers coming into major ports in recent months, China has suspended some meat imports from various places, including Brazil, since mid-June.

Seven Argentine meat processing plants are temporarily not exporting to China because they have registered cases of COVID-19 among their employees, a source from the Argentine agricultural health agency Senasa said on Thursday.

The first cluster of COVID-19 cases was linked to the Huanan seafood market in the Chinese city of Wuhan. Initial studies suggested the virus originated in animal products on sale at the market.

Li Fengqin, who heads a microbiology lab at the China National Center for Food Safety Risk Assessment told reporters in June the possibility of contaminated frozen food causing new infections could not be ruled out.

J&K Okays Rs 25 Lakh Addl Ex-Gratia For Covid Victim Healthcare Workers

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir government today approved an additional ex-gratia of Rs.25.00 lakh in case of death of healthcare worker due to COVID-19.

According to an order by the Health and Medical Education department, issued in this regard, an ex-gratia of Rupees Twenty Five Lakh only, shall be payable to the dependent members/legal heirs of those Healthcare workers, including community health workers who may lose their lives as a result of being in direct contact and care of COVID-19 patients and who may be at risk of being impacted by this disease. The classification of Health care workers for this purpose shall be the same as provided by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India under the "Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package: Insurance Scheme for Health Workers fighting COVID-19".

Pertinently, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, has announced the "Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package: Insurance Scheme for Health Workers fighting COVID-19", for providing an insurance cover of Rs.50.00 lakh for Healthcare providers, including community health workers, who may have to be in direct contact and care of COVID-19 patients and who may be at risk of being impacted by this Pandemic. Also, on account of the unprecedented situation, private hospital staff, retired volunteer/ local urban bodies/ contractual (daily wage)/ ad-hoc /outsourced staff requisitioned by the State/ Central Hospitals/ autonomous hospitals of Central / States / UTS, AIIMS and INIS/ hospitals of Central Ministries are covered under the said insurance scheme.

The order said that the matter regarding providing of ex-gratia to the

Health Care Workers, in addition to the Insurance Cover under "Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package", in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, was discussed in a meeting chaired by the Lieutenant Governor, J&K and a proposal was accordingly submitted that the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir like some other states may also consider providing additional ex-gratia of Rs. 25.00 lakh posthumously, in respect of Health care workers, which will be in addition to the insurance cover of Rs. 50.00 lakh for Healthcare providers approved by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare so that the Healthcare workers in UT of Jammu and Kashmir get a total amount of Rs.75.00 lakh, posthumously.

This order shall remain in force till the validity of Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package Insurance Scheme announced by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.

India Welcomes Israel-UAE 'Historic' Agreement

NEW DELHI: India on Friday welcomed the full normalisation in relations between the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Israel, saying that the two countries are New Delhi's key strategic partners. Speaking at a weekly briefing, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said India has always supported peace, development and stability in West Asia.

"The External Affairs Minister (S Jaishankar) received a call from UAE Foreign Minister on the announcement of full normalisation of relations between the UAE and Israel. India has consistently supported peace, development and stability in West Asia, which is its extended neighbourhood. In that context, we welcome the full normalisation of ties between UAE and Israel. Both nations are key strategic partners for India," Srivastava said.

Earlier today, Jaishankar tweeted about the telephonic conversation with UAE Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan about the full normalisation of relations between UAE and Israel. "Deeply appreciate the call today from FM HH @ABZayed of UAE. Discussed the full normalisation of relations between UAE and Israel announced yesterday," he said.

Meanwhile, Srivastava said India continues its traditional support for the Palestinian cause and hoped to see the beginning of direct negotiations between Israel and Palestine for an acceptable two-state solution. "India continues its traditional support for the Palestinian cause. We hope to see an early resumption of direct negotiations to find an acceptable two-state solution," he said.

On Thursday, Israel and the UAE agreed to normalise their relations, and

an agreement on the mutual establishment of embassies is expected to follow in the coming three weeks. In exchange, Israel said it would halt its plans to formally annex parts of the West Bank.

A joint statement of the US, UAE and Israel said, "President Donald J. Trump, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel and Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the United Arab Emirates spoke today



and agreed to the full normalisation of relations between Israel and the UAE."

As per the joint statement, delegations from Israel and the UAE will meet in the coming weeks to sign bilateral agreements regarding investment, tourism, direct flights, security, telecommunications, technology, energy, healthcare, culture, the environment, the establishment of reciprocal embassies and other areas of mutual benefit.

"Opening direct ties between two of the Middle East's most dynamic societies and advanced economies will transform the region by spurring economic growth, enhancing technological innovation and forging closer people-to-people relations," the statement read.

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DLC Approves 100 % DG Set Subsidy For 7 Industrial Units



SRINAGAR: The Divisional Level Committee (DLC) Kashmir, which met here today under the chairmanship of Director Industries and Commerce, Mahmood Ahmad Shah, approved 100 per cent DG set subsidy in favour of seven industrial units involving an amount of Rs. 35.09 lakh.

Joint Director (Development) Industries and Commerce, General Managers of DICs and other concerned officers and officials were present in the meeting.

The approved cases included M/S Greenscape Industrial Estate Khonmuh,

M/S Peer Industries Zakoora, M/S Alnoor Agrifresh Private Limited Lassipora, M/S Sofi Agro Industries BK Pora, M/S ST Industries Chittergam, M/s Aalif Enterprises Baramulla and M/S Alba Electro Chemical Industries Rangreth. During the meeting, Director emphasized upon the General Managers to put up all the pending qualifying cases before the Committee at the earliest.

Meanwhile, Director also reviewed the functioning of the department wherein he stressed upon the need to expedite the handover/ takeover process of 8520 kanal of land transferred to the department in various districts during the current year. He also took stock of achievements registered by the department under several flagship schemes.

NEWS MAKERS

Supreme Court Holds Prashant Bhushan Guilty Of Contempt For Tweets Against Judiciary

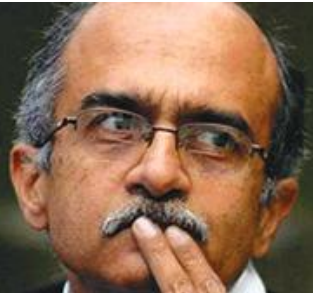
NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Friday held activist-lawyer Prashant Bhushan guilty of contempt for his two derogatory tweets against the judiciary.

A Bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra said it would hear on August 20 the arguments on quantum of sentence to be awarded to Bhushan in the matter.

A contemnor can be punished with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend up to six months or with a fine of up to Rs 2,000 or with both.

The apex court had on August 5 reserved its verdict in the matter after Bhushan had defended his tweets, saying they were against the judges regarding their conduct in their personal capacity and they did not obstruct administration of justice.

On July 22, the top court had



issued a show cause notice to Bhushan after initiating the criminal contempt against him after taking note of a petition.

While referring to the tweets by Bhushan, the apex court had earlier said these statements are prima facie capable of "undermining the dignity and authority" of the institution of the Supreme Court in general and the office of Chief Justice of India in particular, in the eyes of the public at large.

Senior advocate Dushyant Dave, appearing for Bhushan in the matter, had said, the two tweets were not against the institution.

Bhushan has made immense contribution to the development of jurisprudence and there are at least 50 judgments to his credit. Dave had said, adding that the court has appreciated his contributions in cases like 2G scam, coal block allocation and in mining matters.

Referring to the ADM Jabalpur case on suspension of fundamental rights during the Emergency, the senior advocate had said that even extremely uncharitable remarks against the judges were made and no contempt proceedings were made out.

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New Low-Cost Test Can Diagnose Covid-19 In Just 20 Minutes

MELBOURNE: Scientists have developed a new low-cost nasal swab test which can accurately diagnose the presence of SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19 in just 20 minutes.

The findings, published in the Journal of Medical Microbiology, show the test called N1-STOP-LAMP, is 100 per cent accurate in diagnosing samples containing SARS-CoV-2 at high loads.

The rapid molecular test is highly accurate and easy to use, making it a prime candidate for use in settings with limited testing capabilities, according to the researchers.

The method involves using a small portable machine, which can reliably detect SARS-CoV-2 from just one nasal swab, they said. "In the race to

control the COVID-19 pandemic, access to rapid, precision diagnostics is key," said Tim Stinear, a professor at the University of Melbourne in Australia.

"We have developed an alternative COVID-19 molecular test that can be readily deployed in settings where access to standard laboratory testing is limited or where ultra-rapid result turnaround times are needed," Stinear said. This new test uses only one tube and involves only a single step, making it more efficient and lower cost than many of the current tests for SARS-CoV-2.

The N1-STOP-LAMP method was found to be 100 per cent accurate and correctly identified 87 per cent of tests as positive when used to assess 157 confirmed-positive samples.

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