

## News Digest

### Pak Begins Phase-III Trial Of COVID Vaccine

Islamabad: The Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) has given a nod for phase-III clinical trial of a COVID-19 vaccine developed in collaboration with a Chinese company, a media report said on Tuesday. According to a statement from the National Institute of Health (NIH), it has obtained "formal approval" from the DRAP for phase-III Clinical Trial of Recombinant Novel Coronavirus Vaccine Adenovirus Type 5 vector (Ad5-nCoV) developed by CanSinoBio and Beijing Institute of Biotechnology China (BIB). The NIH said this would be the first-ever phase-III clinical trial for any vaccine in Pakistan. "It is a multi-country multi-centre clinical trial which CanSinoBio is already conducting in China, Russia, P-02

### India, Pak Troops Trade Fire Along IB

Jammu: India and Pakistan troops exchanged heavy gunfire along the International Border in Kathua district of Jammu region, sources said Tuesday. Pakistani Rangers opened fire on border out posts (BoPs) along the International Border in Kathua district, sources said told PTI. BSF troops guarding the border retaliated, resulting in exchanges, they added. Sources said Pakistani Rangers fired from machine guns at forward BoPs of Chandwara and Karol Matraya in Hiranagar sector on Monday night. There were no casualties in the firing.

### Lashkar Militant Held In Hajin: Police

Srinagar: Police on Tuesday claimed to have arrested a Lashkar-e-Taiba militant from Bandipora district of north Kashmir. Based on credible information, police, army's 13RR and the personnel of IRP 8th battalion arrested Lashkar militant Subzar Ahmad Rather alias Aatish Bhai from Check Chandrageer area of Hajin in Bandipora, a police spokesperson said. He said that incriminating materials, arms & ammunition including a pistol, one magazine and four rounds were recovered from the militant, who hails from Awneera area of Shopian. Rather, the police spokesperson said had recently joined the outfit and was tasked to carry out P-02

### Youth Dies Of Drowning In Shopian

Srinagar: A youth on Tuesday died of drowning in a stream in south Kashmir's Shopian district. 24-year-old Idrees Ahmad Mir of Oyel Damhal Kulgam was beating the heat when the incident took place on Tuesday afternoon. The locals rescued him from the Nallah Reshinagri and took him to nearby hospital for treatment. However, the doctors there declared him brought dead on arrival. Meanwhile, a police officer told news agency KNS that investigations have been started in this regard.

### Shepherd Slips To Death

Srinagar: A shepherd on Tuesday slipped to death while grazing his cattle in south Kashmir's Anantnag district. 40-year-old Ahmed Shakhor of Gowas village was grazing his cattle at Rawat Raksh pasture in the south Kashmir district, when he lost his balance and fell into a deep gorge, police sources said. People present in the pasture shifted Shakhor to the district hospital Anantnag for treatment. However, he succumbed to his injuries. (KNT)

## Mobile Internet In J&K Gives Social Media Humour A 4G Edge

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: High speed mobile internet services are back in Jammu and Kashmir but only in Ganderbal and Udhampur and humour mills are on overdrive with whacky one liners, visual jokes and a veritable meme fest playing out on social media.

Sharp, satirical and sometimes just slapstick, the posts, mostly on Twitter, reference Bollywood, use photographs and also some nifty photoshop editing to make their point and tickle a few funny bones while they are at it.

So there is one post featuring an Air Company boarding card from Srinagar to neighbouring Ganderbal, the prized Kashmir district 30 km away where 4G mobile services started from August 16

## Kreeri Gun-Battle Ends After Two Days

5 Security Personnel, Lashkar Commander Among 3 Militants Dead

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The two-day long encounter between militants and the joint team of police, CRPF and army in the orchards of Kreeri in Baramulla district ended on Tuesday, consuming eight lives in all—three of them militants including two Lashker-e-Taiba commanders, two army soldiers, as many paramilitary CRPF men besides a policeman.

Having been suspended on Monday night, the firefight resumed at first light today (Tuesday), leading to the killing of the trapped militant, Usman reportedly a Pakistani national.

Also, one among the two soldiers succumbed to the injuries, taking the fatality toll of soldiers in the gunfight to two.

"Two soldiers who were critically injured succumbed to their injuries," Army spokesperson Lt. Col Rajesh Kalai said. He said two AK rifles and three pistols were recovered from the encounter site.

"Conspirator Sajad alias Haider and one foreign militant Usman of killing BJP leader late Waseem Bari,



File Pic

his father and brother have been killed," Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir Vijay Kumar said.

"Haider was also instrumental in recruiting youth into militant folds and was involved in several attacks on Police, security forces, civilians and political workers," he said. The search operation in the area is in process, the official said.

The encounter had ensued after a joint team of Police, CRPF and army launched a cordon-and-search-operation following the attack in the morning in which two

CRPF men and an SPO were killed. "At about 0915hrs on Monday, (militants) fired indiscriminately upon a joint naka party of Police and security forces from nearby orchards at Nawan mode Kreeri area of Baramulla," a police spokesperson said. In the militant attack, he said, two CRPF personnel of 119 battalion and a police personnel (SPO) sustained grievous gunshot injuries.

"The injured were evacuated to nearby hospital for the treatment of their injuries. However, PAGE 02

**TWO SOLDIERS WHO WERE CRITICALLY INJURED SUCCUMBED to their injuries," Army spokesperson Lt. Col Rajesh Kalai said. He said two AK rifles and three pistols were recovered from the encounter site.**

## Shopian Encounter: Court Of Inquiry In Progress, Says Army

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: An army court of inquiry on Tuesday began recording statements of witnesses in connection with the killing of three alleged militants in an encounter last month in Shopian in South Kashmir, following allegations by families in Rajouri area of Jammu region that as many of their kin were missing from the same place. Srinagar-based Defence spokesperson Colonel Rajesh Kalia asked additional civil witnesses to depose before the court of inquiry.

According to sources, the inquiry

is being headed by a Brigadier rank officer as the unit involved in the encounter was headed by a Colonel.

The incident took place on July 18 when the army claimed to have killed three militants at Ashimpura in the higher reaches of Shopian in South Kashmir.

However, little over two weeks thereafter, missing complaints were lodged by the families of three youths, working as labourers in apple and walnut orchards, who had disappeared from the same region and they had last talked to them on July 17.

Colonel Kalia in his statement said the high-level court PAGE 02

## IAF Deploys Fighter Jets Along Pak Border Amid Tensions With China

Agencies

NEW DELHI: The Indian Air Force (IAF) deployed the home-grown Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas on the western front along the Pakistan border in view of the tensions with China on the Ladakh front.

"The LCA Tejas was deployed by the Indian Air Force on the western front close to the Pakistan border to take care of any possible action by the adversary there," government sources told ANI.

The first LCA Tejas squadron, 45 Squadron (Flying Daggers) based out of Sullur under the Southern Air Command, was deployed in an operational role there, the sources said. The indigenous Tejas aircraft had

### Navy Commanders Conclave To Discuss Ladakh Standoff

Top commanders of the Indian Navy will extensively deliberate on the evolving maritime security architecture in the region and the border row with China in eastern Ladakh at a three-day conclave beginning Wednesday, officials said. A major focus of the conclave will be to review the Indian Navy's operational readiness as well as issues relating to India's security interests in the Indo-Pacific, a region P-02

been praised by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his Independence Day speech where he had stated that the deal to buy the LCA Mark1A version was expected to be completed soon.

While the first squadron of the planes is of the Initial Operational Clearance version, the second 18

Squadron 'Flying Bullets' is of the Final Operational Clearance version and was operationalized by the IAF chief Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhaduria at the Sullur airbase on May 27.

The Indian Air Force and the Defence Ministry are expected to finalise the deal for the 83 Mark1A aircraft by the end of this year. PAGE 02

### Morning Showers Break Dry Spell In Kashmir

SRINAGAR- A spell of early morning rainfall broke the prolonged dry spell in Kashmir valley even as the summer capital Srinagar had on Monday recorded the hottest August day in the last nearly four decades, officials said on Tuesday.

Many places in the Kashmir valley received a spell of rainfall during the night, the officials said. They said the valley witnessed rains and thunderstorm with lightning and gusty winds which continued at few places till the morning.

Srinagar city recorded 20.2 mm rainfall, while Qazigund 12.2 mm, Pahalgam 6.2 mm, Kupwara 5.2 mm, Gulmarg 2.6 mm, and Koker-nag 1.8 mm, they said.

The clouds dispersed in the morning, the officials said, adding, there was no forecast of any major rainfall activity for next three days. However, he stated that scattered rain is expected around 20-21st August.

The rainfall broke the prolonged dry spell in Kashmir valley which had been witnessing hotter days in the recent weeks.

On Monday, Srinagar city recorded a maximum temperature of 35.7 degrees Celsius, which was the hottest August day in the last 39 years, the officials said.

They said Monday's maximum temperature was six degrees above the normal.

The city remained hotter than Jammu – the winter capital of the UT – which had recorded 32.1 degrees Celsius on Monday.

While the Met office had announced the arrival of monsoon on June 24 this year, the valley witnessed dry weather conditions amid soaring temperatures.

Pertinently, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Pandurang P-02

## Hundreds Protest Across Valley Against Blasphemy Video

File Pic



Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: Hundreds of people on Tuesday held protests in several parts of the Valley against the members of an extremist Hindu group in Jammu's Reasi for making blasphemous remarks against Prophet of Islam (Pbuh).

According to reports, protests were held in many parts of Srinagar, Anantnag, Pulwama and Baramulla districts against the members of members of right-wing Sentinel Bharat Raksha Manch, who had made derogatory remarks against Prophet of Islam

(Pbuh) triggering massive outrage.

On Sunday, police arrested Satpal Sharma, the main accused and his associate Deepak soon after the video containing derogatory remarks against Prophet of Islam (Pbuh) went viral. Rohit Sharma, a resident of Pacca Danga locality, was the third accused arrested in connection with the case related to the communally sensitive video.

Police had also filed a case under section 153A IPC (promoting enmity between different groups) and 295A IPC (deliberate and malicious acts, intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by PAGE 02

### Flash Floods Threaten IB Fencing In J&K

JAMMU: Flash floods triggered by heavy rains are threatening the three-tier border fencing along the Indo-Pak International Border and have caused minor damage to a section of the fencing in Jammu frontier belt, officials said.

Heavy rains have caused flash floods in various rivers along the border, threatening the border fencing in Samba-Kathua-Jammu belt, they said. A senior BSF officer said that parts of the fence in Basantar river area are likely to get washed away. "It is 150 to 200 metres of patch. There was partial damage to it. If there is more flooding, it will cause complete damage to the fence and to the adjoining village in Ramgarh."

"Efforts are being made to repair the damage," he said. He said no post has P-02

### Landslide Halts Traffic On Kashmir Highway

SRINAGAR: A landslide triggered by rains prompted authorities to briefly suspended vehicular traffic on the strategic Jammu-Srinagar highway on Tuesday.

According to the reports, the overnight rain triggered a landslide at Nehad in Ramban along the 276-kilometre Jammu and Kashmir highway prompting the authorities to suspend the movement of vehicles on Tuesday morning.

Reports said that the highway was thrown open for traffic after National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) and Border Roads Organization (BRO) pressed into service sophisticated machines P-02

## Plunder In Pandemic: Kashmir's Green Gold Continues To Bleed

Jyotsna Bharti

At a time when forest watchers and wardens are fighting flames in Zabarwan Range, Kashmir's virtual space is bleeding with the green gold. Pictures showing chopped trees have once again surfaced online after reports of unabated axing came from north Kashmir's Uri town.

Right under the nose of forest guards, a report said, the timber-smugglers are hacking the forest in a highly militarized zone falling in the close range of Line of Control (LoC). These looters were seen selling the booty in the nearby villages.

Taking serious note of the report, many netizens shared the wrecked

wood scenes on their social media handles, making many believe that the valley has become a 'plundered paradise' in pandemic.

Sharing a picture of a ravaged forest site, a netizen named Sumaiya wrote: "In Botingu Sopore, all green trees chopped off."

Kashmir's award-winning photojournalist, Altaf Qadri, shared another pillaged photo, with a striking caption: "This is what they've done in Tosémaidan."

As the disturbing trend gained mass and momentum online, many more came forward with disquieting visuals. One such image came from north Kashmir's Bungus area. "This is what they are doing in Bungus," a netizen wrote.



KO Investigation

Notably, axe had started falling

on Kashmir forests as early as in April 2020 – when the valley was

yet to complete a month under the Covid lockdown.

Acting on ground leads, KO team visited the Tangmarg-Gulmarg stretch to witness what looked like the tree massacre scene. It was April 16.

'Things Under Control'

Despite the screaming evidence, even gathered by district commissioner Pulwama during his surprise forest visit in the district during the early phase of pandemic, many forest officials term the situation under control.

"There has been a spurt in smuggling in the beginning of the Covid lockdown, but things are under control now," Irfan Rasool, Forest Conservator for North Kashmir, told Kashmir Observer. "They [smugglers] PAGE 02



# US Senate Encourages Diplomatic Solution Indo, Pak Border Dispute

Press Trust Of India

**WASHINGTON:** A bipartisan US Senate resolution has condemned China's use of military force to change the status quo at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with India and called for a diplomatic solution to the issue.

Indian and Chinese troops have been locked in a bitter standoff in several areas along the Line of Actual Control in eastern Ladakh since May 5. The situation deteriorated after the June 15 Galwan Valley clashes in which 20 Indian Army personnel were killed. The Chinese side also suffered casualties but it is yet to give out the details.

The resolution, introduced by senators John Cornyn and Mark Warner, commended India for taking steps to secure its telecommunications infrastructure from Chinese security threats and also supported bilateral and multilateral partnerships, such as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD), to promote a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific.

The QSD, also known as the Quad, is an informal strategic forum between the US, Japan, Australia and India. The diplomatic and military arrangement is widely viewed as a response to increased Chinese economic and military power in the Indo-Pacific region.

Cornyn and Warner are co-chairs of the Senate Indian Caucus.

The resolution tabled on

the Senate floor last week has been sent to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for consideration.

Cornyn is the Republican Senate Majority Whip, while Warner is the ranking member of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

Condemning China's use of military aggression to change the status quo at LAC, the resolution, the text of which was released on Monday, said the US officially recognises the McMahon Line, the state of Arunachal Pradesh and encourages a diplomatic solution to remaining contested areas of the border between India and China.

The McMahon Line defines a clear boundary line between

India and China. The India-China border dispute covers the 3,488-km-long LAC. China claims Arunachal Pradesh as part of southern Tibet while India contests it.

The resolution said in the months leading up to June 15, China increased troop deployments, built new infrastructure in contested areas, and harassed Indian patrols along multiple sectors of the LAC, particularly around the Depsang Plains, Galwan Valley, Hot Springs, and Pangong Lake.

The events of June 15 that resulted in the death of 20 Indian soldiers raises serious concerns regarding the intent of the Chinese government and its military, the resolution said, noting

'No Surprise There': Omar On MP Govt's Job Decision



Press Trust Of India

**SRINAGAR:** National Conference leader Omar Abdullah on Tuesday questioned the different yardsticks applied for jobs in different territories of India after Chief Minister Shrivraj Singh Chouhan announced that government jobs in Madhya Pradesh would only be for locals.

In a tweet, Abdullah said jobs in Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh are for everyone, but jobs in Madhya Pradesh "exclusively" for people from the state. "No surprise there!" he said.

Commenting over the issue, PDP president Mehbooba Mufti's daughter Iltija Mufti said while states like Nagaland and Madhya Pradesh were moving towards "semi-autonomous status" and exclusive rights for the locals, Jammu and Kashmir "entitled to all of this constitutionally has been robbed because it is muslim dominant".

"BJP's India has no place for minorities, hence validating Jinnah's two nation theory," Iltija wrote on her mother's handle, which she has been using since last year when Mehbooba Mufti was taken into custody.

Earlier in the day, Chouhan said necessary legal provisions would be made to ensure that only local people get government jobs in Madhya Pradesh.

He also said resources of the state were meant for residents of the state

## Kreeri Gun-Battle Ends...

all the three injured personnel succumbed to their injuries," he had said. The police spokesperson had identified them as SPO Muzaffar Ali of District Police Baramulla, Constables Lokesh Sharma and Khurshid Khan of 119 battalion CRPF.

"In the initial retaliatory firing one militant got injured." He said the militants were engaged till the area was completely cordoned off with the help of reinforcement and the search operation was thereafter jointly launched by Police, 29RR and CRPF. "In the ensuing encounter, two militants were killed on Monday." Two Army personnel also sustained gunshot injuries and were shifted to hospital where one among them died yesterday. The militants who were killed yesterday included Sajad Ahmad Mir alias Haider alias Jaja of Brath Kalan Sopore (Lt Chief of North Kashmir) and Anayatullah Mir of Andergam Pattan, affiliated with LeT.

Addressing reporters on Monday, Director General of Police Dilbag Singh rated Haider among top ten militants in Kashmir and top most in north Kashmir.

"He had joined militancy in the 2016 winters and used to work on same pattern as that of Burhan Wani. He was active in north Kashmir. If Burhan Wani turned many to become militants in South Kashmir, he spared no efforts in north Kashmir. So far we have arrested at least 20 militants recruited by him apart from many Over Ground Workers (OGWs)," Singh had said. (GNS)

## Morning Showers Break Dry...

K Pole on Monday chaired a meeting of concerned officers to take stock of the water crises like situation looming due to dry season and no rainfall in nearly past 3 months.

During the meeting, Pole urged people to ensure judicious use of water to ensure there is no scarcity anywhere. The meeting had also discussed measures to be taken for sustenance of trees health, next year yield, wildlife, fish population that is likely to get affected due to deficit rainfall.

## Hundreds Protest Across...

insulting its religion or religious beliefs) at Pacca Danga police station. Here in Srinagar, protests were held at Rawalpura and Press Colony, Lal Chowk seeking stringent punishment for the rightwing extremists for hurting the sentiments of Muslims. At Press Colony, groups of people assembled and staged a protest against the blasphemous video.

Carrying placards that read "It's better to kill us than to insult and abuse our religion, our Prophet is our honor and hang the culprit", the protesters asked government to take stern action against the fanatics.

"We cannot tolerate anything against our beloved Prophet (Pbuh). Our prophet is our pride, our life and we will not hesitate to sacrifice our lives or take lives of those who show disrespect towards our religion," said Wamiq, a protester from Srinagar.

He said the government keeping in view the love and respect of Muslims for their Prophet (SAW) should act tough against the fanatics.

Groups of people, mostly youth also staged a protest at Rawalpura here. "No Muslim would tolerate abuses against the prophet (PBUH). The culprits should be detained under preventive law and should be handed a strict punishment. Their words have the potential to disturb peace in Jammu and Kashmir," a protester said.

Reports of protest were also received from the border town of Uri. According to the reports, hundreds of people assembled in Bus Stand Uri and started a march towards SDM Office, KNS reported.

The protesters were raising slogans against the accused and demanding exemplary punishment to the extremists so that it serves a lesson to others.

Meanwhile, a complete shutdown was observed in Gool Gulabgarh area of Ramban district while peaceful protests were organized in different parts including Doda and Kishtwar against the blasphemy video.

Firdous Tak, a former lawmaker from Jammu, said the first information report registered by the police against the accused has a legal flaw. In a Twitter post, Tak said the district magistrate concerned should have filed the complaint against the accused, adding in absence of such a complaint, it is easier for the accused to walk free.

Reports said that Muslims in Jammu region organized protest rallies, while various Muslim religious and community groups in the region, including Anjuman Islamia, Bhaderwah; Jamia Masjid Committee, Tathri; and Kishtwar Islami Markazi Majlis-e-Shura have asked people to register protest till culprits are not detained under Public Safety Act PSA. (With KNT inputs)

## Shopian Encounter: Court...

of inquiry into 'Operation Amshipora' in Shopian was under progress. "Statements of key witnesses are being recorded and progress is being monitored closely. Additional civil witnesses are being asked to depose before the court of inquiry," he said.

The spokesperson said DNA samples have been collected from Rajouri by the Jammu and Kashmir police and sent for matching with those of the alleged terrorists killed on July 18.

Col Kalia said the army is committed to ethical conduct of all Counter Terrorist operations.

"Cases where doubts are raised are investigated under due process as per the law of the land. Since the case is under investigation, further details will be shared periodically, as appropriate without affecting due legal process," he said.

The relatives of three youths, belonging to Dhar Sakri village in Kotranka of Rajouri area in Poonch, had lodged a written missing persons report in the local police station after they lost contact with them on July 17.

In their complaint, they informed the police that they had last spoken to the three, who were mainly involved in apple and walnut trading, on July 17 when the youths had informed their families that they had got a room at Ashimpura in Shopian.

The same place was the site of the encounter the next day and since then there has been no report about the three, the families said in their complaint.

The DNA samples of the family members of the three boys were collected in a government hospital at Rajouri on August 13 in the presence of a police investigation team sent from Srinagar.

Three boys, Mohammad Imtiyaz and Ibrar Ahmed, both residents of Kathuni mohalla of Dharsakri village of Rajouri, and Mohammad Ibrar, a

resident of Tarkassi village of Rajouri, left their homes to work as labourers in Kashmir's Shopian and went out of contact with their families after July 17 late evening.

The father of Imtiyaz, one of the missing persons, was seen on social media pleading for a visit to Kashmir and exhuming the bodies of his son and others for a proper burial in Rajouri.

He even went on to say that if any of the three was remotely connected to militant organisations, he was ready to face the consequences.

The Army has already initiated an inquiry into the 'encounter' carried out by its troops in Amshipora village of Shopian district.

Taking note of the social media inputs, the army instituted an investigation into the encounter.

## Jamia Masjid Reopens...

in accordance to social distancing norms.

Meanwhile, a statement issued by the Anjuman Auqaf, Jamia Masjid led by Mirwaiz Moulvi Muhammad Umar Farooq said that the decision to hold prayers was taken while upholding the views of Shariah experts and following the guidelines issued by the medical bodies regarding the Covid-19 pandemic.

"For the convenience of those coming for prayers, Auqaf Jamia had put in place all the SOPs and other preventive measures including providing free masks and keeping the sanitisers inside the grand masjid and putting up posters of guidelines to be followed," the Auqaf statement said.

The statement said that the devotees expressed strong anger and resentment over the blasphemous remarks against the beloved Prophet of Islam (PBUH made by some miscreants and communal zealots in Jammu region, and demanded stringent punishment to the culprits.

The Auqaf handout added that the devotees prayed to Almighty Allah to grant refuge to the people of Kashmir, Muslim Ummah and entire humanity from the deadly outbreak of coronavirus and all other sufferings and hardships.

"The management of the Jama Masjid and the people interacted with several media-persons present on the occasion and demanded immediate release of the Anjuman Auqaf Jamia Masjid Chairman Mirwaiz Moulvi Muhammad Umar Farooq who continues to be under arbitrary house arrest for more than a year now, so that the Mirwaizeen – of addressing the people from the pulpit of the Jamia Masjid," the Auqaf statement said.

The Auqaf said that the release of Mirwaiz is inevitable so that he resumes his duty and responsibility.

Meanwhile, the Auqaf has announced that apart from daily prayers, the congregational Friday prayers will also resume at Jamia Masjid with all SOPs and other preventive measures.

## IAF Deploys Fighter Jets...

In view of the Chinese aggression on the borders, the IAF had deployed its assets all along the borders with both China and Pakistan.

The forward airbases of the force have been equipped to take care of situations along the western and northern fronts and have seen extensive flying operations in the recent past, including both daytime and night operations.

## Navy Commanders Conclave...

where China has been rapidly expanding its military presence, they said.

The Indian Navy has deployed a range of its frontline warships and submarines in the Indian Ocean region to send a clear message to China following escalation of the border dispute.

"The conference assumes greater significance in the backdrop of recent events on our northern borders, coupled with the unprecedented challenges posed by COVID-19," the Indian Navy said in a statement.

The naval commanders would also deliberate on ensuring tri-services synergy as well as functional reorganisation within the Navy to improve efficiency, it said, adding the conference would also discuss the larger security imperatives in the Indo-Pacific.

The Navy said the conference would provide the higher naval leadership a forum to discuss conduct of operations, sustenance and maintenance of assets, procurement issues, infrastructure development and human resource management within the ambit of the "new normal" resulted by the pandemic.

"The Chief of the Naval Staff, with the commanders-in-chief, will review major operational, materiel, logistics, human resource, training and administrative activities undertaken during the year and deliberate upon the course to be steered in the future.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh is scheduled to address the conference on Wednesday.

It is the first naval commanders' conference since the institution of Department of Military Affairs (DMA) and creation of the post of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS).

"The conference would discuss upon the ways to optimise joint planning structures, tri-service synergy, and operational readiness, as also functional reorganisation within the Indian Navy to improve efficiency," the Navy said.

Officials said all possible security challenges that the country may face including from China and Pakistan in the Indian Ocean Region will be deliberated upon at length at the conclave, they added.

The Indian Ocean, considered the backyard of the Indian Navy, is critical to India's strategic interests. Over the years, the region has witnessed increasing Chinese presence.

China has constructed the deep-sea Gwadar Port in southern Pakistan and a naval base in Djibouti in the Horn of Africa.

In the last few weeks, the Navy has significantly expanded its deployment in the Indian Ocean Region, positioning a plethora of warships and submarines following the Galwan Valley clash with Chinese troops in eastern Ladakh in which 20 Indian Army personnel were killed.

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

Over the years, the Indian Navy's focus has been on enhancing combat efficiency and improving operational readiness and these issues will be discussed in detail, the officials said.

Measures to ensure safety, continued training, and checks and balances on crew proficiency aboard the front-line warships will also be reviewed, they said.

## Kashmir Reports 12 More...

admitted to SMHS hospital here on August 16 died today. Also, a 65-year-old man from Trehgam Kupwara died at the SMHS hospital, they said.

A 65-year-old man from Handwara died at CD hospital Dalgate Srinagar, one of the exclusive facilities for the management of the covid-19 patients here.

"He was declared dead at 4:30 a.m.," a doctor at the hospital said.

Two patients succumbed at SKIMS Bemina, also among the exclusive facilities for the covid-19 patients here.

A senior doctor at the hospital told GNS a 55-year-old woman from Gulab Bagh Srinagar died nine days after the admission.

The second death reported at the hospital includes a 50-year-old woman from Makhama Magam who died three days admission. "Both the patients were suffering from multiple ailments," the doctor added.

Four deaths were reported from Anantnag and include a 65-year-old woman from Gopalpur, a 65-year-old from Ashmukam and a 55-year-old woman from Noupura Akhran and a 70-year-old man from Shangus Kreeri who died at Government Medical College hospital Anantnag.

A 65-year-old woman from Nawa Kadal Srinagar having hypertension, hypothyroidism and bilateral Community Acquired Pneumonia died at SKIMS Soura.

Regarding the fatality from Bandipora, they said, a 65-year-old man from Bandipora died at SMHS hospital later in the afternoon, three days after he was admitted to the hospital with bilateral community acquired pneumonia.

With these deaths, officials said, 566 people have succumbed to the virus in Jammu and Kashmir so far—525 from the Valley and 41 from Jammu division.

Srinagar district with 180 deaths tops the list followed by Baramulla (88), Budgam (44), Anantnag (43), Kulgam (31), Pulwama (40), Kupwara (37), Shopian (25), Jammu (29), Bandipora(23), Ganderbal (14), Rajouri (3), two each in Doda, Poonch and Udhampur besides one each in Ramban, Samba, and Kathua. (With GNS inputs)

## 434 New Covid-19 Cases...

infected people across the Union Territory to 29326.

While Kashmir valley reported 346 new cases, 88 others were confirmed by the officials from the Jammu region.

Among these cases include several Defence and CRPF personnel besides three pregnant woman and as many minors.

Giving district-wise details, official sources said that Srinagar reported 66 cases, Baramulla 37, Pulwama 27, Budgam 6, Anantnag 42, Kulgam 16, Shopian 3, Kupwara 66, Bandipora 59, Ganderbal 24, Jammu 28, Rajouri 2, Kathua 3, Udhampur 13, Ramban 5, Samba 12, Doda 4, Poonch 3, Reasi 14, and Kishtwar 4.

In Kashmir, Srinagar tops the list with 7026 cases followed by Baramulla with 2475, Pulwama 2122, Budgam 1834, Kulgam 1728, Shopian 1524, Anantnag 1857, Kupwara 1637, Bandipora 1535 and Ganderbal 987.

In Jammu division, Jammu district has 2033 cases, Rajouri 790, Ramban 629, Kathua 677, Udhampur 662, Samba 589, Doda 347, Poonch 332, Reasi 302 and Kishtwar 185.

Moreover, 590 more COVID-19 patients have recovered and discharged from various hospitals, 110 from Jammu Division and 480 from the Valley.

## Flash Floods Threaten IB...

suffered damage and jawans were keeping vigil along the border.

He said some troops are stationed across the river. "They are self-contained. They have everything with them. They do not cross over to this side. It is dangerous to bring them on this side. The regular movements are going on," he added.

In 2012, the BSF had repaired and reconstructed over 700-800 metres of fencing, along the border in Samba district, which were damaged by torrential rains and floods.

Parts of the three-tier border fencing along IB were washed away in Nursery-Bandstop forward belt of Ramgarh sub-sector of Samba district due to flash floods in Basantar river.

Nearly 190 km of the border along the IB in Jammu, Samba and Kathua districts is fenced to stop cross-border infiltration and smuggling of narcotics and weapons from Pakistan.

## Landslide Halts Traffic...

and men and cleared the landslide.

An official told news agency KNT that stranded vehicles were allowed to move towards their respective destinations.

"Today traffic was to ply from Jammu to Srinagar. However, only essential commodity vehicles were allowed to ply on the highway due to the landslide," he added.

## Mobile Internet In J&K...

scrawled at the bottom of the picture.

Ranveer Singh stars in the meme carnival too. Looking very serious and pensive in a still from "Gully Boy" with the words, "Apna time aayega" (Our time will come), a snatch from a rap song from the film.

A scene from "Partner" starring Salman Khan and Govinda is also doing the rounds. Salman is "Srinagar" looking glumly at a beaming Govinda, who is, of course, "Ganderbal".

Using the hashtag #4GTrial, one Twitter user said, "4G restored in only Ganderbal and Udhampur. Meanwhile, rest of Jammu and Kashmir." The photograph accompanying it is from another Bollywood film with Akshay Kumar, Paresh Rawal and Suneil Shetty walking glumly with this dialogue Bahut galat hua re deva" (things have gone so wrong).

If not Bollywood, there is inspiration aplenty from photographs in the news and other sources too.

Ganderbal and Udhampur taking 8mbps speed Meanwhile other districts," said a Twitter, choosing a picture with two formally dressed elderly gentlemen, one Ganderbal and the other Udhampur, talking earnestly while a Neanderthal like figure, labelled 'other districts' listens in. The contrast between the two 'pilot' districts and the others was driven home, tongue firmly in cheek but effective nonetheless.

Another post had a bus, impossibly crowded with people on the roof and hanging on precariously to windows and doors, and the simple two

words "Ganderbal Chal".

People in the union territory, particularly in the Valley, have long demanded high speed mobile connectivity. It was suspended for months after Jammu and Kashmir was bifurcated into the union territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh, on August 5 last year. From February this year, 2G services were started.

## Plunder In Pandemic...

are the people who've lost their jobs in tourism sectors and are forced to do such things during the lockdown."

So far, Irfan said, the forest department has seized 4,342 cubic feet of timber from smugglers, as well as confiscating 13 vehicles and 41 horses, and filing 103 police reports against 306 culprits involved.

"Timber smugglers took advantage of our restrained ground staff, who couldn't reach far-flung areas in the beginning of Covid lockdown," Mohit Gera, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, told Kashmir Observer.

"Our workers, who initially took part in the Covid fight back, are now resolutely patrolling and guarding our green gold."

But despite this routine patrol, and launching a mobile app and toll-free number—for locals to report real-time timber theft—persistent smuggling cases are posing some serious questions on the department's defense mechanism.

On August 13, Mohammad Sayeed Beigh, a Bandipora-based journalist, uploaded a video on his social media, showing how smugglers have left behind blazing stumps in a forest. The billowing smoke was seen from the main town in Bandipora.

"Morning scene Chitnara Forest (timing 6:15 am Dated 13/8/2020). Burning of an uprooted tree. Major portion of the tree is missing. And yes our DFO office and Historical Forest training school is there," Beigh wrote. 'Insider Involved'

But while the spike was always there, said Mushtaq Pahalgami, Kashmir's prominent environmental activist, the cases have just come in the limelight due to pandemic.

"There's always an insider from the department helping such mafias in smuggling the timber," Pahalgami told Kashmir Observer.

"I'm not saying that the entire system is involved, but there's always someone helping these mafias from inside in order to get few benefits out of it. It's a huge web."

## Pak Begins Phase-III Trial...

Chile, Argentina and will shortly start in Saudi Arabia. The principal investigator of the multi-centre clinical trial in Pakistan is NIH executive director Maj Gen AamerIkram," the statement said.

"AJM Pharma CEO Adnan Hussain signed an agreement with the NIH last month for collaborating on the phase-III clinical trial of CanSinoBio Ad5-nCoV in Pakistan," it said.

According to a document signed by DRAP Clinical Studies Committee secretary Shafqat Hussain Danish, the committee recommended that the trial be held in Indus Hospital in Karachi.

The Dawn newspaper reported that after seeing the document the test will be carried out by the International Centre for Chemical and Biological Sciences, Karachi, in collaboration with a Chinese company already conducting trials in China.

As many as 200 volunteers from Karachi, representing various ethnic groups, have been registered. The trial will be completed in 56 days during which three injections of inactivated virus will be administered to the volunteers — both male and female.

The document said the National Data Safety Monitoring Committee will closely monitor the safety of the patients and submit reports on a monthly basis.

A DRAP official, not authorised to speak on record, said it was a major development as, in case of a successful trial, the vaccine would become available to people.

"Though vaccines are being prepared in different countries, we cannot surely say whether we will get them as there will be high demand for the vaccines across the globe. If this trial is successful, the vaccine will be easily available to us at affordable rates," the official said.

Pakistan's coronavirus cases reached 289,832 on Tuesday after 617 new infections were diagnosed in the last 24 hours. Fifteen more people died during this period, taking the number of COVID-19 deaths to 6,190 across the country, the health ministry said on Tuesday.

Minister for Planning Asad Umar, who also heads the National Coordination and Operation Centre on COVID-19, said he was hopeful that the trials on the vaccine would be successful.

"It is one of the potential vaccines which can become successful," he said.

Pakistan was unable to participate in the phase-III trials held in different countries. However, an opportunity had finally been created wherein volunteers could participate in the trials within the country, Umar said.

The phase-III clinical trial is designed to evaluate whether an investigational vaccine can prevent symptomatic COVID-19 among adults.

On March 24, Minister for Science and Technology FawadChaudhry had constituted a committee — Scientific Task Force on COVID-19 — headed by scientist Professor DrAttaurRehman.

One of the committee members, who requested not to be named, said: "The trial will commence from next week which will be participated by 200 volunteers, all over 18 years of age".

"We have selected volunteers from various ethnic groups to analyse their results. I believe Karachi is the most appropriate city as people from all backgrounds are settled there. An amount of Rs 50,000 will be paid to each volunteer. After completion of the trial, we will move to other cities of the country," he said.

When asked about the side effects of the vaccine, the committee member said though its safety profile was very good, every medicine had side effect in one per cent cases with mild fever, tiredness, headache or allergy.

"These are mild symptoms and people should know that even the committee members are willing to volunteer themselves for the trial. We are taking part in global efforts against COVID-19. Moreover, as we are passing through the 'fifth generation warfare' phase, the trial will build a positive image of Pakistan," he said.

## Lashkar Militant Held In Hajin...

'subversive activities' in and around Hajin area. "A case under relevant sections of law has been registered in Police Station Hajin and further investigation has been initiated," the police spokesperson added.







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OBSERVER

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## A long haul

India continues to struggle with the rising number of Coronavirus cases. The number has now crossed 27 lakh with death toll at 52000. However, over the past three days there has been decline in the number of daily cases from the highest of over 63 thousand cases to now 55 thousand. We can take heart from the fact that the number of recoveries has also grown exponentially. At over 73 percent, India has one of the best recovery rates in the world.

But this hardly detracts from the challenge of the fast spreading contagion. Without a vaccine or an effective medicine to treat the disease, the infection seems here to stay. And as the situation over the past four months underlines, the lockdowns don't serve much purpose beyond a point. That too, for as big and as densely populated a country as India. On the contrary, the lockdown has only flattened the growth curve of the economy. According to a rough estimate, India's economy may have contracted by as much as a fourth in June quarter because of the lockdown necessitated by Covid-19 pandemic. The contraction estimates range from 14 to 26 percent and are in line with those seen in other countries hit hard by the contagion.

But the gradual unlocking of the economy has brought back some economic activity. It will need some generous government support to bring the economy back on the rails. Almost all sectors of the economy have been drastically affected.

At the same time, unless the government gets a grip on the runaway infection, the economy will continue to struggle. Thankfully there are some vaccine candidates whose development is at an advanced stage. The central government has already asked five pharmaceutical firms, including three that have candidates in clinical trials - Serum Institute of India, Bharat Biotech and Zydus Cadila - to let it know by Thursday on how soon they can produce large quantities and what pricing they expect if their shot is approved. So far, Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine is largely considered the front runner globally. Although, Russia has also announced a vaccine recently, there's a growing skepticism about its efficacy.

Meanwhile, the key to defeat Coronavirus is not locking the country down as it is a cure worse than the disease. We need to create more awareness among the people and let them take charge of the prevention efforts. And this has not been done as aggressively as was needed. What is needed is to encourage the preventive behaviour by people through a stringent enforcement of law against people publicly violating the safety precautions. And certainly not the lockdown.

## OTHER OPINION

## Mideast breakthrough

Netanyahu seems to hope the UAE agreement will salvage his tarnished legacy as Israel's longest-serving prime minister. His reputation has been damaged by successive blows - his failure, in three consecutive elections, to win an outright parliamentary majority, his criminal indictment on corruption charges and his much-criticised handling of the coronavirus pandemic.

Netanyahu has invested heavily in his relationship with Trump and it paid off when the US recognised Jerusalem as Israel's capital and cut support for the Palestinians. But even hawkish White House advisers balked this summer at his illegal scheme to annex large swaths of the West Bank in defiance of Arab and European opinion. With Trump apparently on the way out, Netanyahu badly needed a win.

Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the UAE's crown prince, required a boost, too. His support for the disastrous Saudi-led war in Yemen and his meddling in Libya have hurt his own and his country's international standing. This pact brings enhanced respectability, allowing increased technological, business and security cooperation with Israel, not least vis-a-vis their common enemy, Iran. It also opens the way for the UAE's purchase of previously embargoed US weaponry.

It is worth noting that the various motivations of these three individuals appear to have little or nothing to do with resolving the central issue at the heart of the decades-old conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbours - the illegal occupation and seizure of Palestinian land. Their self-exculpation defence - that the UAE agreed to normalise relations in exchange for a halt to the West Bank annexation plans - looks highly questionable.

Under fire from rightwingers and settler groups enraged that the promised "extension of Israeli sovereignty" was being snatched away, Netanyahu denied that annexation had been sacrificed to normalisation. His plan had merely been suspended following a request from Trump to pause implementation, he said. Yet in Washington, Trump insisted annexation was totally "off the table".

Given this potentially fatal ambiguity, western countries, including Britain, have been too quick to accept assurances that the deal somehow helps the Palestinians. Boris Johnson called the pledge to suspend annexation "a welcome step on the road to a more peaceful Middle East". Is this naive or just cynical? What happens if or when an Israeli government decides to end the suspension, as could happen at any time? Who then will speak for Palestine?

Palestinian leaders, ranging from the Palestinian Authority to Hamas in Gaza, spoke for themselves last week. They called the deal a selfish betrayal. Their view is shared by Turkey, Yemen and Iran, while Egypt and Jordan appear decidedly lukewarm. By breaking ranks with the 2002 Arab peace initiative and setting a precedent for other Gulf states, the UAE, egged on by Trump, has measurably reduced Israel's incentive to negotiate what has long been considered the only available, just and lasting Middle East peace settlement - a two-state solution honouring the aspirations of Israelis and Palestinians alike. Extremists on either side may ultimately be the historical beneficiaries.

Guardian



Makhdoom Mohi-ud-din

**A black becomes 'insolent' when he resists and protests. When a black talks of Marx, Fanon wrote, "the first reaction is always the same: we have brought you up to our level and now you turn against your benefactors".**

## OPINION

# Frantz Fanon, George Floyd and anti-racist anthems

The unrest after Floyd's death seemed startling and spontaneous



George Floyd, the black American was killed in police custody on May 25. It sparked off serial protests first in USA and then in other parts of the world. Why did the killing touch off incendiary outrage and anger? Was the killing of Floyd racially motivated? If yes, why such outpouring? A re-reading and re-appraisal of Frantz Fanon's, 'Black Skin, White Masks' is I think apposite. It gives insights into the psychology and psycho analogy of race and racism. Frantz Fanon, black radical and anti colonial thinker, fought on the side of Algerians in their anti colonial struggle.

The unrest after Floyd's death seemed startling and spontaneous. Zia uddin Sardar, British Pakistani scholar and cultural critic figures out different reasons for 'Floyd phenomenon' and its ilk. In 2008 Sardar wrote in the foreword to 'Black Skin White Masks': "this anger is not spontaneous phenomenon, it is not gut reaction or some recently discovered passion for justice and equity. Rather it is an anger borne out of grinding experience painfully long self analysis and even longer thought and reflection. As such it is guarded anger and directed at specific long term desire."

George Floyd actively resisted being handcuffed, it was reported. Homi K. Baba, Indian origin English scholar and critical theorist delineates a 'muscular tension between the black body and white body, there is a tension of meaning and being or some would say demand and desire, which is the psychic counterpart of that muscular tension'. The phobic image of black is deeply woven into the psychic pattern of white. The killing of George Floyd again once again raises the question Homi K. Baba asked in the foreword of 'Black Skin White Masks' in 1986. How can human world live its difference? How can a human being live other-wise?

Thomas Lane, the police officer put his hands on George Floyd and pulled him out of the car, the prosecutors reportedly said. Fanon wrote in different but analogous context that a black is 'predestined depository of this aggression'. Once handcuffed, Floyd became compliant, reported BBC. Aime Cesaire, radical black thinker, preceptor of Fanon puts across humiliations of racism, "I am talking of millions of men who

have been skillfully injected with fear, inferiority complex, trepidation, servility, despair and abasement".

Alex Kuang, black police officer faces the charges of aiding and abetting in Floyd's death. Fanon outlines the dilemma of a black, 'the black man has two dimensions, one with his fellows, the other with the white man.... That this self division is direct result of colonialist subjugation is beyond question....' This is direct result of slavery. This is direct result of white supremacism. 'Negro (read black) is a stage in the slow evolution of monkey into man....black soul is white man's artifact'.

A black becomes 'insolent' when he resists and protests. When a black talks of Marx, Fanon wrote, "the first reaction is always the same: we have brought you up to our level and now you turn against your benefactors. Ingrates! Obviously nothing can be expected of you.... He had had the impudence to read Engels....'. The 'impudence of black has forced resignation of some editorial staff of New York Times and the narrative of 'Cancel out Culture' has been pushed into dissemination.

The police officers did not relent when George Floyd pleaded that he was claustrophobic. He could not throw off what Fanon calls 'corporeal malediction'. The humanity of the black is either declined or decreased:

*Those who invented neither gun powder nor the compass.  
Those who never learned to conquer steam or electricity.  
Those who never explored the seas and skies.  
But they know the farthest corners of the land of anguish.  
Those who never knew any journey save that of abduction.  
Those who learned to kneel in docility.  
Those who were domesticated and Christianized.  
Those who were injected with bas-tardy*

(Claude Norday)

Urdu has been reduced to a language of a community and vector of its religion and culture. Shunned in its own place of origin and ancestry, Urdu has puissant tradition of bohemianism and heterodoxy. Ralph Russel, proclaimed as easily the best Urdu scholar in the west picked up the language from south

Indians as a conscript in second world war fighting in the north east India. The progressive writers of Urdu created a shining trove of anti racist anthems. The poems of Faiz Ahmad Faiz have been translated into Swahili. Ali Sardar Jafri, a familiar face of Progressive Writers Association expressed his solidarity with a black:

*Habshi mera bhai  
Jungle jengal phool chuney  
Bhai ke paaon laal gulab  
The African - (American) my brother  
Picks flowers in the forest after forest  
My brother whose feet are red  
Red as roses*

(Translation Ali Hussain Mir and Raza Mir)

"The couplet", write Ali Hussain Mir and Raza Mir in the Anthems of Resistance 'Jungal jungal phool chuney Bhai ke paaon laal gulab' is from a folk song expressing deep fraternal fondness.

*Jafri felicitated Paul Robeson, an African-American stage and film actor known for his political activism:  
Krishna ka geet hai, Gokhul ki haaseen sham hai tu.  
Aa kaleje se lagaalen ke siyaah-faam hai tu.*

*You are Krishna's song, You are Gokhul's beautiful evening.  
Come let us embrace, for you too, like me are dark skinned.*

(Translation Ali Hussain Mir and Raza Mir)

Urdu poets, expressly left-leaning, created paeans to black hero Martin Luther King. Makhdoom Mohiyuddin, Urdu poet from Hyderabad (Deccan) deeply mourned his assassination in 1968:

*Yeh qatl kisi ek aadmi ka nahin,  
Yeh qatl haq ka masavaat ka, sharaafat ka,  
Yeh qatl ilm ka, hikmat ka, aadmiyat ka,  
Yeh qatl hilm-o-muravat ka, khaak-sari ka.*

*This is not just murder of one man.  
This is the murder of truth, of equality, of nobility.*

*This is the murder of knowledge, of wisdom, of humanity.*

*This is the murder of clemency, of chivalry, of humility.*

(Translation Ali Hussain Mir and Raza Mir)

(The author can be reached at mmuddin2804@gmail.com)



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## IAS: Why qualifying it is a class thing

The Indian Administrative Services (IAS) is perhaps the only profession that has attained celebrity status in India. The number of candidates that sit for the examination varies within India and according to the Annual Report 2014-15 published by the Union Public Service Commission, Government of India (2016) some 24680 candidates appeared in 1950, and out of that 2780 were recommended, which is 11.26 % success rate. However, the number of candidates that have appeared for the test has dramatically increased over the years, and in 2015 a total of 3,267,794 candidates appeared but surprisingly only 5,969 (0.18%) were recommended. This indicates a

drastic decrease in the number of final recommendations.

Since the test is considered very hard, candidates routinely take multiple attempts to break the walls of the competition to be called the "IAS" officer. The big question remains as to who can afford to take such a risk where it is well established that only a few percent will qualify the final round, and that too perhaps after a few failed attempts. Only people with a strong support could do this, and that means such examinations are for the people who are usually "elite". The poor cannot take the risk. It is also proven by published data that the employees of the IAS usually belong

to privileged backgrounds: those who can afford to take risks, can halt their studies for preparation and can join coaching classes which charge a fortune as fees.

This takes us to another important discussion on why people take such tests and why entry to a typical administrative job has to be so popular among people. Is it the salary, incentives or something else? It seems it is not salary or incentives but the mere stardom that surrounds the job which makes it desirable. This suggests that deep within we aspire for power and yearn to be called "sir" — the British parlance for subjugation.

It is well known that it is not

easy to achieve a formal education as everyone can't afford it. It requires resources such as a privileged family background, parenthood, shelter, and health. Yet we remain completely blind to these realities when we pose with the so called high achievers, and we completely isolate the candidates who fail to pass or even sit for competitive examinations.

Very obviously, the idea of merit in itself is about a privileged background. Our education system and work culture has this weird fascination for class. Wealthy are usually exposed to the best and the worst is reserved for the less privileged people.

Dr Afroz Ahmad Shah



# Frequent Lockdowns And Delayed Treatment Making Kashmiris 'Toothless'

KO Web Desk

**Dentists work around the area that can potentially transmit the most — the mouth, teeth and around the nose. These areas are unavoidable during the treatment. So it is a risk both for the dentist and the patient.**

**A**N archetypal anguish, toothache remains a seething yet silent pain troubling Kashmiris during the Covid pandemic. For the fear of the viral infection, many prefer staying home, and bear the excruciating pain, than visiting their dentist. This searing agony in the valley where "the majority of people suffer from tooth decay" is now taking an additional toll on the lockdown-weary people.

Studies have also shown that good oral hygiene has been recognized as a means to prevent airway infections in patients, especially in those over the age of 70. Researches further show that those with periodontal disease are at a 25 percent raised risk of heart disease, thrice the risk of getting diabetes, and 20 percent raised risk of getting high blood pressure. These're all risk factors of severe COVID-19, the studies reveal.

These health challenges have thrown up unlikely heroes who not only have to step outside their homes, but abandon all social distancing to provide essential services.

But while the role of frontline health workers has been much lauded, dentists in Kashmir have rarely received any appreciation despite falling directly in line of aerosol.

In a candid chat with *Kashmir Observer*, dental surgeon *Dr. Sheikh Shahid* details how his tribe is replacing pain with relief, frown with a smile, and discomfort with ease in the current testing times when escalating anxiety is only disturbing one's oral health.

**To begin with, how has coronavirus affected dentistry?**

Dentists work around the area that can potentially transmit the most — the mouth, teeth and around the nose. These areas are unavoidable during the treatment. So it is a risk both for the dentist and the patient.

Further, dentists use certain instruments which create aerosol or droplets mixed with saliva or blood in the air. Since COVID-19 is spread from an infected person, these aerosols leave the patient and the dentist more vulnerable to the infection.

**But then fear of infection is such that not many come forward for the supposed "supplementary" oral treatment in Kashmir. How can delaying treatment affect the teeth?**

While it's okay for patients wanting a crown, regular cleaning to put their plans on hold, there're certain procedures that should not be delayed.

As we all know, COVID-19 isn't going anywhere and this is the new normal. So we've to learn to live with it. But there're serious challenges ahead.

Dental care is sometimes urgent, and putting it off can at times flare up the issue. While some issues can be handled through tele-consultation, but many times it requires personal visits.

Years of dental practice has taught me that nothing is worse than a dental pain irrespective of nature and reason.

Also, it purely depends on the pain threshold of the patient. What might be just sensitivity for us can be sleepless nights for someone.

But according to the Indian Dental Association, pain related to swelling, inflammation, fracture tooth, and bleeding come under severe dental emergencies.

**Since dentistry itself remains a risk area, how do you ensure the safety of your patients?**

First, the hospital carries out temperature screening at the entrance. After that, patients are checked upon



Sheikh Shahid attending to his patient at his clinic

their contact with any infected person recently / travel history/ any symptoms they had recently.

If all clear, their hands are sanitized and patient protective gowns are given to wear during their visit.

And also, brief breaks in-between patients are given to sanitize and disinfect surfaces and things around in dental settings.

**What're the most common dental problems among Kashmiris? And has Covid-19 escalated them?**

The most common dental problem encountered by Kashmiris is dental caries or cavities, more commonly known as tooth decay, caused by a breakdown of the tooth enamel.

This breakdown is the result of bacteria on teeth that breaks food and produce acid that destroys tooth enamel and results in tooth decay.

Due to frequent lockdowns and delayed treatment, an unattended cavity might have reached the stage of root canal or even tooth removal.

Some degree of risk is also involved in case of unaddressed gum issues. It can lead to inflammation, which can lower down one's immunity.

**So what options patients have then? How should they seek a dental appointment during the pandemic?**

Well, they should call up their doctor and explain their problems. If the issue is small and can be rectified over the phone, then appointment can be avoided for the sake of social distancing.

Also, patients should inform the doctor about medication they are taking. They should take along their health reports so that a second visit can be avoided.

**It brings us to the common question: how should people maintain**

**oral health during the current crisis situation?**

See, the real challenge is to keep the mouth clean and free from at least bacterial infections. A cleaner and healthy mouth is less prone to viral infections.

The bacteria lives in everyone's oral cavity, predominantly sticking on the teeth, the top surface of the tongue and below the visible margin of the gum that touches the tooth.

Good oral hygiene has been recognized as a means to prevent airway infections in patients, especially in those over the age of 70. Those with periodontal disease [Periodontal disease is an infection of the tissues that hold your teeth in place. It's typically caused by poor brushing and flossing habits that allow plaque—a sticky film of bacteria—to build up on the teeth and harden] are at a 25 percent raised risk of heart disease, thrice the risk of getting diabetes, and 20 percent raised risk of getting high blood pressure, the researchers wrote. These are all risk factors of severe COVID-19, the studies reveal.

One can follow standard dental care procedure at home. Avoid consuming food that is too hot or too cold if you are sensitive so that the pain does not aggravate. Diet control is crucial.

Brush your teeth twice daily or use medicated mouthwashes. Use medicated toothpastes for sensitivity if it's mild. Else personal visit is mandatory. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitiser. Clean the toothbrush properly after use to ensure it is not contaminated.

Most importantly, flossing teeth is an important habit for proper health and hygiene for protecting teeth from decay.

## Nargis Khatoon: A New Kashmiri Singing Sensation With Celebrity Fanbase

From Pakistani star singers to Bollywood celebrities, a young Kashmiri singer is sweeping praises from all and sundry for her singing talent on internet.

Aaqib Javed

**I**t was turning out to be another day for the 21-year-old budding Kashmiri singer on July 5, 2020, until a top Pakistani celebrity singer Ali Sethi reposted her song on his Instagram stories.

Within hours, Nargis Khatoon's inbox was flooded with messages. The people from all over the world including Pakistan, UAE and India fell in love with her voice.

The raging response didn't stop there.

A few days later, another Pakistani singer Ali Zafar retweeted her song on his twitter handle and praised her voice.

"It was crazy," Khatoon told Kashmir Observer. "I got so much love and support from people that I could never imagine."

The appreciation and praises for her voice didn't only come from the other side of the border.

On July 14, Bollywood actress, Sushmita Sen while retweeting her song wrote: "Uff! @nargiskhatoon Love you!"

Khatoon's singing power was also appreciated by Bollywood singer Ehsaan on Live Instagram show.

A Kashmir girl, Khatoon was born and brought-up in Jammu region where her father was running his business. She now lives in Srinagar with her family.

As a small girl, she used to sing on her school functions and radio shows. She also sang around 8 to 9 songs for a children show for Doordarshan.

"When I started singing, it was all natural," says Khatoon, currently pursuing her BBA. "Singing was always a part of my life."

At 17, she started learning the basics of Indian classical music, the singer who has performed in different states of India says.

"Right now, I'm learning and playing guitar simultaneously," Khatoon says. "I'm also taking western vocal lessons. And I started learning ukulele [a small four-stringed guitar of Hawaiian origin] exactly from the day the lockdown started."

Since the outbreak of pandemic, the singer-song-



Nargis Khatoon

writer has kept the audience glued to her social media profile. She keeps sharing her musical content on Instagram and Twitter.

"I've had so many rollercoaster moments since this pandemic took over and the lockdown was imposed," the singing sensation says.

"People have been showering so much of love and support that I'm just overwhelmed and grateful."

The fact that her voice "soothes" people and gives

them a good time, as she has been hearing throughout, makes her extremely happy.

Khatoon calls a Pakistani-born British singer Salma Agha who sang as well as acted in Bollywood films in the 1980s and the early 1990s as her first ever inspiration. She follows songsters like Adele, Mami Smith, Shafqat Amanat Ali, Lata Mangeshkar, SEL and Shameem Dev.

"These are the people I started listening to as a

kid," she says. "A lot of music got into my ears without me realising that I'm getting used to it. My ears are getting familiar with some styles, poetry, the ways of expression and voices."

As someone who wants to carve her career in playback singing, Khatoon is mindful of the fact that she still has a long journey in front of her. But the self-trained singer credits internet for her singing growth and graph.

Khatoon is also exploring new genres, styles and techniques. She's also meeting new people and exploring options of collaborating, jamming with different musicians, live arena, and the studio experiences.

"All of these add to one's core talent, and this is what I've exactly been doing and experiencing for years," she says. "Nobody can teach you the way experiences can, and that's what's it for me. It's a beautiful process."

Musical training, she says, is all about ears. "How well your ears can identify music, the smaller nuances, and also, any art is mostly heart and soul," she says.

For a female singer, however, there's a "lack of opportunities" in J&K bereft of the Live Scenes, she rues.

"I could see guys doing music, but I didn't see any girl around pursuing music," Khatoon says. "That was not a problem for me but I'd just wonder how come no other girl is trying to break into the scene."

In her case, however, it was her late mother who would encourage her from the word go: "Tehchhayaslaawaz" (Your voice is very nice).

"What more did I need at that time?" she says. "But yes, my family was a little hesitant upon seeing my seriousness about music."

Despite being mindful of a few opportunities in the field of music in the erstwhile state, Khatoon remains upbeat about her singing journey.

"I believe we, especially Kashmiri girls, shouldn't give up," Khatoon says. "Ours isn't a conservative society. So, it doesn't hurt to explore more and get better."

Also, she says, there's no dearth of art in the valley.

"Bad times that we have passed through has made us as a society bitter to some extent, but our resilience for life and liveliness remains the same," she says. "And that's what keeps us going."



आमंत्रण पत्र

## JAMMU AND KASHMIR PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

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**NOTIFICATION NO: PSC/EXAM/2020/12**  
**D A T E D : 1 7 . 0 8 . 2 0 2 0**

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The result of Accounts Clerk Course (ACC) Departmental Examination, 2019 is declared as under:-

ROLL NO	NAME OF THE CANDIDATE	PARENTAGE	PI	PII	PIII	PIV	REMARKS
1	MANISH KUMAR	BALWANT RAJ	19	70	77	69	Passes.
2	RIHANA RASOOL	GHULAM RASOOL SHORA	15	52	81	61	Passes with 2 grace marks in Paper I.
3	SUMEET GUPTA	KULDEEP KUMAR GUPTA	21	52	62	35	Passes.
4	JYOTI RAINA	RATTAN LAL RAINA	16	45	59	71	Passes with 1 grace mark in Paper I.
5	PANKAJ KHAJURIA	BISHAMBER DASS	19	40	58	80	Passes.
6	AKHTER ALI	ALI MOHAMMAD GANAI	28	64	68	69	Passes.
7	SAMEER ABBAS	MOHAMMAD AMEEN					Withheld for want of Exemption Certificate from Finance Deptt.
8	ABID QAYOOM TAK	ABDUL QAYOOM TAK	20	67	78	63	Passes.
9	AKASH BHASIN	SURINDER KUMAR	A	A	A	A	Absent.
10	SIDHARATH KAW	SUBASH KAW	30	58	64	66	Passes.

11	ANIL KUMAR SHARMA	RAM KRISHAN SHARMA	17	42	58	64	Passes.
12	VICKY KUMAR	SAT PAL	6	22	44	56	Fails in Papers I & II. Passes in Papers III & IV.
13	MEHRAJ UDDIN RATHER	GH MOHD RATHER	19 Passed in 12/2017	49 Passed in 12/2017	59	50 Passed in 03/2016	Passes.
14	HARISH KUMAR	KRISHAN LAL	13	48	45	24	Fails in Papers I & IV. Passes in Papers II & III.
15	WAQAR AZIZ LODHI	ABDUL AZIZ	26	A	A	A	Passes in Paper I. Absent in Papers II, III & IV.
16	NIRVAIR SINGH	GURMOHAN SINGH	17	59	56	67	Passes.
17	POONAM JAMWAL	DHIAN SINGH JAMWAL	26	67	75	92	Passes.
18	RANDHIR SINGH	HARDIT SINGH	11	61	65	85	Fails in Paper I. Passes in Papers II, III & IV.
19	NAJMA KHATOON	GHULAM MEHDI	18 Passed in 12/2017	34	39 Passed in 12/2017	61	Passes with 1 grace mark in Paper II.
20	SHAH NAWAZ MUGHAL	MOHD BASHIR MUGHAL	10	40	53	44	Fails in Paper I. Passes in Papers II, III & IV.
21	KULDEEP SINGH	SEWA RAM	19	40	45	14	Passes in Papers I, II & III. Fails in Paper IV.
22	ASHISH KUMAR	CHAMAN LAL	A	A	A	A	Absent.
23	ROHIT SAYAL	DEEPAK SAYAL	12	38	63	33	Fails in Papers I & IV. Passes in Papers II & III.

24	NEHA SAMBYAL	DHARAM VIR SINGH	21	67	67	90	Passes.
25	JIGMET LAMO	SONAM ANGCHUK	9	44	56	58	Fails in Paper I. Passes in Papers II, III & IV.
26	BHAWANA SHARMA	KEEMTI LAL SHARMA	16	62	64	77	Passes with 1 grace mark in Paper I.
27	TSEWANG STOB DAN	LOBZANG TSERING	15	43	55	44	Passes with 2 grace marks in Paper I.
28	SHEIL KHAN	HUSSAIN ALI	14	45	22	37	Fails in Papers I & III. Passes in Papers II & IV.
29	MOHD AFAQ ULMUJTABA ULMUSTAFA	MOHD YOUSUF	17	64	53	57	Passes.
30	SUDERSHAN KUMAR HANSA	MANI RAM	17 Passed in 12/2017	22	24	16	Fails in Papers II, III & IV.
31	ARVIND	RAJ KUMAR	7	14	33	37 Passed in 12/2017	Fails in Papers I, II & III.
32	MOHD ARIF	NOOR HUSSAIN	19	47	60	44	Passes.
33	ITISHRI	PARSHOTAM LAL	18	67	70	80	Passes.
34	TAHIR PARVEZ MIR	ABDUL SALAM MIR	35	72	76	73	Passes.
35	SUPNEEL KAUR	BALWINDER SINGH	18	44	57	30	Passes with 5 grace marks in Paper IV.
36	SOHAIL AHMED	IQBAL AHMED	27	71	64	56	Passes.
37	AJAY KUMAR	DINA NATH	12	46	48	36	Passes with 5 grace marks in

							Paper I.
38	AKSHI BHAGAT	RAM PARSHAD	16	42	55	61	Passes with 1 grace mark in Paper I.
39	VIJAY KUMAR	MADAN LAL	9	32	57	27 Passed in 12/2017	Fails in Papers I & II. Passes in Paper III.
40	VIKAS SHARMA	SANT KUMAR SHARMA	23	62	64	75	Passes.
41	HARMEET SINGH	TIRTH SINGH	19	56	78	68	Passes.
42	ASAD AHMED	ZAMIR HUSSAIN	10	42	41 Passed in 12/2017	58	Fails in Paper I. Passes in Papers II & IV.
43	NEENA GUPTA	MOHAN DASS GUPTA	A	A	A	A	Absent.
44	JATINDER SINGH	MEHAR SINGH	19	51	64	74	Passes.
45	MEENU KUMARI	DASS RAM	13	67	80	74	Passes with 4 grace marks in Paper I.
46	POOJA RANI	BHAG SINGH	17	52	55	61	Passes.
47	MISS TSERING DOLMA	MRR TSERING TASHI	14	33	71	58	Fails in Papers I & II. Passes in Papers III & IV.
48	DHIRENDER MOHAN	MOHAN LAL RADHA	18	61	48	56	Passes.
49	STANZIN ANGCHOK	TASHI NAMGIAL	21	42	60	55	Passes.
50	SUNIL KUMAR	GULDEV SINGH	23	59	68	62	Passes.
51	VIVEK SHARMA	SURINDER SHARMA	26	70	83	60	Passes.
52	SATISH SHARMA	PARMANAND	17	51	A	A	Passes in Papers I & II. Absent in Papers III & IV.

53	DINESH SHARMA	OM PARKASH SHARMA	40f 33	7	44	39	24	Fails in Papers I & IV. Passes in Papers II & III.
54	HEMANI BHADWAL	RASH PAL SINGH	18 Passed in 12/2017	58 Passed in Aug. 2013	34	49 Passed in Aug. 2013	42	Passes with 1 grace mark in Paper III.
55	NIGHAT NIAZY	NAIAZ AHMED	7	30	44	50		Fails in Papers I & II. Passes in Papers III & IV.
56	NASEER AHMED	MOHD HANIEF	4	33	63	43		Fails in Papers I & II. Passes in Papers III & IV.
57	AVINASH ATTRI	SUKHDEV KUMAR	21	56	73	62		Passes.
58	ADNAN UL HAQ	MAHBOOB AHMAD	29	63	63	59		Passes.
59	RUHANIAT SINGH JAMWAL	SURAJ SINGH	9	31	64	52		Fails in Papers I & II. Passes in Papers III & IV.
60	NAVEEN SHARMA	DHARAM PAUL	33	46	65	46		Passes.
61	NOWSHEEN SAROORI	FARID AHMED MIR	A	A	A	A		Absent.
62	NARINDER KUMAR SHARMA	SOM DUTT SHARMA	29	62	77	60		Passes.
63	FAYAZ ALI	NISSAR ALI	18 Passed in 01/2013	24	43	16		Fails in Papers II & IV. Passes in Paper III.
64	LAKESHWAR KHAJURIA	MANOHAR LAL	22	66	72	73		Passes.
65	SOURAV DUTT SHARMA	SHAKTI DUTT SHARMA	26	46	53	57		Passes.
66	SOURAV SINGH	SOBA SINGH	12	53	38	47		Passes with 5 grace marks in Paper I.
67	VANDANA SHARMA	CHAMAN LAL SHARMA	18	65	68	85		Passes.

68	VINOD GUPTA	JAGDISH KUMAR GUPTA	50f 33	36	66	70	86	Passes.
69	VIJAY KUMAR SHARMA	MADAN MOHAN SHARMA	24	51	52	49		Passes.
70	VIJAYTA JASWANT	JASWANT LAL CHIBBER	20	62	71	69		Passes.
71	ABHISHEK KHAJURIA	RAM PAUL SHARMA	26	67	60	66		Passes.
72	BARUN SLATHIA	PREM SINGH	36	79	76	88		Passes.
73	SANJEEV SHARMA	UMA DUTT SHARMA	11	43	53	56		Fails in Paper I. Passes in Papers II, III & IV.
74	DEEPAK GUPTA	ASHOK KUMAR	29	63	76	78		Passes.
75	KANAV ANAND	LATE SH PARMOD ANAND	22	65	66	83		Passes.
76	NEERAJ SHARMA	SHADI LAL	15	58	56	67		Passes with 2 grace marks in Paper I.
77	NISHANT GUPTA	ROMESH CHANDER	24	67	66	85		Passes.
78	PAWAN KUMAR	TIRATH RAM	11	54	48	57		Fails in Paper I. Passes in Papers II, III & IV.
79	KALPANA MANHAS	JAGDEV SINGH MANHAS	27	70	67	77		Passes.
80	SEEMA VERMA	TITRU RAM	16	44	71	77		Passes with 1 grace mark in Paper I.
81	RAJINDER KUMAR	KALA RAM	15	54	50	52		Passes with 2 grace marks in Paper I.
82	RAJ KUMAR	HANS RAJ	13	60	49	42		Passes with 4 grace marks in Paper I.
83	INDU PAWAR	RAJINDER SINGH	30	79	82	83		Passes.

84	BALBIR SINGH	KIRPA RAM	30	56	67	66		Passes.
85	MUVAHHID CHIB	KHADAM HUSSAIN	11	44	58	66		Fails in Paper I. Passes in Papers II, III & IV.
86	MOHD YASEEN	ABDUL AZIZ	18	55	61	64		Passes.
87	VIVEK SANYAL	JAGDISH RAJ	17	37	63	57		Passes.
88	VIPUL LEHRA	BHARAT BHUSHAN	38	57	70	56		Passes.
89	AMBER KHAN	MOHAMMAD ANWAR	13	55	44 Passed in 12/2017	36 Passed in 12/2017		Passes with 4 grace marks in Paper I.
90	VIJAY KUMAR	DHARAM CHAND	13	27	48	43		Fails in Papers I & II. Passes in Papers III & IV.
91	ANKUSH SHARMA	RATTAN LAL SHARMA	18	36	32	11		Passes in Papers I & II. Fails in Papers III & IV.
92	RISHABH SHARMA	SURINDER BHUSHAN SHARMA	30	72	67	66		Passes.
93	SHAISTA KATOCH	B A KATOCH	19	44	58	67		Passes.
94	JOSY KOUL	SH DWARIKA NATH KOUL	18	33	54	21		Passes in Papers I & III. Fails in Papers II & IV.
95	RENU SHARMA	SURAJ MANI SHARMA	13	32	66	55		Fails in Papers I & II. Passes in Papers III &

95	RENU SHARMA	SURAJ MANI SHARMA	13	32	66	55	Fails in Papers I & II. Passes in Papers III & IV.
96	ASHU	ASHOK KUMAR KAPAHI	19	69	65	68	Passes.
97	KASHORI LAL	SHIB DASS	1	3	25	5	Fails.
98	BHAVNA	OM PARKASH	11	40	70	59	Fails in Paper I. Passes in Papers II, III & IV.

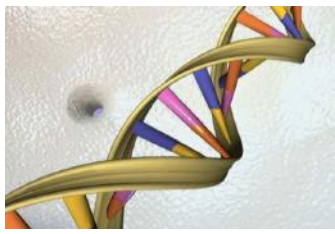
99	BABER ALI	MOHD ALI	20	65	73	63	Passes.
100	VIJAYDEEP SINGH	JAGDEEP SINGH BHALWAL	11	49	63	52	Fails in Paper I. Passes in Papers II, III & IV.
101	SUMATI ANTHAL	BALWAN CHAND	20	70	79	78	Passes.
102	PAWAN SHARMA	GOVIND RAM	27	72	66	65	Passes.
103	JASWANT SINGH	DARSHAN SINGH	13	49	60	52	Passes with 4 grace marks in Paper I.
104	MAHESH KUMAR	TARSEM RAJ	26	73	66	37	Passes.
105	NIDHI KALGOTRA	GIRDHARI LAL KALGOTRA	16	72	73	73	Passes with 1 grace mark in Paper I.
106	LOVEJEET SINGH KHAJURIA	RAJINDER SINGH KHAJURIA	A	A	A	A	Absent.
107	TSERING DORJAI	TASHI DORJAI					Withheld for want of Exemption Certificate from Finance Deptt.
108	LALIT KUMAR DUTTA	BAL KRISHAN DUTTA	9	28	55	23	Fails in Papers I, II & IV. Passes in Paper III.
109	RAKESH SHARMA	HEM RAJ SHARMA	12	52	49	35	Passes with 5 grace marks in Paper I.
110	VINAY GUPTA	YOG RAJ GUPTA	28	64	72	73	Passes.
111	SUNIL KUMAR	BODH RAJ	15	46	72	55	Passes with 2 grace marks in Paper I.
112	RAJINDER KUMAR	RAM PAL GUPTA	26	72	75	61	Passes.
113	RITESH GUPTA	VIRINDER KUMAR	26	60	75	65	Passes.

114	RAJINDER KUMAR	AMAR NATH	16	49 Passed in 12/2017	53	45	Passes with 1 grace mark in Paper I.
115	MOHD SIBTAIN	AKBAR ALI	A	A	A	A	Absent.
116	KULWANT SINGH	RASHPAL SINGH	29	59	72	85	Passes.
117	KOSER AYAZ KHAN	MOHD AYOOB KHAN	4	2	20	31	Fails.
118	AMAN KUMAR ABROL	YASH PAL ABROL	19	63	47	43	Passes.
119	MOHD SAFEER	MOHD BASHIR	8	35	27	43	Fails in Papers I & III. Passes in Papers II & IV.
120	VIKAS KUNDAN	SOM DATT	8	31	51	41	Fails in Papers I & II. Passes in Papers III & IV.
121	SHABIR AHMED	ABDUL GANI	13	31	43	38	Fails in Papers I & II. Passes in Papers III & IV.
122	KARAR HUSSAIN SHAH	ALI HAYDER SHAH	18	63	61	62	Passes.
123	DHUNDUP TSERING	TSEWANG NURBOO			-		Withheld for want of Exemption Certificate from Finance Deptt.
124	BILAL AHMAD	HAJI ASGAR ALI	17 Passed in 01/2013	55 Passed in 12/2017	38 Passed in 01/2014	25	Fails in Paper IV.
125	ATHER SHAHNAZ	SHAHNAZ IQBAL	24 Passed in 12/2017	37 Passed in 12/2017	42	34	Passes with 1 grace mark in Paper IV.
126	NITIN SETHI	JAGDISH SETHI					Withheld for want of Exemption Certificate from Finance Deptt.

127	SANJAY KUMAR	AMER NATH	2	10	45	22	Fails in Papers I, II & IV. Passes in Paper III.
128	RAM KUMAR	GOVIND RAM	15	44	40	23	Fails in Papers I & IV. Passes in Papers II & III.
129	ARJUN	ASHOK KUMAR SHARMA	30	69	64	58	Passes.
130	MUDASIR RIAZ	RIAZ AHMAD SHAH	17	65	64	76	Passes.
131	FAROOQ AHMED	GULAB DIN	12	41	45	44	Passes with 5 grace marks in Paper I.
132	SAJJAD AHMED	MOHD HAFIZ	A	A	A	A	Absent.
133	ABHISEK KUMAR	LOCHAN DASS	19	63	74	69	Passes.
134	SHABANA ANJUM	KHALIL AHMED	20	69	72	72	Passes.
135	MOHD RAFIQ	GUL MOHD	1	7	16	15	Fails.
136	SUMIT RAINA	PISHORI LAL RAINA	22	45	39	60	Passes.
137	SONAM MAHAJAN	SUDESH KUMAR	15	60	51	80	Passes with 2 grace marks in Paper I.
138	VANDANA SHARMA	ASHWANI KUMAR SHARMA	17	69	70	88	Passes.
139	AJAY SINGH	KULDEV SINGH	13	51	69	68	Passes with 4 grace marks in Paper I.
140	SANDEEP SINGH PARIHAR	JAGDISH RAJ PARIHAR	A	A	A	A	Absent.
141	JETINDER KUMAR	SHADI LAL	20	68	76	78	Passes.
142	ASHA RANI	INDER CHAND	26	53	78	76	Passes.
143	VIPAN SINGH PARIHAR	BHARAT BHUSHAN	25	71	69	65	Passes.



## Coronavirus Mutation More Infectious But Less Deadly, Says Disease Expert



**SINGAPORE:** A mutation of the novel coronavirus increasingly common throughout Europe and recently detected in Malaysia may be more infectious but appears less deadly, according to a prominent infectious diseases doctor.

Paul Tambyah, senior consultant at the National University of Singapore and president-elect of the U.S.-based International Society of Infectious Diseases, said the D614G mutation has also been found in Singapore.

The city-state's health ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Tambyah said there is evidence the proliferation of the mutation in Europe has coincided with a drop in death rates, suggesting it is less lethal.

The mutation is not likely to impact the efficacy of a potential vaccine, despite warnings to the contrary from other health experts, he added.

"Maybe that's a good thing to have a virus that is more infectious but less deadly," Tambyah

told Reuters.

Tambyah said most viruses tend to become less virulent as they mutate.

"It is in the virus' interest to infect more people but not to kill them because a virus depends on the host for food and for shelter," he said.

Scientists discovered the mutation as early as February and it has circulated in Europe and the Americas, the World Health Organization said. The WHO has also said there is no evidence the mutation has led to more severe disease.

On Sunday, Malaysia's director-general of health Noor Hisham Abdullah urged greater public vigilance after authorities detected what they believe was the D614G mutation of the coronavirus in two recent clusters.

Noor Hisham said the new strain detected was 10 times more infectious and that vaccines currently in development may not be effective against this mutation.

But Tambyah said such mutations would not likely change the virus enough to make potential vaccines less effective.

"The mutant affects the binding of the spike protein and not necessarily the recognition of the protein by the immune system, which would be primed by a vaccine," he said.

## Man From India Triggered New Cluster Of Cases Of New Strain Of Coronavirus

Southeast Asia is facing a strain of the new coronavirus that the Philippines, which faces the region's largest outbreak, is studying to see whether the mutation makes it more infectious.

The strain, earlier seen in other parts of the world and called D614G, was found in a Malaysian cluster of 45 cases that started from someone who returned from India and breached his 14-day home quarantine.

The Philippines detected the strain among random Covid-19 samples in the largest city of its capital region.

The mutation "is said to have a higher possibility of transmission or infectiousness, but we still don't have enough solid evidence to say that that will happen," Philippines' Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said in a virtual briefing on Monday.

The strain has been found in many other countries and has become the predominant variant in Europe and the U.S., with the World Health Organization saying there's no evidence the strain leads to a more severe disease. The mutation has also been detected in recent outbreaks in China.

There's no evidence from the epidemiology that the mutation is considerably more infectious than other strains, said Benjamin Cowling, head of epidemiology and biostatistics at the University of Hong Kong.

"It's more commonly identified now than it was in the past, which suggests that it might have some kind of competitive advantage over other strains of Covid-19," he said.

As Southeast Asian countries take various steps to prevent a resurgence while reopening limited travel, they struggle with people breaching quarantine rules after returning from overseas as well as false negative test results at borders.

The man who returned from India had tested negative when



he arrived in Malaysia. He has since been sentenced to five months in prison and fined for breaching quarantine.

### People's Cooperation

"People need to be wary and take greater precautions because this strain has now been found in Malaysia," the country's Director-General of Health Noor Hisham Abdullah wrote in a Facebook post, saying the strain can make it 10 times more infectious without citing a study. "The people's cooperation is very needed so that we can together break the chain of infection from any mutation."

The strain "might be a little bit more contagious. We haven't yet got enough evidence to evaluate that, but there's no evidence that it's a lot more contagious," University of Hong Kong's Cowling said.

Noor Hisham warned that the strain could mean existing studies on vaccines may be incomplete or ineffective against the mutation. That's even as a paper published in Cell Press said the mutation is unlikely to have a major impact on the efficacy of vaccines currently being developed.

While Malaysia has largely managed to prevent a resurgence of the virus seen elsewhere in the world, the number of new cases found in the country has been picking up. The country reported 26 new cases on Saturday, the most since July 28.

Confirmed cases in the Philippines have surged 76% from the end of July to a total of 164,474 as of Monday. It overtook Indonesia more than a week ago to become the country with the largest outbreak in Southeast Asia.



## Oman, Israel Discuss 'Recent Developments' After Uae Deal

Oman's foreign minister spoke to his Israeli counterpart on Monday, Muscat said, the first contact since Israel normalised ties with the United Arab Emirates last week.

Yusuf bin Alawi subsequently spoke with a top Palestinian official, Oman added.

The Israel-UAE deal, announced by United States President Donald Trump on Thursday,

is only the third such accord Israel has struck with an Arab country, and raises the prospect of similar deals with other pro-Western Gulf states. Bin Alawi and Israel's Gabi Ashkenazi spoke via telephone about "recent developments in the region", Oman's

foreign ministry said on Twitter.

Bin Alawi told Ashkenazi that Oman "clearly reaffirms its position calling for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace" in the Middle East.

Bin Alawi also called for a "resumption of the peace process in order to satisfy the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people who aspire to an independent state".

While Oman and Israel do not have formal diplomatic relations, there have been several contacts between the two states, including in 2018, when the late sultan Qaboos received Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Muscat.

Also on Monday, bin Alawi

spoke with senior Fatah official Jibril Rajub, who expressed his "appreciation of the role of the sultanate and its balanced and wise policy towards Arab issues and, foremost, the Palestinian question", according to Oman's foreign ministry.

The Palestinian Authority has voiced its "strong rejection and condemnation" of the Israeli-Emirati deal.

Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCC) Bahrain and Oman have welcomed the deal, while Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar have yet to comment.

Home to Islam's holiest sites, Saudi Arabia would face sensitive political calculations before a formal recognition of Israel.

### THE ISRAEL-UAE DEAL, ANNOUNCED BY UNITED STATES

President Donald Trump on Thursday, is only the third such accord Israel has struck with an Arab country, and raises the prospect of similar deals with other pro-Western Gulf states. Bin Alawi and Israel's Gabi Ashkenazi spoke via telephone about "recent developments in the region", Oman's foreign ministry said on Twitter.

## Israel's Mossad Chief Visits UAE For Security Talks: State Media

Israel's Mossad spy agency chief Yossi Cohen visited the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for security talks, Emirati state media reported on Tuesday, days after the two countries agreed to establish diplomatic ties.

Cohen discussed "cooperation in the fields of security" and regional developments with the UAE's national security adviser, Sheikh Tahnoun bin Zayed Al Nahyan, in Abu Dhabi, reported the official WAM news agency.

The United States, Israel and UAE, along with some other Gulf states, have a common foe in Iran.

Cohen's trip marked the first visit to the UAE by an Israeli official after the announcement last week by US President Donald Trump that the two countries had agreed to normalise relations.

As part of the deal, the Jew-



ish state agreed to suspend the annexation of occupied West Bank territories, although Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the plan was not off the table in the long run.

The Israel-UAE deal is only the third such accord Israel has struck with an Arab country, and raises the prospect of similar deals with other pro-Western Gulf states.

Trump said leaders from the two countries would sign the agreement at the White House in the coming weeks.

Speaking to reporters later, Trump suggested that more diplomatic breakthroughs between Israel and its Muslim neighbours in the region were expected.

"Things are happening that I can't talk about," he said.

## UN Court Finds No Evidence Of Hezbollah, Syria Involvement In Hariri Assassination

The presiding judge at a United Nations-backed tribunal in the Netherlands delivered a verdict on Tuesday in the trial in absentia of four members of Hezbollah accused of involvement in the truck bomb assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, ruling that there is no evidence of involvement of Syria or Hezbollah.

Sketching the complex political backdrop for the assassination, Presiding Judge David Re of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon said that in the months before his death, Hariri supported reducing the influence of Syria in Lebanon and that of Hezbollah in Syria. He said judges who studied reams of evidence in the trial of four Hezbollah members accused of involvement in the bombing were "of the view that Syria and Hezbollah may have had motives to eliminate Mr. Hariri and some of his political allies." But he added that there was no evidence that "Hezbollah leadership had any involvement in Mr. Hariri's murder, and there is no direct evidence of Syrian involvement in it."

Re was speaking as he delivered the final judgments in the trial. The court was not expected to rule on either Hezbollah or Syria as the tribunal can only accuse individuals, not groups or states.

The verdict was originally expected on Aug. 7 but was postponed following the massive blast that hit the Port of Beirut three days earlier.

Four alleged members of Lebanon's Iran-allied Hezbollah movement were tried in absentia by the Special Tribunal



for Lebanon (STL) over a bombing that had killed Hariri, along with 21 other people, in Beirut on Feb. 14, 2005. The STL was established in 2007 following a U.N. Security Council resolution. At the time, Hariri's assassination was widely blamed on Syria and its allies in Lebanon, and Hezbollah. Both Damascus and Hezbollah have always denied having any links with the bombing. Hariri's death triggered an outcry, locally and internationally and triggered massive protests in Lebanon that later forced Syria to withdraw its troops from its neighbor, after 29 years of political and military hegemony.

The four defendants went on trial in 2014 on charges including the "intentional homicide" of Hariri and 21 others, attempted homicide of 226 people wounded in the bombing and conspiracy to commit a terrorist act. The four defendants were identified as Salim Jamil Ayyash, Hassan Habib Merhi, Assad Hassan Sabra and Hussein Hassan Oneissi. In 2011, the tribunal issued an indictment and arrest warrants for the four Lebanese suspects. In May 2016, Hezbollah said that a fifth suspect, Mustafa Badreddine, who the prosecution alleged was involved in organizing the attack, had been killed in an explosion near Damascus airport in Syria.

## Trump Elevated India Ties In Ways Not Seen Under Others: White House



**WASHINGTON:** US President Donald Trump has elevated America's ties with India and solidified the growing partnership between the two countries in ways not seen in any previous administrations, the White House has said.

The US president will continue to build this critical partnership in the years to come, it asserted.

"President Trump has prioritised US-India relationship and worked to expand all facets of the partnership over the last three-and-a-half years," a senior administration official from the National Security Council of the White House told PTI on Monday. "Given the two countries' democratic foundations and their mutual interests in rebuilding the global economy following COVID-19, diversifying global supply chains, and ensuring the Indo-Pacific region remains free and open, President Trump will continue to build this critical partnership in the years to come," the official said.

"The Trump Administration has elevated the US relationship with India and solidified our growing partnership in ways not seen in any other US administra-

tion," the official said, noting that the president has enabled India to become the first non-treaty ally to be offered an armed MQ-9 Unmanned Aerial System.

"During President Trump's historic visit to India February 24-26, he and Prime Minister Narendra Modi elevated the relationship to a Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership. Prime Minister Modi was also one of the first foreign leaders to visit the White House after President Trump took office on June 26, 2017," the official said.

The senior official noted the two leaders have also spoken side-by-side at two major events - "Howdy, Modi" in September 2019 in Houston, Texas, before a crowd of over 55,000 and again at "Namaste, Trump" in February 2020 in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, to address a crowd of 110,000 people.

"These gatherings boosted our people-to-people ties and highlighted the warm personal relationship between the two leaders," the official said.

Trump's Indo-Pacific strategy prioritises closer cooperation between the United States and India to secure a free, open, inclusive, peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific region, said the official.

"We have boosted quadrilateral consultations among the United States, India, Australia and Japan, with the four foreign ministers meeting for the first time in September 2019," the official said.

"President Trump has strengthened all aspects of US-India security and defence cooperation to build a comprehensive, enduring, and mutually beneficial defense partnership," the official said

### NEWS MAKERS

## Israel Preparing For Flights To Uae Over Saudi Arabia

**JERUSALEM:** Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Monday that the Jewish state was preparing for direct flights, over Saudi Arabia, to the United Arab Emirates as part of its normalisation deal with the UAE.

Israel and UAE announced on Thursday that they would normalise diplomatic relations under a US-sponsored deal whose implementation could reshape Middle East politics from the Palestinian issue to the fight against Iran. Netanyahu, briefed at Tel Aviv's Ben-Gurion airport on plans for expanding flight activity curtailed by the coronavirus pandemic, gave no timeframe for the opening of an air link with the Gulf Arab country. "We are currently working on enabling direct flights, over Saudi Arabia, between Tel Aviv and Dubai and Abu Dhabi," Netanyahu told reporters, estimating the flight time at "about three hours, just like to Rome". Saudi Arabia does not recognise Israel and its air space is closed to Israeli airlines.

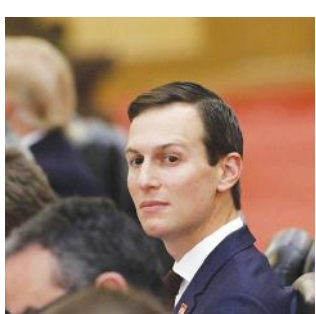
## Jared Kushner Urges Saudi To Normalise Ties With Israel

US president's son-in-law and White House adviser Jared Kushner said on Monday that it would be in Saudi Arabia's interest to normalise ties with Israel as the UAE has agreed to do.

It would also weaken their common foe Iran's influence in the region and ultimately help the Palestinians, Kushner told reporters during a telephone briefing.

"It would be very good for Saudi business, it would very good for Saudi's defence, and, quite frankly, I think it would also help the Palestinian people," Kushner said.

Saudi Arabia, the Arab world's biggest economy, has been silent on Trump's surprise announcement last Thursday that the UAE — a close US and Saudi ally — and Israel had



decided to normalise relations.

In return, Israel agreed to suspend the annexation of occupied West Bank territories, although Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the plan was not off the table in the long run.

Saudi King Salman and his son, Crown Prince Mohammed bin

Salman, had repeatedly expressed their desire for an independent Palestinian state with economic opportunities, Kushner said.

"What they basically said is that they [...] want to see the Palestinian people have a state and economic opportunities," said Kushner, the architect of Trump's Middle East peace plan, which was wholly rejected by the Palestinians.

The landmark deal between UAE and Israel is only the third such accord the latter has struck with an Arab country, and raises the prospect of similar deals with other pro-Western Gulf states.

Trump said leaders from the two countries would sign the agreement at the White House in the coming weeks.

## Donald Trump's Plane Nearly Hit By Drone On Sunday, Say People On Air Force One

President Donald Trump's jet was nearly hit by what appeared to be a small drone as it approached an air base near Washington Sunday night, according to several people aboard Air Force One.

The device, which was yellow and black and shaped like a cross, was off the right side of the plane. It was seen by several passengers on the jet, shortly before it touched down at 5:54 p.m. at Joint Base Andrews in Maryland. The White House Military Office and the Air Force's 89th Airlift Wing said in a statement on Monday evening that they were "aware of the report" and "the matter is under review."



While it has been notoriously difficult for aviation safety investigators to verify such fleeting events, it appears to be among the thousands of such safety incidents involving unmanned devices in the U.S. that have prompted calls by law enforcement and homeland security agencies for greater measures to rein in their use.

Most civilian drones weigh

only a few pounds and probably couldn't take down a jetliner. But government research suggests the damage could be greater than that from a similar-sized bird, which could shatter a cockpit windshield or damage an engine. Trump was flying in the modified Boeing Co. 757 that is among the fleet of jets known as Air Force One when the president is aboard. The Federal Aviation Administration receives thousands of reports per year in which drones fly too close to other aircraft or operate in restricted areas. Most of the reports come from pilots. The FAA referred questions on what happened near Andrews on Sunday to the Air Force.



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