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News Digest

CRPF Officer Dies Of Heart Attack

Srinagar: A Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) officer on Tuesday died of a heart attack in south Kashmir's Kulgam district. Sub-Inspector Ravi Kumar of CRPF 18 battalion suffered a heart attack in Nilloo area of the district, where he was posted and performing his duty, reports said. The officer was removed to the hospital where the doctors declared him brought dead on arrival. A police officer confirmed the death of the officer to news agency KNO and said that the deceased was a native of Himachal Pradesh.

Cop, Associate Held Over Highway Robbery

Srinagar: Two people, including a policeman on Tuesday were arrested for their involvement in a highway robbery in south Kashmir's Awantipora. According to a police spokesperson, a truck driver Reyaz Ahmad Sheikh of Kangan filed a complaint to the police that some goons stopped his vehicle (JK05A-6896) at Lethpora and looted 2 cell phones and an amount Rs10,000 from him. Accordingly, the spokesperson said, a case FIR No. 111/2020 under relevant sections of law was registered in Police Station Awantipora and investigation was initiated. During the course of investigation, the police spokesperson said that the officers taking aid of modern and scientific methods of investigation were able. **▶ P-02**

Grenade Defused At Kreeri Gunfight Spot

Srinagar: A grenade was recovered and defused by the state forces near last week's gunfight site in Kreeri area of Baramulla district on Tuesday. The locals spotted the grenade in orchards on Tuesday afternoon and informed the police about the recovery, officials said. He said a joint team of 29 RR, police rushed to the spot along with Bomb Disposal Squad and defused the grenade. The grenade was recovered eight days after the gunfight broke out between the forces and militants in the area in which three militants were killed. **▶ P-02**

Agri Dept To Hold E-Auction Of Saffron

Srinagar: The agriculture department in Jammu and Kashmir is planning to hold online auction of saffron produced in the valley through a portal to ensure that buyers across India have access to the quality product, officials said on Tuesday. "The Department of Agriculture under the aegis of India International Kashmir Saffron Trading Centre (IIKSTC), contemplates to promote trading of GI-tagged Kashmir saffron through pan-India e-Auction portal created in collaboration with NSE-IT, with **▶ P-02**

10 Injured As Bus Turns Turtle In Kupwara

Kupwara: At least 10 passengers including six women were injured when a passenger bus they were travelling in turned turtle in Magam Handwara in north Kashmir's Kupwara district on Tuesday. Official sources said that the bus (JK09-0557) met with the accident at Khanpora Magam when the driver of the bus, coming from Magam to Handwara, apparently lost control over the vehicle while negotiating a curve, reported news agency GNS. The injured persons were identified as Mohmooda Begum of Dolipora, Rubena Begum of Sunmoola, Irshada Begum of Sonmoola, Bashir Ahmad Bhat of Shogpora, Hayat Hijam **▶ P-02**

PULWAMA SUICIDE ATTACK

NIA Files Charges Against Azhar, 18 Others

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Wrapping up the probe into a fatal militant attack that left 40 CRPF personnel dead in South Kashmir last year, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Tuesday filed a chargesheet in a special court here against 19 people including Masood Azhar, the chief of banned militant group Jaish-e-Mohammed, for planning the suicide operation.

Leading the investigation into the "blind case", as seven accused wanted in it were killed during different encounters in 2019, a team led by joint director of the NIA Anil Shukla gathered evidences and statements of militants and their sympathisers arrested in different cases in order to expose the conspiracy hatched for executing the audacious attack on the paramilitary convoy, officials said.

The 13,500-page chargesheet names Masood Azhar, his brothers -- Abdul Rauf and Ammar Alvi -- and his nephew Mohammed Umer Farooq, who had infiltrated into India in 2018 and was



Salahuddin, 11 Hizb Men Charged Under PMLA

The Enforcement Directorate Tuesday filed a charge sheet before Delhi court against Pakistan-based Hizb-ul-Mujahideen chief Syed Salahuddin and 11 others for allegedly laundering money for financing militant activities in Jammu and Kashmir. The agency said the charge sheet is also related **▶ P-02**

subsequently killed in one of the encounters in South Kashmir.

According to security forces, Farooq had entered India in late 2018 using the natural caves at the Samba sector in Jammu region along the international border.

The chargesheet says suicide bomber Adil Ahmed Dar was driving the car laden with 200 kgs of explosives and had prepared his last video at Shaker Bashir's residence in Pulwama on a high-tech phone **▶ PAGE 02**

WHILE IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE SUICIDE ATTACKER WAS Adil Ahmed Dar but the same had to be established with evidence. After picking up human remains from various spots, they were sent for DNA profiling," the official, who requested anonymity, said.

India Deploys Troops With Shoulder-Fired Missiles In Ladakh

NEW DELHI: The Indian Army has further bolstered its combat readiness in eastern Ladakh by deploying troops with shoulder-fired missiles in several sensitive areas in the backdrop of increasing activities by Chinese helicopters in the region, official sources said on Tuesday.

These missiles have a range of two to five km and they are capable of bringing down low flying helicopters and aircraft, they added.

The deployment of a sizeable number of troops with shoulder-fired missiles came as part of India's overall approach to significantly ramp up combat capabilities of the Army and the Indian Air Force (IAF) in eastern Ladakh.

There has been an increase in activities by Chinese air force **▶ P-02**

India Expedites Work On Leh-Himachal Road

NEW DELHI: Amid the border row with China, India is expediting work on a strategic road linking Darcha in Himachal Pradesh with Ladakh that will criss cross a number of high-altitude snow-bound passes, official sources said on Tuesday.

They said the nearly 290-km-long road will be crucial for movement of the troops and heavy weaponry into the frontier bases of the Ladakh region and will provide a crucial link to the Kargil region.

It will be the third road link to Ladakh after the other two roads: the Manali-Leh road and Srinagar-Leh highway.

The work on reopening an alternative road to Ladakh from Himachal Pradesh has been expedited as it is a strategically key road, said an official on condition of **▶ P-02**

Covid-19 Claims 16 More Lives, Toll Reaches 649

SRINAGAR: As many as 16 more people, including a CRPF personal succumbed to coronavirus in Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday, raising the total number of people dead since the pandemic outbreak in the Union Territory to 649.

While thirteen of the victims hailed from Valley, three others devoured by the deadly infection were residents of Jammu division, officials said Tuesday.

The victims from Jammu, the officials said included a 53-year-old and a 63-year-old male from Bakshi Nagar. They died in the Government Medical College (GMC) in the winter capital. The third victim from the division was a 45-year-old woman from Kathua, who died at GMC Kathua.

In Valley, four people from Srinagar were among the fatalities reported today.

Sources said that a 45-year-old CRPF man from 162 battalion who was posted at Humhama Budgam died at SKIMS Soura,

Covid-19 Victim's Kin Booked For Violating Funeral SOPs

Police have filed case against the kin and relatives of a coronavirus victim from Batpora area of the city outskirts, for allegedly violating Covid-19 Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), laid down **▶ P-02**

six days after he was admitted to the tertiary care hospital.

A 46-year-old man from Sumbal Bandipora, who was also admitted to the hospital on August 2 died this morning, they said.

Also, a 52-year-old man from Anchar Soura died at the tertiary care hospital, ten days after he was admitted and diagnosed with multiple underlying ailments.

A 95-year-old man from Kawdara Srinagar died four days after he was admitted to CD hospital, one of the exclusive facilities for the management of Covid-19 **▶ PAGE 02**

84 Travellers Among 701 New Cases

Jammu and Kashmir reported on Tuesday 701 fresh cases of Covid-19, including 84 travellers, taking the total number of people infected by the deadly disease across the Union Territory to 33,776. While 562 new cases were reported from Kashmir valley, the remaining 139 were confirmed Covid-19 positive by the officials from the Jammu division. **▶ P-02**

Massive Landslide Forces Closure Of Kashmir Highway

Press Trust Of India

BANIHAL: Traffic on the Jammu-Srinagar national highway was suspended early Tuesday after heavy rains triggered a massive landslide in Ramban district, blocking the only all-weather road linking Kashmir with rest of the country, officials said.

Deputy Superintendent of Police, Traffic (National Highway), Ajay Anand said the landslide struck the highway at Dalwas around 5 am, also damaging a portion of the road. The agencies concerned have started the road clearance operation to restore the highway, he said adding the resto-

Landslides Leave Four Dead In Reasi

Three members of a family were among four killed in separate incidents of landslides following heavy rains in Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir, police said on Tuesday. Khalil Ahmad (30), his wife Raksana Begum (25) **▶ P-02**

ration work would take time given the damage to the road.

Traffic was stopped at Qazigund in south Kashmir following the landslide, the officials said. **▶ PAGE 02**

US Think Tank Says '4 Point Formula' Best Solution To Kashmir

'India's Insistence On Kashmir Being A Purely Domestic Issue Is A Fiction'

Agencies

NEW DELHI: A report by the US Institute of Peace (USIP) has analyzed that the standoff between India and Pakistan over Kashmir can be resolved if the Musharraf-Manmohan deal is implemented with mutual agreement from both sides.

The report by the Washington-based think tank, funded by the US Congress, has expressed concerns over the Narendra Modi government's decision to annex Jammu and Kashmir, changing the special



status into two Union Territories, highlighting that the decision will "be sorely tested by the disaffection that has intensified among Kashmiris since August 5, 2019." **▶ PAGE 02**

JKCCS Terms Ongoing Internet Gag In Kashmir As 'Digital Apartheid'

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A prominent Kashmir based human rights organisation, Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (JKCCS) in its latest report released on Tuesday termed the ongoing internet clampdown as 'digital apartheid' and sought intervention of international community for restoration of the same.

The report titled 'Kashmir's Internet Siege' says the "ongoing internet siege enacts a 'digital apartheid', a form of systemic and pervasive discriminatory treatment and collective punishment, and was a clear violation



of international human rights law as well as the laws of armed conflict."

"The siege is a means of political repression that serves as a deliberate means of severing social, economic and political connections between Kashmiris, while also isolating them from the world," a JKCCS spokesperson said

while releasing the report.

He said for the already vulnerable people of Jammu & Kashmir, who live amidst a "state of perpetual war and permanent emergency", this 'siege' is enforced by various modes of network disruption and state control over access to the internet.

"These disruptions disproportionately target essential civilian supplies and services, adversely impact human rights and preemptively silence all forms of online speech," he added.

Referring to the cases in the Supreme Court challenging the ban on high speed internet in Jammu and Kashmir, the JKCCS said the writs did **▶ PAGE 02**

Delimitation Panel Orders Freeze On New Admin Units In J&K

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The Delimitation Commission has ordered a freeze on creation of new 'administrative units' in Assam, Manipur, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir till the exercise of redrawing constituencies in these northeastern states and the union territory is completed.

The order says the freeze is effective from June 15, a senior official aware of the development said.

An administrative unit may include a district or a tehsil.

The Delimitation Commission is carrying out the delimitation exercise and if a new administrative



unit is created then it also will have to be made part of a constituency.

For every new such unit created, the Commission will have to go back to the drawing board. To avoid that, the freeze has been ordered, explained the officer.

The delimitation panel would redraw the Lok Sabha and assembly constituencies of the four northeastern states and, work on increasing the assembly seats of **▶ PAGE 02**

Govt Orders Domicile Certificates To PRC Holders In 5 Days

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Tuesday directed the competent authorities to issue domicile certificates to the Permanent Resident Certificate (PRC) holders and migrants of the Union Territory within five working days.

Ordering amendment in Jammu and Kashmir Grant of Domicile Certificate Procedure Rules, 2020 issued vide notification (S.O. No.166 of 2020 dated 18.05.2020), the government directed: "In sub-rule(i) of rule 6. (a) The following first proviso shall be added, namely, - "Provided that any person eligible for Domicile Certificate for category of domicile as provided under clause (a) and **▶ P-02**

LG Manoj Sinha To Chair First Admin Council Meeting

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha will chair first Administrative Council meet on August 27, wherein according to sources, some key decisions are likely to be taken.

LG Sinha, who assumed chair two weeks ago, will hold the Administrative Council meeting at Raj Bhawan on Thursday.

"16th meeting of the Administrative Council is scheduled to be held on 27th of August, 2020 at 04:00 PM, at Raj Bhawan, Srinagar", reads an order issued by the General Administration **▶ P-02**

RIYAZ WANI

KO Analysis

Why Joint Statement Has Little More Than A Feel Good Appeal

In a joint declaration on Saturday, six J&K parties including Congress expressed their resolve to fight for restoration of Article 370 that granted J&K its autonomous status within Indian Union. Contrary to a subdued political stance adopted by these parties over the loss of special constitutional status during last several months, the language of the joint statement was aggressive and evocative. The use of words like, 'spiteful', 'pain', 'short-sighted', etc was a clear attempt to appeal to a deep sense of hurt and humiliation among people in the Valley over the erasure of a cherished autonomy. And to that end, the statement may have satisfied a large section of population.

But the real challenge for these parties lies ahead. By coming out with a hardline statement, they have set the bar high. And a credible follow-up activity is what will be needed in weeks and months to come for the people to take these parties on their word.

Is this activity possible? Not necessarily. By now the New Delhi has made its redlines in Kashmir amply known. Going by the situation over the past year, the centre is unlikely to countenance any public expression of dissent that seeks to involve people. And as a probable consequence



of this policy, the J&K parties like National Conference, the PDP and the People's Conference that have been

at the receiving end of the administration's unsparing assault over the last year have stayed short of calling

for a public resistance against Article 370 move. There has been no call for a hartal, a peaceful protest a political rally or at least an attempt to hold a press conference.

The BJP has already trashed the joint statement terming it as day-dreaming. Its state president Ravinder Raina said the reversal of the move was impossible.

"The restoration of Articles 370 & 35(A) is next to impossible. Due to these Articles, J&K has suffered for decades and they gave rise to terrorism, separatism and strengthened the Pakistani agenda and as such, they won't be restored at any cost,"

Raina said, addressing party workers at Salsui village of Kalakote in Rajouri district. "Kashmir-based leaders are doing nothing except day-dreaming as they are feeling restless to return to the corridors of power to enjoy all luxuries for themselves and their near and dear ones."

Ironically enough the six parties that were a part of the joint statement represent almost the entire mainstream politics of J&K. And so what these parties are saying, in effect, articulates the predominant majority of the public opinion in the union territory. Significantly, the statement also includes Con-

gress, the national party. So, the statement deserved to be taken seriously. But it won't. And the problem is not the BJP alone but the new political consensus on Kashmir across the country that treats the withdrawal of Article 370 as a fait accompli. For example, even Congress at the national level is not against reading down of Kashmir's special status, its opposition is just to the manner of doing it.

Do Kashmiri parties have thus any chance of mounting an effective resistance against the loss of J&K's autonomy, one that would force any rethink on the move by the centre. There is no realistic chance of this happening until there is a fundamental shift in the political realities of the country - a part of **▶ PAGE 02**

From Front page...

Intense Rainfall Likely In North, Central And East India During Next 5 Days

NEW DELHI: Twelve rain-related deaths were reported in Gujarat and four from Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday, even as very heavy downpour was predicted in the east, north and the central parts of the country over the next five days.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said a low pressure area (cyclonic circulation) over north Bay of Bengal and its neighbourhood was very likely to move west-northwestwards during the period as it issued a red alert for Odisha for August 26 and for Chhattisgarh, a day later.

Incessant rainfall disrupted normal life in Odisha, and 1,400

people were evacuated from inundated areas in Gujarat during the day, while over 1,000 villages remained affected by floods in 18 districts of Uttar Pradesh.

In the national capital, the IMD issued an alert for "moderate to heavy" rains over the next three days, and the Yamuna river was flowing precariously close to the warning mark in the city.

No fresh areas were inundated by floodwaters for the third consecutive day in Bihar, where 83.62 lakh people across 16 districts were reeling under the impact of the deluge.

The IMD said widespread rainfall with isolated heavy to very heavy

falls are very likely in Odisha, Gangetic West Bengal and Jharkhand till August 28 and in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and west Rajasthan during August 26-28.

Isolated extremely heavy falls are also very likely in Odisha on August 25-26 and in Chhattisgarh on August 27, it said.

"The north, central and east India will experience widespread rainfall activity and it can also experience an intense rainfall activity over the next five days," Sathi Devi, head of the national weather forecasting centre, said.

In Gujarat, 12 deaths have been reported in rain-related incidents since Monday eve-

ning. The state has so far received 106.78 per cent of its annual average rainfall.

Heavy rains in catchment areas have filled to the brim 90 out of 205 dams in the state, while 70 dams have reached over 70 per cent of their total storage capacity, he said.

Rescue and relief operations continued in rain-battered regions as teams of the National and State Disaster Response Forces evacuated people stranded due to flooding.

Three people drowned in Morbi district, and one death each was reported from Dang, Jamnagar, Junagadh, Tapi, Kutch and

Amreli districts. A man died in a wall collapse incident in Patan, while two more died in other rain-related accidents.

A high alert has been issued for areas downstream of 138 dams from which water is being released.

In Jammu and Kashmir, three members of a family were among four killed in separate incidents of landslides following heavy rains in Reasi district.

A 30-year-old man, his 25-year-old wife and a relative were killed in a landslide in the upper reaches of Khour in Mahore area on Monday night, and a 40-year-old man died in another

landslide in KhandiGaliDhok.

The Uttar Pradesh government said 1,090 villages in 18 districts have been affected by floods, although Relief Commissioner Sanjay Goyal said the situation was being monitored and "there is an overall improvement".

He said the Sharda river at LakhimpurKheri'sPaliakalan, the Saryu at Elgin Bridge in Barabanki, Ayodhya and Turtipar in Ballia were flowing above the danger mark.

In Delhi, dark clouds shrouded the skies in the morning, restricting the maximum temperature at 33.2 degrees Celsius. Humidity levels oscillated between 69 per

cent and 92 per cent.

The city is likely to witness another spell of "moderate to heavy rain" between Wednesday and Friday, the IMD said.

The Yamuna was flowing precariously close to the warning mark. The water level was recorded at 204 metres at 10 am and at 203.98 metres at 6 pm, just below the danger mark of 205.33 metres.

Water was being released into the Yamuna at the rate of 33,406 cubic metres per second (cusec) at 6 pm from the Hathnikund barrage in Haryana's Yamunanagar district. Normally, the flow rate is 352 cusec.

NIA Files Charges Against...

brought by Bilal Ahmed Kuchey.

While Dar is now dead, both Bashir and Kuchey have been arrested. The explosive laden car, which was driven by Bashir initially before he handed it over to Dar, was lammed into a bus carrying CRPF personnel from Jammu to Srinagar at Lethpora in Pulwama district of South Kashmir on February 14, 2019.

From virtually a case that reached a "dead end" as the five people known to the agency earlier this year either as conspirators or executors of the attack were eliminated in various encounters, the case threw unique challenges for the NIA as there was no solid information about the perpetrators or the mastermind behind the attack.

"It was a blind case for us. There were a lot of murmurs but everything needed to be established beyond doubt in the court of law," a senior official, who is part of the probe, said here.

The first challenge was to establish the ownership of the car used by Dar, the suicide bomber. There was nothing available from the vehicle which carried a cocktail of explosives like Ammonium Nitrate, Nitro Glycerine and RDX, the official said.

But with the help of forensic methods and painstaking investigations, the serial number of the car that was blown into pieces beyond recognition was extracted and within no time the ownership of the vehicle was established -- from the first to the last owner.

However, the last owner of the car, Sajjad Bhat (named in the chargesheet) of Bijbehara in Anantnag district, had disappeared hours before the February 14 attack and joined Jaish-e-Mohammed. He was subsequently killed in an encounter in June last year.

"While it was clear that the suicide attacker was Adil Ahmed Dar but the same had to be established with evidence. After picking up human remains from various spots, they were sent for DNA profiling," the official, who requested anonymity, said.

"The suicide attacker was identified and confirmed by matching the DNA extracted from the meagre car fragments with that of the DNA of his father," he said.

The role of other conspirators which included Mudasar Ahmed Khan, Qari Mufti Yasser and Kamran came to light but all of them were killed in different encounters with security forces.

Khan was killed on March 10, Kamran on March 29, Sajjad Bhat on June 18 of last year while Qari Yasser was shot in an encounter on January 25 this year.

After JeM spokesperson Mohd Hassan in a video claimed that his group was responsible for the attack, it was sent for forensic examination and the Internet Protocol address was traced to a computer based in Pakistan. The official said during the investigation, the NIA stumbled upon another case of over ground workers of JeM which was subsequently busted.

This case also brings to light the use of e-commerce platforms by the planners in the militant module for purchase of high-end batteries, phones and some chemicals. As many as seven people have been arrested so far by the NIA in this case, the officials said.

Besides Azhar, those charge sheeted include six militants who were killed in various encounters and four absconders, two of whom are still hiding in Jammu and Kashmir -- one of them a local and the other a Pakistani national.

Salahuddin, 11 Hizb Men...

to blasts carried out by the militant group in Jammu and Kashmir in 2011 in alleged connivance with the Pakistani government and its spying arm ISI. The prosecution complaint, ED's equivalent to charge sheet, has urged the court for confiscating attached assets totalling to Rs1.22 crores in the case, besides other punishment under Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

The case is likely to be taken up by the court soon.

The central probe agency had filed a criminal case of money laundering after taking cognisance of a National Investigating Agency (NIA) charge sheet filed against Salahuddin, Mohammad Shafi Shah and others under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and other sections of the Indian Penal Code.

The ED charge sheet filed before a special court under various sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) named Mohammad Shafi Shah alias Doctor/Dawood/Nisar, Talib Lali alias Talib Hussain Lali/Waseem/Abu Umer, Mohd Yusuf Shah alias Syed Salahuddin, Gulam Nabi Khan alias Amir Khan, Umer Farooq Shera alias Mehboob-ul-Haq, Manzoor Ahmed Dar alias Masroor Dar, Zaffar Hussain Bhat alias Khursheed, Nazir Ahmad Dar alias Shabir Ellahi/Khalid, Abdul Majeed Sofi alias Majeed Bisati/Shahen, Mubarak Shah, Muzaffar Ahmad Dar/Gaznavi/Mohd Ali and Mushtaq Ahmad Lone alias Mushtaq Aalam. The agency said it took over probe in the case after taking cognisance of a 2011 FIR of the NIA in which Mohammad Shafi Shah and his associates were alleged to be involved in execution of sensational blasts in Jammu and Kashmir and huge quantity of arms, ammunition and explosives were recovered from them.

The ED said its money laundering investigation found "that Hizbul Mujahideen-- the most active outfit in Kashmir, has been responsible for funding militant and secessionist activities in Jammu and Kashmir headed by Syed Salahuddin-- its self-styled commander based out of Rawalpindi in Pakistan."

"The funding of militant activities on Indian soil had been organised by a trust called JKART (Jammu & Kashmir Affectedes Relief Trust) which was operating in connivance with the government of Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the ISI," the ED said.

It is also revealed, the ED said, that the militant funds were sent to India through the hawala channel, barter traders and human carriers.

"The funds were further distributed through hawala, human carriers and banking channels to the next of kin of active as well as dead Hizbul Mujahideen militants," the agency said.

"The master minds" behind the distribution of these funds, allegedly used for financing of militant activities in the Kashmir valley, were Mohammad Shafi and Talib Lali, residents of Bandipora in JK. Muzaffar Ahmad Dar of Budgam and Mushtaq Ahmad Lone of Anantnag. The agency said it has earlier attached 13 properties, worth Rs 1.22 crore, "belonging" to seven militants as part of this investigation.

India Deploys Troops With...

in the region in the last few weeks following which the Army has decided to deploy troops with shoulder-fired missiles, the sources said. The Indian Army has significantly increased deployment of troops and weaponry including tanks and artillery guns in various sensitive sectors along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the last few weeks.

The IAF has also significantly enhanced deployment of its frontline jets, attack helicopters and transport fleet in all its key bases guarding the airspace along the LAC.

It has enhanced deployment of its air defence systems in the region. The IAF has already moved a sizeable number of its frontline fighter jets including Sukhoi 30 MKI, Jaguar and Mirage 2000 aircraft to several key air bases including Leh and Srinagar.

It has also deployed Apache attack choppers and Chinook heavy-lift helicopters to transport troops to various forward locations.

The frontline fighter jets have increased their sorties in Ladakh and nearby areas.

India and China have held several rounds of military and diplomatic talks in the last two-and-half months but no significant headway has been made in resolution of the border row in eastern Ladakh.

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

However, the process has not moved forward since mid-July. The Chinese People's Liberation Army has pulled back from Galwan Valley and certain other friction points but the withdrawal of troops has not moved forward in Pangong Tso, Depsang and a couple of other areas, sources said.

In the five rounds of Corps Commander-level talks, the Indian side has been insisting on complete disengagement of Chinese troops at the earliest, and immediate restoration of status quo ante in all areas of eastern Ladakh prior to April.

Even as both sides have been engaged in diplomatic and military talks, the Indian Army is making elaborate preparations to maintain its current strength of troops in all key areas in eastern Ladakh in the harsh winter months.

India Expedites Work...

anonymity, adding the project is expected to be completed by the end of 2022.

The sources said various road projects are being expedited for movement of troops to various key areas like Daulat Beg Oldie as well as Depsang along the Line of Actual Control in eastern Ladakh.

The Border Roads Organisation is also working on another crucial road connecting Ladakh with Depsang plains. The road will provide access the Sub-Sector North (SSN) in Ladakh.

The trigger for the standoff in eastern Ladakh was China's stiff opposition to India laying a key road in the Finger area around the Pangong Tso Lake besides construction of another road connecting the Darbuk-Shayok-Daulat Beg Oldie road.

The road in the Finger area in Pangong Tso is considered crucial for India to carry out patrols. India has already decided not to stall any border infrastructure projects in eastern Ladakh.

Last month, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh reviewed the progress of various infrastructure projects that are under construction in border areas including in Ladakh region at a high-level meeting.

In the meeting, he had instructed the Border Roads Organisation to expedite work on the road linking Darcha with Ladakh, the sources said. India and China have held several rounds of military and diplomatic talks in the last two-and-half months but no significant headway has been made in resolution of the border row in eastern Ladakh.

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Covid-19 Claims 16 More Lives,...

patients in the Valley. According to a doctor at the hospital he was suffering from severe Covid-19 pneumonia with hypertension, diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and BPH. He was declared dead at 12:40 a.m.

An 80-year-old Covid-19 positive woman and having multiple ailments from Bannoo Achgoza Pulwama died at district hospital Pulwama, they said. A 65-year-old woman from Maisuma Srinagar died at SMHS hospital, eight days after she was admitted with bilateral community acquired pneumonia.

An 86-year-old man from Sapapura Ganderbal died eight days after he was admitted to SKIMS Bemina, also among exclusive facilities for the management of the Covid-19 patients here.

A 65-year-old man from Tangmar who was admitted to SMHS hospital few days back as a case of hypertension, diabetes and bilateral community acquired pneumonia died at SMHS hospital, they said.

A 65-year-old man from KhanSahib Budgam who was admitted as a case of bilateral CAP also died at the SMHS hospital.

A 70-year-old man from Kupwara who was admitted to the hospital on August 10 with Bilateral CAP died this evening.

A 62-year-old man from Rawalpota Srinagar died at CD hospital this evening, four days after he was admitted with underlying ailments.

A 50-year-old man from Sheikhzoo Ganderbal was also among the victims, they said.

Sources added that a 66-year-old woman from Monghal Kulgam died at SKIMS Soura, four days after she was admitted to the hospital.

With these deaths, 649 people have died in Jammu and Kashmir--50 from Jammu division and 599 from Valley with more than 200 victims from Srinagar alone. (With GNS inputs)

Covid-19 Victim's Kin Booked...

by the Union Health Ministry, during funeral of the deceased here last week. Official sources said that police have filed an FIR against relatives of COVID-19 victim who died last week at SMHS hospital. They said the next of kin of the deceased not only gathered in large numbers for the funeral but also pelted stones on ambulances and other vehicles deputised with the team of health officials.

It may be in place to mention that the deceased from Batpora Kralpora, was admitted at SMHS hospital on August 23rd after being diagnosed with COVID-19. Sources said he succumbed to the deadly virus the very next day. "Dead body of the deceased was brought to his home in an ambulance, by the health authorities for burial purposes, as per the guidelines laid down by the government. However the relatives of the deceased gathered in a large number on the funeral of the deceased thereby violating prescribed COVID guidelines," they said.

They said the relatives of the deceased besides violating protocol, damaged an ambulance and a Tata Sumo vehicle. This act of the public gathered at the funeral of the deceased posed grave threat to public health.

A police official while confirming the incident told news agency KNO that a formal case under FIR number 79/2020 under section 147, 188, 427 IPC at Police Station Kralpora and investigation set into motion to ascertain facts.

84 Travellers Among 701...

Srinagar district reported the highest number of 208 new cases, followed by 76 in Jammu district, the officials said.

This was for the fourth time in past five days that the number of fresh COVID cases in Srinagar district was more than 200.

In Poonch district of Jammu, the Deputy Commissioners office was closed for visitors after three employees tested positive for the disease on Tuesday, and the public has been asked to contact the officials over the phone in case of any urgent issue.

The three employees, including an operator of the deputy commissioner, were among the 139 fresh cases detected across 10 districts of the Jammu region, the officials said.

Massive Landslide Forces...

The traffic on the highway plies from Jammu and Srinagar alternatively in view of the ongoing work on the four-laning project.

Light motor vehicles from both sides were also stopped at various places due to the closure of the highway, the officials said, adding the stranded vehicles would be given priority once the highway is restored.

Landslides Leave Four Dead...

and their relative Mohammad Aslam were killed after a landslide in upper reaches of Khour in Mahore area on Monday night, a police official said. He said the three had gone to the area for cattle grazing and had set up their shelter near the mouth of a natural cave. Several of their animals were also killed in the incident.

The bodies of the deceased were recovered this morning and are being handed over to their families after completion of legal formalities, the official said.

In another incident, the official said 40-year-old Wali Mohammad was killed in a landslide in Khandi Gali Dhok on Monday.

The deceased was grazing his cattle when the landslide occurred, he said, adding five buffaloes were also killed in the incident.

US Think Tank Says '4 Point...

increasingly find it hard to manage its narrative about constitutional and political change ushering in peace to Kashmir. Most indicators of violence in Kashmir have been on the rise since August 2019 decision.

"The Indian government's insistence on Kashmir being a purely domestic issue is a fiction maintained only by a large security presence," the report added.

Exploring best options for a solution to the ongoing Kashmir dispute, the report highlights the backdoor deal arrived in 2004-2007 between then Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf and former Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

The four-point formula proposed by Musharraf, which was later finetuned during several back-channel negotiations, remains as the best available solution to the Kashmir conflict, the report claims.

The first point of the formula, which was about self-governance, mutually agreed by both parties back then "has been undone by India's 5 August decision".

The report claims that demilitarization of Kashmir, being the second point of the 2004-07 deal, is still possible if both India and Pakistan come to a mutual agreement.

"This would require India to persuade Kashmiris to not take up arms against the Indian state and Pakistan to curb militant activities along the Line of Control (LoC)," the report maintains.

It also suggested that this could be achieved through initial pilot programmes in some territorial pockets to see if those prove successful, adding that demilitarization could be extended to other parts of Kashmir then.

However, the report warned that even if Pakistan were to control militancy on its side, "Kashmir might still suffer from attacks launched by indigenous militants and widespread disinfection of Kashmir could play the role of a spoiler for long enough to wreck plans of demilitarization". Elaborating on the third point of the deal, the report highlights that before August 5, 2019, some steps were already taken to implement the third element ie allowing the free movement of people and trade between the two countries and the divided Kashmir.

The initiation of bus service between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad, launched in February 2005, followed by the second bus service from Poonch to Rawalakot, which started about an year later, opening of trade across the LoC in October 2008, duty free barter trade of at least 21 items produced on either side, were steps towards implementation of the third point of the deal, the report emphasizes.

The fourth point of the deal was the creation of mechanisms to oversee certain less sensitive sectors on both sides of the LoC.

"Like progress towards the goal of making borders irrelevant, movement towards this objective is also possible if there is a political will on both sides. "The third and fourth points of the formula are interrelated; progress toward one would facilitate progress toward the other," the report added. But with India's decision of August 2019, the report noted that "any further talks based on that formula will be harder to begin".

In the current scenario, the four-point Kashmir formula seems far from reach. Nonetheless, the report claims, "it is the best available basis" for future talks between the two arch-rivals.

JKCCS Terms Ongoing...

not help end the digital siege of Kashmir.

"Instead they have inaugurated a new legalised regime of mass surveillance, filtering, and internet-speed throttling through expansive executive orders. These orders are issued every two weeks, and from January 2020 until now a total of 17 such extension orders have been issued," the JKCCS spokesperson said.

"Alongside routine extensions of internet restrictions, frequent complete suspensions of mobile internet connectivity through emergency police orders have also continued unabated. Since January 2020, when partial 2G internet connectivity was first restored, 70 such temporary suspension orders have been issued," he added.

The JKCCS spokesperson further said that the internet blockade has hit several key areas, including economy, health, education, law and justice and press freedom.

"Livelihood consequences of the shutdown of August 2019 were severe, and losses suffered during the first five months alone were estimated at Rs 178.78 billion, with more than 500,000 people having lost their jobs," the JKCCS spokesperson said.

About the health sector, he said the indices showed a marked decline, with numbers of visits in some hospitals in August 2019 dropping by as much as 38%. The JKCCS said that the education suffered a major setback, and the first anniversary of the internet shutdown in August 2020 saw students in Kashmir's schools and institutes of higher education mark a full year without attending school, college or university.

"Justice saw systemic delays further compounded by ineffective online hearings. More than 6000 detentions and over 600 'administrative' detentions took place around August 5th 2019. Of habeas corpus petitions filed for the release of illegal detainees during the period, 99% remain pending," the JKCCS spokesperson said.

"Press freedoms and the right to freedom of speech, expression as well as social participation suffered from the direct impact and chilling effects

of online surveillance, profiling and criminal sanctions, with police complaints registered against working journalists and over 200 social media and VPN users," he added.

The rights group further said that their report was a missive addressed to the human rights and digital rights community about the breadth and forms of this collective punishment.

"It is also a testament to the resilience and resourcefulness of the people of Jammu & Kashmir, who refuse to be silenced," the JKCCS spokesperson said, adding "The report is also addressed to the international community."

He said while the government of India may have succeeded in "gagging" the voices of the people of Jammu and Kashmir with its longstanding communication blockade, this should not prevent the international community from speaking and calling out the government of India for "suppressing the fundamental rights of people."

Delimitation Panel Orders...

the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir as per the provisions of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act.

The Delimitation Commission for the four northeast states and Jammu and Kashmir was set up in March.

It is headed by former Supreme Court judge Justice Ranjana Desai (retd). Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra is the representative of the Election Commission in the delimitation panel while state election commissioners of Jammu and Kashmir and the four states are its ex-officio members.

Govt Orders Domicile...

clause 4(a) of the Table appended to Rule 5 shall be issued Domicile Certificate on the basis of Permanent Resident Certificate only and no further verification or inquiry shall be undertaken by the Competent Authority in such case."

"The Competent Authority shall issue Domicile Certificate in such cases within a period of five working days from the date such application is received by it.; (b) Existing first proviso and second proviso shall be re-numbered as second and third proviso respectively; and (c) In the said renumbered proviso(s), the words "provided that" and "provided further" shall be substituted by words "provided further" and "provided also" respectively." Earlier, the Government had fixed 15 days for issuance of the domicile certificates in J&K.

Lt Governor Manoj Sinha on Sunday directed the officers concerned to speed up the process of issuance and delivery of domicile certificates in a hassle-free way, as he appreciated the enthusiasm shown by the applicants.

"All pending applicants be provided domicile certificates within 15 days, and deadline of September 10 is being set, after which no long pendancy shall be excused and action against the responsible, underperforming officers shall be taken," Sinha had said, chairing a meeting here to review ongoing development activities in Jammu district.

LG Manoj Sinha To Chair...

Department (GAD), "All the Advisors to Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor and the Chief Secretary are requested to kindly attend the meeting through video conferencing from the Meeting Hall, 4th Floor, Civil Secretariat, Srinagar", it adds.

Quoting sources, news agency KNS reported that some key decisions were likely to be taken in the meeting.

Why Joint Statement Has...

it driven by the changing geopolitics of the region. And this shift appears a long shot under the circumstances.

This makes the joint statement little more than symbolic in its significance, a political gesture to keep the people in good humour. The demand for restoration of autonomy could stay as part of the agenda of the parties as they go about their normal political activities just like autonomy and self rule agenda of the National Conference and the PDP. How will New Delhi deal with the joint statement? It has so far deigned it not even worthy of acknowledgement let alone react to it. And going by the amount of thought that has gone into the centre's Article 370 move and the subsequent far-reaching measures, it has already prepared itself for all the contingencies including an antagonistic response from the establishment parties: by downgrading J&K into a union territory that lets the centre directly control the minutest affairs of the former state.

The only way the mainstream parties could have undone some of the damage being inflicted by the various administrative and legislative changes over the last year was if J&K were a state and they could form a majority government. But in a union territory even if they secure a landslide majority in any future election, they will be subservient to the Lieutenant Governor. And this is also why it is highly unlikely that New Delhi will restore the statehood to J&K anytime soon -- at least not until the centre is certain that no Kashmiri party or parties either individually or collectively are in position to undo any law or order passed during Lieutenant Governor's rule. This will be possible once Jammu is given a parity and subsequently a majority role in a future state Assembly.

Cop, Associate Held Over...

to identify two accused persons involved in the commission of crime. He identified the duo as Mudasar Ahmad Bhat of Fateh Kadal and Uzair Yousuf Dar of Habakadal Srinagar.

"Subsequently, they have been arrested and shifted to police station Awantipora where they remain in custody. Looted amount of Rs 10,000/- have also been recovered from their possession. Further investigation in this regard is in progress," the police spokesperson said. Meanwhile, a local news agency KNT reported that one of the accused was a policeman posted at the District Police Lines Srinagar.

Grenade Defused At Kreeri...

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Baramulla, Abdul Qayoom also confirmed to news agency KNO that a grenade was found from the encounter site and was later defused.

Agri Dept To Hold E-Auction...

a sole aim to assure buyers have access to quality Kashmir saffron," one of the officials said.

The department has asked saffron growers of the Kashmir valley and buyers across the country to register themselves as traders at saffronauctionindia.com, they said adding this will ensure hassle free e-trading.

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KASHMIR
OBSERVER

Printed & Published by Sajjad Haider on behalf of the Kashmir Observer LLP
Published from: # 5- Boulevard, Srinagar-190001
Printed at: KT Press Pvt. Ltd, Rangreth Ind Area, Srinagar.
RNI Registration No: 69503/98
Postal Registration No-L/159/KO/SK/2014-16
Editor-in-Chief : Sajjad Haider
Legal Counsel: Tasaduq Khwaja
Switchboard: (0194) 2106304
Editorial: (0194) 2502327
Email editorial: editor@kashmirobservers.net

Return to politics

When six J&K parties issued a joint statement on August 22, it came as a surprise to the people in Kashmir. There was no inkling about any of them meeting to deliberate a joint response to the revocation of Article 370 last year. Perhaps for fear of the administration acting to stop any such a meeting, the parties chose to informally consult one another before issuing the statement. The statement itself makes no bones about what these parties want to say: it unequivocally demands the restoration of J&K's special status and its reinstatement as a state. Significantly, Congress, a national party, is part of the joint statement, lending it further weight. Also, the statement makes the future politics of J&K subservient to the demand for reversal of the withdrawal of the special status. The parties said "there is nothing about us without," a slogan that has a pedigree in Poland's 1505 constitutional legislation that transferred power from the monarch to parliament. The slogan was also used during the disability activism in Europe in 1990s.

This potentially makes the joint statement an abiding part of the future politics in the Valley, if not in parts of Jammu. But for now, the importance of the statement lies beyond what it seeks to achieve: it signals the revival of mainstream politics in Kashmir, a year after all the politicians across the mainstream-separatist divide were detained following the repeal of the region's special status. In fact, the PDP leader and the former J&K Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti is still under detention. She has been slapped with yet another Public Safety Act.

The recent past has witnessed stirrings of renewed politics that culminated in the joint statement. Earlier National Conference had organized a meeting of its leaders at the residence of its president Dr Farooq Abdullah. The meeting essentially was held to test the government's claim before the high court that no National Conference leader was under detention in Kashmir and that they were free to move, subject to necessary security arrangements. National Conference has also been issuing substantive political statements for sometime now. The political activity can thus be expected to gather momentum in near to medium term. More so, if the government chooses to release Mufti. It will also depend on whether the centre chooses to hold election in the union territory or delays it further till some 'conducive' time. There is, however, hope in the way the local politics is tentatively hurtling to the foreground again. This is needed to fill in the political vacuum that has developed in the region over the last year.

OTHER OPINION

Women, uninterrupted

Among the more serious ramifications of the pandemic has been the rather extensive, even if unintended, disruption of health-care services. Normal life has been crippled by the restrictions flowing from control measures, and access to medical services has become infinitely tougher for a vast majority. The scale of the impact on women's lives is only now being recognised, as global reports of inability to access contraceptives and abortion services during the long lockdown warn of dire consequences, including unwanted pregnancies, including unwanted pregnancies, increase in domestic violence, and maternal mortality. A recent estimate by Marie Stopes International (MSI) said about two million women missed out on services between January and June; 1.3 million were in India alone. According to WHO, a recent survey of responses from 103 countries found that 67% reported disruption in family planning and contraception services. UNFPA projections indicate that 47 million women in 114 low- and middle-income countries would be unable to use modern contraceptives if the average lockdown continued for 6 months with major disruptions to services, and an additional 7 million unintended pregnancies are expected to occur.

At the heart of this issue is the bulk of health-care services shifting to cater to COVID-19 related emergencies, and lockdown disruptions. India listed abortions as essential services under the lockdown, but the disruption of transport services hampered access to centres of care, and lack of awareness about these services being available during this period was a factor. It is pertinent to ask if services to facilitate abortion and contraception were indeed available in the cities and rural areas during the period, despite being listed as 'emergency' and thus allowed to remain open even during intense lockdowns. Almost 30% of the respondents seeking an abortion said that the clinic in their area was closed, according to the MSI report. Further, a study in six States by the Foundation for Reproductive Health Services India, showed a severe shortage of medical abortion drugs in pharmacies. For a country setting out to bolster its contraception and abortion services outreach, this pandemic and its lockdowns have dealt a blow. The need for contraceptive services remains high in India, with over 1 in 3 women (35%) reporting a need for contraceptive advice, as per the MSI study. Providing uninterrupted abortion and contraceptive counselling, devices and care services are essential to safeguard the reproductive rights of women, and protect them from abuse. These services must continue through measures such as telemedicine, incentives to local clinics to open their doors, resolving drug supply chain disruptions, besides improving access to health care. For, countries that do not prioritise women's health-care needs will bear the heaviest of burdens, not so long after.

The Hindu



Imam Hussain shrine

Karbala: A Rendezvous of Martyrs

Imam Hussain's (AS) resistance was the ultimate act of courage, the noblest self sacrifice, made in the state of higher consciousness and with full knowledge of its import

Makhdoom Mohi-ud-din

Karbala is a passionate yearning of Islamic Ideal. It is spiritual and strenuous longing of seemingly elusive values of purity, piety, equity and liberality

Karbala is a combination of two words meaning a place of trial and tribulations. It conveys profound depths of emotional and spiritual associations. It has a seminal place in Muslim history and consciousness. In many ways it is also cathartic. The Prince of Martyrs, the grandson of Holy Prophet (PBUH), standing against falsehood and tyranny was martyred here in the year 1680 AD Ashoora - tenth of Muharram, the most solemn and somber date of Muslim calendar.

"Imam Hussain's (AS) sufferings is recalled by Shia and non-Shia alike in Muslim fight for self worth. His actions and attitudes, his serenity under siege are inspirational for Muslims," writes Ed Hussain in House of Islam. Karbala is remembered and recollected in detail as a pall of melancholy descends, pathos and sobriety permeates the ambience. Martyrdom of Imam Hussain (AS) gave rise to a new history. It elevated the great Imam to a living presence. Karbala continues to ignite imagination. Martyrdom forms the central part of Karbala. Karbala spotlights the injustices of the past and inherent injustices of this world. Imam Hussain (AS) and his gallant and gentlemanly companions made Karbala a high point in the defiance and resistance to the injustice and tyranny. The companions choose a certain and imminent martyrdom.

"We will fight with you until we reach our destiny," Imam Hussain(AS) recited a verse of the Holy Quran known to all Muslims. "To God we belong and to God is our return". Karbala is a passionate yearning of Islamic Ideal. It is spiritual and strenuous longing of seemingly elusive values of purity, piety, equity and liberality. Martyrdom of Imam Hussain has sowed the seeds of a "complete revolution in the consciousness of Muslim community," says Reza Aslan.

"The march of Muslims to Karbala is endless; it is remembered in epic dirges. And for Shias and Sunnis alike Karbala was not some 1340 years ago "it feels as if mass-

acre happened in our life times that we failed to come to Imam Hussain's (AS) aide. This guilt tugs at Muslim conscience" writes Ed Hussain in House of Islam. So lamentations are atonement for sin. 'Aza' or mourning achieved its full expression and form at Karbala. The refusal to give up piety and purity for politics and power led to Hussain's martyrdom. An effort at conciliation and amity by him was rewarded with poisoning. The goodness, as a result, was in a rapid retreat. The debilitation of Islamic Ideal was near complete. Forward thrust of material historical forces was daunting and overwhelming, but moral world acutely needed an arrival of a paragon of ethical defiance. It was not crude attempt at power as Tarique Ali claims. The Marxist historian tries to demean moral resistance. He fails to perceive spiritual impulse of individuals and expeditions. The erudite Scholar, Karen Armstrong is more apt in "The Battle for God". "... believing the poignant spectacle of Prophet's family marching in the opposite direction to tyranny would bring Ummah back to more authentic practice of Islam".

Imam Hussain's (AS) journey was the ultimate act of courage, the noblest self sacrifice, made in the state of higher consciousness and with full knowledge of its import. Karbala is a classic struggle of good and evil. Martyrdom is primal and Abel is ante-diluvian precedent. Martyrs are altruistic and represent virtues. Expedience subordinates ethics, martyrdom revives it after every Karbala. Karbala is 'tajdid'-renewal. It prevented stultifying of Islamic Ideal. Martyrdom is spiritual. Mendacious and a materialist cannot experience it. Martyrdom is about austerity and arduousness, an epicurean cannot perceive it. Martyrdom is the realization of the piety of the protest. A martyr embodies idealism, he is unmindful of consequences. The lines of T.S. Eliot scribbled for the different context are relevant here:

And do not think of fruit of action
Fare forward
Not farewell,

But fare forward voyagers.

The martyrdom at Karbala sent shock waves throughout the world. Elegies are still written. Martyrdom of Imam Hussain (AS) is eternal, it transcends sects, schisms and spans. "In the distant age and climate," says historian Edward Gibbon "tragic scenes of the death of Hussain (AS) will awaken the sympathy of the coldest readers". The martyrdom of Karbala left behind a complex legacy, both pacific and subversive. Lesley Hazleton, a respected scholar of Islam has a lesson from 'Karbala Paradigm'. It is particularly pertinent for the west. She counsels "the Karbala story has endured and strengthened not least because it reaches deep into the questions of morality of idealism versus pragmatism, purity versus compromise. Its DNA is the very stuff that tests both politics and faith and animates the vast and often terrifying arena in which the two intersect. But whether sacredness inheres in the Prophet's blood family as the Shia believe or in the community as a whole, as Sunnis believe nobody in the west should forget that what unites the two main branches of Islam is far greater than what divides them, and the vast majority of all Muslims still cherish the ideal of unity preached by Muhammad (PBUH) himself - an ideal the more deeply held for being so deeply broken".

Karbala, the rendezvous of martyrs is sacred geography. Its configuration within the aesthetic Marsiyya (elegies) is central. The journey to Karbala like the Hijrah - Migration of Holy Prophet (PBUH) has become a pivotal trope. The journey to Karbala opens up vistas of space to counteract imperial circumscription of Muslims into the artifices of the nation states even within similar ethnic particularities. Karbala internalizes migrant mode of journey and is a soulmate of moral one. It has spiritual antecedents, journeys of earlier apostles and the hijrah of final messenger (PBUH).

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



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Why Ban On Ethephon Should Be Lifted

Ethephon is an important synthetically produced fruit ripening chemical. This chemical is dissolved in water and sprayed on the fruit. While dissolving in water it produces ethylene, the gaseous natural hormone which promotes quick and uniform ripening of fruit.

In nature the ethylene is produced in fruits at maturity which promotes the fruit ripening but the natural fruit ripening is mostly non uniform which makes the fruit ripe at varying stages due to which the yield and quality of fruit is affected, and which in turn af-

fects the economy of fruit growers.

To induce uniform ripening of the fruit this synthetically produced Ethephon was made available in the market by scientists, and this chemical is commonly in use from decades and fruit farmers throughout the world are happy with the chemical. This chemical is also commonly used in Kashmir Valley, mostly as a colouring agent. But from the past decade the Ethephon sales are mostly restricted by the government officials, because of some health concern due to which the chemical is not sold openly in the market.

The restricted sale is a growing headache for the apple growers of the valley because they use this chemical for producing red colour apples, which fetches them a good market price. As per the health toxicity of is concerned the sprayed Ethephon is not much toxic that it should be banned, but for the organic fruit buyers this is not an option. There is not any concrete evidence of its health toxicity yet, no carcinogenicity has been proved in animal trials as reported by Cornell University but there may be some non-serious issues with the ethylene allergic people.

I think the chemical must be allowed without any restriction in the market and there should be no ban on selling and using the chemical for horticulture purposes. This chemical is commonly available in the apple producing developed countries. The Ethephon is sold with different trade names in the Kashmir but the chemical composition in all is same which include Ethephon 39%.

Dr Willayat Bashir (Ph.D)
Contractual Lecturer Chemistry
GDC, Sumbal, Sonawari

When the sun peeped out on the sunny morning of 6 July of 2019, I met up half a dozen students turned up in the premises of Central University of Kashmir's then Nowgam campus in the outskirts of Srinagar City. With backpacks strapped on their shoulders, carrying luggage in haversacks, they boarded the yellow colored university vehicle parked inside the premises of the campus. No sooner, the engine of the University vehicle with the university name emblazoned in white paint revved up. The driver whispered a flurry of prayers and continued until the vehicle trundled through the iron wrought gate to set off on its 146 kilometers long journey. Reclining on a seat, I was trying to imagine in my mind's eye, the landscape of Gurez. Muneeb elbowed me to bring my imagination vehicle to a grinding halt. Muneeb is a student from the Maths department of our university. A de facto guide, he is supposed to know the different terrains of Gurez like the backside of his hand.

Our vehicle pulled up at a few places on the way to pick up few more students. Thus, it was a small clique of 14 students who were out on the road on their way to explore the mountainous checkered landscape of Gurez. For moving towards Gurez, one has to get a written approval from District Magistrate Bandipora. Without much ado we received the consent.

Clock struck 1 Pm. Everyone moved towards the main market to fill their bellies. We took our lunch of plain rice with meat balls with a dash of chutney against the 60 INR. Everyone has had his fill. Bandipora Market has all that it takes to call it a market. Despite its hustle bustle, Bandipora Rahimiya reigned supreme in the mind. Bandipora is the district's headquarter that has four tehsils. Nestled in the foothills of snow clad peaks of Harmukh, it overlooks the shores of Wular. The district was carved out from erstwhile Baramulla district in 2007.

Soon, the driver sat on the wheels after having his fill. We were again on the roads travelling through the serpentine ways to reach our destination. The road was dotted with potholes. Our next pit stop was Tragbal, amidst the verdant mountains where a dhaba was serving hot brewing Lipton tea. A shepherd family from Bandipora had pitched their perforated tents at this spot. While their herd was grazing, they would sip the salt tea inside their tents and their children were giving furtive glances at us. The photographic freaks among us who slung the camera around their shoulders were in no mood to give it a miss. They rope in the elder of the family for consent. Nod in approval ensued a spate of photographs.

After taking a glassful of Lipton, we again boarded our Gurez bound vehicle snaking through mountains to stop at 11,672 foot Razdaan Pass for some more pictures. Peer Baba of Lahore sits atop the pass. Clouds hung low on one side like a white drape to keep Gurez hidden like a revered relic kept inside the sanctum Sanctorum. I wanted to put on the cassock and meditate to atone for my sins, for I felt the place like a holy grail, cut out for meditation. As our vehicle sped past the Razdan pass, I felt like entering into the mystical world draped in idyllic beauty which warmed the cockles of my heart. Monotony of life fizzled out.

Gurez has many concentric circles and every layer lays bare its chequered history. Globetrotters roam in its all-pervading mountainous villages and hamlets. Linguists find it their gaunt for examining the different nuances of Sheena language. Those who study conflict find the people of Gurez and Tulail tehsil caught in a catch 22 situation where they have not much to say about when guns rage at the peaks of mountains. Kishan Ganga Dam is not talked about much but it has wiped out the whole village of Badwan. The only spire of the mosque stands tall amidst the water is testimony to the existence of life there. These aftereffects witnessed by Badwan Village lay bare the cost. Kishan Ganga hydroelectric plant incurred on the people of Gurez. Post the Kishan Ganga dam catastrophe, the villagers were accommodated at different places after government distributed doles to the affected lot. Despite producing electricity, Gurez still remains draped in darkness most of the times. The blubs blink on petrol in Gurez for 6 to 7 hours while as rest of the state encashes on the waters of Kishan Ganga which approximately produces 360 Megawatts. Here the axiom "Nearer the church, farther from the God" gets materialized. Kishan Ganga is called Neelam in Pakistan.

Gurez reigns supreme while flipping through the books of history. Kashmir was connected to Gilgit through silk route. The route cuts through Gurez. Gurez forms the part of Dardistan. "These people still associate themselves with Gilgit," says DrMusavir who teaches linguistics at Kashmir University. DrMusavir who was on a visit to Gurez along with the students of linguistics talked about the survival of this language. "I don't know how far it is going to survive in future." He further added. Of 16 villages, only three villages speak Kashmiri language. Rest of them



Gurez: The Heartland of Dardistan

Tanveer Rashid

converse in Sheena. While witnessing the mountain after mountain amidst military check post, we spotted the first village. It ensued the cheerful hurrah. Kuragbal sits calmly amidst mountains. It is the first village on way to Gurez. After we travelled through Razdan pass, we entered into this village. A local said that more than 80 households are dwelling there who eke out their living through farming and manual labour. Some people are also working in Government sector. Kuragbal is followed by Kanzalwaan, Nayal, Khopri, Badwan and wanpora village. We stayed at Wanpora. The village houses Government degree college Gurez, Government high school and fishery.

Dawar is the main town of Gurez. A sub district hospital, a separate government higher secondary for boys and girls, a fleet of Sumos which ply on Gurez to Bandipora and Gurez to Tulail characterizes this town. The town has a population of 200 households. Veterinary staff is also available to cater to those who rear livestock. The town also has a j and k bank office and an ATM booth. Dawar market is all about one road which is the sought-after place for shoppers. Dry fruits, produce sellers and hair salons shops were surrounded by the houses and fields. Old men wear woolen cloaks though young put on swanky drainpipe denims and T-shirts and older women wore the traditional local headress or the embroidered skull cap, called khoi. The young women simply remain headscarved. I strike a conversation with a

from the ground when HabbaKhatoon dropped a clay pot of water. The lyrics of the songs played on the mobile phone amplified through the loud speaker were corresponding with the poetry of HabbaKhatoon. Our vehicle was bereft of stereo. Everyone would rely on the mobile phones which were heavily supported by power banks lest they run out of battery. To keep the euphoria and excitement intact, Teachers would crack a joke or two or would sing snippets of a Bollywood number much to our amusement. The milk-colored water of the HabbaKhatoon spring drives visitors to take a bath in its crystal cold waters to keep sweltering heat at bay. It is believed that HabbaKhatoon would wander in that area after her husband Yusuf shah Chak was imprisoned by Akbar and sent to Bihar which linked this spring with her. Chorwan is Sheena spoken habitation. It houses the shrine of Syed Masoom Shah. I spotted women pounding something into the stone mortar with wooden pestle while some women disgorge potatoes from the small rectangular terraced fields. Goat and sheep tied to their pegs while frothy water of Kishan Ganga flows silently along. Men carrying logs on the horse back while children giggle while flung their lithe bodies into deep waters. Mud and log houses were ubiquitous with Dardic touch and a smattering of Sheena language. Youth recline under the fir or pine tree through which passes the flecks of rays and chit-chat which

a fishery pond here, " said Muneeb-Magrey, a local resident. The college caters to the students from the villages of Chorwan, Achoora, Markoot, Mastan, Dawar, Shah Pora, Wanpora, Khopri, Nayal, Izmar and many other villages. Izmar has one higher secondary while as Dawar has two higher secondary one for boys and one for girls. Every village has one high school. Tariq Ahmad Khan, a local who teaches in this college calls the availability of internet and college a paradigm shift in the checkered history of Gurez. "Earlier these things were not available here but now they have internet at their disposal. They are trying to use different mediums to make their voice heard," said khan who spots a flowing beard. In Chorwan village of Gurez, Gulzar lone, a government teacher, swears by the genuinity of the local students. Giving credence to his assertion, He says in a pitched voice, "Believe me recently a boy from this village cracked mains in the civil services. These children have the talent to compete with others provided they are given facilities."

In the Budugam village of Tulail, I happen to visit the Sub Health centre along with my classmates and teachers. Patients were reclining on the bed and their family members were attending to them. As I was looking for a doctor, a person coming in haste. Calling himself in the charge at the centre Ghulam Mohammad reasons the absence of both the doctors at the centre. "One doctor has gone to see off his parents at air-

umer whose lip smacking dishes drew a round of applause was the icing on the cake. I had caught the wink when a friend tapped on the back whispered to come downstairs in the parking lot. Rubbing eyes and stretching arms I joined party. As clock chimed 12:00 AM, birthday boy knifed through the cake amidst jets of snow spray and a chorus of "happy birthday". After munching my share of cake I went upstairs to hit hay. Sleeps started playing hide and seek. I fiddled with mobile and browse through social networking sites. It generated soporific feeling. Thus I dived into dreamy world.

It didn't take us long to develop a rapport with our hosts. They always wear a smile on their faces. We got on well. We would banter with them and they would broke into fits of laughter. They had a host of problems in their area but very rarely they would let that scrunch their faces into a mask of gloom. Mostly they don't come up with those nitpicky complaints. But their demands are overdue.

Wanpora village has the luxury to browse Internet to connect to the outside world and make calls to their close ones. Internet is yet to make inroads in the most areas in this bewitching valley of Gurez. People can browse internet in Dawar, Achoora, Markoot, Mastan, Wanpora, Khnadiyal and Shahpora (Fakirpora). Bakhtoor, Kanzalwaan and Chorwan do not have the luxury to avail internet facility as internet is still a dream in these areas though they have a luxury to make calls. Kuragbal, Nayal, Tarbal, izmar and Jalendora are yet to make use of mobile phones.

Dawar, Shahpora, Bakhtoor and izmar are Kashmir speaking. Rest of the villages in Gurez tehsil converse in their native language: Sheena language. In the main town of Dawar, ZakirHussain was catering to his customers. Some would indulge in haggling before I stepped in. Zakir is MSC in Geology from JamiaMillia. As tourists keep on treading the untrodden paths in Gurez, Zakircherrypicked some to give a peep to an outsider what it is to live in Gurez where adequate electricity is still a coveted dream. "Out of 24 hours blubs blink only for 8 hours," Said Zakir while rubbing his hand on his trimmed beard.

Amidst the Natural landscape, the overriding presence of jackboots and the spools of concertina wires plays the spoilsport. After every few kilometers one has to deboard at every army picket to get himself documented in the record books through the pigeonholes. Drivers name, passengers, registration number and the reason of visit" is a sort of catchism between army personnel and our teacher happened at every check post much to our disappointment. Every village has its own share of pickets and jackboots here who keep Michael Foucault's panopticon view on these villages. In this part of the world such spectre doesn't roll too many eyes. If I had my way I would have cut all the Gordian knots the Gurez valley comes across. A youth in Chorwan opine that a shoestring budget can cover the Gurez travel but bumpy stretch from Bandipora wears off the interest of many visitors.

After our two day stay in Gurez, we braced up to return to the monotony of our lives. On returning, I alighted on Razdan Pass. Took a deep breath of fresh air in the mountains, I roved around amidst the click-clanking of camera shutters. Dark white clouds were hanging low kissing the lofty mountains, fog was all-pervading cutting short visibility and winds blowing randomly in our faces, fitfully disturbing our clothes. Green pastures, tranquility and serenity embraced me. An eternal bliss refreshed me. All this was souvenir from the place which is still a virgin to many who don't open their blinkers beyond Gulmarg, Pahalgam, and Sonamarg. Writers wrote paeans to this place. Despite all the travails of life, they held their head high and take it in their stride. To me those who have not frequent this pocket of our valley has given a miss to the mystic slice of our state's tourism pie.

Serpentine terrains were well complemented by the Bollywood numbers on way to Bandipora. At Bandipora, A glassful of Lipton with potato stuffed Samosas were enough to revitalize ourselves for final stretch of our journey. A teacher and classmate choose Bandipora to Sopore stretch to reach home thus bade adieu to all of us. As sun downed in the west, darkness took over. Some were browsing on their mobile phones. Some listening to the Bollywood numbers. Some trying to tailor the memories of past two years of university life thus evoked a deluge of nostalgia. I deboard in Lal chock. Rickshawallas took me for a customer. I keep on walking the side paths much to their chagrin. Twenty minutes Later, I knocked at the door of my hostel room. At the drop of the hat, my roommate unlatched the door. After changing into Casuals, I gulped down a tumbler of lemon drink. As I was tailoring the different shades of my four day journey to entomb them in the repository of my mind, Sleep got better of me. Eyelashes of my eyes embraced each other like virgin tracts of verdant mountains cuddled me for four days. Thus next day I woke up amidst the monotony of life far away the serene and calmness which Gurez caters to its visitors.

Gurez has many concentric circles and every layer lays bare its chequered history. Globetrotters roam in its all-pervading mountainous villages and hamlets. Linguists find it their gaunt for examining the different nuances of Sheena language. Those who study conflict find the people of Gurez and Tulail tehsil caught in a catch 22 situation where they have not much to say about when guns rage at the peaks of mountains.

shopkeeper- who later turned out to be the brother of shopkeeper, M.A History - and I was wonderstruck by his erudite. White fluffy clouds lie low like a white shawl covering HabbaKhatoon-the graceful 13,000 foot-pyramid shaped peak that rises over the town and is named after the 16th century poet known as the Nightingale of Kashmir, who is said to have lived near the mountain's base as the young woman.

Dawar caters to all the 15 villages. Different guesthouse are the pit stop of travelers where they stay at shoestring budget for a night to unwind themselves. The verdant carpeted stadium at the foothills of the mini-mountain freckled with pine and other trees gives space to the youth to have fun and frolic. Some play crickets, a sprinkle of spectators recline at the fringes watching the gentle's man game while others while away time. The huge six triggers hoots and a wicket ensues high-five.

Gurez is the smattering of all the famed tourist destinations of the valley. It has mounds of white snow like Gulmarg for skiers. White tourmaline waters of kishan Ganga is the holy grail for anglers and rafting buffs. Akin to Sonamarg and Pahalgam's verdant fields is ubiquitous in this backyard of our valley. All you need is a bit patience to stay in them, cuddle them and they fill your lungs with fresh air and a mystic gratification. Only a monk and a darvesh can unravel them, for it is a apt destination for meditation from the chaotic life.

Enway to Chorwan I spotted a HabbaKhatoon Spring at Achoora. The legend has it that that the spring gushed

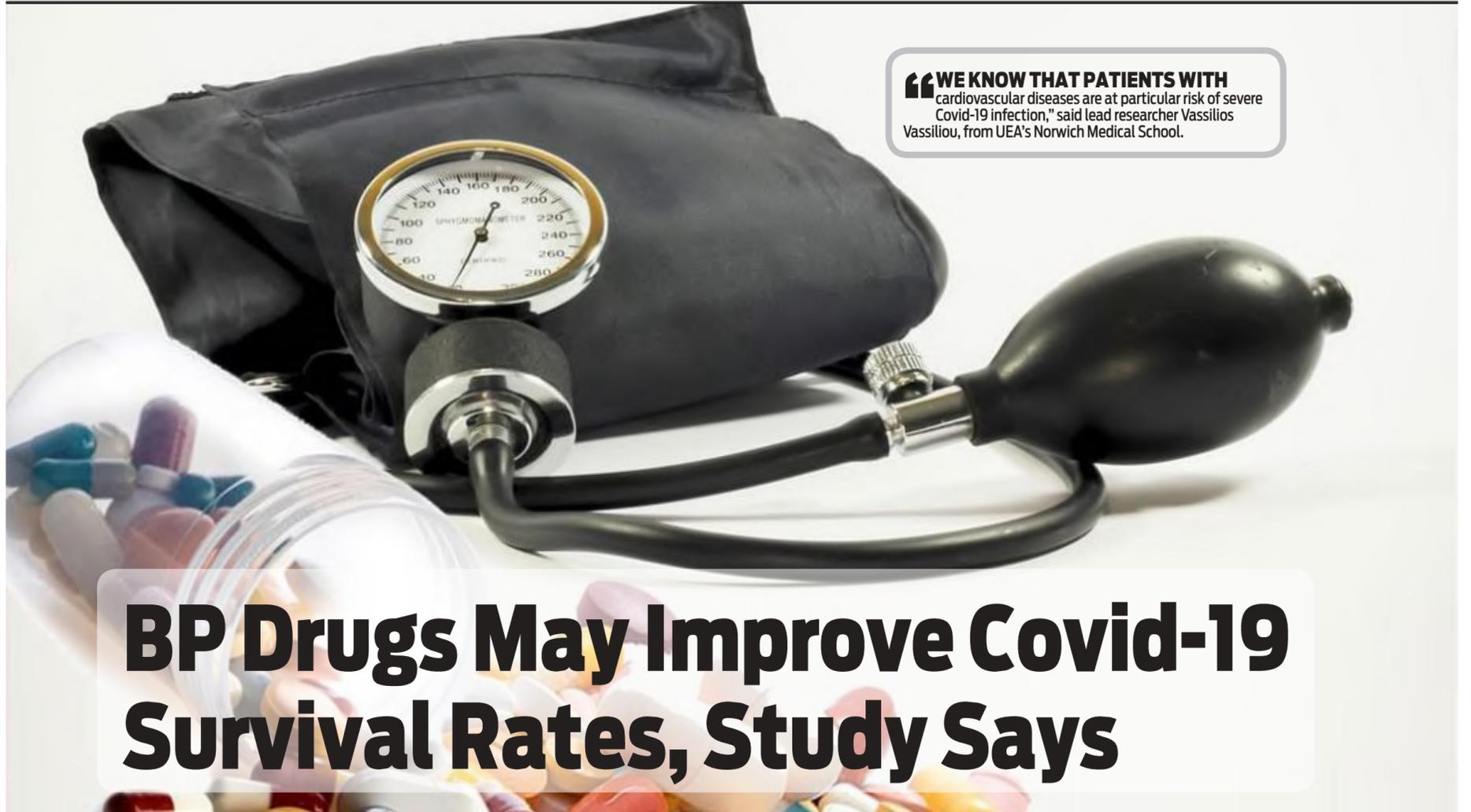
sometimes ensue a peal of laughter. The air smacked the pastoral smell. No one is couch potato here. This is what characterizes the life of Gurez. I fell head over heels in love with this austere lifestyle.

Living near the border carries its own bagful of worries. LOC runs few miles north of Gurez. Some say a fifteen minute walk will land you in the hamlet across the border. Sudden staccato sound or a loud bang would send shivers down the spine of the people in nineties which receded since 2000. The villagers have constructed underground bunkers to thwart casualties when Indian and Pakistan trade fires. Despite life threat looming in the mountains, smile writs large on their faces and the moment you direct your cameras towards them their faces contort into a smile. With their Perseverance and stoicism they don't let guns play the spoilsport in their idyllic life. A lesson or two for us whom trivial things, sometimes, give sometimes tough time.

Gurez has only Government Degree College to cater to the burgeoning demand of education. The college is located in WanporaGurez girdled by the mountains. Honking of vehicles, glitzy restaurants and swanky lifestyle is still unheard of. Wanpora village has one high school as well. Some people on condition of anonymity said that this village has made fortunes after MLA came here to reside but most of the people negate this comment. "The large tracts of land are available only in this village and government made most of it by constructing Government degree college, government high school and

port who are going for Holy Pilgrimage. Another doctor has gone to Srinagar as his son has sustained a fracture in some part of a body," said the visibly panting Ghulam Mohammad. This absence of doctors in the mountainous areas of the state is the tip of an ice berg and lays bare the lacunas we have in these border areas vis a via health sector. The defunct x ray machines, Blood testing machines, No availability of Doctors characterizes the health sector mostly in the small hamlets sandwiched between the mountains. Muneeb, a university student said that despite having a sub district hospital Gurez at their disposal "Still most patients have to be preferred to Bandipora."

We were lucky enough to have chosen Wanpora as our place for our stay. It was the guest house with wood-paneled rooms. Windows scoured and buffed up, shelves dusted, and curtains washed and ironed. It was connected with few spic and span tiled-bathrooms. The facade was well complemented by beautifully manicured park. We were dog-tired. We took a hall where eight of us comfortably took a rest after the kitchen was taken over by some of us who waited with bated breath to flaunt their culinary skills. But Umer -My classmate-won the hands down in preparing lip-smacking dishes. He was well assisted by two locals and few class mates. We would wolf down a piece or two of meat before cleaning our hands under the ewer with crystal cold water. Taking those morsels of food in the late nights with my classmates are now an unwritten memoir committed to my memory for eternity. The birthday of



WE KNOW THAT PATIENTS WITH cardiovascular diseases are at particular risk of severe Covid-19 infection," said lead researcher Vassiliou, from UEA's Norwich Medical School.

BP Drugs May Improve Covid-19 Survival Rates, Study Says

NEW DELHI- Medication for high blood pressure may improve COVID-19 survival rates, and reduce the severity of novel coronavirus infection, particularly in patients with hypertension, according to a study. Researchers from the University of East Anglia (UEA) in the UK studied 28,000 patients taking antihypertensives — a class of drugs that are used to treat hypertension or high blood pressure. The study, published in the journal *Current Atherosclerosis Re-*

ports, found that the risk of severe COVID-19 illness and death was reduced for patients with high blood pressure who were taking Angiotensin-Converting Enzyme inhibitors (ACEi) or Angiotensin Receptor Blockers (ARB). "We know that patients with cardiovascular diseases are at particular risk of severe Covid-19 infection," said lead researcher Vassiliou, from UEA's Norwich Medical School. "But at the start of the pan-

demie, there was concern that specific medications for high blood pressure could be linked with worse outcomes for COVID-19 patients," Vassiliou said. The researchers, including those from Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital, analysed what the impact of these medications is for people with COVID-19. They studied the outcomes for patients taking antihypertensives, looking particularly at what is called 'critical' outcomes

such as being admitted to intensive care or being put on a ventilator, and death. The team analysed data from 19 studies related to COVID-19 and ACEi and ARB medications. The researchers noted that their meta-analysis involved more than 28,000 patients and is the largest and most detailed such study to date. They compared data from COVID-19 patients who were taking ACEi or ARB medications with

those who were not — focusing on whether they experienced 'critical' events and death. "We found that a third of COVID-19 patients with high blood pressure and a quarter of patients overall were taking an ACEi/ARBs. This is likely due to the increasing risk of infection in patients with co-morbidities such as cardiovascular diseases, hypertension and diabetes, said Vassiliou. "But the really important thing that we showed was that there is

no evidence that these medications might increase the severity of COVID-19 or risk of death, he said. On the contrary, the researchers found that there was a significantly lower risk of death and critical outcomes, so they might in fact have a protective role — particularly in patients with hypertension. COVID-19 patients with high blood pressure who were taking ACEi/ARB medications were 0.67 times less likely to have a criti-

cal or fatal outcome than those not taking these medications, according to the study. "Our research provides substantial evidence to recommend continued use of these medications if the patients were taking them already, said Vassiliou. "However, we are not able to address whether starting such tablets acutely in patients with Covid-19 might improve their prognosis, as the mechanism of action might be different," he added.

Nitrate Supplementation Could Help Elderly In Lung Clearance, Breathing Clearly

Agencies

Improving the function in the diaphragm, recent research in mice has shown that nitrate can help the muscle involved in coughing and breathing, by enhancing its power.

The study that was done on old mice, if replicated in humans, could provide a strategy for helping elderly people clear the lungs more effectively and avoid infection.

The recent study was published in *The Journal of Physiology*.

Previous studies showed nitrate was helping muscles by improving the use of calcium in the muscle. This finding that it's additionally affecting power is significant, especially in the context of Covid-19, because the diaphragm is the primary inspiratory muscle used for breathing and coughing, the latter being relevant for clearing the lungs.

The research team at the University of Florida found that dietary nitrate supplementation elicited a pronounced increase in contractile function (power) of the diaphragm, a respiratory muscle, of old mice.

They made their measurements during maximal



activation, so the effects observed seem to be caused by an improvement in the function of contractile proteins rather than calcium handling. Few short-term interventions have such a profound impact on muscle contractile function, as was observed in this study. Dietary nitrate is readily available for humans and could be used, under proper supervision, to improve respiratory muscle dysfunction that contributes to shortness of breath and morbidity in the elderly. The researchers gave sodium nitrate to old mice in their drinking water daily for

14 days. The control group received regular water. Diaphragm muscle contractile function cannot be assessed directly in live animals or humans. Thus, they tested diaphragm function in muscle tissues under controlled conditions for muscle stimulation and oxygenation. The main limitations are that mouse and human diaphragm have different percentages of fast and slow muscle cells. Mouse diaphragm consists of 90% fast muscle cells; the human diaphragm consists of 25-50% fast muscle cells depending on several factors that include age and sex. Dietary ni-

trate seems to exert a greater impact on the contractile function of fast muscle cells. Thus, the benefits to the human diaphragm may not be as pronounced as was observed in mice. They also only tested male mice, and the benefits for females is unknown. Leonardo Ferreira, senior author of the study said: "Our findings are especially important in light of the current Covid-19 pandemic as they suggest that, if replicated in humans, dietary nitrate is useful to improve respiratory muscle dysfunction that contributes to difficulty in weaning patients from mechanical ventilation."

Royal Springs Golf Course Cheshmashahi Srinagar

E-NIT No. 16 of 2020-21 Dated 24.08.2020

For and on behalf of Secretary Royal Springs Golf Course, Cheshmashahi, Srinagar e tenders (in single cover system) invited on item rate basis from approved eligible suppliers/dealer for each of the following item/work.

			Cost of tender document (in Rs)		
			= Non Refundable in shape of		
			Brain Branch Nishat Srinagar		

Position of Funds: Demanded

In case the offered bid is below 60% of the advertised cost or more, such bid / bids will be out rightly rejected. In case more than one bidder has quoted equal bid amounts or bids are found to a "Tie" list lowest will from draw of lots.

The Bidding documents Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from _____ as per schedule of dates given below:

Date of issue of Tender Notice	
Period of downloading of bidding documents	
Date & time of opening of Bids(Online)	

- The successful bidder shall submit original Demand opening of the bids failing which proceeding as warranted under rules shall be initiated in the matter. and PAN in person within two days from the
- The bidders will provide email ID and complete postal address including cell numbers.
- The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web Site _____ conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e bids of Responsive bidders days from the date of opening of Bids
- The bids for the work shall remain bid meeting will not be cause of disqualification of the bidder.
- The earnest money shall be forfeited, if:
 - Any bidder/ tenderer withdraw his bid/ tender during the period of bid validity or make any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid.
 - Failure of Successful bidder to furnish the required performance security within the specified time limit.
 - Failure of Successful bidder to _____ days after fixation of contract.
- If the bidder has not uploaded rate for any item/items of the rate list/quantity schedule, the item for which no rate has been quoted/uploaded deemed as HTR (Highest Tendered Rate) received for the particular work at the time of evaluation while preparing comparative statement, however, LTR (Lowest Tendered Rate) shall be allowed in the allotment of the contract as per standard practice, in case such bidder is successful bidder. F has uploaded/ quoted rates as "Free of cost" or "nil rates" against all items of the work, the tenderer shall be out rightly _____ and the rates quoted shall be deemed to _____ and the rates quoted shall be deemed to _____ for the calculation purposes. However, in case the rate quoted is equivalent to zero value, the same shall be calculated on HTR basis.
- Bidders are advised not to make any change in BOQ (Bill of Quantities) contents. In no case they should attempt to create similar BOQ manually. The BOQ downloaded should be used for filling the item rate inclusive of all taxes and it should be saved with the same name as it co _____ and the rates quoted shall be deemed to _____
- Price escalation and all taxes upto completion of the work, unless otherwise specified. Deduction on account of taxes shall be made from the bills of contractor on gross amount of the bill as per the rates prevailing at the time of recovery.
- Bidders are advised to use _____ Tendering portal to store such documents as reqd. The bidder at his own responsibility and risk should visit and examine the site of work and its surroundings before submission of bid. documents relating to the bid shall be in the English Language.
- Any bid/s received beyond 15% above the advertised cost of the work shall not be entertained and fresh tenders shall be invited without any further notice.
- The date of start of the work shall be reckoned within one week from the date of issuance of LOI/Contract allotment as the case may be. Penalty for delay in completion: In case of delay in completion of work stipulated period of completion, penalty _____

Suitable time extension shall be granted in case of increase in scope of work and in the event of delay beyond control of contract determined by the department. e/equipment advance shall be paid unless otherwise specified in the SBD. 20. The earnest money of all bidders except the 1 two lowest bidders shall be released after the contract for the work is fixed. 10% shall be deducted from each running bill of the successful contractor which shall be released after virtual completion of work in _____ The payment schedule shall be fixed after award of contract in favour of successful bidder, on the basis of availab _____ The tender receiving authority reserves the right to accept or reject any tender or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof. _____ of contract the contractor shall be responsible to remove all un used material and restore all work in its original

DIPK-NB-1986/20

6 Tips To Take Care Of Your Wooden Furniture

Good quality furniture lasts a lifetime. But, no matter how good the quality of wood is, it is susceptible to abrasion, scratches, and wear and tear, due to constant use. Hence, it's extremely important to take care of wooden furniture as much as you can. When you buy wooden furniture, the manufacturer instructs you with certain cleaning and care instructions. You must be mindful of them and follow the process as instructed. We have listed below 6 best tips in the best state possible. **Don't Mistreat Furniture** Whenever you keep glass prod-

ucts or mugs or any hot or cold object on wooden tables, use coasters and never place them directly on the surface without putting a tablecloth beneath it. You can place decorative tablecloths or placemats on top of the surface which would protect the furniture surface from getting stained. **Avoid exposure to outside elements** Several natural factors like rain, sunlight damage the quality of the furniture. Even then you need to value them and keep them away from direct sunlight,

fireplaces, vents, etc. as the heat and light can affect its longevity. So, when you are looking to rent furniture in Chennai, try hunting them online. **Dust regularly** Airborne particles, dust, and dirt cause a thin layer of wood which damages and scratches the surface. It also destroys its natural sheen. Your guests also wouldn't like to see a thin film of dust layering over your furniture. Hence, you must dust your furniture from time to time, using a soft cloth. Don't use rough

materials to dust off the surfaces as they can cause scratches. **Keep Wood Smelling Fresh** Sometimes old furniture develops an unpleasant odour. To make them smell fresh and new, sprinkle some amount of baking soda. You can place a pan of charcoal inside chambers and drawers. It would absorb the smell that emanates from the furniture body. Remember that even with the best care and maintenance, furniture and appliances are prone to disintegration. But, ordering the quality one is important in

the very first place so if you are looking to rent appliances in Chennai, do read the reviews. **Re-oil and re-wax dry wood** If you notice your furniture becoming too dry, you can re oil it. Follow the below steps for re-oiling the furniture surface: Clean the surface using a wet cloth and mild soap or detergent. **Dry clean it immediately.** Now apply furniture oil and let the furniture soak the moisture for about 15 mins. After this, if you choose to apply any protective layer, let the oil

settle for a day before you proceed to apply any other solution. **If you are to wax the furniture surface, the process is a bit different.** Once you have cleaned the surface using a damp cloth and mild soap, apply a coat of wax and spread the mixture throughout the surface. **Don't keep the wax for more than 20 mins.** Remove the excess wax from the surface by wiping it off with a clean pad. Now buff using a soft cloth until the surface feels smooth.

Clean the wood surfaces Sometimes only dusting doesn't help and one needs to clean the surfaces regularly to retain the natural finish of the future surfaces. Never use the all-purpose cleaners that are readily available in the market. They damage the wooden finish of your furniture. Usually, cleaning with a wet cloth and a mild dish detergent help. Once you have cleaned the surface with a damp cloth, be sure to wipe it off using a soft dry towel. Although cleaning smaller spaces will be a bit challenging, you can get tips to decorate small places by referring to a number of lifestyle articles present online.

Astrazeneca Starts Trial Of COVID-19 Antibody Treatment

Agencies

London: British drugmaker AstraZeneca has begun testing an antibody-based cocktail for the prevention and treatment of COVID-19, adding to recent signs of progress on possible medical solutions to the disease caused by the novel coronavirus.

The London-listed firm, already among the leading players in the global race to develop a successful vaccine, said the study would evaluate if AZD7442, a combination of two monoclonal antibodies (mAbs), was safe and tolerable in up to 48 healthy participants between the ages of 18 and 55 years.

If the UK-based early-stage trial, which has dosed its participants, shows AZD7442 is safe, AstraZeneca said it would proceed to test it as both a preventative treatment for COVID-19 and a medicine for patients who have it, in larger, mid-to-late-stage studies.

AstraZeneca shares were up about 1% at 87 pounds (\$114) in early trading.

Development of mAbs to target the virus, an approach already being tested by Regeneron, Eli Lilly, Roche and Molecular Partners, has been endorsed by leading scientists.

mAbs mimic natural antibodies generated in the body to fight off infection and can be

synthesised in the laboratory to treat diseases in patients. Current uses include treatment of some types of cancers.

U.S. infectious diseases expert Anthony Fauci has called them "almost a sure bet" against COVID-19, and AstraZeneca in June received \$23.7 million in funding from U.S. government agencies to advance development of antibody-based treatments for COVID-19.

"This combination of antibodies, coupled to our proprietary half-life extension technology, has the potential to improve both the effectiveness and durability of use in addition to reducing the likelihood of viral resistance," said Astra's executive vice president of biopharmaceuticals R&D Mene Pangalos.

Though vaccines are at the heart of the long-term fight against the pandemic, alternative treatments are also being advanced, and the United States on Sunday authorized use of recovered COVID-19 patients' plasma to treat those who are ill.

The Financial Times reported at the weekend that President Donald Trump's administration was considering a fast-tracked approval of AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine before November's elections.

US police shoot black man in back, sparking unrest

Agencies

WASHINGTON: Police shot a black man in the back multiple times in the US city of Kenosha, Wisconsin, as his three sons watched on Sunday, his family's lawyer said, sparking a night of unrest during which protesters hurled firebombs and bricks at law enforcement officers.

Crowds gathered at the scene, set fires and threw bricks and Molotov cocktails at police, prompting authorities to impose a curfew. On Monday morning Kenosha County announced on Twitter that its courthouse and administration building would be closed due to damage from the night's unrest.



The victim, 29-year-old Jacob Blake, was taken to a hospital in serious condition after the shooting on Sunday afternoon. Blake's father told NBC News on Monday that his son was out of surgery and in stable condition.

A video circulating on social media showed Blake walking toward the driver's side of a gray SUV followed by two officers with their guns drawn at his back. Seven gunshot sounds can be heard as Blake, who appears to be unarmed, opens the car door.

It was unknown whether the officers saw something inside the vehicle to justify deadly force. It was also not clear whether one or both officers fired their weapons.

The incident occurred three months after the death of George Floyd, a 46-year-old black man, in Minneapolis police custody sparked nationwide protests against police brutality and structural racism in the United States.

Former vice president Joe Biden, the Democrat seeking to defeat President Donald Trump in the Nov 3 election, on Monday called for the officers to be held accountable and for the dismantling of systemic racism.

"And this morning, the nation wakes up yet again with grief and outrage that yet another black American is a victim of excessive force," Biden said in a statement, noting that Blake was shot in the back. "These shots pierce the soul of our nation."



Un: Global Tourism Lost \$320Bn In 5 Months From Pandemic

Agencies

United Nations: In addition to tourism jobs that are at risk, the policy paper said jobs in associated sectors, including food service, that provide employment for 144 million workers worldwide are also at risk.

The tourism global industry has been devastated by the coronavirus pandemic, with \$320 billion lost in exports in the first five months of the year and more than 120 million jobs at risk, the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said Tuesday.

THE UN chief said in a policy briefing and video address that tourism is the third-largest export sector of the global economy, behind fuels and chemicals, and in 2019 it accounted for 7% of global trade. "It employs one in every 10 people on Earth and provides livelihoods to hundreds of millions more," he said.

In addition to boosting economies, "it allows people to experience some of the world's cultural and natural riches and brings people closer to each other, highlighting our common humanity," he said. But the UN chief said that

in the first five months of 2020, because of the pandemic, international tourist arrivals decreased by more than half and earnings plummeted.

Guterres said this has been a "major shock" for richer developed nations "but for developing countries, it is an emergency, particularly for many small island developing states and African countries."

Tourism for some of those countries represents more than 20% of their GDP, he explained.

Sandra Carvao, the UN World Tourism Organization's chief of market intelligence and competitiveness, said the \$320 billion in lost exports from January through May is three times what was lost during the year 2009 at the height of the last global financial crisis.

And according to the policy briefing, export revenues from tourism could fall by \$910 billion to \$1.2 trillion in 2020 and that could reduce global GDP by 1.5% to 2.8%.

In addition to tourism jobs that are at risk, the policy paper said jobs in associated sectors, including food service, that provide employment for 144 million workers worldwide

are also at risk.

It also stressed that small businesses were particularly vulnerable.

Guterres said tourism is also a key pillar for the conservation of natural and cultural heritage.

According to the briefing, some 7% of world tourism relates to wildlife, "a segment growing by 3% annually."

"The fall in revenues has led to increased poaching and habitat destruction in and around protected areas," the secretary-general said, "and the closure of many World Heritage sites has deprived communities of vital livelihoods."

Guterres called for the tourism sector to be rebuilt in a way that is safe for host communities, workers and travellers, and is also "equitable and climate friendly."

Noting that travel restrictions and border closures still remain though some have been lifted, Carvao said "the recovery will be very much dependent on the evolution of the pandemic and the economic situation."

"No country has escaped the impact of Covid on tourism," she said.

WHO cautions Covid-19 plasma treatment still experimental

Agencies

Geneva: The antibodies float in plasma — the yellowish, liquid part of blood — which is collected from COVID-19 survivors and given to patients infected with coronavirus.

The World Health Organization on Monday cautioned that using blood plasma from Covid-19 survivors to treat other patients is still considered an experimental therapy, voicing the concern as a US boost for the treatment has many scientists afraid formal studies will be derailed.

On Sunday, the US Food and Drug Administration authorized what's called "emergency use" of the treatment under its special powers to speed the availability of promising experimental drugs during a public health crisis.

The action isn't the same

as approving plasma as safe and effective, and numerous rigorous studies are underway to find out if it really works.

"The results are not conclusive," WHO's chief scientist Dr Soumya Swaminathan said during a press briefing. "At the moment, it's still very low-quality evidence."

Convalescent plasma is a century-old treatment that was used to fight off flu and measles outbreaks in the days before vaccines, and was tried more recently during the Ebola outbreak.

When the body encounters a new germ, it makes proteins called antibodies that are specially targeted to fight the infection. The antibodies float in plasma — the yellowish, liquid part of blood — which is collected from COVID-19 survivors and given to patients infected

with coronavirus.

Swaminathan said WHO considered plasma therapy to be experimental and that it should continue to be evaluated. She said the treatment is difficult to standardize: Plasma must be collected individually, and people produce different levels of antibodies.

"Of course, countries can do an emergency listing if they feel the benefits outweigh the risks," she said. "But that's usually done when you're waiting for the more definitive evidence."

In a letter describing the FDA's emergency action, the agency's chief scientist said the treatment "should not be considered a new standard of care" for coronavirus infections, and that more data from studies will be available in the coming months.

Pak wins rare, fragile success against novel coronavirus

Asad Hashim / Aljazeera

Islamabad, Pakistan - Walking through the Karachi Company bazaar in the Pakistani capital Islamabad, the coronavirus pandemic seems a world away.

Groups of shoppers gather at the small stalls that line the alleys of the market, selling everything from plastic stools to jewellery and colourful garments. Hardly anyone wears a mask, as they haggle over prices and stall owners shout to try and get the attention of potential customers.

"The danger is much less now," says Sheikh Usman, 32, who runs a small garment stall and has not worn a protective face mask for months. "The restrictions should be finished, because the virus is over now."

With a population of 220 million, a ramshackle health and hygiene infrastructure and densely packed urban neighbourhoods, Pakistan was considered by many to be a prime candidate to see the worst of the coronavirus pandemic.

Six months after registering its first case, however, active cases in Pakistan are continuing to steadily decline, with the number of deaths recorded in a day often down to single digits.

The country has seen 293,261 confirmed cases of the novel coronavirus, with 6,341 related deaths, according to official data. Save for single-day blips, active cases have been steadily declining since hitting a peak in June, currently standing at 10,091, their lowest

level since late April.

Epidemiologists, however, warn that far from having weathered the storm, the country may be on the cusp of a second wave, primed to potentially hit as large religious gatherings are held this week, and wedding halls and schools are to be reopened by next month.

Underestimation of cases

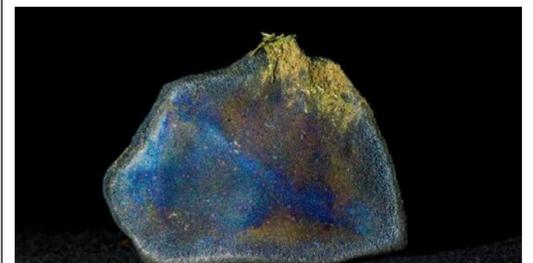
Critics say testing in the South Asian country has been low, resulting in an underestimation of cases. On Sunday, Pakistan conducted 23,655 tests, with 496 of them returning positive. The government says it has the capacity to conduct up to 67,340 tests a day, but people are simply not seeking them.

A worker checks the temperature of children arriving with their mother to visit the zoo, following an ease in restrictions that had been imposed to help control the coronavirus, in Lahore, Pakistan, Tuesday.

"Before, the kind of lines we saw for COVID-19 testing, we used to have to turn people away to come back the next day," says Seemin Jamali, executive director of the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC), the largest government hospital in Karachi, Pakistan's most populous city.

At present, the hospital's 90-bed COVID-19 ward only has 14 patients - a far cry from June, when patients' families in Karachi and other cities told Al Jazeera they were having difficulty finding hospital beds for their dying relatives.

Costa Rican rainbow meteorite may hold building blocks of life



A special rainbow-coloured meteorite found in Costa Rica may have carried building blocks for life to Earth, reports livescience.com.

On April 23, 2019, a soft space rock smacked into Costa Rica after a washing machine-sized clay fireball broke up before landing. While meteorites turn up all over Earth, these shards were special; the asteroid that spawned them was a soft remnant of the early solar system, made from the dust from the spinning nebula that would ultimately form our solar system, formed in even older stars, the report said.

Locals found shards scattered between two villages, La Palmera and Aguas Zarcas.

And the meteorites that rained down from the event — collectively called Aguas Zarcas — belong to a rare class called carbonaceous chondrites, which form in the wee hours of the solar system's emergence and are typically packed with carbon.

This particular space rock contains complex carbon compounds, likely including amino acids, which join to form proteins and DNA, and perhaps other, even more complex building blocks of life.

While other rocky chunks from the very early solar system became parts of planets, this one remained intact and changed over time only through sunlight-driven chemical reactions that spurred the creation of more and more complex chemical compounds, the report added.

An earlier meteor that exploded over Murchison of Australia in 1969 had similar features.

Amino acids discovered in its clay, Joshua Sokol reported in Science, helped spread the idea that life on Earth may have originated from chemicals delivered in meteorites. And like the Murchison meteorite, this Aguas Zarcas fragment contains dust from the ancient, earlier Milky Way, before our sun formed.

NEWS MAKERS

"Great To Be Back In School": Greta Thunberg After Year Gap For Climate

Stockholm, Sweden: Swedish environmental activist Greta Thunberg said Monday she has returned to school after a year off campaigning to curb climate change.

"My gap year from school is over, and it feels so great to finally be back in school again!" the 17-year-old tweeted, attaching a smiling photo of herself with a schoolbag on her back and her hands resting on a bicycle.

My gap year from school is over, and it feels so great to finally be back in school again! pic.twitter.com/EKDzOnwal — Greta Thunberg (@GretaThunberg) August 24, 2020

Thunberg did not say in which city or school she would be continuing her studies.

Since her last school year finished in June 2019, the teenager's



travels around the world meant that she ended up doing lessons remotely.

Rather than head into the final years of secondary school, she travelled across the Atlantic by sailing boat — hoping to highlight the carbon emissions of flying.

Her ultimate destination had

been the COP25 UN climate conference in Chilean capital Santiago.

But the event was ultimately shifted to Madrid because of massive unrest in Chile, leaving Thunberg to sail back from the US to Europe on board a catamaran belonging to a young Australian couple.

Stranded by virus, Japan couple become Cape Verde envoys

Cape Verde's Olympic committee has told the couple they will have tickets to watch the Games in Tokyo.

A pair of Japanese honeymooners stranded in Cape Verde by the coronavirus pandemic have been named unlikely ambassadors for the tropical paradise's Olympic team at next year's Tokyo Games.

Rikiya and Ayumi Kataoka started a round-the-world trip in December in South Africa, and were working their way north in February when the scale of the pandemic began to become clear.

They scrapped their plans to continue on to Europe and decided to fly to Cape Verde.

"We thought staying in Cape Verde was the safest option," husband Rikiya, 29, told AFP in an online video interview from the island.

"We felt fortunate that we were able to come here. The number of infections

was rising in Japan. Europe has also seen an explosive rise in cases. Honest-



ly, I thought we got lucky for being able to come to a very peaceful place."

But when the country's airport shut down, they were stuck, and Rikiya, who runs a sharehouse business in Tokyo and works as a videographer, began producing videos and photos for local restaurants and resorts in exchange for meals and lodging.

Twitter flags Trump's 'misleading' tweet on drop boxes

Washington: Twitter has hidden a tweet by US President Donald Trump criticising the promotion of drop boxes by Democrats as an option for voters, saying it contained "misleading claims" that could "dissuade voters" ahead of the November election.

The US president tweeted on Sunday that postal voting could encourage fraud and puts users at risk of contracting coronavirus.

"So now the Democrats are using mail drop boxes, which are a voter-security disaster. Among other things, they make it possible for a person to vote multiple times. Also, who controls them? Are they placed in Republican or Democrat areas? They are not COVID sanitised — a big fraud," Trump wrote. The social media giant said the tweet made "misleading health claims".

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