



Maximum : 28°C
Minimum : 17°C
Humidity : 69%

SUNSET
Today 07:00 PM
SUNRISE
Tomorrow 06:02 AM



News Digest

Civilian Injured In Cross-LoC Firing

SRINAGAR: A civilian on Friday was injured as India and Pakistan troops traded fire along the Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir. Wajid Ali son of Qurban Shah of Gohlad Mendhar was injured after the two armies exchanged gunfire along the LoC at Reelan in Mendhar sector, reports said. The injured civilian was removed to the sub-district hospital Mendhar for treatment. SHO Mendhar Manzoor Kohli told news agency GNS that the civilian was injured in firing by the Pakistani troops along LoC.

Policeman Killed In Road Accident

SRINAGAR: A policeman on Friday was killed in a road accident in north Kashmir's Kupwara district. Tahir Ahmad Bhat of Lachampora Rajwar was critically injured when the bike he was riding, was hit by a vehicle near Petrol pump Chogal in Handwara on Friday morning, official sources said. The injured cop was shifted to district hospital Handwara for treatment. However, the doctors there referred him to SMHS hospital Srinagar for advanced treatment. However he succumbed to the injuries there, official sources added.

Kashmiri Youth Held In New Delhi Released

SRINAGAR: Delhi police has released a youth from central Kashmir's Budgam district, two days after he was detained over suspicion. Manzoor Ahmed Ahanger was released by police, two days after he was detained when he was allegedly found roaming in suspicious conditions around Parliament, reports said. A resident of Rathuna, Ahanger was handed over to a close relative. Confirming his release, family sources told news agency KNT that Ahanger was questioned by Delhi police and treated well. "He is returning home," they added.

J&K's Covid-19 Combat Efforts Hailed

SRINAGAR: A central team of experts on Friday lauded the Jammu and Kashmir government's COVID-19 containment and mitigation measures, saying the testing strategy across the Union Territory is aggressive and robust which has helped in containing the spread of the disease. The two-member central team comprising NITI Aayog Member (Health) V K Paul and National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) Chief S K Singh, which is on a visit to Kashmir to take stock of the overall COVID situation in the valley, called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha at the Raj Bhavan here, an official spokesman said. He said the two-member team held a detailed review of the situation emerging in the valley due to COVID-19.

11 Shops Gutted In Kupwara Blaze

SRINAGAR: At least 11 shops were gutted in a midnight blaze incident at Manwan Aawora village in north Kashmir's Kupwara district. Nearly a dozen shops were gutted in a blaze that broke out in the intervening night of Thursday-Friday, reports said Friday. They said that though the actual cause of fire was not ascertained yet while the loss suffered in the blaze was also being estimated. Locals told news agency KNO that at least 11 shops having different stock within were gutted in the incident. The shops include grocery, medical store, P-02

Cop-Turned Militant, 3 Aides Killed In Shopian Encounter

Another Militant Arrested With 'Extreme Professionalism': Police

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Four militants, including a policeman-turned militant commander on Friday were killed while another was captured by government forces during an encounter in south Kashmir's Shopian district.

State forces launched a cordon and search operation (CASO) in Killoora area of Shopian after receiving specific information about the presence of militants in the area, a police spokesperson said.

He said the search operation turned into an encounter after the militants turned down surrender offer and opened fire at a search party of the forces, who retaliated.

In the ensuing exchange of fire, four militants were killed, the police spokesperson said. He identified the killed militants as Al-Badr District Commander Shakoar Ahmad Parry and his associates Suhail Bhat, Zubair Negroo and Shakir-ul-Jabbar.

The police spokesperson further said that joint team exhibited "extreme professionalism"



Ko File Photo Abid Bhat

and arrested another militant identified as Shoiab Ahmad Bhat of Awantipora.

Disclosing the background details of the militants, the police spokesperson said all of them had a long history of crime records and were involved in planning and executing several attacks in the area including on police and security establishments.

About Al-Badr commander Parry, the spokesperson said that he was engaged as special police officer (SPO) in 2014 in P-02

Hideout Busted In Tral: Police

Police said on Friday that it busted a hideout in Tral area of south Kashmir's Pulwama district. Based on specific information regarding presence of JeM militants in Takiya Gulabagh in Tral, Police, army and CRPF launched a search operation in the area, a police spokesperson said. P-02

Missing BJP Panch's Body Found In Shopian Orchard

Police on Friday recovered body of a missing BJP affiliated Panch from south Kashmir's Shopian district, days after an unverified audio clip purportedly released P-02

Man Tried To Snatch Rifle Of CRPF Cop, Held

A 28-year-old man was on Friday arrested by security forces after he tried to snatch a CRPF personal's rifle in Nowhatta area of the city, police said. P-02

Govrenment Scuttles Muharram Procession With Tough Restrictions

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: Authorities on Friday imposed strict restrictions in parts of Kashmir to prevent people from taking out Muharram processions to mark the eighth day of the 10-day mourning period, officials said.

They said restrictions on the movement and assembly of people under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) have been imposed in Budgam and Baramulla districts and parts of Srinagar district.

In Srinagar, curbs were imposed in areas falling under eight police stations—Batamalo, P-02



Ko Photo Abid Bhat

Dozens Detained As Police Foils Muharram Processions
Police on Friday detained over two dozen youth, who defied government P-02

Hurriyat Condemns Arrests, Use Of Force
Expressing serious concern over the fresh wave of "arbitrary arrests" of youth, the All Parties Hurriyat P-02

Kashmir Records 8 More Covid-19 Deaths, J&K Toll 683

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: Coronavirus claimed eight more lives in Kashmir Valley on Friday, taking the death toll across the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir to 683.

While two each victims were residents of Srinagar and Kulgam, one each hailed from Anantnag, Ganderbal, Baramulla and Pulwama districts of the valley, official sources said.

A 62-year-old man from Saller Anantnag died at SKIMS Soura, six days after he was admitted to the tertiary care hospital, they said.

A 76-year-old man from Mehjoor Nagar died at SMHS hospital here, four days after he was admitted to

Baby, 106 Travelers Among 696 New cases
A month-old baby, six soldiers and seven CRPF personnel were among 696 people, who tested positive for coronavirus in Jammu and Kashmir on Friday, taking the number of people infected by virus in the P-02

the hospital and diagnosed with as "T2DM, AKD and bilateral CAP".

A 64-year-old man from Dalgate Srinagar died at CD hospital, one among the exclusive P-02

Flood Threat Ebbs As Rain Stop After 2 Days In Kashmir

Agencies

SRINAGAR: As incessant rains from last couple of days stopped, the water level in river Sindh and Doodhganga Nallah receded considerably in last 24 hours, official sources said on Friday.

They said that water level in Sindh decreased from 3.74m at 11 p.m. last night to 2.20m at 9 p.m on Friday near Duderhama Ganderbal in central Kashmir's district. The authorities had declared flood alert at around 10 p.m. on Thursday night after the water level breached danger mark of 3.35m near Duderhama Ganderbal.

Admin Asks People Not To Panic, Stay Alert

Chief Engineer Irrigation and Flood Control Jal Shakti department on Friday urged to remain alert but not panic amid increase in water level in River Jhelum and its tributaries. "It is for the information of the General Public that due to continuous rains over the last two days the water level P-02

LG Sinha Tours City, Reviews Flood Preparedness

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday conducted a whirlwind tour of Srinagar city to assess the flood preparations and emergency response mechanism being put in place to deal with any eventuality that may P-02

"Amidst incessant rains, the water level in Nallah Sindh at Duderhama has crossed Flood mark. All residents of the P-02

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: The annual yatra to high-altitude Harmukh Gangbal lake, which Kashmiri Pandits consider as the abode of Lord Shiva, has been performed in Central Kashmir Himalayas amid curtailment due to COVID-19.

"The yatra started from Naranag on August 24 and team members had to trek to Harmukh Gangbal lake. This year, the yatra size was also curtailed due to ongoing COVID-19 pandemic", Vice-President of Harmukh Gangbal Ganga Trust (HGGT), King C Bharati said.

The team members of the HGGT performed yagna at the Harmukh Gangbal lake, which is located



File Photo

around 14,500 feet above the sea level in the Harmukh mountain range.

"The lake is also known as Harmukh Ganga. The Harmukh mountain is also known as The Kailash of Kashmir. The yatra returned to Jammu today", he said.

Rajiv Pandita, a member of the yatra team, said it began on August 24 and culminated on August 28. "The yatra was conducted under tight security. The Gangbal yatra was revived after P-02

Bangladeshi Teen Goes Missing From Quarantine Centre

SRINAGAR: A coronavirus infected girl from Bangladesh has reportedly gone missing from a quarantine centre in south Kashmir's Anantnag district.

18-year-old Chandni, daughter of Muhammad Younis Mian, a Bangladeshi national, went missing from a quarantine centre in Akura, where she was taken by the officials of Child Welfare Committee and she tested positive for the deadly disease, news agency KNT reported Friday.

"We have lodged a missing report at the police station," BMO Mattan, Dr Saleem said.

According to News 18 report, the girl had entered India illegally in March via the Bangladesh border without a visa and passport.

"She was then taken into custody from Anantnag area of P-02

KU To Hold UG First Semester Exams Online

SRINAGAR- The University of Kashmir will conduct the first semester examination of undergraduate courses through online mode in view of the COVID-19 pandemic, a university spokesman said on Friday. A notification to this effect was issued by the Controller of Examination of University of Kashmir on Friday.

In view of the COVID-19 pandemic and the requirement of social distancing thereof, the Vice-Chancellor has been pleased to authorise the conduct of 1st semester examination through online mode strictly as per guidelines notified by the University," the notification reads.

Practical Examination P-02

Swati Joshi

WHEN the Central Water Commission (CWC) informed about the moderate risk of flash floods in some areas of Jammu and Kashmir on August 25, some haunting memories of the devastating fall of 2014 resurfaced on social media in Kashmir.

In the backdrop of the CWC's prediction, many wondered: Is Kashmir staring at another deluge? The forecast came on the eve of the sixth anniversary of the flood that marooned major parts of the valley, and ravaged lives and properties.

"Flash Flood Guidance issued by IMD valid for 6 hours from 0530 hrs on August 25, 2020, in Jammu and

Six Years Later, Flood Concerns Continue Testing Kashmir's Preparedness

Kashmir and Uttarakhand are appended," the CWC tweeted. "Moderate threat over some watersheds and neighborhood areas of Puch, Reasi and Ramban districts of Jammu and Kashmir..."

When flood hit Kashmir on September 6, 2014, thousands of people were left stranded inside their submerged houses. Due to incessant rain and overflowing flood channels, the conditions worsened in the following days.

By September 25 that year, the death toll had reached 285. Even after 10 days of the flood, three major hospitals remained closed, while two of

them partially resumed their services.

The Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) stated that the 2014 floods in Kashmir were caused by "a combination of intense rain, mismanagement, unplanned urbanization and a lack of preparedness".

Overlooked Warning
Six years before that shattering September, a stark warning had come in the form of a study.

Scientists Humayun Rashid and Gowhar Naseem, in their 2008-published paper, had warned that the breakdown of the natural discharge system due to the degradation of the network of lakes could prevent



File Photo of 2014 floods

water from flowing out of the valley.

Though the proof of an upcoming flood was there, no steps were

taken by the government — which was the first entity to disappear in the deluge.

"We completely forgot about floods after 1980," Saleem Beg, convener at Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), said. "That's why nothing much was done to get Kashmir prepared for floods."

And such was the groundwork during the 2014 floods that there were no rescue boats in the initial days, Beg told Kashmir Observer.

Most of the infrastructure in the valley is in a flood-prone area, the INTACH convener continued.

"It's a challenge for every government to remove construction from flood-prone areas but that cannot be a reason for bad disaster man-

agement," he said.

A study done by Hakim Farooq Ahmad, Assistant Professor, Geography & Regional Development, University of Kashmir, clearly maps the flood vulnerability in the valley.

The study claims that 39 percent population, residing in 424 villages of the valley, with 90082 households, covering an area of 64.97% of study area, are vulnerable to low flood hazard.

Similarly, the professor notes, 41 percent population, belonging to 99 villages, with 110060 households, covering an area of 34.66% out of the total area of the study area, is vulnerable to moderate flood hazard in Kashmir.

"And about 20 percent population of 14 villages, with 55952 households, covering an area of only 0.35%, is highly vulnerable P-02

From Front page...

COVID Strikes IPL: CSK Seamer, Multiple Staff Members Test Positive

NEW DELHI: An India T20 specialist is among multiple members of the Chennai Super Kings contingent who have tested positive for COVID-19, forcing the IPL franchise to extend its quarantine period in Dubai and causing upheaval ahead of the event starting September 19.

The franchise is yet to issue a formal statement but a league source told PTI that the number of positive cases could be between 10 and 12.

"Yes, a right-arm medium fast bowler, who has recently played for India in white-ball cricket, along with a few staff members

have tested positive for COVID-19. The number could be as high as 12," the senior IPL source said on conditions of anonymity.

The development has forced the Mahendra Singh Dhoni-led side to extend the quarantine period till September 1.

While there is panic in the BCCI's rank and file after this but it is understood that for the time being, there is no imminent threat to the league, shifted out of India this year due to the pandemic.

The scheduling convention followed in the IPL is two finalists of the previous year playing the

inaugural game which would have been Chennai Super Kings and defending champions Mumbai Indians this season.

However, it's still not clear if CSK would be ready for the September 19 league opener.

The source revealed that all COVID-19 positive results came during day 1, 3 and 6 of testing after the contingent's arrival in Dubai.

"As far as we know, one of the senior-most officials of the CSK management, an official's wife, and at least two members of their social media team are also COVID-19 positive. There are

couple of net bowlers who have also tested positive," he said.

According to the BCCI's Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), all those who test positive are mandated to go through an additional 14-day quarantine.

They can enter the bio-secure bubble only after returning negative in tests to be conducted after the extended isolation.

It is understood that all the members of the jumbo contingent, who tested positive, are "largely asymptomatic".

The biggest challenge will be tracing those who came in contact with these contingent mem-

bers as it is understood that most of them contracted the virus in Chennai, where the team had a short training camp before heading to Dubai.

"If you see, they all had tested negative for COVID during the two RT-PCR tests conducted in Chennai ahead of their departure. Had they been positive, they wouldn't have been able to board the flight in the first place," the league source stated.

It is understood those who have tested negative will be allowed to enter the bio-bubble. However, the IPL source believes that the likelihood of the team's

camp starting on September 1 is slim.

"I don't think they can start the camp from September 1. It will take at least till September 5 before they can even think of resuming the camp," he said.

In the BCCI corridors, there was bewilderment over the team's decision to have a camp in Chennai before boarding the flight to Dubai. Tamil Nadu has recorded more than 4 lakh cases so far.

"CSK practised three days in Chennai out of the five days. Was there any tangible gain achieved from that camp?" a BCCI official

said.

It remains to be seen what protocols will be followed for all those players who will be arriving late after the conclusion of the Caribbean Premier League and the England vs Australia limited-over series.

It couldn't be immediately confirmed whether the BCCI will be coming out with an official release on the issue confirming the name of the player and the staff members.

Earlier, Rajasthan Royals' fielding coach DishantYagnik had returned positive in tests conducted in India.

Cop-Turned Militant, 3 ...

District Police Kulgam.

"Meanwhile on operational grounds he was converted as Constable in Police Department and was adjusted in Police District Awantipora. Later on he was transferred from District Awantipora to District Anantnag, where he took away 4 rifles from the other officials and joined militant outfit," he said.

After joining militancy, Parray, he said got active in the area and distributed the snatched weapons among his close associates. He said that the cop-turned militant was main handler of Al Badr and was involved in recruiting youth into militant ranks.

"Shakoor and Suhail Bhat were also involved in recent abduction and killing of Khanmoh's Panch. They were also involved in abduction of TA soldier namely Shakir Manzoor Wagay resident of Shopian who has been reportedly killed," the police spokesperson said.

He said that keeping in view the prevailing pandemic due to COVID-19 and to ensure the safety of people from inherent risk of contracting the infection, the bodies of the killed militants shall be sent to Handwara for burial purposes after completion of all medico-legal formalities.

"The nearest family members of the killed militants shall be allowed to participate in the last rites at Handwara," the police spokesperson said.

"Incriminating materials including arms & ammunition were recovered from the site of encounter. All the recovered materials have been taken into case records for further investigation and to probe their complicity in other crimes. There was no injury to civilians or loss of property during the said encounter," he added.

He further said that a case under relevant sections of law has been registered in this connection at the Police Station Imam-Sahib and investigation has been initiated.

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

Missing BJP Panch's Body...

by militants claimed to have killed the panchayat member for "anti-movement" activities"

The body of the Panch Nisar Ahmad Bhat of Khanmoh, who went missing on August 19, was found in an orchard in Dangam village of Shopian by locals on Friday morning, officials said. The locals immediately informed the police about the body that was reportedly half-buried.

Bhat had been booked under the controversial Public Safety Act (PSA) in 1995. He had 12 cases registered to his name.

On Tuesday, an unverified audio clip purportedly released by militants had claimed that Bhat was killed for his anti-movement activities. The speaker in the 2:56 minute long audio had also claimed that Bhat has been buried at an unidentified place due to Covid-19 pandemic.

"We've been after him for a long time. Finally, we got him," the speaker says in the audio.

Quoting a police official, a PTI report said that the body was removed to hospital for legal formalities.

He said the deceased man was identified as Nisar Ahmad Bhat (45), a panch affiliated with the BJP, who was reported missing since August 19 by his family at Panthachowk in the city.

Police suspect that Bhat was kidnapped by militants and later killed in Shopian district.

"We are investigating all possible angles," the official added.

Militants have stepped up attacks on BJP workers, including panchs and sarpanchs, killing at least five people affiliated with the party. A Congress sarpanch was also killed in south Kashmir. (With PTI inputs)

Man Tried To Snatch Rifle ...

Tehreen Shabir Dar, a resident of Peerbagh area on the outskirts of the city, was overpowered by Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) head constable Samrinder near Nowhatta chowk when he tried to snatch his service rifle, a police official said.

Dar was later handed over to the local police and booked under relevant sections of the law.

"A police team conducted searches at his residence at Peerbagh but did not find anything incriminating against the youth," the officer said.

The family members of the man alleged that he was mentally unstable but had no evidence to back their claim, the officer said.

During questioning by police on why he tried to snatch the rifle, Dar said, "Allah ka hukam tha (It was an order from Allah)", the officer added.

Hideout Busted In Tral: Police...

During the searches, he said a hideout of JeM was busted and subsequently destroyed.

"The joint team was able to recover incriminating materials from the hide-out. The incriminating material has been taken into Police custody for the purpose of investigation," the police spokesperson said.

He said a case FIR No. 77/2020 under relevant sections of law stands registered at Police Station Tral and investigation into the matter has been initiated.

Police, ACB, AIS Brought...

"public order", "police", "All India Services" and "Anti Corruption Bureau", exercise his executive functions in his discretion under the Act.

The LG, on the advice of the chief minister (when elected), shall allot the business of the government among the ministers by assigning one or more departments to a minister.

The council (of ministers) shall be collectively responsible for all the executive orders issued by any department in the name of the LG and contracts made in the name of the president in connection with the administration of the Union Territory, whether such orders or contracts are authorised by a minister with respect to a matter pertaining to a department under his charge or as a result of discussions at a meeting of the council.

The notification said all communications received from the Centre, including those from the prime minister and other ministers, other than those of a routine or unimportant character, shall, as soon as possible after their receipt, be submitted by the secretary to the chief secretary, the minister in-charge, the chief minister and the LG for information.

Any matter, which is likely to bring the government of the Union Territory into a controversy with the Centre or a state government, shall, as soon as possible, be brought to the notice of the LG and the chief minister by the secretary concerned through the chief secretary.

In case of a difference of opinion between the LG and a minister with regard to any matter, the former shall endeavour by discussion within two weeks from the date of such disagreement to settle any point on which the difference of opinion has arisen.

Should the difference of opinion persist, the LG may direct that the matter be referred to the council, which shall consider it at its next scheduled meeting and convey its decision, but not later than 15 days from the date of such reference.

In case no such decision is received within 15 days from the date of such reference, the LG's decision shall be deemed to have been accepted by the council of ministers.

In case of a difference of opinion between the LG and the council with regard to any matter, the former shall refer it to the Centre for the decision of

the president and shall act according to that decision, the notification said.

Govrenment Scuttles...

Shaheed Gunj, Karanagar, Maisuma, Kothibagh, Shergrahi, Kralkhud and Ram Munshibagh, the officials said.

Shops and other business establishments in the areas, where restrictions are in place, are shut, while public transport is off the roads, they said. However, some private vehicles were seen plying.

The officials said security forces have been deployed in strength in other areas of the Valley to prevent any untoward incident.

The restrictions were imposed to maintain law and order in these areas in view of the eighth day of Muharram, they said.

Prior to 1990, on the 8th day of Muharram, Ashura procession would commence from Shaheed Gunj area, pass through MA Road and later culminate at Imambargah Dalgate. However, during the past 30 years, authorities have not allowed the processions, citing security reasons. For last several years, mourners have been defying the restrictions and tried to carry out the procession. However, police would bundle them into vehicles and release them later.

On Thursday last, the Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Pandurang K Pole said that restrictions shall continue on all religious processions and gatherings in all districts in wake of Covid-19.

He urged the heads of these bodies to use their influence and aware people about the importance of following Covid-19 related SOPs including social distancing protocol and use of face masks while commemorating martyrdom of Imam Hussain AS and other martyrs of Karbala during these days

Dozens Detained As Police...

imposed curbs and tried to take out traditional procession on the eighth day of Islamic month of Muharram in the uptown here.

Despite strict curbs and heavy deployment of CRPF personnel and cops across the city, dozens of mourners appeared near the headquarters of the Fire service department at Batamaloal here and tried to take out traditional Muharram procession to Dalgate, eyewitnesses told Kashmir Observer.

Chanting "Lababi Ya Hussain" "Islam Zindabad", the mourners were intercepted by a posse of policemen.

"The police rounded up several mourners when they offered resistance and tried to march towards Dalgate. The mourners were bundled in police vans and whisked away," Farooq Ahmad, an eyewitness said.

After Batamaloal, eyewitnesses said, a group of youth also appeared near Pratap Park in the city centre and tried to take out the procession. However, the cops immediately swung into action and detained the mourners.

The cops, witnesses said also used pepper gas sprays while detaining the mourners.

A group of mourners were also detained while trying to take out a procession near Kashmir Gold Club along the Maulana Azad Road here.

Meanwhile, Itihad-ul-Muslimeen condemned what it called "brutal" police action on the peaceful mourners here.

In a statement issued to media, an IuM spokesperson said that police and CRPF used force to break-up peaceful Muharram procession in which mourners were following proper SOPs. In the alleged police action, the IuM spokesperson said that dozens of youth were injured and scores detained.

"Even a mini bus carrying women mourners was seized by police. Over 30 women were taken to police station Kothi Bagh and detained there," the spokesperson said.

He said that IuM,President, Maulana Masroor Abbas was put under house arrest ahead of the procession.

Hurriyat Condemns Arrests...

Conference (APHC) led by Mirwaiz Umar Farooq on Friday condemned the use of force on Muharram processions by police in parts of the Valley.

In a statement issued here Friday, an APHC spokesperson condemned tear-gas shelling and aerial firing on a Muharram procession in Budgam, arrests of youth and imposing curbs in parts of Valley, including Srinagar, saying such harsh measures are in clear violation of the worldwide accepted democratic norms and principles.

"The sentiments of people especially youth can never be suppressed by the dint of force," the APHC spokesperson said, while maintaining that the "violation of basic human rights and suppression" of genuine sentiments of Kashmiris continues from the last seven decades.

"This is an eye-opener and a matter of concern for world human rights bodies and the international community," the spokesperson said.

APHC, he said reiterates that it strongly opposes the government's unilateral steps aimed at "usurping" the rights of the people of Jammu & Kashmir.

"Such measures cannot alter the nature, status and significance of the unresolved Kashmir dispute," the spokesperson said.

The pro-freedom conglomerate also demanded unconditional release of not only those arrested recently but also all Hurriyat leaders, political leaders, civil society members and youth detained in homes, police stations, and prisons in J&K and jails across India.

Gangbal Yatra Held Amid...

200 years on June 2009", Pandita said.

The holy mace was taken to Harmukh Gangbal lake shrine and mahayagya of Mata Gangeshori was held amid vedic mantras.

While over 450 people had performed the pilgrimage last year, this time only 12 pilgrims were allowed due to the pandemic.

The pilgrims braved incessant rains, chanting slogan of "Jai Maa Gange and Har Har Mahadev " during the yatra this year.

The HGGT thanked Divisional commissioner Kashmir, IGP Kashmir, Commander Sector 3, DC Ganderbal, Commanding officer 24 RR, SSP Ganderbal for smooth conduct of the yatra.

Kashmir Records 8 More...

facilities for the management of the covid-19 patients. Having underlying ailments, the sexagenarian was admitted to the hospital on August 20, they said.

A 60-year-old woman from Guzarbal Ganderbal died at SKIMS Soura, a week after she was admitted to the hospital.

A 65-year-old man from Tangmarg Baramulla died at SMHS hospital, a day after he was admitted to the hospital with bilateral pneumonia, they said.

A 78-year-old man from Tral Payeen having "sepsis with MODS" died at district hospital Pulwama during last night, the officials said.

Regarding victims from Kulgam, officials said that they included septuagenarians from Panzath and Mandhole areas respectively.

With these deaths, 683 people have fallen victims to the covid-19 and include 57 from Jammu division and remaining 626 from Kashmir Valley. (With GNS inputs)

Baby, 106 Travelers Among...

Union Territory to 35831.

While Kashmir valley reported 494 new cases of coronavirus, the remaining 202 were confirmed by the officials from Jammu division, officials said.

Giving district wise breakup, they said, Srinagar reported 194 cases, Baramulla 40, Pulwama 57, Budgam 59, Anantnag 31, Bandipora 30, Kupwara 25, Kulgam 11, Shopian 9, Ganderbal 38, Jammu 109, Rajouri 8, Kathua 27, Udhampur 23, Samba 9, Ramban 1, Doda 6, Poonch 8, Reasi 5 and Kishtwar 6.

Meanwhile, 651 more COVID-19 patients have recovered and were dis-

charged from various hospitals including 195 from Jammu Division and 456 from Kashmir Valley.

Flood Threat Ebbs As Rain...

downstream adjacent villages are requested to remain alert and cautious," Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal had said in a tweet last night.

Also, water level in Doodhganga Nallah was recorded at 187m at 9 p.m as against 3.69m at 10 p.m. last night. When the level crosses 3.8m at Barzulla Srinagar, the flood is declared in the area, the official sources added.

Meanwhile, the water level increased in Jhelum during the time but the threat of flood remains minimal, the officials said.

They said that the water level in south Kashmir's Sangam gauge was 13.38ft at 9 p.m., 5-ft below the alarm level of 18 feet but almost 8 feet below the danger mark of 21 feet.

At Ram Munshi Bagh in Srinagar, it was at 16.11 feet against the alarm level of 16 feet and flood level of 18 feet, they said.

The state's summer capital Srinagar, which was devastated by floods in September in 2014, along with other parts of the valley received plenty of rainfall in last two days.

According to the officials, the rain recorded during last 24 hour at Automatic Rain Gauge Stations includes 22.0mmat Khudwani, 9.0mm at Batkoot, 23.0mm at Sangam, 31.5mm at R.M.Bagh and 40mm at Asham and 36.5mm at Ganderbal. (GNS)

Admin Asks People Not...

in River Jhelum and its tributaries has increased," the Chief engineer Iftikar Ahmad Kakroo said.

"At Sangam the level is now reducing and at present is 15.95 ft. against the danger level of 21 ft. The gauge level at Ram Munshibagh is presently 15.77 ft. against the danger level of 18 ft," he said, adding, "The level of Ram Munshibagh, Srinagar is likely to increase as peak discharge from South Kashmir will reach Srinagar and move further towards north."

The Chief engineer said that the weather forecast is favourable and the levels are expected to reduce, he said as per a communication.

"People are requested not to panic but remain alert and vigilant," he said, adding, "In case of any emergency they are requested to contact Irrigation and Flood Control Department and District Administration of respective Districts."

LG Sinha Tours City,...

arise out of torrential rains.

Sinha was accompanied by his advisor Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar, chief secretary B V R Subrahmanyam, Divisional Commissioner Pandurang K Pole and other officials from police and civil administration, an official spokesperson said.

During his tour, the LG visited Zero Bridge, Munshi Bagh gauge, flood control rooms of irrigation and flood control near wooden bridge, emergency operation centre at Hari Niwas and took a first-hand appraisal of the situation, he said.

Sinha was briefed about the situation and the various measures, including the technological interventions deployed by the department to mitigate any eventuality.

Srinagar has been witnessing torrential rains over the past few days.

While taking stock of the Jhelum flood mitigation under the Prime Minister's Development Package (PMDP), he was informed that under the Phase-I of the plan, the carrying capacity of the Jhelum river at Sangam has been increased from 31,800 cusecs to 41,000 cusecs.

Under the PMDP's Phase-II of the plan, this capacity will be enhanced from 41,000 cusecs to 60,000 cusecs, Sinha was informed.

He directed for expediting the process of planning and executing the work under the PMDP and asked the chief secretary to initiate immediate assessment of the damages caused due to the recent torrential rains in both Jammu and Kashmir divisions by taking a sympathetic view of the overall situation.

Later, LG Sinha paid a surprise visit to the Civil Secretariat here and inspected various administrative sections, an official spokesperson said.

He said during the surprise visit in the early hours of the day, the LG went from door-to-door and inspected various sections and complexes of the Civil Secretariat - the seat of the government - and took stock of the working in the offices of various departments.

Principal Secretary to the Lieutenant Governor, Bipul Pathak and senior civil and police officers accompanied Sinha, he said.

Taking serious note of the absence of officers, the LG observed that the Union Territory government is committed towards effective delivery of public services with a special focus on improving service delivery mechanism and timely disposal of public grievances and such unprofessional attitude will not be tolerated, the spokesperson said.

The LG asked the officers and staff working there to adopt a professional work culture while giving much importance to the punctuality, he added.

Bangladeshi Teen Goes...

south Kashmir. She was handed over to the Child Welfare Committee as per law," the report says.

The report quoted Tawheeda Makhdoomi, chairperson of the Child Welfare Committee in Anantnag as saying that the disappearance could be a conspiracy.

"He said the committee had been taking care of her since March and no family member had inquired about her," the report said.

KU To Hold UG First Semester ...

in this regard shall also be conducted strictly as per the guidelines notified by the Assistant Registrar Academic, it added.

The decision to hold online examinations comes amid ranging controversy on the conduct of NEET and JEE examinations through physical presence of the candidates next month.

Six Years Later, Flood...

to flood hazard," Prof Ahmad says. Groundwork after 2014

Soon after the 2014 floods, New Delhi created an emergency project with the assistance of World Bank called Jhelum Tawi Flood Recovery Project (JTFRP).

The project focuses on "restoring critical infrastructure using international best practices on resilient infrastructure".

Since Kashmir region is prone to both floods and earthquakes, JTFRF designs infrastructure with upgraded resilient features, and includes "contingency planning" for future disaster events.

Under JTFRP, the Multi-Hazard Risk Assessment Project (MHRA) for the entire erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir was given to RMSI, a GIS consulting company providing geospatial technology solutions.

The MHRA study is done with the aim to create disaster risk maps and associated outputs that will assist the J&K administration in building better and incorporating global frameworks.

According to Pushpender Johari, the team leader of MHRA, the assessment will be completed next year. The outcome will be used to develop a GIS-based Digital Risk Database (DRDB) and an Integrated Operational Forecasting System (IOFS), he informed.

"The RMSI team is testing DRDB and IOFS and plans to complete the full implementation by 2021," Johari told Kashmir Observer. "The DRDB and

IOFS will help to give warning to people ahead of the flood."

The study will inform people about the increase in water level and the potential bridges that may get impacted, the project leader continued. "This will help in timely rescue and management."

On being asked about the development of haphazard infrastructure in Kashmir, Johari said that many buildings in the valley are in flood-prone area especially the old constructions in Srinagar.

"Last time also it was the low-lying areas that were the most affected," he said.

'Situation Under Control'

Even as the CWC warning has renewed flood concerns in the valley, If-tikhar Kakroo, Chief Engineer of the Irrigation and Flood Control (IFC) Department, said that the situation is under control.

Notably, a flood is declared when the gauge reading at Sangam area in South Kashmir reaches 21.

All the officials, Kakroo said, have been asked to report the 'mitigation process' duty. "The officials are on 24x7 duty, and depending on their roles, they are assigned different tasks."

The officials monitor the embankments to check if there is any threat of inundation that requires corrective action, the chief engineer told Kashmir Observer.

"Material required for strengthening embankment and plugging breach, like sand-filled bags and other machinery, is available with the department."

Besides, he said, shelters are already identified by the district administration in wake of any contingency.

"To keep a track of the water levels and the amount of precipitation, automatic gauges are used by the department," Kakroo said. "Everything is online and most of our sites are unmanned."

But despite the IFC chief's assurances, the common refrain in Kashmir remains that the official flood response is driven by the desperate times, desperate measures motto.

"After two-days of rainfall swelled Jhelum and created fresh flood concerns in the valley, the IFC is at its usual job again: Issuing gauge level updates," said Syed Beenish, a Srinagar-based lawyer.

"It would've been far better for the IFC and its allied departments to work throughout to, at least, save the tormented Kashmiris from this regular mental pestering called flood anxiety."

J&K's Covid-19 Combat...

to COVID pandemic with all the district teams and tertiary care hospitals.

While briefing the Lt Governor about the assessment they made on the ground, the two-member team lauded the UT government's COVID containment and mitigation measures that are in place and suggested supplementary measures to further augment the same.

They appreciated the J&K government's testing strategy, mandatory traveller screening, and homecare model for positive asymptomatic patients, the spokesman said.

Testing strategy across the UT is aggressive and robust and it has helped in containing the spread of the disease, the team said.

The spokesman said the central team acknowledged that J&K has a vigorous three dimensional COVID containment strategy that is primary preventive, containment, and surveillance to arrest the spread and management for reducing the mortality rate, which is playing an important role in effectively dealing with the COVID pandemic.

In view of the impending winter season and sudden spike of positive cases in some districts of J&K, the team suggested a host of immediate measures including establishing 24x7 COVID counselling call centres at divisional levels with technical teams, strengthening the contact tracing mechanism with all contacts to be home quarantined until they test negative, micro-containment plan in cities with 100 per cent testing of all inhabitants with strict perimeter control and to strengthen the referral system from peripheral hospitals to tertiary care hospitals.

They also suggested involvement of panchayati raj institutions (PRIs) in rural areas for COVID control efforts, continuing the high testing trend and build on same and increasing high flow nasal cannula (HFNC) inventory and keeping sufficient stock in stores, the spokesman said.

The LG observed that all the important suggestions and recommendations made by the central team will play an important role in comprehensive and effective management of the COVID-19 situation in J&K, he said.

The LG called for heightened awareness to keep the infection low and immediate capacity augmentation, besides utilisation of every available resource to arrest the mortality rate, the spokesman said.

Sinha asked the health functionaries to formulate comprehensive future management and containment strategy of COVID-19 pandemic in the UT and stressed on carrying out intensive surveillance and testing, particularly in red zones and inviting renewed participation of PRIs, religious leaders and other distinguished personalities to spread awareness.

The spokesman said Sinha called for sustained efforts from all the stakeholders for effectively combating the spread of COVID-19 and maintained that strict compliance of all healthcare protocols and SOPs notified by the central and the UT government must be ensured to mitigate the threat of the deadly virus.

The Lt Governor laid special emphasis on ensuring 100 per cent coverage of AarogyaSetu app and asked for its integration with ITHAS system, to improve contact tracing and surveillance of positive cases and its geo-mapping must be done to predict hotspots, the spokesman said.

He said the LG also gave directions for putting in place a robust mechanism and taking all requisite measures to ensure the safety of frontline COVID warriors including doctors, paramedics, medical professionals and security forces who are also at high risk of catching the infection.

Various valuable suggestions were made during the meeting including setting up 24x7 tele-medicine/e-support centres for providing support of senior doctors, clinicians and community medicine professionals to the frontline medical professional working on ground, a similar e-support system of medical professionals and psychologists for home care patients to avoid any mental and psychological fatigue to overcome the disease, improving the ambulance response time for its immediate availability in rural and urban areas, the spokesman said.

He said the team also suggested for evolving scientific learning community, wherein each medical college including SKIMS can provide necessary scientific handholding to a minimum of three districts with regular update of scientific information that would also prove to be helpful in mortality management.

For rural areas, suggestions were made for devising an institutionalised mechanism like village monitoring committees including PRIs, anganwadi workers and others for tracking incoming travellers and positive cases. Strengthening of IEC measures and revamping ICUs and utilisation of the available resources to their full capacity was also suggested, the spokesman said.

11 Shops Gutted In Kupwara...

tailoring and others. They alleged that the fire tenders failed to reach the spot on time, thus causing more damage to the shops.

Demanding a Fire and Emergency Services station in the locality, the locals said that not only today but the entire hamlet has suffered huge losses in the tragic fire incidents in past too but the administration never paid heed to the repeated requests.

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NO HOLDS BARRED



Several years ago, some intellectuals from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal predicted South Asia would again look like what it was before the partition. They proposed a confederation comprising Bangladesh, India and Pakistan

The Red Tsar on the Fate of India, Pakistan – and Kashmir

Stalin asked whether Delhi had considered the possibility of some kind of federation between India and Pakistan. “That would be the ideal solution,” the pope of dialectical materialism observed

B. Z. KHASRU

Just three weeks before Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin died, India's ambassador to Moscow, K. P. S. Menon, received a much sought-after invitation to meet him at the Kremlin. The reclusive communist leader rarely granted such an interview. During the previous five years, he bestowed this honor upon only three other diplomats.

The Soviet foreign office, which called Menon to convey the invite on 17 February 1953, took the license plate number of his car and the name of his driver. It advised the ambassador to report to the gate of the fortified complex in the center of Moscow at 7:45 pm for the 8 o'clock meeting the next day.

The topics they discussed during the interview — India-Pakistan relations and Kashmir, among other issues — still reverberate seven decades later in South Asia and beyond. These vexing issues take an added dimension now, given the precarious state of affairs in Kashmir as well as highly strained Indo-Pak relations since Prime Minister Narendra Modi revoked the state's long-held constitutional autonomy a year ago.

After some small talks, which included a discussion on Indian languages, Stalin and Menon briefly discussed India's ties with China, Japan and Korea. Menon also briefed the Red Tsar on Delhi's role in the Korean War and at the United Nations.

How strong is India's army?

Stalin then asked whether India had a sufficiently large army. When Menon replied that India's army was to defend itself, not to attack another country, Stalin asked: “But is your army capable of defending India?”

Menon said India's army was well-trained, but its air force and navy were in infancy.

Stalin's next asked about India's relations with Pakistan, a topic he discussed once with Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan three years ago when he was India's ambassador to Moscow.

Menon said “Kashmir continued to be a stumbling block in the establishment of friendly relations.”

Stalin made no comment, but asked whether Delhi had considered the possibility of some kind of federation between India and Pakistan. “That would be the ideal solution,” the pope of dialectical materialism observed.

Menon replied that this would take time, given the Hindu-Muslim bitterness generated in the last days of the British Raj.

“How primitive it is,” Stalin interjected, “to create a state on the basis of religion!”

How Indian Muslims should feel

Menon referred to Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's view of a secular India. By upholding this view, he continued, India had been trying to make the Muslims “feel that they were Indians in every respect.”

“Of course they are Indians,” said Stalin, “and your policy is just the right one.”

Both Stalin and Menon are gone, and seven decades have passed since they met. But India and Pakistan are still at loggerheads, Kashmir resembles occupied Bangladesh of 1971, and India's Muslims are now scared like never before. India today is in the grip of a chauvinistic cult that abhors secularism, promotes ultranationalism and dreams of a Hindudom in South Asia.

The federation idea dates back to the British time, but has not gained much traction. Some people see the solution to the state's problem in an economic miracle. One idea was to push for a joint Indo-Pak investment plan that would generate a 9.5 percent growth rate a year, making Kashmir as rich as China in 20 years.

Several years ago, some intellectuals from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal predicted South Asia would again look like what it was before the partition. They proposed a confederation comprising Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. One of them also suggested that India and Pakistan form an interim administration to run the disputed territory and later find a negotiated permanent settlement.

Musharraf plan still viable

The most promising formula to resolve the Kashmir crisis — and thus defuse the India-Pakistan conflict — came to nought after President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan was pushed out of power in 2008. Musharraf and Manmohan Singh, then prime minister of India, secretly worked out a blueprint that would grant Kashmir full internal autonomy and allow the Kashmiris to move freely across the India-Pakistan border, pending a final agreement down the road. Musharraf's sudden downfall sent the plan into cold storage, but it still remains a viable option.

Unfortunately, instead of picking up from where Singh left off, Modi has backpedaled into the dark alley of ultra-nationalism. His misguided policies have provoked sharp backlashes at home and abroad and riled up all of India's neighbors, even the friendliest one, Bangladesh. This is the kind of retarded thinking that has cost India its rightful spot on the global stage and held it back from reaching its economic potential.

For the past 70 years, Indian leaders have misread the writing on the wall that India's nirvana lies neither in crippling Pakistan nor in condemning the Kashmiris to an open-air prison, but in the nation's

emergence as an economic superpower. After China humiliated India in the 1962 war, Nehru recognized it, but his socialist economic formula retarded growth. He shunned foreign capital because he wanted India to walk “with its head held high, not bowing to anyone.” This posture yielded less than desired results.

By giving its people a world-class living standard, Delhi can entice Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Nepalese and Bhutanese to join India if it holds the promise of a better life for them. Mexicans dig tunnels to enter the United States; Africans and Asians risk their lives to cross the Mediterranean for Europe's greener pasture.

Poor economy India's real problem

If the Indians were as rich as Americans or Europeans, the Pakistanis would wonder whether they are better off in a dirt-poor separate nation or in a wealthy India. Sadly, the land of 1.4 billion Indians ranked 102nd among 117 countries in the Global Hunger Index in 2019, behind Nepal, North Korea and even Pakistan. Sure, man does not live by bread alone and everyone cherishes freedom. But in a world of hunger, freedom sounds hollow. Time and again, nation after nation has shown money is god. It's high time the Indians start to worship the rupee rather than the cow.

No, Modi's re-election last year is no proof that Indra has won. In the grand scheme of things, Lakshmi will prevail. As America has discovered, it's the economy, stupid! In 2012, only 5 percent of Puerto Ricans voted in a nonbinding referendum to create a free nation, while a whopping 61 percent preferred to be America's 51st state. Quebec rejected twice the idea of a French-speaking country; Quebecers prefer Canada's economic largesse to independence.

In contrast, economic deprivation galvanized Bengalis to form Bangladesh and the South Sudanese to secede from Khartoum. The Tamils Tigers fought for 26 years against Sri Lanka precisely for the same reason.

Would the Soviet Union have splintered if it were an economic powerhouse? Possibly not. Yugoslavia fell apart only after running into a serious economic hardship and its most advanced region — Slovenia — refused to carry the burden of its poorer siblings. The Sikh separatists felt the same when they waged a violent campaign to create Khalistan.

India has suffered because of its messed-up policies. Unlike many other newly developed nations, such as South Korea, Chile and China, India lacked the resolve to be rich. As KanwalRekhi, a highly successful Indian-American entrepreneur in Silicon Valley, put it, “India is poor because it is fixated on poverty.” Until and unless a nation charts the right course of action, it will not reach the promised land.

India must look beyond Pakistan

The Indians don't compare themselves against the Europeans or the Americans; they use the hapless Pakistanis as their measuring stick and naively self-congratulate themselves for their shallow achievement. This perverse thinking has led India to take its eyes off the prize. Since independence, Delhi has been obsessed with Pakistan, a disoriented nation that is just one-fourth of India in land, people and natural resources. As a result, India today finds itself dwarfed by its real rival, China.

In 1960, China and India had the same per capita income of \$80. Today an Indian earns only 25 percent of what a Chinese makes. China's military budget is four times larger than India's. China today outguns India in all things defense. India can't even make enough arms to defend itself, despite having immense human talents and natural resources.

On the international stage, India is nowhere near China. The entire African continent worships the renminbi. In Latin America, China's trade totals \$315 billion, compared with India's \$31 billion. To an average Greek, India is a land where people wear colorful dress, eat spicy food and men dance in movies. So much for the reputation of the nation with a 5,000-year heritage! Even in India's backyard, Beijing has made spectacular inroads into Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal.

Because of India's dismal failure to offer the economic carrot, Kashmir takes matters into its own hands. The fact that India's smaller siblings have done well encourages the Kashmiris to strike out on their own. Bangladesh's per capita income has risen sixfold since 2002 to \$1,855, compared with India's fivefold to \$2,108, despite Bangladesh being a resource-poor country. If Bangladesh can prosper, why not Kashmir?

Kashmir, unfortunately, is in an inclement climate today, thanks to harsh geopolitical realities. So its fate will take unpredictable twists and turns. Nonetheless, if India ever faces cataclysmic headwinds, it will not be because of its laxity to brainwash its citizens into super-patriotism, but because of its foul-ups in responding to its people's dream to live in a prosperous motherland. The history of the Soviet Union is highly instructive.

B. Z. Khasru is author of “Bangladesh Liberation War, How India, U.S., China and the USSR Shaped the Outcome.” His new book, “One Eleven Minus Two, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's War on Yunus an America,” will be published shortly by Rupa & Co., New Delhi.

Are Women Leaders Better For The World?

In the on-going Covid crisis, the response by global women leaders has been more robust, pragmatic and effective as compared to men in leadership positions

Asad Mirza

The ongoing Covid pandemic has shown that the countries that are led by women leaders at the national level have coped better with the crisis. These countries also suffered half as many deaths as were averaged by countries led by men.

The success of Germany's Angela Merkel, New Zealand's JacindaArdern, Denmark's Mette Frederiksen, Taiwan's Tsai Ingwen and Finland's Sanna Marin attracted many headlines and comparative analysis has proven that the women leaders fared much better than their male counterparts.

Role of women leaders

A report published by the Centre for Economic Policy Research and the World Economic Forum based on the steps taken by leaders of 194 countries, concludes that the difference is real and “may be explained by the proactive and coordinated policy responses” adopted by female leaders.

SupriyaGarikipati, a developmental economist at Liverpool University and Uma Kambhampati of Reading University, the authors of the report, while speaking to The Guardian said, “Our results clearly indicate that women leaders reacted more quickly and decisively in the face of potential fatalities.”

They further said, “In all cases, they locked down earlier. While this may have longer-term economic implications, it has certainly helped these countries to save lives, as evidenced by the significantly lower number of deaths in these countries.”

Policy and strategy responses besides the number of Covid-19 cases and deaths until 19th May were taken into account to analyse the results along with other variables and reliable comparisons between different countries.

GDP, total population, population density and proportion of elderly residents, annual health spending per head, openness to international travel and level of gender equality in society in general, were

the different variables taken into account.

Global women leaders of the past

Till November 2019, 89 women leaders have graced the office of the prime minister or president in different countries around the world.

The first woman to be democratically elected as prime minister of a country was Sirimavo Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka, when she led her party to victory at the 1960 general elections and chartered a new path for asserting the Sinhala sentiment in the Sri

The success of Germany's Angela Merkel, New Zealand's JacindaArdern, Denmark's Mette Frederiksen, Taiwan's Tsai Ingwen and Finland's Sanna Marin attracted many headlines and comparative analysis has proven that the women leaders fared much better than their male counterparts.

Lankan politics.

The first woman to serve as president of a country was Isabel Martinez de Perón of Argentina, who as vice-president succeeded to the presidency in 1974. The first elected woman president of a country was VigdísFinnbogadóttir of Iceland in 1980.

Included in the list is also Golda Meir, who was the fourth prime minister of Israel. The world's fourth and Israel's first and only woman to hold the office of

prime minister, she was described as the “Iron Lady” of Israeli politics; the term which was later applied to British prime minister Margaret Thatcher and Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi, also. Former Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion used to call Meir, “the best man in the government.”

Then we have, Margaret Thatcher, the first woman to become prime minister of the UK. Her policies were referred to as “Thatcherism” and she was given the sobriquet, “Iron Lady”, due to her uncompromising politics and leadership style. She led Britain to

victory in the Falklands War and single-handedly broke the miners strike in 1984-85.

In Asia, we have many women leaders of tall stature, such as, Chandrika Kumaratunga, daughter of SrimavoBandaranaike, who graced the office as Sri Lanka's first female President. She was able to handle the Tamil-issue in the island nation to a peaceful end after many setbacks.

In India, we had Indira Gandhi, who became the

longest serving prime minister of the country. She led the country to a decisive victory in 1972 against Pakistan and was instrumental in the creation of Bangladesh. Gandhi remained a staunch supporter of the Palestinians in the Arab-Israeli conflict and was critical of the Middle East diplomacy sponsored by the United States. In 1999, BBC named her as the “Woman of the Millennium” in an online poll. Time magazine also named her among world's 100 powerful women who defined the last century.

Then we have Benazir Bhutto, who graced the office of country's prime minister ship, twice, in Pakistan. Ideologically a liberal and a secularist, she chaired or co-chaired the Pakistan Peoples Party from the early 1980s until her assassination in 2007.

Then we have two warring ladies of Bangladesh, Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina, both of whom served or are serving as the prime minister of the country. Forbes magazine ranked Khaleda at number 33 in the list of 100 Most Powerful Women in the World. On the other hand, Sheikh Hasina was included in the list of

“Top 100 Global Thinkers” of the present decade. Currently, she is a member of the Council of Women World Leaders, an international network of current and former female presidents and prime ministers.

So why are women leaders more successful?

So what are the reasons, which could be contributed to the success of these women leaders taking better decisions to handle the welfare of their citizens? Can we count pragmatism, more rationality and the women touch to be the pulse of their actions? Perhaps more research will shed more light on the attributable factors, but historically too, we can say that these women leaders took their countries to newer heights due to their grit, dedication and the will to survive in a man's world. Hats off to women power.

Asad Mirza is a Sr journalist and commentator based in New Delhi

My Muharram Lamentation

Obaid Zia

I am a Sunni. My family is Sunni. We love Abu Bakr, Uthman, Umar, Ali. We believe in their Rightly Guided Caliphates. The Commanders of the Faithful. We believe in Aisha as a wife of the Prophet and a role model. A Mother of the Faithful. This is our belief. We are not Shia.

As part of being Muslim, we love the Prophet and love all that which he loves. For what is beloved to the Prophet is beloved to God. This includes love of the people he loved. The Prophet loved his wives, his friends, his companions, and his family. We wish peace upon the Prophet and his family in every Salaat, just like every other Muslim in the world does without regard to madhab.

Of the Prophet's family, there exist two names shadowed in an eternal passion, kept alive by billions of lovers for over a millennium. The beloved sons of Fatima az-Zahra, daughter of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), and her husband Ali ibnAbiTalib: Hasan (as) and Hussain (as). The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) confided with humanity that indeed his favorite two children in all of creation would be the leaders of the youth of Paradise. The two sons of the House of the Prophet would grow up to be great leaders, as prophesized by the Holy Messenger, and find themselves murdered by their grandfather's followers for their sacred ancestry.

Why is it that, growing up, the names Hasan (as) and Hussain (as) brought the images of children to my mind? Why is it that I, and many other youth in America, are not taught much about Hasan (as) and Hussain (as) when they grow up? All that most know about them is that the Prophet loved and kissed them and that they would bring him his blessed slippers. That's it. They're our role models to be the perfect children. We, as Sunnis, have forgotten that they're really models through our death and afterlife.

We never learn that Hasan (as) and Hussain (as) grow up to be Imam Hasan (as) and Imam Hussain (as). We don't learn of the prophecy of Imam Hasan (as) being a great sayyid through whose hands Allah shall bring peace between two parties. We don't learn about him succeeding his father as the entitled fifth Rightly Guided Caliph, a rank we are taught is posthumously bestowed upon Umar ibnAbd al-Aziz. We aren't taught that he gave up his right to the caliphate to fulfill that very Muhammadan Prophecy. We never learn that Hasan (as) and Hussain (as) grow up.

We never learn about the murder of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) grandsons at the hands of his Ummah. We never learn about the betrayal from a son of BaniUmmayah. We never learn about the theft of khilafat from the righteous. We never learn about Muawiyah's warning his son to not meet God with his Imam Hussain's blood. We never learn about the gross disobedience to his father, his soul's nature, his sense of inhumanity, to the Prophet he claimed to love?

We feel from our parents and elders that Muharram is sacred for reasons other than literal translation, but don't know why. We get lost in confusing debates about not marrying during Muharram. Elders argue over engagements being jaaz before and/or after 10th Muharram. We get even more confused when an aunty says marriages shouldn't be held until Rabi al-Awwal. Why does it matter? We ask. We aren't Shia, we iterate. Few parents are willing to explain. Maybe the pain of which there is to speak is too deep. Maybe they've become confused, in the melting pot that is Muslim America, on the validity of their beliefs. However, I'm not writing this to criticize the pseudo-salafi influence in America throwing off 1400 years of orthodox Sunni scholarship. I'm writing this because I was (and still am, obviously) a confused Sunni youth in America wondering why the hadith and scholarly quotes about the Ahl al-Bayt are an open secret, why the poems of Imam Shafi are hidden, why our elders and teachers are content in letting an entire generation grow up without knowing that Islam could have died barely 60 years in. How can an imam talk about the erroneous fitnah of women when we don't even know about the fitnah that almost killed the religion of our beloved Prophet?

We, as a generation and a new culture are confused because we don't know about Karbala.

I educated myself. I read about the Ahl al-Bayt. I read about Orthodox Sunnism. I picked up where the Sunday school textbooks left off. I read about what our Shia brothers believe about the Battle of Karbala. I read about what the Orthodox Sunni scholars say about it. I read the accounts. I feel the shared pain between the Ilinesan ancient remorse, the feeling of



shame. When you realize the scholars who speak about Hussain (as) are the scholars that are here to be the heirs of the Prophets, you see how much we share across these sects. You see how sects become madhabs. We aren't united by the shahadah. We aren't united by love of a single God. We aren't united by love for the Prophet. We are united by all that and the love of the Ahl al-Bayt. In Muharram, we share the deep grief for the events at Karbala. When you see what both traditions of scholars, Shia and Orthodox Sunni, say about the emotions of Muharram, you see why we are brothers.

We are brothers because when a tyrant stole the caliphate of the Muslim Ummah and abused it, Imam Hussain (as) stood up for you and me and the nation his grandfather built with his blood, sweat, and many tears. He marched himself to his death for the sake of survival. On that day in Karbala, he was undoubtedly on the side of Islam, the side of his father, the side of his grandfather, the side of righteousness and truth.

Imam Hussain (as) came to the battlefield not as a Shia to fight Sunnis, or a Sunni to fight Shias. He was there as the inheritor and rightful successor of his grandfather to continue the Prophetic crusade against injustice and darkness. It wasn't Sunni succession vs. Shia succession. The knowledgeable of the Ummah had already designated Imam Hasan (as) and Imam Hussain (as) as caliphs. No. That day in Karbala, the battlefield was Haq vs. Kufr.

Bloodshed was to ensue. Brother slaughtered brother. Imam Hussain (as) came with a message of diplomacy, of amnesty, of civility. He was faced with an army who claimed to be from the Ummah of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). They were a people who claimed to pray and fast. An army who venerated the grandfather of the man they were ordered to murder, an army who claimed to love God and His messenger as the ultimate reality.

An army who claimed to be on the path of Islam, an army who claimed to love the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), was about to slaughter his holy family before leaving their dead bodies to rot for three days. They took the words of the kalima, chewed them up, spat them out, and trampled them with their horses. When Sayyidina Abu Bakr would rather do good to the family of the Prophet rather than to his own family, the army at Karbala didn't even spare thirsty infant Ali al-Asghar crying in the arms of Imam Hussain (as). They couldn't spare a drop of water for the progeny of the Prophet they claimed to love. Their hearts had already traded God for the pleasures of this world. Words cannot describe the revolting lapse of conscience, of taqwa, of basic humanity, that the murderers of the Prophet's household had on that day.

The story ends with SayyidShabab al-Jannah, the Leader of the Youth in Paradise, the Prince of the Prophet's household, becoming the final

casualty. Having watched all 72 of his followers and most of his family slaughtered, beheaded, and disfigured, he charged into the army of thousands, fighting valiantly despite his severe wounds. After the final blow to the Prince of the Martyrs, his head was cut off, and placed on a silver platter to be presented to the general of the army, who started playing with a stick at the nose and mouth of Al-Hussain's head and saying something about his handsome features. The army, who claimed to be Muslims, would then place the heads of their victims and Imam Hussain (as) on the tips of spears and march 600 miles to Yazid championing their victory.

If only this was the whole story, yet this much is enough to make anyone's skin crawl. Such injustice was done. If Hussain (as) had remained quiet and relented to Yazid, he and his family members would have lived. However, Yazid's men would still have been evil. They would've gutted Islam of anything good or Prophetic, and left it a shell of empty words, of sin, of corruption, of evil. If it weren't for Imam Hussain's sacrifice, Islam would have died. The legacy of Hussain's (as) selfless sacrifice lived on in the community of the Muslims under unjust rulers. The light of his fight for truth lived on in the minds of the believers, ready to reclaim the religion of the Holy Prophet whenever opportunity presented. Imam Hussain (as) inspired the spirit of reality in the darkness. Yazid had Imam Hussain (as) killed, Yazid won, but Yazid still died three years later, and today he's nothing but dust in the desert, while Hussain (as) lives on in the hearts of billions. While Yazid won the battle, Hussain (as) continues to win the war hundreds of years later. His death in righteousness lit the fire of truth until the truth of the battle could prevail, and continues to inspire truth in the face of injustice today.

How could I ignore the sacrifices of the Prophet's family? How could I not grieve and mourn when recounted the atrocities at Karbala? How could I ignore the suffering of Imam Hussain (as), when he watched all those he loved in the world beaten, abused, slaughtered, beheaded, and molested in front of his eyes? When Imam Hussain (as) gave up his whole world, was stabbed 33 times by spears, struck 34 times by swords, hit over 100 times by arrows, only to weep and say I only wish for Allah to shower them with forgiveness, how can I say that remembering his suffering is a sin?

I am a Sunni, and I mourn in Muharram. I mourn in my own way, and always look to do better in honoring our Imam, but for at least the first ten days of every year, I remind myself of Imam Hussain (as). Mourning is not exclusive to our Shia brothers, and we shouldn't let that cross our minds. Imam Hussain (as) died so that all of us could be Muslim. His death enabled us all to seek the pleasure of God and the Righteous, and not this world. The family and lovers of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) faced such inhumanity from people who also claimed to love the Prophet; people who supposedly read salawat on them during every salaah. It should not be forgotten. It should always be remembered, and if you don't even shed a tear, if you don't start grieving just at the thought of the injustice, then you aren't remembering like you should. When you don't remember, when you don't feel emotion, for the events of Karbala, when you've let the sacrifice be forgotten, you've accepted Yazid's victory.

I'm a Sunni, and my heart grieves, because Sunnis do grieve for Hussain (as). We weep for Hussain (as). We have for 1400 years, just like Shias. Because Karbala wasn't a sacrifice for Shias, it wasn't even a sacrifice for all Muslims. It was a sacrifice for humanity.

*Shah astHussain (as), BadshahastHussain (as)
DeenastHussain (as), DeenPanahastHussain (as)
Sardadna dad dast, dardast-e-yazeed,
Haqaa key binaey La ilaastHussain (as)
King is Hussain (as), Emperor is Hussain (as).
Faith is Hussain (as); the Defender of Faith is Hussain (as).
His head he gave, not his hand, to Yazid.*

The reality is that the foundation of La ilahaila Allah is Hussain (as).
KhuajaGhareeb Nawaz MoinudinChisti (R)

Peace and blessings be upon the Prophet Muhammad, his family, his companions, and his wives.

*Author has studied Pharmacy at St. John's University in New York
says y'all a lot and wants to be a successful poet and pharmacist but
will probably end up writing gratuitous stanzas on the back of patients' prescription bags for the rest of his life.*

Review

‘Kashmiriyat’ | ‘A Brutal Exploitation of Artistic License’

Asif Khan, Arbeena Shah

Hindi film industry sees Kashmiris as a flock of sheep and takes them wherever they want. They hardly give Kashmiris a space in their films and represent them as robots controlled by the other side, without having a voice of their own.

KASHMIR is all heart whenever Bollywood has approached and tried to prey upon the picturesque valley. It persecutes the inhabitants and distorts the vox populi of the region. There're a plethora of kindred Hindi movies obsessed with inflicting pain and suffering on Kashmiris. And the torment has continued ever since the dawn of Bollywood.

Hindi film industry sees Kashmiris as a flock of sheep and takes them wherever they want. They hardly give Kashmiris a space in their films and represent them as robots controlled by the other side, without having a voice of their own.

The filmmakers hardly think of repercussions their ruthless portrayal can have.

Lately, senior Bollywood actress Sony Razdan, who earlier acted in a movie Raazi (2018), which was again grossly engaged in distorting the image of Kashmir, said in one of her interviews with Kashmir Observer that, "Kashmir has been grossly underrepresented or misrepresented a lot of the times in Bollywood." But who knows that Bollywood may soon open its eye towards Kashmir and incorporate their narrative as well.

But that day seems quite far as of now, as digital theatres witness back to back explosive patriotic releases misrepresenting Kashmir.

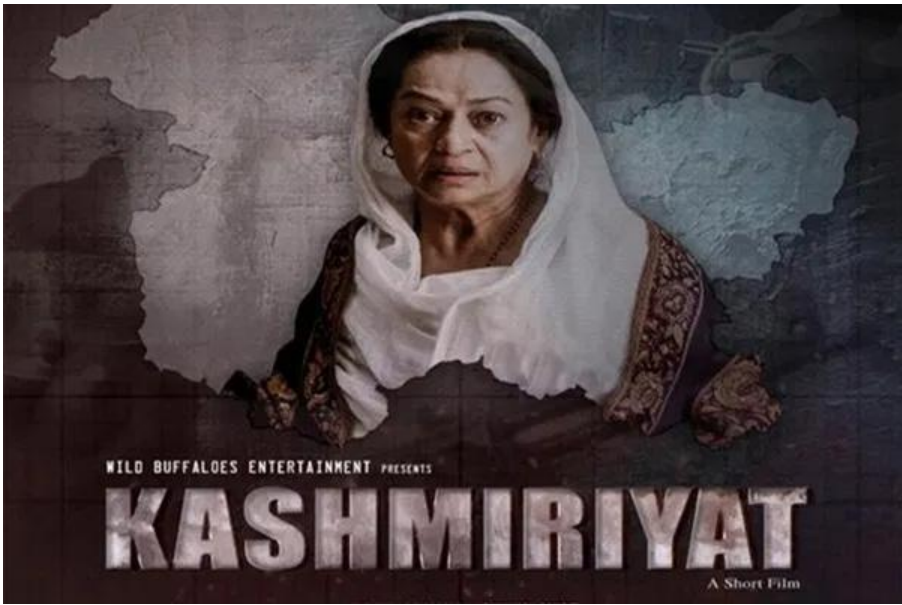
Though all such movies may well be driven by the same source of inspiration of reinforcing the existing stereotypes and stigmas attached to Kashmiris, audiences turned cheerleaders seem to be rejuvenating them.

It may be because of the frenzy spell of hyper-nationalism that such stuff is being blindly liked and shared.

The case with the latest short film 'Kashmiriyat,' revolving around Kashmir which is written and directed by young Divyansh Pandit is no different.

He is also the founder of the Wild Buffaloes Entertainment production under whose banner this 26 minute and 14 seconds short movie got released on August 12, 2020.

Pandit has also assisted with the award winning director Raj Kumar Santoshi in the film Phata Poster Nikla Hero besides directing two travel shows and more than 20 short films.



The story of the short film records a young boy Liyakat played by Naveen Pandita led astray by the country across the border via its present element in Kashmir in face of Altaf (Anshul Trivedi) playing a Pakistani army officer.

Liyakat is shown preparing a bomb to target the army personnel in order to avenge the killings of Kashmiri Muslims. But his mother, Muneera Anwar, played by Zarina Wahab, comes into scene and ruins his entire plan once she discovers his intentions. In this chaos Liyakat's mother is shot.

The film begins with a flash forward showing Indian army cordoning a house to get into it. Then we are taken to a road side where a kid dressed in a stereotypical Kurta pajama and a white skullcap is busy playing with a catapult while Altaf, portrayed as the Pakistani element, hands him some toffees.

We come to know about the address of the place at which it is shot from the telephonic response of the police when Liyaqat yells at his mother, Muneera Anwar, not to call the police while pointing a gun at her. But she does.

Short Film director Divyansh Pandit

with actor Zarina Wahab

Kashmiriyat is a sort of short film which has painted everything in black and white. The film claims that there is no real dissent in Kashmir and blames Pakistan for all the anarchy present in the valley. The film is an extreme artistic piece and brutal exploitation of artistic license.

short film is driven by a dictator mentality and rides on jingoism. There is hardly any scope for an alternate narrative which could have added to the beauty of this film.

The director instead of keeping a single dish on the plate could have accommodated some more for sure as Kashmiris do in Wazwaan. But he has chosen to go with the current wave. The director is still young and will definitely learn with time to accept the beauty of plurality.

The dialogues of the Pakistani army officer, played by Rohit Sagar, when he briefs a journalist that, "We don't want war but if India wants war we have only one thing to say, if two nuclear armed countries come face to face in a war it will be disastrous," resemble to what the current Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan has been reiterating since

2019 Pulwama suicide bombing in which 40 CRPF men were killed.

While Muneera breathes her last she narrates her story of conversion from a Hindu Pandit named Pallavi Raj to Muneera Anwar. She narrates that many Pandit women were taken hostage and forcibly converted to Islam in Kashmir.

While handling such politically-sensitive subjects, the filmmaker should have done proper research and presented the actual number of Pandit women "converted", rather than playing with the sweeping numbers.

People should've known the exact number of Pandit killings because the story which Muneera narrates seems to be more of Gujarat carnage.

The representation of Kashmiris through an innocent kid named Jahaan is again misleading as it goes onto show that Kashmiris are unaware of the truth.

Here, again the bias in writing is exposed as the writer enforces that his version of the story is only truthful. How can a person who is not even well-versed with the politics of the region comments so vehemently of a complicated issue like Kashmir.

It places strong queries and questions against the writer and his works.

Kashmiris have a sound knowledge not only of the politics of their homeland but also geopolitics surrounding the globe. Our writers/journalists have been internationally and nationally acclaimed. They surely won't accept this distorted and intolerant work. And their national and global audience would also renounce the film.

The clips in the lone song of the film, 'Ye Jo Jahaan Hain' sung by Shruthi Pathak and Raj Pandit narrating the story of Kashmiri Pandits backed by emotional lyrics and photos of the dead bodies, will instantly fill one with intense rage and animosity against Kashmiri Muslims.

Again, the makers are caught guilty of biased and poor research on the subject as the role of the establishment is again brushed under the carpet.

We aren't recommending this movie as there is much better stuff available on the internet.

FEAR
OF MISSING OUT
IMPACTS PEOPLE OF
ALL AGES,
STUDY FINDS

WE'RE NOT ALL EQUALLY PRONE TO THE
Fear of Missing Out, but for those who are, social media can exacerbate it. Social media allows you to witness what other people are doing and what's going on in their lives. If there's already concern about missing out, then there will be distress at seeing that on social media."

Agencies

Fear of missing out (FOMO) -- the social anxiety that other people are having fun without you -- can have an impact on any, irrespective of age.

In fact, not age, but aspects of self-perception--namely loneliness, low self-esteem, and low self-compassion--were more closely associated FOMO, according to a recent study by Washington State University researchers published in the Journal of Social and Personal Relationships.

"FoMO is not an adolescent or young adult problem, necessarily. It's really about individual differences, irrespective of age. We expected FoMO to be higher in younger age groups, particularly because of the tremendous amount of social development happening at those times, but that's not what we found," said Chris Barry, a WSU psychology professor and the lead author on the study.

Barry and co-author Megan Wong, a WSU undergraduate student, conducted a survey of more than 400 people across the United States from different age cohorts ranging from 14 to 47, asking a range of questions related to self-perception, life satisfaction, and social media use.

The researchers found that social media use was not a good predictor of FOMO. For instance, two people with the same social media engagement may be affected quite differently: one might have a few negative feelings about seeing their friends' activities while the other might find it upsetting.

"We're not all equally prone to the Fear of Missing Out, but for those who are, social media can exacerbate it. Social media allows you to witness what other people are doing and what's going on in their lives. If there's already concern about missing out, then there will be distress at seeing that on social media," said Barry.

For people experiencing this kind of distress, Barry suggested that it may be good to reduce social media use or cut it off altogether for a period of time.

The study did find one silver-

lining: while FoMO can have negative impacts, it did not appear to relate to the respondents' sense of life satisfaction. Barry said this indicates that FoMO is not overwhelming social anxiety.

The researchers suggest that those who want to reduce their feelings of FoMO should try addressing their negative self-perceptions such as practicing better self-compassion by viewing personal setbacks as opportunities for growth, taking steps to reduce loneliness, and shifting focus away from the distant experiences of others.

"To do something about FoMO, individuals can foster a greater sense of real connectedness to others which will lessen feelings of isolation. You can also try being more in the moment, concentrating on what is in front of you as opposed to focusing on what else is going on out there," Barry said.

‘Nomophobia Is Associated With Poor Sleep Health In College Students’

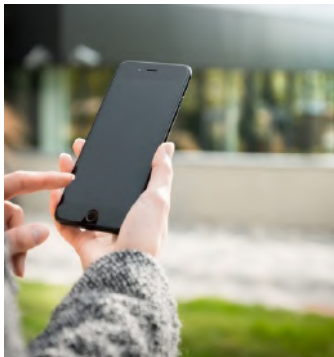
Agencies

The fear of not being in contact with a mobile phone -- "nomophobia" -- is extremely common among college students and is associated with poor sleep health, according to a new study.

Preliminary results show that 89 per cent of a sample of college students had moderate or severe nomophobia. Greater nomophobia was significantly related to greater daytime sleepiness and more behaviors associated with poor sleep quality.

"We found that college students who experience more 'nomophobia' were also more likely to experience sleepiness and poorer sleep hygiene such as long naps and inconsistent bed and wake times," said lead author Jennifer Peszka, Ph.D., professor of psychology at Hendrix College in Conway, Arkansas.

While Peszka anticipated that nomophobia would be common among the study participants, she



was surprised by its high prevalence.

"Because our study suggests a connection between nomophobia and poorer sleep, it is interesting to consider what the implications will be if nomophobia severity continues to increase," she said.

The study involved 327 university students with a mean age of 20 years. Participants completed several questionnaires, including the Nomophobia Questionnaire, the Epworth Sleepiness Scale, and the Sleep Hygiene Index.

Peszka also noted that one common recommendation for improving sleep habits is to limit phone use before and during bedtime. However, she said that for people who have nomophobia, this recommendation could exacerbate bedtime anxiety and disrupt sleep, rather than improve it.

"The recommendation to curtail bedtime phone use, which is meant to improve sleep and seems rather straightforward, might need adjustment or consideration for these individuals," she said.

The research team included co-investigators David Mastin, Ph.D., and Bruce Moore, Ph.D., from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, where the other co-authors are undergraduate student researchers: Shalonda Michelle, Benjamin T. Collins, Nataly Abulimeh, Monnar Quattom, Maya Henderson, Madison Sanders, and Jeremiah Critton.

The research abstract was published recently in an online supplement of the journal Sleep.

Respiratory Vaccines May Reduce Heart Failure Deaths

Agencies

Researchers, including one of Indian-origin, have found that influenza and pneumonia vaccinations are associated with fewer hospital deaths in patients with heart failure.

Respiratory infections such as influenza and pneumonia make heart failure worse, and annual vaccinations are recommended.

According to the study, presented at ESC Congress 2020 - The Digital Experience, one out of five individuals will suffer heart failure in their lifetime. An estimated 26 million people are affected worldwide.

"The Covid-19 pandemic has shone the spotlight on the importance of vaccination to prevent respiratory infections, particularly for people with diseases like heart failure," said study author Karthik Goguguntla of the University of Connecticut in the US.

While it is known that inoculations protect against respiratory infections and that these infections exacerbate heart failure,



few studies have compared outcomes of vaccinated versus unvaccinated patients.

The research team examined whether immunisation had any link with the risk of heart failure patients dying while in the hospital.

The study included 2,912,137 patients with heart failure who had a hospital admission from 2010 to 2014 and the average age was 70 years.

Just 1.4 per cent of the patients in the study had the flu vaccine and 1.4 per cent had the pneumonia vaccine.

The researchers compared in-hospital death rates between heart failure patients who received flu and pneumonia vaccinations that year and those who did not.

The rates of in-hospital mortality were significantly lower in patients who received the flu

vaccine (1.3 per cent) compared to those who did not receive the flu vaccine (3.6 per cent).

Similarly, rates of in-hospital mortality were significantly lower in patients inoculated against pneumonia (1.2 per cent) compared to those who were not inoculated (3.6 per cent).

"Our study provides further impetus for annual immunisations in patients with heart failure. Despite advice to do so, uptake remains low," said Goguguntla.

He noted that serious reactions to flu and pneumonia vaccinations are very rare, happen within a few hours, and can be effectively treated.

"Pneumonia and flu vaccines are vital to preventing these respiratory infections and protecting patients with heart failure," Goguguntla said.

"Although many people have rejected common and safe vaccines before Covid-19, I am optimistic that the pandemic has changed perceptions about the role of immunisations in safeguarding our health," the study author concluded.

Agencies

Older people who eat plenty of vitamin C -- commonly found in citrus fruits, berries, and vegetables -- have the best skeletal muscle mass, according to new research.

Published in the Journal of Nutrition, the study was led by the University of East Anglia (UEA).

This is important because people tend to lose skeletal muscle mass as they get older -- leading to sarcopenia (a condition characterised by loss of skeletal muscle mass and function), frailty, and reduced quality of life.

Lead researcher Prof Ailsa Welch, from UEA's Norwich

Vitamin C Is The Key To Better Muscles In Later Life: Study

Medical School said: "As people age, they lose skeletal muscle mass and strength. People over 50 lose up to one per cent of their skeletal muscle mass each year, and this loss is thought to affect more than 50 million people worldwide. It's a big problem because it can lead to frailty and other poor outcomes such as sarcopenia, physical disability, type-2 diabetes, reduced quality of life, and death."

The professor added: "We know that Vitamin C consumption is linked with skeletal muscle mass. It helps defend the cells and tissues that make



up the body from potentially harmful free radical substances.

Unopposed these free radicals can contribute to the destruction of muscle, thus speeding up age-related decline. But until now, few studies have investigated the importance of Vitamin C intake for older people. We wanted to find out whether people eating more Vitamin C had more muscle mass than other people."

The research team studied data from more than 13,000 people aged between 42-82 years, who are taking part in the EPIC (European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition) Norfolk Study.

They calculated their skeletal muscle mass and analysed their vitamin C intakes from a seven-day food diary. They also examined the amount of vitamin C in their blood.

Dr Richard Hayhoe, also from UEA's Norwich Medical School, said: "We studied a large sample of older Norfolk residents and found that people with the highest amounts of vitamin C in their diet or blood had the greatest estimated skeletal muscle mass, compared to those with the lowest amounts.

"We are very excited by our findings as they suggest that dietary vitamin C is important for

muscle health in older men and women and may be useful for preventing age-related muscle loss. This is particularly significant as Vitamin C is readily available in fruits and vegetables, or supplements, so improving intake of this vitamin is relatively straightforward," Dr Hayhoe said.

Adding further, the researcher said: "We found that nearly 60 per cent of men and 50 per cent of women participants were not consuming as much Vitamin C as they should, according to the European Food Safety Agency recommendations. We're not talking about people needing mega-doses. Eating citrus fruit, such as orange, each day, and having a vegetable side to a meal will be sufficient for most people."