



Maximum : 26°C  
Minimum : 17°C  
Humidity : 77%

SUNSET  
Today 06:51 PM  
SUNRISE  
Tomorrow 06:07 AM



## News Digest

### Landslides Block Highway For Few Hours

Srinagar: Traffic was suspended on Srinagar-Jammu Highway for a few hours after rainfall caused landslides in Panthial area of Ramban district on Friday. A traffic official said that rain caused landslides at Panthial and other places on the highway. The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) cleared stones and debris and at around 2pm, traffic was restored on the highway. Hundreds of vehicles including trucks carrying essential supplies got stranded for a few hours. The official said the road was thrown open after the stretch was cleared and stones from the hill-top stopped falling on the road.

### Truck Crushes Pedestrian To Death

Kulgam: A pedestrian was crushed to death by a speeding truck here in South Kashmir's Kulgam district. A police official said that a truck (JK03E-2429) hit and injured a pedestrian who succumbed to his injuries at PHC Qaimoh. The victim has been identified as 35 year old Maqsood Ahmed Dar son of Ghulam Qadir, a resident of Wanpora Kulgam. The incident occurred at Trachloo village of the district. The official said that the truck driver Muhammad Younis Chando son of Muhammad Yousuf has been arrested and a case against him registered.

### Police Arrest 5 For BSF Killings

Srinagar: Police Friday claimed to have solved Pandach militant attack and have arrested five accused in this regard and seized two ambulances and two motorcycles from their possession. Two BSF personnel from 37 Battalion were killed when suspected militants attacked them in Pandach area that falls in the jurisdiction of police station Soura. The incident had occurred on 20 May this year. Police had arrested 05 uncategorized militants of ISJK who helped in transporting, logistics, planning and executing the attack, in case FIR no 48/2020 u/s 302, 395 IPC, sections 7/25, 7/27 Arms Act, sections 16, 18, 19, 23 ULAP Act of Police Station Soura. During further investigation, 04 vehicles were detained which includes 2 private ambulances functioning at SKIMS, a bike and a Scooty. The statement further reads, accordingly approval for seizure of the above vehicles ● P-02

### Burglars Loot Sopore Market

Sopore: Burglars broke into the five shops in two different markets in North Kashmir's Sopore town of Baramulla district and decamped with goods and valuables worth lakhs of rupees. Local sources said that burglars stole cell phones and electronic goods from two shops at Iqbal Market Sopore. Similarly burglars decamped with valuables worth lakhs from 3 shops at Main Chowk Sopore. These shops are owned by Fayaz Ahmad Shah, Jan Muhamad Paray and Muhammad Iqbal Rather. Locals said that besides looting 5 shops, the burglars also tried to broke the locks of many shops but have failed in the bid. When contacted, a police official said that a case in this regard has been registered and investigation set into motion.

## Situation Along LAC Delicate & Serious, Says Army Chief

LAC Tensions Most Serious Since 1962: FS Shringla



GEN MM NARAVANE visited Leh and reviewed security situation and operational preparedness along the LAC -Twitter

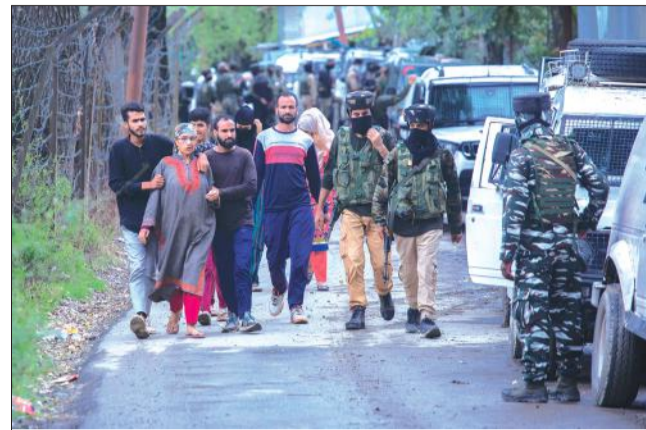
**NEW DELHI:** Situation along the Line of Actual Control in Eastern Ladakh is "delicate and serious" and the army has taken some precautionary measures to enhance security in the wake of new developments, Army Chief General MM Naravane

said on Friday. Army chief, who concluded his two day visit to forward areas in Ladakh, said that the morale of his troops present in the region was high and they were prepared to deal with any situation. Gen Naravane reached Leh on

Thursday for a two-day security review of the Ladakh sector, where India and Chinese armies have deployed almost 100,000 soldiers and weaponry in their forward and depth areas, according to the Hindustan Times. Army Chief said the situation

### Rajnath Singh Meets Chinese Counterpart In Russia

Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday met his Chinese counterpart General Wei Fenghe on the sidelines of a ministerial meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in Moscow, Russia. The meeting, which took place at Hotel Metropol in Moscow, came at a time when Indian and Chinese soldiers are engaged in a tense standoff along the LAC in Ladakh. ● P-02



**LIFE UNDER** The Shadow of Gun: Civilians being evacuated from the encounter site in Pattan- KO Photo Abid Bhat

## 3 Unidentified Militants Killed, Major Injured

**PATTAN:** Three unidentified militants were killed in an encounter at village Yadipora in Pattan (Baramulla district) while an army officer and an SPO were also injured in the initial exchange of fire.

According to police an encounter broke out between militants and armed forces comprising of police, 29 RR and 176 battalion CRPF laid a siege in Yadipora village late last night. "In the morning, contact with the militants was established triggering a fierce exchange of fire. In the first assault, a militant was killed while an army officer sustained bullet injury in his chin," they said.

Defence spokesman in Srinagar Colonel Rajesh Kalia said that an army officer was injured in the firing "but he was stable."

### Operation Suspended In Pulwama For Night

A gunfight between militants and government forces broke out in Babhara area of South Kashmir's Pulwama district on Friday. According to the reports, a joint team of Police, Army and CRPF launched a ● P-02

A police spokesman said during the cordon and search operation as the presence of hiding militants got ascertained, they were given the opportunity to surrender. "However, they refused to surrender and instead held two families comprising of 12 members ● PAGE 02

## HRW Urges India To End Use Of Pellet Guns In Kashmir

**SRINAGAR:** Human Rights Watch (HRW) on Friday asked Indian police and paramilitary forces to stop using pellet-firing guns in Kashmir as they cause 'grievous injuries'.

"Time and again, Indian law enforcement's use of shotguns in Kashmir has resulted in shocking, grievous injuries of protesters and bystanders," said Meenakshi Ganguly, South Asia director at HRW. "Indian authorities need to recognise that this weapon fired into crowds, even with violent demonstrators, will invariably cause indis-

criminate and excessive injury in violation of international standards."

"Indian leaders who claim that their policies are improving the lives of Kashmiris cannot disregard that security forces are maiming, blinding, and killing people," Ganguly said. "The Indian government should cease the use of shotguns firing metal pellets and review its crowd control techniques to meet international standards."

In a statement, the organisation said that pellets have caused thousands of injuries, ● PAGE 02

**TIME AND AGAIN, INDIAN LAW** enforcement's use of shotguns in Kashmir has resulted in shocking, grievous injuries of protesters and bystanders," said Meenakshi Ganguly, South Asia director at HRW.

## LG Reviews Mega Projects Of Kashmir Division Govt To Incentivise Timely Completion Of Projects

**SRINAGAR:** In order to give a boost to infrastructural development in Kashmir Division, the Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha today took a comprehensive review of various Mega Projects being undertaken under several Central Schemes and other projects in a meeting held at the Civil Secretariat. He also reviewed a host of upcoming developmental projects in the region.

The Lt Governor called for multiplying the efforts in bringing developmental reforms in



the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir to achieve the mission of inclusive socio-economic development of all. ● PAGE 02

### Media Delegation Calls On LG

A delegation of journalists called on Lt Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday and shared with him their perceptions about the ground situation in Jammu and Kashmir. The delegation comprised Bashir Manzar, Kashmir Images; Bashir Ahmad Bashir, Srinagar Times; Masood Hussain, Kashmir Life; members of JK Editors Forum comprising of Zahoor Hashmi, Aftab; Mohammad Aslam, Editor KNS; President Kashmir Press Club, Shuja Ul Haq, India Today; President Kashmir Editors Association, Rashid Raheem (CNS/Fajar); President J&K Press Association; Gh Hassan Kaloo, Mirror of Kashmir. ● P-02

### COVID-19

## 1047 More Test Positive; J&K Tally Crosses 40,000 Mark

**SRINAGAR:** Jammu and Kashmir on Friday witnessed another spike as 1,047 fresh cases of Covid-19 tested positive including 74 travellers taking the total number of positive cases to 40,990 in the Union Territory.

Of the total 40,990 cases, 30,579 are from Kashmir and 10,411 from Jammu division. Among 1,047 new cases, 554 belong to Kashmir division while as 493 are from Jammu division, adding that the total number of positive cases in Kashmir division have reached to 30,579 including 24,474 recover-

ies while as total number of positive cases in Jammu division have reached to 10,411 including 6,961 recoveries and 81 deaths.

The officials said that total number of active cases in Jammu and Kashmir are 8,800 including 5,431 from Kashmir division and 3,369 from Jammu division.

With 676 more recoveries, the tally of total recoveries in Jammu and Kashmir has reached to 31,435 which is 76.68 percent of the total cases.

Permanently Jammu division crossed 10 thousand mark on Friday as division witnessed huge spike

of positive cases in last two days. "Cases tested positive in J&K include 175 from Srinagar, 61 from Baramulla, 34 from Pulwama, 78 from Budgam, 48 from Anantnag, 34 from Bandipora, 69 from Kupwara, 21 from Kulgam, 04 from Shopian and 30 from Ganderbal in Kashmir division while as 493 from Jammu division include 322 from Jammu, 18 from Rajouri, 40 from Kuthua, 44 from Udhampur, 13 from Samba, 06 from Ramban, 07 from Doda, 11 from Poonch, 04 from Reasi and 28 from Kishtwar," officials disclosed. As per officials figures, ● PAGE 02

### 11 More Die Due To Covid-19, J&K Toll 756

Srinagar: Eleven more people died due to Covid-19 in Jammu and Kashmir in last 24 hours, taking the fatality count due to the virus to 756. Among the victims eight belonged to Kashmir Valley and remaining three to Jammu division. Regarding the deaths in the Valley, they said, three victims were residents ● P-02

## Policeman Arrested On Charges Of Fraud

**HANDWARA:** A Policeman has been arrested on charges of forgery and fraud in North Kashmir's Handwara town. The arrest was made after one Mudassir Ahmed Sheikh, a resident of Shanoo Langate area filed a complaint at police station Handwara stating that a policeman working in the office of DySP DAR Handwara duped him and after taking Rs two lakhs provided him a fake appointment order in Jammu Kashmir Police Department.

Both the accused cop and the complainant hail from the same Shanoo Langate area of Kupwara district. The accused has been identified as Shabir Ahmed Dar (390/H) who is in lock-up and suspended as well. KNT reported that the accused

Shabir Ahmed Dar in 2017 handed over a fake appointment order to the complainant for SPO and for some time the accused asked him to accompany him and they both used to visit District Police Lines Handwara.

The complainant was sure that he has got the job of SPO. The accused even provided him with a fake belt number 349/spo and for at least 3 months, he deposited money into the bank account of the complainant saying it is his salary.

The complainant Mudassir Ahmed has submitted all the bank statements before the police.

Police accordingly took cognizance of the complaint and registered an FIR vide number 300/2020 under section 420, 468 ● PAGE 02

## In FOCUS Kashmir's Banned Stones — Part I: Closure Of Century Old Quarry

Sanika Athavale

ONCE prosperous and self-sufficient, the miners of Athwajan belt eagerly await the 'better days' that will witness their children attending school again and their adult sons and daughters being betrothed. The locals of the belt in the Pantha Chowk area on the outskirts of Srinagar remember the time when bank representatives were frequent visitors trying to embed the ideas of 'investments' and 'savings' in their minds. With an air of disbelief, a local miner marvelled at the depreciated

reality of Athwajan since the blanket ban of 2016 which prohibited any sort of mining activity in the region.

"It is not just our source of income, but our self-respect and honour that has been attacked," Nazeer Bhat, a quarry holder, stated ruefully.

"The bankers who would beg us to take loans are now 'investigating' some of our people for non-repayment. We have been impoverished by the ban."

Dated 24-11-2016, the banning order cited, interestingly, the primary reason to be the 'bad face' or poor view presented to the travellers on the Srinagar-Jammu highway due to

mining activities, and the secondary reason as the 'ecological damage' inflicted by excessive mining.

With an alleged 'sleight of hand' and a few signatures, the Geology and Mining department had delegitimized the Athwajan belt four years ago, which was one of Kashmir's most vibrant economic hubs and an old spot for stone mining.

Stating that "no one was interested in knowing the shattered state of their lives," Bhat, also a member of the President United Quarry Association, mourned the loss of his ancestral business and livelihood. It is pertinent to note here that



the setback to the stone mining business is not exclusive to this ancient area. From the northern reaches of Pampore to the 'gateway

of Kashmir' in South Kashmir's Qazigund, miners are grinding bones instead of stones.

Claiming that they have been 'forced' to shut shop, the miners complain of administrative negligence, deliberately ignored malpractices, and enforced unemployment and poverty.

### How Stone Mining Worked In Kashmir

The extraction of raw materials, construction aggregate (locally called bajri) in this case, for building infrastructure for various ruling empires has, historically, always been organised by Kashmiri families. After becoming a passed-down

family business over the years, the present day representatives of these old clans assert that they have been, quite literally, the 'structural' backbone of Kashmir.

This industry was remodelled, like all others, after India won her Independence and definitive departments and ministries were formed.

The families generationally employed in this occupation were allotted areas for business by the Department of Geology and Mining following its inception in 1960.

Soon, a 'royalty system' was also established to control the extent of mineral extraction and the wealth extracted from it.

These royalties had to be prepaid monthly at the offices of the authorities based on an ● PAGE 02

# Scientists Develop Portable Sterilisation Unit To Decontaminate PPEs

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI-** Scientists have developed a portable sterilisation unit using a new technology called the hybrid sterilisation system that can decontaminate personal protective equipment (PPE) necessary for combating COVID-19, allowing them to be used multiple times, a statement said on Friday.

It can be used by health professionals and other corona warriors for whom PPEs are essential and can prevent generation of hazardous solid waste from the protective gear, it added.

The Portable Optical Cavity Sterilisation Unit (POSCU) to provide efficient and rapid

decontamination of personal protective equipment (PPE) and other household items has been developed by the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Tirupati and the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) Tirupati.

A working point-of-use sterilisation unit has been developed with the support of the Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB), a body under the Department of Science and Technology (DST).

"UV radiation is a proven method for sterilization. However, the lower penetration depth of UV-C and faster divergence from the source can result in nonuniform treatment," the

statement said.

The team consisting of Reetesh Kumar Gangwar and Arijit Sharma (both assistant professors of physics) and Shihabudheen Maliyekkal, assistant professor of civil and environmental engineering, from IIT Tirupati has developed this hybrid sterilisation system consisting of a UV radiation cavity, cold plasma and H2O2 (hydrogen peroxide) spray.

"Unlike the traditional UV systems, this unit follows the optical cavity concept to optimise the use of photon flux in the treatment area. The system confines the UV radiation and enhances photon-flux and sterilisation efficacy," the state-

ment said.

The coherent operation of UV-C, cold plasma, and H2O2 spray further strengthens the sterilisation efficiency due to more hydroxyl radical production.

The team is currently optimising the design parameters, including UV dose, plasma, and H2O2 concentration, to get the optimum sterilisation performance in a short contact time of less than two minutes.

Due to the non-thermal nature of the treatment, the proposed unit shall also find application in the sterilisation of other items such as packed and unpacked food, currency, and other household items, it added.

## Finmin Comes Out With Measures To Rationalise Non-Priority Expenditure

**NEW DELHI-** The government on Friday asked all ministries / departments to review appointments of consultants, curtail functions and ban use of imported paper for printing as part of measures to rationalise non-priority expenditure.

The finance ministry has issued the instructions on expenditure management with a view to improving the quality of public expenditure, containing non-developmental spending and ensuring availability of adequate resources for critical priority schemes, the Department of Expenditure said.

"In the context of the present fiscal situation and the consequent pressure on Government resources, there is a need for further economy and rationalisation of non-priority expenditure, while protecting and preserving priority expenditure," the department said in an office memorandum.

With regard to administra-

tive expenditure, the Department of Expenditure, under the finance ministry, said no printing or publishing of books, publications, documents will be done on imported paper, except where printing is done abroad by Indian missions.

"Expenditures on functions such as celebrations of Foundation Day etc, should be discouraged or if felt necessary be appropriately curtailed. In any case, travel for such functions and provision of bags or mementos should be avoided," the ministry said.

It asked all the ministries / departments to carry out a review of the individual consultants appointed by them in consonance with the provisions of General Financial Rules (GFR) and reduce the number of consultants to the minimum requirement.

"Due economy may be observed while determining the fees of the consultants and care may be taken that such fees

are not disproportionate to the quality and quantity of work to be carried out by the consultants," it added.

With regard to new positions, it said there will be a ban on creation of new posts, except with the approval of the expenditure department.

"If any post has been created after July 1, 2020, under delegated powers or authority, without approval of Expenditure Department and have not yet been filled, then shall posts shall not be filled. If it is deemed absolutely essential to fill them, proposals may be sent for approval of Department of Expenditure," it added.

Earlier this week, the finance ministry had asked ministries / departments/ PSUs and public sector banks not to print calendars, diaries, greeting cards and schedulers in physical format henceforth.

It also banned printing of coffee-table books and instead encouraged use of e-books. (PTI)

## Situation Along LAC Delicate...

motivated and fully prepared to deal with any situation. "Our officers and men are the finest in the world and they will not only make the army proud but also the nation proud."

Tensions flared in the sensitive sector after fresh clashes near Pangong Tso on the intervening night of 29 August and 30 August as well as on 31 August.

MOST SERIOUS CHALLENGE

Meanwhile Foreign Secretary Harsh V. Shringla Friday said the ongoing tensions between India and China at the LAC in Ladakh is the "most serious challenge" and similar to what both sides faced in 1962.

"We have had an unprecedented situation on the India-China border. We've never had this situation since 1962, we never lost lives in the last 40 years, it is an unprecedented situation. We have also seen there has been a unilateral attempt that seems to be an effort to change facts on the ground. We'll be firm and resolute in resisting this," Shringla said while virtually addressing the Indian Council of World Affairs.

In 1962, China had attacked India and the war went on for about a month after which China declared a unilateral ceasefire. Shringla added, "As far as we are concerned, there'll be no compromise on our sovereignty and territorial integrity. At the same time, as a responsible country, we are always willing to talk and ready to engage even in the depth of Covid crisis. We've kept our communication lines open. Our senior commanders have been talking on the ground. Diplomats have been talking to each other both in New Delhi and Beijing."

## Rajnath Singh Meets Chinese...

It is being said that the main reason behind the meeting is the ongoing border dispute in Ladakh which could not be resolved despite several military-level talks. This is also the first meeting between the political leadership of both countries since the start of the face-off in May. It is being said that the main reason behind the meeting is the ongoing border dispute in Ladakh which could not be resolved despite several military-level talks. This is also the first meeting between the political leadership of both countries since the start of the face-off in May.

## 3 Unidentified Militants Killed,...

including children hostage. It was therefore after strenuous efforts of joint forces that all the family members were evacuated," he said. The spokesman said that in the ensuing encounter, three unidentified militants were killed and their bodies were retrieved from the site encounter. "The identification and affiliation of the slain militants was being ascertained," the police statement said.

The police spokesman said that incriminating materials, including arms and ammunition were recovered from the site of encounter. "The last rites of the slain militants will be performed after conducting their medico-legal formalities including collection of DNA. In case any family claims their bodies, they can come forward for their identification and participation in the last rites to PCR Baramulla.

## Operation Suspended In...

cordon-and-search-operation in Babhoora.

As the joint team besieged the village, the militants present there fired upon them. The fire was retaliated by the joint team, triggering off an encounter, officials said.

"Police and security forces are on the job. Further details will be shared as they emerge," they said. Sources said that firefight stopped in the area and it could not be immediately ascertained if the militants have managed to escape. They said that village remained under cordon and operation has been suspended due to darkness.

## HRW Urges India To End Use...

including loss of eyesight, since the shotguns were first deployed as an "ostensibly 'non-lethal' option" for crowd control, in 2010.

Expressed its concern, HRW said that though the small metal pellets, sometimes referred to as "birdshot" or "dove shot", are concentrated in a tight pattern as they are fired, "the pellets spread out to create a constellation that can reach a wide radius, causing injuries indiscriminately, including to bystanders".

HRW said while no accurate data on casualties from shotgun-fired pellets is available, at least 17 people were killed due to the use of pellet guns between 2015 and 2017. "According to the data journalism website IndiaSpend, pellets fired from shotguns blinded 139 people between July 2016 and February 2019. In January 2018, Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Mehbooba Mufti told the state assembly that 6,221 people had been injured by pellets between July 2016 and February 2017 and among them, 782 people had eye injuries," the statement adds.

In its statement, HRW pointed out that the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms "prohibit the use of those firearms and ammunition that cause unwarranted injury or present an unwarranted risk."

## 1047 More Test Positive;...

9,910 positive cases including 231 deaths and 8,191 recoveries are from Srinagar, 2,937 including 103 deaths and 2,328 recoveries are from Baramulla, 2,767 including 2,260 recoveries and 56 deaths are from Pulwama, 2,722 including 1,982 recoveries and 64 deaths are from Budgam, 2,464 including 52 deaths and 1,932 recoveries are from Anantnag, 2,318 including 1,595 recoveries and 26 deaths are from Bandipora, 2,235 cases including 1,564 and 53 deaths are from Kupwara, 1,982 including 1,820 recoveries and 37 deaths are from Kulgam, 1,735 including 1,611 recoveries and 28 deaths are from Shopian and 1,609 including 1,188 recoveries and 24 deaths are from Ganderbal.

In Jammu division, 4,382 including 2,211 recoveries and 54 deaths are from Jammu district, 967 including 789 recoveries and 05 deaths are from Rajouri, 1,012 including 747 recoveries and 05 deaths are from Kuthua, 909 including 728 recoveries and 03 deaths are from Udhampur, 777 including 578 recoveries and 03 deaths are from Samba, 673 including 648 recoveries and 01 death are from Ramban, 466 including 362 recoveries and 05 deaths are from Doda, 469 including 365 re-

coveries and 04 deaths are from Poonch, 437 including 338 recoveries are from Reasi and 319 including 195 recoveries and 01 death are from Kishtwar.

As per the daily information bulletin, 472,900 persons in Jammu and Kashmir are under observation while 44,162 persons have been kept under home quarantine besides that 8,800 persons are in isolation.

According to the bulletin, 371,147 persons have completed surveillance period and 48,036 persons are under home surveillance besides that so far results of 1,031,316 samples are available. Out of 1,031,316 the number of samples tested negative stands at 990,326 while 49,990 have tested positive, among them 8,800 are active and 31,435 persons have recovered.

## 11 More Die Due To Covid-19,...

of Srinagar, two each from Baramulla and Kupwara and one from Pulwama.

They said a 70-year-old man from Rangwar Baramulla who was admitted on August 3 as a case of bilateral community acquired pneumonia died at SMHS Hospital Srinagar.

An 80-year-old man from Chijhama Rafiabad, they said, died at GMC Baramulla.

Among the deaths from Srinagar, they said, includes a 53-year-old man from Ellahibagh who died at SKIMS Soura, eleven days after he was admitted to the tertiary care hospital.

They said a 65-year-old from Awantipora Pulwama, admitted on August 30 with "AKI C and bilateral CAP" died at SMHS hospital.

They said one among the victims from Kupwara includes a 34-year-old woman from Panzgam area, who was admitted to SKIMS Soura on August 17 died today.

Regarding deaths from Jammu, they said, a 70-year-old patient from Gujjar Nagar Jammu passed away at GMC Jammu.

A 50-year-old man from Afghan Mohalla in Jammu City who was suffering from hypertension and Community Acquire Pneumonia died in the Government Medical College (GMC) Jammu last evening within hours of hospitalization.

With these deaths, officials said, 756 people have succumbed to the virus in Jammu and Kashmir so far. Among them, they said, 675 were from the Valley while 81 others from Jammu division.

Srinagar district with 231 deaths tops the list followed by Baramulla (103), Budgam (64), Anantnag (52), Pulwama (56), Kupwara (53), Jammu (54), Kulgam (37), Shopian (28), Bandipora (26), Ganderbal (24), Rajouri (5), Doda (5), Poonch (4), Kathua (5), Udhampur (3), Samba (2) and Ramban (1).

## Govt To Incentivise Timely...

During the meeting, the Lieutenant Governor was briefed by officers about the pace and progress of ongoing development projects executed by Health, RDD, PWD, Jal Shakti, PDD, Agriculture/ Horticulture, and other departments in Kashmir Division.

Stressing on the need to strengthen medical infrastructure in the region, the Lt Governor directed for speedy execution of work on Major Projects of Health & Medical Education Department in Kashmir. These include ALIMs Awantipora worth Rs. 2000 Crores, Government Medical College, Anantnag worth Rs. 139.30Crores, Government Medical College, Baramulla worth Rs 139 Crores, Unani Hospital Nawabagh Ganderbal worth 32.50 Crores, Additional Block of Lal-Deed Maternity Hospital in Srinagar constructed by JKERA worth Rs 132.5 Crores, Construction of 120 Bedded Additional Hospital Block at The Bone & Joint Hospital Barzulla by JKERA worth Rs 88.94 Crores, 200 Bedded Maternity- Children Hospital Bemina- Srinagar costing 116.28Crores, among others.

While reviewing the status of development of transit accommodation for migrant employees at the cost of Rs 920 crore in Kashmir division the Lt Governor issued explicit directions to officers for expediting the same.

The Lt Governor also took serious note of the unwarranted delay in the execution of development projects being taken up by NPCC, especially the Bakshi Stadium under PMDP and directed the Administrative Secretary, Youth Services and Sports Department to take on-spot review to solve all the impending issues and expedite the project on priority.

The Lt Governor also reviewed the progress of Saffron Park at Dussu, Pampore worth 37.65 crores, Construction of Government of Degree College, Singapora Pattan, Government College of Engineering & Technology at Safapora, Semi Ring Road, Z-Morh tunnel, NH-444 (Srinagar-Shopian Qazigund Road) of which 40.00 km of the total 85.72 km has been completed. Mega Projects under execution in Kashmir Province by JKPC including 148 meter Span Watalbagh Basipora Bridge Ganderbal, 188 meters span Shariefabad Bridge Srinagar, Construction of 3x42 Meter PSC Grider Double Lane Bridge at Noorjahan, Qamarwari; besides, construction of 4 Mega Storm Water Drainage Projects with the cumulative cost of 133 crores by JKERA in Srinagar City.

Taking a strong note of the unwarranted delays in the completion of some projects, the Lt Governor directed the concerned officers to ensure that projects do not remain languishing unnecessarily and regular reviews are conducted to remove bottlenecks and expedite progress. He also directed officers for coming up with a formal policy to incentivize the timely completion of projects.

While reviewing the pace of Wular Lake conservation project, the Lt Governor was apprised that a complete check has been put in place to avoid any kind of encroachments around the lake. The Lt Governor called for expediting the dredging and de-silting activities and efficient utilization of funds allocated for the purpose.

He exhorted upon officers to furnish regular status reports to the government on regular intervals depicting the work done adding that it will facilitate proper monitoring and filling up gaps and remove bottlenecks, if any.

To take J&K towards inclusive development, while ensuring responsive and accountable governance, the Lt Governor asked the officers to go the extra mile to meet the developmental aspirations of the people.

## Media Delegation Calls On LG...

Hafiz Ayaz Gani Editor Rising Kashmir; Shamim Mehraj Kashmir Monitor; Nazir Masoodi, Bureau Chief NDTV; Khaliid Hussain Gilani Bureau Chief Zee TV; Zeenat Zeeshan, Bureau Chief Republic TV; Mufti Islah,

Bureau Chief CNN/IBN; Sanam Aijaz, Pr. Correspondent Gulistan TV and Shabir Ahmad Bureau Chief ETV .

Journalists from National Media Association included Mohammad Salem Pandit, Bureau Chief Times of India; Mir Ehsan Bureau Chief Hindustan Times ; Tariq Ahmed Correspondent The Week; Basharat Masood Bureau Chief, Indian Express; Zaffar Iqbal; Azan Javid, Correspondent, The Print.

The delegation also apprised Lt. Governor about various issues pertaining to media fraternity in Kashmir valley.

The Lt. Governor assured them of government's full support and sought their cooperation in building peaceful and prosperous Jammu and Kashmir. He told media persons that this is the first round of interaction and more such will follow as this process of having interactions with media fraternity will be a continuous one.

## Policeman Arrested On...

at police station Handwara. The accused cop Shabir Ahmed Dar was arrested accordingly.

A police officer declined to comment on the issue saying the case is looked at by SP Handwara.

When contacted, SP Handwara Sandeep Chakarvarti said that the cop working in DySP DAR office has been arrested. "The accused has committed forgery and a case has been registered against him," he said.

## Kashmir's Banned Stones...

extraction-estimate and the receipts from these transactions had to be provided at the Department's checkpoints by the drivers of the tippers involved in the material's transportation.

The quarry holders could revisit the office twice or more times in a month if they wished to recharge their quantity-estimate through more payment.

On what basis would the royalty amounts be fixed?

The official website of the Industry and Commerce Department of the Jammu and Kashmir government, states: "Geology and Mining Department is authorized to receive royalty on extraction of Major as well as Minor Minerals in the state at the rates fixed by the Govt."

However, in the words of a tipper driver, Shafeeq Hussain Bhat, this "simple" and officiated royalty arrangement ceased to exist in 2019, after the rules under SRO-105 were strictly enforced in Jammu and Kashmir.

SRO 105: Created an uproar in 2016, crippled miners after 2019

Ninety-six pages long, the Statute Regulatory Order (SRO) 105 had disrupted the J&K assembly in June 2016.

The National Conference (NC), placed as the Opposition in a PDP-BJP ruled state government, had called it an 'assault on Article 370', as it made way for non-local participation in bidding for mineral excavation in J&K.

The abrogation of the said article would later expose everything that it protected from non-local ventures along with destabilising the stone miners at home.

In the same month in 2016, a J&K Assembly panel had also recommended the revocation of the SRO.

Headed by NC MLA Mohammed Akbar Lone, the panel had said in its report: "The order is in gross violation of the Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir, J&K Land Alienation Act, State Subject Law, J&K Transfer of Property Act and J&K Land Grants Act. It ignores and disregards constitutional and statutory imperatives relevant to grant of licence, mining lease, quarry licence and other minor mineral concessions. It deprives the permanent residents of the state of their exclusive rights." It had advised the then-government to reframe the rules after consulting all stakeholders.

But, three years later, even a year after the abrogation, no efforts have been taken to act upon the panel's suggestions.

At that time, Ahsan Pardeesi, the provincial youth vice-president of NC, in April 2016, had highlighted how the rules in the SRO had increased royalty rates that the "poor stone quarry men could not afford." Indeed most of the 'stone quarry men' come from humble backgrounds but had been financially stable (so far) because of their lineal never-out-of-demand occupation.

But, shortly after the historic day of August 5, 2019, the demand for their services did not diminish but their legal conscience was put to test.

The controversial set of rules were implemented with much fervour following the events of last year's August, resulting in a blanket ban on all stone mining activity in the new union territory (UT).

The SRO's rules from 2016, implemented by an official circular in 2019, have disallowed any form of stone mining or extraction in J&K until all the newly prescribed documents, that the miners say are very time-consuming to organise, are submitted.

With these developments bringing the industry to a halt, the Geology and Mining Department has stopped collecting royalties because there is no "legal" extraction to collect them for.

The absence of legalised extraction also meant that the people in this business have generated no legal income or income since a year.

What were the rules of SRO 105 that instantly disenfranchised miners? The SRO 105 was signed on March 31, 2016, for "regulating the grant of various forms of mineral concession (permits) in respect of minor minerals, storage, transportation of minerals and prevention of illegal mining in the State".

Because bajri, an essential raw material used in the construction of buildings, is derived from ground stones, it has been classified as a 'minor mineral' by the Department of Geology and Mining, making the people involved in its business liable to follow the new rules.

Under them, it has been stated that no person shall be granted any minor mineral concession in any area or will be allowed to commence mining operations for minor minerals in any area unless an approved mining plan, an environmental clearance, and a CTO (Consent to Operate) has been submitted to the Department by them.

These three prerequisites were made indispensable in 2016 and the move had led to an indirect but effective ban on all stone mining activities in Kashmir causing several people in the industry to protest.

They argued that their business was ancestral and hardly a threat to the environment, road safety, aesthetics, etc.

"We are all for sustainable development and are ready to follow the

new procedures," a miner said. "We have submitted all our documents for the clearance but haven't heard from the concerned authorities. The Covid-19 lockdown is also responsible for the lag, but until then, can't the Department give us short term permits so that we can earn a dignified living? We have been mining these spots for 100 years!"

Describing the procedural intricacies of the new rules, Assistant Mineral Officer, Khurshid Mir, told Kashmir Observer that it has prescribed a three-course process before beginning mining activities.

"The mining plans have to be made and compiled as per scientific norms by a qualified person and then submitted to the appropriate authority," Mir explained.

After that, he said, an environmental clearance (EC) needs to be sought. "This can be applied for only after the mining plan has been approved because the very same is used as a base document for obtaining the EC. These clearances are provided by the State Environment Impact Assessment Authority of J&K."

The authorities concerned with all the steps of the 'three-course process' are completely different and unrelated to each other. Even for the final step, i.e CTO, the Pollution Control Board of the region has to be approached.

Speaking from his own experience and on the condition of anonymity, a district-level officer told Kashmir Observer that in 2019, the independent committee that approved mining plans was chaired by the then-Director of the Department of Geology and Mining and composed of other officials from the administrative setup.

But the quarry-holders who have plans approved from the committee pointed out that the ECs have not been granted.

"The mandate to grant ECs is with the State Environment Impact Assessment Authority, my office has no role to play in the entire process," the official clarified.

But the legal changes of 2016 were approved by the Geology and Mining office.

Breaking down the developments post SRO 105, Khurshid Mir informed, "Since the order had suddenly compelled stone miners to submit whatnots, the then-government temporarily amended Rules 104 and 105 (a) that covered the 'Rights of existing concession holders' and the 'Rights of pending applicants' respectively. The short-term amendment was done soon after the declaration of the rules and was reappplied every six months until orders from the National Green Tribunal (NGT), Supreme Court, and Pollution Control board demanded the strict implementation of SRO 105 in 2019."

The 'amendment' being referred to had allowed the industry to maintain status quo from 2016 to 2019, while it readied itself for the transformation under the new rules.

The Department continued with their old royalty system and the ancestral miners said that it was not "confusing to work with."

They operated their stone quarries despite SRO 105's expelling language as the amendment – renewed every six months – had kept the familiar and "simple" system intact.

In the meantime, they also reorganised themselves into 'clusters', as commanded by the new rules, and got their clusters' mining plans approved by the authorities.

The ordered regrouping had to be done with a maximum of 20 quarries in an area of not more than 50 hectares. The cluster had to have a name and choose a representative as its face.

Hilal Ahmad, the Vice-President of the United Quarry Association, belongs to Shalwani cluster of Pampore. Three stone mining clusters have been formed in his region, namely Bajar, Regand, and Shalwani. He said that his group would have received its EC by now if the triple attack of Article 370's revocation, formation of UT, and Covid-19 outbreak had not broken the flow of the system.

Even Mushtaq Ahmed Bhat, a quarry holder from Athwajan belt who also operates quarries in other areas said that since the passing of the J&K Reorganisation Act of 2019, when most of the work was shifted from the erstwhile state's offices to those in New Delhi, all the progress in meeting the 'three requirements' was lost in transition.

"We have sent our mining plans to the environmental authorities but they have done nothing on their front yet," he said exasperatedly.

All that the miners say they want are short-term permits that will allow them to conduct their business without being arrested for illegal extraction. The three-course process has not been completed by most from the community for some reasons they are unwilling to take the blame for.

"There is an administrative lag," Zeeshan Rehman, the Acting Chairperson of the Senior Contractors Coordination Committee (J&K), told Kashmir Observer.

"We are with the government, if their aim is to make processes transparent and conserve the environment. But they need to realise that they are taking excruciatingly long time and contradicting themselves. We are not being given our ECs or there is no political will to grant us, professional miners, short-term permits, but this August an order was passed enabling Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) to procure short-term mining permits from the Department."

When asked for the rationale behind the PRI-permission order, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Pandurang Pole, told Kashmir Observer, "Ask the government body that looks after rural development."

Khurshid Mir too spoke of the order nonchalantly indicating that it was hardly an issue for his office.

"Yes, the Department of Geology and Mining has been asked to get the three permissions on behalf of the PRIs. That has happened," he added almost regrettably.

## Police Arrest 5 For BSF Killings...

was sought from the DGP JKP Dilbagh Singh and today DGP has accorded approval for seizure of the vehicles.

Police said that the ambulance JK01AD-0915 was used to transport the militants from Bijbehara to Pandach, Srinagar while Bike (JK01AH-2989) and Scooty (JK01V- 8288) were used to carry out the attack and escape after looting of weapons from the injured jawans. Ambulance JK01AF -9417 was used to transport the militants back to Bijbehara from Srinagar.

"Furthermore, categorized militants of ISJK involved in the attack have also been neutralized in two separate encounters at Zadibal, Srinagar and Hatigam, Bijbehara and looted weapons of BSF jawans have also been recovered, it said."



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NO HOLDS BARRED



Teachers have entered households and parents have entered the eco system of schools. Therefore, the job has become advanced and challenging. With the right mind set, collaborative behaviour and understanding, we can surely overcome these new obstacles

# Simplistic Solution for a Complex Problem

M.K. Narayanan

It is a moot point whether a long-standing problem of this nature can be solved merely by rejecting notions of a 'separate Kashmiri identity', disowning all talk of Kashmiri 'insaniyat' and 'jamhooriyat', and making Kashmiris pay for their past mistakes

In August last year, Parliament removed Articles 370 and 35A of the Constitution from the statute book, effectively emasculating the special status of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). It followed this up by carving out two Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh from the State of J&K. The asymmetric character of the Indian federal structure notwithstanding, the manner in which the changes were effected caused a great deal of dissonance. Criticism was, nevertheless, muted given assurances that the step would ensure a more closely integrated Indian Union. Pakistan, predictably, criticised the step, while China raised its voice observing that the bifurcation of J&K and the voiding of Article 370 should not be seen as solely India's internal matter.

#### Use of 'shock and awe'

The August 2019 move confirmed the Centre's willingness to resort to 'shock and awe' tactics to achieve pre-determined objectives, irrespective of whether the end results were achievable or not. The move on J&K was unexpected, the closest parallel possibly being demonetisation. In both instances, the decisions were taken in utmost secrecy, leaving no scope for discussion, debate or retreat. The rashness of the determination to 'cross the Rubicon', and erase the notion of a separate 'Kashmiri identity', was not dissimilar (though in a totally different context) to the use of air power to hit targets inside Pakistan (in February 2019).

Ruling party spokesmen went to considerable lengths to argue that the August 2019 decision was aimed at ending an anomaly that had existed for long, and had impeded Kashmir's peace and progress. To sugar-coat the decision, prospects were held out of vastly enlarged economic and job opportunities, reduction in levels of terrorist violence, closer integration with the rest of India, etc. At the time, much of India seemed to accept this line of argument, though there were quite a few who objected to the stealth and secrecy that preceded the announcement of abrogation of two key Articles of the Indian Constitution, and the stringent security measures that were enforced across J&K, immediately prior to and subsequently.

#### Unrealised goals, concerns

The laundry list of achievements and missed targets post-August 2019, however, suggest that the intended objectives of bringing Kashmir into the national mainstream, reducing levels of violence within the Union Territory, and expansion of jobs and economic opportunities, are still to happen. Levels of violence continue to remain high, broadly approximating to what existed in earlier periods. The only silver lining has been the elimination of some top leaders of terrorist outfits, such as the Hizbul Mujahideen.

The incarceration of several senior political leaders for several months under various provisions of the law, including the Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act, has, meanwhile, undermined faith in the Centre's commitment to an early return to orderly political discourse. Senior leaders like former Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti, still remain in custody. Prominent National Con-

ference leaders, Farooq Abdullah and Omar Abdullah, have been released from custody, but continue to face restrictions, with regard to any kind of political activity. Peoples Conference chief Sajad Lone was released after spending almost a year in preventive detention. The widespread concern about human rights and human rights violations in Kashmir, hence, appears justified. As former Supreme Court of India judge, Justice Madan Lokur, observed in a recent newspaper article, that even a form of house arrest is a matter of grave human rights concern.

Among other major concerns has been the difficulty faced by the populace in accessing information, following the snapping of high speed Internet connections. Students, in particular, have faced serious problems on account of the lack of access to high speed Internet. Another has been the State government's announcement (in May this year), to notify the J&K Grant of Domicile Certificate Procedure Rules, 2020 and set a fast track process in motion. The domicile certificate issue has become a 'ticking time-bomb', with some political parties declaring that it could "change the demography of the erstwhile State of J&K". The latest notification allows non-locals to apply for domicile certificates, thus potentially opening the floodgates for 'outsiders' to settle in the State, acquire property, and also apply for jobs in an already scarce job market.

Even Jammu which had less to lose on account of the changes effected in August last year, has its own list of concerns, mainly relating to the likely influx of outsiders into the State following the removal of restrictions. The inability of local businesses to compete with goods from outside is another of their special concerns. Together with the higher cost of manufacture in J&K, as also the need to import raw material from elsewhere, concerns abound about their ability to compete with 'outsiders'.

#### The complexity of Kashmir

India has had problems with Kashmir ever since 1947. The reasons are too well known to merit repetition. Successive governments in Delhi and Srinagar have wrestled with the problem. Kashmir has also figured prominently in at least four India-Pakistan conflicts, and the Kashmir issue has been a constant irritant in India-Pakistan relations. Anyone who deigns to read the debates in the United Nations on Kashmir during the 1950s and 1960s, and even subsequently, will understand the complexity of the Kashmir problem. Every government in Delhi has dealt with Kashmir during their tenure in office, and there has been no lack of trying on their part to solve the issue.

Many options on how to deal with the problem have been previously explored. In the past, the security problem had attracted the attention of renowned international experts, with experience in dealing with insurrections, sub-nation tensions, terrorism, and various other facets of organised and unorganised violence. During the final decades of the 20th Century, many saw a parallel between the situation in Kashmir and that prevailing in Northern Ireland. There was also a steady exchange of ideas and concepts with a view to finding a solution. A major differ-

ence between Northern Ireland and Kashmir, however, was that unlike in the case of the former, Kashmir had two hostile neighbours, one of whom was intent on instigating violence and providing a suitable 'rear' for terrorist elements.

#### Long shadow of world events

It is a moot point whether a long-standing problem of this nature can be solved merely by rejecting notions of a 'separate Kashmiri identity', disowning all talk of Kashmiri 'insaniyat' and 'jamhooriyat', and making Kashmiris pay for their past mistakes. An ingrained belief that the solution lay in squeezing Kashmir's politics into the 'straitjacket' of national politics, shorn of all past beliefs and practices, could prove to be highly misplaced. It would amount to proposing a simplistic solution for a complex problem.

The Kashmir problem cannot again be detached from the extant situation prevailing in parts of the world, where many existing systems are undergoing changes. This crucial aspect of current history cannot be avoided.

Across the globe, for instance, radical Islamist ideas appear to be gaining ground, and the impact is being felt on youth in our region as well. No longer can it be solely attributed to the fallout of the Afghan Jihad of the 1980s, for there are other forces such as the Islamic State in existence today, that are a force to reckon with. This must be recognised even as claims are being made that home-grown militancy in J&K has been extinguished. There are sizeable pockets of radical Islamist influence present in Kashmir today. One index is the existence of the so-called 'unattached militant'. All such elements are driven by the power of an idea, and cannot be suppressed through sheer force. These are among the fundamental issues that need resolution in Kashmir.

#### Have debate, introspection

Current policy makers should not assume that it is a failure of imagination, or of policy making, that prevented past leaders from understanding and finding a solution for the Kashmir problem. It would be wise for leaders in Delhi to be careful not to view immediate dividends as representing a new dawn, and should instead pause to try and ascertain what lies beyond the horizon. Restoring normalcy should be an urgent priority even if many of the senior political leaders in Kashmir belonging to the National Conference, the People's Democratic Party, or PDP, the J&K Congress, and the J&K Peoples' Conference appear highly critical of the Centre's policies.

An intense debate must start as to where we go from here. Introspection after the initial one year has become essential. 'Strong arm populism' has its limits. A moment arises in the course of any struggle when it becomes necessary to undertake value-based judgements. In Kashmir, the moment is now. We cannot afford any more 'evolutionary adaptations to an already dangerous social and complex environment'.

...  
The Hindu

## Parenting In Pandemic

As Covid -19 has changed everything, the burden of responsibilities has fallen on the shoulders of parents yet again.

Riyaz Kazmi

Our Joys knew no bounds the moment it was announced that this year the academic session would be started earlier as on 24th February,2020.After spending an obnoxious seven months at home,our children were suffering emotionally and experiencing a social ache.They had been thrust into an extremely difficult situation. Now, they had a reason to be excited which was palpable.

My daughter was also flying above the skies.We shopped her favourite"back to school" stuff.She was very excited to meet her friends and teachers whom she missed a lot.In the preceding night, she couldn't even sleep out of excitement.

After such a long spell of inactivity it was not an easy job to re-establish the routine. But enthusiastic students were trying hard to get back on the track. For a week, everything went very well. However, as usual,our happiness was short lived and a pall of gloom descended upon us when the Covid- 19 pandemic came knocking on our doors. It snowballed so fast that everything got entrapped and came to a grinding halt.

Fortunately or unfortunately, it didn't come as a surprise to our children as they are already quite familiar with the shutdowns. All these years, children of the valley have been affected but parents have never given up.AsCovid -19 has changed everything, the burden of responsibilities has fallen on the shoulders of parents yet again.

The pandemic has taken a toll on everyone's mental health. It takes a lot of patience to console, calm and control our children. However, the sooner we understand our new roles, the more peaceful our lives will be.

Educational institutions play a major role

in the upbringing of children.The way teachers engage them in different activities cannot be replaced by any virtual learning.Teachers know when to be tough or tender. For parents, it is not an easy task to take over their roles and responsibilities. It is no wonder then that many parents in Kashmir are using a comical yet revealing phrase, School KarGassunYelleh, Tawanus Ha Lageh (When will schools re-open, so that we can save ourselves from the trouble and tough times that our kids are giving us at home).

Nevertheless we must admit that the lockdown period has given us ample time and opportunity to develop a strong bond with our children.It has been a blessing in disguise to find and better ourselves in many ways.

Earlier, we didn't get the time to know about our children's day. These days, due to online classes, we're having the opportunity to monitor their interactions closely and help them accordingly. This has proved beneficial as we're developing a more understanding bond with our kids and are raising them better.

Additionally, men have started sharing family responsibilities. From cleaning to cooking, many

men are doing their bit. This has brought in the necessary realisation that the whole burden of the household must not fall on the women of the house. They need to enjoy their own time and space. Fathers and mother working together and dividing work at home is also bound to develop the same sensibility in the kids for the longer run.

In the absence of any avenue to socialise with their friends, we must ensure that children get to have a good family time. We have to be their best buddies. We can start with staying with them through their homework, give them company as they watch their favourite shows and can also actively involve them in small house chores like setting the table. This will also prove beneficial to our own mental health; as our children will prove to be a beacon of hope for us in these tumultuous times.

Our children are the reflection of our behaviour. The way we react will determine their future behaviour as well. The more we try to stay calm and patient, the more we can groom them into the civilized and cultured human beings.

Patience is one of the main life skills and the key to deal with our kids smartly and strategically.If we can keep it cool with our kids, we can be patient with

others as well.

In addition to patience, we also need some semblance of discipline within our household. This has been especially difficult to do during the pandemic lockdowns. Covid 19 is taking a heavy toll on us both physically and mentally.

Therefore, we have to gear up to remain active. Doing aerobics, yoga, zumba and playing games with our children will not only ease off mental stress but will also keep everyone fit.

Another beneficial activity can be getting our kids to explore their creative sides.Once we try to engage our children in creative pursuits, it becomes quite easy to go through the hard times.Our support and appreciation can bring the best out of them. Once we help them find their creative side, it will keep the engaged, motivated and happy.

Roles have evolved and changed during these times and we're all trying to put out best foot forward. Teachers have entered households and parents have entered the eco system of schools. Therefore, the job has become advanced and challenging. With the right mind set, collaborative behaviour and understanding, we can surely overcome these new obstacles.

As we juggle our responsibilities, let us also remember those among us who are not privileged enough to have resources or even loved ones to assist them. It has become imperative to look out for these people and extend help. Good parenting always involves good role models. Be one for your children!

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# Ideal Teacher: The Right Mix Of Chalk And Challenges

Happy Teachers day!

Mohammad Hussain Khan.

“They keep the watch along the border of darkness and make the attack on the treacle’s of ignorance and folly. Patient in their daily work, they strive to conquer the evil powers which are the enemies of the youth. They awaken the sleeping spirit. They quicken the indolent, encourage the eager and steady the unstable.

No matter how old we grow, the lessons taught by our teachers can never be forgotten. Good teaching is more a giving of right questions than a giving of right answers. Let us remember, one book, one pen, one child and one teacher can change the world. Dear readers, teaching is the one profession that creates all other professions. That is why no better tributes have been paid to any man on earth than to the teacher. East or west, everywhere he has been respected. He has been called the architect of nation, the harbinger of the progress of the culture, the maker of man and the maker of history. Like a gardener caressing the plants, he caresses the young human beings and looks after their physical, mental and social growth and development. God created man in his own image, the teacher fashions the child in his image. A teacher effects eternity. He can never tell where his influence stops.

Famous educators plan new system of pedagogy, but it is the teachers who direct and guide the young. They live in obscurity and contend with hardship. For them no trumpets flare, no chariots wait and no golden decorations are decreed. They keep the watch along the border of darkness and make the attack on the treacle’s of ignorance and folly. Patient in their daily work, they strive to conquer the evil powers which are the enemies of the youth. They awaken the sleeping spirit. They quicken the indolent, encourage the eager and steady the unstable.

Teachers communicate their own joys in learning and share with boys and girls the best treasures of their mind. They light many candles which in later years will shine back to cheer them. This is their reward. Knowledge may be gained from books, but the love for knowledge is transmitted only by personal conduct.

Certainly heavy responsibilities lie on the shoulders of a teacher. A university degree or diploma does not make him an ideal teacher. Of course it qualifies him for the profession. And to be an ideal teacher there should be proper and the harmonious development of the qualities of head, heart, hand and health. The ideal teacher makes the student



spell bound by his very presence in the class. Young children fall in love at the first sight and develop instantaneous loyalties with the good looking teacher. The charming and dynamic personality really does wonders. He has calm nature, winning looks, serene face and pleasant demeanor. He has sound physical health which brings in him enthusiasm, vigour, vitality and dynamism, so important for the job.

He possesses high intellectual caliber. The profession itself demands deep understanding, logical reasoning power, resourcefulness, tact, intuition and memory. To meet the call of profession, he keeps his interest broad and varied. He has deep thirst for knowledge. He has keen power of observation and an inquisitive approach to every new situation. His mental horizon is widened by acquiring more and more experience by studying more and more, and by assimilating new facts in order to impart the same to the young learners. In a way, he is a student, a learner throughout his life coming true to Tagore’s statement, “A teacher can never truly teach unless he is still learning himself”.

With fortitude to combat any problem, with forbearance to face any hardship, with restraint to cool anger and frustration, with composure to bring

peace of mind, with selfless submission to his profession, with resignation to divine will and with faith in himself and in the Almighty, an ideal teacher is that of a super person. He is all cheerful and optimistic who teaches the students with delight and creates a delightful learning atmosphere in the class. It was for such an ideal teacher that saint Kabir pointed out, “Teacher and God, both are standing before me. Whom would I pay obeisance? I bow to my teacher who guided me to God.”

Such a teacher is motivated by sound philosophy of life. He is a live wire whose mission is to transmit desirable values in the young men through the medium of enlightened instructions and personal influence.

An educational institution is a worship of wisdom, seed bed of character, a citadel of discipline and nursery of nation. Its success depends upon the ideal teacher. We may not expect every teacher to be hall marks of genius but the ideal for a teacher is set.

Some years back I went to a reputed school as a guest lecturer. At the very outset of my class, I asked all the students of the class what they wanted to become in life. Many answered, IAS officer, Doctor, Engineer, Pilot, KAS officer etc and list was long. But not a single student said,

teacher or lecturer or professor. It appalled me to hear that none of them opted for teaching in life. Then I remembered the words of J. Barzun he says, “Teaching is not a lost art but a lost tradition”.

Is teaching profession an unimportant one? Of course not. Teachers help students to shake off ignorance, vices and evils of the society. In other words, teachers can change lives with just the right mix of chalk and challenges. Alexander the Great stated the importance of teachers saying, “I am indebted to my father for living, but to my teacher for living well.

In the developed world, teachers hold a high position with high social status and earn decently. But the case is a little different in the land of ours. Many do not wholeheartedly want to become teachers and the society still has a long way to give due regard for teachers as teaching is not just for making money but cultivating noble and novel ideas in the pupils. Once Adul Kalam was asked how he would like to be remembered by the world: a scientist or Bharat Ratna recipient or the President of India or the Missile Man? But APJ Abdul Kalam wished to be remembered as a teacher! He said, “If a country is to be corruption free and become a nation of beautiful minds, I strongly feel there are three key societal members who can make a difference. They are the father, the mother and the teacher”.

I honour all the ideal teachers on “World Teacher Day” who have had a profound impact on the way they teach and whose influence can live in through generations afterwards. Happy Teachers Day. A day kept aside to honour the gifted souls who work every day to make sure that the future is bright for all of us. On this beautiful occasion, let us take the opportunity to convey our wishes to all our teachers who have given impeccable contribution in shaping us. Let all of us also pray for those teachers who have left for heavenly abode and touched our lives with their powerful and abiding influence on the total make up of our personalities. Let light perpetual shine upon them. May noble souls of all the departed teachers rest in peace.

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## How To Get Every Child To School

Now is the time for national governments and the international community to come together to give children and young people the opportunities they deserve

Gordon Brown

We write to call for urgent action to address the global education emergency triggered by Covid-19. With more than one billion children still out of school because of the lockdown, there is a real and present danger that the public-health crisis will create a Covid generation who loses out on schooling and whose opportunities are permanently damaged. While the more fortunate have had access to alternatives, the world’s poorest children have been locked out of learning and denied Internet access. And with the loss of free school meals - once a lifeline for nearly 400 million boys and girls - hunger has grown.

An immediate concern as we bring the lockdown to an end is the fate of an estimated 30 million children who, according to Unesco, may never return to school. For these, the world’s least-advantaged children, education is often the only escape from poverty - a route that is in danger of closing.

Many of these children are adolescent girls for whom being in school is the best defense against forced marriage and the best hope for expanded opportunities. Many more are young children who risk being forced into exploitative and dangerous labour. And because education is linked to progress in virtually every area of human development - from child survival to maternal health, gender equality, job creation, and inclusive economic growth - the education emergency will undermine the prospects for achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and potentially set back progress on gender equity by years. According to the World Bank, the long-term economic cost of lost schooling could be as much as \$10 trillion.

We cannot stand by and allow these young people to be robbed of their education and a fair chance in life. Instead, we should be redoubling our efforts to get all children into school - including the 260 million already out of school and the 75 million children affected by protracted conflicts and forced displacement, among whom are 35 million refugees or internally displaced people. We should provide them with the comprehensive help they need and make it possible for young people to start or resume their studies in school, as well as further and higher education.

There is a longer-term challenge. Even before Covid-19, the world faced a learning crisis. Over half of the children in developing countries suffer from



“learning poverty” and even at age 11 have little or no basic literacy and numeracy skills. As a result, 800 million of today’s young people leave education with no qualifications whatsoever. If we are to avoid this, the millions of children who are now preparing to return to school, having lost over a half-year of education, need their governments to invest in catch-up programmes and proper learning assessment. When schools reopened after Pakistan’s 2005 earthquake, attendance recovered, but four years later children had lost the equivalent of 1.5 years of schooling.

Resources are now urgently needed to get young people back into education and enable them to catch up. What is more, we should rebuild better: more support for online learning, personalised learning, and teacher training; conditional cash transfers for poor families; and safer schools that meet distancing rules. This should build on the enormous community effort that has been displayed during the pandemic and the coalition of global organisations that have now joined forces in the Save our Future initiative, launched on August 4.

Yet at the very time we need extra resources, education funding is in danger on three fronts:

• As slower or negative growth undermines tax revenues, less money may be available in almost every country for public services, including education.???

• When allocating limited funds, some governments may leave education crowded out and underfunded as they prioritise expenditure on health and economic recovery.???

• Intensifying fiscal pressure in developed countries will result in reductions in international development aid, including aid for education, which has already been losing out to other priorities in the allocation of bilateral and multilateral aid. There is also a danger that multilateral donors, who already under-invest in education, will reallocate funds.???

The World Bank now estimates that, over the next year, overall education spending in low and middle-income countries could be \$100-150 billion lower than previously planned.

This funding crisis will not resolve itself.

We call on the G20, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and regional development banks, and all countries to recognise the scale of the crisis and support initiatives to enable catching up and to resume progress toward SDG4.

First, every country should pledge to protect front-line education spending, prioritising the needs of the most disadvantaged children through conditional and unconditional cash transfers to promote school participation, where possible.

Second, the international community must increase aid for education, focusing on the most vulnerable, including the poor, girls, children in conflict situations, and the disabled. The quickest way to free up resources for education is through debt relief. The 76 poorest countries have to pay \$86 billion in debt-service costs over the next two years. We call for debt suspension, with a requirement that the money for debt servicing be reallocated to education and other priority investments for children.

Third, the IMF should issue \$1.2 trillion in Special Drawing Rights (its global reserve asset) and its membership should agree to channel these resources toward the countries that need them most, creating a platform for recovery.

And fourth, the World Bank should unlock more support for low-income countries through a supplementary International Development Association budget, and - following the lead of the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, which have now pledged \$650 million to the new International Finance Facility for Education to help unlock billions in extra finance for education in lower-middle-income countries - invite additional guarantees and grants from donors. This is in addition to the replenishment over next two years of the Global Partnership for Education, scaled-up investment in Education Cannot Wait, and continued support for the UN agencies focused on education and children (led by Unesco and Unicef). We also call on private-sector corporations and foundations to make support for global education a greater priority.

Sustainable human development can only be built on a foundation of quality education. While the challenges are momentous, the impact of the crisis on children has made us even more determined to realise the ambition contained in SDG4, that ours can be the first generation in history in which every child is in school and has the chance to develop their potential to the fullest. Now is the time for national governments and the international community to come together to give children and young people the opportunities they deserve and to which they are entitled.

...  
Project Syndicate



IT IS PART OF THE SHARED CULTURE OF humankind, and our analysis shows that it also contributes to mental and physical health," the author added.

# ACT OF KINDNESS BENEFIT

## Health And well-being: Study

**Agencies**

Helping other people, showing some act of kindness to others can be good for people's health and well-being, according to research published by the American Psychological Association.

However, not all good-hearted behavior is equally beneficial to the giver. The strength of the link depends on many factors, including the type of kindness, the definition of well-being, and the giver's age, gender and other demographic factors.

The study was published in the

journal Psychological Bulletin.

"Prosocial behavior--altruism, cooperation, trust, and compassion--are all necessary ingredients of a harmonious and well-functioning society," said lead author Bryant P.H. Hui, PhD, a research assistant professor at the University of Hong Kong.

"It is part of the shared culture of humankind, and our analysis shows that it also contributes to mental and physical health," the author added.

Previous studies have suggested that people who engage in more prosocial behavior are happier and have better mental

and physical health than those who don't spend as much time helping others. However, not all studies have found evidence for that link, and the strength of the connection varies widely in the research literature.

To better understand what drives that variation, Hui and his colleagues performed a meta-analysis of 201 independent studies, comprising 198,213 total participants, that looked at the connection between prosocial behavior and well-being. Overall, they found that there was a modest link between the two. Although the effect size was small,

it is still meaningful, according to Hui, given how many people perform acts of kindness every day.

Digging deeper into the research, Hui and his colleagues found that random acts of kindness, such as helping an older neighbor carry groceries, were more strongly associated with overall well-being than formal prosocial behavior, such as scheduled volunteering for a charity.

That may be because informal helping is more casual and spontaneous and may more easily lead to forming social connections, according to Hui. Informal giving is also more varied and

less likely to become stale or monotonous, he said.

The researchers also found a stronger link between kindness and what is known as eudaimonic well-being (which focuses on self-actualization, realizing one's potential, and finding meaning in life), than between kindness and hedonic well-being (which refers to happiness and positive feelings).

The effects varied by age, according to Hui, who began this research at the University of Cambridge. Younger givers reported higher levels of overall well-being, eudaimonic well-being, and psychological function-

ing, while older givers reported higher levels of physical health.

Also, women showed stronger relationships between prosociality and several measures of well-being compared with men--perhaps because women are stereotypically expected to be more caring and giving, and thus derive a stronger sense of good feelings for acting in accordance with those social norms, according to the study.

Finally, the researchers found that studies that were specifically designed to measure the connection between prosociality and well-being showed a stron-

ger link between the two than studies that analyzed data from other large surveys not specifically designed to study the topic.

Future research should examine several other potentially important moderators that the research literature has largely ignored so far, the researchers suggest - for example, the potential effects of givers' ethnicity and social class. Researchers might also examine whether more prosociality is always a good thing, or whether there is an "ideal level" of prosociality beyond which too much kindness and giving become detrimental to the giver, according to Hui.

## Quit Smoking To Reduce Stroke Risk: Study

**Agencies**

Scientists have urged people with atrial fibrillation -- the most common heart rhythm disorder -- to quit smoking if they want to reduce stroke risk.

Previous studies have shown that smokers are more likely to develop atrial fibrillation and subsequent stroke.

"Smoking precipitates blood clots that could lead to a stroke, which may be why giving up lowers risk," said study author So-Ryoung Lee from the Seoul National University Hospital in South Korea.

"The remaining stroke risk after quitting might be through the damage already caused to the arteries -- called atherosclerosis," Lee added.



The study, presented at ESC Congress 2020 - The Digital Experience, examined the association between smoking cessation after newly diagnosed atrial fibrillation and the risks of stroke and all-cause death.

The researchers included the 97,637 Korean patients who had a national health check-up less than two years before being diagnosed with atrial fibrillation, and a second check-up within two years afterwards.

Patients were followed-up after the second check-up until the end of 2017 for the occurrence of stroke or death.

The average age was 61 years and 62 per cent were men.

Participants were classified according to smoking status before and after atrial fibrillation diagnosis: never-smoker, ex-smoker, quitter, current smoker.

The proportion of never smokers, ex-smokers, quitters, and current smokers was 51.2 per cent, 27.3 per cent, 6.9 per cent, and 14.6 per cent, respectively.

During a median three-year follow-up, there were 3,109 strokes and 4,882 all-cause deaths (10.0 per 1,000 person-years and 15.4 per 1,000 person-years, respectively).

## ‘Emotional Support From Parents Less Likely To Make Teens Cyberbullies’

**Agencies**

Emotional support from parents--and specifically, how teens perceive their relationships with their parents can be taken to understand the cyberbullying behaviors.

Adolescents who perceive their parents to be loving and supportive are less likely to engage in cyberbullying, according to a new study by researchers at NYU Rory Meyers College of Nursing.

The findings, published in the International Journal of Bullying Prevention, are especially relevant given changes in family life created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"With remote learning replacing classroom instruction for many young people, and cell phones and social media standing in for face-to-face interaction with friends, there are more opportunities for cyberbullying to occur," said Laura Grunin, a doctoral student at NYU Meyers and the study's lead author.

"New family dynamics and home stressors are also at play, thanks to higher unemployment rates and more parents working from home," Grunin added.

More than half of US teens report having experience with cyberbullying, or online behavior that may involve harassment, insults, threats, or spreading rumors.

"Understanding what factors are related to a young person's cyberbullying of peers is important for developing ways that families,



schools, and communities can prevent bullying or intervene when it occurs," said Sally S. Cohen, clinical professor at NYU Meyers and the study's senior author.

Gary Yu, associate research scientist and adjunct associate professor at NYU Meyers, coauthored the study with Grunin and Cohen.

Using data from the World Health Organization (WHO) Health Behavior in School-Aged Children survey, the researchers analyzed responses from 12,642 US pre-teens and teens (ages 11 to 15 years old) surveyed in 2009-2010, the most recent WHO data on school-aged children collected in the United States.

The adolescents were asked about their bullying behaviors, as well their perceptions of certain family characteristics, including their relationship with their parents.

The researchers found that the more adolescents perceived their parents as loving, the less likely

they were to engage in cyberbullying. When asked if their parents are loving, youth who said "almost never" were over six times more likely to engage in high levels of cyberbullying than those who answered that their parent is "almost always" loving.

Other types of emotional support, including how much teens feel their parents help and understand them, also contributed to the likelihood of whether young people engaged in cyberbullying behavior.

"Our findings point to the importance of parental emotional support as a factor that may influence whether teens cyberbully--and more importantly, it is how teens perceive the support they receive from their parents," said Grunin.

"I would stress to parents it is not necessarily if they think they are being supportive, but what their adolescent thinks. Parents should strive to discern their

teen's perception of parental emotional support as it might be associated with youth cyberbullying behavior," the author added.

Certain demographic factors were also related to teens' likelihood of cyberbullying. Girls were much less likely than boys to exhibit high levels of cyberbullying. The race also played a role: Asian American adolescents were the least likely to be cyberbullied, while African American teens were less likely than white teens to engage in lower levels of cyberbullying and more likely to engage in higher levels.

Cohen added, "Since 2010, when the survey was conducted, technology and social media have become increasingly ubiquitous in teens' lives; the increase in screen time during the current pandemic poses new challenges. Online access and anonymity in posts create widespread opportunities for cyberbullying."

The researchers note that educators, health professionals, social media experts, and others working in youth development should take family dynamics into account when creating programs to address cyberbullying.

"While our study doesn't prove that a lack of parental support directly causes cyberbullying, it does suggest that children's relationships with their parents might influence their bullying behaviors. These relationships should be considered when developing interventions to prevent cyberbullying," said Grunin.

Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir

Mechanical Hospital & Central Heating Division Srinagar

CANCELLATION

Subject: - 1. Complete servicing of CPE 100, 517 Cfm air compressor A & B of 800 LPM oxygen plant installed at Govt. Super speciality Hospital sgr.

2. Servicing of Elgi make Air Compressor feeding medical air supply at Govt. SMHS Hospital Srinagar.

References: 1.This office NIT no: MHCHD/TS /2020-21/04/e-tendering Dated 05.05.2020.

2. This office NIT no: MHCHD/TS /2020-21/06 Dated 12.05.2020.

In view of the administrative reasons, the above referred e-Nit issued by this office is hereby cancelled.

Sd/-

Executive Engineer

MHCH Division

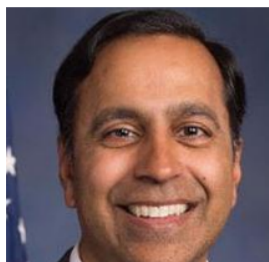
Srinagar.

DIPK-5046/20

## 2 Million Hindus Key Voting Bloc In Swing States, Says US Congressman

Agencies

Washington: The two million Hindus in the United States are a vital and key voting bloc in several swing states this presidential elections, Indian American Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi said as he told fellow community members



that it was their dharma to exercise their franchise.

In his virtual key note address at the formal launch of the "Hindu Americans for Biden", Mr Krishnamoorthi, who is the three-time Democratic Congressman from Illinois, urged his community members to vote for Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden and his Indian American running mate Kamala Harris on November 3.

"I feel it is so important to elect Joe Biden because of a Hindu value "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" (entire world is a family) a core tenant of Hindus

- we believe in treating everyone with dignity and respect," he said.

"It is an old saying in Washington DC, which is, if you don't have a seat at the table, you're on the menu. And none of us on this zoom call or our families, or communities, or Hindu Americans as a whole can afford to be on the menu, and neither can our agenda. That's why it's so important that you vote," he said.

"This year is the most important election of our lifetime before us. In 60 days, on November 3rd, believe it or not, the two million Hindu, Americans in this country will be a vital and key voting bloc in several swing states. Not only Florida, but Virginia and Pennsylvania and Michigan and Wisconsin, and the list goes on and on. It is our duty, indeed it is our dharma to vote," Krishnamoorthi said.

"Voting is our Dharma, and it's at the heart of our society," said Amit Jani, Biden Campaign National AAPI director.

Moderating the launch event, Niki Shah, co-state director of New Jersey, South Asians for Biden, said that hate crimes and acts of vandalism have increased in the last three and half years and that it was unacceptable.

## China Plans Building Spree In Tibet As India Tensions Rise: Report

Agencies

Beijing: China is planning a more than 1 trillion yuan (\$146 billion) push to accelerate infrastructure investment in Tibet, including new and previously announced projects, three sources familiar with the matter said.

The renewed push to step-up development of the remote and impoverished southwestern

Railway, according to remarks published by the official Xinhua news agency.

The construction plans include completion of the challenging middle section of a high-elevation Sichuan-Tibet railway link, a railway line between Nepal and Tibet that has remained in the planning stages, and a newly planned dry port in the Tibet Autonomous Region, the



region signals Beijing's intent to bolster frontier security amid heightened border tensions with India in recent months, two of the sources said.

Last week, during a senior Communist Party meeting on Tibet's future governance, China's President Xi Jinping lauded achievements and praised frontline officials but said more efforts were needed to enrich, rejuvenate and strengthen unity in the region.

He said a number of major infrastructure projects and public facilities would be completed, including the Sichuan-Tibet

sources said.

The sources declined to be identified because they were not authorised to speak with media.

It was not immediately clear how much of the targeted spending is new, or over how many years it would be invested.

China's State Council Information Office and the Tibet regional government did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Construction on the most difficult section of the Sichuan-Tibet railway - linking Chengdu with Lhasa - will begin in coming weeks, said two of the sources.



## Russia's COVID-19 Vaccine "Safe", Passes Early Trial Test: Lancet Study

Agencies

London: Patients involved in early tests of a Russian coronavirus vaccine developed antibodies with "no serious adverse events", according to research published in The Lancet Friday, but experts said the trials were too small to prove safety and effectiveness.

Russia announced last month that its vaccine, named "Sputnik V" after the Soviet-era satellite that was the first launched into space in 1957, had already received approval.

This raised concerns among Western scientists over a lack of safety data, with some warning that moving too quickly on a vaccine could be dangerous.

Russia denounced criticism as an attempt to undermine Moscow's research.

In the Lancet study, Russian researchers reported on two small trials, each involving 38 healthy adults aged between 18 and 60, who were given a two-part immunisation.

Each participant was given a dose of the first part of the vaccine and then given a booster with the second part 21 days later.

They were monitored over 42 days and all developed antibodies within the first three

weeks.

The report said the data showed that the vaccine was "safe, well tolerated, and does not cause serious adverse events in healthy adult volunteers".

The trials were open label and not randomised, meaning there was no placebo and the participants knew they were receiving the vaccine and were not randomly assigned to different treatment groups.

Researchers underlined that larger and longer trials - including a placebo comparison - would be needed to establish the long-term safety and effectiveness of the vaccine for preventing Covid-19 infection.

The report said the 76 participants of these trials would be monitored up to 180 days, adding that a more rigorous phase 3 clinical trial was planned with the involvement of 40,000 volunteers "from different age and risk groups".

"Safety is paramount"

Naor Bar-Zeev of Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, who was not involved in the study, said the research was "encouraging but small", adding that it did not give any data on effectiveness among older age groups, who are particularly vulnerable to

Covid-19.

"Showing safety will be crucial with Covid-19 vaccines, not only for vaccine acceptance but also for trust in vaccination broadly," he said in a commentary in the Lancet.

"Since vaccines are given to healthy people and, during the COVID-19 pandemic, potentially to everyone after approval following phase 3 trials, safety is paramount."

The pandemic has seen an unprecedented mobilisation of funding and research to rush through a vaccine that can protect billions of people worldwide.

This week the US urged states to get ready for a potential Covid-19 vaccine rollout two days before the presidential election in November, sparking concerns President Donald Trump's administration is accelerating research to fit a political timetable.

Russia has said that industrial production of its version is expected from September.

President Vladimir Putin said in early August that the vaccine gave "sustainable immunity" and that one of his own daughters had been inoculated, even though Russia's health ministry said clinical trials were not yet complete.

## Bahrain to allow Israel flights to UAE over its airspace

Agencies

Abu Dhabi: Bahrain will allow "all flights coming to and departing from the United Arab Emirates" to cross through the island kingdom's airspace - a statement apparently allowing Israeli flights after neighboring Saudi Arabia issued a similar announcement.

The state-run Bahrain News Agency (BNA) made the announcement without directly naming Israel, just as Saudi Arabia had. However, the announcement late Thursday came just days after the kingdom allowed the first direct Israeli commercial passenger flight to use its airspace to reach the UAE.

The statement makes no mention of the kingdom's rival, Iran, nor Qatar, which

Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the UAE are currently boycotting.

Flights between Bahrain and the UAE now skirt just north of Qatari airspace as Doha remains banned from the airspace of boycotting nations amid a yearslong political dispute. Iranian flights to the UAE similarly don't need to enter the airspace of Bahrain, an island nation just off the coast of Saudi Arabia in the Persian Gulf.

BNA cited an unnamed Transportation and Telecommunication Ministry official for the announcement, saying it came at the request of civil aviation authorities in the UAE, a federation of seven sheikhdoms home to Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

Earlier this week, Jared Kushner, the US president's son-in-law and senior ad-

viser, flew with a high-level Israeli delegation to the UAE on the first direct commercial passenger flight between the two countries. The flight traversed Saudi airspace, signaling at least acquiescence for the breakthrough US-brokered agreement by the United Arab Emirates to normalise relations with Israel.

The UAE has promoted the deal as hinging on Israel halting its contentious plan to annex parts of the West Bank sought by the Palestinians for their future state. The deal also may allow Abu Dhabi to purchase advanced weaponry from the US, including the F-35 stealth fighter jet.

The Palestinians have fiercely opposed the normalisation as peeling away one of their few advantages in moribund peace talks with Israel.

## Afghan govt frees Taliban prisoners except 'few' opposed by foreign nations

Agencies

KABUL: The Afghan government said Thursday it had released 400 Taliban prisoners under an exchange deal with the militants, except for "a few" opposed by foreign nations, and expected peace negotiations to start soon.

The two warring sides have grown closer this week to launching direct talks in Qatar, tying up the end of a contentious and months-long prisoner exchange.

Kabul has already sent a logistical team to Doha where the Taliban's political office is based, with the negotiators expected to depart later on Thursday.

"The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has received our commandos held hostage by Taliban, after which the Gov't released the remaining 400 convicts, except the few for which our partners have reservations," National Security Council spokesman Javid Faisal said on Twitter.

"Diplomatic efforts are ongoing. We expect direct talks to start promptly."

Two Taliban officials confirmed the prisoners had been freed but that those opposed by France and Australia were still in government custody.

Paris and Canberra made protests over the release of the militants because of their links to the murders of French and Australian civilians and troops in Afghanistan.

"Australia and France have some considerations about them," one Taliban official told AFP on condition of

anonymity.

"The Kabul administration will send them to Qatar where they will be in custody during the intra-Afghan talks."

A Western diplomatic source, however, said the decision had not yet been taken.

A date for talks to start is yet to be fixed.

Negotiations were initially supposed to begin in March as agreed in a deal between the Taliban and Washington in February, from which Kabul had been excluded.

But repeated squabbles over the prisoner exchange delayed the negotiations, including the Taliban's demand that 400 prisoners accused of serious crimes be among those freed.

The prisoner exchange agreed between the US and the Taliban stipulated that Kabul should release a total of 5,000 militants in return for the insurgents freeing 1,000 Afghan troops.

The Taliban have said they were willing to begin negotiations "within a week" of the prisoner swap being completed and blamed Kabul for delaying the negotiations.

President Ashraf Ghani said on Wednesday that a "critical stage of peace" had been reached and that the talks would help reduce violence and finalise a permanent ceasefire.

Afghan officials, meanwhile, called for the start of direct talks with the Taliban.

Najia Anwari, spokeswoman for the State Ministry for Peace Affairs, said on Thursday the government had "removed all the obstacles for the direct talks to start".

## NZ Records First Covid-19 Death In Over Three Months

Agencies

Wellington, New Zealand: New Zealand recorded its first coronavirus death in more than three months on Friday when a man in his 50s died due to the virus.

also for the family and whanau (relatives) grieving over this death," health chief Ashley Bloomfield said in a statement.

"Our thoughts are with his family and community at this time of loss and grief."



Health officials said the man was part of a second-wave cluster of infections that emerged in Auckland last month, ending a spell of 102 days free of community transmission in the South Pacific nation.

The death at Auckland's Middlemore Hospital on Friday afternoon takes New Zealand's death count from the virus to 23, with the most recent previous fatality on May 24.

"I acknowledge the anxiety New Zealanders may be feeling about today's news, both in the wider community and

The Auckland cluster emerged in a family of four and has since grown to 152, including three recorded on Friday.

It has proved difficult to eliminate despite a two-and-a-half week lockdown in Auckland that ended on Sunday night.

"We have always recognised that further deaths linked to Covid-19 were possible," Bloomfield said.

"Today's news reinforces the importance of our shared vigilance against Covid-19, the very serious consequences the virus can carry with it."

## Heartbeat Detected Under Rubble A Month After Beirut Blast, Search Resumes

Beirut: Rescuers resumed a search Friday for possible survivors under rubble in Beirut, buoyed by faint hopes of a miracle a month after a monster blast ripped through the city's port.

The cataclysmic August 4 explosion killed a total of 191 people, making it Lebanon's deadliest peacetime disaster. One month on, seven people are still listed as missing.

Hopes emerged on Thursday that one of them could still be found alive after a specialist sensor device detected a heart beat under the debris of a flattened building.

Crews of rescue workers from Chile and Lebanon used their hands on Friday to lift chunks of rubble from the site between the hard-hit districts of Gemmayzeh



and Mar Mikhail.

They resumed their efforts after pausing briefly overnight, an AFP photographer at the scene said.

"We have excavated rubble but we haven't reached a conclusion yet," said George Abou Mousa of Lebanon's civil defence.

The pulse they detected on Friday had already slowed signifi-

cantly compared to a previous recording, said Nicholas Saade, who coordinates between the Chilean and Lebanese rescuers.

"After removing the big chunks we scanned again for heartbeats or respiration, it showed low beat/respiration" levels of seven per minute, he told AFP.

## Trump Called US Marines Killed In WWI Battle "Losers": Report

Washington, United States: US President Donald Trump referred to US Marines buried in a WWI cemetery in France as "losers" and "suckers" for getting killed in action, according to a report Thursday in the Atlantic magazine.

The report, penned by the magazine's editor-in-chief Jeffrey Goldberg, said Trump had refused to visit the Aisne-Marne American Cemetery near Paris in 2018 because "he feared his hair would become disheveled in the rain," although the official explanation offered by aides was that the helicopter due to take him there could not fly due to weather.

"In a conversation with senior staff members on the morning of the scheduled visit, Trump said, 'Why should I go to that cemetery? It's filled with losers,'" the article said.

"In a separate conversation on the same trip, Trump referred to the more than 1,800 marines who lost their lives at Belleau Wood as 'suckers' for getting



killed," the Atlantic added, citing four unnamed people it said had firsthand knowledge of the discussions.

Trump and his team slammed the report. The president refuted the article "in very emphatic terms," chief of staff Mark Meadows told reporters. "He was more offended by them."

White House communications director Alyssa Farah said on Twitter that the allegations were "offensive & patently false," while Trump campaign press secretary Hogan Gidley called them "disgusting, grotesque, reprehensible lies."

## MacKenzie Scott becomes world's richest woman

MacKenzie Scott, philanthropist, author, and former wife of Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos, has become the richest woman of the world.

Her net worth is now \$68 billion, propelling her past L'Oréal heiress Francoise Bettencourt Meyers, reports CNN citing Bloomberg's Billionaire index.

In 2019, Scott received a quarter of Bezos' Amazon shares in the couple's divorce settlement amounting to more than \$35 billion at the time.

She is now the 12th wealthiest person in the world.



N E W S M A K E R S

# Don't Show Off Like Singhams, PM Modi To Police Officers



**HYDERABAD:** New police officers should not be influenced by films like "Singham" that portrayed supercops, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said today, adding some police personnel want to first show-off but miss out on main aspects of policing.

Addressing the 2018 batch of IPS probationers at the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy through video conferencing, he also cautioned them not to indulge in wrongdoings and said they would land in troubles with the latest technologies, which are also useful in better policing.

"Some policemen who join new duty want to first show-off... scare people... And anti-social elements should shiver from hearing my name itself... after watching films like "Singham", it gets over their mind and because of it those works which need to be done get missed out," PM Modi noted.

Responding to a woman probationer, PM Modi heaped praise on the people of Kashmir, saying they are "lovely" people and having special ability to learn new things.

"I am very connected to these people. They treat you with so much love... All of us together, we have to work towards stopping the children from taking a wrong direction.

"And this can be done by our women police officers efficiently. Our women force can effectively work in educating the mothers and bringing back those children. I am confident if you do that, in the initial stage it-

self we can prevent our children from getting into the wrong path," PM Modi said.

He was apparently referring to youngsters being radicalised and made to join terror groups in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Prime Minister also stressed on constabulary intelligence for effective policing.

Nowadays technology plays an important role in crime detection, be it CCTV footage, mobile tracking...it helps you in a big way. But, the same technology is also responsible for suspension of police personnel nowadays..., PM Modi warned.

The way technology is helpful it is also becoming a cause of musibat (difficulty)...and police are subjected to it more, he added.

He further said the police officials need to train people to see how technology can be used to its maximum and in a positive way as big data and artificial intelligence, social media were the new age technologies which can be used as weapons for better policing.

The "humane" side of the police force in the country came to fore during the coronavirus pandemic and the security personnel did a commendable job.

During coronavirus times, police used to sing songs to create awareness, used to feed the poor and take patients.

These scenes were witnessed by people... During the coronavirus, humanity worked through Khaki uniform, he said.

Replying to one of the cadets from Tamil Nadu on managing stress among police personnel, PM Modi said farmers also face stress if there was unwanted variation in rainfall.

He also noted that yoga and pranayama were great ways to beat the stress.

# Chinese Are Encircling Indian Sub-Continent: Sharad Pawar

**MUMBAI:** NCP president Sharad Pawar on Thursday said the Chinese are "surreptitiously" encircling the Indian sub-continent, and India must keep a close watch on developments in Sri Lanka and Nepal.

He had invited former foreign secretary Vijay Gokhale and Air Marshal Bhushan Gokhale (Retd) for interaction with NCP MPs Supriya Sule, Praful Patel, Amol Kolhe and Vandana Chavan against the background of the stand-off in eastern Ladakh, Mr Pawar tweeted.

The former defence minister said that during the meeting he expressed his concerns over a larger strategic and political thinking in China that aims to halt India's economic growth.

"I highlighted the fact that the Chinese are surreptitiously encircling the Indian Sub-Continent from all directions and also expressed my concern over their presence in the South China Sea," Mr Pawar said in another tweet.



"I hinted at the need to keep a close watch on affairs of Sri Lanka and Nepal and also the Chinese interventions in general," he added.

Vijay Gokhale spoke about the history of Indo-China relationship, especially the border disputes. The former foreign secretary shared his views on the current situation on the Line of Actual Control (LAC), Mr Pawar said.

Air Marshal Gokhale emphasized that India must take into consideration the new era of parallel warfare that includes cyber war, information war, perception creation and war on economic fronts, the NCP president added.



A VILLAGE damsel heads home after a hectic day in the fields in central Kashmir- KO Photo Abid Bhat

# Trust, Non-Aggression Key For Regional Peace, Says Rajnath Amid India-China Border Row

Peace and security in the SCO region demands a climate of trust, non-aggression, respect for international rules and peaceful resolution of differences, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Friday, seen as an indirect message to China which is engaged in a festering border row with India in eastern Ladakh.

In his address at a ministerial meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in Moscow, Singh also referred to the Second World War and said its memories teach the globe the "foibles of aggression" of one state upon another that brings "destruction" to all.

Both India and China are members of the SCO, an eight-nation regional grouping which primarily focuses on issues relating to security and defence.

"Peaceful stable and secure region of SCO member states which is home to over 40 per cent of the global population, demands a climate of trust and cooperation, non-aggression, respect for international rules and norms, sensitivity to each other's interest and peaceful resolution of differences," Singh said.

He made the comments in the presence of Chinese Defence Minister Gen. Wei Fenghe.

Indian and Chinese troops are engaged in a bitter standoff in multiple places in eastern Ladakh for four



months. Tensions flared up in the region after China unsuccessfully attempted to occupy Indian territory in the southern bank of Pangong lake five days back.

"This year marks the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War as well as the formation of the United Nations which underpins a peaceful world, where international laws and sovereignty of states are respected and states refrain from unilateral aggression on another," he said.

The defence minister also talked about threat of terrorism and extremism and pitched for having institutional capacity to deal with the challenges.

He said India "unequivocally" condemns terrorism in all forms and manifestations, and condemns its "proponents", adding New Delhi values the works of SCO Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS).

"We laud recent work of RATS in the cyber domain to prevent the spread of radicalism and extremism. The adoption of anti-terror measures by the SCO Council to counter extremist propaganda and de-radicalisation is a significant decision, he added.

In his address at the combined meeting of defence ministers of SCO, Collective Security Treaty Organisation and Commonwealth of Independent States member states, Singh said India was committed to the evolution of a global security architecture which will be "open, transparent, inclusive, rules-based and anchored in international laws."

He also expressed deep concern over the situation in the Persian Gulf region.

India has vital interests and links of civilisation and culture with all States in the Gulf. We call upon countries in the region all of which are dear and friendly to India, to resolve differences by dialogue based on mutual respect, sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs of each other, he said.

Referring to developments in Afghanistan, Singh said the security situation in the country remained a matter of concern.

"India will continue to support the efforts of the people and Government of Afghanistan for an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled inclusive peace process.

# Amid Tension With China, India To Host Quad Meet Later This Year

**NEW DELHI:** India will hosting the Quad foreign ministers meet later this year, the external affairs ministry has confirmed.

"We look forward to holding QUAD meet later this year and details are being worked out," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said on Thursday.

Foreign ministers of the group had met last year in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly (UNGA). Along with India, Quad Quad or the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue includes Australia, Japan and the United States.

Apart from the Quad meeting, details are also being worked out for the India-US 2+2 dialogue.

Both of these meetings are taking place at a time when China is facing the global ire for trampling democ-



racy in Hong Kong, human rights violations in Xinjiang, alleged breach of internet privacy in various countries and attempting to unilaterally change the status quo at the India China border violating all bilateral agreements and protocols.

Beijing is also displaying strong-arm tactics in the South China Sea and is being blamed by some quarters for the spread of COVID-19 globally which originated in its labs in Wuhan. US President Donald Trump has re-

ferred to COVID-19 as "Chinese virus".

The US had also imposed restrictions on Chinese diplomats in the country. India has also banned several Chinese apps and popular game Pubg and Indian Railways has cancelled Chinese investment.

As major powers of the world get sceptical about China, India is looking forward to replacing the Asian giant as a production and services hub of the world.

Quad countries including Australia and Japan have assured huge investments in India's infrastructure technology and supply chain.

The United States has also hailed India as a big power in India-Pacific.

China watchers here feel that Beijing will be watching Quad and 2+2 meet very closely as it views this grouping of democratic powers with a sense of alarm.

# CBSE Class 10, 12 Compartment Exams To Be Held From September 22-29

**NEW DELHI:** The compartment examinations for classes 10 and 12 will be conducted from September 22 to 29, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) announced on Friday.

The board said that examinees will carry hand sanitisers and wear face masks in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The compartment examination for the two classes will begin from September 22 and will conclude on September 29. All candidates will carry their own hand sanitiser in transparent bottles and (their own) water bottles, and will be required to cover their mouth and nose with mask or cloth," CBSE Exam Controller Sanyam Bhardwaj said in an official notification detailing the exam schedule.

Earlier in the day, the CBSE opposed in the Supreme Court a plea seeking postponement of compartment exams for Class 12



scheduled this month, saying all "necessary" safety measures for students are being taken in view of COVID-19 pandemic.

The plea challenged the CBSE's decision to hold compartment examinations for Class 12 on the ground that it would be detrimental to the health of the examinees in view of rising COVID-19 cases.

The apex court will hear the case on September 10. PTI

# Horror In UP: 3-Year-Old Raped And Murdered In Lakhimpur



A three-year-old girl, who was found dead in a sugarcane field in Uttar Pradesh's Lakhimpur Kheri, was raped before murder, a senior police officer said on Friday.

This is the third such incident in the district in as many weeks.

The girl's body, which bore injury marks on the head, was recovered from the vicinity of her village in Singahi area on Thursday after she went missing on Wednesday, police said.

"The postmortem report has confirmed rape. I am with family members right now. Seven of our teams are working on the case. I am myself going for combing in sugarcane fields and strict action will be taken against the accused," Superintendent of Police Sanyendra Kumar Singh told PTI over phone.

"If needed, NSA will also be invoked against the accused," he said.

In his complaint to police, the girl's father had alleged

that Lekhrum, a resident of their village, had abducted and killed the child due to past enmity with his family.

A case of murder was lodged against the accused.

Lakhimpur Kheri district was in the news recently when a 17-year-old dalit girl was found dead outside her village. She was allegedly raped and murdered after she left home to fill a scholarship application.

Her mutilated body was found near a dry pond, around 200 metres away from her village falling under the Neemgaon police limits.

Prior to this incident, a 13-year-old girl was raped and killed in the district.

Police said the girl had gone to her fields in the afternoon and when she did not return home, her family started looking for her. She was found dead in a sugarcane field.

Both incidents drew flak from the opposition, with Congress and SP leaders attacking the Yogi Adityanath government over the law and order situation.

**THE POSTMORTEM REPORT HAS confirmed rape. I am with family members right now. Seven of our teams are working on the case. I am myself going for combing in sugarcane fields and strict action will be taken against the accused,"**

## NEWS MAKERS

### Man Rides 1,200 Km On Scooter To Take Wife To Madhya Pradesh Exam Centre

**GWALIOR:** Rains and potholed roads were no deterrence for a Jharkhand man who drove over 1,200 km on a scooter, with his pregnant wife sitting pillion, so that she could appear for an exam for aspiring teachers here in Madhya Pradesh.

The tribal couple, Dhananjay Kumar (27) and his wife Soni Hembram (22), travelled on the two-wheeler from Ganta Tola village in Godda district of Jharkhand to reach Gwalior, a centre for DEd (Diploma in Education) exam, required to be cleared by those wanting to take up teaching jobs.

The wish to see his wife become a schoolteacher inspired Mr Kumar to undertake the arduous journey, covering more than 1,200 km across four states, braving rains and



bad roads in the midst of COVID-19 enforced lockdown.

As trains, buses and other means of transport were not available, we decided to traverse the journey by road on our two-wheeler, Mr Kumar told PTI on Friday. My wife, who is pregnant, was initially reluctant to take this arduous journey. But after seeing my determination, she agreed for this long journey, he said. The couple arrived on August 30 for DEd exam being conducted by the MP Board of Secondary Education. The examination will continue till September 11.

As a video of the couple and

their journey taken by some newsmen went viral on social media, the district administration stepped in to help them.

If I had hired a taxi for coming to Gwalior, it would have cost 30,000 which was a big amount for me. Whatever little jewellery we have, we mortgaged it to raise 10,000.

"So far, we have spent 5,000 on our one-way journey and on a room that we have taken on rent in Deendayal Nagar here, Kumar, who has studied till Class 8, said. We started off on August 28 morning and enroute stayed a night each in Muzaffarpur (Bihar) and Lucknow to reach Gwalior on our scooter, said Kumar, who was working as a cook with a caterer before he lost his job three months ago because of lockdown.

### Released From Jail, Kafeel Khan Wants Old Job Back In UP Medical Services

**JAIPUR:** Days after a court dismissed his detention under the National Security Act, Dr Kafeel Khan on Thursday said he will ask Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath to give him back his job in the state medical services.

Dr Khan was addressing a press conference in the Rajasthan capital, where he said felt "safe" as it is a Congress-run state - indirectly comparing it with Uttar Pradesh. He was suspended from Gorakhpur's BRD Medical College after several children died there in 2017, apparently due to the lack of oxygen cylinders at the government hospital.

A departmental inquiry later cleared Dr Khan of most of the charges, but he found him-



self in trouble for an allegedly provocative speech in Aligarh over the amended citizenship law. He was detained under the stringent NSA, which the Allahabad High Court on Tuesday ruled was illegal.

"As the High Court has quashed the charges under the NSA lodged against me, I would write to the Uttar Pradesh chief minister to reinstate me in the medical service," he told reporters. "If I am not allowed, I will hold medical

campus in flood-affected areas of Assam as an activist," he added.

The doctor said he and his family arrived in Jaipur as they felt safe there.

"There is a Congress government in Rajasthan. My family felt that we will be safe here. I wanted to spend some quality time with my family," he said.

He said he was falsely implicated by the UP government and sent to jail as he had exposed the system.

"I was leading a simple life. I tried to expose the system as children died at BRD Medical College due to lack of oxygen. This did not go well with our chief minister and a false case was lodged, and I was sent to jail," he claimed.

### 'Holding JEE-NEET Like Jallianwalla Bagh'

BJP MP Subramanian Swamy has been vociferous in supporting demands of students to postpone the NEET and JEE qualifying examinations that are to be held this month due to the COVID-19 situation.

While not directly criticising Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Swamy had been warning that the BJP could pay a steep electoral cost for not heeding students' sentiments.

In August, Swamy warned that the Modi government going ahead with NEET and JEE would be a "giant mistake" similar to the Indira Gandhi government's mass sterilisation programme (Nasbandi) during the Emergency of 1975-1977. The legacy of Nasbandi was a key reason in the Congress being wiped out in north India during the 1977 elections and is still considered a burden for the party.

On Friday, Swamy compared the

move to hold NEET and JEE to another emotive incident in Indian history: The Jallianwalla Bagh massacre of 1919. The Jallianwalla Bagh massacre is considered a turning point in Indian history as it led to a surge in support for independence from British rule. Swamy tweeted, "JEE/ NEET exams in the middle of a galloping COVID-19 infections, paralysing lockdown effects, a collapsing economy, a monsoon in bloom, Chinese Dragon gobbling our territory, & chors and murderers in Bollywood, is like Jallianwalla Bagh where innocent were gunned down."

On August 31, Swamy had warned going ahead with JEE and NEET could lead to a massive spike in COVID-19 cases and result in India overtaking the US as the country with most infections. Swamy tweeted, "May be we will overtake US after the proposed JEE/NEET exams are over..."