

Maximum : 29°C
Minum : 16°C
Humidity : 54%SUNSET
Today 06:47 PM
SUNRISE
Tomorrow 06:09 AMContact: -0194-2502327
FOR SUBSCRIPTIONS &
YOUR COPY OF

News Digest

IED Defused In
Kupwara

Srinagar: An improvised explosive device (IED) was found on roadside near Arampora in Kupwara on Monday. Official sources said that the IED was detected by police and army, reported news agency GNS. They said bomb disposal squad teams of the Army and police reached to the spot and destroyed it safely, they added. A senior police officer confirmed the recovery as well as defusing of the device

Biker Killed In
Hit And Run

Srinagar: A motorcyclist on Monday was killed while his pillion rider was injured after being hit by a vehicle in north Kashmir's Kupwara district. Mudasir Ahmad Sheikh and Mehraj-ud-Din Bhat were critically injured when an unknown vehicle hit their motorbike near Kawari Bridge in the border district, reports said. The vehicle fled from the spot after the accident while the duo was shifted to District Hospital Handwara for treatment, where Sheikh was declared brought dead on arrival. A police official told news agency KNS that manhunt has been launched to trace the unknown vehicle that

3 Booked For Cheating
J&K Couple

Jammu- Three persons, including a Mohali-based visa consultancy firm owner, were booked by the crime branch for allegedly cheating a couple from Jammu and Kashmir of over Rs 4.50 lakh on the pretext of sending them to Canada on a work visa, officials said. The Jammu crime branch registered a criminal case against Aditya, the owner of Consultancy VFS Global Associates, and his associates Daljeet Singh and Love Preet Singh for defrauding the couple of Rs 4.59,800, they said. Manpreet Singh and Gagandeep Kour, residents of Bharkh village in J&K's Reasi district, in

LAWDA Demolishes
Illegal Structures

Srinagar: The Lakes and Waterways Development Authority (LAWDA) on Monday carried out demolition drive in several parts of the city. The Enforcement Wing of LAWDA today carried out several demolitions in Harwan, Saidakadal, Nishat and Habak areas in collaboration with concerned Police Stations, an official spokesperson said. During the drive, he said, plinth, two single storeys and third storey raised by violators while taking undue advantage of the prevailing situation in the valley were dismantled. "Also FIR's were registered in the concerned police stations against the violators," the official spokesperson said.

Youth Killed After
SUV Falls Into Gorge

Jammu: A 22-year-old man was killed on Monday when a private passenger vehicle skidded off the road and plunged into a 500-foot deep gorge in Ramban district of Jammu and Kashmir, police said. Kuldeep Singh, a resident of Bagna village, allegedly took away the SUV of Farooq Ahmad who had parked it on a link road outside his Alsi village Sunday night, a police official said. On seeing his vehicle missing in the morning, Ahmad was on way to lodge a police complaint when he came to know

Arunachal Is 'South Tibet',
China Remains Defiant

Dismisses India's Claim Of Abducting 5 Men

Agencies

BEIJING: China on Monday adopted a decidedly unfriendly posture to the Indian Army's question asking if five civilians who went missing from Arunachal Pradesh days ago were in the custody of the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

China has never recognised the "so-called 'Arunachal Pradesh', which is China's south Tibet region", the Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian told a news briefing on Monday in response to a question about the missing Indians.

"We have no details to release yet about question on Indian Army sending a message to PLA about the five missing Indians in the region," he added, denying knowledge of the abduction.

The Indian Army had told its Chinese counterpart about the five civilians, who were engaged as guides and porters by the Army in the Upper Subansiri district on the Sino-India border, on Saturday.

Those allegedly kidnapped have been identified as Toch Singkam, Prasat Ringling, Dong-



Image for representation

Jaishankar To Discuss LAC
Crisis With Chinese Counterpart

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar is likely to have a stopover in Iran on Tuesday on his way to a four-day visit to Russia, where he is expected to hold a bilateral meeting with his Chinese

SSF Commando Laid To Rest In Leh

Niyima Tenzin, a commando of the Special Frontier Force (SFF) who was killed in a land mine blast a week back in eastern Ladakh, was laid to rest in Leh with military honours, official sources said. Tenzin died on the intervening night of August

tu Ebiya, Tanu Baker and Ngaru Diri. They had gone for hunting in a jungle when they were allegedly kidnapped by the PLA.

Two members of the group returned home and informed the families of the other five that they had been

Guns Roar Along
LOC In Rajouri

Jammu: Indian and Pakistani troops Monday exchanged fresh bout of fire along the Line of Control (LoC) in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir.

A defence spokesperson said that Pakistani troops on Monday violated ceasefire by resorting to firing and shelling on forward areas along the LoC in Rajouri district.

The firing from small arms and shelling from mortars from across the border was "unprovoked", he added.

The spokesman said the cross-border shelling

Kashmir Action
'Threatened'

Peace: Pak Army

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa has sent out an open warning to India, claiming that his country would win the "fifth generation or hybrid war".

Addressing a ceremony marking Defence Day and Martyrs' Day at the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi on Sunday, Bajwa said Pakistan is facing multiple challenges aimed at discrediting the country and its armed forces.

"We are facing the challenge that has been imposed on us in the form of the fifth generation or hybrid war. Its purpose is to discredit

NC Leader Among 18
More Die Of Covid-19,
J&K Toll 806

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: At least 18 more people, including a senior National Conference leader and former legislator Thakur Rachpal Singh died of coronavirus in Jammu and Kashmir on Monday, taking the total number of Covid-19 fatalities across the Union Territory to 806.

While Kashmir valley reported ten more coronavirus deaths, the remaining eight were confirmed by the officials from the Jammu division, officials said. Among the victims from Valley included three

each from Srinagar and Baramulla besides one each from Pulwama, Kulgam, Shopian and Budgam.

Regarding Jammu, they said, four of the victims were from winter capital of the J&K two from Rajouri and one each from Kathua and Doda.

Senior NC leader died of COVID-19 at a hospital in Reasi district of Jammu division on Monday, officials said. The 69-year-old Singh is survived by wife, son and two daughters, a party leader said.

AN OFFICIAL AT THE HOSPITAL said the National Conference leader was suffering from fever, cough and also complained of breathlessness.

87 Travellers Among 1013 New Cases

Jammu and Kashmir on Monday reported 1013 new Covid-19 cases, including 87 travelers, taking the total number of people infected by the virus in the Union Territory to 44570. Among the fresh cases, 413 are from Kashmir Valley and 600 from Jammu division, taking the overall tally to 44570. Giving district-wise break of the cases, official sources said that Srinagar reported 136,

...SHOPIAN 'FAKE ENCOUNTER'

SC Petitioner Gets PIL For
SIT Probe Withdrawn In SC

Agencies

SRINAGAR: A Public Interest Litigation, seeking a probe by Special Investigation Team into claims by government forces regarding the "encounter" at Amshipora Shopian on July 18 this year, was withdrawn even as the Supreme Court granted petitioner liberty to file same before the J&K High Court.

Three "militants" were claimed to have been killed by army who was "later" joined by police and paramilitary CRPF. However, the families of

the three persons from Rajouri, who after failing to contact their loved ones since July 17 and after seeing pictures on social media claimed slain to be their kin who had gone to Shopian for "labour".

A bench of justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul, Aniruddha Bose and Krishna Murari after hearing the petitioner through counsel allowed him to withdraw the petition to raise the issues before the Jammu & Kashmir High Court.

"The Writ Petition is dismissed as withdrawn with the aforesaid liberty," the apex court said

THE WRIT PETITION IS DISMISSED AS withdrawn with the aforesaid liberty," the apex court said in an order.

Militants Escape After Brief
Encounter In Budgam

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: Groups of youth engaged in stone pelting and clashed with state forces near the site of a gunfight between militants and troops in Budgam district of Jammu and Kashmir on Monday even as the militants managed to escape the cordon, officials said.

Acting on specific information about the presence of militants in the Kawoosa area of Budgam district in central Kashmir, government forces launched a cordon and search operation there, the officials said.

They said the search operation turned into an encounter after the militants fired upon the



KO Photo Abid Bhat

Govt Puts Off SMC
Mayor Polls By 3
More Months

SRINAGAR- The government on Monday deferred by three more months the elections to the post of Mayor Srinagar Municipal Corporation in wake of an amendment made to the rules today itself.

The post of Mayor SMC fell vacant on June 16 and was to be filled up within a period of one month in terms of Section 36 of the Jammu & Kashmir Municipal Corporation Act, 2000.

However, on July 15 the election was deferred till September 15 in terms of the amendment made by the government in the rules, citing the health pandemic due to COVID-19.

Then the government inserted second proviso to sub-section (2) of section 36 of the

Sinha Visits Jagti Township, Raghunath Bazar
KPs Raise Demand Of More
Townships In J&K With LG

Observer News Service

JAMMU: The members of Kashmiri Pandit community on Monday demanded more townships for the migrant families, besides retrieval of encroached properties and compensation for damaged properties in Kashmir.

The Kashmir Pandit community members living in Jagti Township here submitted a written memorandum, flagging various issues of importance to the Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha during his visit on Monday, an

NEP-2020 Will Help Youth
Realise Dreams: LG

Asserting that Jammu and Kashmir is witnessing a new dawn, the Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Monday said that the new education policy (NEP) 2020 will help the talented youth of the Union Territory to realize their true potential and make their dreams come true.

official spokesperson said. They also flagged the issues of political reservation to KPs and demanded more townships for remaining families of migrants.

"The residents of Jagti Township

apprised the Lt Governor about various welfare issues of Kashmiri Pandit community including permanent rehabilitation of Kashmiri Pandits, enhancement of relief amount, financial package



MUGHAL GARDENS Slated To Be Included Into UNESCO World Heritage List. KO File Pic Abid Bhat

In FOCUS

Sanika Athavale

The miners from Athwajan belt who were permanently disenfranchised by a 2016 order accuse the then and successive governments of "revenge politics" and "malignant rules".

Stating that the belt was used by Kashmiris for extracting stones since their great grandparents ventured into this business, the quarry-holders proudly claim to have been the main suppliers of construction raw materials in Kashmir valley before the ban order.

"It was a bajri hub and the centre for Kashmir's highest quality," a quarry-holder said.

For the people from this region, there exists no scope to restart operations even after a lengthy wait for clearances and other permits. It is a direct ban.

Why?

The 'bad face' or poor look presented to the travellers on the Srinagar-Jammu highway, due to the presence of the mining belt on that route, has been listed as the first and foremost reason for the ban. Any resultant ecological damage has been marked as the secondary reason.

This order came eight months after the declaration of new rules under SRO 105.

"Please see the state of the high-

way from Qazigund till Athwajan," Nazeer Bhat, a quarry-holder, said.

"It's filled with quarries and gives a horrid look. It was beautiful there. Athwajan and Pathan Chowk have no jungles around them and that's the exact reason why it is naturally well-placed for stone extractions. Ancestral wisdom had narrowed down mining activities to that belt for a reason."

There are other mines placed on the Srinagar-Jammu highway, said Mushtaq Bhat, a quarry-holder from Athwajan. "It's really uncanny that the same logic does not apply to them." The only bad face it presents, he said, was to the elitist trustees of Delhi Public School (DPS), Srinagar.



Pointing out to the fact that their quarries were visible from DPS's rear side, the miners accused the former PDP-BJP government of play-

ing dirty politics with them. "After a fallout with former PDP MLA from Sonawar, Mohammed Ashraf Mir, the dispensation ordered the ban," Mushtaq maintained.

"We were promised rehabilitation"

Forbidden to execute their professional duties, innocent and struggling, the Athwajan miners had staged protests, demonstrations, and organised meetings with concerned officials for resuming work.

They were first promised rehabilitation in the form of new sites where they can continue their ancestral businesses. This part of the chapter was being overlooked by the former Divisional Commissioner

Baseer Ahmad Khan.

The fact that the 'new sites' were located merely 500-600 metres away from the banned spots, in Zewan, had bewildered the miners then. They said that the authorities contradicted themselves by promising their rehabilitation in an area so close. "What happened to their 'bad face' logic, we do not know," they said.

There was another conundrum.

A Border Security Force (BSF) office was already built and operational on a territorial level higher than that of the proposed sites.

"We accepted it," Nazeer, the quarry-holder, continued. "But did they know that we would've needed to 'develop' those new points from scratch? That we would not have been able to extract or earn until the sites had been fully

Arunachal Is ‘South Tibet’,...

whisked away by the Chinese troops from Sera-7, an Army patrol zone located about 12 km further north of Nacho. Nacho is the last administrative circle along the McMahon line and is around 120 km from the district headquarters Daporijo.

Indian government sources said the matter has not been escalated to a diplomatic level yet. “The discussion is only between our border post and theirs. We will have to wait to get more clarity,” an officer said on the condition of anonymity.

Relations between India and China have hit a multi-decade low since clashes in Ladakh in June that killed 20 Indian soldiers. Both sides have since stepped up monitoring of their largely unsettled 3,488 km border. “We spoke with them on the hotline and told them that it’s suspected that some people have crossed across to your side and we will be grateful if you could hand them over back, as per what we do normally,” Lieutenant Colonel Harsh Wardhan Pande, an Indian Army spokesman, told news agency Reuters.

“There is no earmarked line going through the forest or the mountains, so they keep moving here and there. So they might have gone there. It’s a very normal thing,” he said, adding they were yet to hear back from the Chinese.

Jaishankar To Discuss LAC ...

counterpart Wang Yi, people familiar with the developments said. Jaishankar is visiting Moscow to attend a meeting of foreign ministers of the eight-nation Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) of which both India and China are members.

He is likely to have a meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif in Tehran before he leaves for Moscow, they said.

Jaishankar’s trip to Moscow comes days after Defence Minister Rajnath Singh visited the Russian capital to attend a meeting of SCO defence ministers.

On Friday, Singh held an over two-hour meeting with Chinese Defence Minister Gen Wei Fenghe on the escalating border row between the two countries in eastern Ladakh.

In the talks, Singh categorically told Wei that India will not “cede an inch of land” and is determined to protect the integrity and sovereignty of the country at “all cost

An official statement said that Singh conveyed to his Chinese counterpart that China must strictly respect the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and not make attempts to unilaterally change its status quo. It was the highest level face-to-face contact between the two sides after the border tension erupted in eastern Ladakh in early May.

Both Jaishankar and Wang are expected to hold a bilateral meeting on Thursday, the people familiar with the developments said.

The two foreign ministers held a telephonic conversation on June 17 during which both sides agreed that the overall situation would be handled in a responsible manner.

The talks took place two days after the Galwan Valley clashes in which 20 Indian Army personnel were killed. The clashes escalated the tensions manifold.

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

Tensions flared up again in eastern Ladakh after China unsuccessfully attempted to occupy Indian territory in the southern bank of Pangong lake a week back when the two sides were engaged in diplomatic and military talks to resolve the prolonged border row.

India occupied a number of strategic heights on the southern bank of Pangong lake and strengthened its presence in Finger 2 and Finger 3 areas in the region to thwart any Chinese actions. China has strongly objected to India’s move. However, India has maintained that the heights are on its side of the LAC.

India has also rushed in additional troops and weapons to the sensitive region following China’s transgression attempts.

SSF Commando Laid To Rest...

29-30 around the Pangong lake area after he stepped on a 1962 landmine. They said his death was not related to the confrontation between the Chinese and Indian troops on the same night.

The SFF is an elite unit which was raised in 1962 following the war with China. The SFF mainly comprises of Tibetan refugees.

On last Monday, the Indian Army said it foiled attempts by Chinese military to change the status quo in the southern bank area of Pangong lake on the intervening night of August 29 and 30.

Guns Roar Along LoC In Rajouri...

started around 5 pm and was retaliated befittingly by the Indian Army. There was no report of any casualty on the Indian side, he said, adding the exchange of firing between the two sides was going on when last reports were received.

the country and its armed forces and spread chaos”, he said.

“We are well aware of this danger. We will surely succeed in winning this war with the cooperation of the nation.”

Giving out an open and clear warning without naming India, Bajwa said that Pakistan will give a befitting response to every aggression if a war is imposed.

“I want to send a message to my nation and the world that Pakistan is a peace-loving country. But if war is imposed on us, we will befittingly response to every aggression.

“We are always ready to defeat nefarious intentions of the enemy,” he said.

Hitting out at India, Bajwa said that in 1965, Pakistan had defeated India, an enemy he said many times greater in might than it.

He also reminded Pakistan’s response to the 2019 Balakot airstrikes by India, insisting that there should be no doubt on the country’s readiness to respond.

“Pakistan had again demonstrated this in response to the failed airstrikes at Balakot and the enemy should have no doubt about it.

“We want peace in the whole world and especially in our region. Pakistan’s key role in peace efforts in Afghanistan is a testament to that, but our neighbour India has, as always, taken an irresponsible stance,” Bajwa added.

Mentioning the longstanding dispute of Kashmir between the two countries, the COAS said: “India, by illegally abrogating the special status of illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir had once again threatened peace in the region.

“There is no doubt that Kashmir is a recognized dispute and Pakistan did not accept any unilateral decision in this regard.

“Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah had declared Kashmir the jugular vein of Pakistan. This is part of our faith. We will not show any flexibility in this regard.”

Bajwa reiterated that time has tried the capability of Pakistan many times, highlighting that the country has come our successful every time.

“Pakistan is a living reality. Our blood, our passion and our actions will bear witness to this on every front,” he asserted

NC Leader Among 18 More Die...

Singh, a resident of Sialsui village of Kalakote in Rajouri district, was admitted to the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Narayana Superspecialty hospital at Kalkriyal in Reasi on September 5 after testing positive for the infection, the officials said.

An official at the hospital said the National Conference leader was suffering from fever, cough and also complained of breathlessness. He breathed his last after suffering a massive heart attack in the early hours of Monday, he said.

Singh had won assembly elections twice on National Conference ticket from his home constituency Kalakote in 2002 and 2008 but lost the election to his BJP rival Abdul Ghani Kohli in the 2014 assembly polls.

Officials said that a 74-year-old from Jagati Colony Jammu died at super specialty hospital where was shifted to from at GMC Jammu, eight days after he was admitted with hypertension, type2 diabetes mellitus, hypothyroidism, CKD and severe left ventricular dysfunction.

They said a 58-year-old woman, diagnosed with type 2 diabetes mellitus, DKA with bilateral community acquired pneumonia died last night at GMC Jammu.

They said 72-year-old man from Krishna Colony Kathua who was admitted to Chest Disease Hospital and diagnosed with Bilateral CAP with covid-19 positive died last night.

They said a 73-year-old man from Bharderwah in Doda district died at Chest Disease Hospital Jammu, four days after he was admitted to the

hospital. “He was suffering from type 2 diabetes mellitus and hyperthyroidism and died late last night,” a doctor at the hospital said.

The doctor said 1 78-year-old man from Jewel Canal Road Jammu died at GMC Jammu, a week after he was admitted as a case of “chronic liver disease, portal hypertension, acute kidney infection, respiratory distress and hepato biliary syndrome,” the patient died at 7.30.a.m.”

Official sources said that a 55-year-old Boniyari Uri who was admitted at a hospital here and diagnosed with bilateral CAP died today.

Also, they said a 63-year-old woman from Tral Pulwama died at SKIMS Bemina, one of the exclusive facilities for the covid-19 patients. She was admitted to the hospital on September 1 and died today, they said.

They said a 73-year-old from Parranpillan Uri died at around 8:30 hours today. “He was diagnosed with T2DM, HTN,multiple myeloma,BHP and bilateral CAP”

A 70-year-old from Watergam Baramulla as case of “severe Covid pneumonia” died a after he was admitted to the SMHS hospital here. “He died at around 6:30 a.m. today,” they said.

A 65-year-old woman from Rajouri Jammu, admitted on September 4, died at SKIMS Soura today.

She was suffering from “T2DM, Peritoneal collection with access with septic shock with MODS and COD.”

With these deaths, officials said, 806 people have succumbed to the virus in Jammu and Kashmir so far. Among them, they said, 699 were from the Valley while 106 others from Jammu division.

Srinagar district with 240 deaths tops the list followed by Baramulla (108), Budgam (66), Pulwama (59), Anantnag (53), Kupwara (54), Jammu (67), Kulgam (39), Shopian (29), Bandipora (26), Ganderbal (25), Kathua (10), Rajouri (8), Doda (6), Poonch (5), Udhampur (4), Samba (4) and Ramban (1). (With GNS inputs)

87 Travellers Among 1013...

Baramulla 31, Pulwama 40, Budgam 56, Anantnag 40, Bandipora 31, Kupwara 38, Kulgam 3, Shopian 10, Ganderbal 28, Jammu 442, Rajouri 12, Kathua 21, Udhampur 32, Samba 22, Ramban 1, Doda 13, Poonch 41, Reasi 15 and Kishtwar 1.

Meanwhile, 433 patients—69 from Jammu and 364 from Valley—have recovered and were discharged from various hospitals in J&K, they added.

SC Petitioner Gets PIL For SIT...

in an order.

The PIL was filed by Jammu & Kashmir Reconciliation Front through its Chairman Dr Sandeep Mawa, a member of minority Kashmiri Pandit community, seeking probe into the killing of trio identified in the PIL as Abrar Ahmad, Imtiyaz Ahmad and Abrar Ahmad who were killed as “suspected militants” on July 18 at Shopian.

“This PIL has been filed to bring forth the Human Right violations manipulated under the emblem of ‘Encounter’ where three labourers namely Ibrar Ahmad (16), Muhammed Ibrar (21) and Imtiaz Ahmad (26) have been killed on 18.07.2020 at Shopian district of J&K,” reads the PIL while seeking a direction for an investigation by a SIT consisting of members other than from J&K Police to be monitored by the Supreme Court in keeping with its law laid down in case: Extra Judicial Execution Victims’ Families Association v Union of India (2017) and People’s Union for Civil Liberties v State of Maharashtra (2014).

The petitioner had also sought to quash the investigation initiated by J&K Police in the case it has registered with regard to the “encounter” for being in contravention to the law laid down by the apex court in the case.

The petitioner had also sought direction to the senior superintendent of Police to register an FIR and investigate the matter as per the guidelines formulated under Article 141 in People’s Union for Civil Liberties v State of Maharashtra (2014).

The petitioner stated that “upon promulgation of J&K Reorganization Act, 2019 the J&K State Human Rights Commission ceased to exist and presently there is no forum or body to look into the matters related to Human Right Violations in J&K.” “Moreover there is no designated court to take cognizance of complaints related to Human Rights Violations as mandated under the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 (Section 31) made applicable to the U T of J&K”, it said.

While the PIL had sought direction to Union Ministry of Home Affairs to constitute a High Powered Committee to analyze the aspect of criminalizing custodial killings and Fake encounters by way of a special legislation, it had also sought direction to the Ministry to Constitute the State Human Rights Commission and Human Rights Courts in terms of Section 21 and 31 respectively in the territory of J&K.

The PIL had also sought direction to the Ministry to pay a compensation of Rs one Crore to each family of the victims.

The petitioner submits that the law down by the apex court on the subject of extrajudicial killings and fake encounters in the form of guidelines, even declared as law under Article 141 do not find its way to implementation.

These guidelines, the petitioner said, are instead violated at will as in the instant case, constraining him to seek indulgence of the top Court. The petitioner had submitted that the Government of Jammu and Kashmir has customarily ignored the mandate of law judicially evolved by the Supreme Court to contain, prevent, investigate or penalize the custodial killings and fake encounters “which is predominant in the instant case”.

The petitioner also submitted that the cardinal principle of criminal jurisprudence is that the “one alleged of abuse of powers cannot be permitted to investigate his own cause”.

“The situation becomes vulnerable when the Shopian Police and Army primarily involved in the fake encounter are simultaneously investigating their own cause,” he had pleaded. (GNS)

Militants Escape After Brief...

search party.

Soon after the initial exchange of firing, clashes broke out near the encounter site as groups of youth pelted stones on state forces who chased away the protestors by firing tear smoke shells, the officials said. There are no reports of any injury in the clashes, they said, adding, the militants managed to escape the security cordon.

Govt Puts Off SMC Mayor...

Act amid a notification issued by District Magistrate Srinagar (Chairman, District Disaster Management Authority, Srinagar), prohibiting any inward/outward movement in Micro Containment Zones of Srinagar District.

The Commissioner SMC, the government had said also informed that ninety six zones of the Srinagar District have been designated as micro containment zones for the management of COVID19, under the orders of the District Magistrate, and that a large number of Councilors reside/ fall in these areas.

The Commissioner, it had said, also informed that as a result of the prohibition of inward and outward movement of people in and from these areas, the conduct of election to the post of Mayor within the period prescribed by Section 36 of the J&K Municipal Corporation Act, 2000, read with second proviso of sub-section(2) of Section 36, which expires on 15 September, 2020, was not possible.

Now the government inserted third proviso to sub-section (2) of section 36 of J&K Municipal Corporation Act, 2000, notified vide SO 282 today which provides : “Provided also that the Government may, if the circumstances so warrant, on account of reasons of & security, public health including health pandemic, natural calamity such as floods, earthquake, snowstorm or an event of a similar or any other reason which is a hindrance to the conduct of election of the Mayor or the Deputy Mayor, by reasons to be recorded in writing, extend the time limit of conducting the elections up to a maximum of six months from the date the office of the Mayor or the Deputy Mayor falls vacant.”

Subsequent to it, the government has ordered: “Now, therefore, in terms of the above proviso of Section 36 (2) of J&K Municipal Corporation Act, 2000, in supersession of Government Order No. 158-JK(HUD) of 2020 dated 15.7.2010 and in view of the difficulty in the conduct of the election to the post of Mayor, SMC due to health pandemic-COVID-19 and management protocol related to it issued by District Magistrate, Srinagar (Chairman, District Disaster Management Authority Srinagar), the Government hereby extends the time limit for the conduct of said election to six months from the date the office of the Mayor fell vacant (June 16).” (GNS)

KPs Raise Demand Of More...

of KPs for facilitating entrepreneurship and business, compensation for damaged properties in Kashmir, retrieval of encroached properties in Kashmir etc,” the official spokesperson said.

The LG, he said while interacting with the people there, assured them that all the genuine issues and demands projected by them would be looked into meticulously for their early redressal.

“The Lt Governor observed that he would examine the issues raised by the people and assured them that instead of making hollow promises and announcements, he would genuinely and rationally try to address the problems being faced by the people,” the official spokesperson said. “The UT Government is taking comprehensive measures to ensure prompt redressal of people’s grievances, besides improving public service delivery mechanism with progressively increasing citizens’ participation at all levels, through transparent and accountable governance,” LG Sinha, as per official spokesperson said.

The LG further said that to bring a new era of development in J&K, the present Government was working on the agenda of equitable and holistic development.

The LG was accompanied by Sanjeev Verma, Divisional Commissioner, Jammu; Mukesh Singh, IGP Jammu; Simrandeep Singh, Special Secretary to the Government, Department of Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction; Sushma Chauhan, Deputy Commissioner Jammu; Shridhar Patil, SSP Jammu; T. K. Bhat, Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner and other senior officers.

Meanwhile, LG Sinha also visited Raghunath, Ranbireswar and Panjbakhtar Temples and took stock of the facilities being made available to the visiting devotees.

He paid obeisance there and prayed for peace, progress, and prosperity in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, an official spokesperson said.

The LG, he said also took a walk through the heritage Raghunath Market and Residency Road area where he interacted with locals, shopkeepers, officer bearers of Traders Associations including Raghunath Bazar Association and Kanak Mandi Association.

“He enquired about the difficulties being faced by the people and the business community due to COVID-19 pandemic, or otherwise,” the official spokesperson said.

“Terming people’s feedback as imperative for accountable and responsive administration, the LG urged the people to come forward with their issues and grievances and play an active role in the developmental process by providing regular feedback on the working of the Administration,” he added.

NEP-2020 Will Help Youth...

“Jammu and Kashmir is a land of extremely talented people. The youth of Jammu and Kashmir have excelled in every field. Today, when we are witnessing a new dawn in Jammu and Kashmir, we want the youth of this state to be the pioneers of change. And, I think the new Education Policy will help them realize their true potential and make their dreams come true.” Sinha, as per an official spokesperson said while speaking at Governors’ Conference on Role of NEP-2020 in Transforming Higher Education.

“We live in an era where research and innovation are the keys to success and development. We want to make Jammu and Kashmir the centre of knowledge, enterprise, innovation and skill development,” he added.

President Ram Nath Kovind, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Minister for Education, Ramesh Pokhriyal; Governors/Lieutenant Governors; Education Ministers of States; Chairman, Committee for Drafting New Education Policy; Vice Chancellors and the Officers of the States attended the conference.

Underlining the importance of integrated development of children, the LG suggested that extra-curricular activities such as NSS, NCC, Sports, Music etc. need to be made part of the curriculum and students should get credit of these activities.

“Further, the LG observed that the NEP-2020 could be effectively implemented if institutions are given freedom to redefine teaching positions as per need,” the official spokesperson said.

Sinha, he said stressed on the need to lay special emphasis on Students’ feedback on teaching saying that the practice helps lend perspective to the teaching of pedagogical standards and practices of universities.

“Universities may be asked to explain how they have used students’ feedback. If they do not have this practice, they must implement it in a generic manner. The NAAC assessment requires this but universities tend to not implement this seriously, worrying that it can be misused against teachers,” the LG, as per official spokesperson said. During his address, the LG observed that our priorities guide all policies and our policy decisions guide our destiny.

According to the official spokesperson, LG congratulated the Prime Minister and the Government of India for approving the new National Education Policy, which replaced the 34-year-old National Education Policy. He also complimented the Prime Minister for renaming Ministry of Human Resource Development as Ministry of Education.

“I personally believe that education is the biggest catalyst for change. When education is the guiding force behind human development, humans are no longer limited to a ‘resource’. They become ‘assets’ for the society”,” Sinha said.

Sinha, as per the official spokesperson said that education as a holistic approach broadly focuses on the development of human consciousness, while education in terms of human resource development looks to be just a means to employment.

“This journey of becoming assets from mere resources is possible only when we ensure value-based education to our children. To understand your value system, you need to understand your roots, your tradition and rich cultural heritage, and to understand all these, you should know your mother tongue. The importance given to the mother tongue in the new National Education Policy will help our youth in this regard,” the LG added.

According to the official spokesperson, the LG said that there is a general but flawed belief that vocational education is inferior to mainstream education.

“The new education policy aims to change this perception and for this, it has been said to teach vocational subjects from Sixth Standard itself. With the new education policy, we will empower our youth so that they contribute significantly in nation-building,” the LG added. Pertinently, earlier in a meeting with Vice-Chancellors of the Universities across J&K on August 14, the Lt Governor had asked them to prepare a roadmap for bringing qualitative improvement in the overall functioning of the Universities and adopt J&K centric changes as per the new Education Policy.

Kashmir’s Banned Stones...

developed for use? Would they’ve also compensated us for this obvious fact apart from merely promising us a physical transfer of business? Also, the location is so close.. How does it justify shutting the quarries at Athwajan?”

In any way, the locals said that their consent to being rehabilitated in Zewan meant nothing.

Alarmed about the development, the BSF office wrote to Baseer Khan, categorically stating that such a thing could not materialize near their quarters. Even the Wildlife Conservation and Forest Department, whose fence cut through the new site, said that their area could not be compromised for the miners.

The Department of Geology and Mining wrote to the government informing them that it is ready to move the Athwajan excavators but other departments and institutions were hindering the process. The matter has stayed at that. The rehabilitation plan did not mature at all. Much later, under the leadership of ex-governor Satya Pal Malik that also took away J&K’s special status, were the miners provided some hope.

Noting the genuinity of their problems, a committee was formed to investigate the possibility of scientific, systematic mining in the region. The committee had concluded through its surveys and examinations of five months that small-scale scientific mining for minor minerals through clusters can continue in the region.

“We promised to obey all norms and sent an application to the government,” Mushtaq, the quarry-holder, continued. “They said that there was scope in an area named Alifata D’ and in northwest Pantha Chowk on July 10, 2019. Then the abrogation happened and no work to complete the formalities for re-allowing us has been done. We remain in the same state we were after the ban, if not worse and that is bad

enough.”

The administration has been accused, by Athwajan locals, of non-fulfillment of their promises and non-perusal of its own committee’s recommendations that hold the power to allow the miners the right to live and earn. The incumbent Divisional Commissioner of Kashmir acknowledged both, “Yes, all the plans and proposals are ready. But nothing has happened.”

Nazeer described his troubles as ‘khatarnak’ - an Urdu word for something that is a deadly combo of dangerous and scary. “Because locals here have been involved in this business traditionally, even well and highly qualified youngsters come back to run their quarries after completing their education,” he said.

But for the past four years, all these souls are sitting unemployed, he continued. “It has caused a mental health epidemic. We not only need rehabilitation but also monetary compensation for all these years that we survived with our livelihoods snatched.”

Around 5 lakh people have been associated with this industry, Nazeer informed, and all of them are in financial distress since the past few years. “There are many PhD holders in Athwajan who are sitting idle and mentally frustrated. We have never seen such bad days.”

The Deputy Director of the Department of Geology and Mining, Dr Amarjeet Singh Sodhi refrained from commenting on the issues of the Athwajan belt, when approached by Kashmir Observer, as he “did not know much about what Baseer Ahmad Khan did” during his tenure. However, Nadeem Qadri as per his environment expertise, identified three factors that may have contributed to the Athwajan order: the Srinagar Master Plan, the New Minor Mineral Rules incorporated into the J&K’s territorial jurisdiction and the Environmental Protection Act. “Every mine has a carrying capacity and every mine in Athwajan has exploited its carrying capacity due to the age-old mining operations there,” Qadri, the lawyer known for his environmental advocacy, said. “The Smart City Plan compels the bureaucrats to question the presence of an ecological sensitive area in the limits of the ‘smart city’. Dust and pollution are also problems. They are conceiving an idea for a bio-diversity park there,” he disclosed.

But Zeeshan Rehman, the acting chairperson of the Senior Contractors Coordination Committee (J&K),while arguing that there’re scores of big factories in the specified ‘eco-sensitive zone’, contended that ‘one cannot hide behind the smokescreen of NGT and environment rules and destabilise lives’.

“The stone miners reiterated that they’re willing to work with the government to conserve the ecology of Kashmir, only if the government worked itself,” contractor Zahoor Dhar exclaimed. “We’re prepared to do whatever they need us to but they’re not willing to listen or work for our issues!”

A strong advocate of sustainable development, Nadeem Qadri recommended “something like an Environmental Protection Agency” in J&K. “It must act like a centralised one-stop-shop for all clearances and permits from environmental authorities. Right now, people are seeking 10 different permissions, all from different offices. A centre like that ought to streamline the process more,” he suggested.

But on being asked if the objections raised by the locals were legitimate in his view as an environmental lawyer, Qadri stated that the stone excavators had full moral standing on their allegation. “It is true. The legal community also objected to SRO 105 when it came out, but now with Article 370 gone, it has become harder,” he said, mentioning the extraction of sand in river Jhelum, Sindh, Lidder, etc, are more serious issues to him.

“The government is merely a custodian of natural resources. The first right is of the people. If someone wants to extract, then they should, with government permission. If someone comes from, for example, Punjab, and extracts 10 feet sand instead of 2, then that is exploitation and its impact will be very adverse. Whatever happens in J&K, must happen while maintaining ecological balance and providing the natives their first right to use and sell natural resources judiciously,” he asserted.

Plans to auction stone mines in a few years

In conversation with different officers from the Department of Geology and Mining helped us uncover a plan not yet announced in the larger public domain.

Stone mines which have not been bidded yet, unlike the sand blocs, might be put up for auction in the next 5 years.

“The rules will allow the ones who’ve ancestrally occupied stone quarries the first right over running them for the first five years of their new license - which they will only receive after all the documents listed in SRO 105 are ready and processed,” Khurshid Mir, Assistant Mineral Officer, told Kashmir Observer.

Even the officer who wished to remain unnamed confirmed that the Department along with the government plans to auction Kashmir’s stone quarries (that have never been bidded for before), after the ancestral businesses find their licenses expired.

“The license to mine is valid for a minimum of three years since its issuance and can be extended upto five years,” he said.

Naya Kashmir, development, and demagoguery Prime Minister Narendra Modi had promised to change the face of Kashmir within four months of the abrogation. His party members and he had delivered grandiose speeches promising a world of development, savvy infrastructure, and most importantly ‘peace’, on the floor of the Parliament. Pitifully, on ground and mixed in conspiratorial dust is Kashmir’s dried out economy and frozen society.

The much-celebrated and justified argument of ‘development’ has not seen any real manifestation, especially after the abrogation of Article 370. Moreover, the primary industry providing the foundational material for ‘development’ has been shut and locked until the next (rude) awakening.

“This industry is the backbone of Kashmir’s infrastructure. Without us, construction cannot happen. How are they able to make these false promises and closing us down simultaneously, we do not understand,” most of the stone excavators complained. Even today, they ask for short term permits so that they can arrange for everything the government has asked for.

“It’s known to all that these official processes take their own time and rightly so. If we’re given permits in the meantime, the tendered projects will be completed, the Department will earn a little more, and we will finally be able to work! It is a win-win. If only they cared,” Nazeer Bhat, the disheartened quarry-holder of Athwajan, stated desolately.

Biker Killed In Hit And Run...

had hit the motorbike.

He further said FIR under relevant sections of law has been registered and further investigations taken up.

3 Booked For Cheating...

a written complaint have alleged that the accused lured them with an "offer letter" from Canada and asked them to deposit money for health insurance, medical check-up and processing fee. Aditya also charged them for finger print forms, embassy fee and accommodation in Canada, they said.

After collecting Rs 4,59,800 from them, Aditya did not respond to their phone calls.

The accused have been booked under IPC section 420 (cheating and dishonestly inducing delivery of property). Further investigation is on.

Youth Killed After SUV Falls...

that the SUV had met with an accident ahead of the parking point on the same road in the early hours, the official said.

He said the rescuers found the body of Singh from the damaged vehicle.

Police have registered a case and further investigation is on, the official said.

**RAHI
ADVERTISERS**

+91-7006034174
Sarai Dangerpora Srinagar, KMR

DIPK-5176/20

KASHMIR OBSERVER

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

Standing up to dragon

From the looks of it, the meeting between the Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and his Chinese counterpart General Wei didn't take place in a cordial atmosphere. And both sides also restrained from creating any false expectations. In fact, the tone of the statements issued by both the sides was terse, even while mindful of the urgent need to pull back from the brink. In first remarks after the meeting, India on Saturday said that Singh told the Chinese to "work with the Indian side for complete disengagement at the earliest from all friction areas including Pangong Lake as well as de-escalation in border areas in accordance with the bilateral agreements and protocols".

Singh was also quoted to have said by the Ministry of Defence that "the current situation should be handled responsibly" and "neither side should take any further action that could either complicate the situation or escalate matters in the border areas".

Chinese statement, on the other hand, said the "cause and truth of the current tension on the border between China and India are very clear, and the responsibility lies entirely with India". Wei, according to the Chinese statement has told Singh that "China's territory cannot be lost. The Chinese military is fully determined, capable, and confident to safeguard national sovereignty and territorial integrity".

There has been a matching reply from Singh who has told clearly to Wei that "while the Indian troops had always taken a very responsible approach towards border management, at the same time there should also be no doubt about our determination to protect India's sovereignty and territorial integrity".

If anything, the statements give no inkling that the two sides are anywhere close to an understanding on the issue. As things stand, both sides are ready for a long haul. But the situation can quickly change if there is a miscalculation or two from the either side. Already with multiple Chinese incursions along the Line of Actual Control, the situation has become fraught. Beijing is no mood to withdraw. Several rounds of talks between the two countries have not helped to break the ice. Now with India in response also pre-emptively capturing some heights at Pangong Tso, we have gone one more step up on the escalators ladder.

The only way to pull back from the brink is to seriously engage in dialogue and find a way out as already made clear by the foreign minister S Jaishankar. A war between two Asian giants will be disastrous for not only for them but for the entire region. More so, at a time when both the countries and the world is grappling with Coronavirus pandemic that has brought the world economy to a standstill. And India with its GDP having already contracted by a fourth has turned out to be the worst affected by the contagion.

OTHER OPINION

Increasing Covid-19 Cases and New Challenges

On Friday, the total number of Covid-19 cases in India crossed four million. By Sunday, India overtook Brazil to become the world's second-worst hit country. But none of this comes as a surprise. India has been reporting the most daily cases in the world since early August, and has had the world's worst-recorded case trajectory since August end. The most important figure through any pandemic, however, is the number of lives lost to it. India's case fatality rate of 1.7% is significantly better than not only the global average of 3.2%, but also the United States and Brazil — both around 3%. This has been the primary driver of the Centre's argument that India has handled the pandemic better than other similarly-hit nations.

But despite that, more than 70,000 people have died from Covid-19. When the first (and hardest) lockdown shut the country down on March 25, India had 500 active cases and 10 deaths. Since then, these curbs have been gradually relaxed in seven subsequent phases. Today, when there are more than 860,000 active cases, a majority of economic activities have resumed. An argument can be made that this lockdown came in reverse order. Curbs could have been applied lightly at first, and then gradually strengthened when daily cases rose. In such a system, India would have the hardest phase of the lockdown today.

But such an argument is easier to make in retrospect. In March, the world knew little about Covid-19. In a situation where experts were (and still are) learning how to fight the pandemic, a hard lockdown was one of the few concepts that had unanimous scientific backing. The government says it bought India time to strengthen its health care infrastructure, particularly in regions that needed it the most. This claim, though, will be put to the harshest test in the coming weeks.. Saving lives, not just in proportion of total Covid-19 cases, but also in absolute numbers, from this point will get tougher by the day, and how the government handles this will determine how well the country has truly fared against the pandemic — and how well it put the lockdown to use in terms of building health infrastructure and capacity.

Hindustan times

J&K's Employment Drought

One year of economic depression accompanied by the burden of unemployment is sinking Kashmir into a pit of no retreat

Ejaz ayoub

There has been a migration of the labour force from the "working age and looking for jobs" category to "working age but not looking for jobs". This alarmingly shrinking labour force is even worse; indicating hopelessness, despondency and dejection.



In July 2019, India's leading economic intelligence company, Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy Pvt. Ltd (CMIE) conducted its routine monthly state-wise unemployment survey in the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir. At that point in time, CMIE recorded over 6.5 Lakh unemployed people in the region. With a total workforce of about 43 lakh, comprising just 1 percent of the Indian workforce, J&K's unemployment ratio was hovering at around 15.11 percent, almost double the national July'19-unemployment rate of 7.3 percent.

Fast forward to August 2020, latest CMIE survey ironically shows the unemployment rate in J&K improving to 11.10 percent while the national ratio deteriorating to 8.35 percent. Although deterioration of national unemployment ratio does make sense keeping in consideration the impact of Covid19 lockdowns but J&K showing an improvement despite sustaining twin shocks of Aug 5 2019 and this lethal pandemic, sounds nothing short of a perfect paradox. The discrepancy might, to some extent, be attributed to the way unemployment ratio is calculated based on the Labour force participation rate (LFPR). LFPR — the ratio of people in the working age (16-64 years) to those employed or actively seeking jobs - has contracted. Many job seekers have withdrawn themselves from the job market. This is a common phenomenon during recessionary times. Data from CMIE therefore seems to suggest that there has been a migration of labour force from the "working age and looking for jobs" category to "working age but not looking for jobs". This alarmingly shrinking labour force is even worse; indicating hopelessness, despondency and dejection.

Besides CMIE, there are other data sources which indicate the severity of unemployment in J&K in last 12 months. For example, the employment registration exercise carried out by the Directorate of Employment, GoJK in Nov-Dec 2019. It witnessed around 3 Lakh registrations by graduates, post-graduates and PhD holders. This overwhelming response & the fact that this doesn't capture the major portion of the workforce which comprises of undergraduates or less qualified, speaks volumes about the economy's absolute failure in containing J&K's unemployment tsunami.

Another such recent event was witnessed in the month of

July 2020. In response to Class IV posts advertised by the Jammu & Kashmir Services Selection Board, a whopping 4 Lakh applications flooded the Board's online portal. Similar overwhelming numbers were witnessed for the post of Accounts Assistant and those floated by some regional Banks.

The other aspect that deserves to be embarked upon vis-à-vis unfolding employment crisis in J&K is the impact of economic contraction that the region has faced in last 12 months. This column has previously pegged the economic loss on account of twin systemic shocks in last 12 months at a whopping Rs. 40,943.38 Crore. With 25.80 percent of J&K's GSDP being wiped off, the impact on job markets has been equally devastating. Elementary economic models like the Okun's law which helps in establishing an indicative relationship between economic growth (or contraction) and unemployment rates can be handy in arriving at a rough estimate of the additional jobs lost due to this output contraction.

As per Okun's law, increase in the rate of unemployment is equal to almost half of the corresponding contraction rate in the economic output. This implies that a 25.80 percent economic contraction will result in incremental unemployment to grow by 12.90 percent of the workforce. With a base of 43 lakh workers, a 12.90 percent contraction in jobs will therefore result in a staggering loss of 5.55 Lakh additional jobs. Incidentally, Kashmir's apex business body, The Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry too has pegged the number of jobs lost in various sectors at 4.57 Lakh. This additional mass of 5.55 lakh unemployed people when aggregated with the existing 6.50 lakh (CMIE survey July 2019), we arrive at a towering figure of around 12 Lakh unemployed people. That's an intimidating unemployment ratio of around 28 percent. In other words we are talking about choked income or in worst cases no income for around 12 lakh households. As a result a big portion of the population is in the process or has already been pushed into abject poverty within a short span of only 12 months. That's not just socio-economically alarming for the general masses but equally lethal for the Govt's tax revenues.

Except two sectors, Government sector comprising of around 4.5 Lakh government employees who draw home around Rs. 37,000 Crore annually

in terms of salaries and pensions and a mutedly impacted agrarian sector; the distribution of these job losses is holistic. Almost 50% of the job losses are expected to be borne by labour intensive industries like trading, construction, manufacturing & handicrafts. These economic segments are going to be worse hit in terms of employment downsizing. Besides these one of the most badly hit sectors in J&K since Aug 5 2019 has been the transport sector which supports the livelihood of over 3 Lakh people in J&K. Likewise Tourism sector comprising hotel & restaurant industry and other allied overlaps of the gig economy is expected to remain down and out for a long time. A substantial portion of employee downsizing in these segments is therefore expected to be irreversible. Add to this the on ongoing reverse migration of scores of people who were working in different parts of mainland India and rest of the world. The underlying balloon of unemployed people is J&K has therefore assumed dangerous proportions.

The policy responses on the other hand have been timid, lax and directionless. Too much of hope has been pinned around the unwanted & hassle laden credit linked support to businesses. The administration is even not able to fast track the already approved vacancies in the Government sector. That needs to be prioritised in order to instil some semblance of hope and stability in an otherwise defeated labour market of J&K.

Private sector, which has the ability to soak unemployment pressure substantially, has been running from pillar to post, gasping for tax rebates, loan waivers and other facilitative policies. In absence of any tangible handhold from the Govt the private sectors' appetite too is thinning fast. If not for the people, the fast emptying coffers of the Government treasury should ring sufficient alarm bells. Government too depends on sustained tax revenues to survive, which can only be achieved when there are enough wage earners, buyers & sellers in the markets. It is therefore in the interest of both, the ruling as well as the ruled, to collectively stand up to this challenge wholeheartedly without further delay.

Ejaz Ayoub has been working in the BFSI industry in the field of Financial Risk Management, Strategy, Investments and Foreign Exchange. He can be reached at.ejaz.ayoub@gmail.com



OBSERVER
MAIL

All letters intended for publication must include the writer's name and address, even if a pseudonym is used. Letters are edited as clarity, spaceand accuracy of expression require. Our publishing a letter does not mean we agree with everything or even anything in it. -EDITOR

MAIL YOUR LETTERS

P.O.Box # 337, GPO, Srinagar-190 001
email: editpage.ko@gmail.com

J&K's Panchayati Raj institutions and Covid -19

Panchayati Raj institutions are at the forefront fighting the fight against Covid-19. Firstly, they are proactive in readying the infrastructure which includes converting anganwadis and local schools into quarantine centers or constructing makeshift hospitals. Secondly, the arrangement for massive movement of food grains using PDS system is worthy of praise. This has ensured that no one goes empty stomach by creating com-

munity kitchens. Thirdly, to maintain crucial hygiene and sanitation at village level, they are spraying disinfectants on a large scale and making roads clean through use of bleaching powder. Most importantly, they're mitigating the biggest challenges of remote education by open air classrooms in villages using social distancing norms and have also communicated and assisted the state government who aired the lectures for students on DD Kashir and also motivated people to

go for online learning as well.

Apart from this, they have ensured the availability of ambulance services for ill patients and have also directed the ASHA workers to assist and take care of pregnant ladies who are not able to reach hospitals.

Locally, women who were self-employed as tailors have been engaged in making homemade masks for the needy. House to house survey was also a breakthrough method that helped a great deal in contact tracing and data localisation.

But even with its own merits, Panchayati Raj institutions are not free from lacunas like inadequate and delayed funding, poor infrastructure, lack of systematic and transparent fund usage, shoddy capacity building and man power training measures.

With its demerits and merits, during the pandemic, they are undoubtedly serving as a bridge between the decision makers and the community at grass root levels.

Junaids shafi
Junaids shafi11041995@gmail.com

The Lure of Dishonesty and Rewards of Ethics

In a word full of contexts, being ethical and honest is always going to be worth it

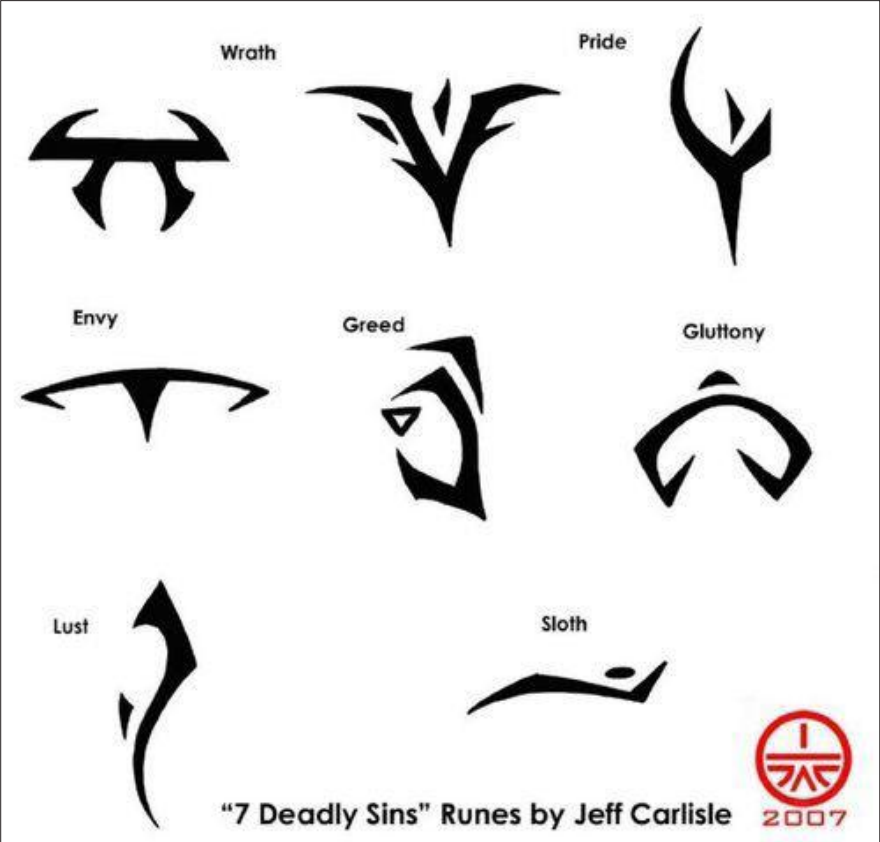
Wajahat Qazi

“Say, if corruption is widespread and acceptable in it, what does the ethical or the moral person do? Be part of the game, so to speak and move on or be an outlier seen as an oddball by the rest?”

Each one of us faces a moral or an ethical dilemma or dilemmas at any given point in time. This is perhaps because we are human, defined as we are by foibles, weaknesses, temptations and so on. There is also a structural factor that overlays our human (ness); context and a given situation can present us with challenges that have a moral or an ethical flavour or ingress. For example, conditions of extreme poverty, say, an exigent need to feed one’s hungry children, can make a perfectly ethical and moral person commit theft or even worse. In this circumstance, the element of moral choice is overridden; it actually does not exist. (You either feed your children or they die of hunger). But these are extreme circumstances (with the caveat that for many deprived and underprivileged of the world, these are unfortunately the normal).

However, generally, and usually we all have a choice, if our mental faculties and the ability to reason are intact. Here the dilemma is that of the prevalent mores in society. Say, if corruption is widespread and acceptable in it, what does the ethical or the moral person do? Be part of the game, so to speak and move on or be an outlier seen as an oddball by the rest? Or, say , if there are moral and ethical issues in society that are brushed under the carpet(as in hushed up), does one stand up to and expose these or close one’s eyes as well or even , at another extreme, to employ the jargon of economists, earn rents off these?

Practically, there’s no easy answers or solutions to these dilemmas. But if one is ethical and moral, one may become a cynic if by omission or commission unethical behaviour is prevalent in society. What then can a person do to remain wedded to a moral compass against the backdrop of unethical situations that present themselves?



For me, the answer is pretty simple and straightforward. As a Muslim, I am a believer. The corollary here is that an ethical path is laid out for me by my religion. This does not then present nuanced moral and ethical ambiguity for me. (I say this in a very non -judgmental manner. I do not judge others for their ethical laxity, perceived or real). Each situation is unique, there is context, there are permutations and combinations, and each one of us is answerable for his or her own acts of omission and commission. Who am I to judge?

But, as a society, whatever and

wherever one’s given society might be, there are and must be ethical standards, that are usually universal, that must not be breached. For instance, a crime like murder is bad. There is universal consensus on this. Exploiting someone or abusing a person’s vulnerability is immoral and unethical. The list goes on. How can these crimes and unethical behaviours be checked?

One answer is by the instrument of law and the state. While law and the state argument and recourse is a sound one but, in the final analysis, a good and ethical society is one where both there

is minimal intervention by either. The well springs of ethics and morality must emerge from people. I am not aiming or alluding here to a moral utopia but merely suggesting that a ‘good’ society is one that is populated by good people, that is, moral and ethical people. This level and nature of morality and ethics can perhaps be arrived at by multi- pronged efforts: one, economic conditions and conditions that give short shrift to crime(this will not prevent crimes of a psycho-pathological behaviour). Two, persons in a given society must be morally and ethically aware and be constantly reviewing and sharpening their moral and ethical compass. Third, morality and ethics can be made chic.

But this leaves the question of ‘returns from either moral and unethical behaviour or returns from unethical and immoral behaviour unaddressed. With respect to the latter, sometimes, it may seem that unethical behaviour yields returns such as economic and financial payoffs, and other forms of glitter. Is then, given the finiteness of life, unethical behaviour worth it?

No. Not at all.

For one, for all the glitter and wealth effects of unethical behaviour, there are invariably opportunity costs- compromises have been made, prices(at times even in terms of life) are paid , or , in other words, a lot is mortgaged in return for unethical behaviour. There are then clear tangible benefits to be had from an ethical and moral orientation. But the most effective, important and long lasting benefit to be had from either is intangible: peace of mind, contentment and even happiness. Let us then strive to strengthen our moral and ethical compasses and live honest, happy and contented lives.

The author can be reached at wajahatqazi1234@gmail.com

How COVID-19 Might Increase Risk Of Memory Loss And Cognitive Decline

Natalie C. Tronson

Of all frightening ways that the SARS-COV-2 virus affects the body, one of the more insidious is the effect of COVID-19 on the brain.

It is now clear that many patients suffering from COVID-19 exhibit neurological symptoms, from loss of smell, to delirium, to an increased risk of stroke. There are also longer-lasting consequences for the brain, including myalgic encephalomyelitis /chronic fatigue syndrome and Guillain-Barre syndrome.

These effects may be caused by direct viral infection of brain tissue. But growing evidence suggests additional indirect actions triggered via the virus’s infection of epithelial cells and the cardiovascular system, or through the immune system and inflammation, contribute to lasting neurological changes after COVID-19.

I am a neuroscientist specializing in how memories are formed, the role of immune cells in the brain and how memory is persistently disrupted after illness and immune activation. As I survey the emerging scientific literature, my question is: Will there be a COVID-19-related wave of memory deficits, cognitive decline and dementia cases in the future?

The immune system and the brain

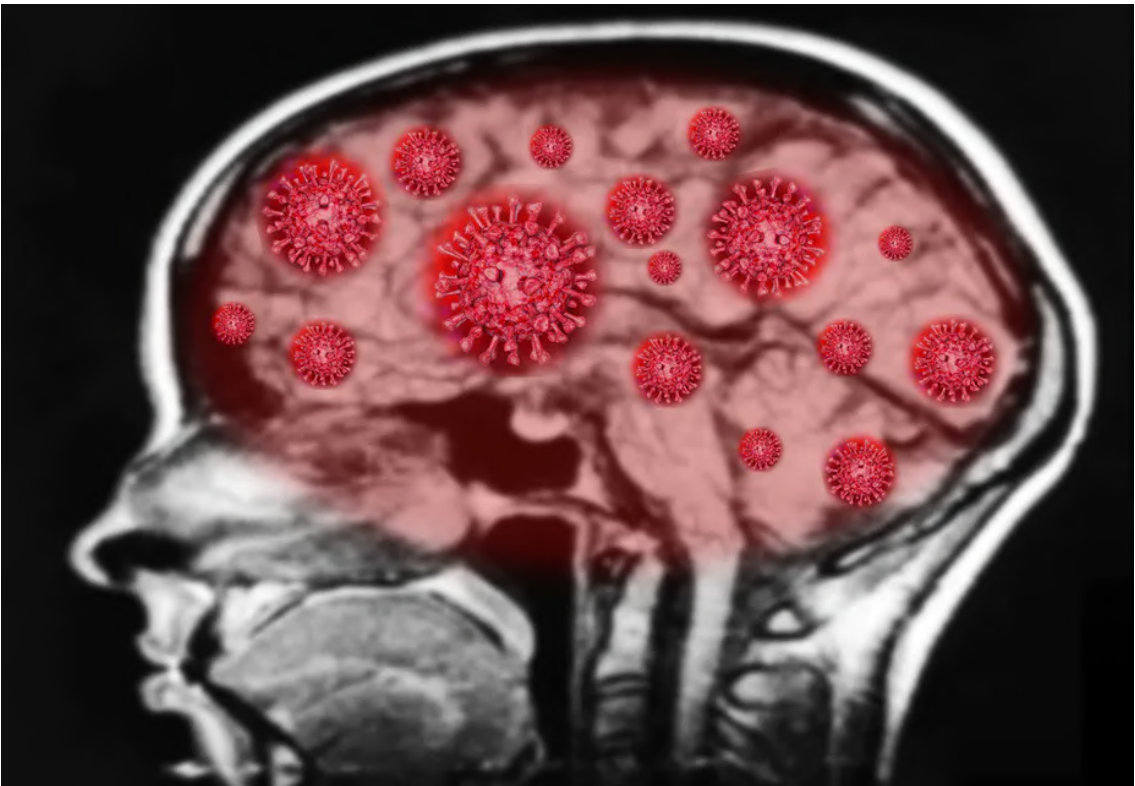
Many of the symptoms we attribute to an infection are really due to the protective responses of the immune system. A runny nose during a cold is not a direct effect of the virus, but a result of the immune system’s response to the cold virus. This is also true when it comes to feeling sick. The general malaise, tiredness, fever and social withdrawal are caused by activation of specialized immune cells in the brain, called neuroimmune cells, and signals in the brain.

These changes in brain and behavior, although annoying for our everyday lives, are highly adaptive and immensely beneficial. By resting, you allow the energy-demanding immune response to do its thing. A fever makes the body less hospitable to viruses and increases the efficiency of the immune system. Social withdrawal may help decrease spread of the virus.

In addition to changing behavior and regulating physiological responses during illness, the specialized immune system in the brain also plays a number of other roles. It has recently become clear that the neuroimmune cells that sit at the connections between brain cells (synapses), which provide energy and minute quantities of inflammatory signals, are essential for normal memory formation.

Unfortunately, this also provides a way in which illnesses like COVID-19 can cause both acute neurological symptoms and long-lasting issues in the brain.

During illness and inflammation, the specialized immune cells in the brain become activated, spewing vast quantities of inflammatory signals, and modifying how they communicate with neurons. For one



“If activation of neuroimmune cells is limited to the duration of the illness, then how can inflammation cause long-lasting memory deficits or increase the risk of cognitive decline?”

type of cell, microglia, this means changing shape, withdrawing the spindly arms and becoming blobby, mobile cells that envelop potential pathogens or cell debris in their path. But, in doing so, they also destroy and eat the neuronal connections that are so important for memory storage.

Another type of neuroimmune cell called an astrocyte, typically wraps around the connection between neurons during illness-evoked activation and dumps inflammatory signals on these junctions, effectively preventing the changes in connections between neurons that store memories.

Because COVID-19 involves a massive release of inflammatory signals, the impact of this disease on memory is particularly interesting to me. That is because there are both short-term effects on cognition (delirium), and the potential for long-lasting changes in memory, attention and cognition. There is also an increased risk for cognitive decline and dementia, in-

cluding Alzheimer’s disease, during aging.

How does inflammation exert long-lasting effects on memory?

If activation of neuroimmune cells is limited to the duration of the illness, then how can inflammation cause long-lasting memory deficits or increase the risk of cognitive decline?

Both the brain and the immune system have specifically evolved to change as a consequence of experience, in order to neutralize danger and maximize survival. In the brain, changes in connections between neurons allows us to store memories and rapidly change behavior to escape threat, or seek food or social opportunities. The immune system has evolved to fine-tune the inflammatory response and antibody production against previously encountered pathogens.

Yet long-lasting changes in the brain after illness are also closely linked to increased risk for age-

related cognitive decline and Alzheimer’s disease. The disruptive and destructive actions of neuro-immune cells and inflammatory signaling can permanently impair memory. This can occur through permanent damage to the neuronal connections or neurons themselves and also via more subtle changes in how neurons function.

The potential connection between COVID-19 and persistent effects on memory are based on observations of other illnesses. For example, many patients who recover from heart attack or bypass surgery report lasting cognitive deficits that become exaggerated during aging.

Another major illness with a similar cognitive complications is sepsis – multi-organ dysfunction triggered by inflammation. In animal models of these diseases, we also see impairments of memory, and changes in neuroimmune and neuronal function that persist weeks and months after illness.

Even mild inflammation, including chronic stress, are now recognized as risk factors for dementias and cognitive decline during aging.

In my own laboratory, I and my colleagues have also observed that even without bacterial or viral infection, triggering inflammatory signaling over a short-term period results in long-lasting changes in neuronal function in memory-related brain regions and memory impairments.

Does COVID-19 increase risk for cognitive decline?

It will be many years before we know whether the COVID-19 infection causes an increased risk for cognitive decline or Alzheimer’s disease. But this risk may be decreased or mitigated through prevention and treatment of COVID-19.

Prevention and treatment both rely on the ability to decrease the severity and duration of illness and inflammation. Intriguingly, very new research suggests that common vaccines, including the flu shot and pneumonia vaccines, may reduce risk for Alzheimer’s.

Additionally, several emerging treatments for COVID-19 are drugs that suppress excessive immune activation and inflammatory state. Potentially, these treatments will also reduce the impact of inflammation on the brain, and decrease the impact on long-term brain health.

COVID-19 will continue to impact health and well-being long after the pandemic is over. As such, it will be critical to continue to assess the effects of COVID-19 illness in vulnerability to later cognitive decline and dementias.

In doing so, researchers will likely gain critical new insight into the role of inflammation across the life-span in age-related cognitive decline. This will aid in the development of more effective strategies for prevention and treatment of these debilitating illnesses.

By Arrangements With
The Conversation

KIDS WITH SOCIAL ANXIETY MORE LIKELY TO DEVELOP DEPRESSION

“AN IMPORTANT POINT IS THAT OUR FINDINGS PROVIDE INSIGHT into the circumstances that may put children at heightened risk of depression, but equally important is research that will help us understand why this may be true,”

Agencies

Dear Parents, read this carefully. Children suffering from social anxiety may be at particular risk for depression in the future, warn researchers.

“We already know from previous research that children with social anxiety symptoms are at high risk of developing depression, as are offspring of depressed mothers,” said study co-author Holly Kobezak from the Binghamton University in the US.

“Our findings take what is already known one step further by suggesting that the combination of these risk factors may be even more insidious than the presence of either risk factor alone,” Kobezak added.

The researchers invited approximately 250 eight- to 14-year-old children whose mothers either did

or did not have a history of major depressive disorder (MDD) into their lab to complete questionnaires measuring social anxiety and depression symptoms.

Symptoms were reassessed at six-month intervals over a period of two years in order to capture changes in symptom levels over time as children progressed further into adolescence, which is a critical time period for the development of depression.

The results, published in the Journal of Adolescence, showed that high levels of social anxiety predicted increases in depression symptoms over time, but only among children of mothers with a history of MDD.

“This provides preliminary evidence that risk for the development of depression among children with social anxiety may be particularly high among children who are already at risk for

depression based on a maternal history of the disorder,” Kobezak said.

The researchers hope that their findings will encourage others to explore the specific ways in which social anxiety symptoms and exposure to maternal depression may work together to increase risk of depression in children over time.

“An important point is that our findings provide insight into the circumstances that may put children at heightened risk of depression, but equally important is research that will help us understand why this may be true,” said Kobezak.

The researchers noted that future research could focus on disruptions in social functioning and interpersonal relations resulting from these experiences and whether this might be why these children are at such elevated risk.



OFFICE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Lolab-Bangus-Drangyari Development Authority, Kupwara
Phone: 01955-252333; e-mail: ceolbdda@gmail.com

“AUCTION NOTICE” No. 02 OF 2020-21

LolabBangusDrangyari Development Authority Kupwara, interested parties are informed to participate in the open for outsourcing of following assets of LolabBangusDrangyari Development Authority (shown against each asset. The open auction shall be conducted in the office of the director tourism Kashmir at TRC Srinagar by the outsourcing committee for which office of the Accounts officer LBDDA Kupwara

	a) 01 No. Four Bed Room Hut with attached bath rooms with dining hall, kitchen and attendants Room b) 01 No. Two Bed Room Hut with attached bath rooms				
	01 No. Two Bed Room Hut with attached bath rooms, kitchen, dining room and care takers Hut. 01 No. Two Bed Room Hut with attached bath rooms and				
	01 No. Two Bed Room Hut with attached bath rooms,				
	Cafeteria with kitchen, storage/staff room, gender based				
	a) Guest House comprising of 3 No.'s rooms with attached bath rooms and common bath room section. b) Interpretation centre with kitchen and wash rooms. c) 01 No. Two Bed Room Hut with attached bath rooms,				
	01 No. Two Bed Room Hut with attached bath rooms and				
	Cafeteria with kitchen, storage/staff room, gender based toilets inside the cafeteria and outdoor PC block. a) 10 Bed room guest house at Chandigam with attached bath rooms, dining hall, annexed kitchen block, caretakers				
	Public park at Zanglikupwara with viewing deck, gender based toilet block and care takers room with kitchen.				

CDR (cash deposit receipt) for an amount shown against each asset, pledged to LolabBangusDrangyari Development Authority Kupwara drawn from any registered bank.

The facilities shall be handed over to the successful bidder on the additional facility shall be provided by the Authority is therefore advised to pay a visit/inspection of the asset personally or through his representative so as to know the actual position of the asset which he is intending to bid for, to deposit the due amount ecified above the next highest bidder deposit the bid amount on the same conditions of payment.

The successful bidder shall not make any addition or alteration proper permission of LolabBangusDrangyari Development Authority Kupwara.

The successful bidder shall strictly adhere to all rules and regulations regarding commercial prevention of environment etc. within the territorial area and should clear all applicable taxes within the default on this account will be the sole responsibility of the successful bidder.

The successful bidder shall arrange all housekeeping/watch and ward and other routine maintenance operations of assets of his own to the satisfaction of the authority throughout the period with focus on sanitation and cleanness of the entire area besi bidder shall maintain the fragile eco system within the area of operation. Any violation of environmental regulations will invite legal proceedings as per law attracted and initiated will be dealt by the successful bidder. LBDDA will not be responsible for any kind of damage, injury, theft, mishap during the period of contract.

has to pay water and electricity c of contract and any defaulter on this account will have bearing upon the term of the contract and its cancellation.

has to ensure all safety measures like fire fighting equipments and first aid preferably physical assets during the period of allotment.

has to run this establishment as per the norms and conditions as prescribed within tourist trade act.

/rate list of services and products will be decided by the authority in consultation with the succ plan by the competent authority in this matter

In case of any untoward /undesired commission of act by the successful bidder or any of his staff member during the contract riod, the dispute has to be resolved by the successful bidder himself and the LBDDA shall in no case be the party to such untoward s and also no responsibility on this account

From the date of enacting of agreement with the Authority the successful bidder shall be known as service provider for the period of contract and any dispute during this period with the prospective customers will be the sole responsibility of the successful shall have to execute an agreement with the authorized representative of the authority for covering all terms

The successful bidder shall submit attested copies of all documents VIZ, valid registration/income tax/service tax clearance certificates. Certificates of hotel management (wherever applicable). The original documents will have to be produced wherever

The successful bidder has to pay income tax on the final bid amount @ in vogue amended by the applicable under rules. Any damage to the property and assets during the contract period shall be with a penalty of 30% of the cost of damage.

The successful bidder has to deposit 25% of the offered bid amount on the day of auction in the form of and 40% within 15 days from the date of execution of the agreement and rest (35%) And in case of failure in payment as per schedule given herein the contract at the very instant without any notice and penalty will be imposed.

The successful bidder shall execute the agreement as per the conditions laid down in this notice and may have additional condition If authority deems appropriate to make agency will not submit the allotment to any other party by way of attorney or any other so his allotment will be cancelled at the very instant without any notice and penalty will

The out sourcing committee reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the offers/bids without assigning any reason the r conducting the open auction shall be issued separately.

No: XEN/LBDDA/KUP/ 10-16
Dated 20-08-2020

s/d
Executive Engineer
LBDDA Kupwara

DIPK-NB-2205/20

Combination Of Hydroxychloroquine, Azithromycin Increases Heart Risk: Study

Agencies

The largest safety study performed on both HCQ and HCQ+AZM suggests that the combination of hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) and azithromycin (AZM) has been linked to significant cardiovascular risks, including mortality.

In patients with rheumatoid arthritis, HCQ treatment in the short term (30 days) was found to not carry excess risk of complications associated with its use, but HCQ treatment in the long term had a 65 percent relative increase in cardiovascular-related mortality, compared to sulfasalazine.

HCQ + AZM had a cardiovascular mortality risk that was more than twice (2.19) as high as the comparative treatment even in the short term based on findings from more than 320,000 users of that combination therapy. This treatment also produced a 15-20 percent increased rate

of angina/chest pain and heart failure.

This study, first published on MedRxiv, has already made significant impacts in the healthcare community. On April 23, the European

lighted the study, among other efforts within the OHDSI community, in its eighth revision of The European Network of Centres for Pharmacovigilance and Pharmacoepidemiology (ENCePP) Guide on Methodological Standards in Pharmacovigilance.

This is the first published study to be generated from the OHDSI COVID Study-a-thon, a global effort in March to set the foundation for OHDSI efforts to design and execute network observational studies around characterization, patient-level prediction, and population-level effect estimation to inform decision-making around the global pandemic.

Multiple studies have been posted to MedRxiv and are currently under peer review.

HCQ, a drug commonly used in the treatment of malaria, lupus and rheumatoid arthritis (RA), gained early attention during the pandemic as a potential COVID-19 treatment.

Study Reveals Post-Covid Inflammatory Syndrome Severely Damages Children's Hearts

Press Trust Of India

An inflammatory syndrome in children, believed to be linked to COVID-19, could damage their heart to such an extent that some kids may need lifelong monitoring and interventions, according to a review of studies.

The research, published in the journal EclinicalMedicine, assessed more than 600 case studies of multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C), revealing that the condition can strike seemingly healthy children without warning three or four weeks after asymptomatic COVID-19 infections.

“According to the literature, children did not need to exhibit the classic upper respiratory symptoms of COVID-19 to develop MIS-C, which is frightening,” said study co-author Alvaro Moreira from The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio in the US.

“Children might have no symptoms, no one knew they had the disease, and a few weeks later, they may develop this exaggerated inflammation in the body,” Moreira added.

In the study, the scientists reviewed 662 MIS-C cases reported worldwide between January 1 and July 25, and found that 71 per cent

of the children were admitted to the intensive care unit (ICU).

They said 60 per cent of the kids exhibited an aggravated immune response with an average length of stay in the hospital of 7.9 days.

According to the scientists, all the 662 children had fever, and 73.7 per cent had abdominal pain or diarrhea, with 68.3 per cent suffering from vomiting.

They said 90 per cent had an echocardiogram (EKG) heart scan, which found that 54 per cent of the results were abnormal. The study noted that more than a fifth of the children required mechanical ventilation, and 11 children died.

“This is a new childhood disease that is believed to be associated with SARS-CoV-2,” Moreira said.

“It can be lethal because it affects multiple organ systems. Whether it be the heart and the lungs, the gastrointestinal system or the neurologic system, it has so many different faces that initially it was challenging for clinicians to understand,” he added.

The researchers noted that the amount of inflammation in MIS-C surpasses two similar pediatric conditions showing aggravated immune response -- Kawasaki disease and toxic shock syndrome.

“The saving grace is that treating

these patients with therapies commonly used for Kawasaki -- immunoglobulin and glucocorticosteroids -- has been effective,” Moreira said.

The study found that most of the 662 children suffered cardiac involvement as indicated by marker molecules in the body such as troponin, which is used to diagnose heart attacks in adults.

“Almost 90 per cent of the children (581) underwent an echocardiogram because they had such a

significant cardiac manifestation of the disease,” Moreira said.

The scientists found dilation of coronary blood vessels in the children -- a phenomenon also seen in Kawasaki disease.

They also observed depressed ejection fraction -- indicating a reduced ability for the heart to pump oxygenated blood to the tissues of the body.

Almost 10 per cent of children had an aneurysm of a coronary vessel, the study noted.

Pak to begin reopening Edu institutions next week

Agencies

Karachi : Schools in Pakistan will begin reopening in phases from next week following a fall in new coronavirus case numbers, officials said, ending a long closure that led to exam cancellations and threw students' grades into chaos.

Higher education institutions and senior school classes will reopen on September 15, class six till eight will open again on September 23, and on September 30 primary classes will reopen. Shafqat Mahmood, Federal Minister for Education, told a news conference.

"It is a difficult decision, as it involves the future of children, it was not an easy decision to make," Mahmood said, adding that success will only be achieved when parents and

it recorded nearly 7,000 infections and 118 deaths in single day.

On Sunday, 394 people tested positive for COVID-19 and three deaths were reported.

Explaining there is a need to lessen the density of students in classes, Faisal Sultan, the prime minister's health adviser, said that if there are 40 students in a class, it should be divided in equal batches attending school on alternate days.

Speaking to reporters, Sultan requested all parents to ensure face masks for children. A surgical mask is not necessary, as even a mask made of cloth will do, he said.

The education minister warned punitive action against educational institutions not following precautionary measures.



teachers play their role.

The South Asian country has recorded 298,903 cases of COVID-19 and nearly 6,345 deaths but has seen a slowing of numbers since June, when

Early last month, Pakistan opened gyms, salons and restaurants dine-in for the first time in five months after being closed down to stop the spread of coronavirus. Reuters

Cabins And Seats May Look Quite Different The Next Time You Fly

Headrest canopies and fabric barriers between seats could start appearing in airplane cabins as the embattled industry tries to ward off the coronavirus.

Airlines desperate for governments to lift travel restrictions and passengers to return are looking at ways to reassure the public that their health won't be compromised on a flight. New-look seats and fresh cabins could be a start.

One of the biggest companies in that business, Recaro Aircraft Seating GmbH, has designed a range of modifications to keep passengers apart and protect them from infection.

Airlines are considering installing Recaro's equipment as temporary cabin makeovers, according to Chief Executive Officer Mark Hiller. They need fittings that are easy to maneuver, lightweight and available at short notice, he said.

"There is definitely large interest from across the different regions," Hiller said in an interview.

With a coronavirus vaccine possibly years away, airlines need to persuade the public it is safe to fly when an infected passenger might be next to them. Sporadic flare-ups around the world are putting people off: Global traffic in July was down almost 80% from a year earlier, a steeper-

than-expected slump, the International Air Transport Association said last week.

Of the planes that are flying, many are half empty. Aircraft typically must be 70% to 80% full to turn a profit, so that increases the appeal of devices that let passengers sit side by side without touching heads, brushing shoulders or nudging elbows.

Airlines are also figuring out how to apply a disinfectant coating developed by Recaro onto their seats, Hiller said. The German company says it has revamped the substance to repel viruses including Covid-19.

While the industry has for months said there's little chance of catching the virus on a plane because there are hospital-grade air filters on board, that argument has been undermined by breakouts on some flights.

All 187 passengers and six crew on a TUI AG flight from the Greek resort of Zante to Cardiff last month were asked to self-isolate after at least 16 confirmed cases were identified on the Aug. 25 service.

Recaro, which sold about 150,000 aircraft seats last year, isn't immune to the crisis gripping the aviation industry, despite potential demand for its designs. Hiller said revenue is expected to drop almost 60% this year.

Agencies



UAE Planning First Official Visit To Israel On Sept 22

Agencies

Jerusalem: The United Arab Emirates is planning to make its first official visit to Israel on September 22 to build up the countries' agreement to normalise relations, a source familiar with the provisional itinerary said on Monday.

Israeli officials declined to comment and UAE officials did not respond to calls seeking comment.

The two countries announced on August 13 they would normalise diplomatic relations in a US-brokered deal that was hailed as a break-

through by Washington and Israel but spurned by the Palestinians.

The UAE delegation's trip to Israel, which has yet to be finalised, would come in reciprocation of a groundbreaking trip to Abu Dhabi last week by senior Israeli and US envoys, the source told Reuters.

The source said the UAE was expected to finalise the trip after a date is announced for a ceremony, likely in Washington, where the countries' leaders will sign their normalisation accord. That ceremony is likely to take place in mid-September, the source added.

The source declined to be identified by name or nationality due to the sensitivity of the evolving contacts.

The trip would be the first publicly acknowledged visit to Israel by an official delegation from the UAE.

Israel exchanged embassies with neighbours Egypt and Jordan under peace deals decades ago. But until the UAE accord, all other Arab states had demanded Israel first cede more land to the Palestinians.

An Israeli minister said on Monday annual trade between Israel and the UAE was expected to reach \$4 billion. Reuters

Hezbollah, Hamas Leaders Discuss Changing Israel-Arab Ties

Agencies

BEIRUT: In an unprecedented development leaders of Lebanon's Hezbollah movement and the Palestinian Hamas group, both sworn enemies of Israel, have met to discuss diplomatic normalisation between the Jewish state and Arab countries.

Hamas political chief Ismail Haniyeh flew to Beirut from Turkey and met Hassan Nasrallah, secretary general of Hezbollah at an undisclosed location in Beirut, Hezbollah-run Al Manar TV reported on Sunday. Hassan Nasrallah was pictured meeting Ismail Haniyeh, who heads the political bureau of Hamas, the de facto ruling party in the besieged Gaza Strip.

Nasrallah and Haniyeh discussed "political and military developments in Palestine, Lebanon and the region" and "the dangers to the Palestinian cause", including "Arab plans for normalisation" with Israel, Al-Manar said.

The meeting followed a 13 August announcement that Israel and the United Arab Emirates had agreed to normalise ties and amid reports that other Arab countries were soon to follow the UAE footsteps.

While a US-backed diplomatic drive aims to boost a regional alliance against Iran, Palestinians have condemned it as a "stab in the back" as they remain under Israeli oc-

cupation with no end in sight.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said that his country was now in talks with other Arab and Muslim leaders about normalising relations, following the deal with the UAE, which is only the third Arab country to have diplomatic relations with Tel Aviv, decades after Egypt and Jordan.

Saudi Arabia has also granted permission to Israeli airlines to use its airspace indicating softening of stance.

Earlier upon his arrival in

that "does not represent the people, neither their conscience, nor their history nor their heritage," Haniyeh said, according to a Hamas statement.

He later met Nasrallah at an undisclosed place. Al Manar reported the meeting without specifying where or when it took place.

Nasrallah has been living in secret after repeated Israeli attempts to assassinate him following devastating 2006 war which drove Israel out of Lebanon.

The Haniyeh-Nasrallah meeting follows an August 13



Lebanon Haniyeh was given a hero's welcome at Ain al Helweh, Lebanon's largest Palestinian refugee camp.

"Not long ago, our rockets only reached (targets) metres from Gaza's borders. Today, the resistance in Gaza possesses rockets that can reach Tel Aviv and beyond Tel Aviv," he said.

As for normalisation between Israel and Arab countries,

announcement that the Jewish state and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have agreed to normalise ties. Some

While the US-led diplomatic drive aims to boost a regional alliance against Iran, Palestinians have condemned it as a "stab in the back" by an Arab country as they remain under occupation and don't have their own state.

China Shows Off Homegrown Coronavirus Vaccines For First Time

Agencies

Beijing, China: China has put its homegrown coronavirus vaccines on display for the first time, as the country where the contagion was discovered looks to shape the narrative surrounding the pandemic.

High hopes hang on the small vials of liquid on show at a Beijing trade fair this week -- vaccine candidates produced by Chinese companies Sinovac Biotech and Sinopharm.

Neither has hit the market yet but the makers hope they will be approved after all-important phase 3 trials as early as year-end.

A Sinovac representative told AFP his firm has already "completed the construction of a vaccine factory" able to produce 300 million doses a year.

On Monday, people at the trade fair crowded around booths showing the potential game-changing vaccines.

China, which is facing a storm of foreign criticism over its early handling of the pandemic, has been trying to repurpose the story of Covid-19.

State media and officials are now emphasising the revival of Wuhan, the central Chinese city where the deadly pathogen surfaced, as a success story in the fight against the virus.

They are also touting progress on domestic vaccines as a sign of Chinese leadership and resilience in the face of an unprecedented health threat that has pummelled the global economy.

In May, President Xi Jinping pledged to make any potential vaccine developed by China a "global public good".

The potential vaccines on display are among nearly 10 worldwide to enter phase 3 trials, typically the last step ahead of regulatory approval, as countries race to stub out the virus and reboot battered economies.

Sinopharm said it anticipates the antibodies from its jab to last between one and three years -- although the final result will only be known after the trials.

China's nationalistic tabloid Global Times reported last month that "the price of the vaccines will not be high".

Every two doses should cost below 1,000 yuan (\$146), the report said, citing Sinopharm's chairman, who told media he has already been injected with one of the candidate vaccines.

China's official Xinhua news agency reported Monday that another vaccine candidate, developed by Chinese military scientists, can deal with mutations in the coronavirus.

Tens of thousands join protest against Belarus strongman



Agencies

MINSK: At least tens of thousands and possibly more Belarusian protesters staged a peaceful new march on Sunday, keeping the pressure on strongman Alexander Lukashenko who has refused to quit after his disputed re-election, turning instead to Russia for help to stay in power.

Troops, water cannon, armoured personnel carriers and armoured reconnaissance vehicles were deployed to the centre of Minsk ahead of the march and several metro stations were closed. Rights groups said nearly 70 people had been detained in the capital.

But protesters from all walks of life, from parents with children to students and from Catholic priests to prominent athletes, came out onto the streets in a show of defiance, a correspondent reported from the scene.

Many held red-and-white flags and placards while a band beat drums and played other instruments. Some dem-

onstrators danced or walked on stilts.

Unprecedented protests broke out after Lukashenko, who has ruled the ex-Soviet state for 26 years, claimed re-election with 80 per cent of the vote on August 9.

Opposition rival Svetlana Tikhanovskaya says she won the vote but Lukashenko's security forces have detained thousands of protesters, many of whom accused police of beatings and torture. Several people have died in the crackdown.

Tikhanovskaya left Belarus under pressure from authorities and took shelter in EU member Lithuania.

Belarusians have been demonstrating across the country for nearly a month even though the protest movement lacks a clear leader, with many activists jailed or forced out of the country.

On Sunday, the protesters marched towards Lukashenko's residence at the Independence Palace where they chanted "Tribunal" and "How much are you getting paid?"

NEWS MAKERS

"From Beginning Of Pandemic, He Called It Hoax": Kamala Harris On Trump

Washington: Kamala Harris, who has been nominated as Democrat vice presidential candidate, hit out at US President Donald Trump as she said his administration "minimised the seriousness" of the novel coronavirus pandemic.

"From the beginning of this pandemic, he has called it a hoax. He has muzzled the public health experts - he has minimised the seriousness of it. If he had listened to the scientists and the experts, he would have understood the gravity of it," Ms Harris told CNN.

Trump previously promised that the US would come out with a vaccine "by the end of this year if not sooner" to which, Kamala Harris responded, "I think we have learned that ever since this pandemic started, that there's



very little that we can trust what comes out of Donald Trump's mouth. I would trust the words of public health experts and scientists and not of Donald Trump."

She further criticised the US President for making the virus a partisan issue stating that "the virus could care less who was voted

in the elections."

"We have a President of the United States who made this a partisan issue. The virus could care less who you voted for in the last election or who you plan to vote for in the next election," the Democratic Vice Presidential candidate said.

Trump Returned From 2018 France Trip With Art Pieces From US Envoy's Residence

Washington: President Donald Trump has come under heavy fire for his decision in 2018 not to visit a US military cemetery while in Paris on an official visit.

What did he do instead? According to Bloomberg News, he killed time in the US ambassador's palatial residence, the Hotel de Pontalba, where he admired several pieces of art... and the following day ordered them loaded onto Air Force One for the return trip to Washington.

That fact was confirmed by a presidential spokesman, Judd Deere, who told AFP that Trump brought the artworks to be "prominently displayed in the People's House" - the White House.

But at the time, Bloomberg reported, Trump's impulsive move raised eyebrows, stunning some of those involved, and sending State Department lawyers scurrying to ensure the move was legal (they ultimately ruled that it was, be-

cause the artwork was US government property).

"It's filled with losers" The incident began during Trump's November 2018 visit to France for ceremonies marking the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I.

While other foreign dignitaries traveled on November 10 to the Aisne-Marne American Cemetery, where hundreds of US Marines who died in the bloody Battle of Belleau Wood are buried, Trump's aides said rainy weather had prevented him from making the short trip in his Marine One helicopter.

Trump faced scathing criticism at the time -- and insisted he wanted to go but was overruled by the Secret Service -- but the decision exploded even more dramatically a few days ago when The Atlantic magazine reported that Trump told senior aides at the time: "Why should I go to that cemetery? It's filled with losers."

Egypt discovers 2,500-year-old intact coffins

Cairo: Egyptian authorities announced the discovery of a collection of more than 13 intact sealed coffins dating back to 2,500 years ago.

The coffins were found at an archaeological site in Saqqara necropolis in Giza, Xinhua news agency quoted the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities as saying in a statement on Sunday.

The coffins, along with three sealed niches, were unearthed inside an 11-meter-deep shaft, according to the statement.

Tourism and Antiquities Minister Khaled al-Anany and Mostafa Waziri, secretary-general of the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA), visited the site on Sunday and inspected the excavation work in the shaft.

‘Textile India 2020’ Virtual Fair To Be Held In Nov

JK Craft Exporters, Entrepreneurs Urged To Participate, Prepare 3D Showrooms

SRINAGAR: After the success of EPCH and CEPC Virtual Fairs, the Ministry of Textiles is planning to organize another Mega Virtual Show – ‘Textile India 2020’ - in the month of November to bring the exporter and business community related to handicrafts and handloom sector on the global platform.

The event will be promoted globally and organizations like India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF) and Invest India will be involved for branding and promotion of the mega event across the globe.

In a statement, the Directorate of Handicrafts & Handloom, Kashmir, has urged craft exporters and entrepreneurs from Jammu and Kashmir to participate in the upcoming Virtual Fair which shall provide excellent marketing opportunities for sale of their famed product line. The statement added that in view of Covid-19 pandemic, the UT Government is making strenuous efforts to promote participation of craft businessmen in virtual mode exhibitions which provide an ideal opportunity to sell finished handicraft and handloom products in outside markets.

The Directorate of Handicrafts and Handloom also called upon the exporters, consortia and craft entrepreneurs to come up with their respective company profiles, booth display, virtual showrooms and e-catalogues to make an impression on online buyers in future exhibitions being held in virtual mode. The statement added that feedback received from participation of craft businessmen from Kashmir in EPCH and CEPC Virtual Fairs has been very positive with thousands of business queries generated and new buyers and destinations having been explored.

The craft exporters and entrepreneurs from Jammu and Kashmir participated in 49th IHGF Virtual Fair organized by EPCH in July and India Carpet Expo organized by CEPC in August in which the participants were conferred with several awards.

All craft promoters and businessmen interested in participation in ‘Textile India 2020’ have been advised to coordinate with the Directorate of Handicrafts and Handloom, Kashmir, Kashmir Haat, Srinagar or reach out on adh.exportpromotion@gmail.com.

India Probes Alleged Dumping Of Vitamin C From China



NEW DELHI: India has initiated a probe into the alleged dumping of Vitamin C, used by pharmaceutical firms for the production of medicines, from China following complaint by a domestic manufacturer.

Bajaj Healthcare Ltd has filed the application before the commerce ministry's investigation arm DGTR, seeking initiation of the probe.

The company alleged that the domestic industry is impacted due to the dumping of Vitamin C from China PR and has requested for the imposition of anti-dumping duty on the imports, according to the notification of Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR).

On the basis of prima facie evidence submitted by the applicants, "the authority, hereby, initiates an investigation," it said.

In the probe, the directorate will determine the existence, degree and effect of any alleged dumping in respect of the product from China.

If DGTR will find that there is dumping and it is impacting the domestic manufacturer, it will recommend the amount of anti-dumping duty, which if levied, would be adequate to remove the injury to the domestic industry.

While the DGTR recommends the duty, the finance ministry imposes the same.

The period of investigation is April 2019- March 2020. It would also look into the data of April 2016-19 period.

In international trade parlance, dumping happens when a country or a firm exports an item at a price lower than the price of that product in its domestic market.

Dumping impacts the price of that product in the importing country, hitting margins and profits of the manufacturing firms.

According to global trade norms, a country is allowed to impose tariffs on such dumped products to provide a level-playing field to domestic manufacturers.

The duty is imposed only after a thorough investigation by a quasi-judicial body, such as DGTR, in India.

The imposition of anti-dumping duty is permissible under the World Trade Organization (WTO) regime. India and China are members of this Geneva-based organisation, which deals with global trade norms.

The duty is aimed at ensuring fair trading practices and creating a level-playing field for domestic producers vis-a-vis foreign producers and exporters.



A FISHERMAN docks his boat on Dal banks on Foreshore Road to take a break for lunch. KO Photo Abid Bhata

India’s Biggest COVID Care Centre To Be Shut Due To Lack Of Patients

BENGALURU: The COVID Care Centre at the Bengaluru International Exhibition Centre here, that was touted to be the biggest such facility for the treatment of asymptomatic and mildly symptomatic patients in the country, will be shut from September 15, as it is not getting patients.

In an order dated September 4, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), the city civic body has said the decision to close the facility with a potential capacity of over 10,000 beds was taken at a meeting chaired by the Chief Minister on the advise of the head of the Covid Care Task Force.

It has been decided to give the furniture brought for the said centre like beds, mattress, pedestal fans, dustbins, water dispensers among others to government-run hostels and hospitals at free of cost.

The Social Welfare Department will get 2,500 furniture for its hostels, while the horticulture university hostel at Bagalkote, Minority



Welfare Department hostel and the GKVK, Bengaluru will get 1,000 each.

The remaining furniture will be given to government hospitals and hostels based on request, it added.

Following the government's decision to allow home isolation of asymptomatic and mildly symptomatic COVID cases, there has been a drastic fall in people getting admitted to the centre, official sources said.

Earlier, the centre had its share of controversy too.

Following the widespread criticism and allegations of corruption against its decision to rent beds and furniture needed for the centre at a higher cost, the government had subsequently decided to purchase it.

Deserted Platforms, Closed Eateries As Delhi Metro Resumes Services

Platforms and key hub stations, including Rajiv Chowk, wore a deserted look, eateries remained closed and the ambience far removed from the usual hustle-and-bustle as the Delhi metro services resumed on Monday after a 169-day hiatus triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Station employees frequently sanitised areas of the metro station and ensured social distancing norms, even as very few commuters opted for the metro services on the first day.

Rajiv Chowk, which is one of the busiest stations of the national capital remained empty. At around 9 am, the usually busy entry point at Rajiv Chowk metro station was deserted with officials, wearing masks and face shields, ready with sanitizers to ensure a safe ride for passengers.

After the entry point, there was a second layer of sanitisation process where thermal screening of passengers as well as their luggage was done.

Imran Khan, who was travelling from Chattarpur to Barakhamba metro station, was on his way to attend a job interview.

"The ride was smooth and there were hardly less than five commuters in my compartment. So, we had ample space to maintain social distancing even within the coaches. I'm glad that metro services have finally begun or I wouldn't have been able to make it for my interview on time," he said.

Another commuter, Vishal Naik (21), a resident of Shastri Park, was relieved that now he would finally be able to reach office in Connaught Place on time.



"Until now, everyday, it took almost two-three hours to reach office. Half of my time was spent in travelling. I had to start at least an hour early from home and wait for unusually longer hours at the bus stands and if the passenger count exceeded beyond 20, I had to again wait to catch the next bus, which is equally risky during pandemic," he said.

Asked if he was afraid to take the ride amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Naik said metro rides are much preferred than buses.

Rajiv Chowk metro station, which serves as an interchange facility between the Yellow Line and the Blue Line, witnessed an unusually thin crowd between 9 am to 11 am. While many train coaches remained totally empty, some had hardly one passengers. Some others had less than 10 passengers on board.

Deepika Nautiyal, a resident of Laxmi Nagar, said she is scared but has taken all the precautions.

"I took an auto rickshaw from my home in Laxmi Nagar and reached Rajiv Chowk metro station. I am a bit

scared but have taken all the precautions," Nautiyal, who works at company in Gurgaon, said.

Another commuter Mona Jha, who lives in Bhajanpura in northeast Delhi and works at Barakhamba Road, said she noticed that people are maintaining the norm of social distancing inside the metro train.

"I boarded the metro at Kashmere Gate and have seen that people are aware. I am not scared. People are more concerned but we must follow social distancing norms. The situation will take time to become normal," Jha said.

At Kashmere Gate metro station, only two gates were opened.

When people were entering the premises, they were seen getting their bags sanitized by the metro employees.

Before contactless frisking, CISF personnel were also seen helping the commuters maintain social distance.

The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) were making several announcements about dos and don'ts during COVID-19.

"If you have cold cough or fever, then please don't take metro. Duration of opening and closing of metro doors have been increased for the convenience of commuters," the announcer said.

Trains were stopping at station with an extra time so that the passengers can easily board or de-board the metro without get in contact with anyone.

The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) said all possible measures will be taken to ensure that services are smooth.

Air Passenger Traffic Grows Around 25 Pc Sequentially In August: Icra

MUMBAI: Air passenger traffic in the country logged around 25 per cent month-on-month growth at 26 lakh passengers in August with airlines scaling up capacity by 27 per cent over July, rating agency Icra said on Monday.

Passenger traffic on year-on-year basis, however, plunged by 77 per cent in August, Icra said.

Overall, passenger traffic grew by 19 per cent till August 31, with carriers flying over 70 lakh passengers during the period, after the resumption of services in a graded manner on domestic routes from May 25 following a two-month hiatus.

The capacity deployment at around 33 per cent year-on-year was rather a slow

recommencement of operations over three months ago, it said.

"The number of flights departing has also gradually increased from 416 on Day 1 to 1,156 on Day 101 (September 2). For August, the average daily departures was around 930, significantly lower than the average daily departures of 2,846 in August 2019, though better than 780 in July 2020," said Kinjal Shah, Vice-President, Icra.

The average number of passengers per flight during August was 98 against the average of 133 passengers per flight in August last year, she said, adding it is expected that the domestic aviation industry operated at a passenger load factor (PLF) of around 63 per cent in the previous month as against 85.1 per cent in August 2019, that too on very low capacity.

The PLF for August 2020 has sequentially improved from

around 55 per cent in July this year despite the increase in capacity deployment by around 19 per cent, she added.

While the scheduled international operations are yet to start, the Civil Aviation Ministry has permitted international operations under the Vande Bharat Mission (VBM) and Air Transport Bubbles (ATB).

Under the VBM for the evacuation of Indian citizens from foreign shores, which started from May 7, the international passenger traffic (inbound and outbound) has been 632,741 for the period May 7 to August 31, according to the rating agency.

For August, the number of international passenger traffic was 2,16,666, a Y-o-Y decline of 89 per cent, it said.

As for aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices, following the pandemic outbreak, crude oil prices declined materially – reached a low of around USD 19 per barrel in April, thereby leading to a decline in ATF prices.

However, the crude oil prices have increased gradually since then, and currently range around USD 44 per barrel, Icra said.

Consequently, ATF prices increased sequentially by 24.1 per cent in July and by 4.2 per cent in August. However, it declined sequentially by 3.4 per cent in September, which is also lower by 32.3 per cent on a Y-o-Y basis.

"The prolonged shutdown of manufacturing activities in several countries and the subsequent impact of the outbreak on the global economic activity will keep the crude oil prices and thus the ATF prices low," she added. PTI



Advertising Guidelines: Make Sure The Fine Print Is Readable, Says Govt



The government has come out with a comprehensive set of draft guidelines on advertising under which 'disclaimers' that are not easily noticeable by or legible or easily understandable to an ordinary consumer will be treated as misleading advertisements under the Consumer Protection Act.

The violation of these guidelines would face action by the recently established Central Consumer Protection Authority.

The draft guidelines, on which the Consumer Affairs Ministry has sought public comments by September 18, are applicable to companies whose products or services are advertised as well as to advertisement agencies and endorsers. According to the draft guidelines, a disclaimer should be clear, prominent enough and legible.

"It should be clearly visible to a normally-sighted

person reading the marketing communication once, from a reasonable distance and at a reasonable speed."

The disclaimers used in advertisements should be in "same language" as the claim of the advertisement, the font should be in the "same font" as the claim and place disclaimers on packaging in a "prominent and visible space".

If the claim is presented as voice over (VO), then the disclaimer should be displayed in sync with the VO, it said. That apart, a disclaimer should not attempt to hide material information with respect to the claim, the omission/ absence of which is likely to make the advertisement deceptive or conceal its commercial intent.

A disclaimer should not attempt to correct a misleading claim made in an advertisement, it added. The draft guidelines also specify that an advertisement should not describe a product or service as "free", "without charge" or other similar terms, if the consumer has to pay anything other than the cost while purchasing a product or service for delivery of the same.

NEWS MAKERS

Retail Chain Director Crushed To Death Under Lift In Mumbai

MUMBAI: The 46-year-old director of a retail chain was crushed to death under a lift after he stepped into its shaft in Worli area here, police said on Monday.

The incident took place on Sunday evening when Vishal Mewani, director of Kohinoor Electronics, went to meet his friend in the two-storey Buena Vista building in Worli, a police official said.

He called for the lift, but stepped into its shaft after opening the lift channel.

On realising that he was in the shaft, he tried to move out but failed and got crushed under the lift which was coming down, the official said.

Fire brigade officials rushed to the spot and Mewani was pulled out. He was taken to Breach Candy Hospital



where he was declared dead on arrival, the official said.

"He spoke to his wife 30 minutes before the incident and told her that he was going to meet his friend. On the basis of primary information, an Accidental Death Report has been registered and investigation is under way," Worli police station senior inspector Sukhlal Varpe said. PTI

Man Gets Back Smartphone As Thief Cannot Operate It

Burdwan: Wonders will never cease found out a man who lost his smartphone in a shop as it was returned a few days later by the person who stole it after he failed to operate it.

Police said on Monday that the man left his mobile phone worth Rs 45,000 by mistake at a sweet shop at Jamalpur in East Burdwan district on September 4. The phone was stolen by a 22-year-old from the shop counter where it was lying.

The phone owner had lodged a complaint with the police as the phone could not be traced at the sweet shop, said police.



He had tried to make a call on his number from another phone but found it switched off, the police said.

But the situation looked up on Sunday when he repeated the attempt and the man who had stolen the phone answered the call

and told him that he wanted to return the phone as he did not know how to operate it.

"I was surprised when the man took the call and said he wanted to return my phone. I collected the cell phone that very day from his residence with police help," he said.

"He even expressed remorse for his act," the phone owner said when asked of the man's demeanour.

The police did not take any action against the man on the request of the complainant as he had returned the phone, the official added. PTI

India Successfully Tests Hypersonic Missile



CHANDIGARH: India on Monday successfully flight-tested a Hypersonic Technology Demonstrator Vehicle (HSTDV) from APJ Abdul Kalam testing range (Wheeler Island) in Balasore, Odisha.

The technology has been developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

With the successful launch, the organisation has demonstrated capabilities for highly complex technology that will serve as the building block for

NextGen Hypersonic vehicles in partnership with industry, DRDO said in a tweet.

DRDO said: "In a historic mission today, India successfully flight tested Hypersonic Technology Demonstrator Vehicle (HSTDV), a giant leap in indigenous defence technologies and significant milestone towards a #sashaktbharat and #atmanirbharbharat."

The DRDO Chairman congratulated all the scientists, researchers and other personnel-related with #HSTDV mission for "their resolute and unwavering efforts towards strengthening Nation's defence capabilities."

Defence minister Rajnath Singh also congratulated the DRDO after the test.