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Today 06:44 PM
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Tomorrow 06:11 AM



News Digest

Cross-LoC Shelling Rattles Poonch

Jammu: Indian and Pakistani troops on Wednesday exchanged heavy gunfire in two sectors along the Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan army violated ceasefire on Wednesday by resorting to heavy firing and mortar shelling in forward areas in Poonch district, officials said. "At about 1730 hours today, Pakistan army initiated unprovoked ceasefire violation by" **P-02**

Hizb OGW Held In Kupwara: Police

Srinagar: Police on Wednesday claimed to have arrested a Hizbul Mujahideen militant associate in Kupwara district of north Kashmir. Altaf Ahmad Bhat of Kanthpora village of Sogam was arrested by police after receiving reliable information that he has come in contact with Hizbul Mujahideen militants and was being lured to join their ranks, a police official said. However, the official said that anticipating that he might face arrest; the youth absconded from" **P-02**

Suitcase Creates Bomb Scare In Poonch

Jammu: An unclaimed suitcase on the roadside in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir created a bomb scare on Wednesday, prompting the Army to rush in a special squad to examine the object, police said. However, no explosive was detected in the suitcase, which, it was later found, belonged to a soldier and contained his clothes and daily use items, a police official said. He said some locals noticed the "abandoned" suitcase on" **P-02**

Bear Mauls Man In Bandipora

Srinagar: A man was attacked and injured by a bear on Wednesday in Ajas area of north Kashmir's Bandipora district. 38-year-old Farooq Ahmad Khan of Charawan village of Ajas was attacked and injured seriously by a bear when he was on the way to market on Wednesday morning, an official said. The locals chased away the bear and rescued the injured man before shifting him to the nearby hospital. However, the doctors there referred Khan, who had suffered injuries on his face, to Srinagar for advanced treatment, officials added.

CASO Carried Out In Beerwah

Srinagar: Government Forces on Wednesday carried out a cordon and search operation (CASO) in Beerwah area of central Kashmir's Budgam district. The state forces laid a cordon around Rath-suna and Dragger villages of the Beerwah on Wednesday evening after receiving specific inputs about the presence of militants, news agency KNT reported. The government forces, the report said carried out door to door search operation after sealing all the entry and exit points **P-02**

China Lines Up Tanks, Combat Vehicles Facing Ladakh



Agencies

NEW DELHI: Chinese Army has deployed close to 50,000 troops along with tanks and heavy artillery along the Line of Actual Control in eastern Ladakh, reports said on Wednesday.

On the opposite Indian side of Chushul, the Chinese have been lining up their tanks and infantry combat vehicles within their territory near the friction areas as they have brought in a lot of heavy weaponry to the area, ANI quoting sources reported.

On the situation along the border,

the sources said that the Chinese Army is carrying out firing practice well within territory controlled by them in Tibet but it can be heard on the Indian side at many locations along the LAC from Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh.

Engaged in a stand-off with the Chinese Army, the Indian Army has given instructions to field commanders that the Chinese should not be allowed to transgress at any cost and also directed them that troops should maintain utter discipline while protecting Indian territory. The field commanders **PAGE 02**

China Starts Fresh Build Up North Of Pangong Lake

As India dominates south of Pangong Lake in Eastern Ladakh, China has started fresh build up at Finger area north of the Lake, sources said on Wednesday. It started soon after the skirmish on the southern bank took place on September 7 where warning shots were fired by both sides. The deployment of People's Liberation **P-02**

Military Commanders Meet Fails To Defuse Tension

Commanders of the armies of India and China on Wednesday met in eastern Ladakh and also exchanged messages over the hotline on ways to check further escalation in border tension on the eve of a crucial meeting between the foreign ministers of the two countries in Moscow, government sources said. The sources said the situation **P-02**

Two CRPF Men Injured In Anantnag Grenade Attack

SRINAGAR: Two Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel on Wednesday were injured in a grenade attack in south Kashmir's Anantnag district.

Suspected militants on Wednesday evening lobbed a grenade towards the personnel of CRPF 40 battalion in Lal Chowk area of the south Kashmir township, officials said. The grenade attack left two CRPF personnel injured.

The injured paramilitary men were removed to the nearby hospital for treatment.

Soon after the attack, the state forces laid a cordon around the area and launched a manhunt to nab the attackers.

2 Arrested After Arms Found In Truck

Two persons were arrested along with arms and ammunition including M4 US carbine and an AK rifle by joint forces near Jawahar tunnel in south Kashmir's Kulgam district late last night, official sources said on Wednesday. They said the joint forces intercepted a truck (JK22B-1737), coming from Samba district. **P-02**

Covid-19 Claims 17 More Lives In J&K, Toll 835

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: As many as seventeen more people succumbed to coronavirus infection in Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday, raising the number of fatalities since the outbreak of pandemic in the Union Territory to 835.

While nine Covid-19 deaths were reported from Jammu di-

vision, eight others were confirmed by the officials in the Kashmir valley. Among the new fatalities from Valley, two each were from Srinagar and Baramulla besides one each from Budgam, Anantnag, Bandipora and Kupwara, officials said. In Jammu division, five of the victims were from Jammu district, two from Rajouri

and one each from Kathua, Reasi and Kishtwar.

Officials said a 77-year-old woman from Noorbagh Baramulla, died at SKIMS Soura hospital here, day after she was admitted and diagnosed with "HTN with severe Covid pneumonia with type 1 respiratory **PAGE 02**

J&K Sees Record 1617 New Cases

Jammu and Kashmir recorded on Wednesday the highest single-day spike of 1617 new coronavirus cases, taking the total number of people infected by the virus in the Union Territory to **P-02**

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Uncertainty Looms Large Over LAHDC Polls

Agencies

LADAKH: Clouds of uncertainty loom large over Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) polls as barring BJP, all other political parties have advocated postponement of hill council elections citing the reasons of border tension and Covid-19 pandemic.

A meeting was held under the chairmanship of deputy commissioner/CEO LAHDC (Election authority) Leh with the political parties that include, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Indian National Congress, Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) regarding the 6th LAHDC election.

Except BJP, all the three political parties suggested for the postponement of the much awaited election in view of the border tensions with China in Eastern Ladakh and ongoing global pandemic.

According to a document, among the four political parties only Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has agreed for the timely elections scheduled to be held in October while the other parties have cited ongoing pan-



demic and the border tensions with China in eastern Ladakh as a reason for postponement of the much awaited election.

The BJP during the meet proposed for timely election with suggestions that include, permissible gathering of 20 to 50 people with laid SOPs for rallies, restrictions on number of vehicles as well as on number of people (There should not be more than two persons in each vehicle), EVM used should be sanitized after each vote cast and creation of sub polling booth within the polling booth.

The representatives of Congress party present in the meeting to decide **PAGE 02**

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Heavy Rains Lash Kerala, North India Remains Dry, Sultry

NEW DELHI: Heavy rains lashed several parts of southern India including Kerala on Wednesday while dry and sultry weather prevailed in the north, even as the IMD forecast widespread rainfall over Peninsular regions in the next four to five days.

Three fishermen drowned when their boat capsized in the rough seas in Thiruvananthapuram as heavy rains lashed parts of Kerala.

In Delhi, dry weather pushed the mercury up slightly as the maximum temperature settled at 35.6 degrees Celsius, two notches above normal.

According to the Met department forecast, the city's maximum temperature is expected to rise by a few notches as rainfall is unlikely over the next few days.

Delhi has recorded just 20.9

mm rainfall against the normal of 58.3 mm -- a deficiency of 64 per cent -- in September so far. Overall, it has recorded 576.5 mm precipitation against the normal of 582.1 mm since June 1, when the monsoon season starts.

In the neighbouring states of Punjab and Haryana, hot and humid weather conditions prevailed at most places, with maximum temperatures settling two-three notches above the normal limits.

Chandigarh, the common capital of the two states, recorded a high of 35.2 degrees Celsius.

In Haryana, Ambala recorded a maximum of 35.4 degrees Celsius while Hisar's maximum settled at 36.6 degrees Celsius. Bhiwani experienced a hot day with a maximum temperature of 37.2 degrees Celsius.

In Punjab, Patiala recorded a high of 35 degrees Celsius, Ludhiana's maximum temperature settled at 34.6 degrees Celsius while Amritsar's maximum settled at 35.4 degrees Celsius.

According to the Met department forecast, monsoon activity is likely to be subdued over Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh during the next four to five days and dry weather is likely to prevail during this period.

In Uttar Pradesh, thunderstorm accompanied with lightning occurred at isolated places in the eastern part of the state.

The met department has forecast rain/thundershower at isolated places and light thunderstorm accompanied with lightning at some places over eastern parts of the state.

As heavy rains lashed Kerala,

three fishermen, who had put out to sea from the coastal town of Anchuthengu, drowned when their boat overturned due to the rough sea and strong waves.

The capital city of Thiruvananthapuram received 10 cm rains with low lying areas getting water logged and five families being shifted to relief camps.

Fishermen have been warned against venturing into the sea as strong winds with speed ranging from 45-55 kmph are likely to prevail along and off Kerala coast from Wednesday, officials said.

Rain/thundershowers were observed at most places over Mahe and Lakshadweep; at many places over Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Jharkhand, Rayalaseema and Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal on Wednesday.

A few places in Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, south Karnataka too witnessed rains while isolated places in Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Konkan and Goa, Uttar Pradesh, West Rajasthan, Gujarat, West Bengal, Sikkim, Chhattisgarh, coastal Andhra Pradesh and Telangana received showers.

In its monsoon forecast, the IMD said that under the influence of an off-shore trough from south Maharashtra coast to north Kerala coast, fairly widespread to widespread rainfall with isolated heavy falls, thunderstorm and lightning are very likely over Peninsular India during the next four to five days.

While heavy to very heavy rainfall at isolated places is very

likely over coastal Karnataka from September 10 to 13, south Karnataka (September 9-12), Kerala and Mahe (September 9-11). Extremely heavy rainfall at isolated places is also very likely over coastal and south Karnataka on September 11.

The western part of the monsoon trough lies north of its normal position and the eastern end lies near to its normal position.

A cyclonic circulation lies over Gangetic West Bengal and neighbourhood in lower tropospheric levels. Under their influence, fairly widespread rainfall with isolated thunderstorm and lightning are very likely over northeast and adjoining east India.

Heavy rainfall at isolated places is also very likely over sub-Himalayan West Bengal

and Sikkim during next 5 days and over Northeast India during the next four to five days.

Under the influence of likely formation of a low pressure area over west central Bay of Bengal off Andhra Pradesh coast around September 13, rainfall distribution and intensity is very likely to increase over Odisha, Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Yanam, Telangana, Vidarbha and adjoining areas from September 12 onwards, the IMD said.

While moderate thunderstorm with lightning very likely at isolated places over eastern Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Vidarbha, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Rayalaseema and Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal during the next 12 hours, it said.

Serum Institute Gets DCGI Notice Over Oxford COVID-19 Vaccine Trial Suspension By Astrazeneca Abroad

NEW DELHI: The central drug regulator has issued a show-cause notice to Serum Institute of India (SII) for not informing it about pharma giant AstraZeneca pausing the clinical trials of the Oxford vaccine candidate for COVID-19 in other countries and also for not submitting casualty analysis of the "reported serious adverse events".

The show-cause notice was issued following reports that human trials of the most promising COVID-19 vaccine candidate, being developed by the University of Oxford, have been put on hold after a UK participant had an adverse reaction to it.

The Drugs Controller General of India, Dr V G Somani, in his show-cause notice has asked

SII as to why the permission granted for conducting phase 2 and 3 clinical trials of the vaccine candidate in the country be not suspended till patient safety is established.

"Whereas, Serum Institute of India Pvt Ltd, Pune, till now has not informed the Central licensing authority regarding pausing the clinical trial carried out by AstraZeneca in other countries and also not submitted casualty analysis of the reported serious adverse event with the investigational vaccine for the continuation of phase 2 and 3 clinical trials of the subject vaccine in the country in light of the safety concerns," said the show-cause notice accessed by PTL.

"In view of the above, I Dr V G Somani, Drugs Controller General of India and Central Licensing Authority hereby give you an opportunity to show cause as provided under rule 30 of the New Drugs and Clinical Trials Rules, 2019, why the permission granted to you August 2 shall not be suspended till patient safety is established," the notice further said.

The DCGI sought an immediate reply saying else "it shall be construed that you have no explanation to offer and action deemed fit will be taken against you".

In the show-cause notice, the drug regulator also mentioned that the clinical trials have been put on hold across countries

where it is conducted i.e. USA, UK, Brazil and South Africa. Last month, the DCGI had granted permission to the Pune-based SII to conduct Phase 2 and 3 human clinical trials of the coronavirus vaccine candidate.

AstraZeneca, the British-Swedish biopharmaceutical giant in tie-up with the Oxford University to produce the vaccine, described the pause of trials as a "routine" one following what was an unexplained illness".

Meanwhile, Serum Institute of India (SII), which has partnered with AstraZeneca for manufacturing the Oxford vaccine candidate for COVID-19, on Wednesday said it is continuing with the trials in India.

Numbers Prove Money Given Was 'Niggardly', 'Insufficient': Chidambaram On Govt Assistance

NEW DELHI: Senior Congress leader P Chidambaram on Wednesday attacked the government over its assistance to the poor under the Pradhan-MantriGaribKalyanYojana, alleging that money given was "niggardly and totally insufficient".

The Finance Ministry on Tuesday said more than 42 crore people have received Rs 68,820-crore financial assistance under the government's PradhanMantriGaribKalyanYojana to protect the poor and vulnerable from the impact of the COVID-19 crisis.

As part of the Rs 1.70 lakh crore PMGK, announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on March 26, the government announced free

foodgrains and cash payment to women, poor senior citizens and farmers.

Attacking the government, Chidambaram asked, "How much did each beneficiary get under the PM GaribKalyanYojana? Was it 'relief' in any real sense or tokenism?"

Under the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP), 2.81 crore people got Rs 2,814 crore or Rs 1,000 per person, the former finance minister said and asked, "Could that sum have kept body and soul together?"

"Jan Dhan account holding women (20.6 crore) got Rs 30,925 crore or Rs 1,500 each over three months. Could a homemaker have run a family

on Rs 500 a month?" he said in a series of tweets.

"Migrants (2.66 crore) got 2.67 lakh MT of food grains over 2 months. That is 5 kg per month. Could it have sustained a migrant and his family? The numbers prove that the money given was niggardly and totally insufficient," Chidambaram said.

"And certainly, the money could not have acted as a 'stimulus' to boost demand and revive the economy," he added.

Under the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan', the government announced supply of free food grains and chana to migrants for two months, and the estimate of number of migrants provided by the states was about 2.8 crore.

China Lines Up Tanks, ...

have also been told that while patrolling their respective areas of responsibility or overuse of force, government sources told ANI. Sources said that India has strengthened its defences along the positions occupied by the Indian Army near Rezang La and Rechen La heights by putting concertina wires and the Chinese troops have been warned that there would be consequences if they try to breach Indian defence, the sources said.

The Indian side has also taken up the issue of Chinese Army's soldiers carrying stick machetes and spears along with them during the deployment close to the Indian positions during talks at the Brigade Commander level, they added.

China Starts Fresh Build...

Army troops have increased since Tuesday evening. They are also bringing in more materials and logistics items.

The troops from both sides are at a short range from each other.

"They are within clear visible range and Indian troops are keeping a close watch on the activities," said a government source.

The Chinese continue to sit atop Finger 4 ridgeline. The north bank of the lake is divided into 8 fingers that are contested by both sides.

India claims that the Line of Actual Control at Finger 8 and had been holding on to area till Finger 4 but in a clear alteration of status quo the Chinese have been camping at Finger 4 and have set up fortifications between Finger 5 and 8.

The Indian Army have occupied crucial heights in areas around the south bank of Pangong Lake and the Chinese have made several attempts to take over Indian positions.

It has become the new friction point where Indian Army seems to be in an advantageous position.

The Indian Army has occupied heights that allow it to dominate the Chinese Moldo garrison and the Spangur Gap under Chinese control. Both Indian and China lay claim to some of these heights.

One of the most critical heights the Indian Army is manning is the Rechin La, which the Chinese are protesting against.

From here the Indian Army enjoys a vantage point not just over Chinese army military bases on the south bank of the Pangong Lake but can also be within range of the Finger 4 area on the north of the lake on the opposite side.

India and China have been engaged in a standoff since May at the LAC in Eastern Ladakh. Despite several levels of dialogue, there has not been any breakthrough and the deadlock continues.

Military Commanders Meet...

in eastern Ladakh remained "tense" and that around 30-40 soldiers of China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) are holding up at a position close to an Indian post in the Rezang-La ridgeline in eastern Ladakh.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi are set to hold the keenly anticipated bilateral talks on Thursday against the backdrop of a massive spike in tension in eastern Ladakh triggered by fresh face-offs between the two armies along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

Jaishankar and Wang are in Moscow to attend a Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meeting.

Besides the bilateral talks, the two leaders are expected to come face-to-face during a luncheon meeting of foreign ministers of Russia-India-China (RIC) on Thursday.

The focus of the bilateral talks between Jaishankar and Wang are expected to be on finding a breakthrough in cooling down temperatures in eastern Ladakh, a day after the two countries accused each other of firing in the air at the latest flashpoint in the first instance of bullets being used along the LAC after a gap of 45 years.

Jaishankar held a meeting with his Russian counterpart and SCO host Sergey Lavrov after which the Indian leader said he had "excellent talks" and that they discussed bilateral strategic ties and exchanged views on the international situation.

The Indian Army on Tuesday said Chinese troops attempted to close in on an Indian position near the southern bank of Pangong lake on the evening of September 7 and fired shots in the air.

The Army said this in a statement after the PLA late on Monday night alleged that Indian troops crossed the LAC and "outrageously fired" warning shots near the Pangong lake.

A meeting between Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and his Chinese counterpart Gen. Wei Fenghe on the margins of another SCO meet in Moscow last Friday apparently did not yield any tangible outcome.

Government sources said a Brigade commander-level interaction took place between Indian and Chinese armies at a forward location along the LAC with an aim to check further escalation of tension and find ways to focus on implementing laid down protocols in management of the border.

Both sides also exchanged messages on the hotline and even commanding officers of the two armies were in touch with each other, they

said.

However, the situation in the region remained "tense" with both sides maintaining aggressive posturing following the fresh face-off on Monday evening, the sources said.

The latest incident was considered serious as the previous instance of shots being fired at the de-facto border was in 1975.

Provisions of an agreement of 1996 and another inked in 2005 mandate the two sides not to use firearms during any confrontation.

The sources had said that Chinese troops carried rods, spears, clubs and pole weapons called 'Guandao' in aggressively trying to close in on an Indian position on Monday evening.

Tensions escalated manifold along the LAC in eastern Ladakh after the Galwan Valley clashes in which 20 Indian Army personnel were killed. The Chinese side also suffered casualties but it is yet to give out the details. According to an American intelligence report, the number of casualties on the Chinese side was 35.

The border situation deteriorated again after China unsuccessfully attempted to occupy Indian territory in the southern bank of Pangong lake on the intervening night of August 29 and 30.

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.

The PLA has been eyeing to capture the strategic heights in the last three-four days, the government sources said, adding the Chinese troops also damaged an iron fence on Monday evening which was put up by Indian troops in the area.

India continues to dominate strategic peaks around the southern bank of Pangong lake area overlooking key Chinese formations in the Moldo area.

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

2 Arrested After Arms Found...

near Jawahar Tunnel and recovered one AK rifle with 2 magazines, one M4 US Carbine with 3 magazines, six Chinese pistols with 12 magazines. Confirming it, a senior police officer said that two persons onboard the truck have been arrested and their interrogation was going on.

The officer identified the duo as Bilal Ahmad son of Ghulam Muhammad Kutrey and Shahnwaz Ahmad Mir son of Zahooh Ahmad Mir, both residents of Shopian.

Besides, the officer said at least three more persons were detained on the lead of Kashmir police from the Ramban district in connection with the incident. "The investigations are underway and further details would be shared later," the officer added.

Uncertainty Looms Large...

about the LAHDC election asked for the postponement of election in view of the increasing number of COVID-19 positive cases and prevailing border situation and said that the election should be held once the situation normalizes.

The party apprehended that the large number of people have come to Leh from border villages so there might not be enough people in the village for campaigning, and at this juncture gathering of people might not be feasible also the number of areas are devoid of telecommunication and mobile facilities. "In such virtual rally might not be possible," the document read.

Kejriwal led Aam Aadmi Party, that would be contesting its maiden LAHDC polls citing Covid positive cases spike as a reason said that it wouldn't be appropriate time to conduct election, the election must be postponed till the situation becomes normal, persons above the age of 65 are more vulnerable therefore there might not be much participation of such person in electoral process as it used to be earlier. Further even if ballot boxes are used, this might prove a potential source of contamination like EVM machines.

The party said that a large number of SOPs regarding social distancing and precautionary measures have been laid down. Therefore these SOPs may lead to delay in casting of votes, thereby resulting in low voter turnout. This might not be a good sign for healthy democracy. Once the normalcy is restored, elections should be conducted with clear SOPs.

The AAP also said that due to the ongoing border tension campaigning in border villages might not be possible thereby resulting in lower electoral process.

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), representatives in the meeting said that keeping in view of the current COVID-19 and border situation, the party advised for postponement of election.

The chair informed that the suggestions have been recorded. The move from the government to hold, meet and decide about the forthcoming most awaited Ladakh Autonomous Development Hill Council (LAHDC), elections comes during the time when situation in eastern Ladakh is escalating and glooming tensions have emerged from the area.

Pertinently, Ladakh has so far reported over 3000 COVID positive cases with over 800 active positive cases among which only 35 have died of Covid of which 22 belong to Kargil and 13 from Leh--(KNO)

Covid-19 Claims 17 More Lives...

failure with encephalopathy."

They said a 55-year-old woman from Barzulla, already battling a life-threatening disease and also diagnosed with bilateral Community Acquired Pneumonia died after remaining admitted to the hospital here for a month and five days.

A resident of Bonagam Handwara, admitted on August 29 with bilateral CAP, and a woman from Shadipora Sumbal, admitted on September 5 with bilateral CAP, died at SMHS hospital.

Also, a 65-year-old woman from Khanyar Srinagar who was diagnosed with Bilateral CAP and T2DM after her admission on September 5 also died at SMHS hospital, they said.

They said a 70-year-old man from Russu Budgam died at SKIMS Beminia, one of the exclusive facilities for the management of covid-19 patients. He was admitted on August 24, they added.

They said a 70-year-old man from Dal Patian Mohala Jammu died three days after being admitted to GMC Jammu as a case of hypertension, bilateral community acquired pneumonia.

A 65-year-old woman from Gazi Pur Kullian Jammu who was diagnosed with "type 2 diabetes mellitus, community acquired pneumonia" died at GMC Jammu, they added.

A 55-year-old man of Nai Basti Jammu, admitted on September 09 and diagnosed with "type2 diabetes mellitus and bilateral community pneumonia died at GMC Jammu, they said.

A 55-year-old woman from Bahu Fort Jammu, admitted on September 4, died at GMC Jammu and was diagnosed with hypertension, type2 diabetes mellitus and CKD died at 2.30 a.m. today, they said.

A 55-year-old man from Tindey Kalan R S PURA, they said, died two days after he was admitted in emergency ward of GMC Jammu

A 75-year-old man from Talab Tillo, a 45-year-old man from Subash Nagar Jammu died 11 days after being admitted to MC Jammu, they added.

With these deaths, officials said, 835 people have succumbed to the virus in Jammu and Kashmir so far. Among them, they said, 712 were from the Valley while 123 others from Jammu division.

Srinagar district with 244 deaths tops the list followed by Baramulla (109), Budgam (67), Pulwama (60), Anantnag (53), Kupwara (56), Jammu (73), Kulgam (40), Shopian (29), Bandipora (26), Ganderbal (25), Kathua (11), Rajouri (12), Doda (8), Poonch (6), Samba (5), Udhampur (4), Reasi (2), Kishtwar (1), and Ramban (1). (With GNS inputs)

J&K Sees Record 1617 New Cases

47542. While 894 new cases were reported from Jammu division, the remaining 723 were confirmed by the officials from the Kashmir valley, officials said. This is for the seventh day in a row now that the J&K has

reported over 1000 covid-19 cases.

Giving district-wise break up, officials said, Srinagar reported 260, Baramulla 85, Pulwama 37, Budgam 69, Anantnag 69, Bandipora 75, Kupwara 51, Kulgam 16, Shopian 23, Ganderbal 38, Jammu 583, Rajouri 71, Kathua 36, Udhampur 77, Samba 30, Ramban 18, Doda 31, Poonch 11, Reasi 28 and Kishtwar 9.

Moreover, they said, 620 more COVID-19 patients have recovered and were discharged from various hospitals-- 52 from Jammu Division and 568 from Kashmir Valley.

Cross-LoC Shelling Rattles...

firing with small arms & intense shelling with mortars along LoC in Degwar and Malti sector," a Defence spokesman said.

Indian Army retaliated befittingly, he said.

There was no report of any casualty on the Indian side, the spokesman said, adding the exchange of fire between the two sides was going on when last reports were received.

Hizb OGW Held In Kupwara...

his home. "Strenuous efforts were made with cooperation from his family and police was successful in tracing and apprehending him," the official said.

During sustained questioning, the official said that it came to fore that he was in touch with recently killed Hizbul Mujahideen Commander Hyder "through social media while the latter was motivating him to join their ranks."

He further disclosed that he is in possession of grenade which was given to him to be lobbed against state forces as a test for joining militant ranks.

"Last night, Kupwara police and 47 RR recovered the grenade hidden by him from a nearby nallah in presence of magistrate," the official said.

He said a case FIR no 126/2020 u/s 7/25 Arms Act, 18, 20 UAPA has been registered at PS Sogam and further investigations started.

Suitcase Creates Bomb Scare ...

the roadside near BhimberGali main chowk and immediately informed the police and the Army.

Police immediately cordoned off the area and diverted the traffic, the official said, adding the Army's bomb disposal squad found no explosive material in it on inspection.

Later, a soldier approached the army team on the spot and claimed the suitcase, the police said, but could not share other details such as how the army man missed his suitcase there and if he was on leave or on duty.

CASO Carried Out In Beerwah...

of the twin villages. Quoting local sources, the report said that huge contingents of forces have been deployed in these areas. However, contact with militants hasnot been established till the last reports came in.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

J&K Science Technology & Innovation Council

Department of Science and Technology

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SHORT TERM NOTICE

On behalf of Lt. Governor, Union Territory of JK, offers/bids are invited from registered Engineering Firms for conducting of Soil Testing and Contour Mapping of the site inside Lal Mandi Agriculture Complex, (Adjacent to SPS Museum) Srinagar, JK for Establishment of Sub Regional Science Centre (Category-II). The offers/bids (estimates etc) alongwith details of the engineering firm in sealed envelopes affixed with Rs.05/- (rupees five only) stamps should reach to this office within a period of 10 days from the date of publication of this notice.

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(Dr NASIR SHAH)

Addl. Director

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KASHMIR
OBSERVER

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Retreating glaciers

A study carried in Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh has found that the glaciers in the regions have witnessed an annual reduction in mass of 35 centimetres on average between 2000 and 2012. Published in the journal Scientific Reports, the study spans 1200 glaciers in the Himalayan region including areas across the Line of Control and Line of Actual Control. The glaciers were studied for thickness and mass changes.

Shockingly enough, the team has noted that during one decade of observation, the region has lost about 70.32 gigatonnes of glacier mass and which is quite significant. At this rate, the environmental situation in the three regions will drastically change in the coming decades. Melting of the glaciers will impact the water, food and energy security. More alarmingly, another study, published in the journal Climatic Change has found that Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh may witness a temperature increase of up to 6.9 degrees Celsius by the end of the century due to climate change. This, in turn, is projected to reduce the glaciers in this Himalayan region by 85 per cent.

These are dire predictions. In recent years, according to some surveys, many natural streams in various parts of Kashmir Valley have run dry. And the reason for this is the steady depletion of the glaciers. This has not only reduced the discharge in the rivers and streams but also made many water bodies extinct affecting the irrigation in the Valley.

Triggering alarm bells is the slowly shrinking Kolahai glacier, the biggest in Valley, which is the source of Lidder and Sindh, two major streams of river Jehlum. The area of Kolahai, according to a study, has retreated 13.87 square kilometers to 11.24 sqkms from 1976 with the annual rate of depletion at 0.08 square kilometre.

The situation is no different with other glaciers. An Action Aid Report in 2009 had said there has been an overall 21 per cent reduction in the glacier surface area in the Chenab basin. Many of the areas in parts of eastern Srinagar and Pirpanjal mountain range in district Pulwama, the report added, had witnessed a complete disappearance of small glaciers. In other areas, like Budgam, the height of the small glaciers has reduced to over one-fourth of the original height.

Similialy, the upper reaches of the Sindh Valley in Ganderbal district, the Najwan Akal which was said to be a major glacier, has completely disappeared. Thajwas, Zojila and Naranag glaciers which once used to last up to October through November till a few decades back too have considerably reduced. The report said the length of the Hangipora glacier in Anantnag has reduced from 35ft to 12ft and the Naaginad glacier has reduced from 30ft to 10ft.

Though we can do nothing about the larger, global scale changes in the climate, we certainly need to address the local man made causes that reinforce their impact on us. It is also important that the government's policies and actions are informed by the studies about the environment. We need to start early and take effective steps to avert the catastrophic consequences of the changing climate.

OTHER OPINON

The breakdown with China

On Monday night, India repelled — yet again — a possible attempt by China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) to intrude into Indian territory across the Line of Actual Control (LAC). This comes a week after India successfully resisted such attempts, and held on to strategic positions on the southern banks of the Pangong Tso. The escalation in tensions in eastern Ladakh is not surprising. With both armies, mobilised in large numbers and staring at eachother in close proximity, it is but natural that skirmishes will happen — especially when one army, PLA, wants to change the facts on the ground and force India to accept a new reality. It is also natural because over the past fortnight, there has been a sharp uptick in rhetoric on both sides.

All of this indicates that the India-China relationship has broken down at two levels. The first is with regard to the border management framework that has been in place for close to three decades. It is clear that China no longer sees the advantage of maintaining peace and tranquility on the border — and is keen to maintain this peace only on its terms, after wresting territory over which it has no legitimate claim. This is unacceptable to India, and rightly so. The second is with regard to the broader framework of the relationship. For years, India has convinced itself that the dynamic with China has both a cooperative and competitive element — and while this was true, it is also now clear that the competitive dynamic is on the ascendant, and is becoming sharply adversarial.

With external affairs minister S Jaishankar scheduled to meet his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, in Moscow on Thursday, it is this breakdown that must be the focus of the discussion. Is it the case that China has decided that it is comfortable with a hot LAC, and an outright adversarial relationship with India? If that is so — and the conversation will give the Indian establishment a sense of Beijing's mood — India has no choice but to prepare itself in the military, economic, diplomatic domains and respond accordingly. Or is it the case that China has read Indian motivations wrong, that apprehensions can be allayed, and Beijing can be persuaded to disengage and de-escalate? If that is so, it will help tackle the immediate crisis — even though the long- term orientation of the relationship will still be troubled.

India must hope for accommodation, even as it prepares for confrontation.

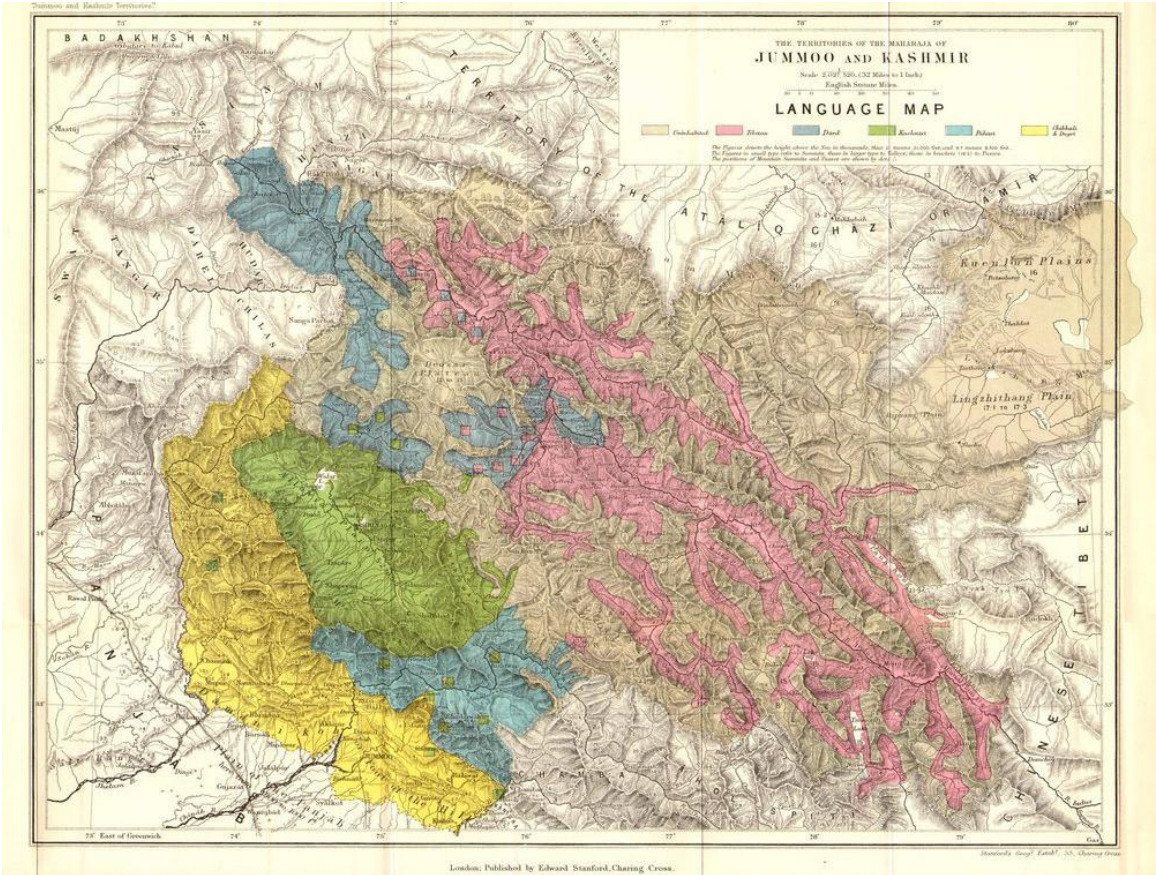
The Hindustan Times

Ahymon Ayoub

Kashmiri was forgone for Urdu as it enjoyed a level of preference as a status symbol, yet the engagement with it was more oral than written. Also, given its replacement as an official language in the recent ruling, it runs the risk of elimination in written form which has already happened with Kashmiri.

Dubious Future of Languages in Kashmir

The Jammu and Kashmir Official Language Bill, 2020 is set to mark yet another era in the history of dispensations juggling with the languages of J&k



Recently, the Union Cabinet dethroned Urdu as the official language of Jammu and Kashmir by introducing a Bill which is scheduled to appear in the upcoming monsoon session of the Parliament. With the overthrow of Urdu, yet another game of languages is set to start. Very likely, Urdu will join the ranks of other languages in the state like Kashmiri and Persian which have met and nearly lost challenges over the years.

Languages like many other fragments of collective social identity, do not follow a hierarchy per se. However, on intersecting with socio-cultural and political realities, languages too get riddled in hierarchies and manifest in a stratified order. This partially follows from the fact that languages being a primordial constituent of individual and collective identity, don't have a privilege of staying apolitical. In fact, the relationship between lingual and other social and political variables is often reciprocal with the linguistic identities shaping political landscapes and vice versa.

It is no hidden truth that being an inalienable part of identity politics, languages have historically spurred many nationalistic and ethnic movements against alienation and ostracization imposed by authoritarian regimes. Present day Bangladesh which came into being on the tarmac of distinct linguistic identity, serves as a powerful example of how political negligence toward a particular language can fuel nationalistic movements based on identity politics. In India, bifurcation of Punjab and Haryana along the same lines and similar current tensions reiterate the momentum that linguistic identity harbours in drawing borders and birthing new geographies.

However, never in the history of rise and fall of civilizations has the political landscape been as unfavourable and abhorring to native tongues and by extension indigenous cultures as today. Globalisation coupled with overall rise of

ethnocentric politics across the globe have ruptured prospectus for native tongues to flourish putting them at the threshold of extinction. No wonder, as per the statistics given by Endangered Languages Project, over 40% of the world's approximate 7,000 languages are at the risk of disappearing with many having already disappeared completely or partially.

In these circumstances, Kashmiri, which has faced neglect at many levels for decades together is anything but ready to face the onslaught of globalisation. Kashmir, given its strategic location and chequered history has assimilated the elements of various cultures including their languages too. With regime changes, the support to these languages came to be withdrawn too; the prime example being that of Persian. While Kashmiri has always been a staple language, Persian at one point of time served as a formal language, the remains of which are still alive in cultural. Besides, Persian and Urdu continue to serve as a major reservoir of historical and religious literature for which it still invites learners and researchers albeit on a small level.

Kashmir seems to have embraced languages partially and more so, its native tongue Kashmiri. The language has so far largely survived through oral transmission and not as a consequence of deep engagement at formal and informal level as has the case been with Persian and Urdu. The production of Kashmiri literature too has almost come to a halt with only a few Kashmiri newspapers running in print.

The rich Sufi literature in Kashmiri which has had a marked influence in the region's understanding of religion is decipherable only to a few today. Most of the studies being conducted on the literature largely depend on translations. In its meek verbal transmission too, the depth of lexicon is lost given the influx of English and Urdu vocabulary.

Even after Kashmiri's inclusion to the local curriculum, new generations seem to have no affinity with

their mother tongue, which as per UNESCO boosts children's confidence if used as a medium of instruction. Kashmiri was forgone for Urdu as it enjoyed a level of preference as a status symbol, yet the engagement with it was more oral than written. Also, given its replacement as an official language in the recent ruling, it runs the risk of elimination in written form which has already happened with Kashmiri.

Although, the nature of implementation of New Educational policy (NEP 2020) announced recently will determine the future course of native language; yet the possibility of Kashmiri gaining a wholesome place which a mother tongue should have is too little. Given the paucity of literature being produced in Kashmiri and our raving preference for English emerging as a new force, the prospects of Kashmiri language seems abysmal.

While the undeniable and unprecedented advantage of English over other languages in the present era can hardly be denied, preservation of local languages can be ascertained too. The polyglottic proclivities of Kashmiris could be tapped in the favour of mother tongue. The many cognitive benefits of mastering several languages can be multiplied by the inclusion of mother-tongue in everyday conversations. Children could be encouraged to learn and engage with several languages right from the beginning. Further, exposure to classical and contemporary literature produced in native language could ensure the production and continuous flow of new local literature. Schools which are following strict lingual code should ease it for mother tongue to flourish. In the absence of favourable policy and institutional support, steps need to be initiated at individual level if native language is to be preserved.

Ahymon Ayoub has completed her Masters in Sociology from Kashmir University. She is also a freelance researcher interested in topics related to Islam and Women.



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

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Systematic aid for orphans

Kashmir for almost three decades has been embroiled in a conflict between India, Pakistan and in recent instances even China. Estimates put the number of deaths at 70,000 since the conflict started in the 90s. However, amidst all the chaos and politics, one group that has suffered the most is the orphans who are generally at the bottom of the privileged chain in the valley.

J&K Yateem Trust is one of the largest orphanages operating in the Valley since 1972 and was the first NGO for

orphans in the area which shows the farsightedness of the vision. The organisation currently runs around 12 NGOs across the union territory. The institution runs special programs like "Feeding the Needy" through which they are providing for more than 4,300 families who are widow-headed or destitute.

The orphanage has not only the job of nurturing the orphans but also helps them in other socio-economic activities such as marriage. They have a program called Wedding Assistance in which they help orphans and economically

underprivileged girls who are unable to bear the expenses and are provided with a wedding kit comprising of ladies suits, footwear and cosmetics products worth Rs.15,000. No cash allowance is given under this scheme.

J&K Yateem Trust has tried to remain completely apolitical since its inception which it

claims is the reason for its success. They do not rely on the government for funding and have tried to run on the goodwill of people.

However, these individual endeav-

ors though appreciable are not enough. Systematic institutional efforts are required in order to reach out to those in need especially orphans. This is important because in the absence of organised governmental efforts and aid, many are likely going to be left out.

The policies need to be drastically improved and an umbrella needs to be created where all the independent organisations can work in tandem for the orphans in Kashmir.

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Shambling Heritage Sites Of Kashmir

Swati Joshi

Unplanned urbanization can also be attributed as one of the main threats to the heritage of Kashmir. Rapid urbanization has been done to meet the demands of the growing population which has resulted in illegal construction in many parts of the valley that has a direct impact on the cultural heritage.

The floods of 2014 created havoc in Kashmir resulting in loss of life and property. Many tangible heritage sites- the Budshah tomb, the Guzar buildings, Masjid Mir Syed Ali Hamdani, Sri Pratap museum, were devastated by the floods. The devastation should have been a learning experience for the government but Kashmir is open to the same destruction as it was in 2014, says Saleem Beg, convener at Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH).

According to a study by ArunMenon, though India has a large stock of heritage structures but lack of adequate quality and quantity of manpower is a serious bottleneck in India to address the gigantic task of understanding and protecting heritage structures from natural hazards.

Heritage sites are classified into two categories –one which are protected under law by Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and the state archives, and the other are the unprotected sites which are governed by some regulations and law. There are dedicated sources to look after the maintenance of the protected sites but the results are not satisfactory.

He says that there are around 100 archaeological sites in Jammu & Kashmir out of which 70 are with the central government and 30 are with the state but they are not ideally looked after by the concerned authorities. The state archaeological department does not have enough funds and technical support to look after the restoration of the historic sites, complains Beg.

The ASI Srinagar circle which looks after the protected site in J&K along with other central government departments was shifted to Jammu after the onset of militancy in Kashmir. Though many government departments were set up again in Kashmir after the conditions subsidize but ASI Srinagar circle is still based at Jammu according to INTACH convener.

A majority of sites protected by ASI Srinagar circle are in Kashmir but if the office is not functional it is bound to get difficult for subordinate units to perform properly. “The officer supposed to be here for 12 months doesn’t find time to come to Kashmir once in three months,” retorts the former Director-General of Tourism.

ASI Srinagar circle faces a shortage of staff and it is not manned by a full-fledged supervision archaeologist which has resulted in the deteriorating condition of the heritage sites in the valley.

Unplanned urbanization can also be attributed as one of the main threats to the heritage of Kashmir.



Rapid urbanization has been done to meet the demands of the growing population which has resulted in illegal construction in many parts of the valley that has a direct impact on the cultural heritage.

A part of the Martand Sun temple in Anantnag has been converted into an apple orchard and the stones of the temple have been taken by the locals for domestic purpose. The park built in front of the historic site is well maintained by the authorities whereas the temple is left to wither. Many structures are in the same condition as the Martand temple.

The haphazard building of infrastructure is done because conservation of heritage is not mentioned in urban planning. It is about time that the authorities should realize that heritage is an important concept of a city, if the city has to live, it has to live with all its aspects.

In December 2010, the State Legislature passed the Jammu and Kashmir Heritage Conservation and Preservation Act (JKHCP) for conservation and preservation of heritage, both tangible and intangible including buildings, structures, monuments, precinct, areas/sites, artifacts, sculptures, paintings, handicrafts, manuscripts. According to the law, the state government needs to be notified by the authority or Municipal Commissioner or Collector

or Director by notification in Government Gazette about the heritage of importance.

But that part of issuing notification by the concerned authorities has not taken off well, according to insights from the convener at INTACH. Under the same act, the urban development ministry and the local bodies were supposed to have heritage guidelines notification in the master plan but these regulations are open to interpretation. “The guidelines need to be implemented based on expert committee advice so that every master plan envisage the expert committee with the municipal corporation but it has not happened,” adds Beg.

Under the JKHCP, the authorities were meant to notify 1000 heritage sites but they have only notified 2-3 buildings, admits the former Director-General of Tourism.

Due to lack of awareness within the state government they don’t realize the importance of preservation of monuments. The municipal laws are defective and heritage-unfriendly.

The author is a correspondent with Kashmir Observer and can be reached at joshi94swati@gmail.com

Keep A Diary During Pandemic

Peta Murray | Kim Munro | Stayci Taylor

A search for “Coronavirus Diary” on Google yields 910,000 results. News outlets like the Guardian, The Atlantic and The New York Times have chronicled an increase in personal record-keeping.

Whether for future historians, self-care or to relieve feelings of isolation, we are in the middle of a diarological moment.

And today’s diaries aren’t just handwritten reflections in bound notebooks. They might be social media posts, video entries or visual collages – so long as they are regularly updated over an extended period and personal in nature, they fit the bill. The secret is in the repetition, and the pledge that drives it.

On the look out

The word diary entered the English language in the late 16th century, via the Latin word, diarium, which comes from dies, meaning day. The diary asks us to attend to this day.

Diary-keeping sharpens observational skills, so it is no wonder then that cultural institutions have begun projects to crowd-source details of what otherwise might be quite banal aspects of our lives.

The State Library of Victoria has a Facebook group, Memory Bank, where posts of shopping lists and sourdough recipes have given way to more melancholy images of closed shops and empty streets in the CBD – a collective chronicle both hyperlocal and universal.

The State Library of New South Wales subtitled its Diary Files an “online community diary”, and currently contains nearly a thousand entries, searchable by keywords. School, time, home and COVID are among the most commonly written words, and the greatest number of contributions come from Sydneysiders between 10 and 15 years of age.

Video “lockdown” diaries can also be viewed online, via BBC Reel, or listened to through Corona Diaries, the interactive open source project which collects audio stories from around the world.

Social researchers have identified the diary as a tool to capture the impact of the pandemic on daily life. UK sociologist Michael Ward began his research through CoronaDiaries, where 164 participants ranging in age from 11 to 87 submit entries in a variety of forms. Ward suggests:

These entries are able to highlight the multiple different lives behind the dreaded numbers we hear announced each day.

Famous diary keepers

Most of us can name some famous literary diarists of history – Samuel Pepys, Virginia Woolf, Adrian Mole. When we stray far beyond this list, it is often the times, rather than the writer, that make



Most of us can name some famous literary diarists of history – Samuel Pepys, Virginia Woolf, Adrian Mole. When we stray far beyond this list, it is often the times, rather than the writer, that make the diary notable.

the diary notable.

There is Lena Mukhina’s perspective on the Siege of Leningrad, 13-year-old Anne Frank’s account of the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands and the poignant scratchings of Sir Robert Scott’s on the day he perished: “For god’s sake, look after our people”.

Nelson Mandela’s desk-calendar notes, kept in prison, speak to extraordinary experiences under extreme conditions.

Diaries from the 1918 influenza pandemic came into their own as more than ephemera for both historians and scientists in 2020.

For a book length account, we can look to Daniel Defoe’s A Journal of the Plague Year, about life in London in 1665 – bearing in mind the author was only five years old at the height of the epidemic, so it is likely a factual-meets-fictional rendering.

Diary-writing serves broader society, and can help individuals make sense of difficult times.

Interviewed for this story, psychologist Robyn Moffitt told us:

From a psychological perspective, keeping a diary is a really useful (and evidence-based) way to engage in healthy self-monitoring of thoughts, feelings, and behaviour ... writing things down as they happen can provide some objective evidence and perspective on the

frequency and severity of different events, and we can use this to correct distorted thinking.

The process of writing itself can also be quite therapeutic. It can allow us to process and reconstruct past events, problem-solve, and create new meanings, and in some ways this makes it similar to psychotherapy. Psychotherapy is often referred to as the “talking cure”, and writing can provide similar therapeutic benefits (the “writing cure” perhaps)?

- What makes it a diary?**
- The turn of the 21st century saw a resurgence of the diary in public reading events such as Mortified, Salon of Shame and our own experiments with The Symphony of Awkward.
- It might be argued that social media has since overtaken the diary as a means to chronicle one’s life. Indeed, there is crossover in the ways lives are shared and curated across different media, from the handwritten diary to blogs.
- The ritualistic structure offered by the personal diary can be repurposed in digital spaces. The notion of publicly committing to post something – an image, a video, a song – every day offers another way of marking out time when every day is Blurs-day the fourteenth of Aprilay.
- We have experimented with each recording a sound a day, collected from the few spaces we were still able to inhabit.
- A diaristic practice, whether written or not, supports us to stay in the moment, as psychotherapists and life coaches exhort us to do.
- And it’s never too late to start diarising. Here are some tips:
- 1. Decide on your platform**
Digital or analogue? Decide on your medium. The written or spoken word? A photo? A sound? A song? Choose something that pleases you (a special pen, a fancy notebook) to heighten the experience.
 - 2. Make a vow**
Make an entry every day, or on a set number of days for four weeks. 28 days is said to be a good target if aiming to break or start a habit – though it may take longer.
 - 3. Make time**
Set aside time at the same hour each day to capture your experience.
 - 4. Rinse and repeat**
Carpe diem. Seize the day!
-
By arrangements with
The Conversation



What Makes Memories So Detailed And Enduring? THIS RESEARCH FINDS THE REASON

“WE BELIEVE WHAT WE HAVE DISCOVERED plays a crucial role in assessing how accurate our predictions are and therefore what is important new information. In the current climate, our ability to manage our expectations and make accurate predictions has never been more important.”

Agencies

In years to come, human memories of the COVID-19 pandemic are likely to be etched in human minds with precision and clarity, distinct from other memories of 2020.

The process which makes this possible has eluded scientists for many decades, but research led by the University of Bristol has made a breakthrough in understanding how memories can be so distinct and long-lasting without getting muddled up.

The study, published in Nature Communications, describes a newly discovered mechanism of learning in the brain shown to sta-

bilise memories and reduce interference between them. Its findings also provide new insight into how humans form expectations and make accurate predictions about what could happen in future.

Memories are created when the connections between the nerve cells which send and receive signals from the brain are made stronger. This process has long been associated with changes to connections that excite neighbouring nerve cells in the hippocampus, a region of the brain crucial for memory formation.

These excitatory connections must be balanced with inhibitory connections, which dampen nerve cell activity, for

healthy brain function. The role of changes to inhibitory connection strength had not previously been considered and the researchers found that inhibitory connections between nerve cells, known as neurons, can similarly be strengthened.

Working together with computational neuroscientists at Imperial College London, the researchers showed how this allows the stabilisation of memory representations.

Their findings uncover for the first time how two different types of inhibitory connections (from parvalbumin and somatostatin expressing neurons) can also vary and increase their

strength, just like excitatory connections. Moreover, computational modelling demonstrated this inhibitory learning enables the hippocampus to stabilise changes to excitatory connection strength, which prevents interfering information from disrupting memories.

First author Dr Matt Udakis, Research Associate at the School of Physiology, Pharmacology, and Neuroscience, said: “We were all really excited when we discovered these two types of inhibitory neurons could alter their connections and partake in learning. It provides an explanation for what we all know to be true; that memories do not disappear as

soon as we encounter a new experience. These new findings will help us understand why that is.”

“The computer modelling gave us important new insight into how inhibitory learning enables memories to be stable over time and not be susceptible to interference. That’s really important as it has previously been unclear how to separate memories can remain precise and robust,” added Udakis.

The research was funded by the UKRI’s Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, which has awarded the teams further funding to develop this research and test their predictions from these findings by measuring the stability of mem-

ory representations.

Senior author Professor Jack Mellor, Professor in Neuroscience at the Centre for Synaptic Plasticity, said: “Memories form the basis of our expectations about future events and enable us to make more accurate predictions. What the brain is constantly doing is matching our expectations to reality, finding out where mismatches occur and using this information to determine what we need to learn.

“We believe what we have discovered plays a crucial role in assessing how accurate our predictions are and therefore what is important new information. In the current climate, our ability to man-

age our expectations and make accurate predictions has never been more important,” added Mellor.

“This is also a great example of how research at the interface of two different disciplines can deliver exciting science with truly new insights. Memory researchers within Bristol Neuroscience form one of the largest communities of memory-focused research in the UK spanning a broad range of expertise and approaches. It was a great opportunity to work together and start to answer these big questions, which neuroscientists have been grappling with for decades and have wide-reaching implications,” said Mellor.

Probiotics May Help Manage Childhood Obesity

Agencies

Probiotics may help children and adolescents with obesity lose weight when taken alongside a calorie-controlled diet, according to a recent study.

The study was presented at e-ECE 2020 and found that obese children who were put on a calorie-restricted diet and given probiotics Bifidobacterium breve BR03 and Bifidobacterium breve B632, lost more weight and had improved insulin sensitivity compared with children on a diet only.

These findings suggest that probiotic supplements and a calorie-controlled diet may help manage obesity in the younger population and reduce future health risks, such as heart disease and diabetes. Obesity is a global health concern and can lead to a number of life-threatening conditions, such as diabetes and heart disease. Treatment and prevention is a serious public health challenge, especially in children and adolescents. Bifidobacteria are a group of probiotic bacteria that are part of the natural gut



microbiome and help with preventing infection from other bacteria, such as E.coli, and digestion of carbohydrates and dietary fibre.

During digestion, they release chemicals called short-chain fatty acids, which play an important role in gut health and controlling hunger. Low numbers of Bifidobacteria may impair digestion, affect food intake and energy expenditure, leading to body weight gain and obesity.

Previous studies suggested that probiotic supplementation with Bifidobacteria could help restore the composition of the gut microbiome,

which may aid weight loss and could be a potential approach for obesity management. However, current research uses mixtures of different strains of probiotics and does not examine the effects of administering Bifidobacteria alone. Dr Flavia Prodam and her team at the University of Piemonte Orientale, aimed to assess the impact of Bifidobacteria probiotic treatment in children and adolescents with obesity on a controlled diet, on weight loss, and gut microbiota composition.

100 obese children and adolescents (6-18 years) were put on a calorie-controlled diet and randomly

given either probiotics Bifidobacterium breve BR03 and Bifidobacterium breve B632, or a placebo for 8 weeks. Clinical, biochemical, and stool sample analyses were carried out to determine the effect of probiotic supplementation on weight gain, gut microbiota, and metabolism. The results suggested that children who had taken probiotics had a reduction in waist circumference, BMI, insulin resistance, and E.coli in their gut. These beneficial effects demonstrate the potential of probiotics in helping to treat obesity in children and adolescents when undergoing dietary restrictions.


“Probiotic supplements are frequently given to people without proper evidence data. These findings start to give evidence of the efficacy and safety of two probiotic strains in treating obesity in a younger population,” Dr Prodam said. The study suggests that supplementation with probiotics could modify the gut microbiome environment and beneficially affect metabolism, helping obese children or adolescents who are also undergoing a restricted diet to lose weight.

Study Finds Vitamin D Levels In Blood Can Predict Future Health Risks

Agencies

Free, circulating vitamin D levels in the blood may be a better predictor of future health risks in ageing men, according to a study.

It suggests the free, precursor form of vitamin D found circulating in the bloodstream is a more accurate predictor of future health and disease risk, than the often measured total vitamin D. Since vitamin D deficiency is associated with multiple serious health conditions as we get older, this study suggests that further investigation into vitamin D levels and their link to poor health may be a promising area for further research. Vitamin D deficiency is common in Europe, especially in elderly people. It has been associated with a higher risk for developing many ageing-related diseases, such as cardiovascular disease, cancer and osteoporosis. However, there are several forms, or metabolites, of vitamin D in the body but it is the total amount of these metabolites that are most often used to assess the vitamin D status of people. The prohormone, 25-dihydroxyvitamin D is converted to 1,25-dihydroxyvitamin D, which is considered the active form of vitamin D in our body. More than 99% of all vitamin D metabolites in our blood are bound to proteins, so only a very small fraction is free to be biologically active. Therefore the free, active forms may be a better predictor of current and future health.



Government of Jammu & Kashmir
Office of the Executive Engineer
(R&B) Division Ganderbal
Address: Secretariat Ganderbal Tel No. 0194 2416058

Invited of tenders for the work Improvement/Upgradation of road from Baba Salina to Ziyarat Sharief road b.w.o P/L 75mm thick wet mix macadam, 50mm thick compacted bituminous macadam,25mm thick semidense with 6mm thick seal coat. (Machine Mix laid with paver)

Reference : This Office NIT NO.73/2020 issued under endorsement No.6091 6100 dated:28

Cancellation Notice

The above mentioned work floated for tenders vide this Office NIT No. referred to above shall and shall be deemed to have been cancelled ab-initio due to poor response shown by the HMPH.

No:
Dated: -09-2020

(Er. Zaffar Qureshi)
Executive Engineer,
(R&B) Division Ganderbal

DIPK-5314/20

**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL
TRANSPORT OFFICER ANANTNAG
NOTICE**

Whereas joint application has been received by this office from Mr.Kay & IAY Traders Pazalpura Bijbehara Anantnag(Party No.1st) as Transferor, (Seller) Owner of the Vehicle Bearing Regd. No.JK03J-8445(Commercial/ Non-Commercial) covering under R/P No. N/A and Mr.Ishfaq Majeed Bhat S/O Ab Majeed Bhat R/O Gund Takipora Kulgam(Party No.2nd) as Transferee (Purchaser) requesting for transfer of R/C & R/P of the above noted Vehicle from party No 1st and 2nd. And Cancellation of hire purchase agreement with JK Bank Ltd.Before the case is disposed off on its merit, anybody have any objection regarding the proposed transfer Amy file his objection within(7) days from the publication of this notice to the office of the undersigned. No any representation / objection shall be entertained after stipulated period.

Assistant Regional
Transport Officer Anantnag

Public Notice

I have lost my PUC marks card during floods 07-09-2014 bearing Roll No. 824650. Now I want to apply for its duplicate. In this case if anybody has any objection he/she can contact to the Principal S.P. Higher Secondary School, M.A. Road, Srinagar within 3days. After that no objection will be entertained.

Aabir Lateef
S/o : Mohd Lateef Dar
R/o : Namchibal Fateh Kadal , Srinagar - Kashmir Roll No. 824650

**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL
TRANSPORT OFFICER ANANTNAG
NOTICE**

Whereas joint application has been received by this office from Mr.Irshad Ahmad Khan S/O Sunaullah Khan R/O Sadiq Abad Anantnag (Party No.1st) as Transferor, (Seller) Owner of the Vehicle Maruti Alto Bearing Regd. No.JK03F-6633 (Commercial/ Non-Commercial) covering under R/P No. Nill and Mr.Mudasir Ahamd Bhat S/O Mohd Rafiq Bhat R/O Reshipora Uller Pulwama(Party No.2nd) as Transferee (Purchaser) requesting for transfer of R/C & R/P of the above noted Vehicle from party No 1st and 2nd. And Cancellation of hire purchase agreement with JK Bank SSI. Before the case is disposed off on its merit, anybody have any objection regarding the proposed transfer Amy file his objection within(7) days from the publication of this notice to the office of the undersigned. No any representation / objection shall be entertained after stipulated period.

Assistant Regional
Transport Officer Anantnag

**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL
TRANSPORT OFFICER ANANTNAG
NOTICE**

Whereas joint application has been received by this office from Mr.Fayaz Ahmad Hangoo S/O Ghulam Nabi Hangoo R/O Sarnal Payeen Anantnag (Party No.1st) as Transferor, (Seller) Owner of the Vehicle Bearing Regd. No.JK03H-7261 (Commercial/ Non-Commercial) covering under R/P No. Nill and Mr.Burhan Ahmad Mattoo S/O Mohd Azad Mattoo R/O Harpora Gangipora Larm Anantnag(Party No.2nd) as Transferee (Purchaser) requesting for transfer of R/C & R/P of the above noted Vehicle from party No 1st and 2nd. And Cancellation of hire purchase agreement with JK Bank New Market Anantnag and Endorsement with Nill.Before the case is disposed off on its merit, anybody have any objection regarding the proposed transfer Amy file his objection within(7) days from the publication of this notice to the office of the undersigned. No any representation / objection shall be entertained after stipulated period.

Assistant Regional
Transport Officer Anantnag

Iran Announces Large-Scale Military Exercise In The Strait Of Hormuz

Agencies

ERUT: The Iranian Armed Forces announced the launch of the main stages of the joint Zulfiqar maneuvers that will take place on Thursday in the southern waters of the Islamic Republic for a three-day period.

The Assistant Commander-in-Chief of the Iranian Army for Coordination Affairs, Admiral Habibullah Sayyari, said on Wednesday, in a statement carried by the Fars News Agency, "The main stages of these maneuvers will take place with the participation of units of the naval, air and ground forces and the army's air defense force in an area of 2 million square kilometers in the waters of the eastern Strait of Hormuz, the coasts of Makran, the Sea of Oman and the northern ocean."

Habibullah Sayyari point-

ed out that "these maneuvers will take place in the framework of three stages, which are intelligence, tactical and capabilities review," adding that "floating naval vessels, submarines and aircraft will participate in these maneuvers, the most important of which is the national submarine, the Fateh."

He explained that "these major maneuvers will display part of the capabilities and preparations of the Islamic Republic of Iran's army for confrontation at a real level."

Sayyari said, "The enemy will face a wide battlefield in the event that he commits any strategic mistake toward Iran," stressing that "in the event that the enemy commits any strategic mistake towards Iran, Tehran's response and the geography of the war will not be limited to the West Asia region."

Afghan VP Amrullah Saleh escapes bomb attack with minor injuries



Agencies

Kabul: Afghanistan's vice president Amrullah Saleh sustained minor injuries Wednesday when his convoy was targeted in Kabul in an explosion that killed at least 10 people and wounded more than a dozen, officials said.

The attack was quickly condemned as an attempt to frustrate the Afghan peace process, coming as the government prepares to send negotiators to the Qatari capital of Doha for long-delayed talks with the Taliban.

In a video posted on Facebook soon after the explosion, Saleh, an outspoken Taliban critic, said he had been travelling to his office when his convoy was attacked.

"I am fine but some of my guards have been wounded. My son, who was in the car with me, and I are both fine," Saleh said, with bandages on his left hand.

"I have some burns on my face and hand. The blast was strong."

Tareq Arain, a spokesman for the interior ministry, said the explosion targeted Saleh's convoy.

"Unfortunately, 10 civilians, mostly people who were working in the area, were killed, and 15, including a number of the first VP's bodyguards, were wounded," he told reporters at the scene.

Saleh is the senior of Afghanistan's two vice presidents. The Taliban, who have

pledged not to launch attacks in urban areas under a deal with the United States, denied responsibility.

Abdullah, a shopkeeper who gave only one name, said the blast had blown out his windows.

"A shop that sold gas cylinders also caught fire, causing the cylinders to blow up," he said.

Saleh survived an assassination attempt last year ahead of presidential elections.

At least 20 people -- most of them civilians -- were killed and 50 others wounded when a suicide attacker and gunmen targeted Saleh's Kabul office at that time.

'Enemies of peace'

The EU in Afghanistan said Wednesday's attack was a "desperate act by spoilers of peace efforts", while NATO's mission in the country said in a statement that "enemies of peace" were ignoring the will of the Afghan people for peace talks to begin.

President Ashraf Ghani, who met Saleh soon after Wednesday's blast, condemned what he said was a "terrorist attack" on his first deputy.

"The terrorists and their foreign backers cannot undermine the people's strong faith in peace, democracy and the bright future of our country," Ghani said in a statement.

Saleh on Sunday said Kabul's negotiating team would push early on at peace talks for a permanent truce.



Oxford Trials Pause Could Disrupt Closely-Watched Race For Vaccine

AstraZeneca Plc stopped giving shots of its experimental coronavirus vaccine after a person participating in one of the company's studies got sick, a potential adverse reaction that could delay or derail efforts to speed an immunization against Covid-19.

The pause stemmed from a standard review of the company's vaccine trials after one person developed an unexplained illness, AstraZeneca said in a statement. The move was intended to give researchers time to examine safety data while maintaining the integrity of the trials, the company said. The drugmaker's shares fell as much as 3% in London Wednesday morning.

The vaccine, which AstraZeneca is developing with researchers from the University of Oxford, has been viewed as one of the leading candidates. The partners are aiming to enroll as many as 50,000 participants for late-stage trials that are underway in the U.K., the U.S., Brazil and South Africa, with others planned for Japan and Russia.

The decision to tap the brakes jolted investors in AstraZeneca, which has a market value of about \$140 billion and has the largest weighting of all the companies in the U.K.'s FTSE-100 Index.

Shares in Moderna Inc. and BioNTech SE, which are working on rival vaccines, gained in late trading in New York Tuesday.

"This is a routine action which

has to happen whenever there is a potentially unexplained illness in one of the trials, while it is investigated, ensuring we maintain the integrity of the trials," AstraZeneca spokeswoman Michele Meixell said in a statement. She said that it's too early to determine the sick participant's specific diagnosis.

Scientific Sprint

The development has the potential to disrupt one of the most closely watched scientific sprints in history. Companies have been working to find a vaccine in hopes of blunting a pandemic that has sickened more than 27 million people and killed over 894,000 worldwide. Health officials in the U.S. and President Donald Trump have repeatedly said that it's possible to have an immunization before the end of the year, and potentially as early as next month.

The top U.S. official in charge of Operation Warp Speed, the Trump administration's program to support the rapid development of Covid-19 vaccines and therapeutics, said experts monitoring the trials in the U.K. paused the late-stage trial in coordination with their U.S. counterparts.

Moncef Slaoui, the head of the Warp Speed initiative, said in a statement that Data Safety Monitoring Boards in the U.S. and U.K. are "conducting an in-depth review of the company's vaccine candidate which is standard procedure when an adverse event oc-

curs."

A volunteer in the U.K. trials was diagnosed with transverse myelitis, an inflammation of the spinal cord generally caused by infections, the New York Times said, citing a person close to the situation that it didn't name.

A Data Safety Monitoring Board is a panel of outside experts that watches for potential harm from experimental drugs and vaccines during clinical trials. The bar to pause a vaccine trial is generally low since participants are healthy and may never need the immunization they have volunteered to receive.

The members of the monitoring board have unparalleled insight into clinical studies. Unlike doctors and researchers, they are told whether those participating received the vaccine or a placebo, and they are given regular updates on how each group is faring.

Oxford University's Jenner Institute didn't immediately respond to requests for comment.

'Safety Precaution'

Some scientists downplayed the significance of the halt. Eric Topol, a cardiologist and clinical-trials expert at the Scripps Research Translational Institute in San Diego, said such pauses in large studies are "not uncommon at all." There is a high likelihood the adverse event will turn out not to be related to the vaccine, he said in an email.

More Indians in Singapore returning home due to job losses: Envoy

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: More and more Indian workers are returning home as Singapore businesses cut down on workforce following the severe impact of the novel coronavirus pandemic, an official said.

"On an average, about 100 Indian nationals in Singapore continue to register daily with the High Commission here for flights back home, with over 11,000 having registered so far," Indian High Commissioner P Kumaran said on Wednesday.

Special flights have been arranged as part of the ongoing Vande Bharat Mission and, wherever necessary, more flights are added to help meet the high demand for some destinations

to help Indian nationals return home as they have lost their jobs, or going back for medical treatment or family-distress situation, he said.

Kumaran said the high commission would continue to work to ensure enough repatriation flights, even though formal flights between Singapore and India have not resumed.

The high commission has repatriated over 17,000 Indian nationals by arranging 120 special flights since May, said Kumaran.

Speaking to PTI, the envoy also listed out his priorities in working on the India-Singapore relationship during his tenure here, especially further intensifying the political engagement, focus on increasing trade and in-

vestment flows, and technology collaborations in the space of fintech and startups.

"We have planned an India-ASEAN hackathon later this year, as part of similar hackathons done between Indian and Singapore in the past," he said. "We are also working further on other collaboration opportunities such as enabling digital payments in Singapore through Indian domestic RuPay cards, working together to develop a Global Stack, on the lines of India Stack, and for making our MSME platforms interoperable."

Discussions are ongoing with the Singapore Manufacturing Federation (SMF) to explore opportunities for a manufacturing partnership.

China holds ceremony to celebrate beating coronavirus

Agencies

BELJING: China's leaders held a triumphant ceremony to celebrate beating the coronavirus on Tuesday, as billions of people around the world still suffer the fallout from the pandemic and the global death toll nears 900,000.

The upbeat mood in Beijing comes as concerns grow about a resurgence of Covid-19 across Europe, with France tightening restrictions, cases in Britain spiking and schools resuming around the region in recent days.

Worldwide infections to date now stand at more than 27 million and over 890,000 people

dinary and historic test" during an awards ceremony for medical professionals decorated with bugle calls and applause.

"We quickly achieved initial success in the people's war against the coronavirus," Xi said.

"We are leading the world in economic recovery and in the fight against Covid-19." The nation's propaganda machine has been attempting to seize the narrative surrounding the pandemic, reframing the episode as an example of the agility and organisation of the Communist leadership. Xi had stern words for China's doubters, saying "selfish moves, any buck-pass-



have died from the disease, with the pandemic showing no sign of peaking.

But in China the virus has been all but banished through a combination of lockdowns and travel restrictions earlier in the year that have officials touting the nation as a coronavirus success story.

President Xi Jinping said China had passed "an extraor-

ing and deeds that confuse right and wrong" risked inflicting damage across the world.

Beijing is also touting progress on its vaccines as a sign of global leadership and resilience.

China put its homegrown Covid-19 vaccines on display for the first time at a Beijing trade fair this week and authorities hope the jabs will be approved for use by year-end.

"True Hidden Gem": Modern Indian Art To Be Auctioned In UK By Sotheby's

Agencies

London: A collection of never-before-seen modern Indian art, including unpublished artworks by artists VS Gaitonde and Ram Kumar, will be offered for auction for the first time in London later this month, Sotheby's auction house said today.

Assembled by the Danish couple Gunnar Hansen and his wife Inger almost half a century ago, the history of the collection is closely tied to that of one of India's leading infrastructure businesses Larsen & Toubro (L&T), for whom Mr Gunnar worked for over 20 years.

"Gunnar and Inger Hansen's collection is a true hidden gem. All of the paintings offered here have rarely been seen in public, if ever, before," said Ishrat Kanga, Head of Sotheby's London Modern and Contemporary South Asian Art Sale.

"The pieces were acquired by the Hansens in India in the 1960s and 1970s, soon after leaving the artist's studios and have been treasured by the family for some 40 to 50 years. Enthused by the radical art they discovered in post-independence India, the Hansens

assembled a visionary collection that today is a perfect time capsule, demonstrating the depth and quality of abstract and non-objective art which was being created in India at this extraordinary moment in time," said Ishrat Kanga.

According to Sotheby's, while working for L&T, Mr Hansen also made a life for himself and his family in India. He with his wife moved from Denmark to India in 1953, where their children Marianne, Peter and Torben were born.

It was while living in Mumbai, then Bombay, that Mr Hansen acquired his passion for modern Indian painting and was a regular visitor to Gallery Chemould and Pundole Art Gallery, where they met the great Indian modernists - including Vasudeo S Gaitonde, Ram Kumar and Krishen Khanna - and amassed their superb collection.

The Sotheby's Modern and Contemporary South Asian Art Auction, scheduled for September 29, includes a selection of works from the estate of Bhupen Khakhar, including a painting of one of the artist's closest friends which hung in pride of place in his Baroda drawing room.

Traversity: Donald Trump Nominated For Nobel Peace Prize

Oslo: A Norwegian lawmaker has nominated Donald Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize for 2021 for helping broker a deal between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, the second time he has put forward the US president for the honour.

Thousands of people are eligible to nominate candidates for the Nobel Peace Prize, including members of parliaments and governments, university professors and past laureates.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee, which decides on the award, declined to comment.

"It is for his contribution for peace between Israel and the UAE. It is a unique deal," Christian Tybring-Gjedde, a member of parliament for the right-wing Progress Party, told Reuters.



Tybring-Gjedde, who nominated Trump for the 2019 award for his diplomatic efforts with North Korea, said he also nominated him this year because of the US troop withdrawal from Iraq.

Last year Trump said he deserved to be awarded the Peace Prize for his work on North Korea

and Syria, but he complained he probably would never get the honour. Former President Barack Obama, a nemesis of Trump, won the prize in 2009 just months into his first term in office.

Nominations for this year's award closed on Jan. 31 and the winner will be announced on October 9 in Oslo.

ANC blasts Trump over alleged Mandela 'insults'

JOHANNESBURG: South Africa's ruling party on Tuesday condemned "disparaging remarks" attributed to US President Donald Trump about the country's late first black president Nelson Mandela.

In a memoir to be released this week, Trump's former lawyer Michael Cohen accused the president of making racist comments about black leaders — including his predecessor Barack Obama and South African anti-apartheid icon Mandela.

The alleged racism was reported by The Washington Post over the weekend after it obtained a copy of the book ahead of publication.

According to the Post, Cohen quotes Trump saying he did not consider Mandela a "real leader" and praising white-minority rule in apartheid South Africa.

The country's ruling African National Congress (ANC) party on Tuesday expressed outrage over Trump's alleged "disparaging remarks".



In a memoir to be released this week, Trump's former lawyer Michael Cohen accused the president of making racist comments about black leaders — including his predecessor Barack Obama and South African anti-apartheid icon Mandela.

US formally announces troop reduction in Iraq

The United States military on Wednesday announced it will reduce its presence in Iraq from 5,200 to 3,000 troops this month, formalising a move that had been long expected.

"We are continuing to expand on our partner capacity programmes that enable Iraqi forces and allow us to reduce our footprint in Iraq," Marine General Frank McKenzie, the head of US Central Command, said during a visit to Iraq.

The US and Iraq in June affirmed their commitment to the reduction of American troops in the country in coming months, with no plans by Washington to maintain permanent bases or a permanent military presence.

The US has about 5,200 troops that were deployed in Iraq to fight the armed group ISIL (ISIS). Officials in the US-led coalition said Iraqi forces are now mostly able to handle the ISIL remnants on their own.

N E W S M A K E R S

LG Visits Border Areas, Reviews Security Setup

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday visited forward areas along the International Border (IB) in Samba district and reviewed the security setup, officials said.

Flanked by Border Security Force Inspector General (IG) N S Jamwal and other civilian officials, the LG visited BSF border outpost (BoP) Bobiya along the IB, they said.

Jamwal briefed Sinha about border domination grid, assessment on threat perception and various measures undertaken to strengthen the border protection grid, according to the officials.

The LG interacted with

BSF officers and commanders, and stressed that the government recognises their unparalleled contribution towards national security.

He expressed confidence in the measures taken by the BSF to safeguard people's lives and property and prevent transborder crime.

Jamwal requested the LG to look into the erratic power supply to border lights and prevent frequent disruptions as it hampers border domination, the officials said.

The LG assured to solve all issues brought to his notice by the BSF and presented a food basket to the jawans at the BOP, they said.

Sinha also interacted with residents of border villages during his visit.

Registration Of Units Under IDS-2017 GOI Clears 58 Cases Worth Rs 224.26 Cr

SRINAGAR: Union Secretary, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Dr. Guruprasad Mohapatra, on Wednesday chaired a meeting of Empowered Committee (EC) for consideration of registration of manufacturing and service sector Units under Industrial Development Scheme-2017.

The meeting was attended by Commissioner Secretary Industries & Commerce, Manoj Kumar Dwivedi, Director Industries & Commerce, Jammu Anoo Malhotra and Director Industries & Commerce, Kashmir Mehmood Shah through video conferencing

from Jammu and Srinagar respectively.

During the meeting, 36 cases from Jammu division and 25 cases from Kashmir division were placed before the Empowered Committee for consideration of registration under IDS-2017, of which, 35 cases from Jammu Division and 23 cases of Kashmir Division were cleared by the Empowered Committee.

It is pertinent to mention that the total investment in the cases cleared by Empowered Committee is to the tune of Rs 224.26 crore and these units shall be able to generate employment for about 1700 persons.

Himalayan States Offer Unexplored Potential For Post-Covid Resurgence: Jitendra Singh

NEW DELHI: Union Minister Jitendra Singh on Wednesday said the Himalayan states and Union territories such as Arunachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir offer unexplored potential for post-COVID resurgence.

Addressing the "Himalayan Divas" conclave here, Singh said for centuries, the Himalayas have stood like a custodian guarding India against foreign invasions and the assaults of nature.

Citing scientific research, Singh said for a large part of the Indian subcontinent, Himalaya serves as a major source of water, flora and fauna.

At the same time, rivers flowing along the Himalayas, whether it is the Indus or the Ganga, offer immense avenues which are yet to be fully explored, he said.

About a dozen States and Union Territories — Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram Tripura, Meghalaya, Assam and parts of West Bengal, are located along the Himalayas.

Singh, Union Minister for Development of the North Eastern Region (DoNER), said while the Himalaya

have vast resources with unexplored potential, there are questions whether enough initiatives are being taken to preserve and utilise it optimally for the benefit of humanity.

That is the question which needs to be addressed rising above all considerations including politics, he said.

The minister said despite concerns like perennial floods, landslides, deforestation, environment pollution, climatic alterations, the Himalayas have the capacity to come to the rescue of humans as a major tool for post-COVID resurgence.

He said the COVID catastrophe has made people realise the need to channelise Himalayan resources.

For example, bamboo from the North Eastern Himalayan range will play a major role in the future economy of the country, he said, referring to the recent hike in import duty of bamboo and amendment in the Indian Forest Act to facilitate the production of bamboo articles and their export.

Similarly, he said, there are other items like saffron and exclusive fruits which have not yet been optimally utilised for the economy and trade.



KASHMIR OBSERVER Lens man Abid Bhat captures the ongoing construction work on strategic Zojila Tunnel on Wednesday

Plasma Therapy Does Not Really Help Beat COVID-19, Finds ICMR Study

NEW DELHI: Use of convalescent plasma therapy in coronavirus-infected patients does not help in reducing mortality or progression to severe COVID-19, a multi-centric study funded by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has found.

The 'open-label parallel-arm phase II multicentre randomized controlled trial' (PLACID Trial) was conducted across 39 public and private hospitals across India between April 22 and July 14 to find effectiveness of convalescent plasma (CP) for the treatment of COVID-19, it said.

The CP therapy involves taking antibodies from the blood of a person who has recovered from COVID-19 and transfusing those into an active coronavirus patient to help kick-start the immune system to fight the infection.

A total of 464 participants (moderately ill COVID-19 patients admitted to hospitals) were enrolled for the study, which has not yet been peer-reviewed and has appeared on medRxiv, a preprint server.

The National Task Force for COVID-19, a committee formed by the ICMR to respond to the pandemic, has reviewed and approved this study, it said.

The Clinical Management Protocols for COVID-19 issued by the Union Health Ministry on June 27 allowed use of convalescent plasma (Off label)



for treating coronavirus-infected patients in moderate stage of the illness under "investigational therapies."

This authorisation has been paralleled by questionable practices such as calls for donors on social media, and the sale of CP in the black market with exorbitant price tags in India, the study said.

Additionally, although CP is a safe therapeutic modality, plasmapheresis, plasma storage and NAb measurement are all resource-intensive processes, with a limited number of institutes in the country having the capacity to undertake these activities in a quality-assured manner.

"The CP was not associated with reduction in mortality or progression to severe COVID-19," the study said, adding this trial has high generalisability and approximates real-life setting of CP therapy in settings with limited laboratory capacity.

A prior measurement of neutralising antibody titres in donors and partici-

pants may further clarify the role of CP in management of COVID-19, it said.

The study trial included 464 moderately ill coronavirus infected hospitalised patients, of whom 235 were given convalescent plasma along with best of standard care while 229 received only standard care, as per the study. Those in the intervention arm received two doses of 200 ml of CP, transfused 24 hours apart, in addition to the BSC (best standard of care). The two plasma units were collected preferably from different donors depending on the availability and ABO compatibility to increase chances of receiving CP with NAb, it said.

"The PLACID trial results indicate that there was no difference in 28-day mortality or progression to severe disease among moderately ill COVID-19 patients treated with CP along with BSC compared to BSC alone," the study said.

The central implementation team at the ICMR was responsible for study design, study coordination, data analysis, data interpretation and writing of the report, the study stated.

Patient enrolment, data collection and actual conduct of the study was done at public and private hospitals independently and the investigators in the ICMR had no role in it, it added.

HC Seeks Report On Encroachments Of Religious Nature In J&K, Ladakh

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir High Court has sought a report regarding unauthorized construction of religious nature on public streets, parks and public places in J&K and Ladakh.

Hearing a Public Interest Litigation, a division bench of Chief Justice Gita Mittal and Justice Puneet Gupta directed the Divisional Commissioner, Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh to obtain a report from all the Deputy Commissioners about all the encroachments including their location, area encroached upon and details of the encroacher.

"The above information shall be complied within six weeks," the court said, adding, "The information shall be placed before the Chief Secretaries of the Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, who shall cause the matter to be considered by all the concerned and competent authorities and a policy decision taken."

The court was hearing regarding illegal religious structures which have come up by way of encroach-

ment on public land –public streets, public parks and public places.

The matter actually engaged the attention of the Supreme Court and it passed orders with respect to the removal of such illegal religious structures on the public land.

"As an interim measure, we direct that henceforth no unauthorized construction shall be carried out or permitted in the name of Temple, Church, Mosque or Gurudwara etc. on public streets, public parks or other public places etc," the apex court had ordered.

In respect of the unauthorized construction of religious nature which has already taken place, the State Governments and the Union Territories shall review the same on case to case basis and take appropriate steps as expeditiously as possible, it had said.

"In order to ensure compliance of our directions, we direct all the District Collectors and Magistrates/ Deputy Commissioners in charge of the Districts to ensure that there is total compliance of the order passed by us," the top court had said, adding, "... The Chief Secretaries, in consultation

with the respective Governments are directed to frame the policy in respect of existing unauthorized construction of religious nature, which had already taken place. This Court directed the respondents to review the same on case to case basis. Let the policies be formulated by all the States and the Union Territories."

To ensure the implementation of directions, the top court had directed that the implementation of the order should be supervised by the concerned High Courts. "We, consequently, remit the above matters to the respective High Courts for ensuring implementation of the orders in effective manner," the top court had said, adding, "The concerned records be transmitted to the respective High Courts. The interim orders wherever passed, shall continue, until the matters are considered by the High Court."

In case any clarification was required, the top court said that it would be open to the parties to approach the Court. "The High Court will have the jurisdiction to proceed in the Contempt of any of the orders passed by this Court." (GNS)

Omar Abdullah Seeks Time To Vacate Govt House In Gupkar

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR- Former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday said he was voluntarily vacating the government accommodation provided to him 18 years ago due to the change in rules of entitlement in the union territory.

Abdullah, who was a Lok Sabha member when the government accommodation in high security Gupkar area here was provided to him in 2002, released a letter on his Twitter handle that he had written in July this year.

He had informed the Administrative secretary concerned about his decision to vacate the Gupkar residence that was allotted to him first in 2002 as Member of Parlia-

ment in the media last year. I received no notice to vacate & have chosen to do so of my own accord," he tweeted.

The National Conference vice president said he is searching for a suitable accommodation which may take eight to 10 weeks in view of the constraints caused by the COVID pandemic.

"Consequent upon the change in entitlements for former CMs of J&K some months ago, I now find myself in an unauthorized occupation of this accommodation as no attempt has been made to regularise the allotment to me on security or any other grounds. This is a situation that is unacceptable to me," he said.

Abdullah said he has never held on to any government property that he was



ment from Srinagar and then after taking over as chief minister of the erstwhile State from 2009 to 2015

"My letter to the J&K administration. I will be vacating my government accommodation in Srinagar before the end of October. The point to note is that contrary to stories

not entitled to and "I have no intention to start now".

Former chief ministers in erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir State were entitled to government accommodation either in Jammu or Srinagar but this entitlement was withdrawn by the administration earlier this year.

LG Inspects Work on 750 Bed AIIMS at Jammu

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha Wednesday visited AIIMS site at Vijaypur and inspected the pace of the on-going construction work on the prestigious project. He directed the executing agencies to stick to the timelines to ensure the completion of work within stipulated time-frame.

The LG observed that the UT Government is aiming to make the health care system of J&K best in the country. Mega projects like AIIMS will certainly boost the health care sector in Jammu and Kashmir.

Government is working on covering various factors like upgrading health infrastructure, strengthening of human resources, rationalizing the available staff, filling up the vacancies of Doctors, nurses and other health workers, retention of Doctors especially in rural areas, availability of adequate medical facilities and bringing in new innovations, which will play a major role in achieving the objective of providing quality and accessible healthcare services to the people of J&K, the Lt Governor maintained.

The Lt Governor enquired about the timelines set for the completion of the mega project.

He exhorted the concerned officers of executing agencies to make sure that necessary measures are tak-

en to ensure quality of work and asked them to work in close coordination for timely completion of the project.

While taking stock of the present progress on the project, the Lt Governor was informed that the Project with 30 months duration was awarded on 22nd February, 2020 with stipulated date of completion is 21st August 2022.

It was informed that LOI was issued by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoH&FW) in March-2019. Funds for establishment of AIIMS Jammu shall be made available by MoH&FW through HEFA(Higher Education Financing Agency). AIIMS Rishikesh is the Mentor Institute for AIIMS Jammu. Sanctioned cost of AIIMS (Phase-I) is Rs 1661 cr (Rs. 1404 cr for C/o Medical college and other infrastructure & Rs. 257 cr for medical equipment and furniture).

The Hospital infrastructure will have 750 Bedded capacity, G+6 storied with 1 basement, Combination of 6 Towers, 1 OPD, 2IPD, 1 Emergency, 1 Diagnostic, 1 Admin, provision of MRI, CT, Nuclear Medicine, Modular OTs, ICU, Super Specialty departments, OPD, Trauma Beds, besides Academic Building including Medical College (100 students per year) and Nursing College (60 students per year), and 1000 Seating Capacity Auditorium.

NEWS MAKERS

13-Million-Year-Old Fossil Ape Discovered In J&K'S Udhampur

DEHRADUN: An international team of researchers has unearthed a 13-million-year-old fossil of a newly discovered ape species in Jammu and Kashmir's Udhampur District, which is the earliest known ancestor of the modern-day gibbon.

The finding, published in the journal Proceedings of the Royal Society B, fills a major void in the ape fossil record and provides important new evidence about when the ancestors of today's gibbon migrated to Asia from Africa.

The fossil, a complete lower molar, belongs to a previously unknown genus and species (Kapi ramnagarensis), and represents the first new fossil ape species discovered at the famous fossil site of Ramnagar in

nearly a century.

The researchers, including those from Arizona State University in the US and Panjab University in Chandigarh, were climbing a small hill in an area where a fossil primate jaw had been found the year before.

While pausing for a short rest, the team spotted something shiny in a small pile of dirt on the ground.

"We knew immediately it was a primate tooth, but it did not look like the tooth of any of the primates previously found in the area," said Christopher C. Gilbert, from City University of New York in the US.

"From the shape and size of the molar, our initial guess was that it might be from a gibbon ancestor, but that seemed too good

to be true, given that the fossil record of lesser apes is virtually nonexistent," Gilbert noted.

He explained that there are other primate species known during that time, and no gibbon fossils have previously been found anywhere near Ramnagar.

Since the fossil's discovery in 2015, years of study, analysis, and comparison were conducted to verify that the tooth belongs to a new species, as well as to accurately determine its place in the ape family tree, the researchers said.

The molar was photographed and CT-scanned, and comparative samples of living and extinct ape teeth were examined to highlight important similarities and differences in dental anatomy, they said.

"What we found was quite compelling and undeniably pointed to the close affinities of the 13-million-year-old tooth with gibbons," said Alejandra Ortiz, from Arizona State University, who is part of the research team.

"Even if, for now, we only have one tooth, and thus, we need to be cautious, this is a unique discovery.

It pushes back the oldest known fossil record of gibbons by at least five million years, providing a much-needed glimpse into the early stages of their evolutionary history," said Ortiz.

The researchers noted that the age of the fossil, around 13 million years old, is contemporaneous with well-known great ape fossils.

This provides evidence that the migration of great apes, including orangutan ancestors, and lesser apes from Africa to Asia happened around the same time and through the same places, they said.

"I found the biogeographic component to be really interesting," said Chris Campisano from Arizona State University.

"Today, gibbons and orangutans can both be found in Sumatra and Borneo in Southeast Asia, and the oldest fossil apes are from Africa.

"Knowing that gibbon and orangutan ancestors existed in the same spot together in northern India 13 million years ago, and may have a similar migration history across Asia, is pretty cool," Campisano added. PTI

Woman Raped, Murdered In J&K'S Samba, Accused Held: Police

JAMMU: A 38-year-old woman was allegedly raped and killed by a man in Samba district of Jammu and Kashmir, police said on Wednesday.

The accused, identified as Puran Chand alias Bitu (32) from Bishnah area of Jammu, was arrested within 24 hours of the crime from his native village, a police spokesperson said.

Rinku Devi, who was from Bihar and lived in a rented house with her husband at village Doliyan, was found dead under suspicious circumstances near Raghunath temple in Bari Brahmana area of Samba district on Monday, he said.

During the course of investigation it came to light that the accused was compelling her to have an illicit relation with him, the spokesperson said.

He said the accused raped the woman and hit her at his rented house in Telli Basti which led to her death.

Later, the accused dumped the woman's body in the nearby area and fled, the spokesperson said. PTI