



Maximum : 30°C
Minum : 15°C
Humidity : 49%

SUNSET
Today 06:43 PM
SUNRISE
Tomorrow 06:11 AM

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CMYK

News Digest

No Let Down In Cross-LoC Shelling

Jammu: For the second consecutive day Thursday, India and Pakistan troops traded heavy gunfire along the Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir. The Pakistan army opened heavy fire and shelled forward areas along the LoC in five sectors in Poonch district on Thursday, officials said. The Indian Army retaliated befittingly, they said. "The Pakistan army continued unprovoked ceasefire violation by firing with small arms and shelling with mortars along LoC in many locations," ● P-02

IED Defused In Baramulla

Srinagar- State forces on Thursday detected an Improvised explosive device in Chatloora area of Rafiabad in north Kashmir's Baramulla district, police said. A joint patrolling party of state forces detected the IED concealed in a sand bag near a bus stop at Chatloora area of the district, a police official said. The IED was apparently planted by militants to target state forces, the official said. A bomb disposal squad was rushed to the spot which destroyed the IED without causing any damage, he added. This was the second IED ● P-02

KU PG Entrance Exams-2020 Begin

Srinagar: The entrance examination for more than 48 PG programs offered by the University of Kashmir started here on Wednesday with the KU authorities holding the examination in two sessions including morning and afternoon for the convenience of thousands of the aspirants. According to the statistics available, the University has received more than 25182 entrance applications for admission to various post graduate courses for the year 2020 against a vacancy of 4149 seats. According to the statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer ● P-02

Biker Killed, Two Hurt In Road Accident

Pulwama- A motorcyclist was killed and while two others injured in a road accident in Litter area of south Kashmir's Pulwama district on Thursday morning. A Maruti bearing registration no JK01A-3585 hit a motorcycle bearing registration no PB36G-2431 resulting in critical injuries to two persons, reported news agency GNS. He said that one among them succumbed to his injuries while two others have been shifted to Srinagar hospital in critical condition. The official identified the deceased as Younis Ahmad Tantray son of Ghulam Moham-mad Tantray, a resident ● P-02

Man's Body Fished Out After 9 Days

Srinagar: The body of a 45-year-old man was fished out on Thursday from Wular Lake, nine days after he drowned in the river in north Kashmir's Bandipora district. The body of Hussain Ahmad Khatana of Tanghat Pethkoot has been fished out after nine days from Wular Lake today, an official said. He said that the man had drowned while grazing his cattle in Zalwan area. The official added that the body has been taken to district hospital Bandipora and after completing medical and legal formalities, it will be handed over to legal heirs for last rites—(KNO)

Indian Army 'Tightens Grip' Over Pangong Heights

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: The Indian Army has further bolstered its dominance over a number of strategic heights overlooking key Chinese-held positions around Pangong lake area in eastern Ladakh even as brigade commanders and commanding officers of the two militaries held separate talks to cool tensions in the region, government sources said.

They said additional reinforcements have been made in hill tops and strategic locations around Pangong lake to keep a hawk-eye vigil on Chinese-held position of Finger 4.

The mountainous spurs in the area are referred to as Finger. China has been holding onto Finger 4 to 8 on the north bank of Pangong lake, the sources said.

The Indian Army has occupied several key heights in the strategically located Rezang-La and Regim-La areas on the southern bank of the lake since the end of August.

The sources said the two armies held separate talks at brigade commander-level as well as between commanding officers in



Jaishankar Meets Chinese Counterpart In Moscow

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi met in Moscow on Thursday amid hopes of a possible breakthrough in reducing tensions along the Line of Actual Control ● P-02

Rajnath Singh Issues Veiled Warning To China

Five French-made multirole Rafale jets were inducted into the Indian Air Force on Thursday at a glittering ceremony here, in a major boost to the country's air power at a time it is engaged in an ● P-02

the general area of Chushul. "The focus was to bring down

the temperatures," said a source. Tension escalated ●PAGE 02

'Repression' Can't Change Kashmir Reality: Hurriyat

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Policy of "fear and repression" can't alter the ground situation in Kashmir, Mirwaiz led Hurriyat Conference said on Thursday claiming that the solution to the issue lies in going to the people of all the regions of erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir as it existed before 1947.

In a handout issued here, a Hurriyat spokesperson said that Kashmir remains an issue which needs to be resolved sooner or later. He said that the policy of fear and repression cannot alter the reality on ground with regard to people's belief in their sentiment and their hope to realise it.

"It is stark for those willing to see it. It is long overdue and this



dispute has to be resolved sooner or later," the spokesperson said.

He said the issue should be resolved by going to the people of all regions of J&K as it existed before August 1947, or through deliberations among the key stakeholders known to all.

The separatist conglomerate also expressed serious concern over the condition of Kashmiri prisoners including Hurriyat leaders and activists and ●PAGE 02

2 Militants Arrested In Kupwara: Police

SRINAGAR- Police on Thursday claimed to have arrested two Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) militants along with arms and ammunition in Kupwara district of north Kashmir.

A police official said that acting on a tip off, state forces jointly carried out an operation in the Kupwara district during which two JeM militants were arrested.

He identified the arrested militants as Waseem Irshad Gabroo of Takiyabal Arampora, Sopore and Mehraj-Ud-Din Wani of Badshah Masjid, Sopore.

"One AK-47 rifle, one AK magazine, two grenades, 30 AK rounds and cash worth Rs 7 lakh were recovered from their possessions."

The official said that a case (FIR

Arms Cache Recovered In Uri

State forces on Thursday claimed to have recovered a large cache of arms and ammunition near the LoC in north Kashmir's Baramulla district. The Army said the operation carried out in Dulanja ● P-02

no. 233) under section Indian Arms 7/25 Act, and 1318, 19, 39 UAPA sections has been registered at police station Kupwara. "Further investigations have been set into motion," the official added.

BJP Leader Arrested For 'Vandalising' Graveyard

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: Police have arrested a Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) leader after he allegedly vandalized a graveyard in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district triggering massive outrage among the locals.

According to reports, BJP leader Ghulam Qadir flanked by his security guards appeared in Kichpara village of Kangan on Tuesday afternoon and tried to forcibly make a path in the middle of a local graveyard. Qadir, reports said had also brought a JCB machine to create a pathway to the inaccessible land lying way behind the graveyard.

The villagers, reports said resented the move of the BJP leader and staged a massive protest.



Chanting anti-BJP slogans, the protesters said they won't allow the 'hooliganism and misuse' of power by the BJP leader to grab the graveyard.

Fearing the situation to go out of hands, the BJP leader fled from

the spot along with his PSOs.

However, the JCB machine which he left behind was seized by police after locals brought the issue into the notice of police and Tehsildar, reports said.

"He was trying to create a pathway for his plot through Kahcharai land. On the basis of complaint, we have taken action against him. He has been arrested. The JCB machine too was seized," SSP Ganderbal, Khalil Poswal told Kashmir Observer.

According to reports, a case FIR No 70/2020 has been filed against Qadir under sections 295A (deliberate and malicious intention of outraging the religious feeling of any class of citizens of India) and Sec 297 IPC (Trespassing on burial places) at the police station Kangan.

Amid Covid, J&K Bank Posts Profit For Q1

Balance Sheet Further Strengthened; NPA Coverage Ratio Increased To 80.93 Pc, Core Deposits Show Marked Growth: JKB CMD

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Despite unprecedented crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, J&K Bank posted a net profit of Rs 6.50 Cr for the first quarter (Q1), of the current financial year (CFY), ended June - 2020.

The bank announced its reviewed financial results for the first quarter of CFY soon after its Board-of-Directors approved the quarterly numbers at a meeting held through video-conference here at its corporate headquarters.



The NPA coverage ratio of the bank has improved to 80.93 percent for the quarter as against 66.61 percent recorded last FY, while the Net NPA ratio of the bank has considerably reduced to 3.05 percent as against 4.36 percent recorded for the ●PAGE 02

13 More Covid-19 Deaths In J&K, Toll 848

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: Coronavirus claimed thirteen more lives in Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday, taking the number of fatalities due to the deadly infection in the Union territory to 848.

While eight deaths were reported from Jammu division, the remaining five were confirmed by the officials in Kashmir valley.

In Jammu division, two deaths each were reported from Jammu, Rajouri and Samba besides one each from Doda and Reasi, officials said.

Among the victims from Jammu, included a 62-year-

old man from Pothal Reasi, who died two days after being admitted to GMC with "inferior wall myocardial infarction. "He died at 5 a.m.," a doctor at the hospital said.

A 38-year-old man from Bari Brahmana area of Samba died at 5:10 am today, two days after he was admitted to the hospital and diagnosed with Bilateral Community Acquired Pneumonia, the doctor said.

An 80-year-old man from Ustad Mohalla Jammu died at GMC, three days after he was admitted to the hospital and diagnosed with hyperten-

sion, CKD and acute ●PAGE 02

WITH THESE DEATHS, OFFICIALS said, 848 people have succumbed to the virus in Jammu and Kashmir so far. Among them, they said, 717 were from the Valley while 131 others were from Jammu division.

1592 New Cases Include 112 Travellers

Covid-19 cases in Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday inched closer to 50,000 mark as 1592 fresh cases were reported, including 112 travelers, taking the total number of people infected by the deadly diseases across the Union Territory to 49134. For the eighth consecutive day, Covid-19 cases ● P-02

Family Booked For 'Gala' Wedding

SRINAGAR: Police on Thursday filed a case against a family for holding a gala wedding in violation of the Covid-19 norms during which firecrackers were burst and a large number of people were invited to the function.

In a handout issued here Thursday evening, a police spokesperson said that around 10:30pm on Wednesday huge sounds were heard in Solina Payeen locality of the city creating panic in the vicinity. The locals, he said called the police station Shergarhi demanding curbing of nuisance in the area.

The preliminary enquiry, the police spokesperson said revealed that the panic created by blast like sound was due to the bursting of fire crackers in a marriage ceremony in the house of Ghulam Nabi Bhat.

"The owner of the house ● P-02

Govt Employee Booked For Migrant Relief Fraud

JAMMU: The Crime branch of Jammu and Kashmir Police on Thursday booked a government employee from the valley for withdrawing relief meant for Kashmiri migrants by fraudulent means, an officer said on Thursday. Mukhtiyar Ahmed Sheikh of Achabal in Anantnag district, who is employed with the health department in Mattan, prepared documents to entitle him to draw relief in both cash and kind as a Kashmiri migrant, a Crime Branch, Jammu officer said.

The crime branch registered a criminal case against the accused for his involvement in withdrawal of relief and ration worth lakhs of rupees by resorting to impersonation and forgery after hatching a criminal conspiracy with ● P-02

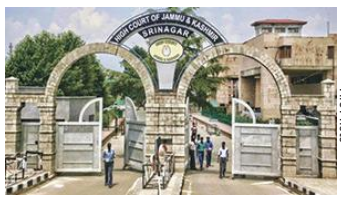
HC Orders Completion Of Selection By SKUAST (K) Despite Govt Order

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir High Court on Thursday directed SKUAST (K) to proceed with and conclude the selection process regarding appointment of Assistant Professor and Jr. Scientist in various disciplines advertised on March 7 last year.

The posts advertised included Assistant Professor and Jr. Scientist in the disciplines of Veterinary Physiology, Live Stock Production Management, Veterinary Public Health and Veterinary Biochemistry. However despite lapse of about nine months, the selection process has not made any progress beyond screening stage.

The university stated the selection process was put on hold in view of the communication of the Finance



Department on 4 July 2019. Following notice to the government by the high court, the latter filed a status report, revealing that the Finance Department has issued a circular on 4th July, 2019, in terms whereof the SKUAST was required to seek financial concurrence before advertising the posts in question and that it had to route the proposal through Administrative Department i.e., Agriculture Production Department which has not been done. ●PAGE 02

In FOCUS Kashmir's NH-44 Nightmare Lingers Despite Judicial Intervention

Swati Joshi

RECENTLY, when it rained, Mehraj regretted her decision to travel by road. She had ditched the flight to Srinagar to "enjoy the picturesque route". But sadly, the experience turned out to be sour.

Mehraj was stuck on the Srinagar-Jammu highway—also called NH (National Highway)—44—for 24 hours. Even when the traffic started moving, she was always on the look for falling debris on the bumpy road.

Traveling to and from Kashmir valley by road has been a nightmare for tourists, locals, truck drivers,

and for those innumerable people for whom the highway is the only road to connect the landlocked region with the rest of world.

Be it the unstoppable monsoons or snow-clad winters, the 287-km long NH-44 can get blocked anytime.

According to the J&K State Disaster Management Policy report 2017, "J&K has recorded more deaths in traffic accidents than militancy."

The report does not primarily talk about NH-44 but it is a part of the catastrophe.

The report stated 3,086 accidents and 464 deaths in J&K in 2017.

Accidental Report 2018, by the National Highway Authority of



India (NHAI), claimed that J&K reported 2,118 road accidents on the National Highway.

J&K secured 21th position out of 36 states and union territories, in the 'total number of persons killed

in road accidents on national highways' ranking.

The area along NH-44 is prone to landslides and avalanches due to the prolonged precipitation resulting in loss of life and property.

Some of the main landslides and shooting stone zones are Panthyal, Anokhifal, Kheri, Ramsos Maroog, Nashri, Battery Cheshma, along the Bichleri stream in Ramban and Udhampur district.

"Most of the cases will be along roads where rocks are cut to make ways because it exposes them and makes them vulnerable to sliding," said Dr. Afroz Ahmad Shah, Assistant Professor in Structural ●PAGE 02

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Indian Army ‘Tightens Grip’...

manifold in eastern Ladakh following fresh face-offs between Indian and Chinese troops in Mukhpari area of Rezang-La ridgeline on Monday evening.

The Indian Army on Tuesday said Chinese troops attempted to close in on an Indian position near the southern bank of Pangong lake in eastern Ladakh the previous evening and fired shots in the air, a first such instance of bullets being used along the LAC after a gap of 45 years.

The Army said this in a statement after the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) late on Monday night alleged that Indian troops crossed the LAC and “outrageously fired” warning shots near the Pangong lake. The incident of Monday evening 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 signed in 2005 mandate the two sides not to use firearms during any confrontation.

MEA Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava at a media briefing on Thursday reiterated India’s position that it is committed to resolve the current situation through peaceful negotiation.

“Both India and China are in regular touch through diplomatic and military channels to resolve the situation. This was the consensus when the two defence ministers met,” he said.

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.

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

Following China’s fresh attempts to change the status quo in the southern bank of Pangong lake, India has further bolstered its military presence in the region.

Jaishankar Meets Chinese ...

(LAC) in eastern Ladakh.

The talks between the two foreign ministers are taking place in the backdrop of a massive spike in border tensions in eastern Ladakh triggered by fresh face-offs between Indian and Chinese troops along the LAC in eastern Ladakh.

Following fresh confrontation around the southern bank of Pangong lake, India has further strengthened its military presence in the region by sending additional troops, battle tanks and other weaponry. The Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) has also beefed up its presence in the area where the situation remained very tense.

“The external affairs minister will be meeting the Chinese foreign minister shortly where he will be discussing this issue,” Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said at a virtual media briefing in the evening when asked whether the four-month-long border faceoff will be raised by Jaishankar at the talks.

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

Srivastava reiterated India’s position that it is committed to resolve the current situation through peaceful negotiations.

“Both India and China are in regular touch through diplomatic and military channels to resolve the situation. This was the consensus when the two defence ministers met,” he said.

Rajnath Singh Issues Veiled ...

escalating border dispute with China.

Using the occasion to send a signal to China over the border row in eastern Ladakh, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said the induction was crucial considering the atmosphere being created along the frontier and called it is a “big and stern” message to those eyeing India’s sovereignty.

Singh said Rafale is considered one of the best combat aircraft globally and the deal to procure the jets was a “game changer” for India’s national security.

A traditional ‘sarva dharma puja’, a ceremonial water cannon salute to the Rafale fighter jets and an aerial drill featuring breathtaking manoeuvres by the aircraft marked their induction into the IAF’s ‘Golden Arrows’ squadron at the Ambala Air Force station.

“The induction of Rafale jets is a big and stern message to the entire world, especially to those eyeing our sovereignty. This kind of induction is very important for the kind of atmosphere that has been created on our borders,” the defence minister said.

“We understand very well that with changing times, we also have to prepare ourselves. I feel proud to say that our national security has been a big priority for Prime Minister Narendra Modi,” he said.

Besides Singh, the nearly two-hour ceremony was attended by French Defence Minister Florence Parly, Chief of Defence Staff Gen Bipin Rawat, Air Chief Marshal R K S Bhadauria and top executives of major French defence firms involved in the Rafale deal.

Bhadauria said the induction of Rafale jets could not have happened at a more opportune time, considering the security scenario.

He said the Golden Arrows squadron has already flown the aircraft and undergone intense integrated training with other combat fleets, including firing advanced weapons.

So this formal induction today also marks the operational induction of this aircraft into the IAF. We are good to go and deliver, he said.

In her address, Parly said France is fully committed to integrate the Indian defence industry with France’s global military supply chain, and called Rafale’s induction into the IAF a new chapter in bilateral defence ties.

She said India will have an edge over the entire region to defend its people with the induction of the fighter jets.

At the ceremony, a fleet of indigenously-developed combat jets Tejas, and the Sarang helicopter aerobatic team too displayed a range of aerial manoeuvres.

In a tweet, the IAF welcomed the “new bird” into its arsenal.

The multirole Rafale jets, built by French aerospace major Dassault Aviation, are known for air-superiority and precision strikes. The first batch of five Rafale jets arrived in India on July 29, nearly four years after India signed an inter-governmental agreement with France to procure 36 of them at a cost of Rs 59,000 crore.

The French delegation at the ceremony included French envoy Emmanuel Lenain, Air General Eric Auttel, Vice Chief of French Air Force, Chairman and Chief Executive of Dassault Aviation Eric Trappier, and CEO of missile maker MBDA Eric Beranger.

“We are very proud to be equipping the IAF’s Rafales with a full comprehensive weapon package that includes the game-changing Meteor and MICA air-to-air missiles and the SCALP cruise missile to conduct deep strike missions in a complex and severe environment, Beranger said later.

Vilification Campaign Aimed...

it even paid the heaviest costs.”

KEG members regretted that the “vilification campaigns launched by the vested interests from within the systems of governance, within and outside the wider social media and offshore are aimed at undoing the Himalaya of reportage on which Kashmir’s history rests.”

The members said that the forum must meet frequently to respond to the evolving situations and to revisit the interventions that have taken place in the last more than a year. They said that the institution of media was already battling to stay afloat because of the communication curbs and financial squeeze besides the onslaught of social media and citizen journalism that the emerging situation added to the challenges. The members identified the issues and resolved that these challenging issues will be tackled on a priority basis in the coming days.

The meeting was attended by all the members including Fayaz Ahmad Kaloo (Greater Kashmir), Bashir Manzar (Kashmir Observer), Bashir Ahmad Bashir (Srinagar Times), Sajjad Haider (Kashmir Imageser), Haji Hayat (Kashmir Reader), Tahir Mohiuddin (Chattan), Manzoor Anjum (Uqab), Jeelani Qadri (Daily Afaaq), Manzoor Unjum (Daily Uqab), Haroon Rashid (Nida-ie-Mashraiq), Shifat Kira (Kashmir Vision), Raja Mo-hiuddin (Tameel-e-Irshad), Masood Hussain (Kashmir Life) and Zahoor Malik (Kashmir Times). Shameem Meraj (Kashmir Monitor) could not attend the meeting because of his pressing engagements.

13 More Covid-19 Deaths In...

respiratory distress syndrome.

They said a 57-year-old man from Bahu Fort died at ASCOMS Hospital (Batra) last night and had been diagnosed with hypothyroid and acute respiratory distress syndrome.

A 62-year-old woman from Ghazipur, RS Pura, who were co-morbid and COVID positive died in the GMC Jammu, while a 70-year-old man from Bandrai Ganara in Kalakote tehsil of Rajouri district, who had injury after fall in the house, died in the GMC Rajouri and later test positive for the virus.

A middle-aged woman from Uri was among the victims of Covid-19 infection in Valley. She died at a hospital here at 1:40 am, officials said. “She was diagnosed with HTN, Hypothyroid with Severe COVID Pneumonia and died due to cardiopulmonary arrest,” they added.

Besides her, another victim was a resident of Charar-e-Shareef while those from Srinagar included a 65-year-old woman from Batmaloo who was admitted to the SMHS hospital on September 6 as a case of bilateral CAP, and a 45-year-old from Fakir Gujri Harwan who also died at SMHS hospital.

The other victim was a 66-year-old man from Humhama Budgam who died at SMHS hospital this evening.

With these deaths, officials said, 848 people have succumbed to the virus in Jammu and Kashmir so far. Among them, they said, 717 were from the Valley while 131 others were from Jammu division. Srinagar district with 246 deaths tops the list followed by Baramulla (109), Budgam (69), Pulwama (60), Anantnag (53), Kupwara (56), Jammu (75), Kulgam (40), Shopian (29), Bandipora (26), Ganderbal (25), Rajouri (14), Kathua (11), Doda (9), Samba (7), Poonch (6), Udhampur (4), Reasi (3), Kishtwar (1), and Ramban (1). (With GNS inputs)

1592 New Cases Include 112...

saw a sharp spike as 1592 more people were confirmed positive for coronavirus in the Union Territory, officials said. While 770 new cases were reported from Jammu division, 822 were confirmed Covid-19 positive by the officials from Kashmir Valley.

Giving breakup of the cases, officials said, Srinagar reported 218, Baramulla 75, Pulwama 68, Budgam 190,Anantnag 49, Bandipora 56, Kupwara 85, Kulgam 15, Shopian 2, Ganderbal 64, Jammu 421, Rajouri 48, Kathua 47, Udhampur 28, Samba 35, Ramban 8, Doda 31, Poonch 78, Reasi 28 and Kishtwar 46. Moreover, they said, 344 COVID-19 patients have recovered and were discharged from various hospitals— 71 from Jammu Division and 273 from Kashmir Valley.

'Repression' Can't Change...

thousands of youths who remain incarcerated during the pandemic in jails, including Tihar, Kot Bhalwal, Jodhpur, Agra, Amphala, Haryana and other prisons after being detained before and after August 5, 2019. “These prisoners are targets of oppression. Due to continuous detention and prison conditions the physical and mental condition of most of the prisoners has gone from bad to worse,” the Hurriyat spokesperson said.

“This is a matter of serious concern and worry for the people of Kashmir and the world nations. Human rights organisations have to take note of it,” he added.

Hurriyat also termed continued detention of Chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq as extreme “high handedness” of the state.

Hurriyat has demanded an immediate and unconditional release of all those arrested and lodged in various jails in J&K and across India before and after August 5, 2019.

Family Booked For ‘Gala’...

has violated the orders of District Magistrate Srinagar and also gathered a large number of invitees at his house which is a clear violation of COVID-19 SOP and thereby endangering the lives of others,” the police spokesperson said.

Accordingly, he said a case FIR No. 45/2020 under relevant sections of law has been registered and further investigations started in this regard.

Govt Employee Booked For...

officials and officers of Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner Jammu, they said. A written complaint was lodged by Gani Maqbool, chairman of Antarrashtriya Upbhokta Kalyan Samiti, Kashmir Province with the crime branch on behalf of the complainant, Ali Mohd Paddar of Acha-bal, they said.

Paddar stated that he is a carpenter and Sheikh, who is his neighbour, prepared a ration card in his name and got cash assistance under migrant quota, they said.

Sheikh fixed his photograph on the ration card form to impersonate Paddar and also opened a bank account at Canara Bank in Jammu. He has drawn lakhs of rupees from the bank besides ration from the government ration store meant for migrants, they said.

A formal case is registered by Crime Branch, Jammu against Sheikh and others, they said.

Amid Covid, J&K Bank Posts...

corresponding period of the previous financial year.

The bank’s gross NPA ratio is at 10.73 percent which in sequential terms has come down from 10.97 percent recorded during the March quarter of FY 2019-20. The Capital Adequacy Ratio of the bank under BASEL III is 11.23 percent as on June 30, 2020 against the mandatory requirement of 10.875 percent.

Commenting upon the bank’s results, the bank’s Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) R K Chhibber observed, “We have focused on strengthening our balance sheet further and I feel our (June) quarterly numbers are quite encouraging despite disruption due to the pandemic-hit scenario. Having higher Provision Coverage Ratio (PCR) above 80 percent is a strong indicator of the fact that the asset-quality issues have been suitably taken care of and adequately provided for to focus on the future business and to improve the profitability of the bank. That is why we see our Q1 profit more indicative of our envisaged trajectory than an achievement in numbers.”

“We have managed a positive bottom-line even after making additional provisioning of Rs 147.50 Cr for theCovid -19 related stress”, he asserted.

Although, the RBI directions to defer recovery of interest and installments from March to August, 2020, provided a much needed cushion to both banks and the borrowers in the short-term but we remain highly focused on our post-moratorium loan-book to mitigate all the attendant risks. Amid the prevailing circumstances, we have effected upgrade and recovery of over Rs 100 Cr during the quarter”, he added. “While maintaining our NIM above 3.50percent in spite of considerable reduction in lending rates, we have brought down the cost of deposits substantially to 4.39 percent from the 5.04 percent recorded for the corresponding quarter of the last year”, the CMD said.

The total business of the bank stood at Rs 164861 Cr registering 5 percent growth when compared with the corresponding period of the previous year. The deposits of the bank have increased by 12percent to Rs 99691.41 Cr from Rs 88963.39 Cr recorded last year while as the advances stood at Rs 65179Cr for Q1 of the financial year 2020-21. CASA component of the deposits has increased by 20 percent on YoY basis with Savings deposits growing by 22 percent. Deposit growth in J&K UT has been recorded at 14 percent while as credit has grown by 10 percent on YoY basis. The CASA Ratio of the bank has improved to 53.57 percent from 50.20 percent recorded last year.

“Adapting to the pandemic-affected situation, our lending strategies would be in line with the economic recovery as envisaged in upcoming quarters, wherein we expect credit growth of 5 to 7 percent in the bank’s loan-book”, he said adding that the Guaranteed Emergency Credit Line (GECL) scheme rolled out for pandemic-affected MSMEs, other businesses, under Central Government’s Atmanirbhar Bharat Package has proved to be of great help to businesses.

“For maximum coverage of eligible borrowers under the GECL scheme, we proactively are ensuring that the majority of our customers/businesses avail the best available facilities amid these testing times. So far, 46246 borrowers have availed the loans under GECL scheme and we have disbursed Rs 1591 Cr that includes Rs 1334 Cr in J&K and Rs 257 Cr in the rest of country”, he said that also rolled out a Business Support Scheme for borrowers who do not qualify for the GECL scheme there by providing relief to such borrowers”, the CMD said.

The bank has also rolled out Fund Interest Term Loan (FITL) scheme to ease out its borrowers from instant repayment of accumulated interest for deferment period since first phase of lockdown in March 2020, he said.

“The bank plans to scale up the flow of credit to the priority sector

within the UT to boost lending to agriculture and allied activities besides handicrafts and tourism. Under KCC the bank has already sanctioned Rs 5606.80 Cr to 630100 borrowers. In the rest of the country, our lending focus shall remain on specific niche segments in the retail sector and top rated corporate entities, PSUs”, said the CMD. Notably, the bank is going for capital augmentation of Rs 4500 Cr to further cushion its lending capacity, fuel its future growth while maintaining compliance with all the regulatory guidelines.

Highlighting the importance of digital banking, he asserted “Covid-19 has facilitated a marked shift towards digitization with the bank’s digital domains witnessing a steady increase of users during the first three months of CFY following unprecedented country-wide lockdowns. With digital transactions making up 56 percent of our overall transactions, the growth of digital users in sequential terms has increased by20 percent in UPI users and13 percent in mPay and kiosk banking users.”

As on date the total number of bank’s business units across the country is 950 while the total number of bank’s ATMs currently stands at 1369.

Scholarship For J&K Students...

official spokesman said here on Thursday.

“In a significant move, the central government has enhanced scholarship amount for the students of J&K under Pragati and Saksham Scholarship Schemes from Rs 5,000 per annum to Rs 50,000 per annum from current academic year 2020-2021,” he said.

Under Pragati scheme, all girls of UT Jammu and Kashmir belonging to families having annual income of Rs 8 lakh who shall be admitted in the AICTE approved institutions for the session 2020-21 will be eligible for scholarship.

Under Saksham scheme, all specially abled students with 40 per cent disability pursuing technical education at degree or diploma level belonging to families with annual income less than Rs 8 lakh would be eligible for the scholarship.

These two schemes are aimed at providing scholarship to the students studying within Jammu and Kashmir.

The application for availing these scholarships shall be invited for registration once in a year through National e-Scholarship Portal (NSP) of Government of India.

Accordingly, all principals of engineering institutes of the Union territory have been asked to get the girl students and specially abled students pursuing technical education registered on the NSP portal.

Arms Cache Recovered In Uri...

Uri near the LoC on Wednesday ended with the recovery of two M-16 rifles (Pakistani origin), two pistols 0.30 cal (Pakistani origin), four M-16 magazines and four pistol magazines.

Searches in the area were started after security forces received inputs that weapons were being sent from across the LoC for terrorists in Kashmir.

“There were credible inputs that some weapons were delivered in the Dulanja sector for terrorists in Kashmir on the basis of which Army and police teams launched a search operation and recovered a large cache of weapons including two M-16 rifles,” SSP Barmaulla, Abdul Qayoom said.

He said the borders have been tightened and there is pressure from terrorists in the valley to their handlers in Pakistan to send in more weapons.

HC Orders Completion Of...

The government also mentioned that the employer is otherwise within his rights to cancel any selection process by recalling the posts advertised and the advertisement issued before the selection is actually made.

“The question, therefore, for determination would be, as to whether the SKUAST was justified in issuing the advertisement notification in question without the concurrence of the Finance Department?” a bench of Justice Ali Mohammad Magrey said.

While the Finance Department had ordered that no recruitment against the vacant posts shall be made by the public sector undertakings, autonomous bodies and societies without the prior concurrence of the Finance Department, the court observed that the University has clarified that advertisement was made prior to July 4 last year and that the order of the Finance Department has a prospective effect.

“The selection process is stalled because of the order issued by the Government which is not under challenge but as per the stand of the SKUAST the same has the prospective effect,” the court said, adding, “This Court is not inclined to go into this aspect of the case and return any finding as regards the competence and role of the Government in the case in hand as that is not the issue raised in the petition. The court, therefore, has to only settle the issue regarding completion of the process of selection against the advertised posts notwithstanding the order issued by the Government.”

In view of the issue raised, the court said that it feels unnecessary to embark upon the powers of the government and the University qua the concurrence as the University has, on its own, accepted the order issued by the government qua requirement of concurrence before the issuance of advertisement for making selection against any post.

But the fact of the matter, the court said, is that the Government order that puts the selection process on hold is prospective in nature, therefore, the same does not have any bearing to the case in hand. “Further, in view of the stand taken by the SKUAST and the petitioners having not questioned the Government order, therefore, there is no question for consideration of this Court whether the State Government has any power to override the decision of the appropriate authority of the University when such power is not conferred directly upon the Government under the Statute or regulation framed thereunder,” the court said, adding, “This question is kept open for future consideration as and when such eventuality arises.”

Finally, the court allowed the plea to the extent of directing the University, SKUAST to proceed with and conclude the selection process after allowing all eligible candidates to participate, notwithstanding the Government order under dispute. (GNS)

Kashmir’s NH-44 Nightmare...

Geology at Universiti Brunel Darussalam.

The rock should not be cut in such a way which exposes it to erosion, he said.

Some of the major reasons for landslides are rock exposure to erosion, slope instability, urbanization, and rainfall, the professor explained. “Along the Jammu-Kashmir highway,” he said, “it’s the inappropriate cutting of the road and the absence of remedial measures like proper drainage which causes landslides.”

A study by researchers Mohsin Fayaz and Sheik Abdul Khader P claimed that more than 100 deaths have occurred on the highway over 10 years. “Almost 10 people die on average each year due to landslides on NH-44 Jammu-Srinagar National Highway,” the study notes.

According to the paper, steeper slopes along NH-44 are formed from sedimentary, disturbed, and fragmented rocks that move downslope during light to heavy rainfall, causing severe harm to both highway and residents along the highway.

The increase in the sharp inclined slopes, unscientific construction activities, and the presence of unstable and fragile rocks along the highway make it more prone to slope failure, the paper mentioned.

To prevent further accidents on the highway, the government started a highway widening project in 2011. It was planned to be completed within five years.

The four-lane project was divided into six sub-projects—Jammu-Udhampur (65 km), Chenani-Nashri tunnel (9.2 km), widening of Ramban-Udhampur road (43 km), Banihal-Ramban road (36 km), Qazigund-Banihal road (15.25 km), and Srinagar-Banihal road (67.7 km). The construction of Chenani-Nashri Tunnel project with an integrated tunnel control system was completed in 2018.

The tunnel has been constructed at a cost of about Rs. 3,720 crores. It provides all-weather protection as it bypasses through the snow and landslide-prone range of Kud, Pantitop, and Batote. According to the Ministry of Road Transport and Highway Report 2018, the total cost of the Jammu-Udhampur Bypass project was Rs 2,626.33 crores and the Udhampur-Ramban project was Rs 2,136.97 crores.

In 2019, four-laning of Jammu-Udhampur Bypass, Chenani-Nashri section, Lakanpur to Hiranagar and Hiranagar to Vijaypur was completed, according to Press Information Bureau (PIB) report.

The Qazigund-Banihal tunnel amounting to Rs 1,987 crores is under construction and would be completed by the end of the financial year

(March 2021), said Hemraj, General Manager NHAI, Jammu.

The Qazigund-Banihal tunnel along with Chenani-Nashri will reduce the travel distance by about 30 km and reduce time by two hours.

Widening of Udhampur-Ramban and Ramban- Banihal would be completed by December 2021 and December 2022 respectively, Hemraj told Kashmir Observer.

“In the Ramban-Banihal, 50 percent of the work would be completed by December 2021 and the remaining part by December 2022,” he informed.

According to another NHAI official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, construction has only been started on the 10km stretch of the Ramban-Banihal, while the remaining 20km stretch has been left out. “The untouched part needs to be realigned again as the construction is getting obstructed by landslides,” the official said.

The soil in the Ramban-Banihal stretch is sedimentary resulting in erosion and falling of debris, he said. “The rocks can fall anytime because of which we are not able to break the tunnel from inside.”

On being asked about the completion date of the project, he said, “It is tough to predict the date as we are in the phase of realignment where we’ve to finalize which provision (duct, tunnel) to use for the construction to minimize the damage caused by falling stones and landslides.”

The harsh and fragile terrain, socio-political conditions, lack of skilled labour and construction with ongoing traffic are the challenges faced by the NHAI due to which on-time completion of the project is not possible, said Hemraj.

“Due to COVID, the work was suspended from March to June,” said the general manager. “Even now, we’re short of skilled labour.”

Most of the labourers are non-locals and due to pandemic it’s not conducive for them to travel to J&K, he said.

Special arrangements are been done for labourers to join work which has increased the funding of the project, said Hemraj.

Another NHAI official told Kashmir Observer that one of the major challenges in adhering to the project timeline is the delay in land acquisition.

He explained that many locals go to court to solve their internal conflicts on compensation which further increases the timeline of the project.

“Till the case is in court,” he said, “the project remains stalled.”

The Ramban-Banihal project is under Engineering Procurement and Construction (EPC) contract, under which contractors have to complete the milestone only then they are paid, said the NHAI official. “Sometimes contractors go on a loss which further slows down the project.”

Noticing the delay, the High Court in February said, “It’s a serious issue. This road has become a death trap. It’s a very casual approach on part of the authorities. Such a huge project and delay caused huge loss of public exchequer,” the judge observed.

Once the project is completed, the stretch between Jammu and Srinagar would be reduced to 62 km and the distance will be covered in around 4-4.5 hours and many people like Mehar would not regret their decision to travel to Kashmir by road.

No Let Down In Cross-LoC Shelling

Jammu-based defence spokesperson Lt Col Devender Anand said.

“Around 0530, 1145 and 1215 hours today, the Pakistan army initiated unprovoked ceasefire violation by firing with small arms and intense shelling with mortars along the LoC in Mankote, Degwar and Mendhar sectors,” he said.

In the evening, the Pakistan army targeted Balakote sector. Again around 2200 hours, it initiated ceasefire violation in Krishna Ghati sector in Poonch, he added.

The Indian Army retaliated befittingly, the spokesperson said.

The exchange of fire between the two sides was still on when last reports came in from the area.

On September 2, one junior commissioned officer of the Indian Army was killed in a ceasefire violation by Pakistan along the LoC in Keri sector of Rajouri.

IED Defused In Baramulla...

found by state forces in north Kashmir in the past four days. A similar IED was recovered by forces from Drugmulla area of Kupwara district on Monday.

KU PG Entrance Exams...

(KNO), the KU authorities including the entire administrative machinery, has been geared up to conduct the entrance examination which as per the notification issued by Directorate of admissions and Competitive Examination commenced from September 9 and shall culminate on September 27.

The KU has made elaborate arrangements and constituted several teaching departments as centres within the campus for conducting the examination.

Meanwhile, in view of COVID-19 and to avoid social gathering, the KU administration has also constituted exam centers in north and south Kashmir districts besides the main campus of the University.

For aspirants from South Kashmir examination centres have been constituted at Women’s College Anantnag and Government Degree College (GDC) Pampore, whereas exam centres have been constituted at GDC Kupwara and North Campus of KU at Delina for students of north Kashmir.

According to KU authorities, these have been designated for convenience of the students so that they need not to travel to main campus to appear in the exam.

In central Kashmir one exam centre has been constituted at Bemina Degree College and the main campus of the University.

While taking stock of the elaborate arrangements made for ensuring smooth conduct of the examination Vice Chancellor KU Prof Talat Ahmad during a surprise visit to one of the examination centres at main campus interacted with the students and while wishing best of luck to all the PG aspirants Prof Talat said “We have made all the necessary arrangements for the smooth conduct of the examination and we will make sure that the aspirants do not face any difficulty.”

Prof Talat added “We request all candidates to reach the examination centres well in advance. It is in their own interest so as to avoid any unnecessary delay.”

The University has also advised the candidates to regularly visit the university website for necessary information/instructions regarding Admissions – 2020 and entrance examination.

The varsity administration has also advised the candidates to disburse after examination is over and leave the centre immediately.

The programs for which the University has received more than 25182 applications include MSc Clinical Biochemistry, MA English, MSc Applied Geology, MA History, MA Linguistics, LLB (3 years), M.Sc. Microbiology, MA Arabic, M.Sc. Nano-technology MA Psychology, MSc Chemistry, M Ed, MSc Environmental Sciences, MSc Botany, MA/MSc Mathematics, MA Political Science, MSc Zoology, MA Anthropology, 5-Year BA-LLB, MA Education, MA Sociology, MSc Food Technology, MSc Electronics, MA Kashmiri, M Sc Home Science, MSC IT, MSc Geo-Informatics, MA Persian, MA Islamic Studies, MTTM, MSc Biochemistry MA/MSc Disaster Management, MSc Bio-resources, MA/MSc Statistics, MA Mass Communication, MA/MSc Geography, MCA, MSc Physics, MLIS, MA Economics MA Urdu, MSW, MA Gender Studies, M. Com, M P Ed. MBA, MBA-FM and IMBA—(KNO)

Biker Killed, Two Hurt In Road...

of Naina Pulwama and injured persons identified as javidhamdantnay S/o of Gh.Mohammad resident of NainaBatpora and Tawseef Ahmad Tantrey S/o Mohammad Hissain from Sherpora Pulwama.

He said that a case has been registered in this regard and further investigation is going on.

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Govt. Nominates Admin Secretaries as In-charge Secretaries for Districts

SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 10: The Government today nominated Administrative Secretaries as In-charge Secretaries for Districts for monitoring development works and other related matters.

According to the order issued by General Administration Department, Administrative Secretaries who have been nominated as In-charge Secretaries are Financial Commissioner, Finance, Arun Kumar Mehta for Jammu; Financial Commis-

sioner, Health and Medical Education Department, Atal Dullo for Anantnag; Principal Secretary, Home Department, Shaheen Kabra for Shopian; Principal Secretary, Information Technology Department, Bipul Pathak for Udhampur; Principal Secretary, Housing and Urban Development Department, Dheeraj Gupta for Srinagar.

Similarly, Principal Secretary, School Education Department, Dr. Asgar Hassan Samoon has been nominated as In-charge

Secretary for Bandipora; Principal Secretary, Animal and Sheep Husbandry Department, Navin Kumar Choudhary for Baramulla; Principal Secretary, Revenue, Dr. Pawan Kotwal for Poonch; Principal Secretary, Power Development Department, Rohit Kansal for Pulwama; Principal Secretary, Social Welfare Department, Shailendra Kumar for Doda; Commissioner Secretary, Industries and Commerce Department, Manoj Kumar Dwivedi for Budgam

and Commissioner Secretary, Transport Department Hirdesh Kumar for Rajouri.

Whereas, Commissioner Secretary, Forest, Environment and Ecology Department, Sarita Chauhan has been nominated In-charge Secretary for Kupwara; Commissioner Secretary, Labour and Employment Department, Surabh Bhagat for Kishtwar; Secretary Planning Development and Monitoring Department, M Raju for Reasi; Secretary, Department of Rural

Development and Panchayati Raj, Sheetal Nanda for Ganderbal; Secretary, Department of Disaster Management, Relief Rehabilitation and Reconstructions, Simrandeep Singh for Kulgam; Secretary, Youth Services and Sports Department, Sarma Hafeez for Samba; Commissioner Secretary, Higher Education Department, Talat Parvez Rohella for Kathua and Commissioner Secretary, Culture Department, Zubair Ahmad for Ramban.

LG Meets Media Fraternity in Jammu Welcomes constructive criticism

JAMMU, SEPTEMBER 10: Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha had an interaction with the media fraternity from Jammu here today. This was his 2nd interaction with the media people after a delegation from Kashmir met him on 4th September in Srinagar.

Sanjeev Verma, Divisional Commissioner, Jammu and Dr. Syed Sehrish Asgar, Director, Information and Public Relations Department were present on the occasion.

The Lt Governor sought the suggestions of the Media Persons to make the dissemination of information more authentic and effective.

He observed that the Government of UT is committed to development without discrimination.

He welcomed the constructive criticism for improving the functioning of the Government and make the Government's working more responsive and accountable. Media is an important tool to take Government's works and initiatives to the public, the LG maintained.

Cases of 3 % Interest Subsidy & 30 % CCIAC Jammu Gets 7.54 cr, Kashmir Rs 2.02 Cr

SRINAGAR: Commissioner Secretary, Industries & Commerce Department, Manoj Kumar Dwivedi, chaired separate meetings of the State Level Committees for sanctioning of subsidy cases under the Central Package of Incentives besides approval to 30 per cent Central Capital Investment Incentive for Access to Credit (CCIAC) under Industrial Development Scheme (IDS) respectively here today.

The Committees sanctioned cases of 3 per cent Interest Subsidy and 30 per cent CCIAC amounting Rs. 7.54 crore for Jammu Division and Rs. 2.02 crore for Kashmir Division.

Director, Industries & Commerce, Kashmir Mehmood Ahmad Shah along with officers of Directorate of Industries & Commerce, Kashmir, General Manager JKDFC, Gowhar Arif besides Managers of financing Banks participated in the SLC meeting for Sanctioning of Subsidy cases under IDS while Director, Industries & Commerce, Jammu, Anoo Malhotra, Director Finance R C Kotwal, representative of Director

General Accounts & Treasuries, Mohammad Iqbal Ganaie, Chairman, Federation of Industries, Jammu, Lalit Mahajan, General Managers of concerned DICs and officers of Directorate of Industries & Commerce, Jammu attended the meeting through video conferencing.

Dwivedi exhorted upon the concerned officers to further ease out the process for sanctioning and disbursement of subsidy in order to shorten the duration from the date of application of subsidy in DIC and its disbursement.

Director I&C Jammu deliberated upon 43 subsidy cases pertaining to 3 per cent Interest Subsidy and 30 per cent CCIAC under IDS while Director, I&C Kashmir deliberated upon 5 subsidy cases of Kashmir Division.

Anoo Malhotra apprised the SLC that the maximum pendency has been cleared and directions have been issued to General Managers to clear the pendency at DIC level.

Education Scholarships Last Date for Filing Forms Oct 31

SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 10: According to the School Education Department, 2868 Fresh and 1729 Renewal Pre-Matric scholarship for National Minorities forms were submitted by students of Jammu division till September 03 while 97442 Fresh and 66733 Renewal Pre-Matric scholarships for National Minority forms were submitted from Kashmir division during the same period.

Similarly, 912 Fresh and 78 Renewal Post-Matric scholarships for National Minorities forms were submitted by students from Jammu division till September 03 while 34170 Fresh and 6927 Renewal Post-Matric scholarships for National Minorities forms were submitted from Kashmir division during the same period.

CAR STOLEN



My Baleno Car bearing registration no. JK09B 3548 (Colour Granite) has been stolen from Bagh-e-Mehtab area in the intervening night of 9th and 10th of September. Anyone who spotted / spots this car or has any info regarding the same may kindly contact at:

Mohammad Asim Khan
CELL NO: 7006575404

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR INDUSTRIAL TRAINING INSTITUTE PAMPORE

Email: pampore iti@gmail.com web: www.itipampore.org
No.:ITI/Estt/Pmp/20/983-85 Dated:-09-09-2020

Sub:-Engagement of Vocational Instructor (COPA Self- Finance, Secretarial Practice Self-Finance & Employability Skills Normal Scheme) as Guest Faculty for the session 2020-21.

ADVERTISEMENT

Applications on prescribed format at Annexure "A" affixed with a passport size photograph attested by the Gazetted officer are invited from the eligible candidates for engagement of "Vocational Instructor COPA Self- Finance, Secretarial Practice Self- Finance & Employability Skills as Guest faculty Normal "on need basis for the session 2020-21 as Guest faculty. The applications dully completed in all respects shall reach to this office by or before 19-09-2020. The requisite qualification for the said position is specified below:

	Vocational Instructor self (Secretarial Practice)	Degree in commerce/Arts (with short hand & Typing) from a recognised university with one year experience in the relevant field.
		Diploma in commercial Practice from recognised board of education with two years experience in the relevant field.
		NTC/NAC passed in the trade with three years experience in the relevant field.
	Vocational Instructor (COPA)	B.E/B.Tech in Computer Science /IT from recognised University with one year experience in the relevant field.
		Post Graduate in Computer Science /Computer Application /IT
		Application/IT with two year experience in the relevant field.
		MBA/BBA/Graduate in Sociology/Social Welfare/Economics/Graduate/Diploma from recognised University/Board with 2 years Teaching Experience and trained in Employability skills from DGET Institutes and must have studied English communication skill and basic

The applicants must attach the attested copies of following certificates/testimonials with the appli

Marks Certificate (academic).

Technical Qualification Certificate/Marks Sheet. Experience Certificate in the teachin

The selection shall be made purely on merit basis shortlisted candidates shall be called for interview if needed and the selected candidate has to execute and undertaking dully attested by the Judicial Magistrate to the effect that he/she will not claim for any extensi

Any applicant without relevant Teaching Exp

[Signature]

- 1) Position for which applied:_____
- 2) Candidate:_____
- 3) Father's Name:_____
- 4) Date of Birth:_____
- 5) Permanent Address:_____
- 6) Present Address:_____
- 7) Mobile No.:_____

8) _____

I declare that the entries made in this application are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and nothing has been con suppressed or miss represented.

DIPK-5364/20

DIAL-EMMA



- TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266686
- PCR: 0194-2452092,2455883
- PDD: 0194-2450213
- FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488,2452222,2452155
- CAPD: 18001807011
- SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311



RAILWAYS

- SRINAGAR: 0194-2103259
- ANANTNAG: 01932-228243
- BARAMULLA: 0194-102029
- BUBHERA: 01932-228243
- PAMPORE: 01933-294132
- PATTAN: 01954-293507
- QAZIGUND: 01951-296153



HIGHWAY STATUS

- Sgr-Jammu highway - (Open)
- Mughal Road - (Open)
- Srinagar- Leh- (Open)



HIJRI CALENDAR
22 Muharram
1442

PRAYERS

FAJR	4: 49
ZUHR	12: 31
ASR	5:56
Magrib	6:51
ISHA	8:13

This Day In History

1906 - Mahatma Gandhi coins the term "Satyagraha" to characterize the Non-Violence movement in South Africa.
1909 - Max Wolf rediscovers Halley's comet
1910 - 1st commercially successful electric bus line opens (Hollywood)
1914 - Australia invades New Britain, defeating a German contingent there.
1926 - Spain leaves League of Nation due to Germany joining
1939 - Iraq and Saudi Arabia declare war on Nazi Germany
1941 - FDR orders any Axis ship found in American waters be shot at on sight
1941 - World War II: The U.S. Navy is ordered to attack German U-boats.
1943 - US & Australian troops join in Salamaua, New Guinea
1967 - Indian/Chinese border fights
1967 - US Surveyor 5 makes 1st chemical analysis of lunar material
1965 - Intl Cometary Explorer (ISEE 3) passes Giacobini-Zinner by 7900 km
1995 - Soyuz TM-22, lands.
1997 - After a nationwide referendum, Scotland votes to establish a devolved parliament, within the United Kingdom.
1998 - Independent counsel Kenneth Starr sends a report to the U.S. Congress accusing President Bill Clinton of 11 possible impeachable offenses.
1998 - Opening ceremony for the 1998 Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Malaysia is the first Asian country to host the games.
2000 - Activists protest against the World Economic Forum meeting in Melbourne, Australia.
2001 - Two passenger planes hijacked by terrorists crash into New York's World Trade Towers causing the collapse of both and death of 2,752 people
2007 - Russia tests the largest conventional weapon ever, the Father of all bombs.
2009 - The Brazilian economy technically leaves the recession when GDP grew 1.9% in the second quarter of 2009 after having fallen in the first quarter of 2009 and last quarter of 2008.
2009 - Sweden emerges from the recession after witnessing GDP growth of 0.2% in the second quarter.
2012 - 50 Al-Shabaab fighters are killed in conflict with the Somali National Army.
2015 - A large crane collapses killing more than 100 people in Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

From KO Archives

China Favours Tripartite Talks On Kashmir

International Role Stressed To Break Stalemate

AGENCIES

Beijing- In a major shift in its policy, China today advocated tripartite talks with the Participation of Pakistan, India and Kashmiri representatives to hammer out a lasting solution to the 53-year old Kashmir dispute. It hoped that India also involve the International community as well to peacefully resolve the Kashmir issue.

Of late, China had been suggesting bilateral talks between India and Pakistan to solve the issue. This virtually lent an endorsement of India's insistence on bilateral approach

"The Pakistani side has already said that they are willing to talk about any issue. May be the Indian side could also include the Pakistani side in the talks," Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister Wang Yi said while commenting on the recent talks between India and the Hizbul Mujahideen which excluded Pakistan.

Expounding China's stand, Wang noted that the Kashmir issue has long stalemated. "I think the only way out is the peaceful settlement with the help from the international community," he said, indicating a possible change in Beijing stand.

India has firmly ruled out third party involvement in the resolution of the issue.

China's official media has come out with a series of articles recently, saying that the Kashmir issue involves three parties: India, the Kashmiri people and Pakistan!

"What is more important right now is that the two sides should find a way to really work it out. As a neighbor to India and Pakistan, China will only make positive efforts to help you and not to the contrary," Wang said.

"As neighbor to both India and Pakistan, China's position is very clear: we wish the two sides could 'sit down and talk so that this issue could be worked out through peaceful means," Wang said.

"China does not wish to be the mediator between the two countries nor I think does India wish to have any third party to get involved as a mediator," he said.

"But we do wish to see that you two sides could sit down and have talks. I believe the peaceful settlement of this issue will not only reduce tension there which will do, good not only to the two countries but also to the development of South Asia," he said.

Commenting on China's stand on terrorism, Wang said that as a principle, the Chinese side stands firmly against any form of international terrorism.

(Kashmir Observer, September 11, 2000)

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
MECHANICAL HOSPITAL & CENTRAL HEATING DIVISION SRINAGAR
(Phone No: 0194 xenmhchdk@yahoo.in www.medkmr.or
(Short Term)
NIT No: MHCHD/TS/
SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Date of sale of tender documents.	
Last date of receipt of Tenders.	

For & on behalf of the Jammu & Kashmir, sealed tenders affixed with revenue stamps are invited from the registered firms/Govt. Contractors for the below mentioned work:

Description of work.	Earnest Money,			
Electrification of 500 LPM newly installed Oxygen Plant room at Govt. GB Pant Hospital,				
Servicing of suction plant and various works to be undertaken in the 500 LPM (INMATEC Oxygen Plant of Pant Hospital, Srinagar				
Repairs/Replacement of items to 200KVA, 3				
1000LPM oxygen Plant of Govt. L.D Hospital				

The tender must be accompanied with the requisite earnest money deposit in the shape of CDR/FDR drawn from any scheduled/national bank and pledged in favour of Executive Engineer, MH&CH Division, Srinagar. The tenders found without earnest money shall be rejected out rightly at the time of opening of tender.

The tender document can be had from the office of the undersigned during working hours against cost mentioned above, in the form of IPO/Demand Draft or Cash Payment. Tender documents shall to production of certificates to the following effect:

Latest Sales tax clearance certificate/ or as applicable as per new GST rules
J&K State Sales Tax Registration Certificate/ GST registration certificate
Documentary proof of having successfully executed similar nature of job in Government Government Department.

The tenders should reach the office of undersigned on same day or any subsequent date convenient to the undersigned in presence of the tenderers who may be present

The envelope containing tender should properly be superscripted with Tender Notice no, Name of work and

DIPK-5384/20

Executive Engineer
Mechanical Hospital &

KASHMIR
OBSERVER

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Until Vaccine Is Developed

In a disappointing development on the vaccine front, pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca has put on hold the randomised clinical trial of its vaccine that it was developing in collaboration with the University of Oxford after a volunteer developed “an unexplained illness”. The researchers will now go back to drawing board to examine the necessary safety aspects of the trial. The vaccine has been touted as the front runner in the race to develop a vaccine for COVID-19.

So far, Russia is the only country that has developed the vaccine. According to The Lancet, the Russian vaccine, called Sputnik V, generated a strong immune response and didn't produce serious adverse reactions in the 76 volunteers who were inoculated in a trial. This has to a large extent put to rest the scepticism about its efficacy. Russia is now in talks with India over the phase 3 trials of the vaccine and its manufacturing. A Niti Aayog member said that India is “working in partnership with this vaccine candidate for manufacture, trials and regulatory facilitation”.

Work is also ongoing on India's own vaccine, Covaxin, being developed by Hyderabad based company Bharat Biotech. The progress so far been encouraging. Phase 1 trial has already been completed and phase 2 trial is likely to be concluded by October. So, there is a hope that if all goes well, the vaccine will hit the market by early 2021.

Meanwhile the coronavirus pandemic is spreading through India like wild fire. Nearly 90,000 cases have been reported sick in the country in last 24 hours. This has taken the caseload tally to around 43 lakh. The total number of fatalities have risen to over 74,000. However, one silver lining is that around 33 lakh people have recovered pushing the recovery rate to 77.32 percent. Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh are witnessing the most infections.

has already become the No 2 country most affected by the pandemic after the US. At the current rate of infections, it is set to overtake the US in near future. At the same time while daily caseload in India is among the highest in the world, it remains the lowest given the size of its population. Worldwide, the Covid-19 has infected over 2.6 crore people and killed 870,000.

One reason for the exponential spread of the contagion in India and also in Kashmir is the badly implemented lockdown and the indifference being exhibited by the people towards safety precautions. Though it seems too late to reverse the tide, but the government can still make a redeeming difference by getting people to obey the rules. And which is something that doesn't seem to be happening as aggressively as it should.

OTHER OPINION

When politics dictates law

On Tuesday, the Sushant Singh Rajput case took a new turn with the arrest of actor Rhea Chakraborty in a drug-related case. This newspaper has been critical of the electronic media's coverage of Rajput's suicide — and the nature of the sensationalist conspiracy theories that have come to dominate a case which should have triggered a discussion on mental health. But it is not just the media which is in the dock; the problem is with India's law enforcement apparatus and police agencies.

Irrespective of the merits of the investigation underway, what is increasingly apparent is that all central and state agencies appear to be operating under political directions, for this case is now clearly linked to politics.

This view seems to have the support, if not the concurrence, of leaders in the BharatiyaJanata Party (BJP) — and the social media campaign against her has the sanction of supporters of the party. It is, therefore, not a coincidence that it is central agencies which are at the forefront of implicating MsChakraborty in a range of cases. On the other are those who believe that Rajput's death is being used to target the Mumbai film industry and its leading figures, and there is an attempt to muddy a normal police investigation in the matter. It is not a coincidence that the Maharashtra state administration in general is applying the law against those who it sees as critics.

The issue here is not who is right or wrong. The issue is the complete politicisation of India's premier security agencies, which seem to act not on the basis of evidence but primarily on political directions. India's governance structure, of course, has a framework where the state police in the case of states, and other investigative agencies in the case of the Centre, operate under executive control. Political oversight is important. At the same time, there is a desperate need for autonomy — for as repeated attempts at police reforms have shown, it is when investigative agencies are free of political pressure that they can work fairly.

The Hindustan Times

“Hungama Hai Kyun Barpa?” The Case Of Urdu And Official Languages

The recent draft bill proposed by the union government to expand the official languages of Jammu and Kashmir is an attempt to reduce and alter the capacity of people to imagine and articulate their own narratives

Huzaiifa Pandit

Urdu presents a valid vehicle for expression and exploration of Kashmiri routines of lived life and emerges as a language of the state as well as of resistance and routine.

Lord Polonius: What do you read, my lord?
Hamlet: Words, words, words.

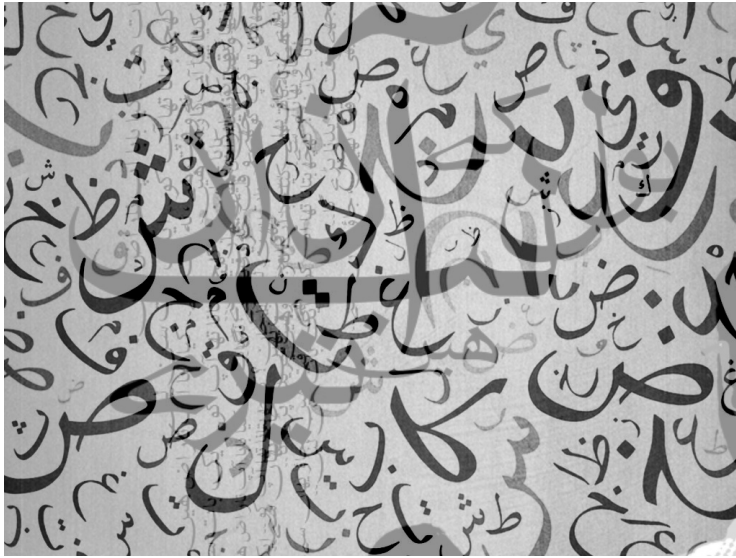
The Bible says first in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Theologians and Bible Scholars will argue that the word means more than the literal meaning conveys. But I evoke the sentence to stress the immense importance of the word – the spoken and the written word. The famous Kashmiri adage goes – Iyekhethgouvti-hakyethgouv (Once it is written, it can't be rubbed off). The word, especially, the written one has the power to change and transform the perceptions of how a people conceive of themselves, both individually and collectively. Nowhere is this power more apparent than in turmoil ridden geographies, where people oppose subjugation by trying to wrest control from the subjugator by writing alternate histories and chronicles of their trauma and grief. The subjugator responds in turn by writing new scriptures of power by either delegitimizing the alternate histories, outlawing them or at a more fundamental level disrupting the capacity of people to create them.

The recent draft bill proposed by the union government to expand the official languages of Jammu and Kashmir from Urdu to include Kashmiri, Urdu, Dogri, Hindi and English as official languages of J&K, is an attempt to reduce and alter the capacity of people to imagine and articulate narratives that run counter to those acceptable to the state, and articulate lived realities.

However, this formulation presents a peculiar paradox. It might be argued that the downgrading of Urdu ought to be a cause of celebration, for it is the language which is employed especially by the repressive state apparatus of the state – the police say to lodge FIRs against a dissident population. As the official language of a people who speak Kashmiri, a different language, Urdu might be viewed as an instrument of silencing the marginalized, and preventing expression. The widespread concern at the downgrading of Urdu, and lack of enthusiasm at Kashmiri being elevated demands one to examine the issue more closely. It could also be argued that Kashmiri – texts and utterances offer a more privileged and unmediated access to Kashmiri perceptions of self – both as an individual and as a community. So what explains then the widespread concern, and the suspicions the decision has raised?

This paradox needs first to be examined in a historical context. Even as Urdu is not the first tongue of either of the three regions of the erstwhile state, it emerged as a compromise on an official language, but found acceptance only in Kashmir, as Dogri and Bodhi (or Balti) are the languages of communication, and culture in Jammu and Ladakh respectively.

Why is Urdu largely accepted



in Kashmir then? M Ashraf Bhat, a Kashmiri Urdu scholar opines that Urdu, “occupies the central space in print and broadcast media; education, religious and political discourses, the legislature and the judiciary, and can even boast of an indigenous literary tradition. Attitudes to Urdu across the community reflect accommodation and acceptance. In the context of the self-determination movement, Urdu has acquired another dimension: it is perceived as the symbol of the subcontinental Pan-Islamic identity.”

The earliest support for Urdu in the public domain came from the reformist minded Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah who founded AnjumanNusrat-ul-Islam (Society for victory of Islam), precursor to Jamat-e-Islami the popular religious organization, to be the first to take up the cause of education of Kashmiri Muslims, which provided the early impetus for the evolution of a political consciousness in Kashmir. He set up the first press in Kashmir, the Muslim Printing Press, launching two weeklies, Al-Islam and Rahnuma to broadcast the views of the Deobandis and to combat what were seen as the un-Islamic practices of the Kashmiri Muslims. Besides, Sheikh Abdullah — arguably the tallest leader of Kashmiri Nationalist movement, and a beneficiary of the rising political consciousness, employed Urdu for cementing anti-colonial consciousness; his moniker- Sher-e-Kashmir (Lion of Kashmir) itself being an Urdu title.

Similarly, the Urdu daily Hamdardedited by PremNathBazaz, a close confidant of Sheikh Abdullah, emerged “as the strongest voice of dissent in Kashmir”, according to Zutshi. Even as most Islamic literature in Kashmir is written in Kashmiri, the literature produced by Jamat-e-Islami bears special mention, especially Tafheem-ul-Quran, an influential commentary of the Quran, and other voluminous literature like MusalmanAurMaujud aSiyasiKashmasksh(Muslims and The Present Political Turmoil) all written in Urdu by MaulanaSayyed 'AlaMaudud.

The Jamat's contribution to the political and social consciousness of Kashmir has been immense, and exceeds the tacit support to the militant organisa-

tion – HizbulMujahideen in 90's. Indeed, its network of Falahe-Islam schools and libraries rival that of the missionary schools in zeal and contribution.

A hybrid of Urdu – Hindustani (a mixture of Urdu and Hindi) also emerges as the transactional language between the ubiquitous Hindi speaking security forces, usually from India, and the local population. Articulations of dissent or compliance must necessarily be transacted in this hybrid, and so Urdu presents a valid vehicle for expression and exploration of Kashmiri routines of lived life. Urdu then emerges paradoxically as both, a language of state as well as of resistance and routine.

The Jammu and Kashmir Re-organisation act, 2019 which erased the last remnants of symbolic autonomy of Kashmir, seeks to replace Urdu with Hindi and other languages as the official languages. Indian Express reported that “Section 47 of the J&K Reorganisation Act empowers the new Legislative Assembly of the Union Territory of J&K to “adopt any one or more of the languages in use in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir or Hindi as the official language or languages to be used for all or any of the official purposes.” (Jaleel 2019) The imposition of Hindi especially derives from the desire of ‘Hinduisation’ of ‘Muslim Kashmir’ since Urdu is invariably associated with a ‘muslimness’ dating from colonial days.

Under the present political dispensation, the insistence on Urdu and its preservation is not only a gesture of solidarity with Indian Muslims but is also an attestation of a shared identity — highlighting our common marginality and a reclamation of threatened minority identities. It affirms that we are joined not just by religion but by a greater sense of complicated grief and community bonds forged from the trauma of being silenced and excluded from deciding our destinies.

Huzaiifa Pandit is the author of the recently published Green is the Colour of Memory, which won the first edition of Rhythm Divine Poets Chapbook Contest 2017. He holds a PhD on poetry of resistance from University of Kashmir.



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Say it Out Loud: Mental Health

While the world is grappling with the Covid-19 Pandemic, it has also been exposed to a humongous mental health crisis. The same is more visible now because of the proportion of people exposed to conditions that can trigger various mental health issues or aggravate existing ones.

However, Kashmir faces yet another crisis which is that of a lack of knowledge regarding mental health. Even as many are confronting the reality of increasing suicide rates; the right narratives are still a far cry. We're either asking people to have a millionaire mindset or are reprimanding people for a lack of Imaan. While the former runs the risk of

putting more pressure on the individual's self-image and scar them further; the latter has the potential to worsen self-doubt and self-deprecating tendencies.

It is true that discipline and spiritual wellbeing can help keep our mental health healthy but they are only one of the many things one is supposed to do in case of a mental health crisis.

Fundamentally, mental health is very similar to our physical health. Just as physical health or illness requires medical attention, so does our mental health. This is the first rule that we all need to normalise in all households. If you are inexplicably low or have any other internal or behavioral conflicts,

please see a therapist.

This awareness is in itself a great step towards taking care of your mental health. Knowing the patterns of your mental setup and the need for mental wellbeing can go a long way. It unloads the burden from oneself and keeps in check our tendencies to blame ourselves for things that are actually out of our control.

Staying aware of mental health at all times will also help us build a system for ourselves where we stay constantly enlightened about the steps to self-care. It will also aid us to understand our circles of acquaintances better. More so, staying vigilant and informed about mental health can also help us direct our loved ones when we

see patterns that might require them to see a therapist or a psychiatrist.

In Kashmir, we need to fight to normalise discussions around mental health. In a world where we are still largely dismissive of mental health issues; we need to stay more alert to mitigate the harm that this unawareness might bring.

During the pandemic, each one of us has become vulnerable to conditions that are detrimental to our physical as well as mental health. Stay alert and stay in touch with health professionals to navigate your way out of this situation.

Tania Shafi
Nawhatta, Srinagar

Ruins Of The Past

Jammu and Kashmir has a rich history whose remains still remind us of the various paths that it has embarked upon but many of these are only ruins

Swati Joshi

A region's past in material form is tangible by the remains we as a people can physically see. It is these remains that helps us trace our history and understand our present better. Jammu and Kashmir has had a long history which is reflected in many ruins that are scattered throughout its geography.

The Manda village of Jammu was one of the excavations sites of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) between 1976-77. It is of a great archeological significance because of its connection with the Indus Valley Civilisation. 100 km away from Manda lies Poonch where a new excavation project has also been approved by the Centre to explore archaeological possibilities in the region. Poonch lies at the tip of the Line of Control between Indian and Pakistan.

Many ruins not only of the famous Indus valley civilization but other civilizations have also been unearthed. Here is a list of some archaeological sites found in the J&K region:



Bomai, Sopore:

Rock carvings found in Bomai, Sopore date back to the upper-Paleolithic age which began around 40,000 years ago. According to a research by Naseer Iqbal, "the stone carving seems to have a purely astronomical origin."

The rock surface comprises of multiple four circles which depicts a meteorite impact that occurred between 40,000 and 6,000 years ago.

"There are four lakes in this region—corresponding to the four circles in the drawing—and several smaller water bodies, all consistent with a multiple impacts event," mentions the research.

Burzahom:



16 km from Srinagar lies Burzahom, one of the most significant sites of the Neolithic age. The site was excavated by the Yale-Cambridge team in the late 1930s. Before coming under the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), the site was dug numerous times between the 1960s-70s.

The excavations have revealed four phases of cultural significance. The I and II represent the Neolithic era; III and IV represent the Megalithic and post-megalithic era respectively. Many artifacts and skeletons were discovered from this site dating back to 3000 BCE. The skeletons found in the site are similar to that of those in the Indus Valley Civilization.

Historians believe that it was an important site for trade with Central Asia and Southwest Asia since Neolithic times.

Manda, Jammu



Excavated during 1976-77 by ASI, Manda is a village in Jammu region which contains ruins of ancient Indus Valley Civilization. Situated on the right bank of Chenab river, Manda is considered as the northernmost limit of the Indus Valley Civilization.

A regions past in material form is tangible by the remains we as a people can physically see. Jammu and Kashmir has had a long history which is reflected in many ruins that are scattered throughout its geography.

Many artifacts like pre-Harappan redware, dishes, goblets, terracotta bangles and many more were excavated by the ASI.

According to a paper by Arjun Singh, "The excavation (at Manda) exposed at 9.20-meter-thick occupation deposit, showing a threefold sequence of culture. These threefold sequences of culture can be categorized into three different periods of culture i.e. Period-I Pre-Harappan and Harappan, Period-II Early historical period and Period-III Kushana period."

Avantipur Ruins:

Located on the Srinagar-Pahalgam highway, the Avantipur town was built by King Avantivarman when he ruled Kashmir from 855-883 AD. The king was the founder of the Utpala dynasty in the ninth century. Amidst the ruins are two temples, Avantishwar dedicated to Shiva and Avantiswami dedicated to Vishnu.

Sandstone was used to build the structure and it incorporates the Gandharva style. The temples were discovered in the eighteen centu-



ries by the Britishers during excavations.

Avantipur was destroyed by the invasion of Afghan ruler, Sultan Sikandar in the 14th century. The ruins have many stories that could be seen on the pillars' inscriptions and many sculptures that have survived the destruction by dynasties and the environment. There are many carvings on the pillars representing demigods and mythical creatures.

Martand Sun Temple:

Dedicated to the sun, this temple is at a distance of over five miles from Anantnag. The ruins of the temple are commonly called Pandu-Koru, or the house of the Pandus and Korus.

Martand is a Sanskrit word which means sun. The temple was constructed during the seventh and eighth centuries by Lalitaditya Muktapada, the third ruler of the Karkota Dynasty. The entire structure is built over a plateau in Anantnag. The temple comes under the Archaeological Survey of India and many films like Aandhi and Haider



have been shot here.

The temple was demolished in the 15th century by Muslim ruler Sikandar Butshikan, the idol breaker. He persecuted Hindus, destroyed the Hindu-Buddhist icons of culture, and is known to have infused terror in the minds of Hindus and Buddhists of the Valley.

Swati Joshi works as a correspondent for the Kashmir Observer

Children's Role In Covid-19 Transmission

Zoë Hyde

Over the weekend, the World Health Organisation made an announcement you might have missed.

It recommended children aged 12 years and older should wear masks, and that masks should be considered for those aged 6-11 years. The German Society for Virology went further, recommending masks be worn by all children attending school.

This seems at odds with what we assumed about kids and COVID-19 at the start of the pandemic. Indeed, one positive in this pandemic so far has been that children who contract the virus typically experience mild illness. Most children don't require hospitalisation and very few die from the disease. However, some children can develop a severe inflammatory syndrome similar to Kawasaki disease, although this is thankfully rare.

This generally mild picture has contributed to cases in children being overlooked. But emerging evidence suggests children might play a bigger role in transmission than originally thought. They may be equally as infectious as adults based on the amount of viral genetic material found in swabs, and we have seen large school clusters emerge in Australia and around the world.

How likely are children to be infected?

Working out how susceptible children are has been difficult. Pre-emptive school closures occurred in many countries, removing opportunities for the virus to circulate in younger age groups. Children have also missed out on testing because they typically have mild symptoms. In Australia, testing criteria were initially very restrictive. People had to have a fever or a cough to be tested, which children don't always have. This hindered our ability to detect cases in children, and created a perception children weren't commonly infected.

One way to address this issue is through antibody testing, which can detect evidence of past infection. A study of over 60,000 people in Spain found 3.4% of children and teenagers had antibodies to the virus, compared with 4.4% to 6.0% of adults. But Spain's schools were also closed, which likely reduced children's exposure.

Another method is to look at what happens to people living in the same household as a known case. The results of these studies are mixed. Some have suggested a lower risk for children, while others have



suggested children and adults are at equal risk.

Children might have some protection compared to adults, because they have less of the enzyme which the virus uses to enter the body. So, given the same short exposure, a child might be less likely to be infected than an adult. But prolonged contact probably makes any such advantage moot.

The way in which children and adults interact in the household might explain the differences seen in some studies. This is supported by a new study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Children and partners of a known case were more likely to be infected than other people living in the same house. This suggests the amount of close, prolonged contact may ultimately be the deciding factor.

How often do children transmit the virus?

Several studies show children and adults have similar amounts of viral RNA in their nose and throat. This suggests children and adults are equally

infectious, although it's possible children transmit the virus slightly less often than adults in practice. Because children are physically smaller and generally have more mild symptoms, they might release less of the virus.

In Italy, researchers looked at what happened to people who'd been in contact with infected children, and found the contacts of children were more likely to be infected than the contacts of adults with the virus.

Teenagers are of course closer to adults, and it's possible younger children might be less likely to transmit the virus than older children. However, reports of outbreaks in childcare centres and primary schools suggest there's still some risk.

What have we seen in schools?

Large clusters have been reported in schools around the world, most notably in Israel. There, an outbreak in a high school affected at least 153 students, 25 staff members, and 87 others. Interestingly, that particular outbreak coincided with an extreme

heatwave where students were granted an exemption from having to wear face masks, and air conditioning was used continuously.

At first glance, the Australian experience seems to suggest a small role for children in transmission. A study of COVID-19 in educational settings in New South Wales in the first half of the year found limited evidence of transmission, although a large outbreak was noted to have occurred in a childcare centre.

Close schools when community transmission is high

This evidence means we need to take a precautionary approach. When community transmission is low, face-to-face teaching is probably low-risk. But schools should switch to distance learning during periods of sustained community transmission. If we fail to address the risk of school outbreaks, they can spread into the wider community.

While most children won't become severely ill if they contract the virus, the same cannot be said for their adult family members or their teachers. In the US, 40% of teachers have risk factors for severe COVID-19, as do 28.6 million adults living with school-aged children.

Children walk to school with masks

In the US, 40% of teachers have risk factors for severe COVID-19, as do 28.6 million adults living with school-aged children. Shutterstock

Recent recommendations on mask-wearing by older and younger children mirror risk-reduction guidelines for schools developed by the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health. These guidelines stress the importance of face masks, improving ventilation, and the regular disinfection of shared surfaces.

The changing landscape

As the virus has spread more widely, the demographic profile of cases has changed. The virus is no longer confined to adult travellers and their contacts, and children are now commonly infected. In Germany, the proportion of children in the number of new infections is now consistent with their share of the total population.

While children are thankfully much less likely to experience severe illness than adults, we must consider who children have contact with and how they can contribute to community transmission. Unless we do, we won't succeed in controlling the pandemic.

By Arrangements With
The Conversation

Yemeni Missiles, Drones Hit Saudi Capital

Agencies

Sanna: Yemen's Houthis have attacked an "important target" in the Saudi capital Riyadh using a ballistic missile and drones.

The Saudi-led coalition,



Debris is seen after ballistic missiles fired by Yemen's Houthi militia fell on a house in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, March 26, 2018.

The group have attacked Riyadh several times before.

"The attacks are a response to the enemy's permanent escalation and its continuing blockade against our country," Sarea said in a statement posted on Twitter.

He promised more attacks if Saudi Arabia "continues its aggression" against Yemen.

Protracted war

The Houthis took over the Yemeni capital Sanaa and most cities in 2014 after ousting the Saudi-backed government of Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi.

The Western-backed coalition that Saudi Arabia leads intervened to try to restore Hadi to power but the war, which has killed 100,000 people, has been stuck in a stalemate for years.

The conflict has led to what the United Nations describes as the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

Depression rate in the US triples during pandemic, study finds



Agencies

Washington: The prevalence of symptoms of depression more than tripled in the United States during the Covid-19 pandemic than before it, a study has found, highlighting the extent to which the health crisis could have a toll on mental health.

The survey study published in JAMA Network Open, an open-access medical journal published by the American Medical Association, also found that people with lower incomes and those exposed to more Covid-19-related stressors were more likely to report depression symptoms than others.

A survey before the pandemic involving nearly 5,000 American adults found that 8.5 per cent of them showed signs of depression such as feeling down or hopeless, low energy, trouble concentrating, or thinking about self-harm.

However, this number rose to 27.8pc when researchers surveyed almost 1,500 American adults about their mental health from March to April of this year. Even more people — almost an additional 25pc — showed milder signs of depression, Time magazine reported.

The findings suggest that "there is a high burden of depression symptoms in the US associated with the Covid-19 pandemic and that this burden falls disproportionately on individuals who are already at increased

risk," researchers said.

According to the Time report, people were more likely to suffer symptoms of depression during the pandemic if they experienced "Covid-19 stressors" — including losing a job, the death of a loved one or financial distress.

Women were more likely to experience depression than men, and single people were more likely to suffer depression than married couples. Additionally, having less than \$5,000 in household savings was associated with a 50pc greater risk of experiencing depression symptoms, according to the study.

The research found the increase in depression symptom prevalence to be higher than that recorded after previous mass traumatic events, likely reflecting "the far more pervasive influence of Covid-19 and its social and economic consequences".

Last month, official data showed that the proportion of people in the United Kingdom suffering with depression almost doubled during the Covid-19 pandemic, Reuters reported.

Britain's Office for National Statistics said 19pc of adults reported some form of depression during June, compared with 10pc in the nine months before March 2020. Stress and anxiety were the most common types of depression listed by people, it reported.



Wildlife Populations In Free Fall As Forests Cut To Grow Food

Agencies

Kuala Lumpur: The average size of wildlife populations has plummeted by two-thirds worldwide since 1970 as forests were felled to grow food, green group WWF said Thursday, warning that harming ecosystems hikes the risk to humans of infectious diseases like COVID-19.

Land conversion for farming and the wildlife trade were key reasons for the 68% average drop across thousands of populations of mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles and fish between 1970 and 2016, according to WWF's Living Planet Report 2020.

"Deforestation and in the larger sense, habitat loss - which is driven by how we produce and consume food - is the main cause of this dramatic decline," said Fran Price, leader of the global forest practice at WWF International.

Price pointed the finger at large-scale commercial agriculture mainly in the tropics and subtropics, including the production of palm oil, soy and beef.

In 2019, tropical rainforests - whose preservation is considered crucial to curbing climate change - disappeared at a rate of one football pitch every six seconds, according to data from monitoring service Global Forest Watch.

Environmentalists say conserving existing forests and restoring damaged ones reduces the risk of flooding, helps limit global

warming by storing more carbon and protects biodiversity.

The WWF report, with contributions from about 125 experts, tracked almost 21,000 populations of nearly 4,400 vertebrate species, giving an overview of the state of the natural world.

Those that live in freshwater suffered an 84% decline, it noted. Other worst-hit wildlife included Eastern lowland gorillas in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the African grey parrot in Ghana, said Price.

"These serious declines in wildlife species populations are an indicator that nature is unravelling and that our planet is flashing red warning signs of systems failure," WWF director general Marco Lambertini said in a statement.

FOREST BUFFERS

Scientists say the rapid pace of deforestation is also a major factor in the spread of zoonotic diseases - which are passed from animals to humans - such as the new coronavirus.

"With deforestation and increased wildlife, livestock-human interactions, there is more of a chance of spillover of zoonotic diseases like Ebola, like COVID-19," Price told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

"Forests really act as buffers to keep those diseases away from humans - and the more we destroy them, the more chances there are that we are going to unleash some-

thing that can have dire impacts on humanity."

If the world continues with business-as-usual over the next decade, the losses in wildlife would take decades to reverse and populations are less likely to be revived, said Price.

She urged bolder commitments and efforts by governments and corporations to make global supply chains more sustainable.

Consumers also need to understand the impacts of their purchasing habits on nature and buy more responsibly, she added. Separately, researchers at the University of Oxford said on Thursday that nature-based solutions - such as restoring forests and mangroves - are key to reducing climate change impacts.

In what they said was the first systematic review of evidence on nature-based solutions around the world, they found that almost 60% of them alleviated climate-related pressures such as flooding, soil erosion and loss of food production.

"It's not just about tree-planting and greenhouse gas removal," said Alexandre Chausson, the study author.

"In many cases, nature-based interventions can help communities adapt to the wave of climate change impacts we've seen over the past months, from record-breaking heat waves to wildfires and hurricanes," she said in a statement.

Kim Jong Un told Trump about killing his uncle, says new book

Agencies

Washington: President Donald Trump's comments about the threat from the novel coronavirus attracted widespread attention after excerpts from journalist Bob Woodward's book 'Rage' were released.

The excerpts also provide new details about the President's thoughts on North Korea's Kim Jong Un, racial unrest and a mysterious new weapon that Trump claims other world powers don't know about.

Some of the other topics covered in the book, which was based on 18 interviews that

president a graphic account of how Kim had his own uncle killed.

As he engaged in nuclear arms talks with Kim, Trump dismissed intelligence officials' assessments that North Korea would never give up its nuclear weapons. Trump told Woodward that the CIA had "no idea" how to handle Pyongyang.

Trump also dismissed criticism about his three meetings with Kim, claiming the summits were no big deal. Critics said that by meeting Kim, Trump provided the North Korean leader with legitimacy on the world stage.



Woodward conducted with Trump between December and July and with others (excerpts from the book were reported by The Washington Post, where Woodward is an editor, and Woodward wrote that Trump said he was impressed with Kim when he first met the North Korean leader in Singapore in 2018 and that Kim was "far beyond smart". Trump also said that Kim "tells me everything" and even gave the

"It takes me two days. I met. I gave up nothing," said the President, who likened North Korea's attachment to its nuclear arsenal to somebody who is in love with a house and "they just can't sell it".

Kim welcomed Trump's attention, calling the President "your excellency" in a letter. Kim wrote to Trump that he believed the "deep and special friendship between us will work as a magical force".

Pak Court Declares Sharif Proclaimed Offender In Graft Case

Agencies

Islamabad: A Pakistan anti-corruption court on Wednesday indicted former president Asif Ali Zardari and ex-prime minister Yusuf Raza Gillani, while declared former premier Nawaz Sharif an absconder in the Toshakhana graft case that allegedly caused a heavy loss to the national exchequer.

Hearing the case, Judge Asghar Ali also sought details of the movable and immovable properties of Sharif, 70, who is in London for treatment, and asked all of the leaders accused in the case to be presented in court within seven days.

The Toshakhana graft case is about alleged relaxation of rules by Gilani, 68, for the benefit of Zardari, 65, and Sharif to buy vehicles gifted by foreign countries.

Sharif is accused of obtaining luxury cars from the treasury house by paying just 15 per cent of the price of these vehicles.

Similarly, Zardari and Gilani, are also accused of receiving luxury vehicles and gifts from the treasury house.

The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in March had filed the case on the alleged violation of the rules of the Toshakhana which it argued had caused a heavy loss to the national exchequer.



According to the NAB, Gilani had facilitated Zardari and Nawaz to obtain the vehicles.

The court has directed the Foreign Office to execute the arrest warrants against Sharif through the Pakistan High Commission in London.

During the hearing on Wednesday, Anwar Majeed and Abdul Ghani Majeed, the two businessmen who are also accused in the case, were indicted. All four men including Zardari and Gillani pleaded not guilty.

Since Sharif failed to present himself before the court as he is in London for his treatment, he was declared a proclaimed offender and his case was separated from the other accused.

He was also asked to appear within seven days.

The court also asked to provide details of Sharif's movable and immovable properties and warned that his properties will be frozen if he failed to appear.

Arab League fails to approve resolution condemning UAE-Israel deal

Agencies

Abu Dhabi: The Arab League has dropped a draft resolution condemning a controversial agreement between the United Arab Emirates and Israel to normalise relations.

Palestine and Arab countries agreed to include an emphasis in the final agreement on commitment to a 2002 Arab Peace Initiative, two-state solution and the land for peace principle, a Palestinian diplomatic source said on condition of anonymity.

They agreed not to include a clear condemnation of the UAE-Israel deal, according to the source.

The source said some Arab states, attempted to add provisions to give a form of legitimacy to the normalisation deal. Those

countries were not named.

"In response, Palestine presented a draft resolution that condemns the UAE-Israel normalisation deal," the source said. "The Arab countries, however, voted down the draft," he added.

On August 13, the UAE and Israel announced a US-brokered agreement to normalise relations, including opening embassies in each other's territory.

Most of the Arab world has long rejected diplomatic ties with Israel in the absence of a peace deal establishing a Palestinian state on lands captured by Israel in 1967.

"An earthquake"

Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki urged Arab nations earlier on Wednesday to

reject the UAE-Israel deal.

Al-Malki described the deal between the UAE and Israel as "an earthquake" that hit the Arab consensus over the Palestinian cause.

He accused the US of pressuring other Arab countries to normalise ties with Israel, which he described as a "colonial and racist occupation."

Hamas regrets decision

Hamas voiced regret about the Arab League's decision.

"It is regrettable for the Arab League to drop a draft resolution condemning the normalisation agreement between the Emirates and the Zionist entity," spokesman for the group, Hazem Qassem, told Anadolu Agency.

Singapore's "Noise-Cancelling Headphones" Can Cancel City Din

Singapore: Sick of noise from construction work, speeding trains and car alarms flooding in through the open window of your tiny apartment in a crowded metropolis?

Scientists believe they have found a way for city dwellers to let in fresh air while reducing the urban cacophony -- and it is a bit like popping massive, noise-cancelling headphones onto your flat.

Under the system devised in Singapore, 24 small speakers are placed on the metal grille of an open window to create what researchers termed an "acoustic shield".

When noise such as traffic or a subway train is detected, the speakers generate sound waves that cancel out some of the din -- much in the same way some high



tech headphones work.

It is like "using noise to fight noise," said Gan Woon-Seng, who leads the research team from Nanyang Technological University in the space-starved city-state, where many complain of noise flooding into apartments.

While blocking the racket from outside, it also "lets in the

natural ventilation and lighting through the windows," he told AFP, at a lab where a prototype of the device had been set up.

The system can reduce incoming sound by 10 decibels, and works best on noises like trains or building work -- but it won't block unpredictable, high frequency sounds such as dogs barking.

China Says UK Envoy's Twitter Account Hacked, After Porn Video "Like"

Beijing, China: China's embassy in London has angrily demanded that Twitter investigate what it says was a hack on its ambassador's official account, which "liked" a pornographic video.

The video remained on the "liked" section of Liu Xiaoming's account for over an hour on Wednesday, attracting a stream of comments and reactions before being taken down.

"Some anti-China elements viciously attacked Ambassador Liu Xiaoming's Twitter account and employed despicable methods to deceive the public," a statement posted on the embassy's website said.

"The embassy has reported this to Twitter company and urged the latter to make thorough investigations and handle this matter seriously.

"The Embassy reserves the right to take further actions and hope that the public will not believe or spread such rumour."

A Twitter spokesperson declined to



comment when asked to respond to the embassy's statement by AFP.

Liu is known as one of China's most outspoken diplomats, using a pugnacious approach in media interviews and online to defend his government.

Twitter and pornography are officially banned in China, which the ruling Communist Party heavily censors.

However China's diplomats and journalists for the state-run media have in recent years set up Twitter accounts to promote and defend the government to foreigners.

Walmart To Test Drone Delivery Of Grocery, Household Items

Walmart Inc said on Wednesday it would run a pilot project for delivery of grocery and household products through automated drones, along with end-to-end delivery firm Flytrex, as the US retailer looks to beef up its delivery business.

Bentonville, Arkansas-based Walmart said the test would start on Wednesday in Fayetteville, North Carolina, with cloud-controlled drones picking up and dropping off select items.

"We know that it will be some time before we see millions of packages delivered via drone. That still feels like a bit of science fiction," Tom Ward, senior vice-president, customer products, said in a statement.

CBSE Won't Be Able To Help Much Students Taking Compartment Exams: SC



The Supreme Court on Thursday said the CBSE would not be able to help much the students taking compartment exams for class XII this month as it would be the colleges and universities that will take their admissions for higher studies. The apex court said this while hearing a plea that has challenged the decision of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) to hold compartment exams on the ground that it would be detrimental to the health of the examinees.

"It is the colleges, universities and deemed universities which will be taking admissions of those students and the CBSE will not be able to help much the students taking compartment exams," a bench headed by Justice A.M. Khanwilkar told senior advocate Vivek Tankha, who was representing the petitioners.

The bench, also comprising Justices Dinesh Maheshwari and Sanjiv Khanna, said this after Tankha argued that the CBSE may ask the colleges to give provisional admissions or wait till results are declared for compartment exams.

Tankha said that compartment exams are scheduled from September 22 to 29 and by that time, admissions for various undergraduate courses would be over.

He said students taking compartment exams would not get admissions in colleges and their whole year would be wasted.

The senior advocate argued that the CBSE could not hold main exams due to

the COVID-19 pandemic and decided to declare results based on some "hybrid systems of evaluation" and due to this, many students are facing compartment exams. "In the interest of students, who are almost 5 lakhs, taking compartment exams, something must be done," he said.

The bench observed that compartment exams are being conducted "perhaps three times in a year".

The top court said around 87,000 students have failed and the solution does not lie with the CBSE.

During the hearing conducted through videoconferencing, Tankha said the Centre and states could be served with the copy of petition through standing counsel and attempts could be made to find an acceptable solution for such students.

"Don't complicate it; otherwise, it will not come up for hearing," the bench said.

The apex court later asked the petitioners to serve the copy of the plea to the Centre and posted the matter for hearing on September 14.

On September 4, the CBSE had opposed in the top court a plea and said all "necessary" safety measures for students are being taken in view of COVID-19 pandemic.

The CBSE's counsel had said that board has increased the number of examination centres for compartment tests from 575 to 1,278.

"We have taken a decision that in a class where 40 students could sit, now only 12 will sit and we are taking all precautions," the counsel for CBSE had said, adding that all necessary measures are being taken.

The apex court had asked the CBSE to file a short affidavit in response of the plea of Anika Samvedi and others.

Why TV News Should Not Be Regulated By Govt, Asks Bombay HC

The Bombay High Court on Thursday said it was surprised to know that the government had no control over the electronic media and asked why television news should not be regulated by the state.

The observation was made by a bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice G S Kulkarni while hearing a bunch of petitions that sought various reliefs related to the case of the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput, including a direction to restrain the press in its coverage of the case.

The bench impleaded the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting as a party in the matters.

It also directed the ministry to file a reply in court indicating the extent of state control that is exercised in respect of telecasting news, particularly such news that "may have serious ramifications".

The bench also made the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED), the central agencies that are currently probing issues related to the case, as parties.

This, after the one of the



petitioners alleged that the agencies were "leaking" probe related information to the press and the public. The bench, however, refused to implead actor Rhea Chakroborty as respondent in the case.

"We do not see any reason to implead the proposed respondent number 12 (Chakroborty), an accused who is presently in judicial custody," it said.

The petitions, filed by activists, and eight retired senior police officers, allege, among other things that several TV channels were running a parallel probe into the case, and that they were running a malicious campaign against the Mumbai police through their current reportage in the case.

On September 3, another bench had heard the same pleas and had passed an order urging the press to show restraint while covering the developments of Sushant Singh Rajputs death case.



A SHEPHERD taking his flock to a pasture in South Kashmir's Anantnag district on Thursday. KO Photo Abid Bhat

Passengers Entitled To Refund For Cancelled Flights, Centre Tells SC

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court Wednesday asked the Centre to clarify whether it is willing to give complete refund of air tickets booked for travel during the COVID-19 lockdown. A bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan referred to a recent affidavit filed before it by the Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) saying that ticket booked for travel during the lockdown period will be refunded.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta told the bench, also comprising Justices R S Reddy and M R Shah, that suppose a ticket was booked on March 15, that is before the lockdown period, then also full refund would be given.

However, Mehta said that he would file an additional affidavit clarifying the position in this regard.

"As per my understanding, even before the lockdown suppose a ticket was booked on March 15 for travel during the period of lockdown and the flight was cancelled, complete refund may be given," he said. Mehta said if a ticket was booked for travel from a foreign country to another offshore nation, then it is not in the hands of the government to refund the ticket amount.

He said the government has proposed refund of amount for tickets booked during the COVID-19 lockdown for domestic or international travel within the lockdown period and they have tried to ensure that airlines don't suffer due to this. Mehta said the proposal for ticket refund has to be approved by the apex court.

"Central government has taken a decision but the court has to approve it. Government has decided to refund the amount for the tickets," he told the court, adding, "We have tried to ensure that airline also don't suffer".

The top court was hearing a plea which has raised the issue of air ticket refund owing to cancellation of flights due to COVID-19 induced lockdown

which had commenced from March 25. The DGCA, in its affidavit filed recently in the top court, has said that full refund shall be provided by airlines immediately for tickets booked during the COVID-19 lockdown for domestic or international travel without the lockdown period.

It has said that for all other cases, the airlines shall make all endeavors to refund the collected amount to the passenger within 15 days.

During the hearing conducted through video-conferencing on Wednesday, Mehta said that there are three categories and for domestic travel ticket, every airline has to refund which is irrespective of the date.

Senior advocate Harish Salve, appearing for Spicejet, said they agree with the stand of the government.

Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Indigo, said, "By and large, we also agree with the Centre's proposal and have only one or two issue for which two three days be given." "Then we will hear it some other day. You all file response to the affidavit," the bench said. Advocate Neela Gokhale, representing travel agent association, said that their funds have been stuck as no refunds were given by the airlines.

"We have consulted all stake holders including ticket agents before finalising the proposal," the solicitor general said. The bench told Mehta that he can also file an additional affidavit if he want to clarify something.

"I will like to clarify on the point of date of booking of tickets as suggested by the court," Mehta said.

The bench observed, "Flights were cancelled and all aspects are needed to be considered. You consider everything."

The apex court has posted the matter for hearing on September 23.

During the hearing, senior advocate C A Sundaram, appearing for passengers association, told the bench that they have impleaded all

the airlines in the matter as told the apex court earlier.

Senior advocate Sanjay Hegde, who also appeared in the matter, said that relief should not be limited to people who had booked ticket during the first lockdown period.

He said many people had booked tickets earlier but the flights were cancelled so relief should be irrespective of the date of booking and should not be limited to the lockdown period.

Sundaram said that there should be full refund of the ticket.

In its affidavit, the DGCA has said that after various rounds of deliberations between the stakeholders including the airlines, they have arrived at a proposed workable solution keeping in view the interests of both passengers as well as companies.

"If the tickets have been booked during the first lockdown period, that is March 25, to April 14, 2020 for the journeys to be undertaken in both first and second lockdown period that is from March 25 to May 3, 2020, in all such cases, full refund shall be given by the airlines immediately (this is being mandated vide MoCA's OM dated April 16, 2020 as the airlines were not supposed to book such tickets)," it said.

On June 12, the top court, while hearing a PIL filed by NGO 'Pravasi Legal Cell', had asked the Centre, the DGCA and the airlines to discuss and work out modalities for full refund of tickets for domestic and international flights which were cancelled following the COVID-19 lockdown.

The aviation regulator, in its affidavit, has said that if airlines are not able to refund the amount on account of financial distress, they shall provide a credit shell equal to the amount of fare collected and this shall be issued in the name of the passenger who has booked the ticket for domestic travel directly or through an agent including online platforms.

Rafale Fighter Jets Inducted Into Indian Air Force

Air display of the first batch of IAF's Rafale aircraft in an arrow formation followed by Jaguar and SU-30 aircraft. Earlier in the day, five Rafale aircraft have put up an air display along with Tejas followed by 'Sarang Aerobatic Team'. The program will culminate with the ceremonial induction of Rafale aircraft to 17 Squadron.

The induction of Rafale in IAF's fleet shows the strong relations between India and France. India and France have been economic, cultural and strategic partners since long said India Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

Indian Air Force officers wearing protective face masks stand in front of a picture of a Rafale fighter jet. The first five Indian Air Force Rafale aircraft arrived at Air Force Station, Ambala from France on July 27, 2020.

India's Defence Minister Rajnath Singh (L) and his French counterpart Florence Parly (2R) arrive to attend an induction ceremony of Rafale jets into the Indian Air Force. Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat, Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhadauria, Defence Secretary Dr Ajay Kumar, Dr G Satheesh Reddy, Secretary Department of Defence R&D and Chairman DRDO along with other senior officers of the Ministry of Defence and Armed Forces were present to mark a very important milestone in the history of the IAF. The French delegation was represented by Emmanuel Lenain Ambassador of France to India, Air General Eric Autellet, Vice Chief of the Air Staff of the French Air Force and other senior officials.

Indian Air Force personnel march past a Rafale jet during its induction ceremony into the Indian Air Force at the Ambala Air Force Station.



Air Force Station in Ambala.

Firefighters give a water cannon salute to Rafale jets during an induction ceremony into the Indian Air Force at the Ambala Air Force Station in Ambala.

IAF helicopters 'Sarang' perform during the Rafale induction ceremony.

IAF helicopters 'Sarang' perform during the Rafale induction ceremony. The first five Indian Air Force Rafale aircraft arrived at Air Force Station, Ambala from France on July 27, 2020.

A French-made Rafale fighter jet flies during its induction ceremony at the Indian Air Force Station in Ambala. The first batch of five planes, part of a \$8.78 billion deal signed between the two countries in 2016 had arrived here in July.

Rafale is an omni-role aircraft which means it can carry out at least four missions in one sortie. The fighter aircraft have HAMMER missiles. It will also be armed with beyond visual range missiles like Meteor, SCALP and MICA, increasing their capability to take on incoming targets from a distance. Above, an Indian Air Force pilot gets out of the cockpit of Rafale jet after a flight during an induction ceremony at the Ambala Air Force Station.

The 'Sarva Dharma Puja' involved priests of various religions. This puja was followed by air display of Rafale fighter aircraft flanked by SU-30 and Jaguar aircraft in an arrow formation.

Sunanda Pushkar Case: HC Asks Arnab Goswami To Show Restraint In Coverage



The Delhi High Court Thursday questioned Arnab Goswami for running a parallel investigation and trial in the Congress leader Shashi Tharoor's wife Sunanda Pushkar's death case and directed the journalist to be bound by his undertaking on showing restraint and bringing down the rhetoric while covering the matter.

Justice Mukta Gupta said the court was not saying that anyone will gag the media but at the same time, sanctity of investigation must be maintained.

"Please show restraint. Once the police investigation is going on in the criminal case, there cannot be a parallel investigation by the media," the judge said and remarked that people must take a course in criminal trial and then get into journalism.

The high court referred to December 1, 2017 order in which it was stated that "Press cannot 'convict anyone' or insinuate that he/she is guilty or make any other

unsubstantiated claims. Press has to exercise care and caution while reporting about matters under investigation or pending trial."

It has been noted in the 2017 order that the counsel for the journalist and channel has assured the court that in future they would exercise restraint as well as bring down the 'rhetoric'.

On Thursday, the judge said, "Defendants (Goswami and his channel) are thus directed to be bound by the statement made on their behalf by their counsel till the next date of hearing."

On the channel's claim that they have evidence with them, the judge questioned them saying "were you at the spot? Are you an eye witness? There is some sanctity attached to the investigation."

To this, advocate Malvika Trivedi, representing Goswami, said there was evidence from AIMS, based on which certain broadcast was aired.

The judge said it was for a court of law to decide what was evidence in a criminal trial and there are statements from here and there which are not evidence.

"Can the media sit in appeal against the charge sheet filed by an investigating agency?", the judge asked.

NEWS MAKERS

Saudi Arabia To Offer Electronic Marriage Registration

CAIRO: Saudi Justice Minister Walid bin Mohammed Al Samaan has directed introducing an electronic marriage registration across the kingdom after around 75,000 contracts were conducted electronically in an experimental stage in Riyadh, local media reported today.

The service via the ezawaj.sa. platform saves time and efforts by curtailing related bureaucratic procedures as the Justice Ministry is planning to gradually go paperless.

The service aims at electronic documentation of data of the couple and electronic conducting of a marriage performed from home in a smooth and safe manner, the ministry said.

The e-platform designated for the service spares the beneficiaries the need to go to the law court to register the marriage contract, the medical centres to learn about results of pre-marriage tests and the Interior Ministry's Agency of Civil Affairs for officially documenting the event. The Justice Ministry has been linked to the Health Ministry, the Agency of Civil Affairs, the National Information Centre and the eGovernment Programme (Yesser) to provide a high-quality service.

Nearly 50% Of India's Working Women Feeling Increased Stress Due To Pandemic: Survey

BENGALURU: Nearly 50 per cent of India's working women are feeling increased stress due to the COVID-19 pandemic, claimed a survey conducted by online professional network LinkedIn.

It revealed that the pandemic is taking a toll on the emotional well-being of India's working women as 47 per cent report they are experiencing more stress or anxiety due to the pandemic, LinkedIn said.

For men, this number stood at 38 per cent, pointing towards a disproportionate impact on women in these testing times, it said. LinkedIn on Thursday announced the findings of the tenth edition of the LinkedIn Workforce Confidence Index, a fortnightly pulse on the confidence of India's workforce.

Based on the survey responses of 2,254 professionals in India, findings from the weeks of July 27 - August 23 reveal the pandemic's impact on In-



dia's working mothers and working women, and the cautious optimism of freelancers towards personal finances and career prospects, it said.

The survey also underscored the challenges of childcare during the pandemic, according to a LinkedIn statement. The survey showed that India's overall confidence is growing steadily.

Remote working has laid out a tougher road for India's working mothers as the survey showed that around one in three (31 per cent) working mothers are currently providing childcare full-time, when compared to nearly one in five (17 per cent) working

fathers, the statement said.

"Worryingly, more than two in five (44 per cent) working moms are working outside their business hours to provide childcare, nearly twice as many men (25 per cent)", it said.

The survey showed that only one in five (20 per cent) working mothers rely on a family member or friend to take care of their children, when compared to 32 per cent men.

More than 46 per cent working mothers reported working till late to make up for work, and 42 per cent are unable to focus on work with their children at home, it said.

Findings show that about one in four freelancers anticipate an increase in their earned income (25 per cent) and personal savings (27 per cent), while close to one in three (31 per cent) expect their number of investments to increase in the next six months. PFI

India: Man Consumes Poison In A Social Media Video, Blames Wife And In-Laws For Death

Yesterday, a 28-year-old man in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh died by suicide, by consuming poison. He filmed his last moments, and posted the video on social media before dying. According to Indian news reports, he blamed his wife and in-laws for his death, in the video.

Munish Sharma was seen reportedly drinking poison, and gasping for breath in the video. He went on to blame his wife, Mohini, and his in-laws for his decision, and requested his family to ensure that people responsible for his death would be punished. According to news reports, the police said that Sharma lived with his wife in the state's Ramganga Vihar area, in the Moradabad district. The two recently quarrelled, and Mohini had left home following the dispute. While the



exact reason of the man's decision to commit suicide is unknown, a police officer told reporters: "The incident took place on Saturday, but, the video was recovered by his family two days later. The post mortem has confirmed death by poison." According to a news report, the official also said that a First Information Report (FIR) has been registered against the four accused people, his wife, father-in-law, sister-in-law and brother-in-law under sections 306 (abetment of suicide) of the Indian Penal Code.