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P6 LIFE & TIMES

RESEARCHERS DEVELOP SENSOR TO DETECT FATTY LIVER DISEASE

Researchers have developed a diagnostic tool, based on nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR), that could be used to detect fatty liver disease ...

P4 INTERNAL ISSUE VS. EXTERNAL DISSENT

Canadian Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, became the first foreign leader to make a statement on ...



P8 NEWS

'BHARAT BANDH' FROM 11 AM TO 3 PM ON TUESDAY: BKU

'During the bandh essential services would not be curtailed and office-goers can move freely'



Wisdom Quote!

"Do all the good you can, for all the people you can, in all the ways you can, as long as you can." —Hillary Clinton

news DIGEST

Hoteliers seek lease extension, vow to promote winter tourism

Re-elect Chaya as Chairman

SRINAGAR: With an eye on winter tourism, J&K Hoteliers Club has urged Lt Governor administration to extend the lease of the hoteliers at various tourist resorts.

J&KHC Chairman Mushtaq A Chaya while addressing a media here said the hoteliers are in stress due to the expiry of the lease which, administration had from time to time assured to extend.

Chaya said due to recent snowfall especially at Gulmarg, travellers have started visiting the Valley and are expected to come in large numbers in coming months.

"However, to host them properly, the government has to provide every support to the hoteliers without pushing them to the wall," said Chaya.

ACB registers case against JMC officials in graft case

OBSERVER NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU: The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Monday registered a case against four officials of the Jammu Municipal Corporation and a restaurant owner for illegal construction here, a spokesperson of the anti-graft body said.

Searches were conducted at the houses of the accused which led to the recovery of incriminating material, he said.

The verification revealed that one Sanjeev Bhasin sought the permission for renovation of his commercial building being run as a restaurant 'Hot Billion' to the extent of existing area in ground floor (102 sqft), proposed area in ground floor (127.5 sqft), totalling 229.5 sqft and proposed 229.5 sqft area in first floor which was granted to him on July 22, 2013," he said.

During the probe, it was found that the owner had initially constructed the whole building illegally in connivance with the then officers of JMC and under the garb of new permission, he raised a huge three-storied commercial building.

Power shutdown

SRINAGAR: According to the Power Controller, Kashmir Province, in order to replace GOAB switch with new serviceable one in 33kV line at Bemina Residential Colony, shutdown of 33 kV lines shall be observed as per programme below.

During the shutdown, the power supply to Receiving Stations Bemina II, JVC and PC Depot fed from Bemina-Bemina II shall remain affected on 10 December from 10 am to 10:30 am, and power supply to Receiving Stations Rakh Arth, Narkara, Jawahar Nagar and K P Bagh fed from Bemina- K P Bagh shall remain affected on 11 December from 4:30 pm to 5 pm.

Similarly, to execute DDUGJY/IPDS/ PMDP Package-A works, shutdown of 33 kV

'Fake News Is Deadly And Needs to Be Curbed'

AASHIQ HUSSAIN ANDRABI

As a data editor and media trainer, Sanjit has over a decade experience in the digital news and data space and has conducted media trainings across Asia.

Before working as a certified trainer of FactShala which is a news and information literacy programme, he worked with some of the top news sites — handling strategic editorial positions in organisations like TheQuint, Moneycontrol, IndiaSpend, Firstpost,



FactChecker.

In a candid chat with Kashmir Observer, the fake news buster talks about the menace of misinformation and the need of strengthening the newsroom fact-checking system.

To begin with, let's talk about FactShala.

FactShala is a news and information literacy programme launched in India



by Internews in collaboration with DataLEADS with support from Google.org and the Google News Initiative.

This programme aims to educate the Indian people about media literacy and empower them to consume information critically. It's designed to help people across India — especially in states with low literacy to understand the nature and characteristics of content published online.

I'm associated with FactShala as a trainer and we have trained to empower people to consume information critically.

More On P2

We're not just fighting an epidemic; we're fighting an infodemic

JK Admin Seeking Modification Of Order on Roshni Act

High Court To Hear Petition Next Week

AGENCIES

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir High Court on Monday adjourned till next week the hearing on a petition filed by the administration seeking a review of its earlier order scrapping the Roshni Act in totality.

The petition filed by Special Secretary in Revenue department Nazir Ahmad Thakur on December 4 for modification of the nearly two-month-old judgment pleaded that a large number of common people would suffer unintentionally including landless cultivators and individuals who are themselves residing in dwellings on small areas.

It said there was a need to distinguish between the common people and the wealthy land grabbers among the beneficiaries, and favoured that landless labourers or those with one house in personal use be allowed to keep the allotted land.

The High Court has adjourned the case till December 16, Advocate Sheikh Shakeel Ahmad told PTI.

Ahmad is representing Prof S K Bhalla who had challenged the Roshni Act in the court, which

on October 9 finally declared the Act "illegal, unconstitutional and unsustainable" and ordered a CBI probe into the allotment of the land under this law.

In its petition filed three months after the judgment amid criticism over its role in not defending the Act in the court, the government which has started releasing separate lists of beneficiaries of Roshni Act and encroachers of government land said the common people are unfortunately clubbed along with rich and wealthy land grabbers who have obtained a title over state land through the provision of now struck down Act.

There is a need to distinguish between these two classes of people; the fact of being either a landless cultivator or house-holder with at the most one dwelling house in personal use, would be the primary criteria for differentiating between two classes, the petition read.

The petition prayed for permission to formulate an appropriate mechanism to enable people like landless cultivators and single dwelling owners to continue to remain in possession of their land, subject to an appropriate ceiling

and on payment at appropriate rates.

It also raised apprehension that the High Court verdict may lead to an unintended roving inquiry by the CBI, which may go on endlessly without generating the results sought by the high court.

On November 1, the Union Territory administration cancelled all land transfers that took place under the JK State Land (Vesting of Ownership to the Occupants) Act, 2001 - also known as the Roshni Act - under which 2.5 lakh acres of land was to be transferred to the existing occupants.

The principal secretary and the revenue department have been asked to work out a plan to retrieve large tracts of state land vested under the Act.

According to the high court order, a total of 6,04,602 kanals (75,575 acres) of state land had been regularised and transferred to the occupants. This included 5,71,210 kanals (71,401 acres) in Jammu and 33,392 kanals (4174 acres) in the Kashmir province.

"Principal Secretary to Government, Revenue Department shall also work out the modalities and plan to evict encroachers from such State Land and retrieve the State land within a period of six months." Principal

3 Kashmiris Among 5 Arrested In Delhi After Encounter: Police

NEW DELHI: Five people including three Kashmiris were arrested after an encounter with police in East Delhi's Shakarpur area and it is suspected that some of them might have links to militant groups, officials said on Monday.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) Pramod Singh Kushwah said, "We have apprehended

five persons after an exchange of fire. Weapons and other incriminating material have also been recovered from their possession."

Two of them are from Punjab and three belong to Kashmir, he said. Some of them are suspected to have links with militant groups but this is being verified, he said, adding that further investigation is underway.

Families vouch for the innocent

BUDGAM: Three families of Central Kashmir's Budgam Monday refuted the claims of Special Cell of Delhi Police that trio from Kashmir arrested by them have links with militant outfits.

Today five men, three from Kashmir and 2 from Punjab were arrested by the Special Cell of Delhi Police from Shakarpur area of Delhi. Police said these arrests were made after a gunfight in the area.

Three Kashmiri men who were arrested by police hail

from Central Kashmir's Budgam district. They are Reyaz Ahmed Rather and Shabir Ahmed Gojri, both residents of Nasrullah Pora and Muhammad Ayoub Pathan of Gondhpora village.

The family members of all these arrested men talked to news agency Kashmir News Trust and vouched for their innocence.

Shaista- wife of Shabir Ahmed Gojri said her husband visits the shrine of Ajmeer Sharif every

Forces Launch Search Operation After Militants Escape In Narbal

SRINAGAR: State forces launched a search operation after a militant allegedly opened fire on CRPF personnel posted at the Narbal crossing on the Srinagar-Gulmarg road here on Monday, officials said.

Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) troopers at the crossing claimed that they signalled a driver of a car to stop, but he drove past and stopped after a short distance, they said.

There were militants in the car and one of them got off, fired and they escaped, according to the troopers, the officials said, adding that the matter is being probed. The area has been cordoned off and a search operation launched to track the militants, they said.

Initially, police had said that a CRPF trooper's rifle went off accidentally, but now officials said that it is being investigated as to where the shots were fired from. The firing caused panic in the area and people ran helter-skelter. While running to safety, Showkat Ahmad fell down and suffered injuries, police said. —Agencies

2 Minor Sisters From Pck Who Inadvertently Crossed LoC Repatriated

POONCH: Two minor sisters from Pakistan-controlled Kashmir (Pck), who were detained after they inadvertently crossed the Line of Control (LoC) into Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district, were repatriated on Monday, officials said.

Laiba Zabair (17) and her younger sister Sana Zabair (13), residents of Kahuta Tehsil in Pck, were detained on Sunday after being spotted moving into this side by Indian troops.

"Two girls of Abbaspur, Tehsil Forward Kahuta of PoK, who had inadvertently crossed into Indian side in Poonch, have been repatriated from the Chakan Da Bagh (CDB) crossing point today," a defence spokesman said.

Avalanche Warnings Issued in Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh

SRINAGAR: Snowfall will start from northwest Kashmir, Pirpanjal, Gulmarg, Sonamarg Zojila Drass axis and gradually affect the entire valley, hilly areas of Jammu and some parts of Ladakh especially Kargil, Zaskar and higher reaches of Leh by Tuesday, MET office said on Monday.

Minimum temperatures continued their upward rise on Monday in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh areas as the authorities improved their preparedness to meet challenges posed by heavy snowfall

forecast in both union territories. Avalanche warnings were issued on Monday for people living in avalanche prone higher reaches of Jammu and Kashmir following an advisory by the weather office that moderate to heavy snowfall is likely in the Valley and Kargil district of Ladakh region beginning Monday afternoon.

Vehicles in Srinagar-Jammu highway have been advised to cross Nagrota from Jammu side and Khanabal from valley side before 2 p.m. so that they are

Covid-19 claims 9 more lives, J&K toll 1755

AGENCIES

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir reported nine more deaths due to novel coronavirus in the last 24 hours, taking the number of those who succumbing to the virus to 1755. Among those who died include five from Jammu and four from Kashmir including a 41-year-old

man from Sangrama Soporein Baramulla district. The other victims from Valley include an 85-year-old man from Mamar Kangan Ganderbal, a 65-year-old man from Qazigund in Kulgam district and a 70-year-old man from Khanpora Baramulla.

The victims from Jammu include two from the J&K's winter capital, Jammu-2 besides one each from Udhampur, Kishtwar and Reasi.



Chanapora Murder Case

Post mortem report confirms death due to assault

Agencies

Srinagar: Post mortem report has confirmed the death of an elderly man in Chanapora Srinagar has occurred due to assault. Police produced the challan in the court of law and the accused has been sent to Srinagar Central Jail.

Pertinently, in August this year, a bank employee was accused of murdering a 65 year old man Abdul Majeed Baqal, a resident of Mini Colony Chanapora.

Pertinently, Sadaf Baqal, the daughter of the victim had said that one Waseem Ahmed alias Jimmy assaulted her father badly and he sustained grievous injuries resulting in his death after a few days in the hospital.

"It was an immaterial issue. My elderly father was cleaning the gate of the house, while sprinkling water on the gate, some droplets touched a pedestrian (girl), who is our neighbor. She accused my father of ruining her dress and called his brother Wasim alias Jimmy. Jimmy, without listening to the version of my

father and ignoring apologies from me and my father, assaulted him badly. My father fell on the ground and was dying with pain. I was requesting Jimmy with folded hands to let him go but drunk with pride, he didn't stop and continued to hit him. When we cried, some neighbours intervened and we shifted him (my father) to hospital. After a couple of days, he died," she had told Kashmir News Trust.

The post mortem of the deceased has maintained that the deceased had died due to blood clotting in his brain as a result of the assault.

"The post mortem report vindicates our stand. From day one, we had been maintaining that my father died due to assault by Wasim alias Jimmy," her daughter said. A police official told KNT that the accused has already been shifted to Central Jail. "We produced a challan against him after receiving post mortem report," the official said.

Pertinently, the accused who is a Bank employee has already been suspended from the service. (KNT)

LG Inaugurates Center Of Invention, Innovation, Incubation

Srinagar: Centre for Invention, Innovation & Incubation (CIII) a joint collaboration between Indian Army, UT Govt of Jammu & Kashmir & Tata technologies Ltd (TTL) was today inaugurated by the Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha in an e-inauguration ceremony.

Army in a statement issued to news agency KINS said that the project will bring qualitative improvement in the field of technical education in UT of J&K.

"It is an ultramodern state of the art facility, aimed to provide high end facilities and support to engineers, promoting the spirit of entrepreneurship and supporting technology start-ups" the statement reads.

"The project will facilitate the creation of a pool of skilled manpower like engineers and technicians which will augment the industrial growth and in turn increase the employment avenue for the Kashmiri youth. The project also witnessed a unified effort of the Indian Army and the civil administration in ensuring timely completion of the center. The center will offer courses for the students in the field of ITI Diploma, B. Tech, M. Tech, etc to enhance their



skills in line with current industrial needs and future technology trends. Initially, 18 majors courses are being introduced with an intake capacity of around 2880 candidates. Each batch will have a strength of 10-30 candidates. The center will strengthen industry academia partnership and will bring quality improvement in the technical education" it reads. "This first of its kind project has

been completed in a record time despite facing all the challenges posed due to COVID-19 pandemic. The center is also a testimony and prime example of the prowess of the unified efforts of all the stakeholders including the Indian Army, Civil Administration & private sector enterprises, making it a reality in very short span of time for bright future of the Kashmir".

In a First: Justice at Doorsteps a reality in J&K with "Insaf ki Dastak" Initiative

Srinagar: In a first, J&K High Court launched an ambitious legal outreach programme "Insaf Ki Dastak" aimed at providing access to justice at the door steps of people living in far-flung and inaccessible areas of the UTs of J&K and Ladakh who face severe hardships in reaching the courts for their legal issues.

The outreach initiative would provide succor to the people of Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir, and Ladakh where 'access to justice' is a challenge owing to its unique topography.

These are in Kathua, Reasi, Poonch, Ramban, Kishtwar, Ganderbal, Bandipora, Baramulla and Kupwara Districts in the Union Territory

of Jammu & Kashmir; and Kargil and Leh Districts of the Union Territory of Ladakh which remain cut off even from the nearest courts for months together due to topography of the region and harsh weather which prevails for a considerable time of the year.

The initiative will help People living in those areas who have to wait for months together or alternatively are forced to travel to far off places to get any legal remedy for their disputes.

The Chief Justice Geeta Mittal who has conceptualized the initiative said, "It is aimed to reach out to people living in far off places so that they do not remain deprived of the legal rights.

CUK VC inaugurates workshop on 'Intellectual Property Rights, Start-Ups and Entrepreneurship Dev'

Ganderbal: Central University of Kashmir (CUK), Vice Chancellor, Prof. Mehraj ud Din Mir Monday inaugurated the two-week National Workshop on "Intellectual Property Rights, Start-Ups and Entrepreneurship Development" organized by the Department of Information Technology, School of Engineering and Technology, at Tulmulla Campus here.

The Vice Chancellor also inaugurated "Taruf", an induction programme for the fresh batch of the students of B. Tech Computer Science & Engineering. Addressing the participants both offline and online, Vice Chancellor, Prof. Mehraj ud Din Mir, said "Innovation, be it in Engineering and Technology, Entrepreneurship or any other professional field has become the beating-heart that gives life to and maintains the

relevance of every field in the current dynamic, ever-changing environment and we can't stay away from it in the current digital world." He encouraged the students to participate frequently in such workshops and asked them to become part of the solutions for the future.

Inaugurating 'Taruf,' Vice Chancellor, welcomed the newly admitted students and said, "The university will extend all possible help, support and cooperation to the students to achieve their goals in academics and make an indelible mark in their field of study. He asked the freshers to enjoy their stay in the varsity and help in building a better society and serve the community thereafter. He also apprised the participants about the facilities provided by the university and scheme of the courses offered.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir UT. Office Of The Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti Water Supply Master Plan Division Srinagar. Gist of Notice Inviting e-Tenders e-NIT NO:- 33/WSMP OF 12/2020 Dated 04-12-2020 (2020-21) For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor Union Territory of J&K, Executive Engineer Water Supply Master Plan Division Srinagar invites tenders by e-tendering mode in Two cover system from Contractors/ firms approved/registered with J&K UTPWD/MES/Railways for the works detailed below. (Position of Funds Available) Table with 8 columns: S. No, Name of work, Estimated cost, Earnest Money, Cost of Document, Head of Account, Time of compl., Class of Contract. Includes 5 items related to water supply improvements and maintenance.

Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir Office of the Executive Engineer, Estates Division Srinagar. SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER E-TENDERNIT No:- 92/E-tender/Estates/2020-21 of 12/2020 Executive Engineer, Estates Division, Srinagar on behalf of the Lt. Governor Union Territory J&K, invites by E-tendering on item rate basis from approved and eligible Registered Approved Electric Contractors with Union Territory J&K /CPWD/Railways and other State/ Central Governments for the following works:- Table with 8 columns: S. No, Name of Work, Est. Cost, Cost of T/Doc, Earnest Money, Time of completion, Class of Contractor, Major Head. Includes 1 item for power installation and commissioning.

DIAL-EMMA TRAFFIC POLICE: 9419993745, 01998-266686 PCR: 0194-2452092, 2455883 PDD: 0194-2450213 FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES: 2479488, 245222, 2452155 CAPD: 1800180701 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)

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This Day In History

- 1710 - Battle of Brihuega in the War of the Spanish Succession: British General James Stanhope captured by French & Spanish forces. 1863 - 2,500 reported killed as result of fire at Jesuit Church of La Compana, Santiago, Chile. 1863 - Abraham Lincoln issues his Amnesty Proclamation and plan for Reconstruction of the South. 1869 - Timothy Eaton founds T. Eaton Co. Limited in Toronto, Canada. 1881 - Vienna's Ring Theater destroyed by fire, kills between 640-850. 1895 - Battle at Amba Alagi: Ethiopian Emperor Menelik II drives Italian General Baratieri out. 1921 - Eamon de Valera publicly repudiates Anglo-Irish Treaty. 1923 - German-US friendship treaty signed. 1923 - Salary & price freeze in Germany. 1941 - London: Dutch government-in-exile declares war on Japan. 1941 - US & Britain declare war on Japan, US enters WW II. 1952 - Isak Ben-Zvi elected president of Israel. 1953 - Dwight D. Eisenhower gives his "Atoms for Peace" speech at the UN in New York. 1962 - 114-day newspaper strike begins in NYC. 1963 - Pan Am Flight 214 crashes outside Elkton, Maryland with 81 killed. Only cause of lighting causing air crash. 1965 - Nikolai Podgorny succeeds Mikoyan as president of USSR. 1969 - Greek DC-6B crashes in storm at Athens, 93 killed. 1972 - United Airlines crashes at Chicago's Midway Airport killing 45. 1974 - Soyuz 16 returns to Earth. 1982 - Colombian writer Gabriel García Márquez receives the Nobel Prize for Literature. 1983 - 9th Space Shuttle Mission, Columbia 6, lands at Edwards AFB. 1984 - Europe & 64 developing countries sign Lome III treaty. 1987 - Occupied Palestinians start "intifadeh" (uprising) against Israel Agreement. 1987 - US President Reagan & Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev sign a treaty eliminating medium range nuclear missiles. 1989 - Great Britain performs nuclear test. 1991 - Russia, Belorussia & Ukraine form Commonwealth of Ind States. 1991 - The Romanian Constitution is adopted in a referendum. 1992 - Galileo's nearest approach to Jupiter (303 km). 1994 - Fire in cinema in Karanay China, 310 killed. 1998 - Tadjena massacre: 81 people are killed by armed groups in Algeria. 2002 - The Caribbean Community Heads of Government meet with the Government of Cuba and declare the date to be "CARICOM-Cuba Day" - To celebrate diplomatic ties between the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and Cuba. 2004 - The Cuzco Declaration is signed in Cuzco, Peru, establishing the South American Community of Nations. 2009 - Bombings in Baghdad, Iraq kill 127 and injure 448

From KO Archives 12 Bangladeshis killed near Jammu

Observer News Service SRINAGAR: Twelve Bangladeshis nationals were killed when Border Security Force (BSF) jawans opened fire at a group of people attempting to sneak into Jammu region from across the border today, official reports here said. The reports said BSF personnel noticed a group of persons attempting to sneak into Indian territory from Pakistan-controlled Kashmir (PeK) near Sangral village in R.S.Pura sector of Jammu in the wee hours today. They mistook the intruders for militants and opened fire at them when they tried to flee back after being asked to surrender, the reports said, adding the deceased were totally unarmed. In the past, a number of Bangladeshi nationals were either arrested or killed while making attempts to sneak into this side. However, a Jammu dateline PTI report, weaving a cock-and-bull story, said; "On being confronted by the BSF jawans and asked to surrender, the intruders started running back, they (official sources) said. "Meanwhile, Pakistani troops resorted to firing from across the border forcing BSF jawans to retaliate. In the exchange of fire, the intruders were killed, the sources said. "Senior BSF and police officers have rushed to the area and the bodies of the intruders are being handed over to police for further investigation," the sources said. "Elsewhere in Kashmir valley, militants shot dead a civilian, injured a surrendered militant and a BSF jawan and abducted a villager, while security forces repulsed a militant attack on a police station since last evening, an official spokesman said. Unidentified gunmen shot dead a farmer Abdul Aziz Dar inside his house at Puthshahi-Lalpora in frontier district of Kupwara early today, he said. Jammu and Kashmir police and CRPF jointly repulsed a militant attack on police station Lalpora in frontier district of Kupwara late last night, the spokesman said. A group of militants opened heavy fire and hurled grenades on the police station. However, the police and CRPF contingent stationed there retaliated and repulsed the attack. No casualty on either side was reported, he added. (KASHMIR OBSERVER, 08 DECEMBER, 2000)

سید محمد شفیع اندرابی رحمت حق اجتماعی فاتحہ خوانی 10 دسمبر کو انجاء دی جائیگی یہ تبرائتہائی رنج و غم کے ساتھ شایع کی جاتی ہے کہ جاؤرہ بڈگام کے معروف سماجی شخصیت سید محمد شفیع اندرابی صاحب مورخ اور 6 دسمبر 2020 کی درمیانی رات کو اس دنیائے فانی سے رحلت کر گئے۔ مرحوم ایک سماجی شخصیت ہونے کے ساتھ ساتھ نیک اخلاق کے مالک اور صوم و صلوات کے پابند تھے۔ مرحوم کو علاقہ بھر میں انتہائی عزت و احترام کی نگاہوں سے دیکھا جاتا تھا۔ مرحوم کی جسدِ خاکی کو ہزاروں افراد کی غمناک آنکھوں کی موجودگی میں ان کے آبائی مقبرہ یا ریکی کلان چاؤرہ بڈگام میں سپردِ خاک کیا گیا۔ اللہ تعالیٰ مرحوم کو کرمات جنت الفردوس نصیب فرمائیں۔ مرحوم کی اجتماعی فاتحہ خوانی مورخہ 10 دسمبر 2020 بروز جمعرات کو مرحوم کے آبائی مقبرہ میں انجام دی جائے گی۔ سوگواران: سید محمد ایاز اندرابی (برادر مرحوم) سید سجاد اندرابی، سید عرف اندرابی، سید داؤد اندرابی (فرزند ان)

KASHMIR  
OBSERVER

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Legal Counsel: Tasaduq Khwaja  
Switchboard: (0194) 2106304  
Editorial: (0194) 2502327  
Email editorial: editor@kashmirobsrver.net

## Covid vaccine

In a welcome development, Pfizer Inc has applied for emergency use authorisation in India after getting the nod for such use in the United Kingdom and Bahrain. The UK is already in the process of using the vaccine and is now in the final stages of planning before the vaccination drive starts on December 14. China is already vaccinating its people with a million people in the country having already received the shot. This despite the fact that China claims to have contained the spread of the virus within its borders and having put its economy back on track. This has been evidenced by the country's second quarter results.

On the other hand, in an attempt to bolster the confidence of the people in the vaccine, the US president-elect Joe Biden and the three former presidents of the country - Barack Obama, George W. Bush and Bill Clinton - have said they are willing to get inoculated against the novel coronavirus on television. Their announcement has come less than a week before the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is set to meet to decide whether to authorise a Covid-19 vaccine produced by Pfizer and BioNTech. Similarly, the World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has said that he too would be happy to have a coronavirus vaccine to help promote public confidence.

Meanwhile, challenges remain. Haryana health minister Anil Vij tested Covid-19 positive fourteen days after taking a shot of Bharat Biotech's Covaxin. However, Bharat Biotech has clarified that the shot is meant to be protective only two weeks after the second dose - which is given after a gap of 28 days following the first dose.

The arrival of the vaccine is, however, no reason to be complacent about the safety precautions. Over eight months after the union government implemented nationwide lockdown to help curb the contagion, India has recorded 9,608,211 confirmed COVID-19 cases, including 139,700 deaths. On a welcome note, a total of 9,058,822 people have recovered from the infection leaving only 409,689 active cases in the country. This is a recovery rate of 94.28 percent. Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh have reported the highest number of cases. In recent past, infections have spiked in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Uttar Pradesh. Around the world, more than 6.64 crore people have been infected by the coronavirus and 15.27 lakh have died so far.

Going forward, the situation seems to be moving in the positive direction. After initial logistical challenges, the distribution of the vaccine will become progressively easy. This, in turn, will hopefully enable the return of the old normalcy.

### OTHER OPINION

## Criminal Trespass by the Israeli Army

Two weeks ago, dozens of soldiers raided the al-Aroub refugee camp in the dead of night. They sowed terror and anger, dragged out a 16-year-old boy and took him barefoot to be arrested. The boy was left for almost 24 hours without food, and much of that time, he was outside in the cold, until he was finally questioned for a few hours and released.

A few months earlier, the boy, Basel al-Badawi, had been summoned for a similar round of questioning, and then, a phone call to his father was enough to bring him in under his own power, without a complicated, frightening arrest operation. His story appeared today in Haaretz.

On Wednesday, Hagar Shezaf reported in Haaretz that the Israel Defense Forces has failed almost completely to carry out a pilot program to summon Palestinian teens for questioning without terrifying their families and neighbors. Six years after the pilot began, the IDF continues to drag hundreds of children and teens out of their beds and arrest them, almost every night. A report released this week by three Israeli human rights organizations, Breaking the Silence, Physicians for Human Rights and Yesh Din, described the severe psychological harm caused by these operations, which destroy Palestinian homes as protected spaces. In 2017 and 2018, there was an average of 267 raids per month on Palestinian homes. In a quarter of these, violence was used, and in a third, property was destroyed. Fully 64 percent of families said the IDF had invaded their homes more than once.

It's no secret that some of these nighttime raids are meant to train the soldiers, and also to demonstrate control and make a show of force to the Palestinian population. In other words, some of these raids are unnecessary and even criminal. It's not hard to imagine life in their shadow, with tens of thousands of families, including many children, feeling vulnerable and threatened every night by soldiers' raids on their homes even when the West Bank is peaceful.

The Shin Bet security service and the IDF must therefore revise their policy on arrests and searches from top to bottom and reduce the number of raids to the minimum necessary. Nighttime raids on homes ought to be an extreme measure, not a routine modus operandi. And that is doubly true when we're talking about the arrests of children and teens. To date, the occupation authorities don't seem to have given any consideration to the damage caused by their actions, which are legally dubious and morally flawed.

Haaretz

# Internal Issue vs. External Dissent



Haris Rashid

By expressing his concern, Trudeau might be able to leverage the Sikh electorate for his political gains but on the other hand, it hurts the national interests of Canada as it affects the relationship with a foreign country. This is however trivial as India-Canada relations are already at worse.

Canadian Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, became the first foreign leader to make a statement on the ongoing Indian farmers' protests, setting off a debate among the Indian diplomatic community whether the statement constituted foreign interference in the "internal affairs" of India. Speaking on the occasion of Gurpurab to his Canadian-Punjabi constituents, Trudeau expressed concern over farmers' protests in India, saying that he would be remiss if he did not start by recognising the news coming from India about the protest by farmers. He further informed that Canada has reached out through multiple means to the Indian authorities to highlight their concerns regarding the protests.

The statement does not seem to have gone well with the Indian government as Ministry of External Affairs served a demarche to Canadian Higher Commissioner to India, protesting that the "comments by the Canadian Prime Minister, some Cabinet Ministers and Members of Parliament on issues relating to Indian farmers constitute an unacceptable interference in our internal affairs" and that "such actions, if continued, would have a seriously damaging impact on ties between India and Canada."

The reaction by India has however stoked debate over what constitutes foreign interference in India's internal affairs according to India's own standards. Trudeau was speaking to his domestic audience about something going on in a foreign country that affected his audience. There is a parallel to this where India can be blamed to interfere in Canada's internal affairs. India repeatedly accuses Canada of providing safe space to Khalistani Movement and blames it for harbouring Khalistani terrorists. For instance, reacting to Justin Trudeau's presence at Khalsa Day in April 2017, the then MEA spokesperson Gopal Baglay had informed that they had taken up such issues in the past with the government of Canada and in this particular case also the practice had not been discontinued. If the same yardstick

that India has applied to Trudeau's statement on farmers' protest was applied to India's statements related to Khalistani Movement, it would be safe to say that it is an interference in the internal affairs of Canada. It might be that Khalistani Movement affects India's Punjab and is one of India's national security concern but then India's farmers' issue affects Canada's domestic audience because there is a large Indian diaspora in Canada

eign policy disaster for Canada as it made the bilateral relations only worse, Trudeau and his family later indulged in activities, targeting their domestic constituents and hence ended up being benefitted politically from the tour.

Additionally, the statement by Trudeau was essentially meant to satisfy his domestic constituents and it did not seek to alter or manipulate Indian opinion or policies. It was not backed by any state

The reaction by India has however stoked debate over what constitutes foreign interference in India's internal affairs according to India's own standards. Trudeau was speaking to his domestic audience about something going on in a foreign country that affected his audience

coming from Punjab whose families and friends have been affected by the recently passed farm laws against which the present protests are taking place.

There is also a concern that by making the statement, Trudeau is putting his political interests over the national interest of his country. There is no doubt that Trudeau made the statement for his own political gains because Punjabi Sikhs in Canada form a huge voting bloc whose support is crucial to any win in elections. By expressing his concern, Trudeau might be able to leverage the Sikh electorate for his political gains but on the other hand, it hurts the national interests of Canada as it affects the relationship with a foreign country. This is however trivial as India-Canada relations are already at worse.

During his visit to India in 2018, Trudeau was cold-shouldered by the Indian government. Contrary to Modi's hugplomacy at that time, Modi did not even receive the leader himself. The then minister of state for agriculture Gajendra Singh Shekhawat had received the guest during a low-key ceremony. While that tour itself was a for-

machinery to alter the outcome of some process. Moreover, the prime minister was only talking about the citizen's right to peaceful protest, not the economic policies or the new farm laws of India. It is rather a concern that a foreign leader's statement on right to peaceful protests and human rights in another country should have evoked such a harsh response and labelled as foreign interference.

How does showing concern for another country's citizens' right to peaceful protest or human rights become interference in "internal affairs" of that particular country? It seems India is either growing intolerant to foreign criticism of its policies and human rights in the same way as it is growing intolerant to the internal dissent of its citizens. It could also be that India now considers itself a powerful actor in global politics that should no more tolerate any criticism from smaller countries like Canada to avoid setting any precedent. In both these cases, India is disincentivising and curbing external dissent.

The author can be reached at  
harisrashid2185@gmail.com



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## Reckless British Behaviour

Last week the British Prime Minister Boris Johnson suffered a rebellion by his own party's backbenchers in the House of Commons. Members of his party refused to vote in favour of the new three-tier coronavirus system that replaced the national lockdown in England from 3 December onwards.

The issue that sparked the revolt was supposed to be core to Conservative Party values - freedom and the health of the economy. Mainly the tussle is over matters economic, allowing people to do Christmas shopping and relax at restaurants and pubs without any restrictions. Under Johnson's plan, much of England will still remain under stringent rules after the national lockdown's expiry on 2 December. People across UK will face limits on household mixing, in addition to tougher rules for pubs and restaurants, which are already weathering the impact of lockdown, in addi-

tion to social mixing rules.

Most British feel that the government is curbing their right to freedom by imposing stricter rules on shopping, visiting restaurants, friends and families.

Boris Johnson had earlier appealed to his colleagues to hold their nerve and back the restrictions until vaccines become widely available. "The end is in sight," Johnson said. "All we need to do now is to hold our nerve until the vaccines are indeed in our grasp and indeed being injected into our arms."

MPs said the new three-tier restrictions are too harsh and risk damaging the economy. They also complained that areas with low rates of infection would be grouped together under the same strict rules as regions where the virus is still spreading.

Interestingly, the vote also showed fissures in the opposition's Labour Party. 15 Labour MPs led by Jeremy Corbyn also broke their party whip by voting against the proposals. Some op-

posed on the basis of wanting a 'zero Covid' strategy; others due to lack of financial aid.

The response of the British public and politicians, both, shows that unlike Indians, the British just want to continue their normal life with no alarm for the Covid threat, except those who have been affected. The latest official figures on Covid deaths in the UK put the number at 60,000. However, the core British value seems to be money and merriment. Unlike Indians, which across the spectrum observed their festivals in a restrained manner, plus the Muslims in the UK who celebrated two Eids under restricted conditions, a majority of the British public wish to celebrate Christmas with normal gaiety and festivities.

Perhaps the Brits could have learnt a lesson from the Italians, who are able to ride over the worst of the first wave of Covid's devastation, by

adopting tougher safety measures.

On the one hand, the Britishers bemoan the worsening economic conditions, but they don't seem to be in a mood to hear and obey the government regarding Covid precautions and in addition blame the government for not providing enough economic packages to the business class. For once the maverick Boris Johnson seems to have taken a prudential step to safeguard the health and lives of the Britishers, but a vast majority seems in no mood to listen.

Britishers who are usually considered to be a stickler for rules have emerged in this episode as the one who consider gaiety and merriment more paramount than their own safety and to restore their earlier image of being sensible citizens will take a lot of initiatives on their part.

Asad Mirza  
asad.mirza.nd@gmail.com

# France's Propaganda From The Middle Ages



Muhammad H Fadel

There is substantial evidence that an important number of prominent European intellectuals of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment were, if anything, Islamophiles

France, and indeed the whole world, were rightly shocked by the barbarous murder in October of schoolteacher Samuel Paty at the hands of an 18-year-old Muslim refugee from Chechnya. The alleged reason for the crime was that Paty, while teaching his students about free expression, showed infamous cartoons denigrating the Prophet Muhammad.

That horrendous crime was quickly followed by an even more brazen one: the murder of three people inside the Notre-Dame cathedral in Nice.

France, instead of taking targeted measures against the guilty parties and those who might have aided them, has instead gone down the now all-too-familiar path of blaming what it believes is an unreformed Islam and a backwards Muslim community. It stands on the cusp of adopting sweeping legislation that, while broadly threatening the civil rights of all of its citizens, will undoubtedly impact Muslims most negatively.

#### Central trope of Islamophobes

These responses come against the backdrop of President Emmanuel Macron declaring that Islam is "in crisis all over the world", and that his government would launch an aggressive campaign to combat what he calls "Islamist separatism". In justifying his muscular approach towards Islam (and not just towards Muslims who commit acts of violence), Macron sees himself as defending the ideals of the Enlightenment and sharing them with the benighted Muslims of France.

There is substantial evidence that an important number of prominent European intellectuals of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment were, if anything, Islamophiles

Contrasting the "enlightenment" of Europe with the "barbarism" of Islam is a central trope of Islamophobes, whether in Europe or North America. Yet, this dichotomy could not be further from the historical truth surrounding Europe's Enlightenment, and even its Renaissance. Both were characterised by a repudiation of the fanatic hatred of Islam and Muslims that the church in the Middle Ages had preached, in favour of a much more balanced appreciation of Islam and the Prophet Muhammad.

Indeed, there is substantial evidence that an important number of prominent European intellectuals of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment were, if anything, Islamophiles.

Two recently published books confirm this point. The first is *Faces of Muhammad*, a book that narrates how European perceptions of the Prophet Muhammad evolved from the figure of the crude imposter propagated by the Catholic church during the Crusades to a religious reformer, glorious leader, and anti-clerical hero to many figures in the Reformation and the Enlightenment.

#### Transformative effects

For Americans, the Enlightenment tradition of honouring the Prophet Muhammad manifested itself in his presence in a frieze at the Supreme Court honouring the great lawgivers of mankind.



#### Faces of Mohammed

The author of *Faces of Muhammad*, historian John Tolan, notes that the rise of humanism through the Renaissance and the Enlightenment allowed Europeans to begin to appreciate the Prophet Muhammad as a historical figure of immense significance, rather than simply as a threat to the church.

In addition, English historian Noel Malcolm's recent book, *Useful Enemies*, chronicles the transformative effects that the Ottoman Empire and Islam had on European political imagination.

European travellers to Ottoman territories in the 15th and 16th centuries, despite the often crude anti-Ottoman and anti-Muslim propaganda that prevailed in Europe, were duly impressed by the empire's religious tolerance; the orderliness and security of its cities; its highly disciplined military; the civic spirit of its well-to-do citizens; a reasonably effective, impartial and speedy judicial system; its reliance on merit as the metric for promotion; and the independence of the state from the religious class.

The increasing encounters of Europeans with the Ottomans and the Mamluks, at least until the conquest of Egypt and Syria in the first quarter of the 16th century, left their traces among the most important European political thinkers of the Renaissance, including the celebrated Florentine political writer Niccolò Machiavelli and the French political theorist Jean Bodin. France played an especially important role as a site for resistance to crude depictions of Islam by virtue of the alliance between Ottoman Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent and French King Francis I.

#### Catholic backlash

These positive encounters with Islam and Muslims in turn inspired European thinkers to imagine ways in which they could transform their own societies. So great was the attraction of the Ottoman model to 16th-century European political writers that, according to Malcolm, it produced a backlash at the hands of Catholic intellectuals, who sought to shore up support for the Hapsburgs in their struggle against the Ottomans.

Their campaign led to the invention of the trope of Oriental despotism in an attempt to subvert the attractiveness of the Ottoman Empire in the eyes of Europeans.

The values of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment amounted to a repudiation of traditional Christian hostility towards Islam and its Prophet.

What these two books unequivocally demonstrate is that the values of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment amounted to a repudiation of traditional Christian hostility towards Islam and its Prophet, and the adoption of a spirit of respect - and even admiration - in its place.

While certain conceptions of freedom of expression might compel a state to permit denigrating portrayals of the Prophet Muhammad to be circulated freely (although anyone with knowledge of French law knows that this is not true for France), in no way can such images be viewed as compatible with the ideals of the Enlightenment; rather, they represent an atavistic return to the crudest propaganda of the Middle Ages, and deserve to be so treated.

Middle East Eye.

## Is isolation a feeling?

Carly Osborn

I am feeling isolated. Is this a state, or an emotion? Rather than getting into the semantics of language, I will ask another question: what does isolation feel like?

Isolation feels like being stuck on the couch despite having time for a walk. Isolation feels like comfort eating nachos and box wine.

Our bodies are tired. Our minds slip and skid between blank boredom and anxious overthinking. What is happening to us, here in our homes, away from the routines and interactions that used to shape our days?

I am feeling isolated. Scholars of emotion talk about feelings as judgements - our considered response to what's happening. These judgements tint our experience as we live it: like the transferred epithets of Wodehouse's Bertie Wooster, "pronging a moody forkful" of eggs, or "balancing a thoughtful lump of sugar" on his teaspoon. Experience reaches us through these filters of judgement.

#### Every lonely person is lonely in their own way

Some of the effects of isolation are common to all human beings, across times and places. Humans have evolved as communal animals living in "families, tribes, and communities". We feel "the pain of social isolation and the rewards of social connection".

Beyond these human constants, our emotional experiences are powerfully shaped by our individual circumstances. Our communal and personal histories affect our expectations of life and our responses to events. In this sense, your feeling of isolation is different to mine. Like Tolstoy's unhappy families, each of us is feeling this crisis in our own way.

Medical researchers of isolation note this recursive flow of emotion: symptoms like poor sleep and high blood pressure correlated not with measures of patients' objective isolation, but their perceived isolation.

One person's agonising loneliness is another's boring staycation. We are as isolated as we feel.

This does not mean our feelings aren't real. They are, in fact, the only reality we can know. Is there a meaningful difference between asking "How are you?" and "How are you feeling?"

#### Full bodied feeling

Our feelings are experienced by our whole selves: bodies, minds, emotions, all intertwined.



We are feeling isolated. Despite our Tolstoyan uniqueness, we find comfort in shared feelings. We share memes about interminable Zoom meetings, or homeschooling. We feel seen, heard, understood - less isolated.

We feel the absence of human touch, we feel anxiety as we obsess over daily statistics, we feel exhausted by shopping trips that feel like ventures into no-man's-land, we feel grief at the horrific headlines of death, and frustration at government responses. We feel loss and confusion about our about our identity and value as jobs disappear.

Those who contract COVID-19 report not only fear of dying, but boredom and anger at being isolated from family and friends.

We are feeling isolated. Despite our Tolstoyan uniqueness, we find comfort in shared feelings. We

share memes about interminable Zoom meetings, or homeschooling.

We feel seen, heard, understood - less isolated. These are called affiliative behaviours and they are a powerful coping strategy for all kinds of crises. Somehow our suffering is more bearable if another human being knows how we feel, and feels it too.

Connecting with one another, and feeling that we are in this together, can mitigate some of the pain of isolation. Sufferers during previous pandemics who felt their isolation was serving an altruistic goal of protecting their neighbours reported less negative

emotions about isolation.

Political exiles have, throughout history, found ways to endure isolation. Early modern English nuns in exiled European convents drew upon antique history to comfort themselves, identifying with Biblical stories of suffering that finally resolve in homecoming and restored community.

Prisoners in solitary confinement have relied on simple things like sunlight and human voices on the radio to keep the worst at bay.

They are feeling isolated. Isolation feels like being alone but it also feels like reaching beyond our usual spheres, feeling new empathy with people who were strangers before.

Isolation is a long-term state for many. From professional women in male-dominated fields, to caregivers and those in remote communities, to religious and queer minorities.

Asylum seekers in detention report deep feelings of isolation and invisibility. Their poems open up for us in new ways now.

New parents, especially mothers, experience isolation with feelings familiar to many of us right now: "powerlessness, insufficiency, guilt, loss, exhaustion, ambivalence, resentment and anger". Those who are young, or poor, or single, are especially at risk of feeling isolated, overwhelmed and worried.

In our empathy we are connected across social and economic gaps.

#### Emotional force

We are feeling isolated. Now, our shared emotions become a central part of how we make sense of the crisis.

Shared, collective emotion can be a strong driver of collective activity. Enough shared emotion can cause us to feel like a unified nation, our common humanity stronger than our superficial differences. Conversely, emotional sparks can create political cliques who cohere around shared anger towards other groups.

Scholars of emotion describe emotions as a force, not only felt within, but acting upon the external world. Emotions do things. Big, collective emotions do big things. We are only beginning to discover what isolation is doing to us.

By arrangement with The Conversation

## Brain implants might soon help restore rudimentary vision for blind people

Restoring vision for visually impaired people might soon be a reality with the help of brain implants, due to recent discoveries at the Netherlands Institute for Neuroscience (NIN), which were published in the journal *Science*. The study has revealed that newly developed high-resolution implants in the visual cortex of people who are blind will make it possible for them to understand artificially induced percepts and shapes.

The concept of stimulating the brain via an implant to generate artificial visual percepts is not new at all and dates back to the 1970s. However, the existing systems can only generate a small number of these artificial "pixels" at any given time. Researchers from a team led by Pieter Roelfsema at NIN are now using new implant production and implantation technologies, advanced materials engineering, microchip manufacturing, and microelectronics, to develop more stable devices and durable than previous implants. The initial results are very promising.

Electrical stimulation  
When electrical stimulation is

delivered to the brain via an implanted electrode, it generates the perception of a point of light at a particular location in visual space, known as a "phosphene". The team developed high-resolution



implants consisting of 1,024 electrodes and implanted them in the visual cortex of two sighted monkeys. Their goal was to create interpretable images by delivering electrical stimulation simultaneously via several electrodes, to generate a percept composed of several phosphenes.

Roelfsema says "The number of

electrodes we have implanted in the visual cortex and the number of artificial pixels we can generate to produce high-resolution artificial images are unprecedented". Recognize dots, lines and letters

micro-stimulation was delivered on a sequence of electrodes, and a letter discrimination task, in which micro-stimulation was delivered to 8 to 15 electrodes simultaneously, creating a percept in the form of a letter. The monkeys were able to recognize shapes and percepts, including lines, moving dots, and letters, using their artificial vision.

Xing Chen, a postdoctoral researcher in the Roelfsema team explained, "Our implant interfaces directly with the brain, bypassing prior stages of visual processing via the eye or the optic nerve. Hence, in the future, such technology could be used for the restoration of low vision in blind people who have suffered injury or degeneration of the retina, eye or optic nerve, but whose cortex visual remains intact". This research lays the foundations for a neuroprosthetic device that would permit profoundly blind people to regain functional vision and to recognize objects, navigate in unfamiliar environments, and interact more easily in social settings, significantly improving their independence and quality of life. -Agencies

## 'How airflow inside car may affect COVID-19 transmission risk decoded'

Using computer simulations, scientists have analysed the airflow patterns inside a car's passenger cabin, shedding light on the potential ways to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission while sharing rides with others.

The study, published in the journal *Science Advances*, assessed the airflow inside a compact car with various combinations of windows open or closed.

According to the researchers, including those from Brown University in the US, the simulations showed that opening windows created airflow patterns that dramatically reduced the concentration of airborne aerosol particles exchanged between a driver and a single passenger.

However, they said blasting the car's ventilation system didn't circulate air nearly as well as a few open windows.

"Driving around with the windows up and the air conditioning or heat on is definitely the worst scenario, according to our computer simulations," said Asimanshu Das, co-lead author of the research from Brown University.

"The best scenario we found was having all four windows open, but even having one or two open was far better than having them all closed," Das said.

While there's no way to eliminate risk completely, and current guidelines recommend postponing travel, the scientists said the goal of the study was simply to assess how changes in airflow inside a car may worsen or reduce risk of COVID-19 transmission.

In the research, the computer models simulated a car, loosely based on a Toyota Prius, with two people inside -- a driver, and a passenger sitting in the back seat on the opposite side from the driver.

The scientists said they chose this seating arrangement since it maximised the physical distance between the two people.



Since the novel coronavirus is thought to spread via tiny aerosol particles that can linger in the air for extended periods of time, the researchers simulated airflow around and inside a car moving at 50 miles per hour.

Part of the reason opening windows is better in terms of aerosol transmission is because it increases the number of air changes per hour (ACH) inside the car that reduces the overall concentration of aerosols, the study noted. The scientists showed that different combinations of open windows created different air currents inside the car that could either increase or decrease exposure to remaining aerosols.

Since the occupants in the simulations were sitting on opposite sides of the cabin, they said very few particles ended up being transferred between the two.

According to the research, the

driver was at slightly higher risk than the passenger since the average airflow in the car goes from back to front, but added that both occupants experience a dramatically lower transfer of particles.

When some -- but not all -- windows were down, the study yielded counterintuitive results.

Citing an example of one such instance, the scientists said opening the windows next to each occupant carried a higher exposure risk, compared to putting down the window opposite each occupant.

"When the windows opposite the occupants are open, you get a flow that enters the car behind the driver, sweeps across the cabin behind the passenger and then goes out the passenger-side front window," said Kenny Breuer, a professor of engineering at Brown University and a senior author of the research.

"That pattern helps to reduce cross-contamination between the driver and passenger," Breuer said.

The scientists said airflow adjustments are no substitute for mask-wearing by both occupants when inside a car, adding that the findings are limited to potential exposure to lingering aerosols that may contain pathogens. Citing another limitation of the study, the scientists said it did not model larger respiratory droplets or the risk of actually becoming infected by the virus.

However, they said the findings provide valuable new insights into air circulation patterns inside a car's passenger compartment. -PTI

## Research reveals connection between Vitamin D levels and gut bacteria

The researchers and collaborators at the University of California, San Diego recently demonstrated that in older men the levels of active Vitamin D are linked to that person's gut microbiome, which is crucial for immunity and bone health. A new understanding of Vitamin D and how it's usually measured was also revealed by the study in *Nature Communications*. Out of the several different forms of Vitamin D, standard blood tests can only detect one amongst them, an inactive precursor that can be stored by the body. The body must metabolise the precursor in an active form in order to utilise Vitamin D.

The senior author Deborah Kado, MD, Director of the Osteoporosis at UC San Diego Health said "We were surprised to find that microbiome diversity the variety of bacteria types in a person's gut was closely associated with active Vitamin D, but not the precursor form".

He further added, "Greater gut microbiome diversity is thought to be associated with better health in general".

The study for the National Institute on Aging-funded Osteoporotic Fractures in Men (Mros) Study Research Group, a large multi-site effort that started in 2000 was led by Kado.

Deborah Kado teamed up with Rob Knight, Rob Knight, PhD, professor and director of the Centre for Microbiome Innovation at UC San Diego, and co-first authors Serene Lingjing Jiang, a graduate student in the Biostatistics Program at Herbert Wertheim School of Public Health and Human Longevity Sciences, and Robert L. Thomas, MD, PhD, a fellow in the Division of Endocrinology at UC San Diego

School of Medicine. Individuals with low levels of Vitamin D are at a higher risk for heart disease, cancer, and even COVID-19 infections among other diseases, as suggested by multiple reports.

Yet the biggest clinical trial conducted till date with more than 25,000 adults, concluded that Vitamin D supplements have



no impact on health-related outcomes, including cancer, heart disease, or even bone health.

Kado, who is also a professor at UC San Diego School of Medicine and Herbert Wertheim School of Public Health said: "Our study suggests that might be because these studies measured only the precursor form of Vitamin D, rather than active hormone".

Kado further added, "Measures of Vitamin D formation and breakdown may be better indicators of underlying health issues, and who might best respond to vitamin D supplementation".

Stool and blood samples of 567 men who participated in Mros were analysed by the team. The

individuals who participated, all had their average age around 84, lived in six cities around the USA, and most of them reported being in good or excellent health condition.

During the research, a technique called 16s rRNA sequencing was used by the researchers to quantify and identify the types of bacteria in each stool sample based on unique genetic identifiers. A method known as LC-MS/MS was used to quantify Vitamin D metabolites (the precursor, active hormone, and the breakdown product) in the bloodstream of each participant.

The researchers in addition to discovering a link between active Vitamin D and overall microbiome diversity, during

Thomas said, "It seems like it doesn't matter how much Vitamin D you get through sunlight or supplementation, nor how much your body can store". "It matters how well your body is able to metabolize that into active Vitamin D, and maybe that's what clinical trials need to measure in order to get a more accurate picture of the Vitamin's role in health," Kado added.

Thomas said, "We often find in medicine that more is not necessarily better". "So in this case, maybe it's not how much Vitamin D you supplement with, but how you encourage your body to use it," further stated Thomas.

As pointed out by Kado, the study depended on a single snapshot in time of the microbes and Vitamin D found in individuals' stool and blood. All of these factors over time can fluctuate depending on an individual's sleep habits, environment, medications, diet, and more.

More studies are required according to the team in order to better understand the role bacteria plays in deciding whether intervening at the microbiome level can be used to augment current treatments to improve bone and other health outcomes, and also understand the metabolism of Vitamin D due to the bacteria. -Agencies

## Researchers develop sensor to detect fatty liver disease

Researchers have developed a diagnostic tool, based on nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR), that could be used to detect fatty liver disease or liver fibrosis.



Since it's a non-invasive test, you could screen people even before they have obvious symptoms of the compromised liver, and you would be able to say which of these patients had fibrosis," said study author Michael Cima from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the US.

The device, which is small enough to fit on a table, uses NMR to measure how water diffuses through tissue, which can reveal how much fat is present in the tissue.

This kind of diagnostic, which has thus far been tested on mice, could help doctors catch the fatty liver disease before it progresses to fibrosis, the study published in the journal *Nature Biomedical Engineering* said.

Fatty liver disease occurs when liver

cells store too much fat. This leads to inflammation and eventually fibrosis, a build-up of scar tissue that can cause jaundice and liver cirrhosis, and eventually liver failure.

Fibrosis is usually not diagnosed until the patient begins to experience symptoms that include not only jaundice but also fatigue and abdominal swelling.

To create an easier way to check for this kind of liver disease, the research team had the idea of adapting a detector that they had previously developed to measure hydration levels before and after patients undergo dialysis.

That detector measures fluid volume in patients' skeletal muscle by using NMR to track changes in the magnetic properties of hydrogen atoms of water in the muscle tissue.

In a study of mice, the researchers showed that their detector could identify fibrosis with 86 per cent accuracy, and fatty liver disease with 92 per cent accuracy. It takes about 10 minutes to obtain the results, but the researchers are now working on improving the signal-to-noise ratio of the detector, which could help to reduce the amount of time it takes.

The current version of the sensor can scan to a depth of about six millimetres below the skin, which is enough to monitor the mouse liver or human skeletal muscle.

The researchers are now working on designing a new version that can penetrate deeper below the tissue, to allow them to test the liver diagnosis application in human patients. -Agencies

## Overweight, obese adults often don't accept weight problems: Study

More than 40 per cent of US adults were overweight and nearly 10 percent with obesity did not consider themselves to be overweight, suggests a cross-sectional analysis of NHANES (National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey) data.

This trend has increased over the last two decades and was especially true of non-Hispanic Blacks and persons with low socio-economic status. The findings are published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

The researchers from the University of Chicago Medicine analyzed NHANES data to investigate the trends of overweight and obesity self-awareness among US adults with overweight or obesity.

They also looked at factors associated with obesity self-awareness and weight loss attempts among adults with obesity. Survey participants were asked about self-perception of weight using the question: "Do you consider yourself to be overweight, underweight, or about the right weight?" They found that more than a significant proportion of those overweight or obese did not recognize the issue.

The authors say that as BMIs of Americans increase, people adjust their views on normal weight range

may contribute to increasing obesity rates in the United States.

The authors also found that health

The authors also found that health

The authors also found that health



to promote positive body images and suggest the use of varying BMI cut-offs to define overweight and obesity may be necessary when comparing varying demographic subsets.

The authors still emphasize that this study data showed persons with obesity who did not view their weight to be overweight were less likely to try to lose weight and this

professional-guided education on weight improved both obesity self-awareness and attempts to lose weight among persons with obesity.

However, having health insurance did not affect obesity self-awareness, suggesting health professionals are not routinely providing weight counselling to patients with obesity. -Agencies

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For and on behalf of the Lt.Governor, J&K UT e-tenders (in Single Cover System) are invited on percentage % basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K State Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the following works:-

S. No.	Name of Work	Est. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In rupees)	Earnest Money (In Rs.)	Time of Completion in days	Time & Date of Opening of Bid	Class of Contractor	Major Head of Account
01	Providing fixing laying of pipe line for Khan Mohalla upper Suliman Bhat Mohalla Gomal Jabdi Patti Mir Mohalla upper Gomal Khatana and Chuck Mohalla Lontha Lohar Mohalla Bukhayan for WSs Lontha Shortpallah (Including cost of pipes)	10.06	600/-	20120/-	15 days	17/12/2020	BEE CEE DEE	NRDWP

Position of AAA/TS : Approved  
Position of funds : committed

- The Bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website [www.jk-tenders.gov.in](http://www.jk-tenders.gov.in) as per schedule of dates given below:-
 

01.	Date of issue of Tender Notice	05/12/2020
02.	Period of downloading of bidding documents	From 06/12/2020 to 16/12/2020 (4.00P.M)
03.	Bid submission start date	06/12/2020 from (10.00A.M)
04.	Bid submission end date	16/12/2020 upto (04.00P.M)
05.	Date & time of opening Bids (on line)	17/12/2020 at (10.00A.M) in the Office of the Executive Engineer Spl Sub Div Tangdar
- Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of E Challan / Treasury receipt in favour of Executive Engineer Spl Sub Div Tangdar (tender inviting authority) and Earnest money / Bid security in shape of CDR/FDR pledged to Executive Engineer Spl Sub Div Tangdar (Tender receiving authority).
- The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on web Site [www.jketenders.gov.in](http://www.jketenders.gov.in) and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same web site in the office of the Executive Engineer Spl Sub Div Tangdar (Tender receiving authority)
- The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of bids.

No: 3089-98  
Dt: 05/12/2020

Executive Engineer  
Spl Sub Div Tangdar

DIPK-10091/20

## Pope To Visit Iraq In March, First Foreign Trip Since Covid Pandemic

Agencies

Paris: Pope Francis will break a 15-month hiatus from international travel to visit Iraq in



March. The Holy See Press Office has confirmed that the Pope accepted the invitation of the Republic of Iraq and the local Catholic Church.

The Apostolic Journey will take place from 5 March to 8 March and includes visits to Baghdad, the plain of Ur, Mosul, and Qaraqosh.

His itinerary will be re-

leased at a later date, and will, according to the Press Office take into consideration the evolution of the worldwide health emergency.

In January this year, Pope Francis met the President of Iraq, Barham Salih, at an audience in the Vatican.

The two spoke about "preserving the historical presence of Christians in the country" and "highlighting the need to guarantee their security and a place in the future of Iraq", according to the Holy See press office.

A few hundred thousand Christians are left in Iraq following sectarian warfare after the 2003 US-led invasion and the Islamic State group's sweep through a third of the country in 2014.

The Iraq foreign ministry said the March visit "symbolises a message of peace to Iraq and the whole region".

## Satellite-Controlled Gun Used To Kill Iranian Nuclear Scientist: Report

Agencies

Tehran: A satellite-controlled machine gun was used in last week's assassination of a top Iranian nuclear scientist, the semi-official Mehr news agency reported.

Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh, who was killed in a gun and car bomb attack on the outskirts of Tehran on November 27, was driving on a highway east of the capital when the weapon "zoomed in" on him "using artificial intelligence," Mehr said on Sunday, quoting Commodore Ali Fa-

operated by someone who later fled the country.

Fadavi said on Sunday that the gun fired a total of 13 shots at Fakhri-zadeh and managed to target him with such accuracy that his wife, sitting just inches away from him in the same vehicle, escaped injury. He added that 11 bodyguards in separate cars were also accompanying the couple at the time.

The incident is the second targeted killing of a high-ranking Iranian official since January, when outgoing US President Donald Trump ordered a drone strike on General Qas-



**The incident is the second targeted killing of a high-ranking Iranian official since January, when outgoing US President Donald Trump ordered a drone strike on General Qassem Soleimani.**

davi, deputy commander of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

Various accounts of his death have emerged since the incident. While early news reports said he was caught in a gunfight between his bodyguards, others said that he was fired at by a remote-controlled machine gun mounted on a pick-up truck

sem Soleimani.

Tehran has blamed Israel for Fakhri-zadeh's killing, the fifth assassination of a nuclear scientist on Iranian soil since 2010. Israel hasn't commented on the allegations, however Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had singled out the scientist in a power-point presentation on Iran's nuclear program in April 2018.



## China Prepares Large-Scale Rollout Of Coronavirus Vaccines

Press Trust Of India

**Beijing: Provincial governments across China are placing orders for experimental, domestically made coronavirus vaccines, though health officials have yet to say how well they work or how they may reach the country's 1.4 billion people.**

Developers are speeding up final testing, the Chinese foreign minister said during a UN meeting last week, as Britain approved emergency use of Pfizer Inc's vaccine candidate and providers scrambled to set up distribution.

Even without final approval, more than 1 million health care workers and others in China who are deemed at high risk of infection have received experimental vaccines under emergency use permission. Developers have yet to disclose how effective their vaccines are and possible side effects.

China's fledgling pharmaceutical industry has at least five vaccines from four producers being tested in more than a dozen countries including Russia, Egypt and Mexico. Health experts say even if they are successful, the certification process for the United States, Europe, Japan and other developed countries might be too complex for them to be used

there. However, China said it will ensure the products are affordable for developing countries and has been actively pursuing deals across the world.

On Sunday, 1.2 million doses of the Chinese company Sino-vac's vaccine arrived in Indonesia, the government said. "We are very grateful, thank God, the vaccine is now available so that we can immediately curb the spread of the COVID-19 disease, President Joko Widodo said.

Within China, so far only one developer, China National Pharmaceutical Group, known as Sinopharm, said in November it applied for final market approval for use of its vaccine. Others have been approved for emergency use on people deemed at high risk of infection.

We must be prepared for large-scale production, Vice Premier Sun Chunlan said during a visit Wednesday to developers, according to the official Xinhua News Agency.

Sun, who has as overseen much of the country's response, visited one of Sinopharm's Beijing subsidiary companies, Sino-vac and a research lab under the National Medical Products Administration, a regulatory agency that approves medical products for public use. The government has yet to say how many people it plans to vaccinate. Sun said plans call for vac-

inating border personnel and other high-risk populations this month. The companies are using more traditional techniques than Western developers.

They say unlike Pfizer's vaccine, which must be kept frozen at temperatures as low as minus 70 degrees Celsius (minus 94 Fahrenheit), theirs can be stored at 2 to 8 C (36 to 46 F). The Chinese producers have yet to say how they might be distributed. Health experts question why China is using experimental vaccines on such a vast scale now that the outbreak is largely under control within its borders.

Health officials previously said China will be able to manufacture 610 million doses by the end of this year and ramp up to 1 billion doses next year.

The government of Jiangsu province, where the major city of Nanjing is located, issued a procurement notice for vaccines from Sino-vac and Sinopharm on Wednesday for emergency use.

Authorities in Sichuan province in the west, which has about 85 million people, announced Monday they were already buying vaccines. An official newspaper in Anhui province, southeast of Beijing, said a local residential committee issued a notice asking whether residents

## US, China Dominated Arms Market In 2019: Report

Agencies

Stockholm, Sweden: US and Chinese companies dominated the global arms market in 2019, while the Middle East made its first appearance among the 25 biggest weapons manufacturers, a report by the SIPRI research institute said Monday.

The US arms industry accounted for 61 percent of sales by the world's "Top 25" manufacturers last year, ahead of China's 15.7 percent, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

Total sales by the "Top 25" rose by 8.5 percent to \$361 billion, or 50 times the annual budget of the UN's peacekeeping operations.

Six US companies and three Chinese firms were in the top 10, rounded out by Britain's BAE Systems in seventh spot.

sales rose by almost five percent in 2019 -- "this increase corresponds to the implementation of reforms to modernise the People's Liberation Army underway since 2015," she said.

US companies Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Northrop Grumman, Raytheon and General Dynamics clinched the top five spots, while China's AVIC, CETC and Norinco held spots six, eight and nine. US group L3Harris Technologies was in 10th place.

"Europe remains a bit dispersed...but if you combine the European companies together you could have European companies the same size" as US and Chinese manufacturers, Beraud-Sudreau noted.

Airbus (European, 13th in the ranking) and Thales (French, 14th) can meanwhile boast of having the strongest international presence -- each is represented in 24 countries, ahead of US Boeing.

"European companies are more internationalised" than others, Beraud-Sudreau said.

**Breakthrough in the Mideast**

For the first time, a company from the Middle East made it into the "Top 25": EDGE, of the United Arab Emirates, was formed by the consolidation of some 25 defence entities in 2019.

In 22nd spot, EDGE "is a good illustration of how the combination of high national demand for military products and services with a desire to become less dependent on foreign suppliers is driving the growth of arms companies in the Middle East," SIPRI researcher Pieter Wezeman said in the report.



"China and the United States are the two biggest states in terms of global arms spending, with companies cut to size," Lucie Beraud-Sudreau, director of SIPRI's arms and military expenditure programme, told AFP.

The US has dominated the market for decades, but for China -- whose companies'

## New Smartphone-Based Covid Test Gives Results In Less Than 30 Minutes



Agencies

Washington: Scientists have developed a novel technology for a CRISPR-based COVID-19 diagnostic test that uses a smartphone camera to provide accurate results in under 30 minutes.

According to the research published in the journal Cell, the new diagnostic test can not only generate a positive or negative result, but it also measures the viral load -- in a given sample.

All CRISPR diagnostics to date have required that the viral RNA be converted to DNA and amplified before it can be detected, adding time and complexity, the researchers said.

In contrast, the new ap-

proach skips all the conversion and amplification steps, using CRISPR to directly detect the viral RNA, they said.

"One reason we are excited about CRISPR-based diagnostics is the potential for quick, accurate results at the point of need," said Jennifer Doudna, a senior investigator at Gladstone Institutes in the US.

"This is especially helpful in places with limited access to testing, or when frequent, rapid testing is needed. It could eliminate a lot of the bottlenecks we've seen with COVID-19," Jennifer Doudna said.

Jennifer Doudna won the 2020 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for co-discovering CRISPR-Cas genome editing, the technology that underlies this work.

### NEWS MAKERS

## Asteroid Dust Collected By Japan Space Mission Arrives On Earth

Tokyo, Japan: In a streak of light across the night sky, samples collected from a distant asteroid arrived on Earth on Sunday after being dropped off by Japanese space probe Hayabusa-2.

Scientists hope the precious samples, which are expected to amount to no more than 0.1 grams of material, could help shed light on the origin of life and the formation of the universe.

The capsule carrying samples entered the atmosphere just before 2:30 am Japan time (1730 GMT Saturday), creating a shooting-star-like fireball as it entered Earth's atmosphere.

"Six years and it has fi-



nally come back to Earth," an official narrating a live broadcast of the arrival said, as images showed officials from Japan's space agency JAXA cheering and pumping

their fists in excitement.

A few hours later, JAXA confirmed the samples had been recovered, with help from beacons emitted by the capsule as it plummeted to

Earth after separating from Hayabusa-2 on Saturday, while the fridge-sized probe was some 220,000 kilometres (137,000 miles) away.

"We found the capsule! Together with the parachute! Wow!," the mission's Twitter account tweeted.

The capsule was recovered in the southern Australian desert, and will now be processed before being sent to Japan.

The samples were collected by Hayabusa-2, which launched in 2014, from the asteroid Ryugu, some 300 million kilometres from Earth.

The probe collected both surface dust and pristine material from below the surface that was stirred up by firing an "impactor" into the asteroid.

## Mass Evacuation In Germany's Frankfurt After World War 2 Bomb Found

Berlin: Nearly 13,000 residents were evacuated in Frankfurt on Sunday as experts defused an unexploded World War II bomb, local emergency services said.

The 500-kilogramme (1,100-pound) British bomb had been found on a construction site in Germany's financial capital on Thursday, the emergency services said.

A 700-metre (half-mile) evacuation radius was set up in the west of the city centre in an area that included a number of old people's homes, heating and internet infrastructure and facilities of the Deutsche Bahn national rail operator.

The work was expected to



continue into the evening because of coronavirus restrictions, the authorities said.

Some 75 years after the war, Germany remains littered with unexploded ordnance, often uncovered during construction work.

Earlier this year, experts defused seven World War II bombs found on the future lo-

cation of Tesla's first European factory, just outside Berlin. Sizeable bombs have also been defused in Cologne and Dortmund this year.

In 2017, the discovery of a 1.4-tonne bomb in Frankfurt prompted the evacuation of 65,000 people -- the largest such operation since the end of the war in Europe in 1945.

# Centre sends countrywide advisory for Bharat Bandh; asks states to tighten security, ensure peace

Union Home Ministry says state governments and UT administrations must ensure that Covid guidelines issued with regard to health and social distancing are strictly followed



**NEW DELHI:** The Centre has asked all states and Union Territories to tighten security during Tuesday's 'Bharat Bandh' called by the farmers unions and supported by opposition parties, while asserting that peace and tranquillity must be maintained on that day, officials said.

In a countrywide advisory, the Union Home Ministry also said the state governments and UT administrations must ensure that the COVID-19 guidelines issued with regard to health and social distancing are strictly followed.

The states and UTs were told that peace and tranquillity must be maintained during the 'Bharat Bandh' and precautionary measures taken so that no untoward incident takes place anywhere in the country, a home ministry official said on Monday.

The 'Bharat Bandh' has been called by the farmers' unions who have been protesting against the three farm laws enacted in the Monsoon Session of Parliament. Major political parties, such as the Congress, NCP, DMK, SP, TRS and Left on Sunday came out in strong support of the bandh. Thousands of farmers, mostly from Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, are protesting at various border points of Delhi against the new farm laws.

Talks between the government and protesting farmers remained inconclusive on Saturday even after five rounds of discussions as union leaders stuck to their demand for the repeal of the new farm laws and went on a 'maun vrat' seeking a clear 'yes or no' reply, forcing the Centre to call for another meeting on December 9 to resolve the deadlock. PTI

## Reforms needed for development, says PM amid farmers' protest

**LUCKNOW:** Amid the row over laws meant to bring a major change in the agri-marketing sector, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said reforms are needed for development and some laws from the past century have become a burden now.

Launching the Agra Metro rail project through video conference, Modi said the reforms carried out by his government are also getting reflected in election results.

His pitch on the importance of reforms comes ahead of Tuesday's Bharat Bandh over the three new farm laws enacted at the Centre. But during his brief address, the Prime Minister made no direct reference to the new laws or farmers' protests.

"Reforms are needed for development. Reforms are very much needed for a new order and to give new facilities. We cannot build the next century with the laws of the previous century," he said.

"Some laws that used to be good in the past century have become a burden in the present century. Reforms should be a continuous process," he said.

Modi said his government is carrying out "holistic reforms". "Earlier, reforms used to happen in a piecemeal manner, or keeping in mind some sectors and departments," the Prime Minister said. He said the reforms carried out in recent past have infused

self-confidence in the country, adding that people will be satisfied when they go through the "finer details".

"This confidence has been seen in every election in the recent past. A glimpse of this confidence is seen in the election results in every part of the country, including Uttar Pradesh," he said.

The Prime Minister said in recent years the poor and the middle class have showered their "unprecedented blessings" on the efforts of the government. He said their support and the small joys experienced by the countrymen "gives me the courage to do new things and take new initiatives".

Modi said his government intends to solve the festering problems faced by people, make life easy, increase investment and ensure the maximum use of modern technology.

He said a major problem in the country's infrastructure sector was that new projects were announced but not much attention was given on how they will be funded.

His government ensures the availability of funds at the start of a new project itself, Modi said.

He said over Rs 100 lakh crore will be spent under the National Infrastructure Pipeline project and work is being done on the master plan for multi-modal connectivity. Efforts are also on to attract investment from all over the world to

improve the country's infrastructure, he added. Work is being carried out on 1,000 km of new Metro rail lines in 27 cities countrywide, Modi said, claiming big progress in this sector since his first government took charge in 2014.

The Rs 8,379.62-crore Agra Metro project has two corridors with a total length of 29.4 km and will connect major tourist attractions like Taj Mahal, Agra Fort and Sikandra with railway stations and bus stands.

The project is scheduled to be completed in five years. Agra has a population of 26 lakh, and about 60 lakh tourists visit the city every year. The Prime Minister said tourism sector benefits the most from better connectivity and infrastructure. Work is on to make "local tourism vocal", he added.

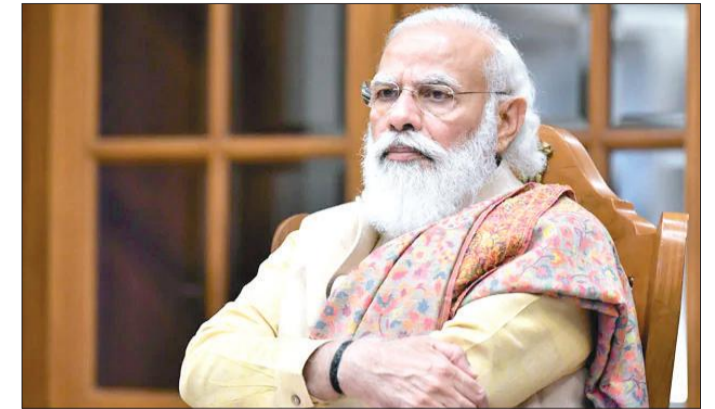
He said the government has not only increased the number of countries covered under the e-visa scheme, it has also significantly reduced the tax on hotel room tariff.

"With the efforts of the government, India is now ranked at number 34 on Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index.

In 2013, India was ranked 65th on this index," he said, while hoping for a recovery in the sector as the coronavirus situation improves. Union Housing and Urban Affairs Hardeep Singh Puri, UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath attended the event. PTI

## Need Reforms For Development, Old Laws A Burden: PM Amid Farmer Protests

The government believes in all-round holistic reforms, he stressed after inaugurating the construction of the Agra Metro project via video conferencing.



**LUCKNOW:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday asserted that reforms are needed for development, and said some laws of the past century have become a "burden" in the current times.

The government believes in all-round holistic reforms, he stressed after inaugurating the construction of the Agra Metro project via video conferencing.

"Reforms are needed for development. Some laws which used to be good in the past century, have become a burden in the present century," he said.

His remarks came in the backdrop of ongoing protests by farmers against three new farm laws. "Our

government is doing holistic reforms. Earlier reforms used to happen in a piecemeal manner," PM Modi said.

He also said that his government intends to solve pestering problems faced by people, make life easy, increase investment, and ensure maximum use of modern technology.

The Rs.379.62 crore Agra Metro project comprises 2 corridors with a total length of 29.4 km and will connect major tourist attractions like Taj Mahal, Agra Fort, and Sikandra with railway stations and bus stands.

The project, which is scheduled to be completed in 5 years, will benefit the 26 lakh population of the city of Agra. It will also cater to more than 60 lakh tourists who visit Agra every year.

**"OUR GOVERNMENT** is doing holistic reforms. Earlier reforms used to happen in a piecemeal manner"

## 'Bharat Bandh' from 11 am to 3 pm on Tuesday: BKU

'During the bandh essential services would not be curtailed and office-goers can move freely'

**NEW DELHI:** The Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) has said the 'Bharat Bandh' on December 8 would start at 11 am and end at 3 pm as they don't want to cause inconvenience to the public.

BKU spokesperson Rakesh Tikait said, "The 'Bharat Bandh' will begin at 11 am and continue till 3 pm on Tuesday." The farmers are protesting against the Centre's new agricultural laws for the last several days.

During the bandh essential services would not be curtailed and office-goers can move freely, said the BKU spokesperson.

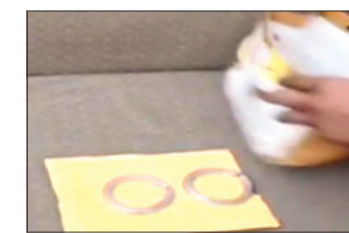
The farmers call for a 'Bharat Bandh' is being supported by several political parties, including the Congress, Left, Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), Samajwadi Party (SP), Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS), Shiv Sena and National Democratic Alliance (NDA) ally - Rashtriya Loktantrik Party (RLP).

The fifth round of talks between the Central government and farmer leaders on Saturday noon remained inconclusive as several farmer representatives said they demanded only the repeal of the three new Union farm laws.

Sources say the government was agreeable to amendments to The Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020; The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020; and The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020 while farmers are pushing for the scrapping of the "anti-farmer" laws. - IANS



## Air India Crew Member Hides Rs 72.46 Lakh Gold In Overhead Bin, Arrested



**NEW DELHI:** An Air India crew member and a catering staff were arrested by the customs officials for allegedly trying to smuggle into the country gold valuing about Rs 72.46 lakh at the Indira Gandhi International airport, an official statement said on Monday.

The crew, who had come in a flight from London on Sunday, after seeing the customs officers had secreted the gold in the overhead bin of the aircraft, it said.

The officers later apprehended the

staff of the catering company - M/s Ambassador Sky Chef - and "based on the discussion between the above said crew of Air India and staff of the catering company" recovered four 'kadas' of gold coated with silver colour from the aircraft on the identification of the crew, the statement issued by the customs said.

The total weight of the recovered gold is 1.667 kg, having tariff value of Rs 72.47 lakh, it said. The gold was seized and both the accused were arrested, according to the statement.

"Further, both the above said persons admitted their role in smuggling of 1.5 kg of gold on December 3, 2020 from London into India," it said.

Thus, these two persons were directly or indirectly involved in the smuggling of gold to the tune of 3.11 kg (1.5 kg on December 3 and 1.667 kg on Sunday), the statement added.

## Karnataka to bring law against 'love jihad' during next session, says minister

An anti-cow slaughter bill will be introduced during this session, says R. Ashoka

The anti-cow slaughter bill will be introduced during the ongoing winter session of the Karnataka legislature, while a law against "love jihad" will be taken up in the next session, State Revenue Minister R. Ashoka said on Monday.

"It has been decided at the government level to enact anti-cow slaughter legislation during this session.

Cow is worshiped as god by farmers.. there is a special place for cows in Indian culture. To stop the killing of cows we are beginning this law in Karnataka," Ashoka said.

Speaking to reporters here, he asserted that it is guarantee that the anti-cow slaughter bill will be cent percent introduced.

"No love jihad during this session..in the next session we will remove love jihad," he added.

A team of officials led by Animal Husbandry Minister Prabhu Chavan had recently visited Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat, where anti-cow slaughter law has been enacted,



to study about its implementation, aimed at strengthening the bill to be introduced during the session that began today.

Officials have been directed to gather information regarding an ordinance promulgated in Uttar Pradesh against "love jihad", Home Minister

Basavaraj Bommai had said, asserting the state will have a law against such practices.

Uttar Pradesh had recently promulgated an ordinance against forcible or fraudulent religious conversions, which provides for imprisonment of up to 10 years and fine of up

to Rs 50,000 under different categories.

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### اظہار شکر

قال رسول اللہ ﷺ: من لم یبکر الخسوق لم یبکر الخساق

خانوادہ سادات رضوی نابدی پورہ کے عزیز رکن اور آیت اللہ سید احمد رضوی کشمیری (رحمۃ اللہ علیہ) کے فرزند و اکابر آغا سید محمد رضوی کے والد آغا محمود رضوی کی وفات پر شفیق اور جن شخصیات خصوصاً مقام معظم رہبری حضرت آیت اللہ العظمی سید علی خامنہ ای (مدظہ العالی) کے ہندوستان کیلئے خصوصی نماز جمعہ الاسلام و المسلمین حجاج آفت ای مہدی مہدوی پورہ (رحمۃ اللہ علیہ) جنوں کشمیر کے محلے گرام، وادھوڑان، مذہبی، سیاسی و سماجی تنظیموں کے سربراہان، حوزہ و ملیہ قم کے اساتید و طلبہ ہائی کورٹ سے وابستہ راہبین، ذرائع ابلاغ کے نامانداروں، محکمہ کتب و ناشران پورہ اور ملازمین طبیعت سے جڑے افراد سے براہ راست، یا بذریعہ ٹیلیفون، ای میل، وٹس ایپ اور سوشل میڈیا کے ذریعہ جنوں و کشمیر، ہندوستان و پاکستان اور اسلامی جمہوریہ ایران سے تیز اسلام و المسلمین آغا سید عبدالہادی، ڈاکٹر آغا سید محمد رضوی، آغا سید امجد رضوی، آغا سید مصطفیٰ رضوی، آغا سید مہر رضوی، آغا سید مہر رضوی اور خاندان کے دیگر اراکین کے ساتھ تفریق پرستی کی اور اس سانچے پر حث نمودارہ واداستہ نابدی پورہ کے ساتھ تسلیت اور یگانگی کا اظہار کیا اور مرحوم جن جن میں دعائے مغفرت کی ہم جھانسانہ طور پر بھی کا شکر یہ ادا کرتے ہیں اور خدا کی بارگاہ میں دست بدعا میں کہ انہیں جزائے خیر عطا فرمائے۔ آمین

سادات رضویہ نابدی پورہ ڈی ڈی بل سرسینگر