



Maximum : 5.4°  
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Humidity : 91%

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SUNRISE  
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02 Jumadi-ul-Sani | 1442 Hijri | Vol:24 | Issue: 13 | Pages:08 | Price: ₹3

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**Quote!**

The most complicated skill is to be simple.

— Dejan Stojanovic

**NEWS DIGEST**

**Car Used By J&K House In Delhi Stolen**

**NEW DELHI:** A car used by the Jammu and Kashmir House in Delhi was allegedly stolen from outside Prem Nagar market here, police said on Thursday.

The car was stolen on Tuesday when the driver parked the vehicle outside the market, they said.

A case has been registered in this regard at the Kotta Mubarakpur Police Station, said Atul Kumar Thakur, Deputy Commissioner of Police (South).

The car's bonnet had government vehicle' printed on it, police said, adding that CCTV cameras are being scanned to identify the accused and trace the vehicle.

**PM Greets Soldiers On Army Day**

**NEW DELHI:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday greeted soldiers on Army Day and praised the Indian Army, saying it is strong, brave and resolute.

In a tweet, he said Indian soldiers have made the country proud as he wished them on behalf of the people.

"Our army is strong, courageous and determined, which has always raised the head of the country with pride. I salute the Indian Army on behalf of all the countrymen," PM Modi tweeted in Hindi.

Army Day is celebrated to mark the first Indian general taking over the command of the Indian Army from a British officer in 1949.

**Sarjan Barkati Released**

**SRINAGAR:** Religious preacher Sarjan Barkati was released on Friday, a day after he was detained in Zainpura area of Shopain by police. Barkati was released on Friday afternoon, a day after he was rounded up by police from his residence in Reban area of Shopain on Thursday, news agency GNS reported while quoting official sources.

Barkati was released on October 28 last, four years after he was arrested during unrest in the aftermath of the killing of Hizb commander Burhan Wani in 2016.

Soon after his arrest, he was subsequently booked under Public Safety Act for organising anti-government rallies.

The cleric had earned the sobriquets like "pied piper" ● More On P6

**5 Passengers Hurt As Minibus Overtakes**

**SRINAGAR:** Five passengers were injured when a minibus they were travelling in turned turtle in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir on Friday.

Around 8:40 am Friday, a minibus (JK02V-8466) was on its way from Mandi towards Poonch when it met with an accident at Chandak near Christ School, resulting in minor injuries to five passengers, local news agency GNS reported. The injured identified as Ashaq Hussain, Mohammad Javaid, Wali Mohammad, Mohammad Iqbal and Mohammad Shabir were shifted to district hospital Poonch for treatment.

**Hideout 'Busted' In Lolab Forest**

**SRINAGAR:** The government forces on Friday busted a militant hideout and recovered arms and ammunition from it during a search operation in Lolab area of Kupwara district, reports said.

A joint team of Army's 28 RR, Special Operations Group (SOG) of police and the personnel of CRPF162 Battalion launched a cordon and search operation (CASO) after receiving inputs about suspicious movement in Nawabehak Kauri forest area of Lolab, news agency GNS reported while quoting official sources.

During searches, the team, as per the official sources recovered a cache of arms and ammunitions in the dense forests. ● More On P6

**Vaccination Drive To Roll Out Today**



Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI:** India is all set to roll out the world's biggest vaccination programme on

Saturday with over 3 lakh healthcare workers to be inoculated on the first day of the much-anticipated drive. ● More On P6

**Covishield Shots At 40 Vaccination Sites In J&K**

Agencies

The Jammu and Kashmir administration is all set to kick-start the Covid-19 vaccination drive on Saturday, days after the Union Territory received the first shipment ● More On P6

**Div Com Delivers Vaccine In Gurez**

Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, PK Pole on Friday visited snowbound Gurez Valley for two day marathon camp to deliver COVID-19 vaccine and also to have first-hand appraisal of winter preparedness and snow clearance efforts. ● More On P6

**COVID-19**

**5 Deaths Reported In J&K**

Observer Monitoring Desk

**SRINAGAR:** Jammu and Kashmir reported on Friday five more coronavirus deaths, including two middle-aged women, even as 144 fresh cases were detected across the Union Territory during the last 24 hours.

Among the victims, officials said, three were from Jammu division and two from the Valley— a 55-year-old woman from Kulgam and a 50-year from Beerwah in Budgam district. The victims from Jammu division included a 75-year-old man from Gadigarh, a 67-year-old man ● More On P6

**Trial Run On Bailey Bridge Today**

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The trial run on Bailey bridge along the Srinagar-Jammu highway in Ramban district will be conducted on Saturday before opening it up for traffic, officials said Friday.

This was stated by Deputy Commissioner (DC), Ramban, Nazim Zai Khan after inspecting the progress of construction work of Bailey bridge besides repair work of damaged concrete bridge, at Kela Morh Ramban on Friday, an official spokesperson said. Chief Engineer BRO, Brigadier IK Jaggi, Additional Deputy Commissioner, ● More On P6

**Govt Relaxes Upper Age Limit For CCE Exams**

Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** The Government on Friday announced "one-time" relaxation in the upper age limit for the ensuing Jammu and Kashmir Combined Competitive Examination (JKCCE).

The announcement was made by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha keeping in view the demands from aspirants and several delegations.

"In view of demand of several delegations/ aspirants, the J&K government for the last time granted one-time relaxation in upper age limit ● More On P6



**Biden Team Picks 2nd Kashmiri Origin Member**

Observer Monitoring Desk

**SRINAGAR:** President elect Joe Biden has picked another Kashmiri origin expert in his core team as he prepares to roll out his initial proposal for pandemic relief later Thursday.

Sameera Fazili will be a deputy director of the National Economic Council focused on manufacturing, innovation and domestic competition. Born to Kashmiri

parents Sameera was director of engagement for the community and economic development department of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta.

This is the second appointment of a Kashmir-origin expert in the Biden administration. Earlier Biden selected a young Kashmir-American Aisha Shah, as one of the main functionaries in the Digital Strategy Team of the White House.

While Sameera Fazili will be a deputy director of the National Economic Council focused on ● More On P6

**Govt Forms Panel To Check Fraud Appointments In SDD**

Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** Lieutenant Governor-led dispensation has ordered for re-constitution of Fact Finding Committee to examine 'fraudulent appointments in Skill Development Department.'

"In suspension of Government Order No. 578-GAD of 2019 dated 11.05.2019, it is hereby ordered that the Fact Finding Committee constituted in terms of aforesaid Government order for looking into 'fraudulent appointments made between 2010-2018' in the Skill Development Department and Autonomous Bodies/

Corporations/Organizations under Administrative Control shall comprise of; Principal Secretary to Government, Housing & Urban Development Department as Chairman besides Secretary to the Government, Department of Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction and Secretary to the Government, Tribal Affairs Department as members," reads an order issued by the government in this regard. The Committee, as per the order, shall identify those responsible for fraudulent appointments, if any, and submit its report by 15.02.2021. (GNS)

**Army Chief's Message To China**

**'Don't Make Mistake Of Testing Patience'**

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI:** In a clear message to China, Chief of Army Staff Gen MM Naravane on Friday said no one should make any mistake of testing India's patience though it is committed to resolve the border standoff along the northern frontier through talks and political efforts.

In an address at the Army Day parade, Gen Naravane said a "befitting response" was given to



the "conspiracy" to make unilateral changes on the border and that the sacrifice of the Galwan heroes in eastern Ladakh will not go waste. ● More On P6

**Top Journalist Who Became News Herself Quit NDTV For Teaching At Harvard Says Job Offer Was Fake**

KO Web Desk

**SRINAGAR:** Job scams in India are rampant and countless victims have fallen for them. But it is perhaps for the first time in India a prominent personality has fallen victim of a spectacular phishing attack.

Six months after a popular TV journalist and new anchor Nidhi Razdan quit her job after a 21 years long stint at NDTV to teach at the prestigious Harvard University, she revealed on Friday that she was a victim of a sophisticated phishing attack and that



the job offer was fake. In June 2020, Nidhi revealed her resignation from NDTV and her new career path, which will be teaching journalism at the prestigious

Harvard University. "After 21 years at NDTV, I am changing direction and moving on. Later this year, I start as an Associate Professor teaching journalism ● More On P6

**Recently Held Gram Sabha's Fake: RTIM**

Observer Monitoring Desk

**SRINAGAR:** Jammu & Kashmir RTI Movement on Friday claimed that fake gram sabhas were held across many places in Jammu and Kashmir recently to constitute the Forest Rights Committees (FRCs) under the Forest Rights Act 2006 (FRA) which has been rolled out in the Union Territory.

In a statement issued to media, Chairman J&K RTI Movement Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat said that due to cold weather conditions and snowfall not even one percent people attended the Gram Sabha meetings across J&K ● More On P6

**Police Much Free In Governor Rule: Former Top Cop**

Auqib Javeed

Once thought as a leading light of 'opinionated police'—who wanted the media to correct its Kashmir branding—former Director General of Police, SP Vaid is currently using words as his weapon.

He lately threw his weight behind his parent department's "fake encounter" fact-finding, demanding that the culprits who killed the three innocent boys at Amshipora should be charged with murder.

After hanging up his boots, the tech-savvy ex-cop who presided over an intense anti-militancy campaign in Kashmir is now wondering about the unabated recruitment in the post-abrogated political landscape.

While calling for a study and societal participation to stop boys for heading woods, Vaid in a chat with Kashmir Observer talks about the security situation of the valley in detail.

How do you see the current security situation in Kashmir?



The situation seems to be under control. You can hardly see any disruption of law and order. But infiltration attempts

are still made by militants in Jammu and Kashmir.

Despite hundreds of militants killed during your

tenure, recruitment is still unabated. Has the counter-insurgent offensive failed as a strategy to curb militancy?

Yes, it remains the fact that militant recruitments haven't stopped. That is why I am saying we need to find out why local youth are joining the militant ranks and what drives them towards it.

The youth are leaving their homes, bright careers and near and dear ones, despite knowing that they will be killed within months.

We need to know, because they are after all our boys. By whatever means it will happen, we've to stop them from joining militancy.

During your tenure you repeatedly maintained that Pakistan is instigating youth through social media. And yet, 2020 saw 167 youths from Kashmir joining militant groups, despite restrictions imposed on the internet?

See, I agree. ● More On P6

TALKING POINT

# 3 Reasons A Negative Test Doesn't Necessarily Mean You're Not Infected

Marisa Iati, The Washington Post

Rampant community transmission of the coronavirus and a crippled vaccine rollout have boxed people into a corner: Many are relying on negative test results, inherently limited in usefulness, as a certificate of clearance to see family and friends.

While testing is critical to containing the outbreak, a negative test result is not a free pass to forgo social distancing, mask-wearing and large gatherings. Here are a few reminders about what a negative coronavirus test means and doesn't mean.

## The tests still have varying degrees of accuracy

Coronavirus testing in the United States has ramped up significantly in recent months, with the daily test count hovering around 1.5 million in January. There are two categories of tests: PCR (polymerase chain reaction) tests - considered the "gold standard" - and less-accurate antigen tests.

PCR tests use a molecular process and are processed in a lab. Faster and cheaper antigen tests

detect proteins on the virus's surface. Most rapid home tests, estimated to be about 90% accurate, use the antigen technology.

PCR tests are your best bet for getting a sense of whether you're infected, even though those results take longer than antigen results. Still, PCR tests can result in false negatives.

That's in part because the giant cotton swabs used in many of those tests may not pick up all traces of the virus deep in your nasal cavity. The virus may have moved from your nose to your lungs or somewhere else, or the swab may not have been inserted far enough.

But nasopharyngeal swabs, which collect samples from the back of your nose and throat, are still more reliable than less invasive throat swabs and nasal swabs.

## A test may not be able to detect the virus early in its course

Early in an infection, the virus may not have reproduced enough to be detectable. The false negative rate of PCR tests on the day of exposure is 100%, but falls to about 38% five days later as symptoms usually set in, according to an analysis published in



the Annals of Internal Medicine. The rate decreases further, to about 20%, after three more days.

"We don't yet understand exactly when a person who's infected will start testing positive for the

virus," Muge Cevik, a clinical lecturer in infectious diseases and medical virology at the University of St. Andrews, told The Washington Post in December. "So there are situations when a person could

test negative, but they could still be contagious."

If you think you've been exposed to the coronavirus but receive a negative test result, you may want to get tested again in

a few days. You should also self-quarantine while you're waiting for results.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggests quarantining for 14 days but considers 10 days acceptable if you haven't experienced symptoms. The agency also says it's probably safe to leave your home after seven days if you have no symptoms and have received a negative test result.

## You could test negative and become infected soon afterward

On top of the other limitations, a coronavirus test captures just one moment in time. You could walk out of a testing center and immediately contract the virus. The test you just took is not going to reflect your new infection.

This constraint is particularly important to keep in mind if you plan to travel after you learn the outcome of your test. A crowded airport terminal or rest-stop restroom could expose you to the virus after you've concluded that a negative test means you're not infected.

Gathering indoors is inherently risky, and a negative test result doesn't tell the full story.

## Psychiatric disorders lead to brain seizures: Study

A study led by investigators of Vanderbilt University Medical Center have claimed that sudden and uncontrolled electrical disturbance in the brain is associated with psychiatric disorders.

Functional seizures are sudden attacks or spasms that look like epileptic seizures but do not have the aberrant brain electrical patterns of epilepsy.

The research team, headed by Lea Davis, PhD, associate professor of Medicine and an investigator in the Vanderbilt Genetics Institute, confirmed associations between functional seizures and psychiatric disorders including posttraumatic stress disorder, anxiety and depression as well as sexual assault trauma.

They also discovered a novel association between functional seizures and cerebrovascular disease, including stroke.

The findings were reported in

the journal JAMA Network Open.

Also known as psychogenic nonepileptic seizures, functional seizures have been historically understudied. Patients often experience a long delay - on average seven years - before they receive an accurate diagnosis.

About 80 per cent of patients experiencing functional seizures are initially misdiagnosed with epilepsy and treated with anti-epileptic drugs, said Slavina Goleva, a graduate student in Molecular Physiology and Biophysics and first author of the study. An accurate diagnosis requires assessment with video electroencephalogram (EEG).

Davis got interested in functional seizures after hearing an NPR story several years ago.

"The story gave the patient perspective on these seizures - the stigma that patients felt and the difficulties they experienced in the medical system. I felt like studies within electronic health records could po-

tentially be really impactful for this community," Davis recalled.

Working with Kevin Haas, MD, PhD, associate professor of Neurology, the researchers developed an algorithm to identify people with functional seizures in the VUMC-EHR system.

"We initially recognized that finding these patients within the EHR would be a challenge because the ICD (International Classification of Diseases) codes are not as specific as they are for a lot of diseases," Goleva said.

In addition to ICD codes, the researchers included Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) codes and used natural language processing to search within the records for a list of keywords.

Goleva and Haas manually reviewed charts to confirm that the algorithm correctly identified patients with functional seizures.

-Agencies

## Killing cancer by unleashing the body's own immune system

A University of Missouri researcher might have found a new way to help the body's immune system get past that deception and destroy cancer.

"Normally, your body's immune cells are constantly on patrol to identify and destroy foreign entities in the body," said Yves Chabu, an assistant professor in the Division of Biological Sciences.

"Normal cells put up a 'don't-eat-me' molecular flag that is recognized by immune cells, thereby preventing the destruction of normal tissues. But some cancers have also developed the ability to mimic normal cells and produce this 'don't eat me' signal. As a consequence, the immune system fails to recognise cancer as a defective tissue and leaves it alone, which is bad news for the patient," added Chabu.

Immunotherapies are cancer drugs that essentially block the "don't-eat-me" signal coming from cancer and allow the immune system to kill it.

Chabu, whose appointment is in the College of Arts and Science, said while these immunotherapies work for certain types of cancers, prostate cancer is highly immunosuppressive, meaning the cancer's physical and molecular environments simply overpower the body's immune system.

But Chabu might have unlocked a solution with help from a more than 50-year-old strain of bacteria.

"Cancers are different in one individual to the next, even when they affect the same tissue. These inter-personal differences contribute to whether or not a particular therapy will effectively kill the cancer and help the patient. The bacteria itself is genetically pliable, therefore it can be genetically modified to over-



come patient-specific therapeutic limits," Chabu said.

"Imagine a patient whose cancer isn't responding to traditional therapies and has no other treatment options. One can envision genetically modifying the bacteria such that it can unload therapeutics that specifically exploit that cancer's unique vulnerabilities and kill it," added Chabu.

In a previous study, scientists at the Cancer Research Center and the University of Missouri developed a genetically distinct and non-toxic strain of salmonella called CRC2631 to select and kill cancer cells.

CRC2631 was derived from another strain of salmonella that had been stored at room temperature for more than half a century. Now, scientists like Chabu are demonstrating the ability for CRC2631, which enthusiastically targets cancerous tumours, to be used to unleash the body's immune system against prostate cancer.

"Because CRC2631 preferentially colonises tumour cells, the effect is mainly localized to the tumour. The use of CRC2631 to design and deliver patient-tailored therapeutics foretells potential in precision medicine, or the ability to tailor a treatment to a specific patient," Chabu said.

Highlighting the promise of personalised health care and the impact of large-scale interdisciplinary collaboration, the University of Missouri System's NextGen Precision Health initiative is bringing together innovators from across the system's four research universities in pursuit of life-changing precision health advancements.

It's a collaborative effort to leverage the strengths of Mizzou and entire UM System toward a better future for Missouri's health. An important part of the initiative is the construction of the new NextGen Precision Health building, which will expand collaboration between researchers, clinicians and industry leaders in a state-of-the-art research facility.

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Agencies

## Mechanical Hospital & Central Heating Division, Srinagar

(Phone No: 0194-2496089, www.medkmr.org, e-mail id: xenmhchdk@yahoo.in)

Subject: Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of 2-Post Hydraulic Lifts and Pneumatic guns along with allied fittings at Regional Workshop at State Motor Garages Department, Bemina, Srinagar.

References: This office NIT no: MHCHD/TS /2020-21/175/e-tenderingdt: 22.10.2020

### CANCELLATION

In view of technical reasons, the above referred work is here by cancelled and shall be tendered afresh shortly.

DIPK-11735/20

No: MHCHD/TS/8586-90

Dated: 14-01-2021

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer,  
MHCHD, Srinagar

## OFFICE OF THE TREASURY OFFICER DANGIWACHA

### SHORT TERM QUOTATION

Short term quotations are invited from reputed dealers for purchase of One No. 200 MAH Tubular Battery for use in office. The quotations affixed with Rs2 revenue stamp should reach this office within 7 days from the date of publication of notice in the newspaper.

DIPK-11664/20

Treasury Officer Dangiwachha

## AUTHORIZED OFFICER (DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER) KAMRAJ FOREST DIVISION ZANGLI KUPWARA

### PUBLIC NOTICE

The confiscation proceedings under section-52 of the Indian Forest Act, 1927 in respect of below mentioned seized vehicles are pending disposal before this forum and next date of hearing has been fixed on 25/01/2021 at 11:00 AM.

S.No.	Registration of the seized vehicle	Date/Location of seizure	Details of seized forest produce
01	JK01G/0297	05-05-2020/Mundji Sopore	Deodar/Kail Sawm = 15.04 Cfts
02	JK02C/4841	Intervening night of 14-15 April, 2019/ Sangri Sopore	Deodar Sawm = 21.32 Cfts
03	JK09/8549	26-04-2020/ Shartpora Kupwara	Deodar Sawm = 05.70 Cfts
04	JK09/3214	Intervening night of 14-15 Oct, 2019/ Kupwara	Deodar Round = 26 Cfts
05	JK01V/7806	Intervening night of 13-14 July, 2019/ Dardpora Lolab	Deodar Round/Sawm = 30.47 Cfts
06	JK05C/8301	Intervening night of 09-10 April, 2019/ Harvan Sopore	Kail Sawm = 20.53 Cfts
07	JK02BA/3662	Intervening night of 19-20 May, 2019/ Rampora Sopore	Deodar Sawm = 49.14 Cfts
08	JK01D/5323	27-05-2017/ Seelu Sopore	Deodar Sawm = 13.12 Cfts
09	JK05/5295	03-04-2017/ Bomai Sopore	Deodar/Kail Sawm = 36.32 Cfts
10	JK05/3404	22-09-2019/ Tujar Sopore	Deodar/Kail Sawm = 08.25 Cfts
11	Maximo without Reg. Number	11-07-2020/ Gutlipora Kupwara	Deodar Round = 14 Cfts
12	JK09A/6808	Intervening night of 12-13 May, 2019/ Kupwara	Deodar Sawm = 38.15 Cfts

In this connection, any person/persons having any interest with the seized property is/are directed through the medium of this public notice to appear before this forum in person on scheduled date and time, failing which this court shall be constrained to pass appropriate orders in ex-parte under law.

(Authorized Officer)  
Divisional Forest Officer,  
Kamraj Forest Division,  
Zangli Kupwara.

DIPK-11729/20



KASHMIR  
OBSERVER

Printed & Published by Sajjad Haider on behalf of the Kashmir Observer LLP  
Published from: # 5- Boulevard, Srinagar-190001  
Printed at: KT Press Pvt. Ltd, Rangreth Ind Area, Srinagar.  
RNI Registration No: 69503/98  
Postal Registration No-L/159/KO/SK/2014-16  
Editor-in-Chief: Sajjad Haider  
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K O V I E W

## As vaccine arrives

On Wednesday, Jammu and Kashmir received over 80,000 doses of the Oxford Covid-19 vaccine, Covishield, from the Pune-based Serum Institute of India. The inoculation drive will begin on January 16, along with the rest of India. As for the far-off places choppers have been arranged to supply the vaccines. Similarly, the vaccines will also be lifted to snow-bound places. In the first phase, three groups of people comprising health workers, and the frontline workers like police personnel, paramilitary forces personnel, and sanitation workers will be covered. The general population will be considered later.

Meanwhile, the number of Covid-19 cases has been progressively declining in J&K. On Wednesday, the union territory did not report any coronavirus deaths and only 121 new positive cases were recorded, 55 of them from Jammu division, taking the number of infected people to 1,22,885. The number of active cases has dropped to 1,629 while 1,19,344 patients have recovered so far. The death toll now stands at 1,912.

Most of the fresh cases were concentrated in Jammu and Srinagar cities – 47 and 35 respectively. Anantnag, Kulgam, Poonch, Ramban, Reasi and Kishtwar did not report any fresh cases. The cases were in single digits in the 12 districts.

The arrival of the vaccine is, however, no reason to be complacent about the safety precautions. On a positive note, the number of infections in India has drastically reduced since the peak of summer when the daily tally had touched around one lakh. Similarly the mortality rate has gone down in the country. Some experts are thus even suggesting that India shouldn't be in a hurry to go for vaccination and wait for the virus to self contain itself as is the case now.

Things from hereon are only expected to look up. While the union government will need to take measures to steer the nation through this crisis, the onus is also on the ordinary people to exercise the safety precautions to ensure the infection is held in check.

With vaccine on the scene, 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.

But it will be some time before the vaccine is available to all. So, people will need to continue to exercise caution, something that, sadly, is not the case now. A small number of people uses masks. And with vaccines being administered, the complacency is likely to grow. So, it is important to ensure that the guard is not let down at a time when people have to wait only a few months more before the vaccine is widely available.

OTHER OPINION

## To Big Tech

WhatsApp, the most popular mobile communication tool in the world, is going to great lengths to explain that its new use policy does not jeopardise the privacy of its users by sending additional data to its parent company, Facebook. The unusual — but not unprecedented — full-page advertisements in newspapers carrying this clarification came after reports indicated that a formidably large number of people may be leaving WhatsApp for rivals such as Signal and Telegram. The company now says that its new policy — a take-it-or-leave-it situation where users will have to delete their accounts if they choose not to abide by it — is valid only for communication with business accounts on WhatsApp. The company believes this is less of a problem since communicating with a business account is optional.

There are two issues here — a seemingly bad faith approach by making the policy mandatory (people are likely to be forced into accepting it because their friends, families and colleagues are all on WhatsApp); and a violation of the principle of purpose limitation. In simpler terms, the latter means data should be collected and processed for only the purposes they are meant for — in WhatsApp's case, this is merely communication. The company is not mandated to follow these principles (and others that could stop it from making such a move) unless it is laid down in law, like it has been in Europe's General Data Protection Regulation. And that is why European users will not be subject to the take-it-or-leave-it new policy that the rest of the world will. The episode is now a strong reminder of why India must expedite work on its own data protection law so that Indians have a right to say to big tech — "We don't agree".

Hindustan Times



# Brides in Blood

Our newspapers were recently filed with the news of a lady, Afrooza Bano, being murdered by her husband. Hear this, because she asked him to pay her Mehr.

HIRRA SULTAN

**Women do not simply marry because they are a burden onto their parents or they cannot take care of their own selves. They, like men, are seeking partners. A relationship which harbors love, intimacy and companionship. Not violence and blind submission.**

Kashmir is considered, especially by Kashmiri's self image as one of the safest places, when it comes to the crime rate especially against women. Yet, our newspapers were recently filed with the news of a lady, Afrooza Bano, being murdered by her husband. Hear this, because she asked him to pay her Mehr. Afrooza was merely 25 years of age.

Mehr is considered a Sunnah of The Prophet, a gift given to the bride from the husband. It usually depends on the giving capacity of the groom and more importantly on what the bride demands. In the days of the companions, many brides are known to have asked for non-materialistic things as well. Though in current times it has become a necessity to ask for something in terms of money or jewelry because men in the society have become unreliable and this amount acts as a security in case of a divorce, extramarital affairs, polygamy or death. Ideally, Mehr is supposed to be paid at the time of the Nikah even though many people keep it pending, to be offered to the bride at a later point of time. Sometimes to the point of her death. And some other times the men ask their wives to forgo their Mehr as well. As a gesture of goodwill and faith.

That was the case in this murder case too. The Mehr amount was pending even though the wedding was held and the couple lived together. Somehow, the talk of paying Mehr didn't go well with the husband and he killed her.

Killing of one's wife is not new to Kashmir. A lot of brides have been

burnt because they didn't bring enough dowries with them, or because they wouldn't meet the new demands for dowry, because they voiced their opinions, objected to their husband's extramarital affairs, had an argument with mother-in-law and the like. The list is never-ending. The number of domestic violence cases is even higher and is on an increase because of constant lockdowns, economic downfall and the general stress of life. A similar increase in the number of domestic violence cases was seen when the state was shut for some six months after the martyrdom of Burhan Wani in 2016.

Thanks to patriarchy, the idea of a woman in our society is that of a dumb and mute person, who says nothing, hears nothing, does nothing. Even if the wrong being done directly impacts her. And this idea is not merely limited to Kashmiri society but plagues pretty much the whole of Indian Subcontinent. The idea that all women are damsels in distress and the men are taking pity on them and favoring them by marrying them and hence saving them. From what? Nobody really knows. So when a woman raises her voice for her rights, she meets ends like that of Afrooza.

Since men have this idea that their wives are supposed to do anything and everything they ask of her and his only duty towards her was that of marrying her, which he already fulfilled. They consider themselves supreme authority over their wives. Someone their wife should never say no to. Many people simply marry because, "We have nobody at home to cook" or "My mother remains

ill most of the time." People forget that their wives are not unpaid maids and that they

have their rights and needs. Like everyone else.

Women do not simply marry because they are a burden onto their parents or they cannot take care of their own selves. They, like men, are seeking partners. A relationship which harbors love, intimacy and companionship. Not violence and blind submission.

As more and more women are getting educated about their rights in a marriage, many young brides are refusing to bend and mold into the societal idea of a good wife. They are no more afraid of a divorce or breaking off engagements. They no longer want to inherit the silence of their mothers and grandmothers. If something does not go well with their core principles, they have learnt to simply walk away.

This is also because of financial independence in the current generation. Since they do not depend on their husbands for financial assistance, they take the decision of asking for their rights or even separation more easily. Without fearing the consequences of what the society would say or more importantly who she might be dependent on if she takes such a decision.

The backlash from men, the violence and murders, also show how they have a sense of losing power and can do anything and everything to have that sense of control over things. For as long as possible. Part of the problem is also the fact that most men have seen their mothers enduring everything. They expect their wives to exhibit the same kind of behavior. The same tolerance our mothers and grandmothers showed when their husbands beat them up, or their mother-in-law treated them unfairly.

Probably, it is time for men to realize how they are supposed to treat women, what their responsibilities are towards their wives and how to let go of their conditioning and become good men. Unless that happens we will hear of many more Afrooza's raising their voices for their rights and many more Shabir's silencing these voices.

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Hirra Sultan is a Srinagar-based author whose work on gender, health and society has appeared in many local publications

The views expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer



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

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## Reopen Anganwadi centers

The Anganwadi Centers were shut due to the Covid-19 pandemic across the country. Recently, The Supreme Court has directed States and Union Territories to take a decision to recommence those centers situated outside containment zones on or before January 31. The Court men-

tioned that the Union Ministry for Women and Child Development had by its guidance note dated November 11, 2020 "permitted all the States and Union Territories to open Anganwadi Centres" and that it is now "the responsibility of the States/ Union Territories to take a decision for opening" them. Punjab and Ra-

jasthan have already opened their Anganwadi centers. The Anganwadi Centers provide important services like preschooling, vaccination, medicines, nutritional meals, and have also conducted various awareness programs to ensure the physical and mental well being of pregnant women and children. These services are

playing a vital role in the underprivileged groups of society. The Center and State Governments should initiate to reopen the Anganwadi centers by following all safeguards.

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Amit Singh Kushwaha  
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# Why I Bemoan the Loss of Our Downtown

WAJAHAT QAZI

**Warped and flawed modernization has led to the demolition of the traditional housing structures of downtown giving way to ugly, concrete, incoherent blobs.**

The only redeeming feature of Srinagar city — an extended urban sprawl that has no coherence — is the downtown: a unique constellation of habitats, living spaces and small business establishments. Worldwide, downtowns are places or spaces where vice jostles with virtue and the best and worst of human nature is at display. But, nay, not our downtown. It remains a space that defies conventional or even stereotypical views of downtowns elsewhere.

The reasons appear to be spiritual, sociological and cultural. The city of seven bridges that connect downtown with the rest of Srinagar city is dotted with tombs and shrines of Sufi saints that brought Islam to Kashmir and are revered by most people here.

The denizens of downtown have a firm belief that because of these shrines, there is a vigil over it that keeps the place clean in the spiritual senses. Sociologically and historically, the downtown was a place where, while turfs were zealously and jealously guarded, both for fun and other prosaic reasons, fate kadal wallahs jokingly mocked the zaina kadal wallahs and so on, everyone knew everyone. The scope for vice and mischief is thereby very restricted. Culturally, downtown was and perhaps is a zone and a sphere unto itself perhaps best reflected in the sense of humour of its denizens.

Downtown, as I recall it, was then a large extended family defined by a high level of social capital. While it was a self-contained space economically with Maharaj Gunj as its economic and trading centre of gravity, the sense of community was very strong. The Khojas (wealthy business people) owed a sense of responsibility toward the poorer downtown wallahs, neighbours in



downtown looked out for each other: it was a source of embarrassment if a neighbour did not do so.

The houses and dwellings of downtown were unique in their shapes, sizes and architecture: most houses were built from what were called maharaj seer (maharaj bricks — small rectangular bricks baked to a hardness in kilns that defied the severest of shocks, the front doors of these dwellings were small (one had to bend to enter), the walls of rooms were splattered with what was called 'bore' — special mud mixed with straw — that staved off the cold of severe Kashmir winters. Many many years ago, the roofs of these houses were covered with clay over which flowers grew. The downtown was connected by small lanes, and by lanes called kochas dotted by cobblestones in a way whose closest analogue remains the arterial system of the human body. Drainage was and remains an issue.

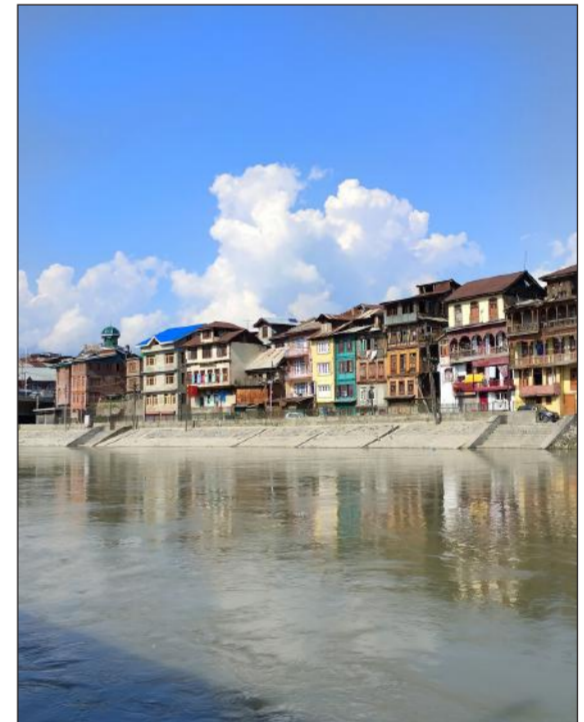
All in all, our downtown was a marvel in its own right — culturally, socially, physically and even economically. But this unique urban space of Kashmir is decaying. In fact, it is losing its character. The reasons, in the main, pertain to the population explosion in Kashmir, the attendant break down of the traditional family structure and concomitant expansion of Srinagar city. The story and saga is also one of neglect and urban decay.

Those who continue to live in the downtown either do so, partly by choice but mostly because of economic reasons. Warped and flawed modernization has led to the demolition of the traditional housing structures of downtown giving way to ugly, concrete, incoherent blobs. Ownership of the motor car has meant that the tonga wallahs (horse driven carriages) are not even a relic; they have gone extinct. Businesses have migrated to other urban centres and central business districts like Lal Chowk or other business centres that have mushroomed within and in the boundaries of Srinagar city.

I noticed this as I wandered across, through and around our downtown. Because I am a romantic (hopelessly so), the loss of downtown's special character is a personal loss for me. My wander-

ings came to a close after days, and as dusk fell on downtown, I peered from the precincts of the Hari parbat fort — a strategic fort built apparently by the Mughal emperor Akbar on a steep hill — downtown glistened with electricity casting a surreal hue on snow clad Srinagar. The muezzins' call to prayer reverberated through the city. I closed my eyes and said a prayer for my and our downtown!

*The author has a Masters with Distinction in International Relations from the University of Aberdeen, Scotland. Worked as the Associate Editor of Kashmir Observer.*



## WhatsApp: Guarding Privacy On Messaging Services

Change of terms and conditions will affect more than a billion messaging app users

You might have missed the message that popped up on your screen as you signed into WhatsApp recently — or you might simply have checked 'OK' to the changes to its terms and conditions — but there are repercussions now to the amendments proposed by WhatsApp.

By February 8, unless you accept those updated terms and conditions, you may be shut out of the messaging service that is enjoyed by more than a billion users the world over. It's by far the world's most popular messaging system, had some 78 million downloads in November, and in India alone more than 400 million use the service and that number grows by the day.

Given these types of numbers, its ease of use and popularity, any change to terms and conditions is significant — this one more so. Because WhatsApp is owned by Facebook — the social media platform purchased it from founders Brian Acton and Jan Koum in 2014 for \$19 billion (Dh69.7 billion) — the new changes now mean that your personal data could be shared with its parent company.

Given what has happened in recent years to users' data, how it was collected, farmed and used, there are obvious concerns now about this move.

But this also raises a far more basic question about your data and personal details. They are yours and should remain so. Certainly, one of the attractions in signing up to WhatsApp and using it multiple times daily for most people, is that it pledged to keep your details private — that they wouldn't be shared with anyone else. The new terms and conditions raise many questions.

A number of governments and privacy advocates globally have taken issue with Facebook and WhatsApp about this new proposed relationship — and rightly so. We all have a basic right to privacy, regardless of the whims of the owners and merger conditions of these technology companies.

The issue of personal privacy is compounded by the sheer size of Facebook and its reach globally. It is used daily by a billion people, and has more than 2 billion users. Its ability to shape events too is huge, yet it shuns any responsibility for the spread of false information and fake news.

A good first step now towards curbing the power of Facebook would be for governments and privacy regulators to halt this sharing of information from WhatsApp. Otherwise, the case for breaking up Facebook grows far stronger.

Gulf News

**Given what has happened in recent years to users' data, how it was collected, farmed and used, there are obvious concerns now about this move. But this also raises a far more basic question about your data and personal details. They are yours and should remain so.**





# World

## Pregnant, Lactating Women Should Not Be Given COVID-19 Vaccine Now: Health Ministry



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

and Covaxin) which contains information on vaccine platform, physical specifications, dosage, cold-chain storage requirements, contraindications and minor AEFIs (adverse event following immunization).

It said this information should be disseminated to programme managers across all levels and through them to cold-chain handlers and vaccinators for ready reference.

Listing the contraindications, the health ministry cautioned against administration of the vaccine in persons with a history of anaphylactic or allergic reaction to a previous dose of COVID-19 vaccine, and in those with immediate or delayed onset anaphylaxis or allergic reaction to vaccines or injectable therapies, pharmaceutical products, food items, among others.

According to the letter, in case of persons having active symptoms of SARS-CoV-2 infection, coronavirus infected patients who have been given anti-SARS-CoV-2 monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma and acutely unwell and hospitalised patients due to any illness, the COVID-19 vaccination is to be deferred for four to eight weeks after recovery.

"Pregnant and lactating women have not been a part of any COVID-19 vaccine clinical trial so far. Therefore, women who are pregnant and not sure of their pregnancy and lactating women should not receive COVID-19 vaccine at this time," the letter stated.

The actions follow the storming of the US Capitol last week by supporters of Trump

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## Washington Locks Down Ahead Of Biden Inauguration Amid Possible Violence Warnings

Agencies

WASHINGTON: As Washington locks down for President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration, Delta Air Lines put new restrictions on passengers to the US capital on Thursday amid warnings of possible political violence throughout the country even after the Jan 20 swearing-in.

Hotels, airlines and other businesses ramped up security as authorities planned to deploy at least 20,000 National Guard troops in the city. Activist groups concerned about the potential for violence asked hotels to close starting this weekend ahead of the event. Delta will not allow travelers flying to Washington area airports to check firearms on its flights before the inauguration, Chief Executive Ed Bastian said on Thursday.

"We're all on high alert based on the events over the last couple of weeks in Washington," Bastian told CNBC. He told Reuters his airline had placed passengers on a no-fly list for their involvement in disruptive incidents that, for example, targeted Republican US Senator Mitt Romney.

stay away from the city. Law enforcement officials have warned of potential violence beyond the U.S. capital. In Ohio, Governor Mike DeWine said on Thursday the state-house and state office buildings in downtown Columbus would be closed from Sunday through Wednesday.

**BEYOND INAUGURATION**

Mary McCord, head of the Justice Department's national security division under former President Barack Obama, warned the threat could remain well beyond the inauguration.

"You will see a resurgence of activity and planning and extremists' threats. So I don't think this problem is going away with this president leaving the White House," McCord said.

The U.S. House of Representatives on Wednesday voted to impeach Trump on charges of incitement after his supporters rampaged through the Capitol, leaving five dead, following a speech by the Republican president reiterating his false claim that Biden, a Democrat, beat him because of widespread fraud.

## UP Woman Goes Missing, Case Under Anti-Conversion Law Against Man She Met Online

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

GORAKHPUR: Police have lodged a case against a Karnataka man for allegedly kidnapping a 19-year-old woman after befriending her, hiding his religious identity, police said on Thursday. A missing report was lodged by the woman's father on January 5 after she did not return home from college, Station House Officer, Chlualat police station, Neeraj Kumar Rai said.

"During an investigation and with the help of call records of the woman's mobile phone, it was found that she used to frequently talk to the man whose name in the Truecaller app was mentioned as Mehboob and the location as Karnataka," he said.

A case was lodged against the man on January 11, following which a three-member police team was sent to Karnataka to trace the man and the kidnapped woman, Mr Rai said.

On the basis of these inputs, the woman's father lodged an FIR against the man and accused him of allegedly kidnapping his daughter and hiding his religious identity, he said.

The woman's father, who is a re-



tired Army man, has mentioned in the FIR that last year the man had befriended his daughter through social media and wooed her on the pretext of providing a job.

Police said that everything would be clear once the accused and the kidnapped woman are traced.

The case was lodged under sections 366 (kidnapping, abduction or inducing woman to compel her into marriage) and 363 (kidnapping) of the Indian Penal Code, besides the new anti-conversion law of the Uttar Pradesh government, the SHO said.

The recently promulgated Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Ordinance, 2020, nullifies marriages if they are carried out for the sole purpose of religious conversion.

## Snapdeal, 4 Indian Shopping Complexes Figure In US Notorious Markets List



Agencies

WASHINGTON: Snapdeal, one of India's largest e-commerce platforms, along with four Indian shopping complexes, two of them in New Delhi alone, have figured in the latest 2020 Review of Notorious Markets for Counterfeiting and Piracy issued by the Office of the US Trade Representative.

The four Indian markets that have found mention in the list are Heera Panna in Mumbai, Kidderpore in Kolkata and Palika Bazaar and Tank Road in Delhi.

Aizawl's Millennium Center was mentioned in the last list of notorious markets, but now it has been replaced by Palika Bazaar.

"Holding intellectual property rights violators accountable and ensuring that American innovators and creators have a full and fair opportunity to use and profit from their work is critical for both physical and online markets," US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer said.

In addition to addressing the role of e-commerce in facilitating the sale of pirated and counterfeit goods, the 2020 Review of Notorious Markets identifies 39 online markets and 34 physical markets that are reported to

be engaged in or have facilitated substantial trademark counterfeiting and copyright piracy.

The report includes for the first time a section addressing the role of internet platforms in facilitating the importation of counterfeit and pirated goods into the United States.

"Today, the greatest risk of importation of counterfeit and pirated goods, harming both US content creators and US consumers, is posed not by foreign flea markets and dark web sites but by inadequate policies and inadequate action by e-commerce companies that market and sell foreign products to American consumers," Lighthizer said.

"Combating piracy and counterfeit will require sustained effort by both the federal government and by companies that profit from the sale of such goods," the official said.

Although the majority of counterfeit goods seized by American law enforcement agencies originate in China and Hong Kong 7-92 per cent by value - the problem is global, with additional major points of origin, including India, Singapore, Thailand, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates, the report said.

## Farmers Again Reject Govt's Offer Of Amending Laws, Want Them Repealed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI: Protesting farmer unions stuck to their demand for a complete repeal of three contentious farm laws at their ninth round of talks with three Central ministers while the government asked them to be more flexible in their approach and expressed willingness for necessary amendments, as the two sides decided to meet again on January 19.

Farmer leader Joginder Singh Ugrahan told reporters after the meeting that the unions urged the government to repeal the three laws, but the Centre was unwilling to do so.

"We decided to meet again on January 19 at 12 pm," he said.

Ugrahan said the union leaders also raised the issue of NIA raids on transporters in Punjab who are supporting farmers' protests and were providing logistic support for the agitation.

At the meeting that lasted for nearly five hours, including a lunch break, farmers unions said they are committed to



continuing holding direct talks to resolve the over-one-month-long deadlock over three agri laws, even as a committee has been formed by the Supreme Court to resolve the deadlock.

In his opening remarks, Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar urged farmer leaders to be flexible in their approach as has been done by the government.

Besides Tomar, Railways, Commerce and Food Minister Piyush Goyal and Minister of State for Commerce Som Parkash were part of the government side talking with representatives of around 40 farmer unions at the Vigyan Bhawan here.

"Both the government and farmer unions have reaffirmed

their commitment to continue with the direct dialogue process," All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee member Kavita Kuruganti, who is part of the meeting, said.

"In his opening remarks, Tomar ji said you keep saying that the government is adamant and making it an issue of ego, even though we have accepted several demands. Don't you think you should be flexible and not stick to one single demand of repealing the laws," said Baljit Singh Bali of Punjab Kisan Morcha.

Farmer leader Darshan Pal said there was a good discussion on all three laws. "There is a possibility of some resolution. We are positive," he added.

## Pakistan Fires 12 Police Officers For Not Protecting Hindu Temple



Agencies

Pakistani authorities have sacked a local police chief and 11 other policemen for failing to protect a Hindu temple that was set on fire and demolished last month by a mob led by hundreds of supporters of a religious party, police said.

The 12 policemen were fired on Thursday over acts of "cowardice, irresponsibility and negligence" for not trying to stop the mob when it attacked the temple, with some having fled the scene.

The regional government in northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa also suspended 33 other police officers for a year as punishment, provincial police chief Sanaullah Abbasi said.

The punishments came amid government assurances that the Shri Paramhans Ji Maharaj Samadhi temple - situated in the remote village of Teri in Karak district, some 85km (53 miles) south of Peshawar, the capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa - would be rebuilt.

Last week, Pakistan's Supreme Court also ordered the rebuilding of the temple, with the next hearing in the case set for January 19.

On December 30, about 2,000 men ransacked the historic temple built in 1920 and an adjacent Hindu shrine, destroying the compound and setting fire to it.

The mob led by a local Muslim leader was enraged by the renovation of a building adjacent to the temple that was recently

bought by the Hindu community to facilitate visiting devotees.

The attack took place after members of the Hindu community received permission from local authorities to renovate the temple.

Pakistan is home to an estimated 3.5 million Hindus, who form a 1.6 per cent minority of the country's 207 million population, as per government figures.

More than 30 rioters, including the Muslim leader who allegedly incited the mob, have already been arrested after they were identified in videos of the attack uploaded online. The arrested included supporters of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam party, who are currently facing trials on various charges.

Although Muslims and Hindus generally live peacefully together in Pakistan, violence against the minority community often centres around the country's strict, and heavily emotive, blasphemy laws.

Attacks on Hindu temples, while not common, have been increasing in frequency in recent years.

Most of Pakistan's minority Hindus migrated to India in 1947 when the Indian subcontinent gained independence from the British rule, resulting in the formation of Muslim-majority Pakistan.

Last year, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) renewed its designation of Pakistan as a "country of particular concern", citing, among other reasons, "severely restricted freedom of religion or belief".

### NEWS MAKERS

## UK Man Offers Millions In Covid Relief To Search Dump For Bitcoin Bounty

LONDON: A Welshman was on Friday offering local officials a GBP 50 million coronavirus relief fund if they let him search a landfill for a hard drive containing bitcoin worth GBP 210 million which he dumped in 2013.

James Howells had 7,500 units of the virtual currency on his laptop hard drive, which had been gathering dust in an office drawer after he spilled a drink on the device.

He threw the drive away during an office clearout in 2013, having forgotten that the bitcoin he acquired for a paltry sum four years earlier were still on the memory device.

Newport Council, in south Wales, has repeatedly rejected Howells' requests to be able to search the landfill, despite his offer of a cut of the bounty.

"In 2017 the value of my hard drive was approximately GBP 125 million (\$171 million, 141 million euros), at which point I made them another offer of 10 percent and unfortunately that offer was refused," Howells told BBC Radio 5 Live.

The value of bitcoin has since shot up even further.

He is now willing to donate 25 percent of the value of the buried treasure to his home city for a "Covid relief fund" if he finds the hard drive.

"Imagine how great it would be to say 'I've given everyone in the city a few hundred pounds'," he told the BBC.

The council told the broadcaster its licensing laws bars any excavation.

"The cost of digging up the landfill, storing and treating the waste could run into millions of pounds without any guarantee of either finding it or it still being in working order," said a council spokeswoman.

Howells believes the search would "not be as hard as you might think" as a professional team would be able to hone in on the likely spot because he knows exactly when he threw it away.



## \$100,000 For Toilet As Ivanka Trump Wouldn't Let Secret Service Use Hers

Many U.S. Secret Service agents have stood guard in Washington's elite Kalorama neighborhood, home over the years to Cabinet secretaries and former presidents. Those agents have had to worry about death threats, secure perimeters and suspicious strangers. But with the arrival of Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner, they had a new worry: finding a toilet.

Instructed not to use any of the half-dozen bathrooms inside the couple's house, the Secret Service detail assigned to President Donald Trump's daughter and son-in-law spent months searching for a reliable restroom to use on the job, according to neighbors and law enforcement officials.

After resorting to a porta-potty, as well as bathrooms at the nearby home of former president Barack Obama and the not-so-nearby residence of Vice President Pence, the agents finally found a toilet to call their own. But it came at a cost to U.S. taxpayers. Since September 2017, the federal government has been spending \$3,000 a month - more than \$100,000 to date - to rent a basement studio, with a bathroom, from a neighbor of the Kushner family.

## Doctor Who Declared Trump "Healthiest" President Ever Dies

New York, United States: President Donald Trump's former personal doctor -- who claimed Trump had dictated a letter insisting he would be the "healthiest" president ever -- has died, reports said Thursday. Harold Bornstein passed away last Friday at the age of 73, according to the New York Times. No cause of death was given.

The long-haired gastroenterologist was Trump's physician from 1980 to 2017. Bornstein gained public attention in December 2015 when Trump's presidential campaign team released a letter from him gushing about Trump's apparently excellent health.

The glowing missive said that "if elected, Mr Trump, I can state unequivocally, will be the healthiest individual ever elected to the presidency." The New York doctor told CNN in 2018 that the president had "dictated the whole letter" himself. "I didn't write that letter. I just made it up as I went along," Bornstein said.

