



Maximum : 9.6° SUNSET Today 05:52 PM
Minimum : -7.0° SUNRISE Tomorrow 07:35 AM
Humidity : 91%

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Widom Quote! Intelligence alone is not nearly enough when it comes to acting wisely. — Fyodor Dostoyevsky

Kashmir Braces For Another Snow Spell

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: The intense cold wave conditions continued unabated in Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday as the minimum temperature stayed several degrees below the freezing point in the Valley...

nearly five degrees below the normal for this time of the year, he said. The Gulmarg skiing resort in north Kashmir's Baramulla district recorded minus 7.8 degrees Celsius last night...

Highway To Remain Closed Today

The 270 kilometre-long Jammu-Srinagar National highway will remain closed for traffic on Friday for maintenance. ADGP Traffic T. Namgyal said that traffic will remain suspended on Srinagar Jammu highway for maintenance...

THE MET DEPARTMENT has forecast that a Western Disturbance will affect the Union Territory for a few days from January 22.

Pak Firing Kills Indian Soldier On LoC

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: An Army man was killed when Pakistan violated the ceasefire and resorted to firing on forward positions along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district on Thursday, officials said.

The Pakistan Army resorted to unprovoked firing along the LoC in the Krishna Ghati sector of Poonch, the officials said. The Indian Army responded to the enemy fire in a befitting manner, they added.

Singh was a brave, highly-motivated and sincere soldier, a defence spokesperson said, adding that the nation will always remain indebted to him for his supreme sacrifice and devotion to duty.

Singh's killing comes a day after four soldiers were injured in Pakistani firing along the LoC in Akhnoor sector on Wednesday. All the four soldiers had suffered splinter injuries and were shifted to the military hospital in Udhampur for treatment.

Jammu and Kashmir recorded 5,100 instances of ceasefire ● More On P10



KO Photo: Abid Bhat

All-Round Development Of J&K Centre's Major Goal: House Panel

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The all-round development of Jammu and Kashmir is a major goal of the Centre, a parliamentary delegation, which is on a three-day visit to the Valley, said on Thursday as it began consultations with stakeholders on how to resolve problems being faced by the residents of the UT.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture delegation -- led by chairman T G Venkatesh -- also held

meetings on the promotion of transport, tourism and culture in the union territory, an official spokesman said.

He said Union Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office Jitendra Singh and Member of Parliament from Srinagar Farooq Abdullah also attended the meetings.

The visit is a first of its kind after the COVID-19 outbreak, the spokesman said.

Speaking on the occasion, Venkatesh, who is the member of the Rajya Sabha, said the all-round ● More On P10

'We're In Kashmir To Build Confidence'

Agencies

Chairman of the 31-member Parliamentary Standing Committee (PSC), T G Venkatesh Thursday said they are in Kashmir to build and create confidence among people of Valley so that more domestic and foreign tourists ● More On P10

NEWS DIGEST

Man Held Over Social Media Post

JAMMU: A man was arrested by police for allegedly posting objectionable content on social media hurting the sentiments of a community in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district on Thursday, officials said.

ATM Guard Killed In Jammu

JAMMU: A security guard at an ATM of Jammu and Kashmir Bank was killed on Thursday in Nanak Nagar area of this winter capital.

"There is blood all around inside the guard room and the area where ATM is placed. The ATM has ● More On P10

Petrol Pump Sealed For Overcharging

SRINAGAR: A petrol pump was sealed in Uri of Baramulla district on Thursday by the Legal Metrology department over the allegations of overcharging.

The Legal Metrology Department Baramulla sealed a petrol pump namely Kafel filling station after receiving the complaints of overcharging, news agency GNS reported.

ACB Books Nine People In Graft Case

JAMMU: Nine people, including four government officials, have been booked on Thursday by the anti-corruption bureau (ACB) for alleged fraudulent withdrawal of nearly Rs 27 lakh of bills for non-existent works in Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar district.

SUBSTANDARD WORKS

Contractor's Arrest Ordered

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir administration has ordered the arrest of a private contractor working on Machail road in Kishtwar district for his poor performance in executing development works.

District Development Commissioner, Ashok Sharma, passed orders for the arrest of the contractor, an official spokesman said on Thursday.

This is probably for the first time that such a strong administrative action has been taken in connection with standard works in the construction of roads and buildings.

Responding to the complaint of locals ● More On P10

J&K to Have Export Promotion Board Headed by LG

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir government has formed a 33-member Export Promotion Board in J&K. With Lieutenant Governor to be its chairman, the Board also comprises nine co-opted members.

Among the 33 official members includes Chief Secretary of J&K, three advisors of lieutenant governor besides administrative secretaries of finance, agriculture production and farmers welfare, industries

AMONG OTHERS, THE BOARD HAS BEEN TASKED to select and manage the areas to be declared as Export Promotion Hubs in the J&K. It is to finalize the Export Policy/Strategy formulated by the Apex level Export Promotion Committee constituted by the Government on 25 June 2020.



Director General Foreign Trade, Divisional Commissioner Jammu/Kashmir, ● More On P10

LG Chairs Maiden Unified Command Meeting

Agencies

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha reviewed the overall security scenario across the Union Territory in his maiden Unified Command meeting on Thursday, reports said.

officers apprised ● More On P10

2 POs From J&K Shifted To Ladakh Courts

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Home Department has on Thursday ordered for placement of services of its two Prosecuting officers from Prosecution Service for disposal of the administration of Union Territory of Ladakh.

The order citing the 'terms of Section 89 of the Jammu & Kashmir Reorganization' Act and 'as a provisional measure' reads that Wasiq Umer currently Assistant Public Prosecutor Court(s) of Munsiff Charari-Shareef/Chadoora and Ravi Kant Samyal Assistant Public Prosecutor in the Court of Munsiff, Banihal be deemed to have been ● More On P10

No Covid-19 Death In Valley

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: A middle-aged woman died of coronavirus in Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday even as the Union Territory reported 117 fresh cases of Covid-19, including a paramilitary personnel and ten travellers during the last 24 hours.

The 55-year-old woman hailed from Nanak Nagar area of Jammu city and her death took the number of people succumbing to the virus to 1924- 1207 in the Valley and 717 in Jammu region, officials said Thursday.

Srinagar district with 453 deaths tops the list followed by Jammu (368), Baramulla (173), Budgam (115), Kupwara

(94), Pulwama (88), Anantnag (84), Doda (64), Bandipora (61), Udhampur (57), Kulgam (54), Rajouri (55), Kathua (51), Ganderbal (46), Shopian (39), Samba (39), Poonch (24), Ramban (21), Kishtwar(22), and Reasi (15).

Meanwhile, ten travellers and a BSF personnel were among 117 fresh cases of virus detected across J&K during the last 24 hours, officials said. While 42 cases were reported from Jammu division, 75 others were confirmed by officials in Kashmir Valley.

Giving district wise break-up, officials said, Srinagar reported 46, Baramulla 2, Budgam 4, Pulwama 8, Kupwara 4, Anantnag 3, ● More On P10

IED Attacks A Major Threat: CRPF DG Says 215 Militants Killed In J&K By State Forces In 2020

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Calling IED attacks a "major threat", the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) chief on Thursday said even the best technology available currently is "not perfect" and the force is scouting for better solutions to stop troop casualties caused by these crude bombs.

"Yes, it is a major threat. There are tools to detect IEDs (improvised explosive devices) but none of them is perfect. This is a field in which internationally all organisations are trying," CRPF director general A P Maheshwari said during a press conference.



He was asked if they have found a technology that effectively checks this menace that has claimed the lives of hundreds of CRPF troops and maimed many others in the last decade. IED attacks are majorly carried

out in the Maoist violence-affected states and the CRPF said it has detected 460 such devices from all across the country, including Jammu and Kashmir and northeastern states.

As many as 418 recoveries of these crude explosives, hidden beneath black top roads and jungle tracks to target security forces, have been recovered from the Naxal violence-hit areas in 2020.

The DG said IED attacks are a "challenge" for the security forces and the menace gets magnified in the core Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected areas as one "cannot even walk an inch without being careful". The core areas ● More On P10

West Pak Refugees Protest 'Denial' Of Govt Jobs

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: West Pakistan refugees on Thursday held protests across the city against the Jammu and Kashmir administration alleging that they are being denied government jobs despite abrogation of Article 370 and the community being granted citizenship rights.

They claimed that a few days back police officials turned them away despite some youth of their community passing all the required mandatory tests for selection in the Jammu and Kashmir Police.

However, no immediate response to their allegations was

available from the police. Led by West Pakistan refugees action committee president Laba Ram Gandhi, over 300 West Pakistan refugees held protests and raised slogans demanding justice by providing government jobs to their wards and benefits of the central government schemes to their families as is applicable to the citizens of the union territory.

"We are holding protests today in support of our demand for government jobs as per the due process of being citizens of Jammu and Kashmir," Gandhi told reporters here.

He said that a few days back, there was a ● More On P10



KASHMIR In Capital: A 'Piece Of Persia' In Delhi

Romaan Arora

SOME thirty years ago, in the winter of Kashmir's discontent, Abdul Majeed Chaku came to Delhi by his own car. Fleeing the searing strife in his homeland, he soon setup a small Kashmir in a new place.

"The motive was to keep the craft active across India," Majeed, now in his early 70s, says. "The raging conflict back home had crippled the craft as well as the craftsmen. Somebody had to think out of the box and rise to the occasion."

Years before his crafty move,

Majeed was aspiring to become a doctor. Despite securing a medical seat, he ended up becoming the heir-apparent of his craftsman clan.

"I don't regret that sacrifice," Chaku, the owner of Heritage Woodcrafts, continues.

"This (woodwork) is our family business, and as I was the eldest son, I was bound to support and sustain it."

Soon as started shouldering his family legacy, he realized how the craft had made Kashmiris empowered during some treacherous times.

"This spirit of empowerment belongs to Amir-i-Kabir

Shah-e-Hamdan who introduced this craft in Kashmir," he says. "I'm only trying my best to continue the Persian saint's legacy."

Experience speaks for itself, and Chaku is a living example of it.

More than 54 years of the craft enterprise has taught him the quintessential differences between working in Srinagar and Delhi.

"Delhi gets affluent craftsmen from everywhere," the craftsman continues.

"As a result, people here want an exclusive product for themselves. I've entertained high-end craft customers

with unique products."

For many of them, Chaku had to make wooden wall-frames for Kashmiri pashmina, copper utensils and carpets.

"The same goes for Paper Mache crafts," he says. "This fashion sense of using Kashmiri handicrafts in interior designing isn't common in the valley. But in Delhi, it has helped me to promote my skills and Kashmiri handicrafts."

To meet this craft demand, he had to resort to smart work.

"Effective and efficient management is also crucial," he says.

"I've such a fine ● More On P10

GAW KADAL ANNIVERSARY

Lal-Chowk, Adjoining Areas Observe Shutter Down



Courtesy: Photos Internet

Agencies

SRINAGAR: It has been over 31 years since 21 January 1990, when the paramilitary Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel opened fire on a procession passing over the bridge that connects Basant Bagh with Maisuma, in Srinagar, killing at least 52 people and injured 250 according to survivors and media reports.

The major killing that took place under Janta Dal rule of the then Prime Minister VP Singh became known as the 'Gaw Kadal massacre' and now is usually marked by a shutdown. The shutdown was observed in Lal-Chowk and surrounding areas and parts of downtown on Thursday.

The weapons and other ammunition which according to them was kept in the houses of locals. The word spread among the people that during the house to house searches by forces, several women were molested and it sparked protests. A large number of people came out on roads and began to march towards the old city area of Srinagar. The procession from areas like Magarmal Bagh, Padshahi Bagh, Kursoo-Rajbagh, Jawahar Nagar and Mehjoor Nagar reached Lal Chowk and began to move towards the old city via Gaw Kadal.

SKIMS Conducts First Allogeneic Bone Marrow Transplant for Thalassemia Major

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Department of Clinical Haematology, SKIMS has for the first time in Jammu & Kashmir performed a matched sibling Allogeneic Stem Cell/Bone Marrow transplant for a patient suffering from Beta Thalassemia Major.



to be matching. So, the patient was taken for Allogeneic matched sibling transplant on 30/12/2020. Presently, the patient is doing well and is being planned for discharge in a few days."

A statement by SKIMS said that Dr. Javid Rasool Bhat, Prof. & Head Clinical Haematology Department, informed that an eight year old boy from Bihar (class 1st student) diagnosed as Beta Thalassemia major at the age of 8 months was evaluated at AIIMS, New Delhi and was offered Bone Marrow Transplant as curative therapy.

"Since, the patient belonged to a very poor family and could not afford this costly treatment. His parents brought him to the Department of Clinical Haematology at SKIMS for his treatment. The only curative treatment option for him was Stem Cell Transplantation," Dr. Javid said "Fortunately, his sister's bone marrow stem cells were found

Meanwhile Director SKIMS, Dr. A. G. Ahangar, complimented the whole Department of Clinical Haematology including faculty members: Dr. Sajjad Geelani, Addl. Prof., Dr. Reashma Roshan, Asstt. Prof. Dr. Afaq Ahmad Khan, Asstt. Prof. and Senior Residents (both Clinical & Lab. Side), Resident staff as well as Paramedical Staff of Ward 5P, Technical Staff (Lab. Side) and Office Staff of Clinical Hematology Department including all other supportive Departments.

"SKIMS has created a niche in conducting rare procedures which is benefiting poor patients," Dr Ahangar added.

SMC Mayor Calls On Lt Governor

JAMMU: Mayor, Srinagar Municipal Corporation, Sh. Junaid Azim Mattu today called on Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha here at Raj Bhavan. Sh. Mattu, during his meeting with the Lt Governor, briefed the latter about various ongoing initiatives being launched by SMC.

ing with the Mayor, assured that all the genuine issues projected by him would be taken up for consideration. In order to provide the people with better public services, the Lt Governor asked the Mayor to take all requisite measures for making constant improvement in the functioning of the Corporation. He also laid special emphasis on ensuring round the clock provision of basic civic amenities to the people.

Police Seeks Help In Identifying Thief

SRINAGAR: Srinagar Police seeks the help of the general public in identifying a suspected thief involved in a bike theft case. Police Station Parimpora received a complaint from an individual wherein he stated that his bike has been stolen by some unknown persons. Accordingly, a case vide FIR No. 05/2021 under relevant sections of law was registered at Police Station Parimpora and investigation was taken up.

During the course of investigation, a Special Investigation Team was constituted. The SIT has collected CCTV footage and subsequently obtained the photographs of the suspect person for the purpose of investigation. General public is requested to share any information regarding the suspected person with Police Station Parimpora on 9596770883.

PUBLIC NOTICE

My Name was wrongly mentioned in PNB Metlife Policy No.21472241 as Gulshan Akhter instead of Gulshan Bano. Now need to rectify the same in this regard. If anybody having objection may file the same at Metlife India Insurance Company Ltd. Haidqa Complex Bagat Barzulla Srinagar within seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Gulshan Bano R/O Near Masjid Shareef Mirpora Furrah Kulgam Bumthan MJA

PRESS RELEASE

Nehru Yuva Kendra Anantnag Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports Govt. Of India organized National Youth Day/Week from 12-01-2021 to 19-01-2021 in eight blocks (Bijbehara, Chittergul, Achabal, Shangus, Qazigund, Sagam, D.Pora and Block Anantnag) of District Anantnag.

Sd/ District Youth Officer Nehru Yuva Kendra Anantnag MJA

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Date Of Birth of my daughter Azra Shafi has been wrongly written school records as 22-10-2013 while my correct DOB is 16-12-2012 which needs immediate correction. If any body having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Principal Hill Grange Secondary School Handwara within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Mohdmmad Shafi Malik F/o Azra Shafi R/o Darbal Payeen ZI.H

از نئیابت ماگام با اجلاس جناب نائب تحصیلدار صاحب ماگام عنوان: منظور درخواست: منظور ڈار ولد عبدالرحمان ڈار ساکن موضع بید آباد جھلدی برادر علی بیگوارہ ایک سرٹیفکیٹ تحت SRO294

UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR Office of the Executive Engineer, Construction Division NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER For and on behalf of the University of Kashmir, e-tenders (In Single cover system) are invited on item rate basis from approved and eligible Contractors Registered with Govt. of J&K/ other union territories and CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the following works:-

از دفتر نائب تحصیلدار من ایگزیکٹو جنرل دفتر اول من درخواست منجانب: عادل احمد مظفر احمد جٹ ساکن کرکٹو تحصیل من ضلع منگ بٹ نام بٹن آر پی سی ایس سرٹیفکیٹ 294 SRO

از دفتر نائب تحصیلدار من ایگزیکٹو جنرل دفتر اول من درخواست منجانب: اشفاق یوسف و جہاد احمد پیران جٹ ساکن ایک کرکٹو تحصیل من ضلع منگ بٹ نام بٹن آر پی سی ایس سرٹیفکیٹ 294 SRO

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DIAL-EMMA TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266686 PCR: 0194-2452092, 2455883 PDD: 0194-2450213 FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488, 245222, 2452155 CAPD: 18001807011 SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081 AIRPORTS SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 0194230331 RAILWAYS SRINAGAR: 0194-2103259 ANANTNAG: 01932-228243 BARAMULLA: 0194-102029 BIJHERA: 01932-228243 PAMPOR: 01933-294132 PATTAN: 01954-293507 QAZIGUND: 01951-296153 HIGHWAY STATUS Sgr-Jammu highway - (Open) Mughal Road - (Closed) Srinagar- Leh- (Closed)

This Day in History

- 871 - Battle of Basing: Danish invasion army beats Saxon Ethelred of Wessex
1528 - England & France declare war on Emperor Charles V
1760 - Battle at Wandewash India: British troops beat French
1771 - Spain cedes Falkland Islands to Britain
1879 - Battle of Rorke's Drift: British garrison of 150 holds off 3,000-4,000 Zulu warriors.

From KO Archives

MUFTI SAYS FAROOQ PLAYING A DANGEROUS GAME

SRINAGAR - By his provocative statements the chief minister Farooq Abdullah is trying to sabotage the ongoing unilateral ceasefire and proposed talks for peace and normalcy in the state says Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) chief Mufti Mohammed Sayed. Mufti Sayed has termed the contradictory statements of chief minister as mischievous and dangerous. On the one hand these are aimed at provoking the militant organisations to step up their activities and on the other hand to mislead the central government on sensitive issues like extension of unilateral ceasefire and proposed talks, the statement said.

AIR, DD NOT OUR TARGETS: LASHKAR

SRINAGAR -Lashkar-e-Taiba -has clarified it would not carry out any attack on civilian targets. Refuting the Indian intelligence reports that its Fidayeen had any plans to target Radio Kashmir and Door-darshan centre here, the Lashkar spokesman, Abu Osama, told CNS on telephone today there was no truth in the reports. Reiterating its strategy on the valley's power situation, Osama said the outfit had taken a serious view of the prevailing crisis and would definitely implement the decisions it has already announced. Osama said the group's Fidayeen would only target the "security forces and their installations. Because-the Radio and Door-darshan are civilian institutions, no attack would be carried out against them. However, he asked the authorities of both the media organisations to stop their propaganda against the Mujahideen forthwith. Referring to the landmine explosion which blew up the Kiri bus yesterday, Osama said the Mujahideen would not countenance the loss of civilians for whose freedom they were fighting. Expressing grief over the civilian casualties, he urged other militant groups to avoid actions which could harm civilians. In the prevailing situation, Osama said, the security forces had adopted a new strategy according to which they board civilian buses to use them as shields against militant attacks. He appealed to the people to avoid travelling in such buses and also to keep away from army and paramilitary establishments.

Pak Election Commission Issues Notices To 19 Political Parties



Agencies

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Wednesday issued notices to 19 political parties in the parliament regarding scrutiny of financial statements and funds.

According to The Express Tribune, a five-member bench, headed by the chief election commissioner, gave the parties a deadline of February 24 to submit their responses.

On behalf of the petitioner, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) counsel Shah Khawar appeared before the ECP. During the proceedings, the political finance wing of the ECP submitted a report regarding scrutiny of financial statements of all political parties serving in the parliament.

The election commission directed for a copy of the report to also be provided to Khawar, asking him to review the report and file his objections, if any, reported The Express Tribune.

This comes after separate rallies led by different constituent members of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM)—the opposition's 11-party alliance—held a protest outside the ECP against an 'unacceptable delay' in the PTI foreign funding case.

During the protest, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Maryam Nawaz termed the case as the 'biggest fraud in Pakistan's history'.

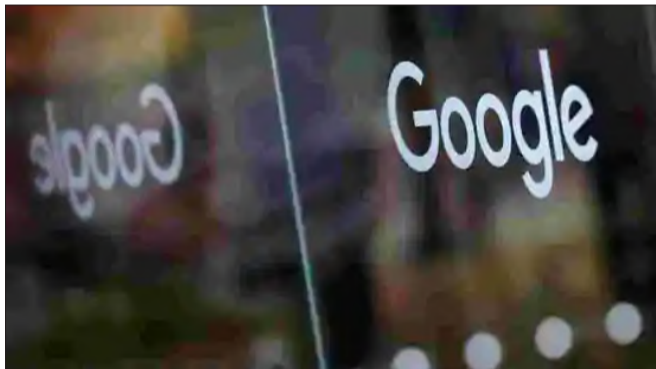
On Monday, the ECP suspended the membership of 154 members of the country's Senate, national and provincial assemblies after they failed to submit statements of their assets and liabilities.

The lawmakers will remain suspended until the submission of their financial statements, Dawn reported.

According to the Pakistan daily, every year ECP suspends the membership of several lawmakers for not submitting the statements. In 2020, more than 300 lawmakers had failed to submit their details.

ON MONDAY, THE ECP SUSPENDED the membership of 154 members of the country's Senate, national and provincial assemblies after they failed to submit statements of their assets and liabilities.

Google To Pay French Publishers For Online Content Under New Copyright Agreement



Agencies

In a first in Europe, Alphabet's Google and a group of French publishers said on Thursday they had agreed a general framework over copyrights under which the US tech giant will pay publishers for content online.

The principles agreed between the French publishers' lobby, Alliance de la presse d'information générale (APIG), and Google include criteria such as the daily volume of publications, monthly internet traffic and "contribution to political and general informa-

tion," they said in a statement.

Google and APIG did not say how much money could be distributed under the agreement to APIG members, which include national and local publishers. Details on how the remuneration would be calculated under the criteria were not disclosed.

The announcement follows months of bargaining between Google, French publishers and news agencies over how to apply revamped EU copyright rules, which allow publishers to demand a fee from online platforms showing extracts of their news.



US PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN holds a pen as he prepares to sign a series of orders in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington, DC, after being sworn in at the US Capitol on January 20, 2021AFP

Hours After Taking Office, US President Joe Biden Ends Donald Trump's 'Muslim Travel Ban'

In a blow to his predecessor Donald Trump's actions to limit immigration, US President Joe Biden on Wednesday has ended the 'Muslim travel ban', which blocked travel to the United States from several predominantly Muslim and African countries.

Hours after taking the office, Biden on Wednesday signed 17 executive orders memorandums and proclamations including ending the Muslim travel ban.

He has directed the State Department to restart visa processing for individuals from the affected countries and to develop ways to address the harm caused to those who were prevented from coming to the United States because of the ban, The New York Times reported.

Implemented in 2017 during Trump's first week in office, the Muslim Ban initially restricted travel from seven Muslim-majority nations: Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen.

The ban faced several legal challenges, but the Supreme Court in 2018 upheld the final version of the measure.

The Muslim travel ban so far restricts citizens from 12 countries -- Iran, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Somalia, Nigeria, Myanmar, Eritrea, Kyrgyzstan, Sudan, Tanzania and North Korea -- and some Venezuelan officials and their relatives from obtaining a broad range of US visas, NPR reported.

With another executive order, Biden has bolstered the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program that protects from deportation immigrants brought to the United States as children, often called Dreamers.

Another executive order revoked the Trump administration's plan to exclude non-citizens from the census count, and another overturns a Trump executive order that pushed aggressive efforts to find and deport unauthorised immigrants.

Biden has also halted construction of Trump's border wall with Mexico. The order includes an "immediate termination" of the national emergency declaration that allowed the Trump administration to redirect billions of dollars to the wall. ANI

Trump Disclosure Reveals Extent Of Pandemic Damage To His Business Empire

Agencies

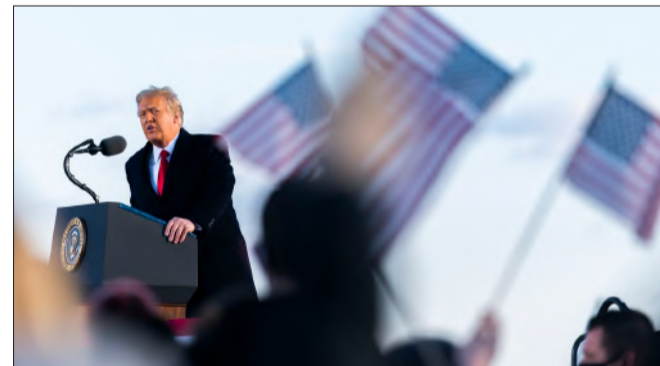
WASHINGTON — Donald Trump's empire has been hit hard by coronavirus closures, with revenue from his Washington and Las Vegas hotels down by more than half.

In his last financial disclosure form as president, Trump detailed the damage the pandemic has wrought, at a time when many tourism businesses are suffering from a lack of travelers. As president, the real-estate magnate resisted policies to slow the pandemic through mask-wearing, and insisted it remained safe for people to travel domestically.

Revenue from the Trump hotel in Washington, which he had been trying to sell, fell to \$15.1 million from \$40.5 million a year earlier, according to the disclosure posted Wednesday. In Vegas, hotel-related sales were down to \$9.2 million from \$23.3 million. Another important property of Trump's, the Doral Golf Resort in Miami, also saw revenues drop to \$44 million from \$77 million a year earlier.

His golf courses in the U.K. and Ireland saw revenue drop by roughly two-thirds, part of a 27 percent overall decline in golfing revenue from the previous year.

Trump's total income fell to between \$273 million and \$308 million, according to the form, which covers 2020 and



the first 20 days of 2021. In his first financial disclosure in 2017, Trump reported making more than \$528.9 million over 15½ months, including his first three months as president.

One bright spot in Trump's empire is his Mar-a-Lago club in Florida, where the ex-president returned Wednesday after his final day in the White House. Revenue for the club hit \$24.2 million, up from \$21.4 million a year earlier, according to the financial disclosure. It's one of Trump's few properties that seem unaffected by the pandemic.

He also reported an uptick in online retail sales year-over-year, up to \$1.96 billion from \$930,869 in 2019. However, in-store sales at Trump Tower in New York City fell because of forced closures — down to \$166,064 from \$849,313.

In total, Trump valued the assets from his businesses at between \$1.3 billion and \$1.7 billion. The disclosures are not exact — federal officials give the value of their assets and income in broad ranges, and the top value is "over \$50 million." Trump had 22 assets he listed in that range, including his Mar-a-Lago resort and the Trump International Hotel in Washington.

The form also details more than \$40,000 in gifts Trump accepted in his last year in office, including freebies from executives at Boeing Co., Apple Inc. and Ford Motor Co.

Trump is worth \$2.5 billion, down about \$500 million from when he took office, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index. His buildings are saddled with more than \$1 billion in debt, most of it coming due in the next three years and more than a third of it personally guaranteed.

Twin Suicide Bombings Kill At Least 32 In Baghdad



Agencies

Twin suicide bombings ripped through a busy market in the Iraqi capital Thursday, killing at least 32 people and wounding dozens, officials said.

The rare suicide bombing attack hit the Bab al-Sharqi commercial area in central Baghdad amid heightened political tensions over planned early elections and a severe economic crisis. Blood smeared the floors of the busy market amid piles of clothes and shoes as survivors took stock of the disarray in the aftermath.

No one immediately took responsibility for the attack, but Iraqi military officials said it was the work of the Islamic State group.

Iraq's health minister Hassan Mohammed al-Tamimi said at least 32 people were killed and 110 others were wounded in the attack. He said some of the wounded were in serious condition. Iraq's military previously put the number of dead at 28.

The Health Ministry announced that all of its hospitals in the capital were mobilized to

treat the wounded.

Maj. Gen. Tahsin al-Khafaji, spokesman for the Joint Operations Command, which includes an array of Iraqi forces, said the first suicide bomber cried out loudly that he was ill in the middle of the bustling market, prompting a crowd to gather around him — and that's when he detonated his explosive belt. The second detonated his belt shortly after, he said.

"This is a terrorist act perpetrated by a sleeper cell of the Islamic State," al-Khafaji said. He said IS "wanted to prove its existence" after suffering many blows in military operations to root out the militants.

The suicide bombings marked the first in three years to target Baghdad's bustling commercial area. A suicide bomb attack took place in the same area in 2018 shortly after then-Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi declared victory over the Islamic State group.

No one immediately took responsibility for Thursday's attack, but Iraq has seen assaults perpetrated by both the Islamic State group and militia groups in recent months.

Struggling French Students Protest University Closures



Agencies

PARIS: French university students protested on Wednesday on Paris Left Bank to demand to be allowed back to class, and to call attention to suicides and financial troubles among students cut off from friends, professors and job opportunities amid the pandemic.

Carrying a banner reading We Will Not Be the Sacrificed Generation, hundreds of students gathered to march on the Education Ministry, seeking government help for those struggling. Other student protests were planned on Wednesday elsewhere in France.

The government ordered all universities closed in October to stem resurgent virus infections, after a similar closure in the spring set many students back academically and socially.

Students have increasingly been sharing their woes on

social networks under such hashtags as #suicideetudiant and #etudiantphantomes, or ghost students.

Heidi Soupault, a 19-year-old student in Strasbourg, wrote an open letter to President Emmanuel Macron last week saying she and her peers have no more dreams and have the impression of being dead.

While France tightened its curfew last week as virus hospitalizations grew again, Prime Minister Jean Castex made a gesture towards college students, allowing first-year students to start returning to partial classes as of next week. The government acknowledged that lockdown-related mental health problems among young people are also a public health concern.

But the protesting students say the measures don't go far enough to address their woes. France has among the worlds highest numbers of virus infections and deaths.

NEWS MAKERS

Zeinab Soleimani To Trump: You Left Office In Defeat, Will Live In Fear

The daughter of top Iranian anti-terror commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani says former US President Donald Trump ordered the assassination of her father to portray himself as "a hero," but he left office "defeated, isolated and broken."

Zeinab Soleimani made the remarks in a post on her Twitter account on Wednesday after Trump departed the White House at the end of his tumultuous four-year term and Joe Biden took office as the 46th president of the United States.

She said the assassination of General Soleimani will continue to haunt Trump, who will live "in fear of foes."



"But instead you are defeated, isolated & broken - viewed not as a hero, but one who lives in fear of foes," she added.

General Soleimani, the commander of the Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), was assassinated along with his Iraqi trenchmate Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the deputy head of the Popular Mobilization Units, in a US drone strike ordered by Trump near Baghdad International Airport on January 3, 2020.

Last July, Agnes Callamard, UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, in a report to the UN Human Rights Council underlined the "unlawful" nature of the targeted killing because the US had failed to provide evidence of an ongoing or imminent attack against its interests, as claimed by the Trump administration, to justify the fatal drone strike.

Iran has issued a red notice request to Interpol for the apprehension of Trump and 47 others in connection with the cowardly assassination operation.

Trump, Pompeo & Co. relegated to dustbin of history: Zarif

Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif retweeted Zeinab's post and said in a tweet that Trump and members of his administration such as former US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo "are relegated to the dustbin of history in disgrace."

"But the memories of Gen Soleimani & the 1000s murdered, maimed & starved of food & meds by Trump's state—& economic—terrorism & crimes against humanity, will shine on" he added.

"Perhaps new folks in DC have learned," he said.

21 Miners Trapped For Nearly 2 Weeks In China, Rescuers Race Against Time

BEIJING, CHINA: Chinese rescuers drilled deep into the ground Thursday in an increasingly desperate bid to save 21 miners now trapped for almost two weeks, with one confirmed dead and still no signs of life from over half of the missing workers, state media reported. Twenty-two workers were entombed hundreds of metres underground at the Hushan mine near Qixia city in east China's Shandong province after a January 10 explosion sealed the entrance and cut off communications. Contact has been established with one group of miners, although one, seriously injured in the initial explosion, was confirmed dead late Wednesday. Another is believed to be trapped on his own, one hundred metres further down in rising waters, but his condition is unknown as he has not been directly reached by the rescue teams above. The second group of 11 miners have also yet to be contacted, despite rescuers' efforts. "They have also been lowering life detectors and nutrient solutions to other sections to locate the other missing miners but continued to receive no life signs," state news agency Xinhua reported.

Mongolian PM Resigns After Protests Over Covid-19 Mother's Treatment

ULAANBAATAR, MONGOLIA: Mongolia's prime minister resigned Thursday following protests and public outrage over the treatment of a coronavirus patient and her newborn baby. Landlocked Mongolia reported just a handful of Covid-19 cases last year after imposing strict border controls, but in November its first domestic transmissions caused a new wave of lockdowns and restrictions. Anger mounted this week after TV footage showed a woman who appeared to have recently given birth being moved to an infectious disease centre wearing only hospital pyjamas and plastic slippers, despite temperatures dipping to minus 25 degrees Celsius.

Autocad Training For Agricultural Applications Commences At SKUAST-K



SRINAGAR: With an aim to upskill agricultural engineering graduates with industry-relevant skills, Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, Kashmir Thursday inaugurated a 15-day training programme on 'AutoCad for Agricultural and Industrial Application'.

The training is organised by the varsity's College of Agricultural Engineering and Technology in collaboration with Autodesk AUTOCAD 2020, an ISO certified company, under World Bank-ICAR funded National Agricultural Higher Education Project (NAHEP) for the institutional development of SKUAST-K.

The training has been designed with an emphasis on the practical aspect of design encompassing real-world applications relevant to agriculture and related industries. The software lays a strong foundation in transforming the imaginative agricultural concepts into the reality, experts said during the inaugural session of the programme.

Director Planning SKUAST-K and principal investigator of NAHEP, Prof Nazir Ahmad Ganai, who was the chief guest at the inaugural session, while emphasising on the need of conducting such programmes for creating a market-ready human resource stressed on

involving Artificial Intelligence and Internet of Things in the graduate course curriculum to generate entrepreneurial potential among agricultural graduates.

Associate Dean, College of Agricultural Engineering, Dr R Kumar, highlighted the training programmes being organised by the college to enhance the knowledge of the trainees. Course director Prof Juaid N Khan highlighted the importance of AutoCAD Software and its applications in multiple domains. He also gave a detailed outline of the topics to be covered in the fifteen days training programme.

Head, FMPE, Prof Jagvir Dixit presented the vote of thanks. The CEO of Autodesk Abid gave a detailed outline of the origin of AutoCAD as a basic designing software.

About 26 trainees including B-Tech (Agri Engg) students, M-Tech (AgriEngg.), MSc and PhD (Floriculture and Landscape students and faculty members of COA&T were selected in the training programme, and informed the audience that this software was founded in 1982 and new versions are coming in marked on yearly basis. Head, FMPE, Prof Jagvir Dixit presented the formal vote of thanks to the chief guest and all the participants in the training programme.



53,000 Poultry Birds To Be Culled At Punjab's Mohali To Stop Spread Of Bird Flu

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

CHANDIGARH: Around 53,000 birds of two poultry farms in Punjab's Mohali are to be culled after some samples from there testing positive for avian flu, a senior official said on Thursday.

The reports of samples taken from two poultry farms at Behra village in Dera Bassi in Mohali were received from the National Institute of High-Security Animal Diseases lab in Bhopal on Wednesday.

"The culling of around 53,000 birds will either start today evening or tomorrow,"

said V K Janjua, Additional Chief Secretary (Animal Husbandry and Dairy).

As per the government of India guidelines, the birds of poultry farms located within one km of an infected farm have to be culled.

There was no other poultry farm other than these two within one km radius, an official said.

The department has constituted 25 teams for the culling drive, he added.

After culling, the poultry birds would be buried, he said.

The samples taken from two poultry farms had tested

positive for H5N8 strain on Wednesday.

The samples from these poultry farms were sent to NISAD for confirmation on January 15 after the Northern Regional Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (NRDDL) in Jalandhar suspected them to be positive for bird flu.

These two poultry farms are layer farms where birds are reared for eggs.

Punjab had sounded an alert earlier this month after bird flu cases were reported from several states and Union territories in north India, including Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi.

Municipal Committee Pampore BJP Activist Elected President Unopposed

PULWAMA: A BJP activist has been elected President Municipal Committee Pampore unopposed on Thursday.

Sources said that Muhammad Yaqub Malik, a resident of Litalbal Pampore area of Southern Pulwama district was elected president Municipal Committee

Pampore uncontested.

"Today was the last day for filing of nomination papers for the President of Municipal Committee Pampore and only one nomination of Yaqub Malik was received. He was accordingly elected President MC Pampore," said an official. (KNT)

Consolidated Health Workers Stage Protest In Srinagar In Support Of Their Demands

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Hundreds of consolidated workers, working in different government hospitals in the Kashmir valley on Thursday staged a massive protest in Srinagar in support of their demands, including release of pending wages and regularization of their service.

The workers, including sweepers and drivers, working in different hospitals since 1994 staged a massive protests in Srinagar alleging

that despite repeated assurance from the administration their demands were not fulfilled.

We demand implementation of minimum wages Act which has already been implemented in different government departments since 2018, the workers said.

Let the health department release our wages according to minimum wage Act, they demanded.

The workers alleged that despite repeated assurance their demands were not met by the health department.

Agency Constructing Zojila Tunnel Chops Over 300 Trees Without Permission'

SONMARG: Megha Engineering and Infrastructure Ltd which is responsible for the construction of 14.5 kilometer Zojila Tunnel has chopped off 338 trees without seeking permission from the Forest Department.

The trees are lying along the road and Forest Department officials have submitted a report to Divisional Forest Officer Ganderbal seeking action against the agency under law.

"There is a road passing through the forest area of Nilgrath. We had marked some 300 trees that were supposed to be cut by the forest department. Ironically, without seeking our permission, Megha Engineering and Infrastructure Limited has cut down 338 trees," Forest Officer Sonmarg Abdul Gani said.

Any Agency involved in the construction of a road or tunnel is supposed to deposit a specific amount before the forest department before cutting the trees if they are hampering



their work. But Megha Engineering and Infrastructure Ltd violated all the rules and did everything on its own.

"338 trees is a big number. We have filed a report before Divisional Forest Officer Ganderbal, Mir Owais and demanded action against the Agency under law," the forest officer said.

Pertinently, Megha Engineering and Infrastructure Ltd secured the contract to construct the multi crore Zojila Tunnel after it emerged as the

lowest bidder for the project.

Zojila tunnel aims to provide all-year connectivity between Kashmir and Ladakh region. The estimated cost of the project is Rs 4,509 crore.

When contacted, DFO Ganderbal, Mir Owais said that he has constituted a committee to ascertain facts. "If some violation has taken place, we will charge a bill from the Agency. I don't think they have cut trees. What I have learnt is that the Agency has cut some saplings," Mir Owais said. (KNT)

THERE IS A ROAD PASSING THROUGH THE FOREST AREA OF Nilgrath. We had marked some 300 trees that were supposed to be cut by the forest department. Ironically, without seeking our permission, Megha Engineering and Infrastructure Limited has cut down 338 trees,"

Rising Unemployment Robbed Sense Of Entitlement Of JK Youth: Sagar

SRINAGAR: National Conference on Thursday expressed dismay over the increasing unemployment rate in Jammu and Kashmir, saying the back-sliding of governance in the region has robbed a sense of entitlement, and job opportunities from the local youth.

As per the statement issued to press, NC said that the disenchantment among youth has been the most disturbing of all the casualties of the unilateral measures undertaken by the GOI on 5th of August in 2019.

Signed by the party General Secretary Ali Muhammad Sagar the statement said various visiting delegations apprised the General Secretary about the widespread unemployment, administrative inertia and development deficit in their respective areas.

Interacting with the delegations, Sagar said the democratic system which was ushered in Jammu and Kashmir by Sher-e-Kashmir has been derailed by the brush of authoritarianism on 5th of August 2019. "Unfortunately, the youth of Jammu and Kashmir has in particular been at the receiving end of it. Unilateral and undemocratic rescinding of our constitutionally guaranteed status, disenfranchising natives from exclusive rights over land and jobs, and the smear campaign against them on media has buried their dreams; they see no light at the end of the tunnel. The dream which was sold to our

youth while rescinding Articles 370, 35-A has not materialized yet. Local educated youth continue to suffer on account of shrinking opportunities, the absence of a viable employment package and incentivization of tourism, handicraft sectors has further aggravated their plight. It won't be an exaggeration to say that the future of our youth across Jammu and Kashmir has been the biggest casualty of August 5th policy 2019 policy of ruling BJP. The absence of any viable private sector compounded the woes of our unemployed youth," he said.

Compounding the predicaments of educated local youth is undoubtedly the dysfunctional government and its lackluster attitude and unawareness about plethora of issues concerning the people, Sagar said "installing democracy in J&K and putting the local youth on the track of development seems unachievable in the prevailing situation due to the failure of the government in infusing trust in the local youth by making amends to the policy of August 5, 2019, coming out with a passive employment bonanza and sustaining of tourism and local handloom and handicrafts sectors by added incentivization. Far from taking such affirmative measures, the ruling BJP under the spell of its faux assimilation drama is adding salt to the injuries of our youth, without giving a thought to its consequences for the country and J&K in particular."

DDC Reviews Developmental Scenario Of Kupwara

KUPWARA: The District Development Commissioner (DDC) Kupwara, Imam Din today convened a meeting of concerned officers to review developmental activities undertaken in the district under District CAPEX Budget, Languishing Projects and Border Area Development Programme (BADP).

The meeting was informed that 70 percent of the available funds under District CAPEX Budget for 2020-21 have been expended up to ending December 2020. It was informed that under R&B, Rs.128.35 lakh have been utilized during the said period for execution of different roads. Rs.214 lakh have been uti-

lized under MDM, while as, 174 lakh under ICDS/Nutrition.

It was further informed that under NREGA (SGRY), Rs.7254 lakh have been incurred during the same period while, 1980 lakh have been expended under PMAY and Rs.139 lakh under NRLM.

The DDC also took stock of developmental works taken under BADP and Languishing projects.

The DDC urged upon the officers to accelerate the developmental tempo in the district and ensure completion of all ongoing works within the stipulated time frame. He also urged them to work with mutual coordination for better results at the ground level.

DC Pays Surprise Visit To SDH Kupwara

KUPWARA: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Imam Din today paid a surprise visit to Sub District Hospital, Kupwara to take stock of the facilities being provided to the patients.

The DC inspected various wards, held interaction with patients and enquired about the facilities being provided to them from Hospital Administration. He also inspected various sections including Dialysis Centre, X-Ray section and Covid-19 immunizations center where immunization was going on besides other units.

After taking stock of the facilities, the DC expressed satisfac-

tion over better functioning of the hospital.

Regarding Covid-19 immunization, the DC said that people who have registered themselves for immunization should take the proper doses so that the pandemic is kept at bay, adding that people should not give ear to rumors.

He also directed CMO Kupwara to ensure a vigorous public awareness campaign regarding Health Insurance Cards so people across the district could get benefits of the scheme.

The DC during the visit was accompanied by Additional Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Nazir Ahmad Lone.

NEWS MAKERS

Advisor Khan Assesses Post Snowfall Scenario In Anantnag, Kulgam

ANANTNAG: Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Basier Ahmad Khan, today visited Anantnag to assess post snowfall scenarios in twin districts of Anantnag and Kulgam besides taking stock of public grievances.

Taking a thorough review of the status of essential services like power and drinking water supply, healthcare, ration and cooking gas supply, the Advisor asked the officers to ensure that all available resources are mobilized effectively for greater public convenience.



Highlighting the importance of PRI members in growth and development, Khan directed the concerned officers to involve them in all welfare schemes so that logical and need based plans are formulated and thus implemented for larger interest of the society. This, he said, would ensure effective devolution of

power to the grassroots level and strengthening of local self-governance.

Advisor asked for maintenance and speedy restoration of power supply to essential services like hospitals and water supply schemes during the inclement weather conditions. He also directed the officers of PDD to publicize the current and strictly abide by it so that people may not suffer on this account. He asked for ensuring timely supply of Mid Day Meal, ration and other essentials to AWCs, pension to old aged people, specially abled, widows and other categories, payment to MGNREGA workers and PMAY-G beneficiaries besides quality healthcare services to general people.

To prevent damage to life and property of vulnerable groups as well as the general public, Khan asked the concerned officers to issue timely advisories in view of possible snow avalanches, floods, increasing fire incidents and predicted heavy snowfall.

In view of spurt in tourist arrival in Pahalgam owing to heavy snowfall, Khan directed for speedy road clearance, proper power and water supply to facilitate the visitors.

Advisor also reviewed the functioning of disaster management centres established along the National Highway.

Taking a brief overview of COVID-19 vaccination programme, Advisor stressed for massive awareness among the people regarding the importance of this drive besides educating about misconceptions and misinformation about the vaccine.

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K O V I E W

President Biden

On Wednesday Joe Biden was inaugurated as the 46th president of the United States. He has taken over at a perilous moment in American history. Four years of Trump presidency have polarized America. And the recent Capitol siege by Trump supporters seeking to overturn the outcome of the presidential election symbolised what has gone wrong with the US during Trump's term. In his inaugural speech, president Biden called for America to unite and "end this uncivil war". He called on Republicans to join him in confronting the nation's economic, social and health crises. Biden used the word "unity" or "uniting" 11 times to send out a conciliatory message. Without naming Trump, Biden said that the democracy has won in America. "We've learned again that democracy is precious. Democracy is fragile. And at this hour, my friends, democracy has prevailed," he said. Soon after his oath, Biden began dismantling his predecessor's legacy with orders to halt construction of his border wall, lift his travel ban including that on Muslims and rejoin the Paris climate agreement.

As Biden was delivering his address, Washington had been transformed into a garrison, with 25,000 National Guard troops joining thousands of police officers to prevent protests by Trump supporters. Similarly, Biden spoke to an empty National Mall with flags standing in for the absent crowd due to the still raging pandemic that has claimed 400,000 American lives.

Trump didn't attend the oath ceremony but his Vice President Mike Pence did. Trump had left Washington hours before the swearing-in. In a message to his supporters, Trump without naming Biden said he wished the "new administration great luck and great success".

Taking over of Biden as next US president is not just an election win. It marks a momentous shift back to a liberal order in the US and hopefully later in the rest of the world. Under Trump, the US had lurched towards far-right. Under Trump, we were witness to a stunning closing of the American mind.

Under Biden, America will be hoped to go back to its core democratic values. This will be good for the rest of the world many parts of which are witnessing "the pandemic of authoritarianism", to borrow the phrase of Nobel laureate Amartya Sen. And the Trump administration was underpinning this "pandemic". There's hope that a liberal US administration will reverse this trend by keeping a leash on the right-wing governments.

Also under Biden, the US will be expected to once again assume its leadership role in the world. Trump had withdrawn from multilateral agreements like Paris climate accord and the US' own nuclear agreement with Iran. The US had also stopped raising the issues of human rights violations across the world. Biden will hopefully change this.

OTHER OPINION

The 46th President of the US

Joe Biden's elevation as the 46th President of the United States (US) marks a moment of victory for all those who believe in liberal democracy, civilised politics within the rules of the game, responsible leadership, and the inclusion of various social groups, including minorities, in the power structure. Mr Biden's predecessor, Donald Trump, stood at the opposite end of all these values — he was illiberal and authoritarian; he was willing to use lies and deceit and undermine all constitutional institutions to win and then remain in power; and he encouraged xenophobic politics based on White supremacism.

Mr Biden's selection of Kamala Harris as Vice-President and appointment of the most racially diverse cabinet in US history shows that he understands the importance of inclusion. His focus on instituting tougher measures to battle Covid-19 and ramp up vaccination shows that he will have a different approach to the pandemic. And with a new economic stimulus — which Mr Biden will have to push through Congress — the task of domestic economic reconstruction will take priority. But his most challenging domestic political task will be to heal a divided nation — the fact that over 71 million people voted for Mr Trump is a grim reminder of the internal faultlines.

But along with domestic priorities, the Biden presidency will have to deal with the most important strategic challenge of the times — the belligerence of China. The appointment of an Indo-Pacific coordinator signals the continued commitment of the new administration to managing China's ambitions and investing in regional partnerships in Asia — including with India. But this will be accompanied by Washington's need to keep up a working relationship with Beijing. Given the relatively bipartisan support for the relationship with India, New Delhi should not be overly concerned about the tactical ebbs and flows in Washington's policy — for the strategic convergence between the two is unmistakable. Despite concerns that may be expressed about what has come to be seen as India's democratic backsliding, Mr Biden is likely to invest in the India partnership across the realm of defence, economy, technology, and climate — and perhaps even make a trip to India in the first half of his term. For now, all democrats should celebrate Mr Biden's win — and the return of the politics of sanity.

Hindustan Times

Poor Social Media Outreach of Government

Make it mandatory for Administrative Secretaries, Directors, DCs, Distt SPs

DR RAJA MUZAFFAR BHAT

When we discuss Gilgit Baltistan, a picture of a rugged mountainous place comes to our mind. This region which was once a part of Kashmir state during Dogra rule. In that sense we have social, cultural and emotional attachment with the region. I am not going to discuss politics of Kashmir or Gilgit Baltistan, instead I am touching a very unique issue which is related to good governance and public outreach of the Government. Chhattisgarh state in central India is also one of the backward states. When we hear or read about Dantewada, Sukma or Bijapur districts of Chhattisgarh, a picture of naxal charged places with thick jungles comes in front of us. Both Gilgit Baltistan and Chhattisgarh may be very backward regions when it comes to socio-economic status of people or lack of education but when it comes to Government's public outreach through social media, the same is much better than Jammu & Kashmir.

COVID 19 pandemic which made our lives very difficult and brought a lot of miseries into the world economy taught us many lessons. We have now come to this conclusion that without meeting physically or travelling long distances to attend workshops, seminars and meetings, the same can be held through virtual mode as well via zoom, skype and other online platforms. These facilities were available in the past also but its importance was not explored properly. Similarly, governments across the world became more active on social media during COVID 19 pandemic which has brought them closer to people.

I have been following regular posts of various Government officers of Gilgit Baltistan. Home Secretary to Deputy Commissioners of remote districts like Hunza Nagar, Ghanche and Skardu have a dedicated twitter handle. Even the Assistant Commissioners in Gilgit Baltistan which are equivalent to our Sub Divisional Magistrates (SDMs) all are updating their activities on social media. Similarly, the District Collectors in Chhattisgarh have their well-maintained official websites which provide all the updated information. On the other hand, when we compare the Government websites of J&K, the same have not been updated for years. Even some administrative departments like Rural Development and Panchayati Raj have no official website at all. The social media presence of Administrative Secretaries, Deputy Commissioners, Directors of various departments, HODs, District Superintendents of Police (SPs) is not encouraging at all.

Chhattisgarh Government

As already mentioned above, Dantewada and Bijapur are the most backward districts in Chhattisgarh state. These districts are considered to be the most backward districts of India as well. When it comes to their presence on social media, the District Magistrates (DMs) of both the districts have official Twitter handles @Dantewada-Dist and @bijapurcg. I have observed both DMs actively responding to people through this platform. Even the official district websites of these Naxal charged districts are fully updated.

More than 8 years back, I had appreciated the District Magistrate of Bijapur for his beautiful website through one of my columns and exposed some of J&K's official websites which had obsolete and outdated information available on them. Even after 8 years, our Government officers & District NIC staff have not rectified their mistakes. Our official websites continue to be in shambles. Recently I wanted to get an email ID or contact number of Secretary Tribal Affairs J&K Government, but after going through the official website of this administrative department <https://tribalaffairs.jk.gov.in>, I found the same in mess. J&K RTI Act 2009 and Rules 2012 are yet to be replaced from this website. In the "who is who" column, Mr Abdul Majid Bhat is the designated Secretary of Tribal Affairs and on the main page Ms Rehana Batul is shown as Secretary of the Department.

Leadership Qualities

Majority of the Administrative Secretaries, Directors, HoDs in J&K don't have any official



When we compare the Government websites of J&K, they have not been updated for years. The social media presence of Administrative Secretaries, Deputy Commissioners, Directors of various departments, HODs, District Superintendents of Police (SPs) is not encouraging at all

twitter handle or facebook page. There are many DCs who have official twitter handles but they are not much responsive except a handful of Deputy Commissioners.

I have observed that the Power Department J&K Government is the most responsive Government organization that addresses public grievances when the same is highlighted on social media. Principal Secretary Power Department, MD Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Ltd (KPDCL), Chief Engineer KPDCL and Chief Engineer Transmission Kashmir are always responsive on twitter and Facebook. They address people's problems when the same is highlighted on social media. The District SPs are not active on social media that much, when it comes to addressing public grievances. SDMs, SDPOs, Tehsildars and Block Development Officers (BDOs) are hardly seen on Twitter or Facebook in their official capacity.

Some officials have a habit of blocking people on Twitter when they make critical analysis. By virtue of being public servants, Government officers need to face the critics positively. This is how they are trained in the administrative training institutes. Blocking people on social media for making positive criticism is nothing but exhibiting lack of leadership qualities. Criticism, in my opinion, is a term for judgment or evaluation, good or bad. It pops up everywhere.

PMGSY JK has No website

PM's Garmin Sadak Yojna (PMGSY) in J&K has no official website. This is not only ethically wrong but an illegal act as well. As per section 4 (1) (b) of RTI Act 2005, public authorities are supposed to make voluntary disclosure of information. I had sought some information from the PMO last year, a part of it was related to rural road projects and they transferred the same to J&K Government. Finally after many months, I got a reply from PMGSY Budgam. I have been

asked to deposit more than Rs 15400 for getting copies of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) of some road projects in Budgam which I wanted. The documents I sought under RTI Act are public documents within the meaning of section 4 of RTI Act 2005 and the same should be available on PMGSY's official website, which they don't have at all. Asking me to pay such a huge amount is not only devious but illegal as well because under the provisions of section 7 (6) of RTI Act 2005 after a lapse of 30 days the RTI applicant has not to be charged any fees for providing information.

Official emails ?

I have been sending emails to Government officers for more than 15 years. During this time, not even 15 officers have responded. This is not happening with me only, but I know dozens of journalists, activists and other people who have similar complaints. Most of the official emails shown on official websites are not operational. On July 29th 2020, I emailed a detailed letter to Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam complaining about non availability of COVID 19 expenses information on his official website www.budgam.nic.in. Till this day no officer responded to my email. I sent an RTI application several months back which was also not responded to. As discussed above, section 4 (1) of RTI Act 2005 also makes it mandatory upon all public authorities to make COVID-19 expense details public. Under the RTI link of Budgam district website, the official phone numbers used to be invalid until recently. For the last few months, the phone number has been allotted to the DC office grievance cell.

Conclusion

There are public spirited citizens in every village, city or a town. These people keep highlighting public issues through social media but feel frustrated when they can't even tag a concerned officer on Facebook or Twitter. I have now brought this issue into the notice of Lt Governor Manoj Sinha some days back when a delegation of J&K RTI Movement met him in Srinagar. He assured us to make sure DCs and SPs at least have better social media outreach so that public grievances get addressed in a short span of time.

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

Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat is Founder & Chairman of Jammu & Kashmir RTI Movement. Feedback: bhatrajamuzaffar@gmail.com



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Sedentary Lifestyle: A Public Health Issue

Sedentary lifestyle has become a significant public health issue. Unfortunately people are spending more and more time in sedentary activities or inactive lifestyles be it in offices, schools, working places or other household scenarios. Sedentary lifestyle means involving less or no physical activities like sitting, sleeping, watching TV or video games, using mobile phones, computers and laptops which lead to ill health or obesity. Obesity affects all races, ethnicities, income levels. Currently 1 in 3 children or adolescents are obese or overweight and get affected by abnormal or excessive fats accumulation. Obesity is not only a problem in itself and but also a gateway to many other health problems.

Physical inactivity or sedentary

life leads to following consequences. Sedentary life affects our cardiovascular activity and enhances heart related issues. There is the risk of developing cancers in our body parts. Obesity is the main reason for anxiety, depression and lowering metabolism. Less physical activity increases our blood pressure and cholesterol which ultimately leads to diabetes. Sitting in one place is very harmful as it develops gout and arthritis symptoms. Osteoporosis, breast cancer and sleeping disorder are the direct results of sedentary lifestyle. Chances of paralytic attacks are higher in overweight people. These people are often victimized, have shortness of breath, impair blood sugar regulations, develop risk of mental illness. Poor people have easier access to unhealthy and junk

foods easily available from markets.

There are many reasons that cause obesity. Lack of physical activity, unhealthy diet, various environmental factors, hormonal disorders and use of technology and community helps in sedentary lifestyle. But these factors are controllable and reversible. More and more walking habits, less use of elevators, talking while walking at a safer place promotes the idea of good health. Instead of watching video games at ideal mode switch over to the activity based games. Reduce ourselves in prolong watching of TV serials, programmes and movies. Avoid using easy means of communication i.e bike, scooter, cars etc to remain fit and fine. Prevent the excess use of social networks, the internet and promote physical activity in our

daily life. Lesser intake of fats and carbohydrates, regular exercises, cycling encourage our healthy habits of calorie consumptions in our body.

People need more care about choices in schools and worksides. Employers can ensure healthy programme options for their employees for healthy development. Women are given more opportunities of breast feeding that can reduce obese or overweight in children. There is no specific cure for obesity. Local government should provide people an increased opportunity for physical activity, encourage easy and safe going activities of schooling, grocery stores, safety bike paths, sidewalks for cycling and healthy activities.

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Emotional Intelligence and Its All Encompassing Role in Our Lives

NASIR GEELANI

Emotional Intelligence is important in every walk of human life and at every stage from infancy to old age. For example, Emotionally Intelligent kids are able to understand more of their emotions clearly and have rich emotional vocabulary

Have you ever wondered, what is the Alchemy of success, Happiness and Mental health? What makes some people more successful than others? What makes people with less knowledge and intelligence surpasses those who are very intelligent and knowledgeable? If you are wondering what that special quality is, then you are at the right place to know about it.

It is Emotional Intelligence, although defined and put into perspective in the last half of 20th century, the concept has been there for thousands of years and its importance was emphasized by all great thinkers of their times. For example, in the work of Aristotle, the "Nicomachean Ethics", the following Quote can be found pointing towards the emotional side of human life and how emotions can be channelized.

"Those who are not angry at the things they should be angry at the thought to be fools, and so are those who are not angry in the right way at the right time or with the right person; for such a man is thought not to feel things nor to be pained by them, and, since he does not get angry, he is thought unlikely to Defend himself."

Emotional Intelligence in mainstream psychology was defined by Salovey and Mayer and later popularized by Famous Psychologist and Writer Daniel Goleman in his best selling book "Emotional Intelligence: Why it Matters More than IQ". According to Daniel Goleman, Emotional Intelligence is an ability to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustration; the ability to control impulses and delay gratification; the ability to regulate one's mood and keep distress from hampering, the ability to think, to empathize; the ability to recognize one's own feelings and those of others; and the ability to manage emotions well within oneself and one's relationship.

Emotional Intelligence is important in every walk of human life and at every stage from infancy to old age. For example, Emotionally Intelligent kids are able to understand more of their emotions clearly and have rich emotional vocabulary. They are better at delayed Gratification (our emotional ability to postpone immediate pleasure for some delayed but greater benefit) which results in them being more tolerant in different endeavors of their life, from romance to career.

When we talk about success in life, we are surely referring to how successful we are in career, business, how well we go at work, how well we are with friends and family and how good we are at making and maintaining relationships. An emotionally intelligent person deals effectively with his business, can sustain losses and frustrations and can understand and connect deeply with people at the workplace this makes his work life healthy. He doesn't mix his frustrations at job with his family or personal life as he can manage and control his emotions. He knows how to deal with one person and how to deal with another in a different way. He knows how to understand others emotions which gives him the



ability to manage emotions judiciously and foster interpersonal relationships.

When we talk about mental health and mental illnesses, we are definitely talking about emotions and feelings in direct or indirect ways. It must be borne in mind that emotional intelligence isn't available in a binary way on or off rather it is on continuum and graded also not clearly graded like IQ. There is correlation between Emotional intelligence and mental health disorders like Major depressive disorders, Anxiety disorders, OCD, ADHD, Borderline personality disorders etc. Discussing each at empirical level is not in scope of this article. However, we can understand it simply: More we have control over how we use and see our emotions, more we have the ability to differentiate among different types of emotions, more we are mindful about how our thoughts give rise to emotions and vice versa, more we will be healthy mentally and physically.

You must be thinking my friend, that wise uncle, that successful relative, my aunt's children are Emotionally Intelligent and what about me. The good news is Emotional Intelligence can be increased in other words human beings can be trained in Emotional intelligence at different developmental levels however, bend the willow while it's young. Children can be trained in emotional intelligence like how to delay Gratification, anger management and other things related to the emotional side of life.

If we talk about parenting it won't be wrong to say there is no parenting unless a parent uses his emotions wisely, judiciously, and in a balanced way in training children how to use and understand their own emotions and to understand the emotions of others. Interestingly, When a parent will keep this in mind it will automatically propel a child to

respond in a healthy way.

Last but not least, I would like to relate the concept of Emotional Intelligence with spirituality and Religion. Every religion must be teaching how to polish and channelize your emotions. However, I being a muslim thankfully would try to relate Emotional intelligence with Islamic principles and customs. The Holy Quran and Prophetic pbuh tradition is filled with examples. As stated by and emphasized in Holy Quran and practiced by Prophet pbuh, I feel one's whole deen is based on Sabr and Shukur (Patience and Gratitude). When we are in a constant state of Gratitude which is being reminded of us by us in five daily prayers and so many times, Our ability to have true patience will automatically be reflected in our life, in other words we will become Emotionally Intelligent.

To conclude, I would like to say emotions are not meant to rule us rather they are our windows to see the world through different perspectives. If we understand this, we can be under emotional intelligence, for example if I am looking from one emotional window, another person can be peeping through another. Emotional intelligence is to accept and celebrate this difference.

Let's be Mindful, let's be self aware, let's be aware about other's feelings Lets be Emotionally Intelligent.

Views expressed in the articles are the author's own responsibility. The content is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment and is strictly for educational/informative purposes only

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Improve Your Mental Health this Winter

TANIA WISEMAN

This past year more than any other we've been reminded that access to outdoor private space is a privilege - not all of us have a home with a garden. But many of us have also spent more time outdoors in nature and felt a greater sense of connection with the trees, plants and the natural world.

With this in mind, I've pulled together some tips on how you can nurture your mental health through nature. These ideas will work for all gardens (both public and private) - from the smallest patch to a stately home.

Reflect

Nature connects us in complex ways. And stopping to think about this connection is one way you can get in tune with the natural world around you. In your garden or local park, walk a path that has been walked before, you could choose an ancient path and consider all the people that have walked that way before. Or choose a route you have walked with someone you care about.

If you have a garden, think about people who have contributed to it, take a slow careful tour, focus on each plant - how did it come into the garden? Show appreciation for it and its story, send a mental message of thanks to the person who gifted it, or inspired its adoption.

The certainty of the rhythmic cycle of the seasons can also help to connect us to a better future. Gardening is inherently related to nature's cycles. Gardening is continuous and can be characterised as "quiet sustainability" or quiet activism. Through the act of willing things to grow we are imagining that spring and summer will come and there will be renewal. Don't worry about the look of the garden, just focus on what it means to you in this season of bare branches and empty flowerbeds.



Harvest and tidy

Gardeners often share and gift their surplus vegetables, plants and seeds with family, friends and neighbours. In this sense then, gardening doesn't have to be an expensive hobby - many gardeners base their acquisition of plants and seeds on mutual exchange with other gardening enthusiasts within their community.

If you bear the responsibility of a garden, then you will also appreciate the pleasure of a newly cleared patch. So, whether there is obvious produce or not, get to work. Tidy, weed and collect up seed pods and cases, use paper bags or envelopes to store them.

Don't worry if you are unsure which plant they came from, take a picture or

Nature connects us in complex ways. And stopping to think about this connection is one way you can get in tune with the natural world around you

draw a map of the spot. You can return to it in the spring if your seedlings start to sprout and you're still not sure what they are. Allow your seeds to dry thoroughly and spend time on rainy afternoons trying to identify them. Reflect on the wonder that each tiny speck will become the producer of thousands of new seeds.

Nurture

Gardening is experienced as both a long-term project - transformations of the garden may take years to achieve - and as a spontaneous and intrinsically rewarding activity. Many gardeners endure chore-like aspects such as weeding as part of their overall project of caring for the garden - which reciprocally appears to care

for them.

Nurturing acts can include transforming pine-cones into bird feeders by squeezing fats and seeds into their spaces and hanging them where you can see them. Piles of dry twigs can also be made into excellent hotels for beneficial garden insects and bigger piles may attract hedgehogs.

Play

In a recent study of Danish allotment gardening, people thought of going to their garden patch as an "escape" - and used terms such as "refuge", "oasis" and "haven" to describe their plot. Many gardeners also highlighted the sense of freedom access to outdoor space gave them - along with a chance to relax and mentally unwind.

So give yourself permission to play and disconnect. Get muddy, dig and weed, move and organise, have fun, get sweaty. If something catches your eye - a strange insect or curious seed case - stop and stare. Be in the moment, allow wonder and child-like feelings and sensory experiences, colours and smells, to fill your mind. Even when it's not fun, it's satisfying.

Though many garden tasks can be enjoyable in their own right, sometimes it can be a bit of chore - like outdoors housework. But letting your imagination roam while doing those necessary, but boring jobs can add a layer of meaning and help to create a sense of purpose in the overall project of tending the garden.

For example you could plan your next holiday while raking leaves, or imagine a beautiful spring border when planting bulbs. Allowing the imagination to roam allows you to create enjoyment in a mundane task. And this sense of delayed gratification is an essential feature of gardening. It doesn't matter if the enjoyment is in the task itself or in the freedom it gives to let the mind wander - just the fact you're doing it is enough.

*By Arrangements with
The Conversation*

Display If Meat Served "Halal", "Jhatka": South Delhi Civic Body To Restaurants

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The BJP-led South Delhi Municipal Corporation has cleared a proposal that will now make it mandatory for restaurants and shops in south Delhi to display whether the meat being sold or served is cut using the "halal" or "jhatka" method, officials said on Thursday.

The proposal was moved by the Standing Committee of the SDMC on December 24. A senior official of the SDMC said the House cleared it in its special meeting on Wednesday. South Delhi has a number of eateries, restaurants and street-side shops selling or serving non-vegetarian food items, prominent places being markers at Defence Colony, Amar Colony, Sarojini Nagar, South Extension, and INA.

Officials said restaurants and meat shops will have to "display clearly and visibly" whether they are serving "halal" or "jhatka". The resolution passed by the SDMC panel had read, "There are thousands of restaurants in 104 wards of four zones falling under South Delhi Municipal Corporation. Out of these meat is served in about 90 per cent of restaurants but it is not mentioned whether the meat being served by the restaurants is halal or jhatka".

Similarly, the meat shops also do not make the distinction, it had said. The resolution further said, "According to Hinduism and Sikhism, eating halal meat is forbidden and against religion...Therefore, the committee resolves that this direction be given to restaurants and meat shops that it should be written mandatorily about the meat being sold and served by them... that halal or jhatka

meat is available here". Standing Committee Chairman Rajdutt Gahlot had earlier said, "At present, while getting a licence made, owners take a licence for selling on type of meat, and then start selling the other one too". Also, the idea was to let a consumer know about the kind of meat being served to him or her and make an informed choice, Mr Gahlot had said.

The resolution in the Standing Committee was moved by Chhattarpur councillor Anita Tanwar. Irshad Kureshi, general secretary, Delhi Meat Merchants Association, an umbrella body of 6,000 licensed meat shops in Delhi, on Thursday said, "The move seems like a way of diverting attention from more important issues".

Meat shops have always been displaying what meat they have been selling, in compliance with the MCD by-laws of 1957. The authorities are needlessly making an issue out of this, he said.

"While restaurants don't display it, customers always check if they have a preference... It is like asking a restaurant to display whether they also serve vegetarian food. A vegetarian person will enquire about the menu according to his or her preference," Mr Kureshi raved. Joy Singh, a partner in Yeti chain of restaurants and co-founder of Raasta restaurant in south Delhi had termed the move earlier as a very "sad and regressive approach".

In 2017, the SDMC had proposed that meat and its products were not to be displayed in the open, citing that hygiene and "sentiments of people affected by the sight" of meat were the main reasons behind the move.



Women row their boat through the frozen Dal Lake in Srinagar on Thursday. KO Photo, Abid Bhat

US' "Toughest" Period As Covid Deaths Cross World War II Troop Casualties

Agencies

WASHINGTON: New US President Joe Biden warned the worst of the pandemic is still to come, as the number of American coronavirus deaths surpassed the country's troop fatalities in World War II.

Coronavirus cases have surged pasted 96 million worldwide, fuelled by the emergence of new variants including one that was first detected in Britain and has now spread to more than 60 nations, the World Health Organization said Wednesday. The United States remains the worst-hit country, with around a fifth of the two million global Covid-19 deaths, and Biden has made the fight against the pandemic his administration's top priority.

"We need all our strength to persevere through this dark winter. We're entering what may be the toughest and deadliest period of the virus," Biden said at his inauguration, where those in attendance wore face masks and social distancing was enforced.

A Johns Hopkins University tracker

on Wednesday showed that 405,400 people have died from the disease, more than the 405,399 total US combat and non-combat deaths in WWII.

Among the Biden administration's targets is to inoculate 100 million Americans in 100 days, hoping to revive a vaccine rollout that had floundered in the last weeks of the Trump presidency. E-commerce titan Amazon on Wednesday offered its vast logistics infrastructure to help with that effort.

Biden's point-man for fighting the pandemic, Jeff Zients, said the US would also rejoin the WHO, reversing his predecessor's decision. He added that top US expert Anthony Fauci would lead a delegation to the WHO executive board meeting on Thursday.

Newsbeep

Britain is mounting a massive vaccination drive, that has involved the repurposing of all kinds of large buildings -- including Salisbury Cathedral, where thousands of elderly people are receiving shots. Two musicians worked in shifts throughout the day on its 19th-century organ, playing soothing pieces by composers including Bach and Dvorak.

"A war zone"

The announcement came as the WHO confirmed that the virus variant first detected in Britain had spread to more than 60 countries, while one that emerged in South Africa has made it to 23. The South African variant is more

contagious than earlier ones, experts have warned.

Both have tempered optimism that mass vaccination will help to end the unpopular restrictions such as shutdowns that have wrecked economies around the world.

There was some good news, however, with early results from two studies on the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine showing it is effective against the British variant, which is fuelling a surge that has overwhelmed UK hospitals.

"When you go into a hospital... in some cases it looks like a war zone," the British government's chief scientist, Patrick Vallance, told Sky News.

Loss Of Smell May Be Best Sign Of COVID-19, Research Says: Report

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Loss of smell may be the best predictor of COVID-19 among patients with symptoms of respiratory diseases, according to new research.

The findings of two new international studies, published in the journal Chemical Senses, show that there is frequent loss of smell in COVID-19 patients which often lasts for a long time. Over 4,500 COVID-19 patients from a total of 23 nationalities responded to the researchers' questionnaire.

The studies found that the average loss of the sense of smell was 79.7 on a scale from 0-100, indicating a large to complete sensory loss.

"This emphasises how important it is to be aware of this symptom, as it may be the only symptom of the disease," said Alexander Wieck Fjaeldstad from Aarhus University in Denmark. The research found that only around half of patients with a loss

of smell got their sense of smell back after forty days.

"This differs from the picture we see with other viral infections and causes long-term discomfort for patients, both in relation to food and social contact, while at the same time causing them worry," Fjaeldstad said.

The researchers also found that the sense of taste was also significantly reduced, to 69.0 on a scale from 0-100, adding the remaining sense of feeling in the mouth was also reduced to 37.3 on a scale from 0-100.

"While the loss of smell in itself removes the ability to sense the aroma of food, the simultaneous loss of the other senses make it difficult to register what you're eating. Putting food in your mouth can therefore become a decidedly unpleasant experience," Fjaeldstad added.

The study is of interest both to patients suffering sensory loss as well as clinicians and researchers who work with diagnostics and following-up on COVID-19, the researchers said.

NEWS MAKER

How Will Courts Find Out Who Is A Fake Baba, Asks Supreme Court

Agencies

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Wednesday declined to entertain a plea seeking action against illegal ashrams run by fake "babas" across the country.

A bench headed by Chief Justice S.A. Bobde and comprising Justices A. S. Bopanna and V. Ramasubramanian said: "How will court find out who is a fake baba?"

As senior advocate Menaka Guruswamy, representing Dumpala Ramreddy, a resident of Secunderabad, said that the Akhil Bharatiya Akahara Parishad has prepared a list of fake babas in the country, the Chief Justice asked how could they rely on the Parishad's decision on identifying fake babas.

Guruswamy replied that it is the apex body of Akaharas and traces its lineage to Adi Shankara. But the bench said: "The list has been prepared without hearing them or

how does this list come into force."

She cited the conviction of godman Ram Rahim, and the Chief Justice said: "All the more reason not to go to them. Why do you want the SC to intervene?"

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta opposed the plea and cited petitioner's habeas corpus petition in the Delhi High Court seeking custody of his daughter, allegedly been kept in illegal confinement by an alleged godman.

The bench observed that it does not want to disrespect any Akhara Parishad. "How can the Supreme Court enter into this realm. Court cannot look into it," said the bench.

"Menaka Guruswamy, learned senior counsel appearing for the petitioner seeks permission to withdraw this petition. Permission, as sought for, is granted. Accordingly, the writ petition is dismissed as withdrawn," the top court said in its order.

Construction In Our 'Own Territory' Normal, Says China On Report Of Building Village In Arunachal

Press Trust of India

BEIJING: China's development and construction activities "within its own territory" is "normal" and beyond reproach, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said in Beijing on Thursday, reacting to a report about China building a new village in Arunachal Pradesh.

"China's position on the Zangnan region (South Tibet) is consistent and clear. We never recognised the so-called Arunachal Pradesh," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying told a media briefing while responding to a question.

China claims Arunachal Pradesh as part of southern Tibet, while India's consistent stand has been that the north-eastern state is an integral and inalienable part of the country.



Hua said China's development and construction activities "within our own territory is normal."

"This is beyond reproach as it is in our territory," Hua added.

In a report, NDTV news channel showed two images of the area in Arunachal Pradesh where it said a new village has been set up by China and it consisted of about 101 homes. According to the channel, the first image dated August 26, 2019 did not show any human habitation but the second one of November 2020 shows a row of structures.

In a cautious reaction to the report, India on Monday said it keeps a constant watch on all developments having a bearing on the country's security, and takes necessary measures to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi said India

has stepped up the construction of border infrastructure, including roads and bridges for the improvement of livelihood of its citizens.

"Government keeps a constant watch on all developments having a bearing on India's security and takes all the necessary measures to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity," it said.

The India-China border dispute covers the 3,488-km-long Line of Actual Control (LAC).

The report about China setting up a new village in Arunachal Pradesh comes amid a military standoff in eastern Ladakh for over eight months.

India and China have held several rounds of military and diplomatic talks to resolve the face-off in eastern Ladakh, but no significant headway has been made so far.

Joe Biden's Inaugural Address Written By Indian-American Earns Praise For Its Powerful Message

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden's powerful inaugural speech, penned by Vinay Reddy, has received glowing tributes for its meticulous crafting and emphasis on the importance of democracy, unity and hope in the midst of challenging times.

Reddy - an Indian-American from Telangana who wrote the speech that outlined Biden's goals for his administration, focusing on healing from the current state of division in national politics - has been praised for his "calming" and "inspiring" words.

Here are some of the memorable quotes from Biden's speech: "This is America's day, this is democracy's day, the day of history and hope. Today we celebrate a triumph, not of a candidate, but of a cause. We have learned again that democracy is precious, democracy is fragile. At this hour my friends, Democracy has prevailed."

"For without unity, there's no peace, only bitterness and fury. No progress, only exhausting outrage. No nation, only state of chaos...this is our historic moment of crisis and challenge... unity is the path forward."

"Here we stand just days



THIS IS AMERICA'S DAY, THIS IS DEMOCRACY'S DAY, the day of history and hope. Today we celebrate a triumph, not of a candidate, but of a cause. We have learned again that democracy is precious, democracy is fragile. At this hour my friends, Democracy has prevailed."

after a riotous mob thought they could use violence to silence the will of the people, to stop the work of our democracy, to drive us from this sacred ground. It did not happen. It will never happen. Not today, not tomorrow, not ever. Not ever."

"Here's the thing about life. There's no accounting for what fate will deal you. Some days when you need a hand. There are other days when we are called to lend a hand. That's how it has to be. That's what we do for one another."

disagreement doesn't have to be a cause for total war".

"Hear me out as we move forward," Biden said at one point in his speech, vowing to be a "president for all Americans", while asserting: "We must end this uncivil war that pits red against blue".

Michael Beschloss, a presidential historian, described Biden's inaugural speech as "modest, austere, grave, calming, cleansing" and "inspiring" in a tweet, while other commentators and media columnists said the president "gave the speech the moment demanded".

"Biden's speech is about appealing to 'our better angels', 'history, faith, and reason', 'dignity', 'respect', 'unity'. It's literally a rebuttal to Trump's 'American carnage' Inaugural address," journalist Matt Fuller tweeted.

"Joe Biden gave the speech the moment demanded. Well done," Time magazine columnist David French tweeted.

"Biden is meeting the moment here by being direct about the challenges we face, the gaslighting, the viciousness and the need to come together. Hell of a speech," said Tommy Vietor, former NSC spokesman for President Obama said.

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