



P3 CITY

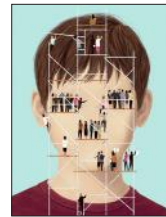
**TULIP FESTIVAL: TRAFFIC POLICE CITY ISSUES ADVISORY**

Traffic Police City Srinagar Thursday issued a traffic advisory in connection with the Tulip Festival. A spokesperson of Traffic Police said that in connection with the Tulip festival...

P5 THINK

**AUTISM DAY: EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW**

In This age of Computers and technology, where every moment we glance at screens the problems of social communication and problems in responding to the stimuli in one's environment has come to forefront. Even though, we keep on...



P7 STATE

**HC SEEKS DETAILS ON ACTION TAKEN TO NULLIFY 'FAKE GIFT DEEDS' IN PAHALGAM**

Jammu and Kashmir high court has asked Revenue Department and the Pahalgam Development Authority to inform as to what action they have taken to get the...

**Widom Quote!**

Writing is an act of faith, not a trick of grammar  
—E. B White

**NEWS DIGEST****Highway To Remain Closed Today**

SRINAGAR: Jammu-Srinagar highway, the only road link connecting Kashmir Valley with the outside world, shall remain closed on Friday for weekly repairs, officials said on Thursday.

"On 02-04-2021, no vehicular movement shall be allowed from either side on Jammu-Srinagar highway between Udhampur and Jawahar Tunnel in ● More On P2

**Cop Caught Red-Handed With Bribe**

SRINAGAR: The Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Thursday arrested a policeman from central Kashmir's Ganderbal district for demanding bribe from the families over a marital dispute.

ACB received a complaint through WhatsApp helpline from a man alleging that a Gulzar Ahmad, a head constable ● More On P2

**NIT Closed, Students Told To Vacate Hostels**

SRINAGAR: National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar has decided to stop offline classes from Friday till further orders in view of spike in Covid positive cases.

"In view of the increasing COVID-19 cases, the students and the staff entering in the institute are hereby informed to follow the already notified SOPs strictly and in letter and spirit. ● More On P2

**2 More Boys Go Missing In Kulgam**

SRINAGAR: At least two more boys have gone missing from their residential places in south Kashmir's Kulgam district, thus taking the toll of missing kids to three in the district. 10-year-old Roshan Din and 13-year-old Suhail Ahmad Mir, both residents of Nandimarg have gone missing from different places of Kulgam, an official said Thursday. ● More On P2

**Rape Accused Held After 3 Year Hunt**

JAMMU: A 21-year-old man was arrested on charges of rape after a three year hunt in Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday, police said. Qayoom Hussain was booked under provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, Infant Marriage Reservation Act and Ranbir Penal Code (RPC) in 2018 on the complaint of the victim at Mahore ● More On P2

**416 Test Corona Positive As Cases Shoot Up In J&K**

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: Coronavirus cases continue to show an upward trend in Jammu and Kashmir as 461 more people tested Covid-19 positive on Thursday, while the deadly infection claimed four more lives in the Union Territory during the last 24 hours.

Among the fresh cases, officials said, Jammu division reported 100 cases and Kashmir 361, taking the overall infection count in J&K to 131421.

Also, four more persons died due to the virus, one from Jammu division and three from Kashmir Valley, taking the total toll to 1998—737 in

**Militants Attack BJP Leader's House In Srinagar, Cop Killed**

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Suspected militants on Thursday carried out an audacious daylight attack on a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader's house in Nowgam area of the city here killing his security guard before fleeing from the scene with his service rifle.

Around 11:30 am Thursday, a group of armed militants appeared outside the residence of BJP leader Anwar Khan in Aribagh locality of Nowgam and opened fire upon the sentry as soon as he opened the



KO Photo: Abid Bhat

gate, an official said.

In the attack, they said, the security guard Rameez Raja

was critically injured, while the militants managed to make a quick ● More On P2

**Veil And Voice Used In Attack: IGP SAYS 2 OF FOUR LASHKAR MILITANTS IDENTIFIED**

The militant attack on the home of a BJP leader in Nowgam area on Thursday that left his police guard dead was carried out by four Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) militants, a senior police officer said, asserting the attackers would be killed soon. Kashmir Inspector General of Police (IGP) Vijay Kumar said two of the four have been identified, and they are from Srinagar city. Kumar said one of the four militants ● More On P2

**No Trade With India Until August 2019 Move Reversed: Pak**

Press Trust Of India

ISLAMABAD: In a volte-face, Pakistan's Cabinet on Thursday rejected the proposal of a high-powered committee to import cotton and sugar from India, with Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi asserting that there can be no normalisation of ties until New Delhi reverses its decision to revoke the special status of Jammu and Kashmir.

The somersault came a day after the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) under newly appointed Finance Minister Hammad Azhar on Wednesday decided to buy the two key items from India, lifting a



nearly two-year long ban on their import from the neighbouring country.

Qureshi said the issue of import of cotton and sugar from India was discussed during the Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Imran Khan. "An impression is ● More On P2

**J&K Govt Allots 62 Acre Land To Hindu Board For Temple**

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Thursday approved a proposal to allot nearly 25 hectares of land on lease basis for a period of 40 years to the Tirumala Tirupathi Devasthanams (TTD) to build a temple and its allied infrastructures in the union territory.

The proposal was approved by the

Administrative Council (AC), which met under the chairmanship of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha earlier in the day.

An official spokesperson said the leased nearly 25 hectares of land will also have a pilgrim amenities complex, a 'vedapatsala', a spiritual/meditation centre, an office, residential quarters and a parking area. In future, it will also have medical and educational facilities, he said. ● More On P2

**20 Youth Held Over Badamwari Ruckus: Police**

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: Police on Thursday claimed to have arrested twenty youth involved in ruckus at a tourism department-organised musical event in Badamwari area of the city on Sunday.

According to a police spokesperson, a group of miscreants created ruckus on the stage when the demand of a song from a boy among the audience was not fulfilled immediately by the performing artists. He said that the musical event witnessed huge gathering of people including very large number of women and children.

Police, he said used maximum restraint to restore order as the use of any kind of force would have created a stampede like situation at the venue.

He further said that a case FIR No 11/2021 was registered at the police station Rainawari and during investigation ● More On P2

**Jammu & Kashmir Excise Department (Kashmir Province)**

وہ دس سال کی جیل ضرور جائے گا

اب کی بار جو خشکاش اگائے گا

یہ ہمارا وعدہ ہے۔

محکمہ ایکسائیز، کشمیر



خشکاش (پوسٹ) کی کاشت قانوناً ایک سنگین جرم ہے۔ جس میں کاشت کار اور مالک زمین دونوں کو دس سے بیس سال کی قید اور ایک سے دو لاکھ روپے کا جرمانہ ہو سکتا ہے۔ پچھلے کئی سالوں سے محکمہ ایکسائیز لوگوں کو یہ تربیت و تئج کرتا آ رہا ہے کہ اسکی کاشت سے اجتناب کریں مگر بد قسمتی سے کوئی زیادہ مثبت اثر ہونے کے بجائے ایسے کاشت کاروں کے حوصلے بڑھتے ہی جا رہے ہیں اسلئے محکمہ نے یہ فیصلہ کیا ہے کہ ایسے سماج دشمن عناصر کے ساتھ اب سختی سے پیش آنا لازمی ہے۔ چنانچہ اس بار جو بھی خشکاش (پوسٹ) کی فصل چھوٹے یا بڑے پیمانے پر اگائے گا وہ دس سے بیس سال کی قید اور ایک سے دو لاکھ روپے جرمانے تک کی سزا ضرور پائے گا تاکہ اس بدعت کو سماج سے مکمل طور ختم کیا جاسکے۔

اگر آپ کو کسی ایسے سماج دشمن عنصر کا پتہ چلے تو 7006130639 پر تفصیلات، WHATSAPP, SMS آپ کی شناخت خفیہ رکھی جائے گی۔ یا کال کر کے ذریعہ مخیر کریں۔

**41 Students, Six Staff Members Test Positive**

At least 41 students and six staff members of different government and private schools tested positive for coronavirus in Kashmir on Monday. At least 44 individuals of three educational establishments tested COVID-19 ● More On P2



## AMBANI SECURITY SCORE

## NIA Searches Hotel, Club In Mumbai, Flat In Thane

Press Trust of India

**MUMBAI:** The NIA conducted searches at a hotel and a club in south Mumbai and a flat in neighbouring Thane on Thursday in connection with its probe into the case of an explosives-laden SUV found near industrialist Mukesh Ambani's residence and the murder of businessman Mansukh Hiran, an official said.

A team of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) reached the Soni building, where the hotel and the club are situated, around 12.45 pm.

Customers and staff members of the hotel were asked to vacate the premises, located near the Babulnath temple.

During the search, the NIA sleuths also made enquiries with a few people at the club and the hotel, the official said. The probe team left the place after over three hours.

Suspended Mumbai police officer Sachin Waze, whom the NIA arrested last month in connection with the case, had been recently brought by the probe agency to the Babulnath area as part of its probe, sources said.

Another NIA team conducted searches at a flat in Mira Road area in Thane district. According to sources the flat was in a woman's possession and was locked for over two weeks.

The gelatin sticks found in the vehicle near Ambani's house had



been procured by Waze himself, NIA sources had claimed on Wednesday.

The NIA on Sunday recovered a laptop, a printer, two hard disks, two vehicle number plates, two digital video recorders (DVRs) and two CPUs from the Mithi river here with the help of divers.

The agency is probing the alleged role of Waze in parking the explosives-laden SUV near Ambani's residence on February 25 and in the murder of businessman Mansukh Hiran.

The body of Hiran, who was in possession of the SUV, was found in a creek in Mumbai town of neighbouring Thane district on March 5.

Meanwhile, a CCTV footage

purportedly showing Waze and suspended police constable Vinayak Shinde seating inside a black Audi surfaced on Thursday.

The probe agencies so far have seized seven high-end cars used by Waze -- the Scorpio found near Ambani's residence, two Mercedes cars, a Prado Land Cruiser, a Mitsubishi Outlander, a Volvo, and an Innova.

The CCTV footage which the NIA has obtained is of March 2 and captured at a toll plaza, sources claimed. The central agency is yet to seize the Audi, they added.

The same car had been earlier found parked at the Mumbai Police Commissioner's office, sources said.

## UP CM Attacks LDF/UDF For Not Bringing Legislation Against 'Love Jihad'

Press Trust of India

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM:** Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Thursday took potshots at his Kerala counterpart Pinarayi Vijayan alleging his office was involved in the gold smuggling scam and attacked the ruling CPI(M)-led LDF and opposition Congress-headed UDF for not bringing in a legislation against 'Love Jihad'.

Addressing a series of roadshows and BJP campaign meetings in various constituencies for the April 6 assembly polls, Adityanath alleged both the fronts were corrupt and had "betrayed" the people of the state.

This was the right time to give a befitting reply to the LDF and UDF, Adityanath said at Kattakada in Thiruvananthapuram, where senior BJP leader P K Krishnadass, is the party candidate.

The two fronts, which have ruled the state alternatively, have no development agenda. Their only agenda was to indulge in corruption and come to power, the BJP leader alleged.

During the last six years of BJP-NDA rule at the Centre 22 AIIMS were set up and several IITs, IIMs have come up in various places. However, when Congress-led governments were in power for over 50 years, only one AIIMS had been set up, he said.

The gold smuggling case was one of the most "shameful"



incidents in India's history, he said earlier at Haripad, in Alappuzha district.

Hitting out at the LDF and UDF, Adityanath said both were not interested in implementing a law against 'Love Jihad' on the lines of the legislation brought in by his government.

Though the Kerala High court had made remarks against 'Love Jihad' in 2009, the state had not done anything so far to check it, he alleged.

"In Uttar Pradesh, an anti-'love-jihad' legislation has been implemented. Why is it not being implemented in Kerala? Neither the LDF nor the UDF seem to be keen to bring in the anti-love jihad law despite Kerala being targeted," he said.

Despite being aware that organisations like Popular Front of India (PFI) and its political wing, the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI), were allegedly involved in illegal activities, thus pushing the state into a dangerous position, the two fronts have tied a cloth around their eyes and failed to take any action against them, Adityanath said.

"This is to protect their vote bank politics," he alleged, adding the two fronts were "cheating" the people.

Lashing out at the left government, he said it had failed completely in handling the COVID-19 pandemic, which shows that the government machinery was a "total failure".

LDF and UDF have been coming to power alternatively as part of a five year agreement and their aim was to favour nepotism and encourage corruption and they were not concerned about providing jobs to unemployed youth, he said.

"The two fronts are competing with each other not on development, but on corruption, the central funds are being misused and diverted for their own cadres and not for the people of the state," he alleged.

"The only option is to ensure that BJP-NDA comes to power in Kerala as it can lead the state to the path of development, help the state's farmers, protect the interests of fishermen community and help the unemployed youth get jobs."

The state Public Service Commission (PSC) was giving jobs to the unemployed youth not on the basis of their qualifications, but jobs were being distributed to LDF cadres, he alleged.

"The youths are depressed and ending their lives and the LDF government was not bothered about their welfare," he said.

Kerala had recently witnessed a series of protests by various PSC rank holders in front of the secretariat demanding jobs.

The UP Chief ministerr also thanked the people of the state for their contributions for the construction of the Ram temple at Ayodhya.

## CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

## Militants Attack

exit from the spot after fleeing with the rifle of policeman, who lied on the ground in a pool of blood.

He further said that the injured cop was removed to the SMHS hospital here, where the doctors pronounced him dead on arrival.

The official said Ahmad -- who is the BJP's district general secretary for Baramulla and incharge for Kupwara district -- was away in Jammu at the time of the attack.

Soon after the attack, a heavy posse of police and CRPF personnel cordoned off the area and launched a manhunt to nab the assailants. Senior police officials, including Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir Vijay Kumar also visited the area to assess the situation.

"Police has registered a case in this regard under relevant sections of law and officers continue to work to establish the full circumstances of this crime," a police spokesperson said.

Pertinently, militants on Monday carried out an attack in Sopore town of Baramulla district killing a BJP councillor and an SPO and injuring another councillor, who died at the Srinagar's SMHS hospital on Tuesday.

Today's attack also comes amid Senior Superintendent of police (SSP) Srinagar Sandeep Chaudhary's direction to the security guards of protected persons to stick to the standing operation procedures (SOPs) and remain alert round the clock

"SSP Srinagar emphasised that more CCTV cameras and centralised surveillance of such guards is being enhanced to ensure safety of protected persons. Men deployed on guards were briefed to stick to SOPs very strictly and remain alert round the clock," a police spokesperson said Wednesday.

## 3-Day Wet

from ensuing Monday.

Deputy Director, Meteorological Office, Dr Mukhtar Ahmad said that the wet spell was expected to begin from evening of April 4. "The main activity is for three days, April 5, 6, and 7," he said

For next 24 hours, the weatherman has forecast "mainly dry weather over Jammu and Kashmir with thunder development at one or two places towards evening."

Meanwhile, mercury settled at 4.2 degree Celsius against previous night's 6.6 degree Celsius in Srinagar, the summer capital of J&K, a MeT department official said.

The temperature was below minus 2.2 degree Celsius in Srinagar for this time of the year, the official said.

Qazigund recorded a low of 3.0 degree Celsius against 6.5 degree Celsius on the previous night, he said.

Pahalgam, the famous resort in south Kashmir, recorded minimum of minus 0.1 degree Celsius against 1.7 degree Celsius on the earlier night, he said.

Kokernag, also in south Kashmir, recorded a low of 6.4 degree Celsius against previous night's 6.7 degree Celsius, the official said.

The minimum temperature settled at 2.0 degree Celsius in Kupwara against 4.5 degree Celsius on the previous night, the official said.

Gulmarg, the world famous skiing resort in north Kashmir's Baramulla district, recorded a minimum temperature of minus 0.4 degree Celsius against minus 1.0 degree Celsius on the previous night and received 0.2mm of rain in last 24 hours till 0830 hours today.

The temperature was above 1.2 degree Celsius normal for the place during this time of the year, the official added. (With GNS inputs)

## Veil And Voice

was wearing a 'Burqa' (veil) and imitated a woman's voice while asking the guard at the residence of the BJP leader Anwar Ahmad to open the main door.

"There was one sentry on the main door and two cops in the guard room. As is clear from the

CCTV footage, one militant wearing a 'Burqa' knocked on the main door and asked, imitating a woman's voice, for opening it," the IGP told reporters on the sidelines of a wreath-laying ceremony of the slain cop -- Rameez Raja -- at the Police Control Room here.

Kumar said when the sentry opened the door, two other militants fired indiscriminately on him and the fourth one decamped with his rifle.

"The militants came and fired indiscriminately, resulting in the on-spot death of the jawan," he said.

The IGP said two militants out of the four have been identified.

"Initially, we thought the one wearing a 'Burqa' was a lady, but when we analysed the CCTV footage closely, we found that it was not a lady, but a male and a militant. Two out of the four have been identified and are from Srinagar city."

"They belong to the LeT outfit. One of them is Shahid Khurshid Dar. He is from Chanapora and is a categorized militant. The other is Obaid Shafi Dar. They both joined the LeT last year along with four others," he said.

"We will neutralise them soon after generating pinpoint intelligence," the IGP added.

He said security forces have been conducting several operations in the last three months, but "there has not been much success".

"We will increase the (anti-militancy) operations and strengthen the intelligence gathering and will soon neutralise them," Kumar said. (PTI)

## ED Charges

under various sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

According to the central probe agency, Khawaja was apprehended by the Special Cell of Delhi Police in 2006 with a bag containing 2.05 kg RDX and Rs 49 lakh in cash.

"He was sentenced for seven years under sections of the Explosive Substances Act along with Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. The seized amount was also confiscated by the trial court," it said.

The ED said its probe found that the "accused was involved in illegal activities related to militant funding in Jammu and Kashmir."

"Out of such illegal activities, he had generated proceeds of crime in lakhs. During that period, he was in touch with Muktiar Ahmed Bhatt alias Ahmed (a Pakistan-based LeT operative in league with Pakistan ISI) to undertake financial dealings for various separatist and militant activities," it said.

It had earlier attached a residential flat at Jangpura in New Delhi and bank balance in the account held by Khawaja's wife.

## LG Okays 50%

the spokesman said.

He said the flow of funds to the subordinate offices will be in online mode through BEAMS and all departments shall be required to submit monthly reports regarding the progress made by them under various components.

In order to ensure uniform pace of expenditure, it has been clearly stipulated that not more than 30 percent of the funds can be spent in the last quarter of the financial year and not more than 15 per cent of the funds can be spent during the last month of March, the spokesman said.

This is intended to avoid rush of expenditure towards end of the financial year. The projects undertaken during the year will need to meet basic discipline of administrative approval, technical sanction and e-tendering, the spokesman said.

He said geo-tagged photographs will be necessary before commencement of the work and after completion of the work for incurring expenditure.

The activities will be available for public viewing through empowerment web-portal and people's participation in the development

process is one of the key objectives that will be pursued, he said.

He said the flow of funds under individual beneficiary schemes would be in DBT mode with Aadhaar seeding which will ensure that only eligible beneficiaries get the benefit of government schemes.

In a significant move, the Panchayat Level Plans, Block Development Plans and District Development Plans are expected to be ready in the month of May.

This will be for the first time in the history of J&K that Panchayats shall be fully involved in the formulation of plans. Suitable training of district officials shall be undertaken by the Government in this regard to enable them to prepare the plans in a time bound manner in accordance with the felt needs of people, the spokesman said.

He said a system of complete physical verification is being institutionalized including third party verification for high value projects.

## No Trade With

being created that relations with India have become normal and trade has been restored..." Qureshi said in a video message. "On this impression, the Prime Minister and the Cabinet had a consensus opinion that until India reviewed the unilateral actions of Aug 5, 2019, it would not be possible to normalise ties with India."

Talking to reporters after the Cabinet meeting, Minister for Science and Technology Fawad Chaudhry said that the Cabinet discussed the issue of ties and trade with India and decided that things cannot progress until India revokes its August 5, 2019 move on Kashmir.

"We want to cooperate with India but the first condition is that it should go back to pre August 5, 2019 position in Kashmir," he said.

Finance Minister Azhar's announcement on Wednesday to import cotton and sugar from India had raised hopes of a partial revival of bilateral trade relations, which were suspended after the August 5, 2019 decision of New Delhi to revoke the special status of Jammu and Kashmir.

India is the world's biggest producer of cotton and the second biggest sugar manufacturer.

Azhar's decision became doubtful since afternoon but officials kept mum and finally the first confirmation came from Minister for Human Rights Shireen Mazari, who is known for her unflinching stand on Kashmir.

"Today Cabinet stated clearly NO trade with India," Mazari tweeted soon after the Cabinet meeting.

Mazari said that Prime Minister Khan, who chaired the first Cabinet meeting after testing COVID-19 positive on March 20, "made (it) clear (that) there can be no normalisation of relations with India until they reverse their actions viz Kashmir of August 5, 2019.

Ahead of the Cabinet meeting, Mazari had said that all ECC decisions have to be approved by Cabinet and only then can they be seen as "approved" by the government.

"Just for the record - All ECC decisions have to be approved by Cabinet & only then they can be seen as "approved by govt"! So today in Cabinet there will be discussion on ECC decisions incl trade with India & then govt decision will be taken! Media shd be aware of this atleast!" Mazari had tweeted.

In May 2020, Pakistan had lifted the ban on import of medicines and raw material of essential drugs from India amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

Ties between India and Pakistan nose-dived after a militant attack on the Pathankot Air Force base in 2016. Subsequent attacks, including one on an Indian Army camp in Uri, further deteriorated the relationship.

The ties strained further after India's war planes launched an air strike inside Pakistan on February 26, 2019 in response to the Pulwama militant attack in 2019 in which 40 CRPF personnel were killed.

India's move to revoke the special status of Jammu and Kashmir in August, 2019 angered Pakistan, which downgraded diplomatic ties with India and expelled the Indian High Commissioner in Islamabad. Pakistan also snapped all air and land links with India and suspended trade and railway services.

## J&amp;K Govt Allots

The TTD, a board established by the Tamil Nadu government under the TTD Act, 1932, is a charitable organisation, which takes up activities in the spiritual, cultural, social, and educational sphere.

According to the spokesperson, the arrival of the TTD in Jammu and Kashmir could tap the tourism potential, particularly pilgrim tourism in Jammu, which is known as the city of temples, and also enhance economic activities.

"Once developed, the TTD infrastructure will be an attraction for the pilgrims and tourists in addition to the Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine and Amarnathji Shrine," he said.

The spokesperson said it would encourage tourists to stay longer in Jammu.

"The future development on the campus will also contribute to the economic growth of the region," he said.

## 416 Test Corona

and Poonch 3 new cases of coronavirus.

Moreover, officials said, 114 more patients have recovered and were discharged from various hospitals--36 from Jammu Division and 78 from Kashmir Division. There are 2874 covid-19 active cases--724 in Jammu division and 2150 in Kashmir. 126549 people have recovered so far in the J&K, they added. (With GNS inputs)

## 41 Students

positive in central Kashmir's Budgam district, reports said Thursday. Officials of School Education Department said that it conduct sampling of one of the higher secondary school in Budgam where at least 33 students and four staff members were tested COVID-19 positive.

The official said that in Beerwah zone, five students of an orphanage school Apna Ghar were also tested positive for COVID-19

"In DPS Budgam, Two staff members were also tested Coronavirus positive," the official said.

"We have asked the district administration to close those institutions for at least five days from tomorrow," he added.

Meanwhile, authorities in Central Kashmir's Budgam district also said two students of Sheikh ul Aalam Memorial Degree College Budgam also tested Covid-19 positive on Thursday.

Earlier, on Wednesday, at least 53 students and four faculty members of different schools in Kashmir division were tested positive for COVID-19 on Wednesday that prompted the authorities to close the institutions impermanent.

Among the 51 students that were tested positive for COVID-19 yesterday included 14 students from a Government High School Katsoo Srigufwara in South Kashmir's Anantnag district, 36 students of Noorani Public School in Khull area of Damhal Hanjipora of Kulgam district and one student of Government Higher Secondary School Kaloosa Bandipora.

Pertinently, staff and students at several other schools in Jammu and Kashmir were also tested positive for the virus previously following the reopening of schools here.

## 20 Youth Held

involvement of 20 miscreants was established, who were identified through different videos of the event and the miscreants have been arrested.

"The investigation of the case is underway," the police spokesperson said.

## Highway To Remain

view of maintenance/repairing of the road," a traffic department official said in a communiqué.

Meanwhile, Mughal Road, connecting southern Shopian and Ponnch districts, remained closed due to snow accumulation, it added.

## Cop Caught

at the police station Gund was calling him repeatedly over his phone and demanding an amount of Rs2000for issuance of the true copy of the compromise deed he had entered into with his in-laws after they had filed a complaint with police, an ACB spokesperson said Thursday. The policeman, he said, had amicably solved the dispute between the couple and to this effect a compromise deed was executed between the parties on March 31.

"On receipt of the complaint, a case FIR No.06 of 2021 U/S 7 PC Act. 1988 IPC was registered in Police Station ACB Srinagar and investigation was taken up," the Bureau spokesperson said.

After filing the case, he said, a team was constituted that laid a successful trap and caught Ahmad red handed while demanding and accepting the bribe from the complainant.

"The amount of bribe to the tune of Rs. 2,000 was also recovered on the spot. He was arrested and taken in custody by ACB team," he said, adding "Further investigation of the case is going on."

## NIT Closed, Students

Anyone found without a mask will be fined and debarred from entering the institute campus," an order issued by NIT Srinagar reads.

It added, "Moreover it is notified that there will be no offline classes from 02-04 2021 till further orders. The B - Tech students of Batch 2019 and M - Tech Batch 2020 are informed to vacate the hostels immediately and proceed to their respective homes."

The final year B - Tech and M - Tech students, residing in the hostels are informed to either vacate the hostels or stay within boundaries of the hostels as neither they nor the day scholars of the said batch will be allowed to leave or enter the campus from tomorrow i.e. 2nd April, 2021, order reads.

For any emergency the students can contact the concerned wardens . This is notified with prior approval of the competent authority, it said.

## 2 More Boys Go

Roshan, he said, went missing from Darul Uloom Baitul-Hilal Chawalgam on March 28while Suhail went to school on March 31 at 10:00 am and there are no traces about them since then.

The families of two minors have approached the Police Station Damhal Hanjipora and Kulgam where they have filed the missing report.

Accordingly, police said that a case under FIR number 47/2021 under section 364 IPC and FIR number 27/2021 under section 363 IPC has been registered and investigation have been initiated in both missing cases.

Meanwhile, the search is going on for the second straight day to trace a four-year-old boy, who went missing in Chowgam area of Qazigund in South Kashmir's Kulgam district on Wednesday--(KNO)

## Rape Accused

police station, a police spokesman said. He said the accused evaded arrest and was declared an absconder by a local court. A special police team arrested him from Reasi based on specific information, the spokesman added.

He said the police had already filed a chargesheet against the accused in the sessions court in Reasi and proved the case with the help of scientific evidence and medical examination of the woman, expert opinions of forensic science laboratory and oral statements. (PTI)



(Kashmir Observer, 02 April, 2005)



## KASHMIR OBSERVER

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### K O V I E W

## After Dushanbe

Speaking at the 9th 'Heart of Asia' Conference at Dushanbe in Tajikistan, the foreign minister S Jaishankar made a rare direct reference to the Taliban and called for a "double peace" both inside Afghanistan and in the region. Jaishankar said "India has been supportive of all the efforts being made to accelerate the dialogue between the Afghan government and the Taliban, including intra-Afghan negotiations". He made it clear that for the peace process to be successful, it is necessary to ensure that the negotiating parties continue to engage in good faith, with a serious commitment towards reaching a political solution.

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi who was present at the conference said that Pakistan feared "that any space gained by ISIS and Al-Qaeda could accentuate the threat of terrorism". He also cautioned against the role of "spoilers", both "within and outside Afghanistan". Unlike the recent past, Jaishankar and Qureshi were present for each other's speeches during the conference.

The conference was attended by foreign ministers of 15 countries, including Afghanistan, Pakistan, Turkey, Iran, China, Russia, Saudi Arabia and Central Asian states.

Significantly, Jaishankar and Qureshi didn't meet as had appeared likely earlier. In the run up to the conference, Qureshi had said that no meeting with Jaishankar had been "finalized or requested". If anything, the absence of the meeting has revealed, the countries are exercising some restraint as far as the dialogue. There's no haste about the open dialogue.

Meanwhile, the two neighbours have walked some more distance along the road to normalcy. On Monday, Pakistan partially reversed a two-year old decision to suspend all trade with India. It would allow the import of cotton and sugar from India. It is the latest Confidence Building Measure following the Line of Control (LoC) ceasefire announced by India and Pakistan in February. Pakistan's had suspended all bilateral trade with India in August 2019 in the wake of the constitutional changes in Jammu and Kashmir, which Islamabad considers "illegal". Earlier in 2018-19 Pakistan was among India's top 50 trade partners.

But for the two countries to take the process forward they will need to go beyond the easy CBMs and do something that is deemed as a conspicuous concession as to the core issue of the either country. India will want Pakistan to hold back its support to militancy in Kashmir and Pakistan, on the other hand, will want India to do something conciliatory in regard to current situation in Kashmir. Both countries want another to help create an "enabling environment". This is something they are discussing in their alleged back-channel talks. Here's hoping this time round the engagement between the two countries reaches its logical conclusion, in an agreement that leads to an abiding solution to their longstanding mutual issues. This alone will usher in a sustainable peace in the region.

### OTHER OPINION

## The thaw on the India-Pakistan front

Responding to Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi's letter greeting Pakistan on its national day, Pakistan's PM, Imran Khan, has claimed that his country seeks "peaceful, co-operative relations with all neighbours, including India". Mr Khan also said that durable peace and stability in the region was contingent on resolving all issues between India and Pakistan, "in particular, the Jammu and Kashmir [J&K] dispute". He then added that the creation of "an enabling environment" was "imperative for a constructive and result-oriented dialogue."

There are two ways to interpret this letter. The first, sceptical, view can see it as an attempt by Pakistan to hold the ties hostage to the J&K issue yet again, without confronting the issue of terrorism. The logical conclusion of such a reading would be that there is little merit in engaging with Pakistan. A second way to read the letter is to focus on why Mr Khan has said what he has, and what he has not said. A reference to J&K is imperative for any Pakistani leader to survive domestically. The fact that despite relentless propaganda over the past year-and-a-half against India's moves in J&K, Pakistan has not made any tangible demands other than mentioning an "enabling environment" leaves space for diplomacy. This reading would lead to a different conclusion — of the merits of engagement.

Hindustan Times



## Why SC must dismiss misguided petition against 26 Quranic verses

There is not a single verse in the holy Quran which promotes violence or terrorism, if read in its proper context.

FIROZ BAKHT AHMED

There is not a single verse in the holy Quran which promotes violence or terrorism, if read in its proper context. The Quran condemns unjustified violence and terrorism, while permitting self-defence. Only a distorted reading of verses taken out of context can lead to views such as Rizvi's

In a recent PIL in the Supreme Court, Waseem Rizvi, former chairman of the Shia Waqf Board in UP, has demanded the removal of 26 verses from the holy Quran claiming that terrorists used these verses to "promote jihad".

Earlier as well, he had written to the Prime Minister, asking him to close down all madrasas since these breed "terrorists". While Rizvi is trying to stir a hornet's nest, the trend of involving the Supreme Court in religious matters is not a tenable one.

True, the apex court decided the triple talaq law which was of paramount importance, keeping in view how Muslim women were being divorced in a single sitting. But in the case of the Quran's verses, the court is not the proper forum or body to decide which verses can be allowed or removed.

This would be a serious interference in the religious beliefs of the community, affecting their right to freedom of religion. If any court entertains such a petition, tomorrow it may be faced with similar petitions for the removal of verses from the religious books and scriptures of other religious communities.

What is positive is that not only Muslims but almost all Hindu brothers believe that the petition is a bogus one. It has also been condemned by eminent people and learned scholars from both the Shia and Sunni communities. Such a bizarre, frivolous and distressing petition deserves to be dismissed forthwith.

There is not a single verse in the holy Quran which promotes violence or terrorism, if read in its proper context. The Quran condemns unjustified violence and terrorism, while permitting self-defence. Only a distorted reading of verses taken out of context can lead to views such as Rizvi's.

Without having gone through the real purport and the exegesis of the 26 verses, this Islam-baiter has

cast unfounded allegations against the three Caliphs (Abu Bakr, Umar and Usman). He completely failed to understand that the 26 verses have been categorised as "war verses" and were in force at the time of the holy wars. No Muslim bases his or her action on these. The very meaning of the word Islam is "submission". Forget taking somebody's life, the Prophet (PBUH) believed that the biggest sin was lacerating people's hearts and hurting them.

Rizvi's argument is that some terrorists and wayward Muslims quote these verses to justify the slaughter of innocents. But, even if these verses did not exist, terrorists would not cease their violence. Had they read and understood the Quran, they would have been the messengers of peace, not death! When the ISIS terrorists, while recording acts of violence, display the Kalimah on the black flag, they deliberately defile Islam. Unfortunately, for the layman, that becomes symbolic of Islamic tenets, which is a misconception.

The scriptures of a religion are the final wordings of their creator and need to be revered by all means — not even a word, comma or full stop can be changed.

In the past, anti-Islam propaganda by Taslima Nasreen, Salman Rushdie or Danish cartoons have created a lot of turmoil. The killing of the middle school French teacher, Samuel Paty, in Paris was one such condemnable fallout. The perpetrator of the crime never knew that his act would have been severely condemned by the Prophet himself.

These brainwashed killers must learn Islam has no room for such killings. At the same time, why do people provoke a community's beliefs under the garb of freedom of expression? True, Christians won't get offended by the cartoons of Jesus Christ but it's not the same with Muslims or Hindus. The late MF Husain had to face a lot of flak and go into a self-imposed exile in Dubai and UK for the criti-

cism of his painting of Saraswati.

The Old Testament is filled with tales of divinely-ordained slaughter and war, yet about two billion Christians today follow the word of the Lord, coupled with the New Testament, which includes a command from Jesus to "love thy neighbour as you love thyself." Muslims also face a similar dichotomy of ideas in the Quran.

In one part, the scripture says, "La ikraha fiddeen," meaning that there is "no enforcement/ coercion in matters of faith." The Quran also states about other religions, "Lakum dinokum waley yadeen," meaning, "to you, your religion, to me, mine."

Nevertheless, the fringe minority that has been indulging in killing the innocent, have turned a god-fearing and law-abiding Muslim person anywhere in the world into an object of suspicion.

It is good that the National Commission for Minorities has condemned Rizvi by sending him a sharp notice for his absurd petition stating that his statement is "provocative and disturbs the balance of communal harmony of a secular nation and has hurt the sentiments of a religious minority community".

The Supreme Court must not entertain this petition that hurts the religious sentiments of billions of Muslims across the globe and must ask Rizvi to apologise, the chief imam of India, Imam Umer Ahmed Ilyasi, has suggested.

As a law-abiding citizen of this great nation, I would appeal and urge all my co-religionists to maintain discipline, remain calm and to register their protest peacefully against this misguided petition.

Views expressed are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer. The article originally appeared in Indian Express



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

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## Spike and School

THE emergence of new variants of coronavirus and the spike in cases in several states of India has posed a new challenge for the reopening of schools and other educational institutes. One question which is lingering on everyone's mind is that should schools be reopened. There are compelling reasons to argue that physical classroom learning should be resumed. The closure of schools for more than a year now has meant that many students had to give up on their education. While schools and colleges conducted online classes but online learning could not be accessed by all. Online learning is a mirage for millions of children in a country like India, how can those children who barely afford to purchase books and stationary attend online classes. This

digital divide has caused frustration among students who had to miss out on a year of learning for no fault of their own. There have been several cases of student suicides as well. The exclusion that online learning creates underscores the need to resume physical classes. But despite the dire need to reopen schools and colleges, it is prudent not to rush into reopening schools and colleges. The pandemic is far from over yet and taking such a hasty step could only prolong it and make reopening more difficult. The development of vaccines has been a beacon of hope but it is important to remember that vaccines do not signify the end of the pandemic, people who are vaccinated can still be infected with the virus, so it's too soon to let down our guards and throw caution to the wind. Since we are in it for a long

time the government should ensure that online education is accessible to all, for that it should increase its funding for education, the government should provide laptops and internet facilities to students so that they can attend online classes. Most schools in our country do not have the infrastructure to practice social distancing and follow all guidelines and any laxity in implementing the SOP's can lead to a surge of cases and could prove disastrous, therefore reopening educational institutes is not an option. There have been concerns that long hours of sitting in front of the screen cause headaches, sore eyes, and blurred vision, these issues should be urgently addressed. The government should come out with new guidelines regarding E-learning, there should be limited screen exposure and adequate

breaks in between classes to ensure student's well-being. Many studies have revealed that there is an uptick in mental health issues among students during the pandemic period, the school and educational institutes should make sure they provide counseling sessions to students via chat and phone calls. The government should collaborate with the schools and educational institutes and make online learning more inclusive and student-friendly. Online learning cannot compensate for classroom learning and a complete shift to E-learning will hamper a Childs holistic development but prevailing circumstances demand that schools should remain closed for a little longer.

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## Autism Day

## Everything You Need to Know

NASIR GEELANI

**The ASD kids don't look different from other kids like down's syndrome, but the sufferers may communicate, behave, interact and learn very differently from normal people. The abilities of learning, thinking, and problem solving skills of children or adults with ASD can range from severely challenged to gifted**

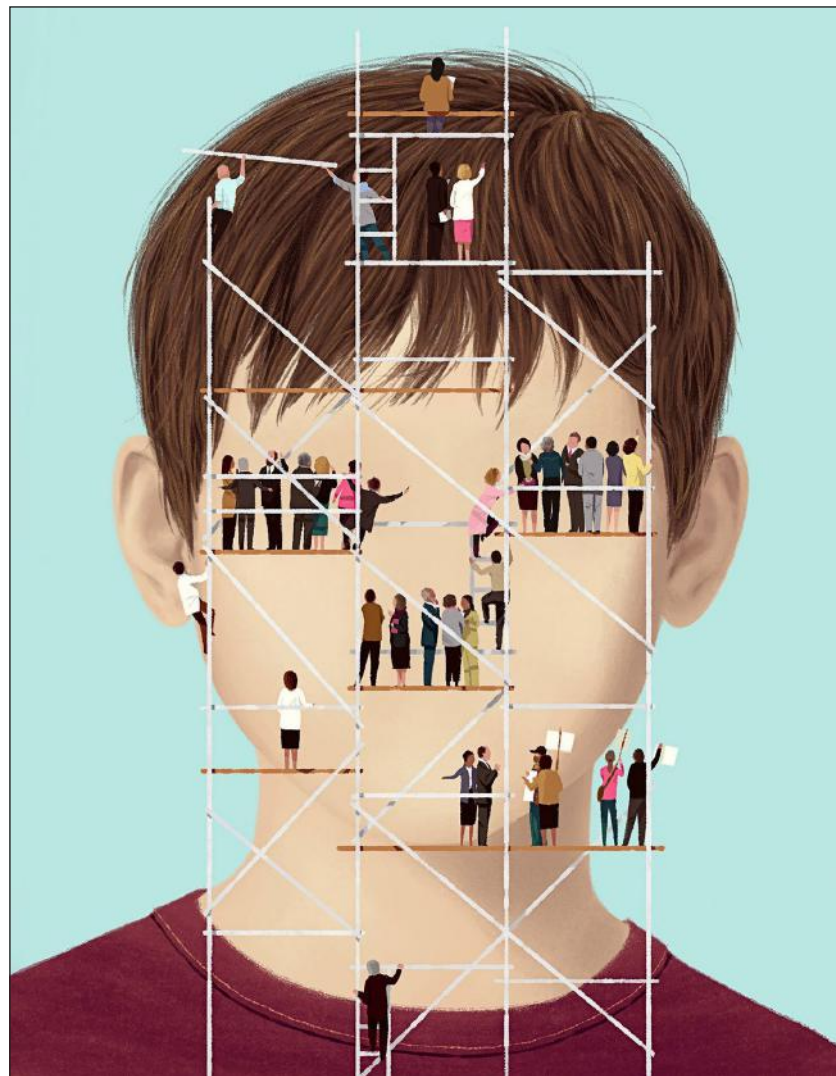
**I**N This age of Computers and technology, where every moment we glance at screens the problems of social communication and problems in responding to the stimuli in one's environment has come to forefront. Even though, we keep on complaining each other for the social connection we have lost, however, the main concern with respect to problems in social exchanges is with kids and children. The debate is not that screens can solely be a causative factor for such communication problems but the fact is excessive use of screen in kids before language development or during language development, which is roughly upto 4-5 years, can precipitate such problems. As excessive use of screen greatly affects development of social brain and social brain is developed through real time social exchanges. Such disorders which affect a person's social communication, interaction with environment and other related symptoms comes under category of autism spectrum disorders.

Autism spectrum disorders were previously a separate disorders, however, Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (DSM-V) brought them under the general category of Autism spectrum disorders. Autism spectrum disorder is a developmental disorder or disability that can cause significant, social, communication and behavioural changes in the person. The ASD kids don't look different from other kids like down's syndrome, but the sufferers may communicate, behave, interact and learn very differently from normal people. The abilities of learning, thinking, and problem solving skills of children or adults with ASD can range from severely challenged to gifted.

**DSM 5 classifies autism into three levels as:**

Level 1: High functioning autism: It includes people who have problem with social communication. Sufferers with level 1 autism, Have challenges with social interactions, struggle Have difficulties in creating new relationships and respond in eccentric manners to social challenges perceived by others as awkward). Cognitive and language abilities may not be impaired, but interactions with others are somehow odd and typically unsuccessful. This closely resembles aspergers syndrome before 2013 DSM classifications. It is also sometimes called social communication disorder.

Level 2: This is very close to what was earlier called classic autism, These person's have evident challenges with both verbal and non-verbal communication, social interaction, very awkward response to challenging social situations when met and a narrow span of interests. These people are inflexible, change resistant, having repetitive movements and patterns that limit the possibility of that person to operate smoothly in most contexts even sometimes at home. If any change in routine



is found it is welcomed with great distress and anxiety. These people require a lot of support for social life. They sometimes have outstanding abilities and memories like the photographic memory of a surgeon in the famous show "the good doctor".

Level 3: Its also known as low functioning autism, it is the severe face of autism which impairs all areas of patient's functioning, from social to language and cognitive abilities. In these people social activity is very limited, speech is basic and is difficult to understand. It is most disabling level of autism. These sufferers require substantial and constant support in life.

**Some common symptoms for a common person to understand the autism:**

- Not pointing fingers at objects they show interest in
- Won't usually look at objects when another person like mother would point at them or turn her vision at any object.
- Not relating or having less interest in other kids
- High threshold for pain, Low threshold for visual and auditory stimuli
- Remaining alone and not making

ing eye contact. Doesn't demand personal attention.

- Lacking empathy or not being able to understand other person's perspective or feeling himself in his shoes that is why such persons have problems in learning because most of times we learn vicariously.
- Such people don't like touch or being cuddled.
- Repeat or echo words or phrases said to them, or repeat words or phrases in place of normal language
- They have trouble in expressing their needs by using typical words or motions
- not play "pretend" games. For example, kids simulate adult actions and tasks in their play.
- have trouble adapting when a routine changes
- have unusual reactions to the way things smell, taste, look, feel, or sound
- lose skills they once had (for example, stop saying words they were using)

Such kids are usually diagnosed at 18 months till or before 4 years, also depending on the level of autism as classified by DSM 5. The diagnosis is tough

as it can't be detected typically by blood tests and only a qualified mental health professional can diagnose it.

**Advice to parents:**

This advice is helpful for every parent regardless of they having a kid suffering from ASD.

- Autism cannot be completely treated because it is a neuro-developmental disorder, however, it can be managed to a very much effective level and when management is started in infancy the results are promising.
- One of the important factors that keeps living organisms especially mammals alive is stimulation and stroking which starts which ranges from physical touching to verbal or non verbal stimulation. Here, we can refer back to the intro of this article, the use of screens deprives infants of this social stimulation and can be detrimental for a child who is autistic and problematic like delayed language even among normal children. The screen should be minimized as much as possible and kids should be involved in social intercourses. Parents can even Make the screen time, which is unavoidable, engaging by interacting with their kid about the content on screen.
- Parents with a kid having ASD, should have arsenal of knowledge to deal with kids problematic behavior. Literate parents, can make use of internet, read self help books on autism, use YouTube and become creative for engaging an autistic kid.
- Remember even though there is a general criteria for ASD as shown above as per the levels, however, each individual child is different from another and parents need to understand their kids in their own unique ways.
- As mentioned kids with ASD like schedules, so include engaging activities in their daily routines.
- Last but not least, if you can detect any signs consult a qualified mental health professional or specially trained mental health professional trained in childhood disorders or ASD.

**"The difference between high-functioning and low-functioning autism is that high-functioning means your deficits are ignored, and low-functioning means your assets are ignored."**

— Laura Tisoncik

*Views expressed in the article are the author's own responsibility and are not a substitute for professional medical advice. These are for educational purposes only.*

*The author is a Licensed Clinical Psychologist. His motto is if we can train animals, what stops us from training human beings"*

## How The Pandemic May Damage Children's Social Intelligence

BARBARA JACQUELYN | CHRISTELLE LANGLEY  
FEI LI | JIANFENG FENG

**D**o you remember the excitement and anticipation of your first day at school? Perhaps you were looking forward to making new friends. Or maybe you were shy and anxious. Research shows that such excitement and stress are the two most common reactions to starting school. It is telling that a large part of this emotional response is social.

Children are keen social learners, developing skills such as sharing, conflict solving and empathy at a rapid pace. These days, many children have already attended parent and toddler groups or nursery before they start school. So even if they have no siblings, their emotional and social cognition has already started developing.

But during the COVID-19 lockdowns, many opportunities for social learning have been lost. How will this affect children's development – and what can we do about it?

Brain development begins soon after conception and continues at least through young adulthood. It is shaped by a complex interplay between genes and the environment. There is evidence for critical periods in brain development, such as adolescence, when it comes to social cognition.

Social cognitive development, however, begins in the first year of life, when children begin to develop "theory of mind" – understanding what others are thinking – which continues through age five. Play is an important part of this process, as it involves a lot of physical contact and development of friendships, helping children to cope with emotions and stay mentally strong.

Researchers are yet to fully understand the ways in which lockdowns will affect children due to reduced or delayed social interactions. But a recent



study provides evidence that some adults' social cognition has indeed been affected by the COVID-19 lockdowns. The study showed that people experienced a reduction in positive feelings – making them biased to think negatively – which was significantly related to how socially connected they were. Those who were less socially connected were more affected.

It is likely that children are even more vulnerable when it comes to long term effects of a delay or absence in peer-to-peer interaction. We know that social brain development is a two-way street – the environment, in this case social interaction between peers, affects the brain and the brain affects the emotional and behavioural response to peers.

Social cognition is not only required for success in school and work environments and personal re-

lationships, but also in "hot cognition" in general, which is essentially emotional reasoning taken as a whole. And we know that such cognition is a building block for "cold cognition", which involves skills such as attention, planning and problem solving.

For example, if children are not able to have creative play with other children, learning to empathise, compromise and manage their emotions, language development and social communication is likely to be affected too. Indeed, it has been shown that children with higher social cognition do better in secondary school.

**Ways forward**

For young children in lockdown, Zooms and remote meetings just don't do it. One mother, having

to cope with perpetual lockdowns, put the problem very clearly to us. "My six-year-old suddenly gets very shy when talking to his class mates on Zoom," she said, continuing:

And kids aren't just missing out on seeing their peers, grownup role models such as grandparents and teachers are suddenly gone too. Most young children I know don't really like video calls, so it's not a substitute for social interaction the way it can be for adults.

Some children, including those who are shy or anxious and those with neurodevelopmental disorders such as autism spectrum disorder (ASD), may be especially affected. In regard to this latter group, it is important that psychological and pharmacological treatments begin at an early age, which involves social interaction. One recent study showed that it is possible to improve ASD symptoms in young children of three to six years of age with severe ASD.

Therefore, the best thing that you can do as a parent right now is to ensure your young child has opportunities for play and social interaction with other children as soon as the lockdown is over and it is safe to do so.

Governments should also develop special programmes for toddlers and children to help gain back the critical period of social brain development that they have lost. There is some evidence that children can benefit from social cognitive training, such as reading and talking about emotional stories.

Loneliness affects all ages and is detrimental to physical and mental health and wellbeing. Fortunately, we now know that our brains are still in development until early young adulthood and therefore, the possibility for relearning lost skills may still be possible.

*By arrangements with the Conversation*



# Exercise, healthy diet in midlife can save from future health conditions: Study

Agencies

Following a routine of regular physical activity combined with a diet including fruits, vegetables and other healthy foods may be key to middle-aged adults achieving optimal cardiometabolic health later in life, according to new research using data from the Framingham Heart Study published in the Journal of the American Heart Association.

Cardiometabolic health risk factors include metabolic syndrome, a cluster of disorders such as excess fat around the waist, insulin resistance and high blood pressure. The presence of metabolic syndrome may increase the risk of developing heart disease, stroke and Type 2 diabetes.

Researchers noted it has been unclear whether adherence to both the US Department of Health and Human Services' 2018 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans and their 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans -- as opposed to only one of the two -- in midlife confers the most favourable cardiometabolic health outcomes later in life.

The physical activity guidelines recommend that adults achieve at least 150 minutes of moderate or 75 minutes of vigorous physical activity per week, such as walking or swimming. The dietary guidelines, which were updated in January 2021, offer suggestions for healthy eating patterns, nutritional



targets and dietary limits. In an analysis of data from participants of the Framingham Heart Study, which began more than 70 years ago in Framingham, Massachusetts, investigators examined data from 2,379 adults ages 18 and older and their

adherence to the two guidelines. They observed that meeting a combination of the two recommendations during midlife was associated with lower odds of metabolic syndrome and developing serious health conditions as participants aged in their senior years in 2016-2019 examinations.

"Health care professionals could use these findings to further promote and emphasize to their patients the benefits of a healthy diet and a regular exercise schedule to avoid the development of numerous chronic health conditions in the present and in later life," said corresponding author Vanessa Xanthakis, PhD, FAHA, assistant professor of medicine and biostatistics in the Section of Preventive Medicine and Epidemiology at Boston University School of Medicine in Boston.

"The earlier people make these lifestyle changes, the more likely they will be to lower their risk of cardiovascular-associated diseases later in life."

Study participants were selected from the third generation of the Framingham Heart Study. Participants (average age 47, 54% women) were examined between 2008 and 2011. Researchers evaluated physical activity using a specialized device known as an omnidirectional accelerometer.

The device, which tracks sedentary and physical activity, was worn on the partici-

pan't's hip for eight days. Researchers also collected dietary information from food frequency questionnaires to measure the kinds and levels of food and nutrients consumed.

In this investigation, researchers observed that among all participants, 28% met recommendations of both the physical activity and dietary guidelines, while 47% achieved the recommendations in only one of the guidelines. Researchers also observed that:

1. Participants who followed the physical activity recommendations alone had 51% lower odds of metabolic syndrome;
2. Participants who adhered to the dietary guidelines alone had 33% lower odds; and
3. Participants who followed both guidelines had 65% lower odds of developing metabolic syndrome.

"It is noteworthy that we observed a dose-response association of adherence to diet and physical activity guidelines with risk of cardiometabolic disease later in life," Xanthakis said. "Participants who met the physical activity guidelines had a progressively lower risk of cardiometabolic disease as they increased adherence to the dietary guidelines."

All study participants were white adults, therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to people in other racial or ethnic groups. Additional studies with a multiethnic participant sample are needed, researchers said.

## YouTube experimenting with hiding dislikes to protect creators

Agencies

Google-owned YouTube has confirmed it is experimenting with hiding dislikes to protect creators and channels from targeted attacks to downvote their videos.

YouTube said in a tweet late on Wednesday that in response to creator feedback around well-being and targeted dislike campaigns, it is testing a few new designs that don't show the public dislike count.

"Creators, you'll still be able to see the exact number of likes and dislikes in YouTube Studio. For viewers, if you're in the experiment, you can still like or dislike a video to share feedback with creators and help tune the recommendations you see on YouTube," the company announced.

Currently, data for both likes and dislikes are available in a creator's individual YouTube Studio page, but only likes will be displayed publicly on a video.

YouTube said it is not testing hiding dislikes on all creators' videos but with a select few to begin with and gather insights.

"Viewer feedback has always been, and will continue to be, an important part of YouTube. But we've heard from creators that the public dislike counts can impact their well-being, and may motivate a targeted campaign of dislikes on a creator's



**Creators, you'll still be able to see the exact number of likes and dislikes in YouTube Studio. For viewers, if you're in the experiment, you can still like or dislike a video to share feedback with creators and help tune the recommendations you see on YouTube**

video," the company said.

"So, we're testing designs that don't include the visible like or dislike count in an effort to balance improving the creator experience, while still making sure viewer feedback is accounted for and shared with the creator," it added.

Instagram had also experimented with hiding like counts on posts in various countries around the world.

## Researchers find potential key to protection against obesity, extended lifespan

Agencies

Adding the nutrient selenium to diets protects against obesity and provides metabolic benefits to mice, according to a study published today in eLife.

The results could lead to interventions that reproduce many of the anti-ageing effects associated with dietary restriction while also allowing people to eat as normal.

Several types of diet have been shown to increase lifespan - that is, the period of healthy lifespan. One of the proven methods of increasing lifespan in many organisms, including non-human mammals, is to restrict dietary intake of an amino acid called methionine.

Recent studies have suggested that the effects of methionine restriction on lifespan are likely to be conserved in humans. Although it might be feasible for some people to practice methionine restriction, for example, by adhering to a vegan diet, such a diet might not be practical or desirable for everyone. In the current study, a research team from the Orentreich Foundation for the Advancement of Science (OFAS), Cold Spring, New York, US, aimed to develop an intervention that produces the same effects as methionine restriction, while also allowing an individual to eat a normal, unrestricted diet.

An important clue for developing such a treatment is that methionine restriction causes a decrease in the amounts of an energy-regulating



hormone called IGF-1. If a treatment could be found that causes a similar decrease in IGF-1, this might also have beneficial effects on healthspan. Previous research has shown that selenium supplementation reduces the levels of circulating IGF-1 in rats, suggesting that this could be an ideal candidate.

The team first studied whether selenium supplementation offered the same protection against obesity as methionine restriction. They fed young male and older female mice one of three high-fat diets: a control diet containing typical amounts of methionine, a methionine-restricted diet, and a diet containing typical amounts of methionine as well as a source of selenium. For both male and female mice of any age, the authors found that selenium supplementation completely protected against the dramatic weight gain

and fat accumulation seen in mice fed the control diet, and to the same extent as restricting methionine.

Next, they explored the effects of the three diets on physiological changes normally associated with methionine restriction. To do this, they measured the amounts of four metabolic markers in blood samples from the previously treated mice. As hoped, they found dramatically reduced levels of IGF-1 in both male and female mice. They also saw reductions in the levels of the hormone leptin, which controls food intake and energy expenditure. Their results indicate that selenium supplementation produces most, if not all, of the hallmarks of methionine restriction, which suggests that this intervention may have a similar positive effect on healthspan.

To gain insight into the beneficial effects of selenium supplementation, the researchers used a different organism - yeast. The two most widely used measurements of healthspan in yeast are chronological lifespan, which tells us how long-dormant yeast remain viable, and replicative lifespan, which measures the number of times a yeast cell can produce new offspring. The team previously showed that methionine restriction increases the chronological lifespan of yeast, so they tested whether selenium supplementation might do the same. As it turned out, yeast grown under selenium-supplemented conditions had a 62 per cent longer chronological lifespan (from 13 days to 21 days) and a replicative lifespan extended by nine generations as compared with controls. This demonstrates that supplementing yeast with selenium produces benefits to healthspan detectable by multiple tests of cell ageing.

"One of the major goals of ageing research is to identify simple interventions that promote human healthspan," notes senior author Jay Johnson, Senior Scientist at OFAS. "Here we present evidence that short-term administration of either organic or inorganic sources of selenium provides multiple health benefits to mice, the most notable of which being the prevention of diet-induced obesity. In the long term, we expect that supplementation with these compounds will also prevent age-related disease and extend the overall survival of mice. It is our hope that many of the benefits observed for mice will also hold true for humans."

## 71.7% off all payment transactions in India to be digital by 2025

Agencies

By 2025, digital payments collectively in India would account for 71.7 per cent of overall payments volume, leaving cash and cheques at 28.3 per cent, said a new report.

In 2020, the transaction volume share in India stood at 15.6 per cent and 22.9 per cent for instant payments and other electronic payments respectively, while paper-based payments had a considerable share of 61.4 per cent, said the report from US-based electronic payments company ACI Worldwide and data analytics and consulting company GlobalData.

This is poised to change by 2025 share of volume by instant payments and other electronic payments is expected to rise to 37.1 per cent and 34.6 per cent respectively, leaving the volume of paper-based transactions at 28.3 per cent.

Furthermore, by 2024 the share of real time payments volume in overall electronic transactions will exceed 50 per cent,

according to the report.

"India's journey of creating a digital financial infrastructure has been characterised by collabora-



tion between the government, the regulator, banks and fintechs," Kaushik Roy, VP and head of product management, Asia, Middle East and Africa, ACI Worldwide, said in a statement.

"This has helped to advance the

country's goal of enabling financial inclusion and also provided rapid payments digitization for citizens. The pandemic has further accelerated adoption of digital payments with many first time users adopting digital payments and significant uplift by merchants."

With millions of people globally having to change the way they work and live—and the way they shop and pay—mobile wallet adoption rose to an historic high of 46 per cent in 2020, up from 40.6 percent in 2019 and 18.9 percent in 2018. Countries like Brazil, Mexico and Malaysia where many people historically relied on cash are now some of the fastest adopters of mobile wallets.

Globally, more than 70.3 billion real-time payments transactions were processed in 2020, a surge of 41 per cent compared to the previous year, as the Covid-19 pandemic dramatically accelerated trends away from cash and cheques towards greater reliance on real-time and digital payments, said the report.

### Office of the Assistant Regional Transport Officer, Shopian NOTICE

Whereas joint application has been received by this office from Mr./Mrs Manzoor Ahmad Sheikh S/o Abdul. Khaliq Sheikh R/o Pirpora Shopian (Party No 1st) as Transferor, (seller) owner of the vehicle Pick Up van bearing Regd. No. JK22 A 3616 (Commercial/ Non Commercial ) covering under R/P NO: -----

And Mr/ Mrs Rafiq Ahmad Dar S/o Bashir Ahmad Dar R/o Zablipora Bijbehara Anantnag (Parti No 2nd ) as Transferee (purchaser) requesting for transfer of R/C & R/P of the above noted vehicle from party No. 1st to 2nd and cancellation of hire purchase agreement with JK Bank Court Road Shopian

Before the case is disposed off on its merits, any body having objection regarding the proposed transfer may file his objection within seven (7) days from the date of publication of this notice to the office of the undersigned .

No any representation/ objection shall be entertained after stipulated period.

No : ARTO/Spn/419-2021  
Dated 29-03-2021

S/D Asst Regional  
Transport Officer Shopian

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### Public Notice

I want to renew my Fertilizer License bearing No: CAOBI FL/2017-18/1313. If anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Chief Agriculture Officer Sopore within a period of seven days . After that no objection shall be entertained. Mudasir Ahad Lone S/o Ab Ahad Lone R/o Nathipora Sopore

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### PUBLIC NOTICE

We the following persons runs an NGO with name and style "Roses of nation" at Pattan Baramulla, now we are applying for No objection Certificate (NOC) .in this regard if anybody have any kind of objections may file the same to Deputy commissioner office Baramulla with in the period of Seven days from the date of publication of this notice.

Name of persons :-

(1) Nisar Ahmad najar S/o Mohd Subhan najar R/o Hardushoora Kunzar.

(2) Mohd Yaseen tantray S/o Sonallah tantray R/o Devbugh kunzar

(3) Kulsuma Akther D/O Ab. Ahad Najar R/o Nehalpora Pattan

(4) Rameeza Khaliq D/o Ab. Khaliq Najar R/o Nehalpora Pattan

(5) Umreena Qadir D/o Gh. Qadir Najar R/o Hardushoora Kunzar

(6) Irshad Ahmad dar S/o Mohd Subhan dar R/o Palpora Pattan

(7) Javid Ahmad najar S/o Mohd Maqbool najar R/o Hariwatnoo Tangmarg

(8) Wahid Bashir Lone S/o Bashir Ahmad lone R/o Thindama Kreeri

Chairman, Roses of nation  
H/O Pattan Baramulla

GMS

### Public NOTICE

I, Sheikh Fayaz Ahmad, residing at west jamia masjid gani mohalla want to change my daughter's name from aatiya to aatiya fayaz studying in viii c, presentation convent school rajbagh. anybody having any objection can file it within seven days from the date of publication of this notice. no objection can be entertained after seven days.

SHEIKH FAYAZ AHMAD  
CONTACT NUMBER:- 9796777064

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## VIGYAN PRASAR

An Autonomous Organization Of Department Of Science & Technology  
Govt. Of India A-50, Institutional Area, Sector-62, Noida, Uttar Pradesh 201309 (UP).

### FILLING UP OF SHORT-TERM CONTRACTUAL POSITIONS

Vigyan Prasar invites application for filling up various post for its **DST Communication/ Media Cell**. The details of positions, eligibility and experience are available at [www.vigyanprasar.gov.in](http://www.vigyanprasar.gov.in). Applications can be submitted online within 15 days from publication of this advt.

DAVP/36103/11/0001/2122.
**Registrar**



## 'Playing In IPL Will Benefit England Players At T20 World Cup,' Says Ben Stokes



Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** The increased participation of English players in the IPL, where there is constant pressure to perform, will benefit them during the T20 World Cup to be held in India later this year, reckons star all-rounder Ben Stokes.

Over the years more and more English players have chosen to take part in the lucrative league. This year, there are 14 England cricketers contracted to play IPL, including white-ball skipper Eoin Morgan Jos Buttler, Stokes, Johnny Bairstow, Moeen Ali, Sam Curran, Tom Curran, Sam Billings, Liam Livingstone and Dawid Malan.

"Yes - the percentage of English players in the IPL has probably grown in the last five or so years," Stokes, who will turn up for the Rajasthan Royals, told 'Sky Sports'.

"Not only is that great for the individual but it is also great for the players involved in the England set-up; it gives them experience in the most high-profile competition in the world but not only that - you are under constant pressure to perform," the imposing all-rounder added.

India is set to host the T20 World Cup later this year and Stokes feels it is the perfect opportunity for English players, who were a part of the recently-concluded tour of India, to get more familiar with the Indian conditions.

"You've got billions of people watching you and you've got the pressure of the franchise on you.

"Being constantly exposed to that is a huge benefit to us as a team, especially with the T20 World Cup coming up at the end of the year in India; it's a great chance for the English guys to get more experience in these conditions," Stokes said.

After being held in the United Arab Emirates last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the IPL returns to India and Stokes hopes fans would be allowed back in the stadiums soon.

"It's great for the competition that it's come back to its roots after taking place in Dubai last year, which was an achievement in itself.

"Fingers crossed that fans will be allowed back in at some point during this IPL because they are a huge part of this game and why we play.

"It was an amazing feeling to have fans back in the grounds on our (England's) recent tour of India - even though 100 per cent of the crowd were against us! Being back in the thick of that atmosphere was amazing!"

The Royals had a disappointing campaign last year, finishing last. However, Stokes is optimistic about the season ahead.

"Last year was obviously disappointing. Yes, we finished bottom of the table but I think it's not as simple as that. We ebbed and flowed with our performances throughout the season: we had some great ones followed by some pretty poor performances.

"But every year is a clean slate and we are really excited about the prospects of what we are able to do on the field this year," he added.

## Mohammad Azharuddin Backs Rishabh Pant As Future India Captain

Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** Former India skipper Mohammad Azharuddin feels swashbuckling wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant will be a front-runner to lead the 'Men in Blue' in future, having established himself across formats in the past few months.

The highly-rated Pant is set to lead the Delhi Capitals in the Indian Premier League this season in the absence of injured regular skipper Shreyas Iyer.

"Rishabh Pant has had such fabulous few months, establishing himself in all formats. It won't come as a surprise if the selectors see him as a front-runner for Indian captaincy in near future. His attacking cricket will stand India in good stead in times to come. @RishabhPant17 @BCCI," Azharuddin tweeted.

The 23-year-old Pant has dazzled across all three formats in the international season that went by.

He notched up scores of 97 and unbeaten 89 in the third and the



fourth Test against Australia to help India clinch the Border Gavaskar Trophy Down Under 2-1.

He continued his rich vein of form in the home Test series against England, playing match-winning

knocks for the team. The selectors took note of his consistency and included him in the white-ball squads.

Pant did not disappoint, scoring important half centuries in the two ODIs he featured in against England.

## RCB Captain Virat Kohli Reaches Chennai, To Be In Quarantine For Seven Days

Press Trust of India

**CHENNAI:** India and Royal Challengers Bangalore captain Virat Kohli reached Chennai on Thursday to join his IPL squad before which he will undergo a seven-day quarantine. The team has already started its training camp on Tuesday for the upcoming season which begins on April 9.

"Captain Virat Kohli has arrived in Chennai," RCB said, announcing Kohli's arrival in a tweet, along with a picture of their captain wearing a mask.

RCB face defending champions Mumbai Indians in the tournament opener on April 9 here.

Kohli, who has been with the



RCB since the inception of the IPL in 2008, quit the bio-bubble in Pune on Monday after India's ODI series win against England.

He has been part of bio-secure bubbles since the end of January, ahead of the England series, and was part of each of the four Tests, five T20 Internationals and three ODIs.

Another key RCB player and South

African star batsman A B de Villiers also joined the RCB bio-bubble on Thursday. The 37-year-old batting great has been a key player for the team since he joined the franchise in 2011.

Head coach Simon Katich also came out of quarantine, along with pacer Navdeep Saini as the RCB team underwent another practice session.

## IPL 2021: Chennai Super Kings Full Squad List, Strengths, Weaknesses And Form Analysis

Press Trust of India

**CHENNAI:** The return of Suresh Raina could boost the batting department but spin-reliant Chennai Super Kings will have to adapt to conditions which may assist pacers as they seek to improve upon their nightmarish show of last season.

Three-time champions CSK had a flop show last season, avoiding the wooden spoon thanks to a few victories at the back-end of the league phase as they failed to make the play-offs for the first time in the tournament's history.

Here is a look at what works and what doesn't for the Mahendra Singh Dhoni-led team, which opens its campaign by taking on Delhi Capitals in Mumbai on April 10.

### STRENGTHS:

CSK have oodles of experience, which will stand them in good stead in crucial situations. The inspirational leadership of Dhoni is another advantage for the team. The return of Raina will strengthen the batting unit which faltered far too often in last year's IPL in the UAE.

A batting line-up of Raina, along with Faf du Plessis, Dhoni, Ambati Rayudu, Ravindra Jadeja, Sam Curran, new recruit Moeen Ali and fast improving Ruturaj Gaikwad could prove a handful for rival bowling attacks and big scores could set the platform for the bowlers to do their job.

With the likes of Lungi Ngidi, Shardul Thakur, Curran, Deepak Chahar in the line-up, CSK have a decent bowling unit to test the best of batsmen in opposition ranks.

### WEAKNESSES:

A team comprising ageing stars proved CSK's undoing last season and they have stuck pretty much to the core squad. In the fast-paced world of T20s, senior stars could prove to be a handicap.

With some of the CSK players, including Dhoni, Raina, Rayudu and Tahir having retired from international cricket and not playing domestic games, lack of match time could hurt the team. That apart, the captain's waning finishing powers

has not helped the team's cause.

The decision of Australian pace ace Josh Hazlewood to pull out of the IPL to give himself rest ahead of the hectic international season ahead will be a blow for CSK.

Also, Ravindra Jadeja is returning from a long injury break and how soon he gets back to his best will have to be seen.

Veteran Trinidad all-rounder Dwayne Bravo's diminishing returns apart from his injury problems would worry CSK.

With this year's IPL matches to be played at neutral venues, CSK, which rely so much on spin, will have to alter their strategy, especially in Mumbai where the wickets may also have something for pacers.

The spin bowling department has experienced and skilful operators but the think-tank needs to get the combination right. Imran Tahir spent most of last season on the bench and the others like Piyush Chawla and Karn Sharma were ineffective.

### OPPORTUNITIES:

After a forgettable 2020 season where they finished seventh, things can only go north for Dhoni and his men. Known to be slow starters, the Super Kings would need to be at their best from the beginning to make an impact and also get the combination right.

### THREATS:

Poor batting let down CSK last season in the UAE and if they don't rework their tactics, it could hamper their chances yet again.

The pace bowlers will need to step up big time if the three-time champions are to put up a good show, else it would be another tough season for Dhoni & Co.

**CSK Squad:** Mahendra Singh Dhoni (captain), Suresh Raina, Ambati Rayudu, KM Asif, Deepak Chahar, Dwayne Bravo, Faf du Plessis, Imran Tahir, N Jagadeesan, Karn Sharma, Lungi Ngidi, Mitchell Santner, Ravindra Jadeja, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Shardul Thakur, Sam Curran, R Sai Kishore, Moeen Ali, K Gowtham, Cheteshwar Pujara, Harishankar Reddy, Bhagath Varma, C Hari Nishanth.

# RASIKH GEMS OPENS SRINAGAR STORE



Observer News Desk

**SRINAGAR:** In a glittering function here, Bangalore-based gems and jewellery brand running their stores in Hyderabad, Delhi, Mumbai, Dubai and other cities on Thursday opened its first Srinagar outlet.

It's the eighth branch of the famous gems & jewellery brand which has attained a competitive edge in the highly demanding global market and entrenched themselves as the leading gem stones supplier based on their planetary or astrology-effect.

They cater to precious gem stones, semi-precious stones, planetary gem stones, astro-

logical gem stones, lucky stones, birth stones and beads.

"I am extremely delighted to open Rasikh Gems and Jewellers in Srinagar," said Mir Mahadi Hussain, Chairman of the brand.

"I am grateful to all, who have been by our side throughout our journey. Your presence at the event is a huge encouragement to our team."

Parliament Member Justice (Retd) Hasnain Masoodi inaugurated the store by cutting the ribbon. Dr Farooq Abdullah, who was scheduled to open the store, could not attend as he is in self quarantine due to Covid infection.

After establishment in 1996, Rasikh Gems and Jewellers over the years has become the

leading trader, supplier and retailer of precious stones.

The brand created its niche in the market through its customer service, international quality and a competitive price.

"We are a small company with a great aptitude for value, satisfaction and reliability," said Dr MM Raza, Astro gemologist.

"Our products cater into different types depending on their size, shape etc. Our dedicated team has many talented and creative artisans who have been in this business for generations. They are known for their ability to design in traditional styles and later depending on customer needs."