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P3 CITY

AFTER SEVEN YEARS PHC CHANAPORA CRAVES FOR UPGRADATION

Even after spending a whopping amount of more than Rs 20 crores, the 60-bedded hospital at Housing Colony, Chanapora, Srinagar is craving for up-gradation from... Primary Health

THINK

INDIA, NEW COVID VARIANT AND RESPONSE

After genome sequencing of over 10,000 COVID-19 cases in India, researchers have discovered a new variant with two new mutations which may be better at evading the immune system....



P5 STATE

FAMILY OF CRPF PERSONNEL ABDUCTED BY NAXALS STAGE PROTEST DEMANDING HIS SAFE RELEASE

Relatives of a CoBRA commando held hostage by Naxals after a recent gun battle with security forces...



Quote!

People only see what they are prepared to see

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

NEWS DIGEST

Army Repatriates Pak Boy

SRINAGAR: The Army handed over a boy to Pakistani authorities at the Titwal crossing point along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Kupwara district on Wednesday, a defence spokesperson said here. Mausam, the son of Manzoor Ahmad and a resident of the Lipa area in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir (Pck), was handed over to the Pakistani authorities at 11.50 am, he added. "On the night of April 5, the... More On P10

HC Quashes 3 PSA Detention Orders

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir High Court has quashed PSA detention orders against three persons and ordered authorities to set them at liberty forthwith provided they are not required in any other case. A bench of Justice Vinod Chatterji Koul quashed District Magistrate, Pulwama order dated 31 August last year by virtue of which Manzoor Ahmad Bhat of Chersoo Katipora was placed under... More On P10

Pakistani Smuggler Killed Along IB: Police

AMRITSAR: An alleged Pakistani smuggler who crossed over to the Indian territory with over 22 kg of heroin was shot dead along the International Border (IB) here in a joint operation by the Amritsar rural police and the BSF, officials said on Wednesday. With this, the police claimed to have busted a major narco-militant module. Based on inputs about the movement of Pakistani smugglers towards the Indian territory... More On P10

2 Dead As Oil Tanker Falls Into Gorge

JAMMU: Two men were killed and two injured when an oil tanker skidded off the road and plunged into a deep gorge in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district, police said on Wednesday. The tanker was on its way to Dugga from Reasi and the accident occurred at Karka late on Tuesday night when the driver lost control over the vehicle while negotiating a blind curve, a police official said. He said rescuers immediately swung... More On P10

Leopard Captured In Doda

JAMMU: A leopard was captured by the wildlife department on Wednesday after hectic efforts lasting over six hours in a village in Doda district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said. The leopard ventured into Pranoo village from the nearby forest around 8.30 am and was noticed by some local labourers working on construction of a road, the officials said... More On P10

Search Operation In Srinagar Ends After 18 Hours



Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: Eighteen hour long search operation which was launched on Tuesday evening in Gulab Bagh area in the outskirts of Srinagar was called off on Wednesday after no militant was found.

A senior police officer said that a joint team of Police

and CRPF launched a cordon and search operation in Gulab Bagh on Tuesday evening after receiving specific information about presence of two militants.

The police officer further said that it was a huge building due to which it took us long time to carry out searches. Some tear... More On P10

Militants Attack Naka Party In Shopian

Unidentified militants on Wednesday attacked a checkpoint manned jointly by police and paramilitary CRPF in south Kashmir's Shopian district. According to the reports, unknown militants opened fire towards a checkpoint of the joint forces in Imamsahib area of the district on Wednesday afternoon. The militants, reports said, fired shots towards the state forces before making a quick exit. However, no loss of life or property was reported in the militant attack. Soon after the incident, the state forces cordoned off the area to nab the attackers.

J&K Film Policy To Be Among The Best In The Country: LG



Observer News Service

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Wednesday said that Jammu and Kashmir film policy will be among the best in the country and all the stakeholders would be taken onboard while finalizing it.

Chairing a high level meeting to review the proposed J&K Film Policy-2021, here at Civil Secretariat Sinha had point wise discussions on measures needed to be incorporated to attract and facilitate the filmmakers coming to the UT, besides maximizing the potential of promising local film sector

and talents for transforming J&K into the most preferred film destination, an official spokesperson said.

"J&K Film Policy will be among the best in the Country and all the stakeholders would be taken onboard while finalizing it," LG said, as per the official spokesperson.

The LG, he said, advised the concerned officers to consult the renowned names in the Indian Film Industry to seek and incorporate their suggestions.

"He also emphasized on streamlining the Single Window Clearance & Facilitation... More On P10

We Support Direct India, Pak Dialogue: US

Press Trust Of India

WASHINGTON: The United States on Tuesday said that it encourages India and Pakistan to have a direct dialogue between them on issues of concern.

However, the State Department refrained from commenting on the recent decision of the Pakistani Cabinet not to import sugar and cotton from India.

"I wouldn't want to comment on that specifically," State Department spokesperson Ned Price told reporters at his daily news conference.

"What I would say is that we continue to support direct dialogue between India and Pakistan on issues of concern," Price said in response to a question.

In a volte-face, Pakistan's Cabinet on April 1 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... More On P10

Corona Cases Shoot Up In J&K, 812 Test Positive

Deadly Infection Claims Six More Lives

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday recorded its highest single-day spike this year as 812 new COVID-19 cases, including 257 travellers, taking the tally to 1,34,827, even as six fresh deaths due to the virus in the past 24 hours took the toll to 2,018, officials said.

Of the fresh cases, 347 were from Jammu division and 465 from Kashmir division of the Union territory, they said. This is the highest number

of single day cases reported in Jammu and Kashmir this year so far.

The UT had less than 1,000 active cases on March 15 while the number of fresh cases crossed the three-digit mark from March 16.

The officials said Srinagar district recorded the highest of 238 cases, including 57 travellers, followed by 138 in Jammu and 79 in Udhampur district.

For the first time in past several months, all 20 districts of Jammu and Kashmir have reported fresh COVID cases.

The number of active cases has now breached... More On P10

Two ITI Staffers, 6 Students Test Positive

Two staffers besides six students of an ITI centre have tested positive for novel Coronavirus on conduct of Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) in Tral in south-Kashmir's Pulwama district. A medical official said that as per guidelines, employees and students of an ITI centre in Tral were tested for the infection through Rapid Antigen Test technique. "During the course of testing, two staffers alongside... More On P10

IGP Cautions Media: 'Don't Come Closer To Encounter Sites'

Directs SSPs Asked To Take Legal Action Against Violators

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir Zone, Vijay Kumar on Wednesday said that he has issued written directions to all district SSPs to take legal action based on facts in case any media person comes closer to the encounter sites or "law and order" situations.



"I have already issued written directions to all district

SSPs yesterday. District SSPs will take legal action on facts," the IGP told a local news agency GNS.

When asked who comes under this advisory, IGP said it implies for both national as well as for local media outlets.

Yesterday he said that the media persons should do not carry any live coverage of any encounter or... More On P10

Kashmir Media Anguished Over IGP's Remarks

The media bodies in Kashmir on Wednesday expressed anguish over the comments attributed to Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir, Vijay Kumar cautioning journalists not to come closer to encounter sites and law and order situations. In a joint statement issued here, a dozen media associations said on... More On P10

Cop, Ex-Soldier Among 4 Held Over Minor's Rape

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Police on Wednesday arrested four people, including a cop and a retired soldier over the rape of a minor in south Kashmir's Kulgam district.

According to a police spokesperson, a written complaint was filed by an individual at the police station Qazigund alleging that her daughter was raped by three persons at Bonigam Qazigund with the help of a woman of Damjen area. He said that the offence as per the complainant surfaced during the course of a medical examination where



she was found pregnant.

"On the receipt of the complaint, a case FIR No. 61/2021 under relevant sections of law was registered and investigation was... More On P10

Tricolour Hoisting Reflects Govt's Insecurity: Mehbooba

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: PDP president Mehbooba Mufti on Wednesday said that the Jammu and Kashmir administration's directions to hoist the national flag on all government buildings in the union territory reflect a sense of insecurity as no such order has been issued anywhere else in the country.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha had asked officials to hoist the tricolour on all government buildings in Jammu and Kashmir late last month. The administration also directed all deputy commissioners and divisional heads of



departments to implement the LG's order within a fortnight.

"This shows their sense of insecurity... the sense of uncertainty. Why are such orders being issued in Jammu and Kashmir only? In other parts, the governor... More On P10

RICH IN VALUE, POOR IN USE

Kashmir's Medicinal Plants Withering

Swati Joshi

Behind those quiet visits of god-men or roaming foreigners in Kashmir jungles, a paper in Shodhganga (a reservoir of Indian thesis) reveals, were around 3,000 medical plant species dotting the length and breadth of the valley.

The hunt for natural antidotes in the woods of the region are still underway and sustaining the medical industry. "Kashmir forests are valued for their rich medicinal plant species,"

says Rafiq Khan, an environmentalist. "No wonder why in the times of yore those Indian Sadhus would frequent our jungles to take home Jadibuti."

Apart from jungles, the larger landscape houses many plant species found in many ancient treatises. For example, Kusthah (Saussurea Costus) is mentioned for its anti-fever properties.

As a well-known medicinal plant of Kashmir, Kusthah is found in high mountains. It's a robust, perennial 3-4 feet tall shrub,

with membranous and irregularly toothed leaves that require a humid and cool climate.

It possesses properties to relieve skin diseases and is recommended for rejuvenation of every part of the body.

A combination of Kusthah with gold, honey, long pepper, and sweet flag is an excellent tonic to boost the mental and physical development of children.

The perennial shrub is used in the treatment of bronchial asthma besides fever, cough, and leprosy.

Inulin (naturally occurring polysaccharides) extracted from Kusthah roots helps to develop a strong immunity.

Similarly, saffron (Crocus sativus) is a prominent medicinal plant deriving its name from the Arabic name "Azaferon".

It's a small herb of 25 cm in height with radical leaves... More On P10

Hyundai Says Its New Electric Car Can Power Devices, Cook Dinner

Kyunghee Park, Bloomberg

Hyundai Motor Co. is pitching its new Ioniq 5 as being able to do more than the average EV.

In a series of promotional videos on YouTube, a camper is shown running on a treadmill hooked up to the car's battery, listening to their favorite tunes on a bank of speakers, and even rustling up a roast-chicken dinner in a portable oven. The car can supply up to 3.6 kilowatts of power, enough to run appliances like refrigerators and stoves.

It's part of a push by Hyundai to appeal to a younger audience as it plays catch-up in the EV market. The South Korean automaker is behind EV pioneers such as Tesla Inc. and established brands like Volkswagen AG and BMW AG, only introducing its electric car in 2016.

"We looked at the wider meaning of space that would include outdoor and daily activities that consumers can do with their cars," Heung Soo Kim, a senior vice president and head of product and EV businesses, said in an interview last

month. "We are constantly looking into new features that will appeal to users."

Hyundai says it's the first major electric-car maker to offer bi-directional charging, which means owners can power electronic devices from the car battery. While conventional car batteries can be used to charge laptops and phones, they drain quickly if hooked up to anything more powerful, like a portable fridge or sound system, meaning serious campers need to install a dual-battery system or lug around heavy, noisy generators to power their home comforts.

The Ioniq 5 also comes with the option to install a solar-panel roof that will charge the battery pack, giving the vehicle additional driving range of about 1,300 kilometers (800 miles) annually.

U.S.-based EV start-up Rivian Automotive Inc. is also looking to attract buyers who love the great outdoors, but with some creature comforts. It has developed a slide-out camp kitchen for its Sedona SUV complete with an induction cooktop powered by the car battery.



Image credit: Bloomberg

'New Era'

Hyundai in the next few months is set to start sales of the Ioniq 5, its first EV built on a dedicated platform called the Electric-Global Modular Platform, or E-GMP. The flat-topped chassis allows the automaker to create more spacious interiors, another drawcard to entice drivers to switch from convention gasoline-

powered vehicles. "This year will be the start of a new era for Hyundai and Kia as its full EVs go on sale," said Lee Jae-il, an analyst at Eugene Investment & Securities Co. in Seoul. "Hyundai has come a long way from being one of the latecomers to the EV market to offering a very competitive product with the Ioniq 5."

Still, demand for the Ioniq 5 is

expected to be slow initially. Hyundai received orders for just more than 20,000 of the vehicles in South Korea on the day pre-orders opened. The automaker aims to sell 26,500 of the EV model in its home market this year, a fraction of its total sales target of 741,500 vehicles.

The Ioniq 5 will start at 52 million won (\$46,000) before subsidies, according to Hyundai's website. The smaller Kona EV starts at 49 million won before subsidies, and its Paliade SUV starts at 36.4 million won. Hyundai shares rose 0.4% in early Seoul trading Wednesday. They have risen 20% this year, making them one of the best-performing auto stocks behind the likes of VW, General Motors Co. and Ford Motor Co.

ture, Kim said.

That compares with Volkswagen's ID.4, which takes about 38 minutes to charge up to 80% from 5% in about 38 minutes and add 100 kilometers in about 10 minutes. It falls short of the Porsche Taycan, which can add enough charge for 100 kilometers in 4 minutes, and has a total range of 450 kilometers. Tesla markets the Long Range version of its Model 3 at about 515 kilometers.

Hyundai's Kia Corp. unit last month also unveiled its new EV6 model that will be assembled on the same E-GMP platform and is expected to go on sale in July.

"We also focused on having a modular platform that will enable us to offer various types of vehicles on the same platform," Kim said.

Hyundai is also working to build charging infrastructure to encourage more people to buy EVs. The conglomerate unveiled plans in March to provide ultra-high-speed charging stations through its E-pit brand. It plans to open 20 stations in South Korea this year and will work with potential partners overseas to build the infrastructure.

Heart patients three times more likely to have diabetes: Study

Agencies

Nearly 30 per cent of patients with coronary artery disease have diabetes, according to the study. That compares to a diabetes prevalence of around 9 per cent in the general population. There was wide geographical variation, with 60 per cent of heart disease patients in Gulf countries having diabetes compared to 20 per cent in Europe.

"Obesity and lack of exercise are common risk factors for both diabetes and heart disease and our results highlight the urgent need to improve nutrition and raise activity levels globally," said study author Dr Emmanuelle Vidal-Petiot of Bichat-Claude Bernard Hospital, Paris, France.

Vidal-Petiot added, "Countries worst affected by diabetes are also at the epicentre of the obesity epidemic, which can be in part attributed to urbanisation and associated changes in physical activity and food intake."

This was an analysis of the CLARIFY registry, which included 32,694 patients with chronic coronary syndromes from 45 countries in Europe, Asia, America, the Middle East, Australia, and Africa. Patients were enrolled from 2009 to 2010 and followed up yearly for five years.

All adverse clinical outcomes measured in the study occurred more frequently among heart patients with diabetes compared to those without diabetes. When the researchers compared the likelihood of poor outcomes in those with diabetes compared to those



without, they adjusted the analyses for multiple factors that could influence the relationship including age, sex, smoking status, body mass index, blood pressure, medications, and other conditions.

After these adjustments, they found that among patients with stable coronary heart disease, those with diabetes had a 38 per cent higher rate of death during the five-year follow-up.

They also had a 28 per cent higher risk of the combined outcome of heart attack, stroke, or death from a cardiovascular cause. Heart patients with diabetes had worse outcomes than those without diabetes regardless of geographic region and ethnicity.

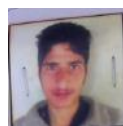
Dr Vidal-Petiot said, "Diabetes was linked with worse outcomes even in areas with the lowest prevalence.

In Europe, for instance, diabetes was linked with a 29 per cent greater risk of the combined outcome of heart attack, stroke, or cardiovascular death. This indicates that management of these very high-risk patients with heart disease and diabetes should be improved. Each country needs to identify these patients and provide tailored educational and prevention programmes."

She concluded, "The importance of healthy eating and living cannot be overemphasised. Everyone can lower their chances of developing diabetes with weight control and exercise, and early detection is needed so that blood sugar can be controlled. Those with heart disease and diabetes also need an active lifestyle and a good diet to protect their health. Avoiding smoking is crucial, as is controlling blood pressure and cholesterol levels."

The Jammu And Kashmir State Board Of School Education, BRANCH OFFICE SOPORE

The candidates whose photograph is published in this notice is claiming to have lost the original Migration Certificate bearing No: 18AKTR/15718 issued by Public Higher Secondary School Tujer Sharief under Below mentioned particulars Name Ishfaq Ahmad Sheikh Fathers Name Abdul Hameed Sheikh Mothers Name Saidia Beigum Roll No 3181253 Session /Year Annual / Reg. 2018 Now the candidate has applied for Duplicate Migration Certificate. Anybody (if) having any objection may file the some before undersigned with (07) Seven days from the date of publication of this notice. Besides, the original certificate be teated as cancelled. Sd/ Assistant Secretary Branch Office Sopore



Public Notice

I have lost my Driving License bearing DL no: JK0420170034936 in Jammu Narwal . Now I am applying for the duplicate of the same if anybodyhaving any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the RTO office Budgam within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained. Mohammad Junaid Sheikh S/o Abdul Aziz Sheikh R/o Punjyari Khag BMG

Public Notice

I have lost my Driving License bearing DL no: JK0420190001908 from Gumboora To Magam . Now I am applying for the duplicate of the same if anybodyhaving any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the RTO office Budgam within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Owais Yaseen Wani S/O Mohammad Yaseen Wani R/O Gumboora Budgam BMG

Office Of The Regional Transport Officer Kashmir NOTICE

Where as an application for transfer of ownership has been received from Parveez Ahamd S/o Mohd Sultan R/o Bhoga Jangpora Bhogal South DI (Transferor) of Duster bearing registration No. DL8CZ-2268 chasis No: 3019408 Engine No: 018579 Model 2013 in favour of Waseem Nazir Malik S/O Nazir Ahamd Malik R/o Nowgam Banpora Srinagar (Transferee). Now, therefore, it is notified for the information of the general, public that representation/ Objection, if any in connection with proposed transfer will be received within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper Kashmir Observer to the address of undersigned. No, representation/ objection shall be considered unless it is made writing it is made in the aforesaid period.

NOJK-RTOK 337 Sd/- Dated: 07/04/2021 Regional Transport Office, Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER BUDGAM KASHMIR NOTICE

Where as a joint application has been recieved from owner. Shri : Nazir Ahmad Wani S/o: Gh Ahmad Wani R/o: Khumaini Colony Budgam as Transferor) & Shri. Abdul Gani Shah S/o Mohammad Jamal

Shah R/o Ladoo Pampore, as Transferee) for transfer of Tipper Carriage route permit No.1326/Gc/ Budgam vehicle No. JK04B-6841 As well as HPA Cancellation with M/S J & K State Financial Corporation B/U Budgam. Now It is therefore notified for general information that objections, if any to the proposed transfer of the said route permit/vehicle shall be filed in writing in the office of the Assistant Regional Transport office ARTO Budgam within a period of 12 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper .

Assistant Regional Transport officer Budgam Kashmir

No. ARTO/ BUDGAM. 159 Dated 07/04/2021 mcb

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

State Institute Of Education Kashmir

(upgraded to SCERT-JK)
Division Office, Srinagar

TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tenders affixed with revenue stamp of Rs. 5/- are invited from the valid service licence holders/ reputed and registered transport Groups / Agencies/Firms, companies/ Association of J&K for supply vehicles to the Office of Principal/ Jt Director, SIE Kashmir (upgraded to SCERT-J&K) for conduct/monitoring of various academic activities / examinations on the following terms and conditions,

1. That the Company/ Firm/ Agency offering tender should possess registration of commercial operative fleet from Registering Authority and have vehicle strength (Sumo/Tavera) of about 10 and above for qualifying all set standards and requisitions as per norms and drivers operating should possess a valid commercial licence
2. That the Company/ Firm/ Agency offering tender should quote the rate for hiring charges only per day for the vehicle excluding fuel charges and is required to submit the same on the letter head of the firm/agency without mutilation/error/overwriting. The SIE, Kashmir will supply fuel as per requirement and need of the vehicle.
3. That the Company/ Firm/ Agency offering tender shall offer their fuel consumption as per set norms of State Motor Garages. However, the fixation of norms under governing procedures for consumption of fuel as per mileage will be authority of the Principal SIE, Kashmir only and the decision according to the set norms shall be binding upon the Company/ Firm/ Agency.
4. That the Company/ Firm/ Agency offering tender should mandatorily supply the fully maintained vehicles only. However, Principal/ Jt. Director, SIE, Kashmir reserves the right to reject any of such vehicle, if found improper in any respect.
5. That the driver operating the vehicle should be personally responsible for maintenance/ damage/ loss during the operational period of the vehicle.
6. That the SIE, Kashmir will release the payment in favour of the representative to the Firm/ Company/ Agency only after satisfactory completion of the assignment Payment/s in no case shall be made to any individual or person under any circumstances except the executant Company/ Agency/ Firm.
7. That the successful Firm/ Agency/ Company shall have to deposit a CDR of Rs. 2000/- (Rupees two Thousand only) pledged to the Principal/ Jt. Director (Trgs)/ SIE Kashmir.
8. That the tender should be addressed to the Principal/ Jt. Director (Trgs), SIE Kashmir (upgraded to SCERT-J&K) Bemina, Srinagar, 190018 and must reach to the office of the undersigned by or before April 12, 2021 upto 4.00 pm during office hours.
9. That the SIE, Kashmir reserves the right to accept or reject any or all contract/s of the tenders without assigning any reason thereof.
10. That the contract period should be for a period of one year from the date of execution of the Agreement.

Joint Director,
SCERT-J&K,
(Erstwhile SIE, Kmr)
Srinagar.

No:- SCERT-KD/Plg/21/ 1578-80

Date:- 03/04/2021.

DIPK-229/21

از عدالت انگریجو مجسٹریٹ درجہ اول (نائب تحصیلدار است ناگ) با اجلاس زیر امض صاحب۔

درخواست نمائند: شیخ عمران الدین ولد محمد رمضان شیخ ساکنہ ڈھارہ ناگ بغرض اجرائی تاریخ پیدائش سر تفلیف بنام آف جان دختر خراج الدین۔

استشار برادر آگاہی ہر خاص و عام۔

معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدور میں ساکن ساکنہ ڈھارہ ناگ نے عدالت بذرائع ایک درخواست عطفی بیان پیش کیا ہے سال کی تاریخ پیدائش 14/12/1999 ہے اس ضمن میں سر تفلیف پیدائش نکلے کا خواہ ہے لہذا سر تفلیف ڈھارہ ناگ کر کے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی بھی تدار یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ ایک ہفتہ کے اندر اندر درودان دفتری اوقات میں پیش کرے بصورت دیگر کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

انگریجو مجسٹریٹ درجہ اول

mja

از عدالت انگریجو مجسٹریٹ درجہ اول (نائب تحصیلدار است ناگ) با اجلاس زیر امض صاحب۔

درخواست نمائند: شیخ عمران الدین ولد محمد رمضان شیخ ساکنہ ڈھارہ ناگ بغرض اجرائی تاریخ پیدائش سر تفلیف بنام آف جان دختر خراج الدین۔

استشار برادر آگاہی ہر خاص و عام۔

معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدور میں ساکن ساکنہ ڈھارہ ناگ نے عدالت بذرائع ایک درخواست عطفی بیان پیش کیا ہے سال کی تاریخ پیدائش 09/08/2019 ہے اس ضمن میں سر تفلیف پیدائش نکلے کا خواہ ہے لہذا سر تفلیف ڈھارہ ناگ کر کے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی بھی تدار یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ ایک ہفتہ کے اندر اندر درودان دفتری اوقات میں پیش کرے بصورت دیگر کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

انگریجو مجسٹریٹ درجہ اول

mia

از عدالت انگریجو مجسٹریٹ درجہ اول (نائب تحصیلدار است ناگ) با اجلاس زیر امض صاحب۔

درخواست نمائند: ارشد زب احمد ولد خالق احمد شیخ ساکنہ نوہی برا پکروہ ناگ بغرض اجرائی تاریخ پیدائش سر تفلیف بنام شیخ محمد صلاح الدین ولد ارشد زب احمد۔

استشار برادر آگاہی ہر خاص و عام۔

معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدور میں ساکن ساکنہ ڈھارہ ناگ نے عدالت بذرائع ایک درخواست عطفی بیان پیش کیا ہے سال کی تاریخ پیدائش 19/12/2019 ہے اس ضمن میں سر تفلیف پیدائش نکلے کا خواہ ہے لہذا سر تفلیف ڈھارہ ناگ کر کے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی بھی تدار یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ ایک ہفتہ کے اندر اندر درودان دفتری اوقات میں پیش کرے بصورت دیگر کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

انگریجو مجسٹریٹ درجہ اول

mja

از نیات ماگم با اجلاس جناب نائب تحصیلدار صاحب ماگم عنوان: مضمون درخواست نصرتہ متیل دست اختر درخزن وانی ساکنہ وانی اٹمن پورہ برادر طاہی بیکارہ ایرا سر تفلیف تحت SRO294

استشار برادر آگاہی ہر خاص و عام معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدور میں ساکن نے ایک درخواست برادر ایرا سر تفلیف پیش کی ہے۔ جو کہ دفتر بذرائع میں زیر کاروائی ہے اور اجراء کرنے مطلوب ہے کہ بذرائع اقتدار پر مضمون ہے زمیندار 65 سال مغلہ بیگم زوجہ محمد متیل محمد علی کام 60 زوجہ محمد 25 نصرتہ متیل 20 دست اختر 18 محبوبہ اختر 16

اے علاوہ عمر کی مہماندہائی ذیل و غیر ذیل 4666 ہے سر تفلیف زیر بحث ادا کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص یا شخص کو کوئی تدار یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا تدار یا اعتراض ساتھ ایم کے اندر پیش کریں۔ معاد کرنے کے بعد کوئی تدار یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

نائب تحصیلدار

sult

After Seven Years PHC Chanapora Craves For Upgradation

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Even after spending a whopping amount of more than Rs 20 crores, the 60-bedded hospital at Housing Colony, Chanapora, Srinagar is craving for up-gradation from Primary Health Center to Sub District hospital for the past eight years.

President of the Colony Committee, Altaf Shawl who also works as a volunteer in the hospital, said that the construction of the hospital took place during the NC-Congress regime, however several governments

changed and the health centre got politicised due to which the place is still awaiting for the up gradation.

Shawl said that, even after the upgradation of the dispensary to the hospital in 2010, the activities are still the same as of the dispensary because no activities are being held even after spending the huge amount on its infrastructure and equipment.

Pertinently in 2014, the health centre was supposed to be inaugurated to function as the sub-district hospital, however due to the devastating floods the inau-

guration was postponed.

Earlier in the year 2012, former Minister Sham Lal Sharma had laid the foundation stone of the hospital. However, the health center has not been upgraded since then despite having all the facilities of the hospital.

"In these years we knocked every possible door and left no stone unturned to make this health center functional as a full-fledged sub-district hospital but after years of the struggle the people's aspirations have met a dead end due to politicizing of the issue," another

resident said.

He said that the locals have been tirelessly working to get the primary health center upgraded to sub-district hospital but due to official apathy people are suffering.

"The health center has all facilities; it just needs a little push by the government to make it functional even when it will function as a full-fledged sub-district hospital, the load to the district hospital could have been balanced," the locals said.

When contacted to the Financial Commissioner to the gov-

ernment for health and medical education, Atal Dulloo didn't respond to the repeated calls and messages from KNO.

Meanwhile, Director Health Kashmir, Dr. Mushtaq Ahmad Rather said that due to COVID-19 crises, the department was focusing on controlling the pandemic and had kept Dr Talat in-charge for the rest of the issues.

"I have given the charge to Dr. Talat, because as of now, I am busy with dealing COVID-19 situation," Rather said—(KNO)

Amid Covid Spike Floriculture Dept Sets Up More Ticket Counters At Tulip Garden



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The department of floriculture, which looks after the world famous Tulip Garden in Srinagar, after severe criticism from different quarters of the society has set up more ticket counters in view of the

rising Covid-19 cases.

Official sources said that a team of magistrates who had made a random inspection of the garden had submitted a detailed report to Deputy Commissioner Srinagar about the adherence to Covid-19 SOPs and protocols set by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

Earlier, the deputy commissioner had directed the officials of horticulture department for strict adherence of Covid-19 SOPs and ensuring use of face masks, more ticket counters for visitors in the gar-

Comm SMC For Ensuring Adequate Water Supply In Ramadan

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: SMC Commissioner Athar Amin Khan on Wednesday held a meeting to finalise the modalities regarding transfer of water works Division to SMC in his office Chamber here at Karan Nagar.

A statement issued by SMC said, "City Municipal Commissioner took review of Manpower, schemes and the undergoing projects. The issues and the measures to be taken regarding supply and demands under Jal Shakti department within SMC limits were also discussed at length."

During the course of meeting, Athar stressed on the officials to expedite the finalization of action plan to be submitted for the current year.

He also deliberated upon various issues including the financial aspects and emphasized that all necessary measures should be taken for adequate and uninterrupted water supply to the citizens of Srinagar especially in the upcoming holy month of Ramadan.

DC Srinagar Reviews Status Of AB-Sehat, Aadhar Enrolment, Other Schemes

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: To ensure prompt and effective services delivery to public, the District Development Commissioner (DDC), Srinagar, Mohammed Aijaz Assad today chaired a meeting to review the status of Ayushman Bharat, SEHAT scheme, Aadhaar enrolment, One Stop Centres and Mahila Shakti Kendra, besides implementation of Social Welfare schemes in the district.

The DDC called for effective and prompt delivery of the services to the public without any difficulty.

He stressed on cent percent Aadhaar coverage in district Srinagar within a specific time frame. He asked the concerned agency to pace up the speed of the process and mobilize its men and machinery to achieve the target.

He instructed for setting up of Aadhaar Enrollment centers at all 7 Tehsil offices of the district.

The meeting was informed that 8.76 lakh population of Srinagar has been provided Aadhaar cards till date.

While reviewing the progress under the Ayushman Bharat (AB) Sehat scheme, the DDC stressed upon the concerned to speed up the process to ensure all eligible citizens of the district are provided Golden cards at an earliest.

He was impressed upon the concerned to file a report about the registrations done on a daily basis.

It was given out that about 2 lakh Golden cards have been issued so far to the beneficiaries and process is going on to achieve the target.

With regard to the functioning of One Stop Centres and Mahila Shakti Kendra and implementation of Social Welfare schemes in the district the DDC asked the concerned to put in extra efforts for visible improvement on ground so that target group is benefitted from the welfare schemes of the Government.

He further asked them to undertake measures for containment of Covid-19 in their respective jurisdictions.

Rs 4030 Cr Provided To 88647 Beneficiaries: DC Srinagar

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A meeting of District Level Review Committee (DLRC) was held here today under the chairmanship of District Development Commissioner (DDC) Srinagar, Mohammed Aijaz Assad to review the progress achieved during 2020-21 under Annual District Credit Plan.

The meeting was informed that by December 2021, around Rs 4030 crore have been distributed among 88647 beneficiaries in the district by different financial institutions under priority and non-priority sectors.

Speaking on the occasion, the DDC stressed on enhancement in the overall credit flow of banks in the district which is must for financial impetus and improving income levels and thereby help in raising standard of living of people. Besides he impressed upon the banks operating in the district to improve their CD Ratio.

He called upon officers to work in unison with added vigour and zeal so that tangible results to take the Srinagar district as a role model for development are achieved.

He also advised the representatives of financial institutions and sponsoring agencies to come forward and help the urban poor of the capital for eradicating poverty, unemployment and reaching out to the poorest of the poor.

The DDC emphasized that all banks operating in the district should educate and sensitize the public about financial literacy particularly in the rural and semi urban belts of Srinagar about vari-



ous banking products and Government sponsored schemes.

While expressing his satisfaction over the RBI comments regarding achievements of targets, the DDC urged the concerned to further improve the performance particularly in private banks.

The meeting held threadbare deliberations on bank wise progress in lending to priority sector/ non priority sector under annual credit plan as of quarter ended December 2020. Besides achievements made under other Government sponsored schemes including JKREGP, NRLM, Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana and enrollment under Social Security Schemes.

The meeting was informed that credit disbursement of Rs 555.65 crore has been provided to 24714 beneficiaries under Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana, besides Rs 41.94 crore were disbursed among 9812 beneficiaries under Kissan Credit cards scheme.

Similarly, under Pradhan Mantri

DLSA Sgr Commemorates 'World Health Day'



SRINAGAR: The District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Srinagar, under the aegis of J&K, Legal Services Authority and under the guidance of Chairman DLSA/Principal District & Sessions Judge, Srinagar, Mohammad Akram Chowdhary observed the, 'World Health Day' at District Court Complex Mominabad here.

The World Health Day was organised with focus on the current year's theme, 'Building a Fairer & Healthier World'.

Besides Secretary DLSA, Srinagar, Noor Mohammad Mir,

Ld. Panel Lawyers and Advocate Sayed Mujtaba working with UNICEF were the speakers on the occasion.

Highlighting the importance of today's programme, Secretary DLSA said that a person can survive without excess money but cannot survive without good health.

He added that to stay healthy is not an option but a necessity to live a happy life. World Health Day aims at providing proper health care services to everyone. He said Health is the relationship between you and your body and 'He who has hope has everything'.

Concluding the programme Noor Mohammad said that health is a state of complete Physical, Mental and Social Well Being and not necessarily the absence of disease and infirmity.

DIAL-EMMA

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

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

RAILWAYS

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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

This Day in History

- 1848 - 1st battle at Gtoto: Sardinia-Piemonte beats Austrians
- 1848 - Battle at Xaquixaguana, Peru: Pedro de la Gasca beats Gonzalo Pizarro
- 1866 - Italy and Prussia ally against Austria-Hungary.
- 1898 - Battle of Atbara River, Anglo-Egyptian forces crush 6,000 Sudanese
- 1902 - Russia and China sign the Convention of Evacuation under which Russia agrees to evacuate Manchuria within 18 months
- 1902 - Demonstration organised by socialists in Belgium as people demand better education, living conditions, the right to strike and universal male suffrage result in a riot and some deaths
- 1904 - Great Britain and France establish their Entente Cordiale, a technical treaty settling long-standing disagreements over Morocco, Egypt, Africa, and the Pacific
- 1908 - H. H. Asquith succeeds Henry Campbell-Bannerman as British Prime Minister
- 1913 - Opening of China's 1st parliament takes place in Peking (now Beijing)
- 1914 - US & Colombia sign a treaty concerning Panama Canal Zone
- 1916 - Norway approves active & passive female suffrage
- 1920 - LONGA soccer team forms in Tilburg
- 1929 - Indian Independence Movement: At the Delhi Central Assembly, Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt handouts and bombs to court arrest.
- 1943 - U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt, in an attempt to check inflation, freezes wages and prices, prohibits workers from changing jobs unless the war effort would be aided thereby, and bars rate increases to common carriers and public utilities.
- 1946 - League of Nations assembles for last time.
- 1947 - Largest recorded sunspot (7,000) observed
- 1948 - Soen Nakagawa & Nyogen Senzaki (Zen teachers) meet in SF
- 1952 - US President Harry Truman seizes steel mills to avert a strike
- 1960 - Neth & Germany sign accord concerning war casualties
- 1960 - US Senate passes Civil Rights Bill with measures against discriminatory voting practices
- 1964 - Unmanned Gemini 1 launched
- 1965 - India & Pakistan forces engage in a border fight
- 1966 - OAO 1, 1st orbiting astronomical observatory, launched
- 1966 - Time publishes its "Is God Dead" Issue - its first issue without an image
- 1968 - Czechoslovakia Cernik government forms
- 1968 - New socialist constitution of East Germany takes effect
- 1974 - Discovery Island opens
- 1977 - Israeli premier Yitzhak Rabin resigns
- 1985 - Amdahl releases UTS/V, 1st mainframe Unix
- 1985 - India files suit against Union Carbide over Bhopal disaster
- 1990 - New Democracy wins the national election in Greece.
- 1991 - Major league umpires & baseball reach a 4-year agreement
- 1991 - Michael Landon announces he has inoperable cancer of the pancreas

From KO Archives

LEISURE A NO LONGER A PLEASURE FOR KASHMIR YOUTH

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The youth in Kashmir are today severely handicapped when it comes to spending leisure time in an enriching and meaningful way, a Kashmir Observer report has found out.

The older generation had a better time in its youth than today's younger lot, who despite the myriad diversions are disposal, feels anxious and impatient at what it describes as severely shrinking space for recreation.

Evidently television, internet cafes and snooker clubs are no match for the colourful fairs at Badamwari, the acrobatics of an Afsar khan at Edges or the antics of magicians in open grounds of which only memories exist in the minds of elders.

What the youth f today seem to be missing is the kind of active participation their [parents and grandparents had by being associated with dramatic clubs, literary societies or sports bodies.

The first ingredients of living satisfying life – the manner of spending leisure time- appears to be a gift that youth in Kashmir today have lost or never acquired in first place.

(Kashmir Observer, 08 April, 2005)

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NOTICE

I Ubaid Ayub S/o Mohammad Ayub DarR/o Sadrabal Srinagar J&K DOB 18-03-1993 want to Correct my Name displayed on my Passport
I want it to be Ubaid Ayub instead of Dar Ubaid Ayub as all my certificates contain my name as Ubaid Ayub .

B-KO

Spelling Correction In Passport

I, Sania Saeed, D/O Mohammad Syed Pandit, R/O. Uthoora, Pulwama, have applied for a fresh passport and want to make entries in it according to the matriculation certificate as there were certain spelling errs in my old passport, bearing No. N 7087753.
Name : Sania Saeed
D/O. Mohammad Syed Pandit (father)
D/O Hafeeza Akhter (mother)
General public is informed that if anybody is having objection, he may file it with Regional Passport Officer, MEA, Srinagar within seven days from the date of publication of this notice in local newspapers.
INFO Sania Saeed

Facebook: Hackers Scraped Data Of 533M Users In 2019 Leak



Agenceis

Facebook said on Tuesday that hackers "scraped" personal data of some half-billion users back in 2019 by taking advantage of a feature designed to help people easily find friends using contact lists.

A trove of information about more than 530 million Facebook users was shared over the weekend at a hacker forum, prompting the leading social network to explain what happened and call on people to be vigilant about privacy settings.

"It is important to understand that malicious actors obtained this data not through hacking our systems but by scraping it from our platform prior to September 2019," Facebook product management director Mike Clark said in a post.

"This is another example of the ongoing, adversarial relationship technology companies have with fraudsters who intentionally break platform policies to scrape internet services."

The data included phone numbers, birth dates, and email addresses, and some of the data appeared to be current, according to US media reports.

The stolen data did not include

passwords or financial data, according to Facebook. Scraping is a tactic that involves using automated software to gather up information shared publicly online.

"All 533,000,000 Facebook records were just leaked for free," Alon Gal, chief technology officer at the Hudson Rock cybercrime intelligence firm, said Saturday on Twitter. He denounced what he called the "absolute negligence" of Facebook.

"Bad actors will certainly use the information for social engineering, scamming, hacking and marketing," Gal said on Twitter.

Clark urged members of the social network to check their privacy settings to control what information can be seen publicly, and to tighten account security with two-factor authentication.

This is not the first-time leaks or use of data from the world's largest social network -- with nearly two billion users -- has embroiled Facebook in controversy.

In 2016, a scandal around Cambridge Analytica, a British consulting firm that used the personal data of millions of Facebook users to target political ads, cast a shadow over the social network and its handling of private information.

'We Failed The Test' Of COVID-19, Says Human Rights Champion



Agenceis

PARIS: Agnès Callamard is best known for her investigation into the killing of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, and has made a career uncovering extrajudicial killings.

The French human rights expert's focus on rights abuses is taking on new dimensions as she assumes leadership of Amnesty International and turns her attention to what she says is one of the world's most pressing issues -- vaccine equity to end the coronavirus pandemic, which has eroded freedoms globally.

Amnesty International released its annual report on Wednesday, arguing that governments have used the coronavirus pandemic as an excuse to clamp down on human rights, whether or not that was the original intent. The wide-ranging report took particular aim at governments in Myanmar and Russia, among others, but also critiqued the use of coronavirus-related police powers in places like Britain and the United States against protesters.

The only way to end the virus -- and the abuses that have ac-

companied it, primarily against the world's most vulnerable -- is to distribute vaccines globally and equitably, she told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

"What we found is that the victims of COVID, whether it was in the U.K., in France, in the U.S., in India, in the Middle East, in Brazil, those victims were primarily among the most disenfranchised and vulnerable groups," she said. "As a global community, as a national community, we failed the test that COVID-19 represented."

Callamard rarely hesitates to call out the powerful. In 2019, as a U.N. special rapporteur, she concluded there was "credible evidence" that Khashoggi's killing was state-sanctioned. She also investigated the U.S. drone strike that killed Iranian general Qasem Soleimani and concluded it was unlawful. Earlier this week, she said there was a real risk that Russia was subjecting opposition leader Alexei Navalny to "a slow death."

She said she will no longer lead her own investigations, as she has done for years for the U.N. -- but will continue to call out human rights violations as she sees

them. And the pandemic exposed plenty. Ending it, she said, will expose even more, especially among wealthy and powerful nations which have purchased more vaccines than they need.

"Not only do we buy everything, but on top of it, we stop others from being able to produce it. In the name of what? In the name of profit and in the name of greed," Callamard said, referring to the European Union and U.S. decision to block a proposal to relax intellectual property restrictions on patents related to coronavirus treatments and vaccines.

One of her proposals falls along the same lines as the Biden administration's call this week for a minimum global corporate income tax. In a foreword to Amnesty's report that she wrote before Monday's announcement by U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, Callamard said the global taxation system had produced more losers than winners.

"Global taxation is a way of re-balancing equality," she said. "It's a way of ensuring that it is not always those who have the least who are requested to give the most."

Leaders Of Russia And China Tighten Their Grips, Grow Closer

Agenceis

They're not leaders for life -- not technically, at least. But in political reality, the powerful tenures of China's Xi Jinping and, as of this week, Russia's Vladimir Putin are looking as if they will extend much deeper into the 21st century -- even as the two superpowers whose destinies they steer gather more clout with each passing year.

What's more, as they consolidate political control at home, sometimes with harsh measures, they're working together more substantively than ever in a growing challenge to the West and the world's other superpower, the United States, which elects its leader every four years.

This week, Putin signed a law allowing him to potentially hold onto power until 2036. The 68-year-old Russian president, who has been in power for more than two decades -- longer than any other Kremlin leader since Soviet dictator Josef Stalin -- pushed through a constitutional vote last year allowing him to run again in 2024 when his current six-year term ends. He has overseen a systematic crackdown on dissent.

In China, Xi, who came to power in 2012, has imposed even tighter controls on the already repressive political scene, emerging as one of his nation's most powerful lead-

ers in the seven decades of Communist Party rule that began with Mao Zedong's often-brutal regime.

Under Xi, the government has rounded up, imprisoned or silenced intellectuals, legal activists and other voices, cracked down on Hong Kong's opposition and used security forces to suppress calls for minority rights in Xinjiang, Tibet and Inner Mongolia.

Xi has sidelined rivals, locked up critics and tightened the party's control over information. An ongoing crackdown against corruption has won popular support while also keeping potential competitors in line.

His steady consolidation of power led to the removal of term limits on the Chinese presidency in 2018, demolishing a convention the party had established to prevent a repeat of the abuse produced by Mao's one-person rule.

Xi further telegraphed his intention to remain in power by breaking from tradition and not indicating a preferred successor.

One who appeared eager to take on the role, Sun Zhengcai, was brought down in 2017 and sentenced to life in prison on corruption charges.

And in Russia, Putin's most outspoken critic, Alexei Navalny, was arrested in January upon his return from Germany, where he spent five months recovering from

a nerve-agent poisoning that he blames on the Kremlin -- an accusation Russian authorities have denied. In February, Navalny was sentenced to 2½ years in prison.

In defying the West, Putin and Xi both have tapped nationalist feelings. Russia's 2014 annexation of Ukraine's Crimea propelled Putin's approval ratings to nearly 90 per cent before they slackened amid economic woes and unpopular pensions reforms.

But the impact of Putin's and Xi's enduring retention of power hardly ends at their respective nations' borders. It ripples outward into the geopolitical balance of power in countless ways.

As Moscow's relations with the West sank to post-Cold War lows amid accusations of election meddling and hacking attacks, Putin has increasingly sought to strengthen ties with China.

And while China so far has avoided a showdown with the West like Russia's, it is coming under growing pressure from Washington and its allies over Beijing's human rights record in Xinjiang, Hong Kong and the South China Sea.

U.S. President Joe Biden has taken an increasingly tough line with both leaders, recently describing Putin as a "killer" and having his top national security aides excoriate China for a litany of issues.

Pak FM Qureshi, Russia's Lavrov Review Cooperation In Defence, Counter-Terrorism

Agenceis

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi and his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov on Wednesday held wide-ranging talks here during which they reviewed their bilateral cooperation in the field of energy, security, including counter-terrorism and defence.

Lavrov, the first Russian foreign minister to visit Pakistan since 2012, was welcomed by Qureshi at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Lavrov planted a sapling in the premises of the ministry and then went inside the building for a joint photo session, followed by the delegation-level talks.

Pleased to welcome Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to the Foreign Office today for excellent

situation in Jammu and Kashmir.

"We are confident that this visit will give further momentum to our deepening friendship and we remain committed to expanding our relations in diverse areas through further high-level contacts," Qureshi said on Twitter.

Officials said that the two foreign ministers held in-depth discussions on various topics of bilateral interest with the aim to expand the multi-faceted ties.

During the visit, the Russian foreign minister will also call on Prime Minister Imran Khan and have interaction with other dignitaries. He is also expected to meet Pakistan Army chief Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa.

Qureshi said ahead of Lavrov's arrival that there was a lot of scope for economic cooperation.



meetings. Building multi-dimensional relations with Russia is a key priority for Pakistan and we believe a strong relationship contributes to regional stability and global security, Qureshi said in a tweet.

Divulging details about his talks, Qureshi said: "We considered ideas to further promote #EconomicDiplomacy and discussed progress in the area of energy cooperation including the Pakistan-Stream Gas Pipeline project".

"We reviewed our cooperation in the field of security including counter-terrorism and defence, he said.

The Pakistani Foreign Minister said that they agreed on the need to promote greater people-to-people contact through greater collaboration across a diversity of fields, including education.

"We will also be enhancing our cooperation within the framework of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation," Qureshi said.

Pakistan and Russia share convergent positions on several issues on multilateral agenda including peace and stability in Afghanistan, he said.

Qureshi also raked up the Kashmir issue in his talks with the visiting Russian Foreign Minister.

The Pakistani Foreign Minister said that he shared with Lavrov the perspective on larger questions of peace and security in South Asia, and the human right

He said that Russia was playing a role in the Afghan peace process.

He later on tweeted that the Russian Foreign Minister's visit is in line with the commitment of Islamabad and Moscow to further strengthen their bilateral ties and deepening the growing bonds of cooperation and collaboration.

Separately, the Russian Foreign Ministry, in an official statement on Lavrov's visit to Islamabad, said that Pakistan is an important foreign policy partner of Russia and fruitful interaction is maintained at international organisations, primarily in the UN and its specialised agencies.

The cooperation between Moscow and Islamabad is based on the coincidence or similarity of positions on most of the problems of the world community, including issues of strategic stability and countering terrorism, according to the statement.

The relations have come a long way from the Cold War hostility to current level cooperation and there is hope to further expand it in coming years. Lavrov arrived here on Tuesday on a two-day official visit with the objective to deepen cooperation in different fields. The Russian foreign minister arrived in Islamabad after concluding his visit to India.

He was received by Qureshi at the airport where the two leaders held a brief chat.

In Its Latest Report, North Korea Tells WHO It's Still Coronavirus-Free

Agenceis

SEOUL: Isolated North Korea has continued to claim a perfect record in keeping out the coronavirus in its latest report to the World Health Organization.

At the beginning of the pandemic more than a year ago, North Korea described its efforts to keep out the virus as a "matter of national existence." It shut its borders, banned tourists and jetted out diplomats. It still severely limits cross-border traffic and has quarantined tens of thousands of people who have shown symptoms.

But it still says it has found no case of COVID-19, a widely doubt-

ed claim given its poor health infrastructure and a porous border with China, its economic lifeline.

In an email to The Associated Press on Wednesday, Edwin Salvador, WHO's representative to North Korea, said the North has reported it tested 23,121 people for the coronavirus from the beginning of the pandemic to April 1 and that all results were negative. Salvador said the North said 732 people were tested between March 26 and April 1.

WHO officials say the North is no longer providing the U.N. agency with the number of people it quarantines with suspected symptoms.

NEWSMAKERS

Backlash After Imran Links Rape To How Women Dress

Agenceis

Pakistan rights campaigners have accused Prime Minister Imran Khan of "baffling ignorance" after the former cricketer blamed how women dress for a rise in rape cases.

In a weekend interview on live television, Oxford-educated Khan said an increase in rapes indicated the "consequences in any society where vulgarity is on the rise."

"The incidents of rape of women... (have) actually very rapidly increased in society," he said.

He advised women to cover up to prevent temptation.

"This entire concept of purdah is to avoid temptation, not everyone has the willpower to avoid it," he said, using a term that can refer to modest dress or the segregation of the sexes.

Hundreds have signed a statement circulating online on Wednesday



calling Khan's comments "factually incorrect, insensitive and dangerous." "Fault rests solely with the rapist and the system that enables the rapist, including a culture fostered by statements such as those made by (Khan)," the statement said.

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, an independent rights watchdog, said on Tuesday it was

"appalled" by the comments.

"Not only does this betray a baffling ignorance of where, why, and how rape occurs, but it also lays the blame on rape survivors, who, as the government must know, can range from young children to victims of honour crimes," it said.

Pakistan is a deeply conservative country where victims of sexual

abuse are often viewed with suspicion and criminal complaints are rarely seriously investigated.

Much of the country lives under an "honour" code where women who bring "shame" to the family can be subjected to violence or murder.

It regularly ranks among the worst places in the world for gender equality.

Nationwide protests erupted last year when a police chief admonished a gang-rape victim for driving at night without a male companion.

The Franco-Pakistani mother was assaulted in front of her children on the side of a motorway after her car ran out of fuel.

Last year, Khan was also criticized after another television appearance where he failed to challenge a Muslim cleric's insistence that coronavirus had been unleashed because of the wrongdoings of women.

Former Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd mistaken as Uber driver

Agenceis

CANBERRA: Former Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd briefly stepped into a new role as an Uber driver in Queensland state, giving a lift to a group of "tipsy" diners who mistakenly piled into his car.

"Guilty as charged," Rudd tweeted in response to a media report on the incident on Wednesday.

"Four young Melburnians getting drenched in a Queensland subtropical downpour at Noosa last night with no Uber in sight... So what's a man to do?" he said in the tweet. The former Prime Minister's daughter Jessica Rudd had tweeted the series of events as it happened, reports dpa news agency.

"Dad just dropped us off at a



restaurant in Noosa then went to find a park because it's raining," she wrote.

"Then I thought I saw some people pile into his car, told myself it wasn't, must be a similar looking Uber. It wasn't. It was Dad's car." She said the "lovely, but tipsy crew had been at the restaurant since lunch".

When the former leader told them he wasn't an Uber they offered to pay him to drive them to a nearby street anyway.

His daughter said it took the group half the ride to realise their driver was the 26th Prime Minister of Australia.

Rudd was the leader of the Labor Party, serving as Australia's Prime Minister between 2007-2010 and again from June-September in 2013.

Covid Spike: Govt Conveniently Overlooking Unmanaged Rush At Public Places, Says NC

‘Govt’s Approach To Fresh Covid Wave Flawed, Inconclusive’

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference on Wednesday rued the government for failing to take quick and decisive steps to check the emerging second peak of COVID-19, saying the selective approach in terms of closing schools alone won't help stop the viral sprawl.

In a statement the party expressed concern over the increased viral cash load and new infections. "As COVID cases surge to fearsome levels across the country, the positive rates in Jammu and Kashmir are also picking up exponentially. Setting off a shutdown of the public, and private school system is what the government has come up with, while as government functions continue unabated," party spokesperson Imran Nabi Dar said.

He said this is not a uniform answer to the emerging situation. "It is not just the gathering in schools children which is stocking community transmission of the coronavirus; the unmanaged rush at public places including parks and gardens in Kashmir is also a point of concern which the incumbent administration has conveniently overlooked. It goes without saying that the approach is flawed and inconclusive.

"Closing schools only first defies epidemiological explanation. Practically all social activities during an outbreak of this magnitude carry risk, and determining which to cut back on requires proper calculation of risk.

"The entire response to the emerging situation ought to be taken by taking all the concerned departments like health,

SMC, traders, school representatives on board. The emerging situation demands a more prompt and well-thought response, not like one which the administration had up its sleeves during the previous year."

He said the entire exercise had only cost us our economy and education of our younger ones. However such a strategy is missing on ground, we only get to hear imprudent dictats on a daily basis.

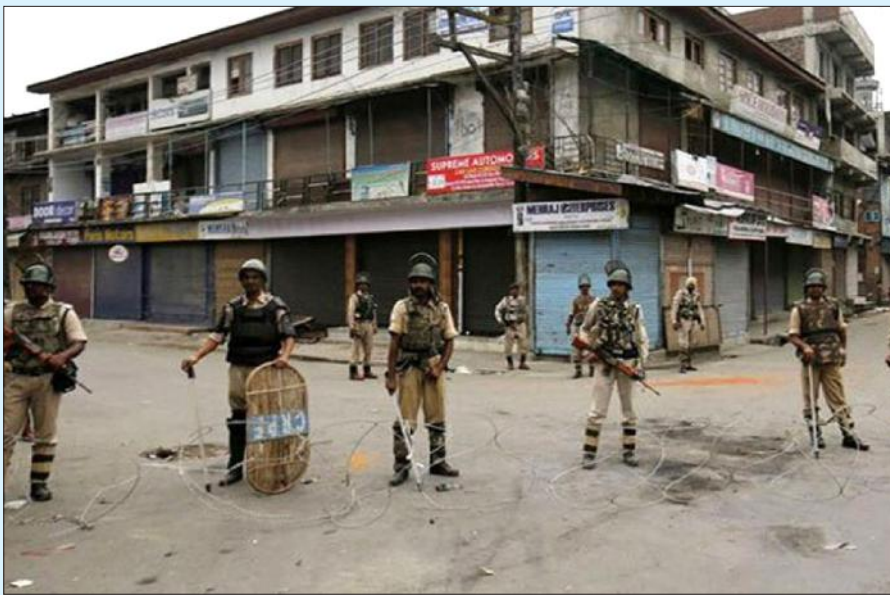
Imran further said the selective approach of the government won't help curb the spread, the need of the hour he said is to have a well planned and multi pronged strategy to fight the emerging peak which he said is imminent in wake of the indifference of the administration and rate of new infections.

"The way public rush was seen allowed at Badamwari, and the other day at tulip garden speaks volumes about the casual attitude of the administration towards the emerging situation.

"We cannot afford to have blanket lock down at this juncture, given the fact the people are yet to make good of the losses incurred by the rampage created by COVID-19 last year.

He said the need of the hour calls for efforts to improve "test, track, and treatment" policy properly, and have a plan in place to manage rush at public places, including hospitals, mosques, schools, roads.

"The entire matter requires the joining heads by the people who have their hands at the helm of power in Jammu and Kashmir. I hope the administration will discontinue the selective approach and come up with a more intelligent approach," he said.



Amnesty Slams Govt Of India Over ‘Clampdown On Civil Liberties In Kashmir’

SRINAGAR: Global human rights watchdog Amnesty International has slammed the government of India over the alleged clampdown on civil liberties in Kashmir, its handling of the anti-CAA protests, farmers' protests, Delhi riots besides the "punitive" lockdown in response to the outbreak of coronavirus pandemic.

In the hard-hitting report released Wednesday, Amnesty alleged that a year after the government revoked the special status of Jammu and Kashmir and split the state into two union territories, the "clampdown" on civil liberties and restrictions on communications services continued. Political leaders such

as Farooq Abdullah, Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti, who were administratively detained in 2019, were released in 2020. However, the union government continued to silence those who demanded accountability and imposed a harsh media blackout, said the report titled "The State of the World's Human Rights 2020/2021" that examines the human rights situation in 149 countries.

At least 18 journalists in Kashmir were physically attacked by police or summoned to police stations. Dissent was further suppressed when a new media policy was introduced by the Jammu and Kashmir government to create "a sustained narrative on the

functioning of the government in media" by checking "anti-national activities", the report said.

On 20 October, the Jammu and Kashmir government closed the office of the Kashmir Times, without prior notice, after its editor, Anuradha Bhasin, had challenged the communications blockade in the Supreme Court. The NIA also raided the offices and residences of civil society activists including Khurram Parvez and three of his associates, and Parveena Ahanter, who had reported extensively on human rights abuses in Kashmir. The NIA alleged that the activists had raised funds for "carrying out secessionist and separatist activities" in Jammu and Kashmir.

Family Of CRPF Personnel Abducted By Naxals Stage Protest Demanding His Release

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Relatives of a Co-BRA commando held hostage by Naxals after a recent gun battle with security forces in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district blocked the Jammu-Poonch highway on Wednesday, demanding an assurance from the government for his safe release.

"He is the responsibility of the government, which should take immediate action to ensure his safe return to us. We want the government to inform us about the action it is taking for his release," Meenu, wife of abducted jawan Rakeshwar Singh Minhas, said in a fervent appeal from the protest site.

Thirty-one jawans were injured while CoBRA commando Minhas, belonging to its 210th battalion, went missing after the gunfight that took place along the Bijapur-Sukma border on Saturday and was stated to have been taken hostage.

Twenty-two personnel from various security forces like the Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) of the Central Reserve Police Force, its Bastariya battalion and those from the District Reserve Guard and STF of the Chattisgarh Police were killed in the

ambush.

In Jammu, dozens of relatives and neighbours of Minhas took to the streets and blocked the main road outside his Burnai residence on Wednesday, raising slogans of "Bring back our hero", "Long live India" and "Shoot the traitors of the nation".

Officials said a police party was at the scene trying to persuade them to allow normal movement of traffic, which had to be diverted to another route.

A purported statement released by the Maoists on Tuesday claimed that they have abducted a jawan during the gun battle in Bijapur and sought nomination of some mediators for his release.

Asked about the statement, Meenu questioned the central government's "silence" on the issue.

"If a jawan is late to report to duty by just one day after leave, action is taken against him, but here he is missing since Saturday and nobody is bothered," she said.

She added that not a word had been received from the government or the CRPF, and whatever information they had was through the media.

Demanding an assurance from the government for her husband's safe release, Meenu

said, "We are concerned about his safety. The Naxals made a claim and also came out with a written statement, and now the government should look for a mediator to bring him back."

"We do not have any source or approach to reach out to the Naxals. We can only make a request for his release," she said, as her five-year-old daughter, Shragvi, stood dumb-stuck nearby.

The jawan's younger brother, Sumit, also appealed to the government to act fast.

"We request the government not to waste any time and bring him back. He is not on any foreign land like (Wing Commander) Abhinandan Varthaman, who returned home from Pakistan within 60 hours," he added.

National president of NSUI, the student wing of the Indian National Congress, Neeraj Kundan visited the family members along with J&K Congress vice-president and former minister Raman Bhalla on Monday, and facilitated a telephonic conversation between them and Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel.

"I want to talk to my son. Please bring him back," Minhas's mother Kunti Devi, a CRPF jawan's widow, had then told Baghel.

Body Of Newborn Found Floating In Ganderbal Power Canal

Observer News Service

GANDERBAL: The Jammu Kashmir Police on Wednesday recovered a body of a newborn baby near Power Canal Dam at Kullian area of Gund In Central Kashmir's Ganderbal district.

A Police official said that panic gripped the area when the employees of Power Development Corporation who were on duty at Kullian Ganderbal spotted the body of a newborn baby floating in the nearby power canal.

"The employees immediately informed the police, who rushed to the spot and the body was taken away," the official said. He said that the body has been brought to SDH Kangan for further medical formalities.

The police have registered a case and initiated an investigation to ascertain the cause of the death.

Independent Councillor Elected Chairman Municipal Committee Baramulla

Observer News Service

BARAMULLA: Independent Councillor Tauseef Raina was Wednesday elected as chairman of the Municipal Council Baramulla (MCB) after he defeated his opponent by a margin of four votes.

An official said that Raina secured a total of 11 votes while his opponent Mudasir Tantray polled only seven votes.

Out of 18 councillors 11 voted in favour of Raina, electing him as chairman municipal council Baramulla. On the occasion, Raina lashed out at Apni Party, saying they used money and all other resources to retain power but failed—(KNO)

Woman, Daughter Charred To Death In Kishtwar

Observer News Service

JAMMU: A woman and her daughter were charred to death in a fire at their residence in Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar district in the early hours of Wednesday, police said.

Posha Devi (50) and Neetu Bala (25) were trapped inside their kutcha house in Manzgam-Tagood village in Chhatroo area when the fire broke out around 1 am, a police official said.

The house was completely gutted, he said, adding that the two women were sleeping and could not escape along with other family members, who made frantic efforts to save them.

Their charred bodies were recovered by rescue teams comprising police, fire and emergency services personnel, the official said, adding that the cause of fire was accidental. (PTI)

Four Drug Peddlers Arrested In Baramulla

Observer News Service

Baramulla: Jammu and Kashmir Police in Baramulla on Wednesday apprehended four persons along with heroine, charas and other substances. A police spokesperson said that on Wednesday during naka checking at Tilgam Frestahar crossing Police Station Kreeer apprehended Issar Ahmad Magray son of Abdul Khaliq Magray, a resident of Tilgam and 105 grams of charas like substance was recovered from his possession. The spokesperson said that an FIR under NDPS Act has been registered and investigation taken up.

He said in a similar incident, Police Station Boniyar apprehended two persons near Sangam Bridge, Boniyar with a packet containing Heroin like substance on 06-04-2021. The apprehended persons were identified as Mohamad Shafi Paray son of Abdul Samad Paray resident of Balkote Uri and Mukhtar Ahmad Paray son of Abdul Majid Paray resident of Jabla Uri at present Motalh Uri", he said and added on their disclosure, another person namely Matwali Ahmad son of Sardar Mohammad resident of Hthlanga Uri was apprehended and similar type of packet of Heroin like substance was recovered from his possession also.

Fresh Covid-19 Wave Could Be Lethal, Warns DAK

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: With Kashmir valley facing second wave of Covid-19, Doctors Association Kashmir (DAK) on Wednesday warned that the new wave could be worse than the first.

"Second waves of pandemics have been harsher," said DAK President Dr Nisar ul Hassan.

"We have witnessed in the past how second wave of 1918 Spanish flu pandemic was deadlier than the first one. The first wave occurred in the spring which was relatively mild. A far deadlier second wave erupted in the fall months which infected 500 million and killed 50 million people globally. Covid-19 is following the same suit."

He said the second waves of coronavirus in United States and Europe were uniformly worse than the first. "Kashmir is currently under the grip of a second wave and the cases are rising and hospitalisations too, he said. "And if countermeasures are not put in place, we could end up having a situation that could be worse than what we saw last year."

This is because, he said, a vast majority of people in the valley are still susceptible to the virus and the virus will go where it is

given room to run, and will find people who are vulnerable to infection.

"People have got pandemic fatigue. They are tired of restrictions, wearing masks, being away from family and friends, and increasingly fed up with the new normal routines. They have thrown caution to the wind," he said.

He said many people don't wear masks and don't care for social distancing. "This behavior would facilitate transmission of the virus that could reignite an outbreak," said Dr Nisar.

Another factor, he said, that could make the new wave worse is the emergence of new variants. "Some of the variants can make the virus more infectious, deadly, or even resistant to vaccines and treatment," he said.

"We should not take much comfort from the fact that so far in the second wave, the incidents of severe cases and deaths are considerably lower than the first spike. The second wave is infecting young people in larger proportion than the first one. And, after a couple of weeks, many of them are likely to infect the elder members of their family and when that happens, serious illnesses and deaths will go up," said Dr Nisar.

TAAK Demands Administrative Quarantine Centres, Mandatory RT-PCR For Tourists

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Travel Agents Association of Kashmir (TAAK) Wednesday impressed upon the LG Administration to designate Administrative quarantine centres for tourists testing positive and make RT-PCR test mandatory for all the tourists entering valley.

In a statement, President TAAK, Farooq Kuthoo opined that due to rising number of Covid cases and the huge tourist influx, it's important to follow this practice to stop the further spread of virus and send a goodwill message to tourists intending to travel to valley.

"Tourists arriving with COVID-19 negative reports should be required to give their sample for RT-PCR testing on arrival at the airport," he said.

The present system of RAT at Srinagar airport allows the tourist to check in at the hotels which puts the ground handlers at huge risk.

"Covid testing on arrival is worrying us since we remain in direct contact with the positive cases during their stay in Kashmir."

He said the RAT reports of travellers are delayed at the air-

port. By the time, reports are dispatched; ground handlers have already come in contact with the visitors. "We want negative RTPCR reports to be produced to every visitor on his or her arrival at the airport," said President Travel Agents Association of Kashmir Farooq Ahmad Kuthoo.

Kuthoo said the airport administration should not allow tourists to leave the premises till their reports are available. "This is the only way to prevent the spread of Covid-19," he said.

President TAAK said several bookings are getting canceled due to the surge in Covid cases. The situation will be worse if the government doesn't handle it well by making negative RTPCR reports mandatory for every traveler.

"Tourists testing positive are left high and dry due to lack of proper guidelines in place which not only puts them at huge inconvenience but it sends a wrong message across country.

"If the government is serious in promoting safe Tourism, they must have the proper guidelines like RT PCR and administrative quarantine centres in place.

Surviving 22 Years In Kashmir Released

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A book 'Surviving 22 years in Kashmir' by Jibran Ahmed was released on April 4 2021, Sunday at Jhelum Cafe Fine Dine, Srinagar.

The book has been published by FreshCode Books, a self-publishing house in the valley. The book was released at a function which was attended by several dignitaries and literati of the valley.

Among the guests were Huzaifa Pandit – author and academic, Unisa Sania, author and poet, and Yasmeen Murawat Khan, Station Head Radio DPS Srinagar.

Congratulating the author, Huzaifa Pandit spoke of the "book as a counter to domicile and memoricide, which will serve as a counter to privileged and biased histories".

Unisa Sania spoke about the "need and responsibility of representation whose onus lies on the intellectuals and young authors of the valley."

Yasmeen Murawat spoke about the "perils of censorship and the need to counter it by telling our stories to the world."

The author, Jibran Ahmed too spoke about his journey from feeling silenced by the multiple lockdowns in the valley to expressing himself through a chronicle of lived experiences.

NEWS MAKERS

LG Directs Strict Action Against Officials Failing To Solve Public Grievances

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday advocated strict action against officials failing to solve public grievances, an official spokesperson said.

Sinha participated in "block diwas" in Hiranagar in Kathua district "Block Diwas", a grass-roots level democratic outreach initiative organised by the administration, as part of efforts to promote good governance.

Sinha asked the officers to be well versed with all the welfare schemes and put in their best efforts to mitigate the problems of people, and be sensitive to their issues.

"Strict action shall be taken against officials not attending



to public grievances," he asserted.

The Lt Governor said the administration is putting untiring efforts to remove all difficulties and making services and welfare schemes easily accessible to citizens.

"Government is working on the mission mode to ensure availability of basic necessities viz. roads, drinking water and electricity, to every citizen of the UT, besides working earnestly towards bringing substantial industrial investment,

promotion of tourism and creating employment avenues for youth," he said.

"We are committed to ensure 100 per cent saturation of all farmers' welfare, social security and beneficiary oriented schemes so that the benefits of

such schemes reach to every eligible beneficiary," he said.

He said providing better livelihood to farmers by tapping the vast potential of the agriculture and horticulture sector in Jammu and Kashmir is the focused area of the government.

"The government is sensitive towards the issues of farmers and population living in border areas. Their issues would be resolved on priority," he said.

He said youngsters would be given every possible assistance and handholding to become successful entrepreneurs. The Lt Governor said that a number of initiatives have been launched and many others are in the pipeline for the overall development in every village and block of the UT.

KASHMIR OBSERVER

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K O V I E W

Paused detente

Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has said that India and Pakistan cannot afford to engage in an all-out war, as both countries are nuclear armed. He reiterated that “all issues could be resolved through dialogue” and called on New Delhi to create “a conducive environment”.

Earlier, Pakistan deferred a decision made by the country’s top economic decision-making body to allow imports of cotton and sugar from India until it reviewed August 5, 2019 decision to revoke the special status of Kashmir. Over the last one and a half month, the two countries have witnessed some positive movement in their relations. Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan also wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi saying that durable peace and stability in South Asia was contingent upon resolving all outstanding issues between the two countries, “in particular the issue of Jammu and Kashmir”. The letter was a response to the PM Modi’s greetings to Khan on Pakistan Day.

After the decision to put on hold the trade, the prospect for further normalization of the relationship looks moot. It depends on what Pakistan wants New Delhi to do by way of creating “an enabling environment” and what is it that New Delhi wants in return. Significantly, India-Pakistan thaw is taking place amid shifting geo-politics of the region. Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov who was in India is now in Pakistan for a two day visit for delegation-level talks on a number of important issues from enhancing bilateral cooperation to the Afghan peace process. In a tweet, Qureshi said that “building multi-dimensional relations with Russia is a key priority for Pakistan”. Lavrov will also hold meetings with the country’s top political and military leadership, including Prime Minister Khan and Chief of the Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa. This is the first visit by a Russian foreign minister to Pakistan since 2012. According to Qureshi, the two leaders also discussed “worsening human rights situation” in Kashmir.

These are very significant developments and reflect the changing geo-politics in South Asia. The war in Afghanistan is certainly the top priority for the neighbouring countries including the US. The US, as the president Joe Biden has also re-affirmed, is on its way out of Afganistan. This is likely to pave way for Taliban to regain power in Kabul, a development of profound import for the region. India-Pakistan detente assumes some significance in this context. A normal relationship between the neighbours would go a long way to usher in the regional peace.

OTHER OPINON

On India-Pakistan dialogue process

After a month of moves and messages that indicated a détente, events last week appear to have slammed the brakes on the India-Pakistan dialogue process. Mr. Qureshi led a charge of Cabinet Ministers who opposed a move by Pakistan’s Economic Coordination Committee to reopen imports of Indian cotton and sugar, arguing that it would violate Pakistan’s commitments on Kashmir. Subsequently, Mr. Khan announced he was dropping the import proposal he had made in his capacity as Commerce Minister, and that ties with India would not be normalised unless the Modi government revoked its steps of August 2019, on Jammu and Kashmir and Article 370. New Delhi, which has chosen not to comment on the events of the past month, and has not denied reports that claimed India-Pakistan moves were part of a back-channel dialogue facilitated by other countries, has also made no comment on Mr. Khan’s U-turn.

While such swings have been common in the India-Pakistan engagement, the present scenario poses questions. If talks are indeed under way behind the scenes, it is unclear why Pakistan’s import decision was not better coordinated before being publicly announced. The move followed a speech by Pakistan’s Gen. Bajwa where he stressed the need for geo-economics, trade and connectivity to be prioritised for regional prosperity. So, if it is not the all-powerful Army Chief or the ‘Pakistani establishment’ that is playing the “spoiler”, the Khan government must identify who it is. It is significant that New Delhi has chosen not to press its advantage over the embarrassing confusion in Pakistan’s stand, or react to its unworkable demand on Article 370, which has drawn India’s sharp comments in the past. This might indicate that the dialogue that has reportedly been on for months has been paused and much will depend on whether any other outlooked steps, including the restoration of High Commissioners in each other’s capitals and LoC trade that was suspended for security reasons in 2019, or commitments from Pakistan on cross-border terrorism, are announced next. If the nascent re-engagement is to have any chance, there must also be more clarity on what the two governments have decided to embark upon and hope to achieve from it.

The Hindu



Blow The Whistle, Milord: On Electoral Bonds

VAIDUSHYA PARTH

“The Electoral Bond, therefore, is a mellowed and fitting way to ensure that all kinds of quid-pro-quo orchestration are made by the ruling party with all kinds of body without any public scrutiny

The Supreme Court, after a short hearing, refused to stay the sale of electoral bonds on March 26, ahead of the Assembly elections in some crucial parts of India. For nearly two and a half years, electoral bonds have been the major source of political party funding through the corporate lobbies in India. Behind the electoral bond scheme underlies the issue of corruption and subversion of democracy through illicit funding of political parties and opaqueness in the accounts of all political parties which eventually jeopardizes the very edifice upon which the Indian democratic set-up rests.

An electoral bond, like a promissory note, is a bearer instrument payable to the bearer on demand. It can be used by individuals and corporations incorporated in India to make donations to political parties. The details of donations made to the political parties are not reported or recorded. This is the creation of an obscure funding system.

The structure of corporate funding has been made equally secretive by removing the requirement of disclosure of the names of political parties to whom funding have been made. To all intents and purposes, neither the contributor nor the recipient of the fund is supposed to reveal the identity of the other.

The inevitable consequences and cumulative effect of the aforementioned provisions is that any legal person, plus a company owned by a foreign corporation can finance a political party in India to a limitless range unaccompanied by either the name of the donor entity or the donee political party being disclosed to anyone in the public sphere. The Electoral Bond, therefore, is a mellowed and fitting way to ensure that all kinds of quid-pro-quo orchestration are made by the ruling party with all kinds of body without any public scrutiny.

The constitutional challenge to the Electoral Bonds is on the deck that it takes no notice and makes light of the “right to know” in parliamentary democratic set-up of the polity recognized under Article 19(1)(a) of the

Constitution, is arbitrary and thus violative of Article 14 of the Constitution and has been passed by perpetrating ‘a fraud on the constitution’ by passing it as a money bill, even though it does not qualify as a Money Bill under Article 110 of the Constitution.

In defending the electoral bonds scheme, the government has argued that electoral bonds reduce the amount of ‘black’ money in elections, as contributions are routed through the State Bank of India which performs ‘Know-Your-Customer’ checks on contributors.

The government’s defence, however, falls short of the constitutional test of proportionality.

corporate funding to political parties will only result into corporate interests taking precedence over the rights of the people in the policy considerations of the State, leaving citizens in the lurch.

It is established that the suitability prong of the proportionality standard requires at least prima facie evidence of a rational connection between the measure undertaken and the legitimate State goal. It is, however, clear that even under a deferential approach, this rational connection has not been made out on the record. The government’s defence of the electoral bonds is the replica of a general phrase – ‘that of a doctor who sees a patient of high fever and says the only way to bring

“It is established that the suitability prong of the proportionality standard requires at least prima facie evidence of a rational connection between the measure undertaken and the legitimate State goal

Proportionality consists of four enquiries. First, is the State pursuing a legitimate aim? Second, is there a rational nexus between that aim and the infringing act? Third, can another, less restrictive, measure be used to achieve the State’s aim or purpose? Finally, is the infringement of the right too great in comparison to the public purpose?

Among the four-pronged proportionality test, the government’s defence of electoral bonds particularly fails the second-prong i.e., the rational nexus between the aim and action taken to achieve that aim. The only official reason given by the government in support of the electoral bonds is the elimination of black money. But what is the rational nexus between electoral bonds and curbing of black money? They have shown none.

The introduction of Electoral Bond does not bear a rational relationship to curbing “black money”, as the confluence of uncapped

down the fever is to kill the patient’.

In any constitutional democracy, every decision of any constitutional functionary must pass through the touchstone of the Constitution, and the body to adjudicate that is the judiciary. By adopting the way of Money Bill, the government already side-lined the role of Parliament to have a check upon its work. To make the situation worse, the Supreme Court has also given up its fundamental role of ‘sentinel on the qui vive’, and on several occasions it has only tried to maintain the status quo.

Views expressed in the article are the author’s own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer

The author is reading law at the School of Law, Narsee Monjee Institute Of Management Studies (NMIMS); he regularly writes on Indian Constitutional law and Economics



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

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Online RTI Portals

I went through an article, “Information under RTI through an online mode” by Raja Muzaffar Bhat (Kashmir Observer 7/4/2021). I have myself been trying my best to get information through digital mode but there is not a single Govt department which receives or provides information digitally. Only recently I sent an RTI application to District Panchayat Officer (DPO) Budgam through email and attached my PHH Ration card

with it as I am exempted from paying Rs 10 application fees. The only thing I did was called the officer and updated her about my emailed RTI. The application was immediately transferred to the Block Development Office Nagam who provided me information within 10 days only. The information about swachh bharat mission is although incomplete but I appreciate the efforts of DPO Budgam. Some time back the Forest Department also sent me a re-

ply by email

If the Govt cannot create online RTI portals at least applicants can send their RTI applications through email. Let all the offices open a separate RTI account where Rs 10 application fees can be transferred through digital mode as is done during online transactions. The PHH or BPL applicants can attach a copy of the ration card with the email. The ration card can be in their name or in the name

of parents. Govt officers actually want to deny the information to the public. They don’t want to be questioned. They are public servants only on papers but exhibit bossism. It is otherwise not a big deal to receive or provide information digitally using basic techniques like email.

Mushtaq Ahmad Lone
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India, New Covid Variant and Response

PRAFULLA SHRIYAN

GIRIDHARA R BABU

To combat the consequences of mutations in India, its pandemic response will have to incorporate several measures. Genomic surveillance will have to be proactive and coincide with the epidemiological investigation of the cluster of cases for early identification and swift action

After genome sequencing of over 10,000 COVID-19 cases in India, researchers have discovered a new variant with two new mutations which may be better at evading the immune system.

In 15-20% of samples from the Indian state of Maharashtra (the state accounting for 62% of cases in the country) a new, double mutation in key areas of the virus has been detected. These are now known as the E484Q and L452R mutations.

What makes the variant different?

Both these mutations are concerning because they are located in a key portion of the virus – the spike protein – that it uses to penetrate human cells. Spike proteins attach via a “receptor binding domain”, meaning the virus can attach to receptors in our cells.

These new mutations include changes to the spike protein that make it a “better fit” for human cells. This means the virus can gain entry more easily and multiply faster. Given what we have seen with other similar mutations, it might also make it harder for our immune system to recognise the virus due to its slightly different shape. This means our immune system may not be able to recognise the virus as something it has to produce antibodies against.

The emergence of these new variants has only been possible because of the continued viral replication in areas with high circulation.

Though the Indian government has said the data on the variants circulating in India (including this new Indian variant and others including the UK strain) are not sufficient to link them to the rapid increase in the number of cases in the country, we think it's the most likely explanation. The country had managed to bring down the rate in February, but a sudden increase in the number of reported cases is now being reported.

Implications

The implications of these developments are greatly concerning – not just for India, but for the rest of the world. Mutations can result in 20% more in-hospital deaths, as we witnessed during the second wave in South Africa. This is because some mutant variants have the ability to spread faster, resulting in sudden surges and, therefore, an overburdened health system.

But there's hope. Places around the world with higher vaccination coverage such as the UK and Israel are witnessing a steady decrease in cases.



Most of the currently approved vaccines around the world have been found to evoke an immune response to some extent against multiple variants. But no trials have yet been undertaken on the effectiveness of vaccines against these new Indian mutations.

To make it difficult for the mutant strains to develop vaccine resistance, we have to ensure wider and faster vaccine coverage across the world.

What has to happen now?

Apart from vaccine manufacturers' efforts to update the composition of vaccines to better deal with new strains, it is important to contain transmission across the world. Countries can use the World Health Organisation's SARS-CoV-2 Risk Moni-

toring and Evaluation Framework to help identify, monitor and assess variants of concern, swiftly.

To establish a direct link between a variant and a steep rise in cases in a short time, it is important to use genomic sequencing to link clusters together. But unless contact tracing is done meticulously, it isn't easy to do so.

It is also important to understand the mechanisms involved in the infectiousness and virulence of the newer variants. For this, lab models are needed to mimic spread and virulence mechanisms efficiently.

To combat the consequences of mutations in India, its pandemic response will have to incorporate several measures. Genomic surveillance will have to be proactive and coincide

with the epidemiological investigation of the cluster of cases for early identification and swift action.

As some variants can escape naturally induced immunity, vaccine manufacturers in India will need to develop better vaccines to cover these new variants. Ongoing surveillance and containment measures need to be strengthened to prevent the emergence of new variants by minimising viral replication.

And finally, swift and rapid vaccine coverage is not only necessary but essential for ensuring any modest levels of success in tackling this pandemic.

*By arrangements with
The Conversation*

Learning to talk in English

Indians are very polite and show deference to politicians

MAHMOOD SABERI

It did not matter that I am a journalist or whether my English is “perfect”, I had to give the language test to qualify as a registered immigration consultant.

“You may be a reporter with the BBC or had done your Master's in the English language, you still have to give the IELTS exam,” said an executive on a YouTube video explaining about the course.

“It is a moneymaking con,” said my wife, sounding like one of the characters in a TV serial we would watch in Saudi Arabia.

I remember eagerly waiting for the serial to start after breaking the daylong fast during Ramadan. It was a very funny show about an English teacher trying to teach English to a bunch of foreigners from various countries.

Surely my English is better than this poor guy trying to be nice to a local politician, I said to myself.

He had put up posters all over the city proclaiming, “Happy Birthday Horrible Chief Minister”, and ‘horrible’ was spelt with a single R by the signwriter, who had stumbled on the abbreviation for the word, “Honourable”.

Indians are very polite and show deference to politicians, especially if you are trying curry favours and get a national award. The poor man had to pull down all the posters after someone pointed out the mistake.

Incidentally, the same signwriter must have migrated to an Arab Gulf country that I had worked in earlier, as I could see his signs all over the emirate, announcing proudly, “Punctures made here”, or “Hairkating Sailoon”.

(In India, a ‘salon’ is a ‘saloon’, and it always reminds me old Hollywood, Western movies where there is a lot of



shooting, throwing of chairs and smashing mirrors, whenever I go for a quiet, sleepy haircut).

There was just no way of getting away from doing the International English Language Test as it is now designed to “help you work, study or immigrate to a country where English is the native language”.

I suddenly started getting doubts whether I would pass the test, even though I used to read a lot when young, especially crime pulp novels by James Hadley Chase, who used expressions such as, “He shot out of the living room like a

bat out of hell”.

There are various ‘bands’ and one has to get 9 CLB (Canadian Language Benchmark) in Speaking, and 7 in Reading, Writing and Listening.

I hate giving tests and usually get jittery and tense (even after taking several deep breaths and pretending that I am sitting somewhere in the Himalayas) and make mistakes like the time I was taking driving lessons from a burly Sardar.

“I say take left,” he would suddenly snap at me, rapping on my wrist that was gripping the steering wheel. Despite his

help I failed the driving test four times, because I had to learn driving all over again, after driving for a decade in Saudi Arabia.

The main hurdle for many new immigrants and international students to get into Canada is the English language, with its crazy spelling, unintelligible grammar and the way nobody speaks English like the ‘Masterji’ in the coaching class in the village.

“Are you OK?” asked my wife, alarmed at catching me speaking to myself in the bathroom mirror.

“I am enunciating,” I said. “I have to practice speaking to get 9,” I said.

“You sound like Mary Poppins,” said my wife. “Nobody speaks like that. I don't think your thick Hyderabad accent matters. Just speak slowly and first gather your thoughts in your head,” she said.

“Oh, God, I won't be able to understand what the British professor is saying. I am sure he speaks like your relative who was in the army,” I said.

Gulf News

In India, a ‘salon’ is a ‘saloon’, and it always reminds me old Hollywood, Western movies where there is a lot of shooting, throwing of chairs and smashing mirrors, whenever I go for a quiet, sleepy haircut

J&K SERVICES SELECTION BOARD

Hema Complex, Sector -3, Channi Himmat, Jammu
www.jkssb.nic.in

NOTICE

J&K Services Selection Board has advertised various posts vide Advertisement Notification No. 01 and 02 of 2021. Accordingly, the syllabi for the posts shown below, advertised vide aforementioned advertisement notifications is notified as per the details given in Annexure "A" to "J" to this notification. The candidates are also intimated that there shall be negative marking for wrong answers (-0.25 for each wrong answer) attempted in the said examination. This notice is for the purpose of intimation to the concerned candidates only.

Controller of Examinations
J&K Services Selection Board
Jammu

No. SSB/Secy/Sel/2021/3334-37

Dated: 06.04.2021

S.No	Advertisement No.	Item No.	Department	Sub Deptt./Appointing Authority	Name of the post	Cadre of the post	Annexure as
1	02 of 2021	169	Health & Medical Education	(GMC Jammu)	Junior Stenographer	Div Jammu	Annexure "A"
2	02 of 2021	170	Health & Medical Education	(GMC Jammu)	Steno Typist	Div Jammu	
3	02 of 2021	205	Health & Medical Education	(GMC Srinagar)	Junior Stenographer	Div Kashmir	
4	02 of 2021	213	Health & Medical Education	(GMC Srinagar)	Steno Typist	Div Kashmir	
5	02 of 2021	247	General Administration Deptt.	Commissioner/Secretary to the Government, General Administration Department.	Junior Stenographer	UT	
6	02 of 2021	248	Health & Medical Education	(ISM)	Junior Stenographer	UT	
7	02 of 2021	306	Health & Medical Education	(Director Health services Jammu)	Junior Stenographer	Div Jammu	
8	02 of 2021	429	Revenue	J&K FCR	Jr. Scale Stenographer	Udhampur	
9	02 of 2021	434	Revenue	J&K FCR	Jr. Scale Stenographer	Doda	
10	02 of 2021	437	Revenue	J&K FCR	Jr. Scale Stenographer	Kishtwar	
11	02 of 2021	440	Revenue	J&K FCR	Jr. Scale Stenographer	Ramban	
12	02 of 2021	443	Revenue	J&K FCR	Jr. Scale Stenographer	Rajouri	
13	02 of 2021	445	Revenue	J&K FCR	Jr. Scale Stenographer	Poonch	
14	02 of 2021	446	Revenue	J&K FCR	Jr. Scale Stenographer	Srinagar	
15	02 of 2021	449	Revenue	J&K FCR	Jr. Scale Stenographer	Budgam	
16	02 of 2021	452	Revenue	J&K FCR	Jr. Scale Stenographer	Ganderbal	
17	02 of 2021	456	Revenue	J&K FCR	Jr. Scale Stenographer	Pulwama	

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18	02 of 2021	459	Revenue	J&K FCR	Jr. Scale Stenographer	Anantnag	Annexure "A"
19	02 of 2021	465	Revenue	J&K FCR	Jr. Scale Stenographer	Kupwara	
20	02 of 2021	472	Revenue	J&K FCR	Jr. Scale Stenographer	Bandipora	
21	02 of 2021	476	Revenue	J&K FCR	Jr. Scale Stenographer	Baramulla	
22	02 of 2021	553	Department of Law , Justice and Parliamentary Affairs	Department of Law , Justice and Parliamentary Affairs	Junior Scale Stenographer	UT	
23	01 of 2021	4	Jai Shakti	PHE Deptt. Srinagar	Junior Stenographer	Div. Kashmir	
24	01 of 2021	5	Jai Shakti	Chief Engineer I & FC Jammu	Junior Scale Stenographer	Div. Jammu	
25	01 of 2021	6	Jai Shakti	Chief Engineer Ravi Tawi Srinagar	Junior Scale Stenographer	Div. Jammu	
26	01 of 2021	19	Horticulture	Dte. Horticulture Jammu	Junior Stenographer	Div. Jammu	
27	01 of 2021	64	Horticulture	Dte. Horticulture Srinagar	Junior Stenographer	Div. Kashmir	
28	01 of 2021	109	Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs	Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs	Junior Scale Stenographer	UT	
29	01 of 2021	114	Information	Dir. Information	Steno Typist	UT	
30	02 of 2021	297	Health & Medical Education	(FW,MCH and Immunization)	Steno Typist	Rajouri	
31	02 of 2021	298	Health & Medical Education	(FW,MCH and Immunization)	Steno Typist	Poonch	
32	02 of 2021	299	Health & Medical Education	(FW,MCH and Immunization)	Steno Typist	Srinagar	
33	02 of 2021	300	Health & Medical Education	(FW,MCH and Immunization)	Steno Typist	Budgam	
34	02 of 2021	301	Health & Medical Education	(FW,MCH and Immunization)	Steno Typist	Ganderbal	
35	02 of 2021	302	Health & Medical Education	(FW,MCH and Immunization)	Steno Typist	Pulwama	
36	02 of 2021	303	Health & Medical Education	(FW,MCH and Immunization)	Steno Typist	Anantnag	

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37	02 of 2021	304	Health & Medical Education	(FW,MCH and Immunization)	Steno Typist	Kupwara	Annexure "B"
38	02 of 2021	305	Health & Medical Education	(FW,MCH and Immunization)	Steno Typist	Baramulla	
39	01 of 2021	20	Horticulture	Dte. Horticulture Jammu	Steno Typist	Div. Jammu	
40	01 of 2021	31	Horticulture	Dte. Horticulture Jammu	Steno Typist	Jammu	
41	01 of 2021	38	Horticulture	Dte. Horticulture Jammu	Steno Typist	Kathua	
42	01 of 2021	41	Horticulture	Dte. Horticulture Jammu	Steno Typist	Udhampur	
43	01 of 2021	46	Horticulture	Dte. Horticulture Jammu	Steno Typist	Doda	
44	01 of 2021	52	Horticulture	Dte. Horticulture Jammu	Steno Typist	Ramban	
45	01 of 2021	55	Horticulture	Dte. Horticulture Jammu	Steno Typist	Rajouri	
46	01 of 2021	58	Horticulture	Dte. Horticulture Jammu	Steno Typist	Poonch	
47	01 of 2021	67	Horticulture	Dte. Horticulture Srinagar	Steno Typist	Div. Kashmir	
48	01 of 2021	73	Horticulture	Dte. Horticulture Srinagar	Steno Typist	Srinagar	
49	01 of 2021	78	Horticulture	Dte. Horticulture Srinagar	Steno Typist	Budgam	
50	01 of 2021	82	Horticulture	Dte. Horticulture Srinagar	Steno Typist	Anantnag	
51	01 of 2021	86	Horticulture	Dte. Horticulture Srinagar	Steno Typist	Pulwama	
52	01 of 2021	90	Horticulture	Dte. Horticulture Srinagar	Steno Typist	Shopian	
53	01 of 2021	97	Horticulture	Dte. Horticulture Srinagar	Steno Typist	Baramulla	
54	01 of 2021	102	Horticulture	Dte. Horticulture Srinagar	Steno Typist	Kupwara	
55	02 of 2021	323	Health & Medical Education	(Director Health services Jammu)	Clark	Jammu	

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56	02 of 2021	337	Health & Medical Education	(Director Health services Jammu)	Clark	Udhampur	Annexure "B"
57	02 of 2021	347	Health & Medical Education	(Director Health services Jammu)	Clark	Reasi	
58	02 of 2021	365	Health & Medical Education	(Director Health services Jammu)	Clark	Ramban	
59	02 of 2021	385	Health & Medical Education	(Director Health services Jammu)	Clark	Kishtwar	
60	02 of 2021	181	Health & Medical Education	(GMC Jammu)	Junior Assistant	Div Jammu	
61	02 of 2021	227	Health & Medical Education	(GMC Srinagar)	Junior Assistant	Div Kashmir	
62	02 of 2021	245	Horticulture/Gardens and Parks	Director Horticulture/Gardens and Parks Jammu	Junior Assistant	Div Jammu	
63	02 of 2021	246	General Administration Deptt.	Commissioner/Secretary to the Government, General Administration Department.	Junior Assistant	UT	
64	02 of 2021	249	Health & Medical Education	(ISM)	Junior Assistant	Jammu	
65	02 of 2021	250	Health & Medical Education	(ISM)	Junior Assistant	Kathua	
66	02 of 2021	294	Health & Medical Education	(FW,MCH and Immunization)	Junior Assistant	Jammu	
67	02 of 2021	295	Health & Medical Education	(FW,MCH and Immunization)	Junior Assistant	Kishtwar	
68	02 of 2021	296	Health & Medical Education	(FW,MCH and Immunization)	Junior Assistant	Bandipora	
69	02 of 2021	314	Health & Medical Education	(Director Health services Jammu)	Jr. Assistant	Jammu	
70	02 of 2021	342	Health & Medical Education	(Director Health services Jammu)	Jr. Assistant	Reasi	
71	02 of 2021	354	Health & Medical Education	(Director Health services Jammu)	Jr. Assistant	Kishtwar	
72	02 of 2021	361	Health & Medical Education	(Director Health services Jammu)	Jr. Assistant	Ramban	

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73	02 of 2021	369	Health & Medical Education	(Director Health services Jammu)	Jr. Assistant	Samba	Annexure "B"
74	02 of 2021	377	Health & Medical Education	(Director Health services Jammu)	Jr. Assistant	Rajouri	
75	02 of 2021	387	Health & Medical Education	(Director Health services Jammu)	Junior Assistant	Div Kashmir	
76	02 of 2021	388	Health & Medical Education	(Director Health services Kashmir)	Junior Assistant	Budgam	
77	02 of 2021	391	Health & Medical Education	(Director Health services Kashmir)	Junior Assistant	Ganderbal	
78	02 of 2021	395	Health & Medical Education	(Director Health services Kashmir)	Junior Assistant	Pulwama	
79	02 of 2021	397	Health & Medical Education	(Director Health services Kashmir)	Junior Assistant	Kulgam	
80	02 of 2021	399	Health & Medical Education	(Director Health services Kashmir)	Junior Assistant	Shopian	
81	02 of 2021	401	Health & Medical Education	(Director Health services Kashmir)	Junior Assistant	Baramulla	
82	02 of 2021	404	Health & Medical Education	(Director Health services Kashmir)	Junior Assistant	Srinagar	
83	02 of 2021	405	Health & Medical Education	(Director Health services Kashmir)	Junior Assistant	Anantnag	
84	02 of 2021	406	Health & Medical Education	(Director Health services Kashmir)	Junior Assistant	Kupwara	
85	02 of 2021	407	Health & Medical Education	(Indira Gandhi Govt Dental college Jammu)	Junior Assistant	Div Jammu	
86	02 of 2021	423	Revenue	J&K FCR	Jr. Assistant	UT	
87	02 of 2021	424	Revenue	J&K FCR	Jr. Assistant	Jammu	
88	02 of 2021	426	Revenue	J&K FCR	Jr. Assistant	Samba	
89	02 of 2021	428	Revenue	J&K FCR	Jr. Assistant	Kathua	
90	02 of 2021	430	Revenue	J&K FCR	Jr. Assistant	Udhampur	

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91	02 of 2021	432	Revenue	J&K FCR	Jr. Assistant	Reasi	Annexure "B"
92	02 of 2021	435	Revenue	J&K FCR	Jr. Assistant	Doda	
93	02 of 2021	438	Revenue	J&K FCR	Jr. Assistant	Kishtwar	
94	02 of 2021	441	Revenue	J&K FCR	Jr. Assistant	Ramban	
95	02 of 2021	444	Revenue	J&K FCR	Jr. Assistant	Rajouri	
96	02 of 2021	447	Revenue	J&K FCR	Jr. Assistant	Srinagar	
97	02 of 2021	450	Revenue	J&K FCR	Jr. Assistant	Budgam	
98	02 of 2021	453	Revenue	J&K FCR	Jr. Assistant	Ganderbal	
99	02 of 2021	457	Revenue	J&K FCR	Jr. Assistant	Pulwama	
100	02 of 2021	460	Revenue	J&K FCR	Jr. Assistant	Anantnag	
101	02 of 2021	462	Revenue	J&K FCR	Jr. Assistant	Kulgam	
102	02 of 2021	466	Revenue	J&K FCR	Jr. Assistant	Kupwara	
103	02 of 2021	469	Revenue	J&K FCR	Jr. Assistant	Shopian	
104	02 of 2021	473	Revenue	J&K FCR	Jr. Assistant	Bandipora	
105	02 of 2021	477	Revenue	J&K FCR	Jr. Assistant	Baramulla	
106	02 of 2021	479	Cooperative Department	Registrar Cooperative Societies J&K	Junior Assistant	UT	
107	02 of 2021	480	Cooperative Department	Registrar Cooperative Societies J&K	Junior Assistant	Div Jammu	
108	02 of 2021	481	Cooperative Department	Registrar Cooperative Societies J&K	Junior Assistant	Div Kashmir	
109	02 of 2021	482	Cooperative Department	Registrar Cooperative Societies J&K	Junior Assistant	Jammu	
110	02 of 2021	483	Cooperative Department	Registrar Cooperative Societies J&K	Junior Assistant	Samba	

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111	02 of 2021	484	Cooperative Department	Registrar Cooperative Societies J&K	Junior Assistant	Kathua	Annexure "B"
112	02 of 2021	485	Cooperative Department	Registrar Cooperative Societies J&K	Junior Assistant	Udhampur	
113	02 of 2021	486	Cooperative Department	Registrar Cooperative Societies J&K	Junior Assistant	Reasi	
114	02 of 2021	487	Cooperative Department	Registrar Cooperative Societies J&K	Junior Assistant	Kishtwar	
115	02 of 2021	488	Cooperative Department	Registrar Cooperative Societies J&K	Junior Assistant	Ramban	
116	02 of 2021	489	Cooperative Department	Registrar Cooperative Societies J&K	Junior Assistant	Rajouri	
117	02 of 2021	490	Cooperative Department	Registrar Cooperative Societies J&K	Junior Assistant	Poonch	
118	02 of 2021	491	Cooperative Department	Registrar Cooperative Societies J&K	Junior Assistant	Srinagar	
119	02 of 2021	492	Cooperative Department	Registrar Cooperative Societies J&K	Junior Assistant	Budgam	
120	02 of 2021	493	Cooperative Department	Registrar Cooperative Societies J&K	Junior Assistant	Ganderbal	
121	02 of 2021	494	Cooperative Department	Registrar Cooperative Societies J&K	Junior Assistant	Anantnag	
122	02 of 2021	495	Cooperative Department	Registrar Cooperative Societies J&K	Junior Assistant	Kulgam	
123	02 of 2021	496	Cooperative Department	Registrar Cooperative Societies J&K	Junior Assistant	Baramulla	
124	02 of 2021	497	Cooperative Department	Registrar Cooperative Societies J&K	Junior Assistant	Bandipora	
125	02 of 2021	533	Department of Law , Justice and Parliamentary Affairs	Department of Law , Justice and Parliamentary Affairs	Junior Assistant	Anantnag	
126	02 of 2021	534	Department of Law , Justice and Parliamentary Affairs	Department of Law , Justice and Parliamentary Affairs	Junior Assistant	Bandipora	
127	02 of 2021	535	Department of Law , Justice and Parliamentary Affairs	Department of Law , Justice and Parliamentary Affairs	Junior Assistant	Baramulla	

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			Justice and Parliamentary Affairs	and Parliamentary Affairs			Annexure "B"
128	02 of 2021	536	Department of Law , Justice and Parliamentary Affairs	Department of Law , Justice and Parliamentary Affairs	Junior Assistant	Budgam	
129	02 of 2021	537	Department of Law , Justice and Parliamentary Affairs	Department of Law , Justice and Parliamentary Affairs	Junior Assistant	Ganderbal	
130	02 of 2021	538	Department of Law , Justice and Parliamentary Affairs	Department of Law , Justice and Parliamentary Affairs	Junior Assistant	Kulgam	
131	02 of 2021	539	Department of Law , Justice and Parliamentary Affairs	Department of Law , Justice and Parliamentary Affairs	Junior Assistant	Kupwara	
132	02 of 2021	540	Department of Law , Justice and Parliamentary Affairs	Department of Law , Justice and Parliamentary Affairs	Junior Assistant	Pulwama	
133	02 of 2021	541	Department of Law , Justice and Parliamentary Affairs	Department of Law , Justice and Parliamentary Affairs	Junior Assistant	Shopian	
134	02 of 2021	542	Department of Law , Justice and Parliamentary Affairs	Department of Law , Justice and Parliamentary Affairs	Junior Assistant	Srinagar	
135	02 of 2021	543	Department of Law , Justice and Parliamentary Affairs	Department of Law , Justice and Parliamentary Affairs	Junior Assistant	Doda	
136	02 of 2021	544	Department of Law , Justice and Parliamentary Affairs	Department of Law , Justice and Parliamentary Affairs	Junior Assistant	Jammu	
137	02 of 2021	545	Department of Law , Justice and Parliamentary Affairs	Department of Law , Justice and Parliamentary Affairs	Junior Assistant	Kathua	
138	02 of 2021	546	Department of Law , Justice and Parliamentary Affairs	Department of Law , Justice and Parliamentary Affairs	Junior Assistant	Kishtwar	

RBI holds interest rates amid Covid surge, pledges to buy Rs 1 lakh crore govt bonds

Press Trust Of India

Mumbai, April 7: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Wednesday kept key interest rates unchanged at record lows while pledging to buy Rs 1 lakh crore of government bonds this quarter to cap borrowing costs in a bid to support an economy facing a resurgence of the pandemic.

In the first monetary policy of the 2021-22 fiscal, the central



bank stuck to its accommodative stance as long as necessary, amid concerns of rising infections that could derail the nascent economic recovery.

RBI's key lending rate, the repo rate, which was cut by a total of 115 basis points last year to soften the blow from the pandemic, will stay at 4 per cent while the reverse repo rate or the central bank's borrowing rate will be unchanged at 3.35 per cent.

Governor Shaktikanta Das said the six-member monetary policy committee (MPC) voted unanimously "to continue with the accommodative stance as long as necessary to sustain growth on a durable basis and continue to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the

economy while ensuring that inflation remains within the target going forward".

Just as the economy started to recover after being pummeled by the pandemic and the lockdowns, India is witnessing a record jump in COVID-19 infections, threatening the nascent recovery.

"The recent surge in infections has, however, imparted greater uncertainty to the outlook and needs to be closely watched, especially as localised and regional lockdowns could dampen the recent improvement in demand conditions and delay the return of normalcy," he said.

The Governor announced a second market G-sec acquisition programme or G-SAP 1.0 wherein the RBI committed to open market purchase of government securities.

In April-June, it is committed to buy Rs 1 lakh crore bonds, with first debt purchases starting from April 15.

The RBI had bought Rs 3 lakh crore of bonds in the last fiscal (2020-21) and planned similar or more spending in the financial year April 2021 to March 2022.

We are now better prepared to meet the challenges posed by this resurgence in infections," he added.

While retaining its GDP growth outlook for FY22 at 10.5 per cent after a 7.5 per cent contraction in 2020-21, the RBI revised the outlook for inflation, with price rise seen at 5 per cent in the fourth quarter of last fiscal year. It is projected to rise to 5.2 per cent in the first half of the current fiscal.

What is a global minimum tax and how could it affect companies, countries?

Agencies

Paris/Washington: Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has thrown the weight of the U.S. government behind a push for a global corporate minimum tax rate, possibly carving a path to a long-sought deal updating international tax rules for the first time in a generation.

Yellen said on Monday that she is working with G20 countries to agree on a global minimum, which she said could help end a "30-year race to the bottom on corporate tax rates."

WHY A GLOBAL MINIMUM TAX?

Major economies are aiming to discourage multinational companies from shifting profits - and tax revenues - to low-tax countries regardless of where their sales are made.

Increasingly, income from intangible sources such as drug patents, software and royalties on intellectual property has migrated to these jurisdictions, allowing companies to avoid paying higher taxes in their traditional home countries.

With a broadly agreed global minimum tax, the Biden administration hopes to reduce such tax base erosion without putting American firms at a financial disadvantage, allowing them

to compete on innovation, infrastructure and other attributes.

The Trump administration took a first stab at capturing revenues lost to tax havens with a U.S. corporate offshore minimum tax in 2017. The "Global Intangible Low-Taxed Income," or GILTI, tax rate was only 10.5% - half the domestic corporate tax rate.

WHERE ARE INTERNATIONAL TAX TALKS?

The Paris-based Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development has been coordinating tax negotiations among 140 countries for years on two major efforts: setting rules for taxing cross-border digital services and curbing tax base erosion, with a global corporate minimum tax part of the latter.

The OECD and G20 countries aim to reach consensus on both fronts by mid-year, but the talks on a global corporate minimum are technically simpler and politically less contentious.

The minimum tax is expected to make up the bulk of the \$50 billion-\$80 billion in extra corporate tax that the OECD estimates companies will end up paying globally if deals on both efforts are enacted.

KCC SCHEME

DC City Orders enquiry against Ellaquai Dehati Bank for keeping cases pending



Observer news service

SRINAGAR, A meeting of the District Level Review Committee (DLRC) was held here today under the chairmanship of District Development Commissioner (DDC) Srinagar, Mohammed Aijaz Asad to review the progress achieved during 2020-21 under Annual District Credit Plan.

The meeting was informed that by December 2021, around Rs 4030 crore have been distributed among 88647 beneficiaries in the district by different financial institutions under priority and non-priority schemes.

Speaking on the occasion, the DDC stressed on enhancement in the overall credit flow of banks in the district which is must for financial impetus and improving income levels and thereby help in raising standard of living of people. Besides he impressed upon the banks operating in the district to improve their CD Ratio.

He called upon officers to work in unison with added vigour and zeal so that tangible results to take the Srinagar district as a role model for development are achieved.

He also advised the representatives of financial institutions and sponsoring agencies to come forward and help the urban poor of the capital for eradicating poverty, unemployment and reaching out to the poorest of the poor.

The DDC emphasized that all banks operating in the district should educate and sensitize the public about financial literacy particularly in the rural and semi urban belts of Srinagar about various banking products and Government sponsored schemes.

While expressing his satisfaction over the RBI comments regarding achievements of targets, the DDC urged the concerned to further improve the performance particularly in private banks.

The meeting held thread-

bare deliberations on bank wise progress in lending to priority sector/non priority sector under annual credit plan as of quarter ended December 2020. Besides achievements made under other Government sponsored schemes including JKREGP, NRLM, Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana and enrollment under Social Security Schemes.

The meeting was informed that credit disbursement of Rs 555.65 crore has been provided to 24714 beneficiaries under Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana, besides Rs 41.94 crore were disbursed among 9812 beneficiaries under Kissan Credit cards scheme.

Similarly, under Pradhan Mantri SVANIDHI schemes Rs 3.38 crore were disbursed among 3389 registered street vendors in the district under which urban street vendor are eligible to avail a loan of Rs 10000 with tenure of one year with interest subsidy of 7 per cent to handholding of youth.

Further the chairman ordered enquiry against Ellaquai Dehati Bank for sanctioning only 6 out of 1509 cases under Kisan Credit card scheme and keeping 1503 KCC cases pending/undisposed thereby making the eligible beneficiaries deprived of the intended benefits.

The meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer, General Manager DIC, DDM NABARD, LDM Srinagar, and Officers from EDI, UDAK, Horticulture, Agriculture, Animal & Sheep Husbandry, Fisheries and other officers of concerned Departments. Besides, Senior Managers of JK bank, SBI, PNB, HDFC and other sponsoring agencies operating in Srinagar.

NABARD's augmented support boosts rural economy in J&K:Govt

JAMMU, APRIL 07: Keeping in line with its vision "Development Bank of the Nation", NABARD augmented support to the various sectors of rural economy during 2020-21, for overall development of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh UTs.

The sanctions under various interventions were higher by 70% over the last year.

NABARD's stress on boosting the capital formation resulted in disbursement of refinance of Rs 111 crore to Regional Rural Banks.

To support the agriculture production activities of farmers, short term refinance to the tune of Rs 50 crore was extended during 2020-21. Further, in Atam Nirbhar Pack-age of Government of India under Additional Emergency Working Capital Funding for farmers, NABARD extended a support of Rs 150 crore to JKGB.

Financing a variety of rural infrastructure projects has emerged as one of the most

dominant themes of rural India's growth.

During the last year, NABARD has sanctioned projects amounting to Rs.787 crore for 36 water supply schemes, construction/improvement of 115 rural roads, construction of 05 fruit and vegetable markets, construction of 05 agriculture extension infrastructure projects and 08 irrigation & flood control projects.

For promoting financial inclusion and taking banking services to people, NABARD sanctioned Rs. 6.12 crore under the Financial Inclusion Fund (FIF) towards a host of initiatives like Financial Literacy Camps, Demonstration of Banking Technology through ATM Vans, Micro -ATMs, Hand Held projectors, Centers for Financial Literacy and various other types of capacity building projects.

For enhancing the income of farmers, NABARD continues to focus on Natural Resource Management

under which assistance was extended for tribal development and watershed/spring shed development projects. NABARD has sanctioned 07 innovative projects such as 'Vegetables and Fodder production through Hydroponics System', 'Empowerment of Rural Youth through Entrepreneurship Development in Pig Farming', 'Development of Bee Village for Collective Marketing of Honey', etc.

To facilitate organization of farmers into FPOs, NABARD provided assistance out of its own funds and has identified 07 agencies as CBOs under the Central Sector Scheme (CSS) for formation and promotion of FPOs. To support marketing of products of artisans / SHGs, 02 Rural Marts and 03 Mobile Vans were sanctioned during the year. 13 Skill Development Programmes (SDPs) on different trades, involving 400 candidates were supported during FY 2020-21.

Evidence Of Normalisation Of Economic Activity In India: IMF Chief Economist Gita Gopinath



Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The chief economist of the International Monetary Fund on Wednesday said that there is evidence of normalisation of economic activities in India. "The evidence we were getting in the last couple of months in terms of the normalisation of economic activity," IMF's chief economist Gita Gopinath said ahead of the annual spring meeting of the IMF and the World Bank.

On Tuesday, the IMF predicted an impressive 12.5 per cent growth rate for India in 2021, stronger than that of China, the only major economy to have a positive growth rate last year during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In its annual World Economic Outlook, the IMF said the Indian economy is expected to grow by 6.9 per cent in 2022. In 2020, India's economy

contracted by a record eight per cent.

However, compared to the previous projections early this team, the change in 2021 forecast is pretty small, she noted.

"In the case of India, we have a pretty small change. It's 1 percentage increase for growth for 2021. This came in with high frequency," she said in response to a question.

Malhar Nabar, Division Chief of the research department at the IMF, told reporters that the IMF has for India already takes a fairly conservative view on the sequential growth for the Indian economy for this year.

"But it's true that with this very worrying uptick in cases that that poses very severe downside risks to the growth outlook for the economy," Nabar said.

International passenger traffic down 89% in February, no sign of recovery: IATA



Agencies

London, April 7: Global airline industry body IATA said international passenger traffic plunged 89% in February compared to the same month last year as COVID-19 infections climbed once more, and there was no sign of an aviation recovery yet.

"International passenger traffic was down almost

89% and is showing no signs of recovery in the current environment," IATA's new director general Willie Walsh said at a presentation on Wednesday.

Walsh, formerly the chief executive of British Airways-parent group IAG, was holding his first media briefing since taking on the IATA director general job at the beginning of April. — Reuters

International passenger traffic was down almost 89% and is showing no signs of recovery in the current environment

India has world's 3rd highest number of billionaires, says Forbes report



India has the third highest number of billionaires in the world after the U.S. and China, according to a new list by the prestigious Forbes magazine, which said Reliance Industries Chairman Mukesh Ambani reclaimed his spot as Asia's richest person, dethroning Chinese business tycoon Jack Ma who was the richest person in the region a year ago.

Forbes' 35th annual list of the world's billionaires is topped by Amazon CEO and Founder Jeff Bezos for the fourth year in a row.

His net worth is \$177 billion, up \$64 billion from a year ago as a result of surging Amazon shares, Forbes said.

On the second spot is SpaceX founder Elon Musk, who was the biggest gainer in dollar terms. Mr. Musk's

fortune ballooned to \$151 billion, a whopping \$126.4 billion more than a year ago, when he had ranked 31 and was worth \$24.6 billion, it said.

"The main reason: a 705% climb in Tesla shares," Forbes said.

Mr. Ambani, the richest person in India and also the wealthiest in Asia, is ranked

10 on the global billionaires' list. He reclaimed his spot as Asia's richest person with a net worth of \$84.5 billion.

Mr. Ambani "has become the richest person in Asia, ranked Number 10 and worth an estimated \$84.5 billion. He nudges out Jack Ma of China, Asia's richest person a year ago, whose rank dropped to

26 (from 17 last year) despite a nearly \$10 billion jump in his fortune to \$48.4 billion," Forbes said.

Adani Group Chairman Gautam Adani, the second richest person in India, is ranked 24th on the global list of billionaires with a net worth of \$50.5 billion.

Chairman of the Poonawalla Group and founder of the Serum Institute of India, the world's largest vaccine manufacturer, Cyrus Poonawalla is ranked 169th on the Forbes list of the world's billionaires with a net worth of \$12.7 billion.

Mr. Poonawalla ranks seven on the list of Indian billionaires. Founder of HCL Technologies Shiv Nadar, the third richest person in India, is ranked 71st globally and has a net worth of \$23.5 billion.

WhatsApp announces new Business features for e-commerce

NEW DELHI: Facebook-owned instant messaging platform WhatsApp on Wednesday expanded its offerings for business users. The company announced two new features that make WhatsApp Business—the new e-commerce side of the platform—more effective and friendly for businesses. The features include better support for WhatsApp Catalogs on desktops, and the ability to hide items that are out of stock.

The instant messaging platform had introduced its Catalogs feature back in 2019, allowing businesses to create a storefront and menus for products they sell. The company says it has over 8 million business catalogs worldwide, including one million in In-



dia. But businesses can only create and manage these from mobile right now.

The second update allows businesses to temporarily hide items that are unavailable from customers. The feature is common amongst e-commerce platforms, grocery delivery and food delivery services, where a dynamic storefront is required. It essentially lets sellers change their menus on the go, and avoid delays in delivery or taking orders for products that may not be im-

mediately available.

The feature updates bring WhatsApp Business more up to speed with competing platforms. While the company has been trying to get more small businesses on board, it competes with virtually every delivery service on the market today. WhatsApp does have a large user base already, but a well rounded feature set will be just as important.

The company is just about a month away from enforcing its new privacy policies, which landed it in trouble with users and the Indian government. The new policies allow the company to share some data with partnering business, which the Indian government has asked the Delhi High Court to block.

N E W S M A K E R S

Centre Rejects Claims Of COVID Vaccine Shortage After Maha And Other States Complain, Allows Jobs At Workplace

Press Trust of India

New Delhi: As COVID-19 cases in India hit a record high lending urgency to scale up vaccination, the Centre on Wednesday allowed the jobs at workplaces with about 100 eligible beneficiaries from April 11 and rejected as baseless allegations of shortage of the injection by Maharashtra and some other non-BJP ruled states.

The central government also wrote to Maharashtra, Punjab and Delhi

governments flagging below-par inoculation of eligible beneficiaries, including healthcare workers, after they demanded that vaccination be opened to all.

India recorded 1,12,389 new cases on Wednesday, according to a PTI tally, taking the overall count to 1,29,14,174. The single-day rise in coronavirus cases breached the one-lakh mark for the third time in four days. India saw a record daily rise on Tuesday, with over 1.15 lakh new infections.

Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh

Tope said that many inoculation centres are being shut due to the shortage of vaccines in the state, the worst affected by the coronavirus outbreak in the country, and they have 14 lakh doses which would last just three days.

"We need 40 lakh vaccine doses every week. We can then administer six lakh doses every day in a week. The doses we are getting are not enough," he said, adding the Centre should ensure that those in the 20-40 age group are vaccinated on priority.

The Odisha government said it has vaccines for another three days and that it had written to the central government on Tuesday urging it to provide 15 to 20 lakh doses of the 'Covishield' vaccine to continue the inoculation drive smoothly.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi also batted for the COVID-19 vaccine for all, saying every Indian "deserves the chance to a safe life". Similar demands for relaxing the age restriction have been made by Punjab Chief Minister

Amarinder Singh, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

However, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan alleged that the states were trying to cover their "failures" and spread panic among the people by demanding vaccination for all without first inoculating enough of the eligible beneficiaries.

People above the age of 45 are currently eligible for vaccination. Vardhan also said the allegations of

vaccine shortage are utterly baseless and the states, including Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh, need to improve the implementation of their testing and containment strategies and vaccination drive.

He said the "lackadaisical" attitude of the Maharashtra government has "singularly bogged down" the entire country's efforts to fight the virus.

Maharashtra recorded the highest daily count of 59,907 cases and 322 deaths on Wednesday.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Search Operation

smoke shells were also fired inside the building; however there was no response from the other.

Hence after 18 hours, the operation was called off and the joint team retrieved from the site, the officer said, as per news agency GNS.

As per the official sources, militants might have escaped while the forces were laying cordon.

Corona Cases

5,000 mark again, rising to 5,035 in the UT, while 1,27,774 patients have recovered so far, the officials said.

The death toll in the UT due to the pandemic is 2,018 as six fresh deaths -- four from Jammu region and two from Kashmir valley -- were reported in the past 24 hours.

Dr Farooq Discharged

however, continue to remain in self-isolation at his residence for some time, the officials added.

"Five days after being admitted to SKIMS, Srinagar with COVID my father was discharged this evening. He will continue the rest of his recovery and recuperation at home. My father and the entire family are indebted and deeply grateful to the doctors, nursing staff & others at the institute," his son and NC vice-president Omar Abdullah wrote on twitter.

"My father has been instructed by his doctors to focus on his recovery & for the time being will not be allowed visitors. He looks forward to completing his recovery so he can resume a full schedule of work," Omar Abdullah said in another tweet.

The 85-year-old NC president tested positive for COVID-19 on March 30. He was kept in home-isolation initially, but doctors on Saturday decided to shift him to a hospital for better medical care.

Several leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, wished him a speedy recovery. Farooq Abdullah received his first dose of COVID-19 vaccine on March 2.

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha had visited the SKIMS Hospital on Sunday to enquire about his health from Omar Abdullah.

"In Srinagar, I met Omar Abdullah at SKIMS Hospital, Soura. Enquired about Farooq Sahab's health and instructed the doctors to provide best treatment. I pray for his long and healthy life," the L-G's office had tweeted.

The L-G had also offered to shift the senior Abdullah to another facility or hospital for better monitoring and care.

Omar Abdullah expressed his gratitude to Sinha for inquiring after his father's health, and said the NC president was getting the best possible care at the facility.

"Thank you for your visit to enquire after my father @manojsinha_ji. We are grateful for the offer to shift my father, the doctors & other medical staff at SKIMS Srinagar are amongst the best anywhere and my father is getting the best possible care," he had written on Twitter.

Meanwhile, Former Chief Minister and National Conference vice president Omar Abdullah on Wednesday received first dose of covid-19 vaccine.

Omar, who is tending to his father—Farooq Abdullah— at SKIMS Soura received the jab at the tertiary care hospital, he said in a tweet. "Got my 1st dose of the #COVIDvaccine this morning. It was a smooth & painless affair. I'm grateful to everyone at SKIMS, Srinagar for vaccinating me today," Omar tweeted.

Two ITI Staffers

six students at the institute were found COVID positive", the official said adding that "All the infected persons were immediately isolated and removed for treatment."

Meanwhile the authorities have suspended all kinds of activities at the institute till further orders.

IGP Cautions

law and order situation.

"The freedom of speech and expression is subject to reasonable restrictions that should not violate other person's right to life guaranteed under Article 21 or putting the national security in jeopardy," he said, adding, "Do not interfere in professional and bonafide duty of police and security forces at encounter site."

He said no operational content should be carried which is likely to incite violence or contains anything against "maintenance of law and order or which promotes anti-national sentiment."

Kashmir Media

Wednesday that journalists in Kashmir have worked under tremendous pressure for the past several decades and despite facing threats to life, liberty and property, they upheld the principles of journalism and reporting.

"If this is a part of the official policy of police then it appears to be a tactic to coerce journalists into not reporting facts on the ground. It also seems to be a part of the string of measures taken by the authorities to suppress freedom of press in the region. Summoning journalists to police stations, filing FIRs and seeking informal explanations for their work has intensified in the past two years," the joint statement said.

It further added that the media in Kashmir were aware of the journalistic guidelines and ethics or situations like encounters, law and order situations and have always upheld these principles.

"Covering and reporting law and order

situations in the region is one of the basic requirements for most news organisations and hence an essential part of the professional role of media professionals. Barring them from covering such events would mean stopping them from delivering their professional duties," the handout read.

Maintaining that the press freedom is the cornerstone of a democracy and any attack on it undermines the democratic setup of which media is the fourth pillar, the media bodies said that any such attack on press freedom and journalism is highly distasteful.

The journalist bodies also urged IGP Kashmir to put the record straight and clarify the statement attributed to him.

The joint statement was endorsed by Journalist Federation of Kashmir (JFK), Kashmir Editors Guild (KEG), Kashmir Working Journalists Association (KWJA), Kashmir Press Photographers Association (KPPA), Kashmir News Television Journalist Association (KNTJA), Kashmir Video Journalists Association (KVJA), Kashmir Press Club (KPC), Kashmir Journalists Association (KJA), Anjuman Urdu Sahafat, Kashmir Union of Working Journalists (KUWJ), Jammu and Kashmir Press Association (JKPA) and JK Editors Forum (JKEF).

Parliamentary

administration and other agencies for making necessary arrangements for the study tour of MPs.

The panel undertakes tours to study the problems of the scheduled castes and scheduled Tribes and the measures taken or being taken for their welfare and prepares reports which are tabled in the Parliament.

J&K has 19 percent SC and ST population- 7.38 percent Scheduled Caste (SC) and 11.91% Scheduled Tribe (ST).

Both the communities have political reservation in Jammu and Kashmir. Before enactment of "The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act", only SCs had reservation in the Assembly of erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir. Seven seats were reserved for SCs in the Assembly.

The delimitation commission is expected to reserve 18 seats for SCs and STs in the Assembly of J&K UT. Of which 11 seats would be earmarked for STs and seven for SCs.

Over the past few years, there have been instances of members from Gujar- Bakerwal community being assaulted by hoodlums in Jammu.

Earlier this year, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture visited Kashmir and recommended a slew of measures for improving road connectivity and giving impetus to the tourism sector in the Union Territory.

Cop, Ex-Soldier

initiated," the police spokesperson said.

During the course of investigation, he said, all the accused persons involved in the offence were arrested and shifted to police station where they remain in custody.

The accused have been identified as Kifayat Ahmad Malik of Yaripora, Mohammad Ahsan Mir of Parigam, Aejaz Ahmad Shah of Devsar and their woman accomplice Shabrooza of Damjen. Malik is said to be a policeman while Mir a retired army man.

Divulging more details about the case, the police spokesperson said that during investigation, it surfaced that the accused policeman was not on duty when the offence was committed neither it had been committed inside police premises.

"Pertinently, in addition to criminal proceedings, departmental proceedings have also been initiated against him," he said.

The police spokesperson assured the people that strict action will be taken against offenders, regardless of their position or placement.

"Further investigation into the matter in going on," he added.

Tricolour Hoisting

or the ruler does not issue such orders," Mehbooba told reporters here.

The former chief minister also said dissent has been criminalised in the country.

"Anyone who differs with them (government), be it journalists, politicians, etc. they are booked," she alleged.

Asked about the recent exodus of leaders from her party, the PDP chief said the deserters should answer this question.

"They did not leave when we made them ministers, MLCs and Rajya Sabha members. They have left now. They should answer what was the pressure or enticement for them," Mehbooba said.

J&K Film Policy

System, and bringing renowned filmmakers from across the country and abroad for exploring the unexplored scenic locales available in abundance in the UT of Jammu and Kashmir," the official spokesperson said.

He said that Director Information and Public Relations, Rahul Pandey gave a detailed presentation on Advantages of Jammu and Kashmir for the Indian Film Industry, besides Administrative structure and the way forward for the film sector in J&K.

Kashmir's Medicinal

It needs cold regions with warm and sub-tropical climates to flourish. The thread-like parts of the flower are used to make saffron spices.

It's used to treat rheumatoid arthritis. A paste prepared with the bulbs of saffron and

cow's milk is applied when inflammation appears on the joints.

Saffron is a powerful antioxidant that protects cells against free radicals linked to carcinogens and oxidative stress.

Also mentioned as "sunshine spice", saffron is found effective in the treatment of depressive symptoms according to studies.

Kashmir is the largest producer of saffron in the world.

Another medicinal plant found in Kashmir is trillium(Trillium grandiflorum), locally known as nagchatri.

It's a perennial 20 cm tall bulbous herb with a snow-white flower atop a whorl of leaves.

It's found in the continents of North America and Asia (Gulmarg in Kashmir) and is used for traditional medicines.

Rhizome, the underground part of nagchatri is used to prepare steroids.

Trillium is used to treat boils, dysentery, inflammation, menstrual and sexual disorders.

It also finds its use as an antiseptic in wound healing.

Tethwan (Artemisia Absinthium) is short perennial herb, also known as wormwood, found in Gulmarg, Sonmarg, Gananpeer, and several parts of Budgam and Kupwara. There're eight to ten species of the herb that grows in the valley.

Wormwood has greenish-silver stems, yellow-green leaves and bulbous flowers of bright or pale-yellow color. Traditional medicines used all parts of the plants for medical practices.

Water boiled with tethwan leaves can be used as an insect repellent. The leaf extracts are used to relieve intestinal worms, diabetes, and obesity. A poultice of the plant is used for tendon inflammation.

The herb should not be applied directly to the skin because its compounds are concentrated and can cause painful burns.

Tethwan also has antioxidant properties that help to combat oxidative stress in the body associated with cancer, heart disease, and Alzheimer's.

In the list of medicinal plants of Kashmir is datura (Datura Stramonium), a poisonous species whose seeds, leaves, and roots are used in traditional medicines. The seeds are purified before use.

Medicines containing datura are used in the treatment of respiratory diseases especially cough and asthma. Inhaling smoke from burned datura leaves is helpful for asthma patients. Vapor infusion of datura leaves boiled in water is used to relieve arthritis.

The oil extracted from seeds of the herb is used to treat baldness and the extract of the whole leaf is applied on hair to control dandruff.

Datura is always used in low dosages under strict medical supervision. A high dosage of the herb can cause adverse side effects.

Army

Repatriates

youngster inadvertently crossed the LoC into Kupwara's Karnah. He was identified as Mausam, son of Manzoor Ahmad from the Lipa area of Pck," the defence spokesperson said, adding that the Indian troops took due care of the boy and the Pakistani authorities were informed of his whereabouts.

Following an interaction between the authorities of both countries on the hotline, the Indian side handed over the boy to Pakistani officials at the Titwal crossing point as a humanitarian gesture, he said.

"The boy was presented with clothes and sweets. On the occasion of his repatriation, representatives of the Karnah civil administration were present," the spokesperson said.

He said such instances of inadvertently straying across the LoC have been reported earlier also due to the proximity of villages along the LoC on either side.

"However, the Indian side has always been prompt in returning the individuals, keeping the humanitarian issue in mind," he added.

The Titwal

crossing bridge located on the Kishanganga river has been acting as a point of peace between the two sides, the spokesperson said.

He said the site is visited by a number of people from either side and is emerging as a tourist spot, especially after the recently-agreed ceasefire between India and Pakistan.

"The peace and tranquillity as a result of the agreement is being appreciated by the civil population on either side of the LoC," the spokesperson added. (PTI)

HC Quashes 3 PSA

the preventive detention. He was lodgement in District Jail, Baramulla.

"Based on the above discussion, the petition is disposed of and Detention Order no. 24/ DMP/PSA/2020 issued by District Magistrate, Pulwama is quashed. As a corollary, (officials) are directed to set (him) at liberty forthwith provided he is not required in any other case," the court said.

The court also quashed detention order by District Magistrate, Pulwama whereby Mohammad Iqbal Hafiz of Prichoo Pulwama was placed under preventive detention.

"The petition is disposed of and Detention Order no.35/DMP/PSA/2019 dated 18.07.2019, issued by District Magistrate, Pulwama is quashed," the court said. "As a corollary, (officials) are directed to set the (detainee) at liberty forthwith provided he is not required in any other case."

The court also quashed District Magistrate Shopian's order, placing one Shakir Ahmad Mir of Zainapora, District Shopian under preventive detention in terms of J&K Public Safety Act on 10 August 2019.

"...the Detention Order no.41/DMS/PSA/2019 dated 10.08.2019, issued against Shakir Ahmad Mir is quashed. As a corollary, (officials) are directed to set (him) at liberty forthwith provided he is not required in any other case." (GNS)

Pakistani Smuggler

with a consignment of drugs, the Punjab police team led by SSP Dhruv Dahiya along with Border Security Force (BSF) troops launched a joint operation at the Kakkar border outpost (BOP), the officials said.

During the operation, the movement of a Pakistani smuggler was noticed. The smuggler fired at the Indian troops and was killed when they returned the fire under Lopoke police station area, a senior police official said.

A joint combing operation was launched at the site and 22 packets of heroin (weighing 22.660 kg), one SAIGA - MK Rifle (semi-automatic rifle) along with two magazines and 24 live rounds of 7.50 mm, one AK - 47 rifle along with two magazines and 21 live rounds of 7.62 mm, Pakistani currency, one mobile phone along with two Pakistani SIMs (Telenor and Jazz), and a pipe which bore a 'made in

Pakistan' marking were recovered, the Punjab police said in a statement.

During preliminary investigation, it was found that the smuggler was known to his two Indian associates, it said.

The police have registered an FIR against the two associates -- Jagdish Bhura, who is a militant of Khalistan Zindabad Force and currently based in Belgium; and Jaspal Singh, a resident of Ferozepur's Gatti village, who has been arrested.

Singh was in close contact with Bhura and was involved in the smuggling of composite drugs and weapon consignments across the border in Amritsar sector, according to the statement.

Singh is learnt to have close links with Pakistan's ISI, the statement quoted SSP Dhaiya as saying.

A case has been registered under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, the Arms Act, the Foreigners Act and the Indian Passport Act at the Lopoke police station, the statement said.

Director General of Police (DGP), Punjab, Dinkar Gupta said follow-up action is being taken to unearth the entire network of border couriers and Bhura's associates who are active on the India-Pakistan border, as well as to establish the entire network of his foreign and Indian associates.

"Arrest of Jaspal Singh is also likely to lead to further vital disclosures regarding the physical and financial flows associated with the recovered drugs and weapons consignment," Gupta said. (PTI)

2 Dead As Oil

into action and retrieved the bodies of Mohinder Pal and Dhayaan Singh, both in their early 20s, from the ill-fated vehicle.

Two others, Surjeet Singh and Tariq, sustained serious injuries in the accident and were rushed to hospitals, the official said, adding that Singh was referred to the Government Medical College (GMC) hospital in Jammu for specialised treatment. (PTI)

Leopard Captured

They said the wildlife department along with police immediately swung into action and the leopard was finally caught around 2.30 pm.

Several persons including an employee of the wildlife department suffered minor injuries after coming face to face with the beast during the operation, the officials said.

It was the second leopard caught alive by the wildlife department in as many days.

A leopard that strayed into Green Belt Park in posh Gandhi Nagar locality of Jammu city was captured by the wildlife department. Two wildlife employees and a civilian were injured by the leopard before it was caught and shifted to Manda zoo in the city. (PTI)

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Indian Judo Team Withdraws From Olympic Qualifiers After Two Players Test COVID-19 Positive



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: A 15-member Indian judo team was forced to withdraw from the ongoing Asia-Oceania Olympic qualifiers in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan after two judokas -- Ajay Yadav and Ritu -- tested positive for COVID-19 just before the start of the tournament.

Yadav, a 73kg class judoka, and Ritu (52kg) tested positive in the second test conducted after landing in Kyrgyzstan and both are asymptomatic. It became the first instance of an Indian contingent's campaign being derailed at an Olympic qualifier because of the dreaded virus.

All the 15 judokas and four coaches had returned negative in the first test conducted after landing in the central Asian country. The entire 19-member contingent is currently in quarantine at a hotel in Bishkek.

"After landing in Kyrgyzstan on April 4, there was a test done and all of us returned negative. But in the second test on April 5 just before the start of tournament, Ajay and Ritu returned positive," team coach Jiwan Sharma told PTI from Bishkek.

"Ajay and Ritu are asymptomatic and they are self isolating at their respective rooms. They are in high spirits and we have been talking and giving encouragement to them through phone," he said.

The Asia-Oceania Championships in Bishkek started on Tuesday and will end on Saturday.

Under the tournament rules,

if any player tests positive, the entire team will have to pull out.

Prominent judokas in the team included Shushila Devi (women's 48kg), Jasleen Singh Saini (men's 66kg), Tulika Mann (women's 78kg) and Avtar Singh (men's 100kg).

All the four were in the race for one continental quota place.

The Sports Authority of India (SAI), in a statement, said that both the judokas who tested positive for COVID-19 "don't have major symptoms and have been quarantined in a safe facility".

"The judokas underwent four rounds of testing between March 30 and April 5 -- two before leaving (India) and one after landing in Bishkek and one day before the competition.

"It was during the fourth test before the competition that the two were found COVID positive," the SAI said.

"The players are safe in a hotel with their daily requirements being looked after by the money allocated to them as daily allowance for the competition."

The rest of the contingent is also in quarantine at the same hotel in Bishkek and the team management is seeking assistance from the Indian Embassy there.

"We are talking to Sports Authority of India (SAI) as well as the Indian Embassy here. We are requesting that some members who tested negative be allowed to return home. Obviously, the two players will have to be looked after.

Fakhar Zaman's Incredible Knock Helps Him Climb Seven Places In ICC Rankings

Press Trust of India

DUBAI: Pakistan opener Fakhar Zaman has moved seven places to be 12th in the latest ICC ODI batsmen rankings, following his 193 against South Africa in the second ODI in Johannesburg. Zaman played a knock for the ages on Sunday before being run out in the last over, breaking the record for the highest score in an ODI innings when batting second.

From the South African camp, Rassie van der Dussen's innings of 123 not out and 60 in the first two ODIs helped him up to a career-best 22nd place. Skipper Temba Bavuma's 92 in the second match also has helped him to a career-best 88th place with the bat.

In bowlers, pacer Anrich Nortje started the series with figures of 4-51 and 3-63 to move to a career-best 73rd place with 427 points. His compatriot, Haris Rauf took five wickets in the first two ODIs to gain 71 places to 143rd.

In the T20I format of the game, Kiwi debutant Finn Allen smashed a 71 from 29 balls in the rain-affected



third match against Bangladesh to move into the world's top 100 for batsmen. His teammate, Tim Southee remains the top-ranked seamer in sixth place, up to a career-best 669 points after taking 3-15 in the final match against Bangladesh.

In the Test rankings, Kraigg Brathwaite was the major mover with the bat up 21 places to 43rd. He is at his highest points tally since August 2019. Oshada Fernando's second innings unbeaten 66 helped him gain 11 places to 61. Jason Holder held on to top place in the all-rounder rankings owing to his innings of 30 and 71 not out plus 2-39 against Sri Lanka.

36 Persons, Including 24 Athletes, Test Positive For COVID-19 At SAI Bhopal

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: As many as 24 sportspersons and 12 support staff members have tested positive for the coronavirus at the Sports Authority of India's (SAI) Bhopal centre but none of the athletes are Olympics-bound.

According to SAI, the positive cases came to light during two rounds of precautionary tests on April 3 and 6.

The SAI Bhopal Center doesn't house any Olympic probable.

"In the two rounds of testing, a total of 36 people have tested positive for Covid, out of whom 24 are athletes, and the other 12 who are staff of NCOE (National Centre of Excellence)," a SAI official told PTI when enquired about the tests.

"None of the athletes who have tested positive are Olympics-bound. Some of the athletes who tested positive had returned from wushu and judo competitions."

In order to contain the spread of



the virus, the athletes, who have tested positive, have been shifted to a hospital as a precautionary measure.

"None of the athletes are critical."

The SAI had further instructed all the NCOEs to strictly follow its existing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) with stress on conducting regular precautionary tests.

On March 31, 30 sportspersons and support staff across disciplines were found to be COVID-19 positive after 741 precautionary tests were conducted at the National Centres of Excellence in Patiala and Bengaluru.

However, the positive results in both the centres did not include any Tokyo Olympic-bound athlete.

'ICC Have Backup Plans For T20 World Cup In India,' Says Interim CEO

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: ICC's interim CEO Geoff Allardice on Wednesday said the body has backup plans in place for the T20 World Cup in India later this year but is currently not entertaining any thoughts of moving it out of the country despite a surge in COVID-19 cases.

The tournament is scheduled to be held in October-November in India, which is reporting over one lakh daily cases for the past few days. Amid the COVID surge, the IPL is due to start on Friday in Chennai behind closed doors.

"We are certainly proceeding on the assumption that the event is going ahead as planned," Allardice said during a virtual media round-table.

"Plan B we have, but we haven't activated those plans yet. We are working with the BCCI, we do have backup plans that can be activated if the time comes.

"We're not oblivious to what is going on around the world and we continue to take updates on all aspects of how sporting events are being run and the situation in each country.

"Cricket is being played in a number of countries around the world, we're taking lessons from all of those and proceeding as planned.

"We do have back-up plans that can be activated when the time is right. We're not anywhere near that timeline yet. We've got a number of months to be able to see how the situation is and how cricket events are being run."

Allardice, ICC's general manager - cricket, was recently made the interim CEO after Manu Sawhney was sent on "leave" after his conduct came under the scanner during an internal investigation by UK-based audit firm PricewaterhouseCoopers.

The 53-year-old Australian, who has played domestic cricket in his country, said the ICC is also in touch with other sports bodies to understand how they are managing in the COVID era.

"Cricket is being played in a number of countries at the moment and



we are learning from all of them.

"We have been talking to others sports bodies about what they are doing, we are in a reasonably good shape at the moment but acknowledge that the world is changing at a rapid rate.

"We have also got the World Test Championship final coming up in two months' time, but we are proceeding with both as planned," he said.

The UAE, which hosted the IPL last year, could be one of the back-up venues for the shortest format's biggest international event should the situation demand a shift.

During the interaction, he was also asked about the Decision Review System (DRS), of which the contentious Umpire's Call is a part, something that was dubbed confusing by India captain Virat Kohli during the limited overs engagements against England.

Allardice said there was "a good discussion" on DRS during the recent ICC Board Meeting.

"DRS was designed to overturn the clear errors. There has been no wholesale changes in it.

"I think more and more when you see a replay, the natural reaction is what can we do. Overruling a clear error... We have got to a point where we are using technology to get correct decisions but striving for perfection becomes impossible.

"We are very comfortable with where we are at the moment," he said.

Allardice acknowledged the challenges countries are facing in

order to host cricket matches and tournaments in terms of maintaining communication with their respective governments.

He is of the opinion that players must get vaccinated whenever possible and that is also the ICC's recommendation, though it falls outside the apex cricket body's ambit.

"I think our medical committee and the board are recommending that participants should be vaccinated wherever possible," he said.

"But the dynamics in each country will be different with the supply of the vaccine and the availability of vaccinations and where sports people or international sports people might be in the queue.

"The ICC wouldn't be able to influence that at a national level but our overall message has been that we recommend participants coming to our events in future are vaccinated wherever possible."

Allardice also admitted that COVID-19 has affected the women's game.

When asked if the pandemic has pushed back women's cricket just at a time when it was gaining momentum following the roaring success of the last T20 World Cup in Australia, he said, "Last 3-4 years the momentum we built around international cricket is fantastic. The final (between India and Australia) (at a packed) MCG was a special moment. "Then COVID hit and made life very difficult to re-establish it. That will be the focus in the next 12 months."

IPL 2021: Rajasthan Royals – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities And Threats



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: A restructured Rajasthan Royals will aim to build a new legacy but a weak Indian contingent and overdependence on foreign recruits could hurt the inaugural edition winners' chance for glory in the upcoming IPL.

Last season's wooden spooners, RR have made some changes in management as well as the squad ahead of the new season. Sanju Samson replaced Australian Steve Smith, who was released, as skipper while coach Andrew McDonald has also gone with Sri Lankan legend Kumar Sangakkara stepping in as director of cricket.

To strengthen their pace attack which was heavily dependent on Jofra Archer, RR bought South African all-rounder Chris Morris for a whopping Rs 16.25 crore, making him the most expensive buy in the IPL auction history.

However, an injury to Archer, who was adjudged the league's Most Valuable Player last season, ruling him out of at least the first few games, is a massive blow.

Here's is a SWOT analysis of the side that will take on Punjab Kings in Mumbai on April 12.

STRENGTH:

RR boast of a number of destructive batsmen. Jos Buttler and Ben Stokes are two match-winning players who can trample any opposition while Samson is a minefield of talent.

South Africans David Miller and Morris are two other powerful strikers and England's T20 specialist Liam Livingstone can turn the match on its head. Last season's revelation, all-rounder Rahul Tewatia, has also showcased his ability to whack the ball outside the park.

With Sangakkara on their side, the Royals have got one of the most astute brains. The Sri Lankan veteran has tons of cricketing experience to offer.

WEAKNESS:

For Royals, the problem is their weak Indian core which hasn't been consistent. Samson has rarely performed in five straight games in any of the editions in the past few years. Pacer Jaydev

Unadkat, bought for Rs 11.5 crore in 2018, has been unable to deliver while Manan Vohra has been brilliant only on rare occasions.

This leaves the team with youngsters, including Riyan Parag and pacer Kartik Tyagi, who has shown flashes of brilliance, Yashasvi Jaiswal and pacer Kartik Tyagi, who was also impressive.

The Royals have an affinity to spend huge bucks on players and apart from Stokes, most of them have not paid dividends.

OPPORTUNITY:

Samson's form and consistency have always been a question mark. He has failed to capitalise on the handful of chances provided to him in T20Is.

With Suryakumar Yadav and Ishan Kishan doing brilliantly on their T20 debuts, the Kerala wicketkeeper batsman's chances to make the Indian team for the World Cup have taken a hit.

This is the perfect opportunity for him to prove his leadership skills and a good, consistent performance with the bat will significantly strengthen his case for selection for the two upcoming T20 World Cups.

THREAT:

With Samson at the helm, his lack of experience in the role and the impact that it might have on his batting are factors that must be taken into account. The flamboyant right-hander may not be able to play with the same freedom now that he has the tag of captain next to his name. His inexperience might also cost the Royals dearly in crunch situations.

The team won matches on the back of some brilliant individual performances but struggled to work as a cohesive unit last season. Consistency will be the key.

The team is heavily dependent on Archer. While they have Morris to rely on, the pace attack seems weak in the 26-year-old England pacer's absence. The franchise would desperately hope Archer joins the side at the earliest.

With a weak Indian contingent, comprising several rookies and over-reliance on their foreign recruits, there is real threat the Royals would once again not qualify for the playoffs.

RCB's Daniel Sams Tests Positive For COVID-19, Padikkal Recovers



Press Trust of India

CHENNAI: Royal Challengers Bangalore's Australian all-rounder Daniel Sams on Wednesday tested positive for COVID-19 ahead of the IPL starting on April 9 here, but opener Devdutt Padikkal recovered from the dreaded infection to join the side.

According to a statement issued by RCB on its twitter handle, the 28-year-old all-rounder arrived in India on April 3 and had a negative COVID-19 test report at that time. RCB will take on defending champions Mumbai Indians in the tournament-opener on Friday.

"His (Sams') report from the 2nd test on 7th April came positive. Sams is currently asymptomatic and he is currently in isolation at a designated medical facility," the RCB said.

"Royal Challengers Bangalore medical team is in constant touch with Daniel Sams and continue to monitor his health and abide by the BCCI protocols."

Sams was traded to the RCB this season from Delhi Capitals. He became the second RCB player to test positive for the infection after left-handed opening bats-

man Padikkal.

Padikkal, however, came out negative in the latest round of testing. The 20-year-old had been in home quarantine since March 22 after being infected. He was RCB's highest scorer last season with 473 runs from 15 matches.

"Devidutt Padikkal, has joined the team on 7th April 2021 with negative reports for COVID-19 as per BCCI protocols. RCB medical team was in constant touch with Devdutt to ensure his safety and well-being," the franchise stated in a separate release.

Sams has played in only three IPL games. He made his league debut last season for Delhi Capitals.

On Tuesday, Mumbai Indians' wicket-keeping consultant and talent scout Kiran More had also tested positive for the virus, but all other members of the defending champions' squad returned negative reports.

IPL 2021 has been hit hard by the coronavirus even before its start as a number of ground-staff at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai, broadcast crew event management officials, and some cricketers, including the likes of Axar Patel and Nitish Rana, have contracted the infection.



'Realised Importance Of Mental Health While Playing For India,' Says Hardik Pandya

Press Trust of India

CHENNAI: India and Mumbai Indians hard-hitting all-rounder Hardik Pandya on Wednesday said he realized the importance of mental health while playing international cricket and credited his family for keeping him in the "right space".

"When I play international cricket, mentally I realised, because the kind of pressure that came into your life. Obviously, life change for us, but as an individual, you need to cope with all the things," Hardik said in a video posted by Mumbai Indians on its official Twitter handle.

"So for me I realized that mental health is also important, where my family played a big role to make sure

that I am in right space." The focus on mental health has grown in the last year with the COVID-19 pandemic forcing players to stay in bio-bubbles, where their life is restricted to hotels and stadiums.

The 27-year-old will turn up for Mumbai Indians in the lung-opener of the Indian Premier League when the defending champions take on Royal Challengers Bangalore on Friday here.

Hardik, who has played 60 ODIs and 48 T20s, also dwelled on the importance of physical fitness on the occasion of World Health Day.

"Just making sure that in the day, you are doing some activity which is adding to your fitness, that's very important. And if you look after small things, it's going to be grateful that it is going to look after your body," he said.

Hardik's brother Krunal, who recently made his India ODI debut against England, said he also works hard for the "inner happiness and peace".

"When we work hard, we work hard for that inner happiness, that inner peace where you can sleep for eight hours, you can laugh for 4-5 hours," said Krunal, who also played T20s for India and has been a vital part of Mumbai Indians.

Mumbai Indians spinners Rahul Chahar and Anukul Roy also spoke on the importance of physical fitness.

"From the time I started playing, as a child, it was clear how important physical health is," said Chahar.

Roy said: "Maintaining a proper diet is essential, and following the diet is always going to be beneficial."

Pak Army Chief Bajwa Discusses Defence Regional Security With Russian FM Lavrov

Press Trust of India

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa said on Wednesday that Islamabad has no hostility towards any country and will work for regional cooperation, as he held talks with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on matters of mutual interest, including enhanced defence ties, regional security, and the Afghan peace process.

Lavrov, who arrived here on Tuesday from India, met Bajwa on the last day of his two-day visit at the headquarters of the Pakistan Army in Rawalpindi, according to a statement by the Army.

"We have no hostile designs towards any country and will keep on working towards a cooperative regional framework based on sovereign equality and mutual progress," Bajwa said.

He said Pakistan values its relationship with Russia and recip-

rocates the desire for enhanced bilateral military cooperation, the statement said.

General Bajwa also offered support for efforts to bring peace in Afghanistan.

"Pakistan welcomes all initiatives which can bring peace and stability in Afghanistan as the whole region will benefit from it," he said.

Lavrov acknowledged Pakistan's achievements in the war against terrorism and contributions to regional peace and stability, especially Pakistan's sincere efforts in the Afghan peace process, the statement said.

He said Pakistan-Russia relations were on a positive trajectory and will continue to develop in multiple domains.

Earlier, Lavrov also called on Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan and held delegation-level talks with his counterpart Shah Mahmood Qureshi. PTI

Wearing Of Mask While Driving Alone Mandatory During Pandemic: Delhi HC



Agenceis

Wearing a mask while driving alone in a private vehicle is compulsory in the context of COVID-19, the Delhi High Court said on Wednesday and described the face covering as a 'suraksha kavach', or protective shield, against the spread of the infection.

Justice Prathiba M Singh also refused to interfere with the Delhi government's decision to impose challans for not wearing a mask while driving a private car alone, saying a vehicle even if occupied by one person would constitute a public place.

"Wearing of a mask therein would be compulsory in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic," the court said. Masks are necessary irrespective of whether a person is vaccinated or not, it added.

Justice Singh's ruling and observations came while dismissing four petitions by lawyers who challenged the imposition of challans for not wearing a mask while driving alone in a private vehicle.

"The wearing of a mask is like a 'suraksha kavach' for preventing the spread of COVID-19," the court said, noting that a mask pro-

fects the person wearing it and also those exposed to him or her.

The wearing of a face mask was "one measure which saved millions of lives" during the pandemic, it pointed out.

Being lawyers and advocates, the petitioners "ought to recognise and assist in the implementation of the measures for curtailing the spread of the pandemic, instead of questioning the legality of the same", the court said.

Compliance of the measures by lawyers would encourage the general public to also comply with the same. During the proceedings, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, represented by advocate Farman Ali Magray, had told the court that it has not issued any direction asking people to wear masks in a car when they are alone.

The ministry said health is a state subject and the Delhi government has to take a decision on it.

The Delhi government had told the court that wearing masks while driving an official or personal vehicle was made compulsory through an office order in April last year and it remained in force.

It also said a private vehicle was held to be a public place by the Supreme Court.

Anil Ambani's Son Anmol Lashes Out Against Lockdowns; Says It Is Only About Control Not Health

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Anmol Ambani, the eldest son of industrialist Anil Ambani, has lashed out against a new round of lockdowns being imposed amid the surge in COVID-19 cases, saying such restrictions do not concern health but control and that they destroy the very backbone of the society and economy.

The 29-year-old former executive director of Reliance Capital Ltd in a series of tweets lambasted the new semi-lockdown rules hurting small businesses and daily wage earners.

"Professional 'actors' can continue shooting their films. Professional 'cricketers' can play their sport late into the night. Professional 'politicians' can continue their rallies with masses of people. But YOUR business or work is not ESSENTIAL. Still don't get it?" he said in a tweet. He had in the past too voiced opposition to such restrictions and retweeted videos and comments denouncing them.

"What does essential even mean? EACH INDIVIDUALS WORK IS ESSENTIAL TO THEM," he said tweeting with hashtag #scamdemic.

Lockdowns, he said, are key in "continuing and enabling greatest wealth transfer in human history."

"The mistake is that the people think this is simply inefficient governance, it's not. It's a coordinated, thought out set of policies designed to enable a new world order to be brought in," he said.

For an economy that was seeking nascent recovery after the world's strictest lockdown last year pummelled business, a resurgence of the pandemic is posing a serious

threat. States have announced partial lockdowns in response to infections rising by record levels.

While Maharashtra has shut all non-essential services through April, the national capital has started night curfew.

The specter of another lockdown is now the biggest headwind for local businesses.

"These lockdowns were never about and have nothing to do with health," Ambani tweeted. "They destroy the very backbone of our society and economy, from the daily wage workers, self-employed and SMEs to the restaurants and dhabas, fashions and clothing stores." Lockdowns also destroy and diminish health by closing gyms, sports complexes and playgrounds, he said, adding that exercise, sunlight and fresh air are some of the strongest pillars of good health and strong immunity.

"And don't forget the psychological damage this is doing to children who are growing up through this madness and are being programmed to believe this is normal," he said.

Stating that lockdowns worsen inequality, he said shutting down of brick-and-mortar stores benefits digital and e-commerce companies, farmland is corporatised and colonised and data and privacy are sold to new-age empires.

"This is not about health. This is about control, and I would think most of us are unknowingly and unconsciously falling into the trap of a much larger and very sinister plan," he said. "To control every aspect of your life - A technocracy exactly like China - A totalitarian bio-surveillance fascist state-controlled from the outside."

India Reports Record 1.15 Lakh New Covid Infections



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The number of new coronavirus cases in India hit a record daily high since the outbreak of the pandemic with over 1.15 lakh new infections being reported in a span of 24 hours, pushing the nationwide COVID-19 tally to 1,28,01,785, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Wednesday.

The single-day rise in coronavirus cases breached the 1-lakh mark for the second time in three days.

A total of 1,15,736 infections were reported in a day, while the death toll increased to 1,66,177 with 630 daily new fatalities, the data updated at 8 am showed.

Registering a steady increase for the 28th day in row, the active cases have increased to 8,43,473 comprising 6.59 per cent of the total infections, while the recovery

rate has further dropped to 92.11 per cent, the data stated.

The active caseload was at its lowest at 1,17,92,135, on February 12 comprising 1.25 per cent of the total infections.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 1,17,92,135, while the case fatality rate has further dropped to 1.30 per cent, the data stated.

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5 and 50 lakh on September 16. It went past 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and surpassed the one-crore mark on December 19.

According to the ICMR, 25,14, 39,598 samples have been tested up to April 6 with 12,08, 339 samples being tested on Tuesday.

The 630 new fatalities include 297 from Maharashtra, 61 from Punjab, 53 from Chhattisgarh, 39 from Karnataka, 30 from Uttar Pradesh, 18 from Madhya Pradesh, 17 each from Delhi and Gujarat, 15 from Tamil Nadu, 14 from Kerala, 13 from Rajasthan.

A total of 1,66,177 deaths have been reported so far in the country including 56,330 from Maharashtra, 12,804 from Tamil Nadu, 12,696 from Karnataka, 11,113 from Delhi, 10,355 from West Bengal, 8,924 from Uttar Pradesh and 7,251 from Andhra Pradesh and 7,216 from Punjab.

The health ministry stressed that more than 70 per cent of the deaths occurred due to comorbidities.

"Our figures are being reconciled with the Indian Council of Medical Research," the ministry said on its website, adding that state-wise distribution of figures is subject to further verification and reconciliation. PTI

COVID-19 Variants, Susceptible Population, Slack In Following COVID Norms Behind Second Wave: Experts

Agenceis

Slack in following COVID appropriate behaviour, a susceptible population and spread of variants could be among the main reasons for the second wave of coronavirus that has hit the country, healthcare experts have said.

The number of new coronavirus cases in India touched a record daily high since the outbreak of the pandemic with over 1.15 lakh new infections being reported in a span of 24 hours, pushing the nationwide COVID-19 tally to 1,28,01,785 on

Wednesday.

The single-day rise in cases breached the one-lakh mark for the second time in three days.

Dr Giridhara R Babu, Professor and Head, Lifecourse Epidemiology, Public Health Foundation of India, said three important factors can be responsible for the surge of cases.

"Although the government has not acknowledged it as there is no clear evidence, there is definitely a role of new variants of concern which are more infectious and probably some of them are immune escape variants also and they are spreading

faster than the earlier versions," Babu told PTI.

Immune escape variants are not detected by the immune system. Some mutations confer this property to the virus and the antibodies are unable to detect it. The Brazil variant is generally not detected by antibodies and then there is a subgroup of South African variant that is also not detected, he said.

"Most importantly, the pace of vaccination is not as fast as one would expect India to be in. The pace at which the vulnerable have to be covered is not satisfactory," he said.

In Just 6 Months, Mumbai Migrants Ready To Pack-Up Again

Agenceis

Barely six months after they returned, thousands of migrants working in Mumbai and Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) are now re-packing their bags to go back home as Maharashtra is in the grip of a tsunami-like COVID 'second-wave'.

With night curfews, stringent daytime restrictions and a weekend lockdown imposed across the state, migrants from different parts of India are in a state of semi-panic, as daily new infections in the state soar in half-lakh-plus range.

A majority of them, especially the skilled and semi-skilled workers, were brought back from their homes in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Gujarat, Telangana, Odisha with great difficulties by their employers after the phase-wise Unlockedown that started in August 2020.

They were employed in the lakhs of small or medium industries, small factories, workshops, warehouses, hotels, restaurants, delivery chains, big and small offices or commercial establishments, and even large retail outlets or shopping centres and in farmlands in rural areas.

Barely had they settled down in the past six months or so, the

son and Congress BMC Municipal Corporator Haji Babu Khan said that this year, the Covid situation appears many times worse than in 2020.

"Last year, the people were left to fend for themselves and somehow survived. There were helping hands who gave them food, shelter, medicines. This year, that is missing as even the NGOs and charitable organisations have exhausted their resources. Now, the situation is grimmer than 2020," Khan said.

Sonawane, Khan and others say that while 80 per cent of Dharavi's estimated migrant labour force had returned by October, now more than half of them are preparing to return over the next few days or so.

A Mulund hotelier C.D. Shetty said with the current norms permitting only home delivery of parcels, the employees are facing an uncertain future again and want to return to their homes.

"We don't want them to go back and are ready to care for them, but for how long Without income, how can we keep bearing the expenses with absolutely no relief or financial help from the government," rued Shetty.

Refuting reports that migrants are allegedly thronging major railway termini to flee the state, Central Railway Spokesperson Shivaji Sutar said "this is far from the truth".



spectre of yet another 'mega-migration' stares at the migrant workers in the state, though there are no hysterical reactions so far.

The Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party, Maharashtra Navnirman Sena, Aam Aadmi Party and others have slammed the Maha Vikas Aghadi government for the semi-lockdown scenario which is playing havoc with the peoples' livelihood.

"Last year, the migrants experienced first-hand the tortures of fleeing to their small towns or villages surmounting great hurdles. This time, they are mentally better prepared and are planning to clear out before the situation worsens," Dharavi Leather Goods Manufacturing Association Working President Rajesh Sonawane told IANS.

Sonawane said that migrant crowds are swelling at various railway stations in the MMR with many resorting to hiring touts to get them confirmed tickets to board the outbound trains.

The Dharavi Garments Manufacturers Association spokesper-

"There is no panic booking of any kind. The crowds seen at the stations are people with routine bookings, the extra trains deployed are part of the restoration process on since June 2020 and we have achieved nearly 75 per cent so far, and the regular summer specials are introduced to cater to the annual holiday rush," Sutar said.

A diamond polisher working with a Mumbai firm, Aseem Shah said that he returned to the city post-Divali, but did not expect things would deteriorate again so rapidly.

"I am waiting and watching not rushing home immediately But if needed, I have saved enough to ensure my family and I can leave the city comfortably if things worsen. Given such disruptions, I am not sure whether it would be worthwhile to return to Mumbai in future," a glum Shah said.

Meanwhile, shopkeepers, traders, businessmen, manufacturer and allied communities in Mumbai, MMR and other major production centres have been protesting against the newly imposed norms since the past three days.

NEWSMAKERS

"I Am Bengal Tigress, Will Break But Won't Bend": Mamata Banerjee

Agenceis

Cooch Behar (West Bengal): Lashing out against the rival Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee today termed herself "Bengal tigress", who will "not bend" in front of the BJP.

Speaking at a public gathering in Cooch Behar, Ms Banerjee said: "They (BJP) will bring goons from Assam. They will explode bombs and threaten people. Do not be afraid. They do not want our mothers and sisters to vote. Central forces are blocking ur mothers and sisters from voting."

She claimed that if the BJP comes to power in the state, they will build detention camps like in Assam. "They have kept 14 lakh Bengalis in detention camps, who have no future. We are fighting for those poor people. They were not even voting, police made raids on them."

"BJP cannot do anything to me with

their money. I am a Bengal tigress, I break but I do not bend," she further remarked.

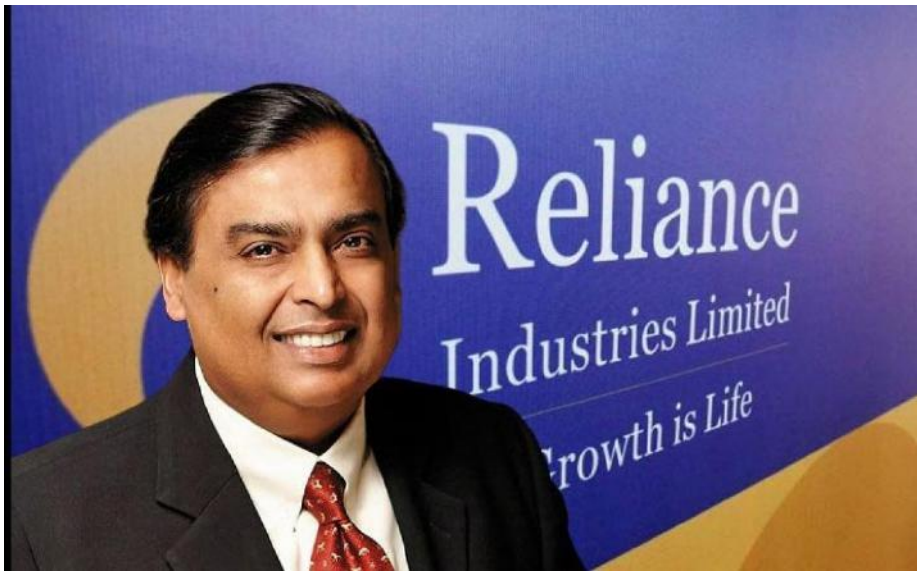
Ms Banerjee appealed to the people to vote for the Trinamool Congress (TMC) if they did not want to see "Gujaratis capturing Bengal". She also raised slogans such as "BJP hatao" and "BJP ke chai na" (We do not want BJP).

"We will not let Gujaratis capture Bengal. Bengal will stay in Bengal, we will not let goons from Gujarat take over Bengal," she said. West Bengal has witnessed three out of the eight phased polls so far to the 294-member state Assembly. Counting of votes will be held on May 2.

The fourth phase of the elections is set to commence on April 10. A total of 373 candidates will contest for 44 constituencies in the upcoming phase, which will encompass five districts of West Bengal - Cooch Behar, Alipurduar, South 24 Parganas, Howrah and Hooghly.



Mukesh Ambani India's Richest In Forbes List, Gautam Adani 2nd



Agenceis

New Delhi: Reliance Industries Chairman Mukesh Ambani reclaimed the top spot in the Forbes list of India's 10 richest billionaires with a net worth of \$4.5 billion dollars.

Mr Ambani was followed by Adani Group chief Gautam Adani and HCL founder Shiv Nadar.

Put together, the three richest Indians add over 100 billion dollars, as per Forbes. Forbes also said that the total number of Indian billionaires rose to 140 this year from 102 last year and their combined wealth nearly doubled to 596 billion dollars.

Mukesh Ambani, who is also

Asia's richest person, diversified his oil and gas empire and dived into sectors such as telecom and retail, which resulted in him retaining the top position.

Amid the Covid-19 pandemic, Mr Ambani accomplished a fund-raising feat, garnering \$3 billion dollars through a string of deals to achieve his target of reducing his flagship Reliance Industries' net debt to zero by 2021.

Gautam Adani, an infrastructure tycoon, got 42 billion dollars richer as shares of his companies Adani Enterprises and Adani Green Energy soared. Mr Adani unseated Radhakishan Dhamaani who was previously the second-richest Indian. Forbes said that

Mr Adani's wealth increased five-fold since 2020.

Mr Adani acquired a 74 per cent stake in Mumbai International Airport, the country's second-busiest, last September. He also sold 20 per cent in his listed renewable firm, Mr Adani Green Energy, to French energy giant Total for 2.5 billion dollars.

In the top ten richest Indians' list, two Indians featured who earned their spot owing to investments in the healthcare sector which has witnessed a boost owing to the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic. These two are: Cyrus Poonawalla of the Serum Institute of India (SII) and Sun Pharmaceutical Industries' Dilip Shanghavi.