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P3 CITY

TOP SRINAGAR HOTEL SHUT AFTER STAFFERS, OWNER TEST COVID POSITIVE

Ahdoos Hotel on Residency Road in Srinagar has been shut after several of its staffers and the owner tested positive for coronavirus on Saturday. Manager Ahdoos Hotel – one of the

THINK

P7 LOCKDOWNS AND CURFEWS

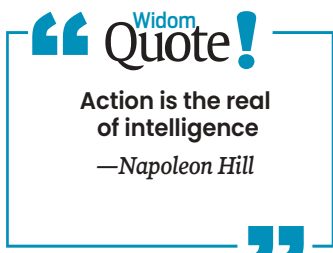
The world has been struggling under travel bans, lockdowns and limits on freedom for the last year because of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, Kashmir has had a much longer and more bitter experience of such restrictions. London-based Kashmiri...



P5 STATE

AVOID EXCESSIVE USE OF HEATING GADGETS TO GET BETTER POWER SUPPLY: CE PDD

Chief Engineer power development department, Aijaz Ah Dar on Saturday urged people to desist from using heating appliances lavishly during Sehri and Iftaar time for the purposes of....



5TH RAMAZAN		
	Iftar TODAY	Sehri TOMMOROW
FIQAH HANAFIYA	07:06	04:28
FIQAH JAFARIYA	07:14	04:26

NEWS DIGEST

Police Probes

Woman's Bullet Injury

SRINAGAR: Police on Saturday said that it has started investigation of a incident in which a woman sustained bullet injury during night hours in Tral area of south Kashmir's Pulwama district. 36-year-old Shakeela Banu, wife of Ghulam Nabi sustained bullet injuries at her home ● [More On P10](#)

3 OGWs Held In Budgam: Police

SRINAGAR: Police on Saturday claimed to have arrested three alleged militant associates of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) in central Kashmir's Budgam district. The alleged OGWs Adil Ahmad Dar, Tahir Ahmad Bhat both residents of Narbal and Ghulam Mohd Gojre of ● [More On P10](#)

BSF Man Dies Of Haemorrhage

SRINAGAR: A Border Security Force (BSF) man, posted at Trehgam area of north Kashmir's Kupwara district died due to brain haemorrhage, officials said on Saturday. Constable Mushtaq Ahmad of 172 Bn. BSF posted at Trehgam ● [More On P10](#)

2 Motorcyclists Electrocuted

SRINAGAR: Two motorcycle borne youths died on Saturday after receiving electric shock in Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir. Suresh Sharma and Aditya Naqsh, both residents of Samba district died on the spot after an 11 KV electricity supply line got snapped and fell on ● [More On P10](#)

Snowfall Shuts Gurez Road

SRINAGAR: Bandipora-Gurez road was again closed for traffic after fresh snowfall en route, officials said on Saturday. They said that the snowfall started overnight and snow depth of six inches was recorded at Razdan Top, located at an elevation of near 12000ft. ● [More On P10](#)

Govt Gears Up To Battle Coronavirus Challenge

Ceiling On Social Gatherings Restricted To 100 In J&K



Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Concerned over the spike in coronavirus cases, the Jammu and Kashmir administration on Saturday restricted the ceiling on social gatherings to 100 people and also announced the postponement of Class 11 examination.

The latest directive comes two days after Lt Governor Manoj Sinha-led administration deferred biannual "darbar move" to Srinagar, extended closure of all schools up to and including

Class 12 till April 30 along with private coaching centres. It also cancelled the ongoing Class 10 examination being conducted by the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (JKBOSE).

"In view of #COVID-19, class 11th exams have been postponed. There will also be a ceiling on gatherings and functions restricting to 100 persons from earlier 200," the office of the Lt Governor said in a tweet.

There has been a spike in coronavirus cases in Jammu and Kashmir over ● [More On P10](#)

SMHS, Allied Hospitals Stop OPD, Surgeries

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Amid spurt in covid-19 cases, the Principal Government Medical College Srinagar on Saturday ordered that all routine OPDs/elective surgeries shall be stopped till further orders in all its associated hospitals.

The Principal has also designated Drug de-Addiction Centre and various rooms for management of the

virus patients with immediate effect.

"In view of upsurge in the COVID-19 cases and in order to cater to rush of COVID-19 patients/ suspects, it is hereby ordered with immediate effect till further orders that Ward No. 02, 03, 04,18, 19, 20, Isolation/ Drug De-Addiction Centre, Paid Rooms, MICU, SICU, W-17 and Disaster Management ward shall be ● [More On P10](#)

1,145 New Corona Cases, 3 More Deaths

Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday recorded 1,145 fresh COVID-19 cases, including 195 travellers, bringing the infection count to 1,45,166, while three more people succumbed to the virus, raising ● [More On P10](#)

717 Travellers Tested Positive In One Week

With the recent spurt in Covid-19 positive cases in Jammu and Kashmir, officials from the Health Department said that 3 per cent of the COVID-19 positive cases are being ● [More On P10](#)

Virtual Hearing Of Court Cases Till April 30

Jammu and Kashmir High Court extended by the end of this month its order regarding virtual hearing of cases amid surge in Covid-19 upsurge.

"After taking note of the rising trend of Covid-19 infection cases and the prevailing situation due to the spread of such infection, the High Court order No. 189 of 2021/RG dated 05.04.2021, is extended up to 30th April 2021," reads an order by Registrar General, Jawad Ahmad. The April 5 order was issued ● [More On P10](#)

Sacked Woman Cop Suspected To Be OGW: Police

'Booked For Raising Anti-India, Pro-Freedom Slogans' Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A day after police sacked and arrested a woman cop for allegedly glorifying militancy; police on Saturday dismissed "over-reach" and an "excessively strict action" against the Special Police Official (SPO) saying she was a suspected over-ground worker of militants and was booked on charges of shouting anti-India and pro-freedom slogans.

Saima Akhter, a resident of Frisal area of south Kashmir district and working as SPO, was

on Friday arrested under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, a police spokesperson said.

In a rebuttal issued on Saturday, a police spokesperson said that it has been found that on various media platforms, a number of vested interests with malafide intentions have put in a lot of efforts into making the incident appear like an "over-reach" and an "excessively strict action."

"It is clarified that the accused woman uttered anti-India and pro-freedom slogans off-camera thus ● [More On P10](#)

Woman Injured As CRPF Men Open Fire At Car

Agenceis

SRINAGAR: A woman was injured on Saturday after security forces fired on a vehicle which did not stop at two checkpoints in Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir, police said.

The vehicle driver, Junaid Tariq Dar, a resident of Handwara in north Kashmir's Kupwara district, has been arrested, they said.

At about 3:15 pm, the vehicle was signaled to stop at Awantipora Chowk by a police party, but the driver sped away and hit police official Naser Ullah, a police spokesman said.

The driver again refused to stop the vehicle at Padgampora bridge and the CRPF personnel deployed at the ● [More On P10](#)

Rs 12.5K Crore Earmarked For Overall District Plan: LG



Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Lt Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday announced that more than Rs 12,599 crore have been earmarked for the overall district plan this year in Jammu and Kashmir, and said 'Janbhagidari' would be the foundation of formulation and implementation of district development plans.

He said aspirations and expectations of the common people

and elected representatives, besides needs of the districts would be reflected in the plans.

Sinha made the remarks during a meeting via video conference with all the 20 deputy commissioners to discuss the effective formulation of district development plans.

"The formulation of District Development Plans is of immense significance, especially after the constitution of District Development ● [More On P10](#)

EGI Slams Police Advisory On Live Encounters

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Terming the recently issued advisory to journalists on live encounters by police as "draconian and undemocratic", the Editors Guild of India (EGI) on Saturday demanded immediate withdrawal of the dictat saying that live reporting from conflict areas was one of the most important journalistic duties and requires extreme grit and determination on the part of reporters.

In a statement issued in New Delhi on Saturday, the EGI demanded the withdrawal of Kashmir Police's advisory forbidding journalists from reporting live encounters with militants on the specious plea that it is "likely to incite violence" or that it can promote ● [More On P10](#)

Amid Strained Ties, 'Invest In Turkey' Billboards Surface In Srinagar

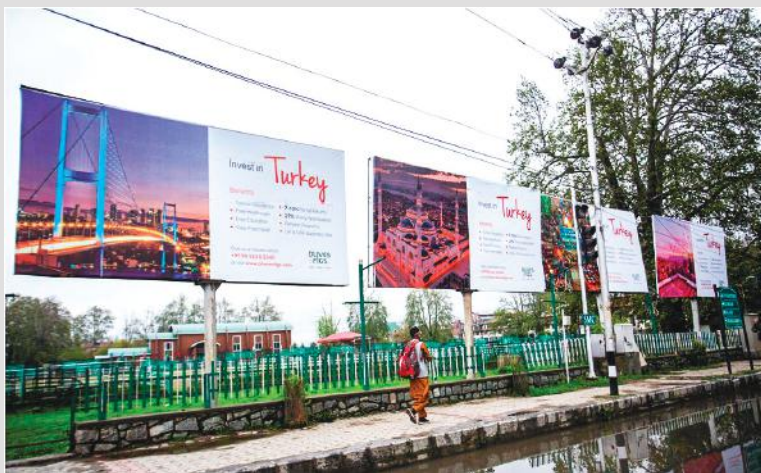
Auqib Javeed

SRINAGAR'S iconic business hub the Poloview has become an eye-catching site for an ironic commercial.

A number of advertising hoardings asking Kashmiris to "Invest in Turkey" have come up amid strained diplomatic ties between India and Turkey.

The departure from the usual sight has already set the speculations rife with many wondering, "Is it a new beginning in the ties of the two hostile nations locking horns over Kashmir till yesterday?"

The hoardings have been placed by New Delhi-based Immigration Consultancy, "Olives & Figs"—a boutique firm offering advisory service across three regions: UAE, Turkey



and India.

The Consultancy offers a number of

benefits including Turkish Residence, Free Healthcare, Free Education and

Visa-Free Travel.

A woman executive of the company told Kashmir Observer that they have placed the hoardings first in Mumbai and then in Srinagar, with an aim to help people to get benefits.

When asked who gave the permission for installing these hoardings across the city, the official said, "The management committee of the company must know about this."

The upper ladder of the company, however, stayed tight lipped about the Srinagar spectacle.

Meanwhile, feigning ignorance over the matter, an official from Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) said that they are not aware of such hoardings.

"We have given the contract of putting the hoardings to Alpine

company and their contract was over on April 14, 2021," Sofi Mohammad Akbar, Chief Revenue Officer, SMC told Kashmir Observer.

"We will remove all the hoardings in the coming days," he added.

Notably, India and Turkey enjoyed good bilateral relations over decades before tensions rose due to Ankara's constant support to Islamabad on various issues, including on Kashmir.

The bilateral ties further plummeted after the Narendra Modi government scrapped Article 370 in August 2019, withdrawing the special status of Jammu and Kashmir.

Soon after throwing his government's weight behind Imran Khan's "Kashmir's global ambassador" campaign, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in February 2020

compared the struggle of Kashmiris with the Ottoman Empire's World War I showdown.

"The troubles our Kashmiri brothers have suffered for decades have been exacerbated by the latest unilateral steps," Erdogan said.

The statement drew a sharp re-tort from external affairs ministry: "These remarks reflect neither an understanding of history nor of the conduct of diplomacy."

"These hoardings have come up at a time when Kashmiris are facing hounding for their Turkey trips," said a spokesman whose Istanbul trip last year fared on the police radar.

"It's like running with the hare and hunting with the hounds."

Interestingly, among those summoned for their ● [More On P10](#)



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KASHMIR
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Sunday| 18-04-2021

Researchers Find A New Treatment For Rare Muscular Disease

Agencies

University of Cincinnati researchers have found a newer, more effective treatment for the disease Pompe that could become the new standard of care for the rare condition. Rare diseases are sometimes the most difficult to treat because of a lack of research and fewer participants to study. An example would be those who have Pompe disease, a genetic condition when a body can't make a protein that breaks down a complex sugar, called glycogen, for energy. Too much glycogen builds up and damages muscles and organs. The disease causes muscle weakness and trouble breathing and can affect the heart and muscles. Hani Kushlaf, MD, an associate professor in both the Department of Neurology and Rehabilitation Medicine and the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at UC and principal investigator of a study led at UC, will present findings on

this new treatment virtually at the American Academy of Neurology on April 20. Kushlaf, a UC Health physician, says Pompe disease affects about 1 in 40,000 people in the United States. It can impact children, but it can also present later in life as well. Left untreated, it can result in progressive loss of function of muscles in limbs and respiration leading to the need for wheelchair use and respiratory support. "In this clinical trial, we tested a new drug, or enzyme replacement therapy (avalglucosidase alfa), to see if it was more effective and safer than the currently approved therapy, also an enzyme replacement therapy, in patients with late-onset Pompe disease," he says. "It turns out that it is safer and more effective than the current FDA-approved therapy. This new enzyme will likely become the standard of care for patients with the disease and has already been submitted for Food

and Drug Administration approval. This is a big deal for patients with this rare disease, as t-PA was for stroke." This study was double-blinded, meaning neither the participants nor the researchers knew which treatment was being administered via an infusion. In 51 patients who received the new treatment, researchers saw an improvement in respiratory muscle function, endurance and muscle strength, in addition to overall better quality of life, when compared to patients on the current standard of care therapy. "These results are extremely promising for finding a new and effective treatment for this disease," adds Kushlaf, who is also a member of the UC Gardner Neuroscience Institute. "With these results, we can take the next steps in having it used widely in this patient population, improving their outcomes and giving them a better life."

نام کی درستی
ہر خاص و عام کو بزرگوار و شہنشاہ مطلع کیا جاتا ہے کہ غلطی اسکول ریکارڈ میں میری بیٹی کا نام مسکان فکیل دیکھ کر فکیل احمد خان ساکنہ اندونو گام اندراج ہوا ہے جبکہ میری بیٹی کا اصلی نام مسکان شیردخت شیر احمد جام ساکنہ چیر پورہ چنی شیخ پورہ ماگرے پورہ ہے اب انکی درستی کرانی مطلوب ہے اس ضمن میں اگر کسی شخص یا اشخاص کو کوئی بھی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ سات دن کے اندر اندر اپنا عذر یا اعتراض انگلیش گریں و سے اسکول اترو سو کر بڑی کے دفتر میں پیش کریں۔ بصورت دیگر کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔
انشیز:- حنیظہ بانو والدہ مسکان شیرساکنہ چیر پورہ چنی شیخ پورہ ماگرے پورہ
mja

نام کی درستی
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mja

از دفتر نائب تحصیلدار انت ناگ با اجلاس زیر اہمیت صاحب
درخواست منجانب:- فیاض احمد شاہ ولد محمد امین شاہ ساکن کی بستی محمد بل انت ناگ تحصیل ضلع انت ناگ بزنس حصول لیگل ہیئر رٹیفکٹ
اشہار عام
معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں ساکن نے ایک درخواست بزنس حصول لیگل ہیئر رٹیفکٹ پیش کیا ہے حسب رپورٹ پٹواری حلقہ سے ساکن کا والد مصی محمد امین شاہ مورخہ 01/03/2020 کو فوت ہو چکا ہے اور موتی کے دارغان بڑیل گیا۔
نام صاحب کنید معد ولیدیت عمر رشتہ ہر اومتونی پیشہ
امیر امین یوہ محمد امین شاہ 55 سال بیوہ موتنی گھریلو کام
فرحت آرو دختر۔۔۔ 35 سال دختر موتنی شادی شدہ
فیاض احمد شاہ پسر۔۔۔ 30 سال پسر موتنی پرائیوٹ ملازم
مہشامین پسر۔۔۔ 27 سال۔۔۔ زیر تعلیم
مہوشامین دختر۔۔۔ 22 سال دختر موتنی۔۔۔
اس کے علاوہ اور کوئی فرد کنید میں موجود نہیں ہے لہذا اگر کسی شخص یا اشخاص کو مذکورہ رٹیفکٹ اجرا کرنے میں کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہوگا تو ایک ہفتہ کے اندر اندر دفتر بازہ میں پیش کریں بعد گزرنے معیا کو عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔
تخیر الصدر نائب تحصیلدار انت ناگ
mja

Office of the Assistant Regional Transport officer, Shopian

whereas an application has been received from one Shri Zahid Yaqoob Bhat S/o Mhd Yaqoob Bhat R/o Vehil Shopian Owner of the vehicle No JK22B-3149 for cancellation of Hire Purchase Agreement with M/S JK Bank Branch Veeri Anantnag

Now it is therefore. Notified for general information that objectoins if any, to the proposed cancellatin of Hire Purchase Agreement shall be filled in writing in the office of Assistnat Regional Trasport Officer Shopian within ap period of seven (7) days fro the publication of this notice in the daily Kashmir Observer

No: ARTO/Spn/474-2021
Dated 17-09-2017

S/D Asst Regional Transport Officer Shopian

ast

از نیات نائب تحصیلدار ماگام
مضمون کا عذات درخواست منجانب یاسینہ رحمان وقرات العین
دختران عبدالرحمان ڈار ساکنہ موضع واگٹ ہمرادعطا کی
بیکوار ڈار اسرٹیفیکٹ تحت SRO 294
اشہار ہمراد آگاہی ہر خاص و عام
معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں درخواست حاصل دفتر پٹواریں زریکا موتنی ہے اس سلسلے میں پٹواری حلقہ سے رپورٹ منظور پکارڈ طلب کیا گیا ہے جس سے میاں سے کسٹم مویش واگٹ میں رہائش پذیر ہے اور کسٹم بڈیل افراد پر مشتمل ہے
حکومت احمدیہ ولد عبدالرحمان
شاہینہ زوجہ شکت احمد 38 سال مزدوری سربرہ کپہ
عار یہ شکت 32 سال گھریلو کام
شیرخوار 01 سال
روقیہ بانو دختر عبدالرحمان 28 سال زیر تعلیم
روقیہ بانو دختر عبدالرحمان 25 سال زیر تعلیم
یاسینہ ڈار دختر عبدالرحمان 20 سال زیر تعلیم
قرات العین دختر عبدالرحمان 18 سال زیر تعلیم
اس کے علاوہ کوئی افراد کنید نہیں ہے ساکن کے کسٹم کی باہارہ آمدنی 8472 ہے سرٹیفیکٹ اجرا کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ سات دن کے اندر اندر اپنا عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ ہی ہم اندر دفتر پٹواریں پیش کرے معیا کو عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا
نائب تحصیلدار suit

OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER KASHMIR NOTICE

Where as an application for transfer of ownership has been received from Manmeet Singh S/O Jaglar Singh R/O Sanchar Lok Pargunj Delhi (Transferor) of I-20 bearing registration No. DL7C9-0217 chasis No: 44109 Engine No: 49422 Model 2012 in favour of Nasar Ahmad Dar S/O Ghulam Ahmad Dar R/O Arampora Qamarwari Sriangar (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 955
Dated: 17/04/2021
fko

Sd/-
Regional Transport Office,
Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER KASHMIR NOTICE

Where as an application for transfer of ownership has been received from Neelam S/O Shri Ramesh Chander R/O Sewa Nagar Ghaziabad UP (Transferor) of m/car bearing registration No. UPI48X-3290 chasis No: 425079 Engine No: 2013066 Model 2012 in favour of Mohsin Bashir S/O Bashir Ah Malik R/O Lasjan Sriangar (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 954
Dated: 17/04/2021
fko

Sd/-
Regional Transport Office,
Kashmir

THE J&K BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS (BOPEE)

Tele/Fax: 0194-2433590, 2437647 (Srinagar): 0191-2479371, 2470102 (Jammu)
Website: www.jkbopee.gov.in E-mail: coejakbopee@gmail.com/helpdesjkakbopee@gmail.com

Subject: Provisional Select List of candidates recommended for Admission to B. Ed. Course-2020 in Government College of Education, Canal Road, Jammu; Third list thereof
Reference: (i) Notification No. 003-BOPEE of 2021 Dated 05-01-2021
(ii) Notice No. 011-BOPEE of 2021 Dated 21-01-2021
(iii) Notice No. 016-BOPEE of 2021 Dated 04-02-2021
(iv) Notification No. 039-BOPEE of 2021 Dated 19-03-2021
(v) Notification No. 042-BOPEE of 2021 Dated 23-03-2021
(vi) Notice No. 037-BOPEE of 2021 Dated 30-03-2021
(vii) Notification No. 050-BOPEE of 2021 Dated 06-04-2021

Notification No. 055-BOPEE of 2021
Dated: 16-04-2021

Consequent upon receipt of shortfall from Government College of Education, Canal Road, Jammu after the last date of joining of candidates pursuant to Notification No. 050- BOPEE of 2021 Dated 06-04-2021, the candidates figuring in Annexure "A" to this notification, have been provisionally selected for admission to B.Ed. Course-2021 in Government College of Education, Canal Road, Jammu against the said shortfall. The Principal of the College will get the following certificates in original verified from the Incharge admission and countersigned by him/her before allowing the candidates to complete their admission formalities:-
(i) Qualifying Marks Certificate (10+2+3);
(ii) Domicile Certificate of UT of J&K / Ladakh (for candidates belonging to UT of Ladakh, St certificate issued by Competent Authoity of UT of Ladakh shall be treated as Domicile Certificate);
(iii) Category Certificate, if any;
(iv) Date of Birth (DOB) Certificate and
(v) Any other certificate required by the College in accordance with the rules.

The selected candidates are directed to report to the College from 17th to 24th of April, 2021 up to 4:00 P.M along with their relevant certificates in original. The Head of the Institution shall send the details of candidates, who do not complete their admission as o SHORT FALL on 24th of April, 2021 up to 5.00 P.M. to the BOPEE office, Jammu positively.
Note:
1. In view of non-availability of the eligible candidates in the following reserved category in B.Ed. Jammu 2020 in Govt. College of Education, Canal Road, Jammu; the vacant category seats have been converted into open merit under Section-9 (2) of J&K Reservation Act-2004 as per details given below and filled up from Open Merit category candidates: (i) Scheduled Tribe (ST) = 03 Seats
2. The Principal of the Institution is advised to ensure to admit only those candidates whose documents are complete in all respects. In case of any deficiency found during the verification of documents / certificates including Marks Card, such candidate (s) should not be allowed admission in any case. Any lapse in this regard will be the sole responsibility of the concerned Head of Institution.
3. The Board has received one representation from candidate namely DIKSHA DEVI bearing Rank 158 who could not join the Institution after being provisionally selected vide Notification No. 042-BOPEE of 2021 Dated 23-03-2021 due to genuine reason. Having considered this representation, the Board has included her name in this Notification on the basis of her merit.
4. The candidates with rank 156 (SC), 164, 166, (OBC) who were selected in their respective categories vide Notification No. 042-BOPEE of 2021 Dated 23-03-2021 are now/hereby treated to have been selected in Open Merit.
5. The Annexure "A" shall be available on the BOPEE website www.ikbopee.gov.in only.
E & OE

(Dr. Sunil Gupta)
Controller of Examinations J&K BOPEE

No: BOPEE/Exam-17/2021
Dated: 16-04-2021

DIPK-NB-334/21

Office of the Principal
Government Medical College, Anantnag, J&K
(Cam Office: MMABM, Associated Hospital, GMC , Anantnag)
Phone no: 01932-227624 / fax 01932-227625 e-mail gmcanantnag@gmail.com

EXTENSION NOTICE

Subject:- e-NIT No 18 GMCA of 2021 Dated: 23.03.2021 for the RUNNING OF Hospital Canteen of MMABM Associated Hospital, Govt. Medical College, Anantnag -Extension of last date thereof.

Due to the poor response to our - e-NIT No. 18 GMCA of 2021 Dated: 23.03.2021 for the RUNNING OF Hospital Canteen of MMABM Associated Hospital, Govt. Medical College, Anantnag, the last date for submission of BIDs is extended up to 22-04-2021 (3:00 PM). Date of Opening of Bids is 24-04-2021 , all other terms and conditions shall remain same.

Principal / Deen
Govt Medical College, Anantnag

No: GMCA/PLG/190/335-39
Dated: 16-04-2021

DIPK-568/21

Union Territory Jammu & Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE EXECUIVE ENGINEER R&B
DIVISION SUMBAL

Subject:- Cancellation of NIT.

Ref:- This office NIT No. 04/ET/R&B/SUMBAL of 04/2021 issued under endorsement No.R&B/Sbl/21/98-105, Dated:-15-04-2021.

Due to error in BOQ of NIT No. 04/ET/R&B/SUMBAL of 04/2021 issued under endorsement No.R&B/Sbl/21/98-105, Dated:-15-04-2021 is hereby cancelled and will be uploaded after rectification shortly.

Sd./
Executive Engineer,
(R&B) Division Sumbal
/R.MIR/

No. R&B/Sbl/21/120-26.
Dated:-16-04-2021.

DIPK-567/21

THE J&K BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS (BOPEE)

Tele/Fax: 0194-2433590, 2437647 (Srinagar): 0191-2479371, 2470102 (Jammu)
Website: www.jkbopee.gov.in E-mail: coejakbopee@gmail.com/helpdesjkakbopee@gmail.com

Subject: Extension in time for submission of online Application Forms for Common Entrance Test (CET) for BE/B.Tech Engineering Courses-2021.
Reference: i. Notification No.036-BOPEE of 2021 dated 10.03.2021.
ii. Notice No.039-BOPEE of 2021 dated 06.04.2021.
Notice No. 041-BOPEE of 2021
Dated: 16.04.2021.

It is notified for information of all such eligible and interested candidates who are willing to apply for admission to BE/B.Tech Engineering Courses-2021 that the Board has decided to extend the last date for submission of online Application Forms for the said courses from 16.04.2021 to 30.04. 2021 (mid night).

The other terms and conditions shall remain the same as notified in the e.Information Brochure, Notifications and Notices issued by the Board from time to time in this regard.
E&OE

(Dr. Sunil Gupta)
Controller of Examinations J&K BOPEE

No:BOPEE/Exam-04/2021
Dated:16.04.2021.

DIPK-NB-325/21



A ROADSIDE VENDOR sells vegetables amid incessant rains in Srinagar on Saturday. KO Photo, Abid Bhat.

KLC Ruckus

Eighth Semester Students File Criminal Complaint, Seek Action



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Days after two groups of students clashed at Kashmir Law College here, a complaint was filed in the court of Chief Judicial Magistrate (CJM) Srinagar on Saturday seeking directions for police to file FIR against the accused.

Complainants through their counsel filed a complaint before the court of Chief Judicial Magistrate for initiating legal proceedings against the accused, who they alleged entered Kashmir Law

College at Nowshera, vandalised college property, beat students and intimidate faculty members.

The complaints have also sought directions on Station House Officer (SHO) police station Soura to file an FIR against the accused who according to the complaint were carrying 'deadly weapons' like German knives and knuckle punches to create an atmosphere of fear in the college on the fateful day.

Complaints Rahib Ahmad Sheikh, Tahir Farooq and Tahir Sidiq Bhat, all 8th semester students of Kashmir Law College

in their complaint have alleged that one Akeel Khan, Majid Khan and Javid Ahmad who are not the students of Law College, forcibly entered into the college premises and resorted to hooliganism.

"On April 15, 2021, the above named accused who are not the students of the said college but outsiders forcibly entered the Kashmir Law College without any authority or permission. The accused were carrying deadly weapons like German knives and knuckle punches in their hands which are evident by the photographs annexed," reads the complaint.

It has also been alleged that the accused created an atmosphere of fear and horror by thrashing the complaints in broad daylight.

"It is therefore prayed that the Hon'ble court may kindly be pleased to take cognizance of this complaint and proceed against the accused in accordance with the law. It is also prayed that the concerned police station be directed to lodge an FIR against the above named accused," complaint adds—(KNO)

DDC Srinagar Takes Stock Of Patient Care At City Hospitals

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The District Development Commissioner (DDC) Srinagar, Mohammed Aijaz Asad, on Saturday conducted a whirlwind tour of Bone & Joint, Lal Ded and G B Pant Hospital and took stock of the patient care facilities available there.

He also inspected major developmental projects being executed in City hospitals and reviewed pace of work on these mega projects.

While visiting Bone and Joint Hospital, Barzulla the DDC inspected various wards and units of the hospital including Trauma

ward, OPD, IPD, General and Post Operative wards, besides Covid-19 Isolation and Vaccination units.

On the occasion, the DDC interacted with the patients and attendants and inquired about the patient care facilities available there.

The Medical Superintendent and other staff apprised the DDC about the functioning of the hospital and health care facilities being provided to the patients.

He also inspected the construction work on Rs 88.95 crore project for 120 bedded Specialized Orthopedic Units including six bedded ICU in Bone & Joint hospital.

The DDC directed the concerned executing agency to redouble the efforts to speed up the pace of work for timely completion of the project.

The MS B&J put forth the issue of parking before the DDC and urged for early resolution of the same.

Top Srinagar Hotel Shut After Staffers, Owner Test Covid Positive

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Ahdoos Hotel on Residency Road in Srinagar has been shut after several of its staffers and the owner tested positive for coronavirus on Saturday.

Manager Ahdoos Hotel – one of the prime lodging in summer-capital – said that they had several guests recently about whom they were informed that they tested positive for the infection through RT-PCR at Srinagar Airport.

"It was as such deemed proper by the management to test the staffers serving the infected guests", he said

adding that "On taking samples, several of them (staffers) have tested positive for the infection."

All of the infected staffers have been home-quarantined and are largely asymptomatic, he said.

It has been, in the meantime, independently learnt that owner of the Hotel Ghulam Hassan, with underlying co-morbidities, has also tested COVID positive.

"We have decided to close all the activities at the Hotel as well as at the Restaurant wing as a precautionary measure till the conditions improve", the manager said. (GNS)

Workshop On Research Methodology Concludes At KU

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A 10-day workshop on research methodology concluded at the University of Kashmir on Saturday. The workshop was organised by the varsity's Department of Environmental Science.

According to a statement Dean School of Biological Sciences and Controller of Examinations Prof Irshad A Nawchoo, who presided over the valedictory function as chief guest, emphasised on the importance of robust and effective research methodology for better research outcomes.

"Methodology is not final. It can be modified during the course of research," he said, urging young scholars to follow standard publications rather than ordinary ones.

Dean, School of Earth and Environmental Science, Prof Shamim Ahmad Shah, who was a guest of honour, focused on various research aspects, including selection of topics, making of synopsis, selecting methodology and planning the research work.

Workshop Director and Head Department of Environmental Science Prof Fayaz Ahmad highlighted aims and objectives of the 10-day workshop, which covered a range of topics including developing hypothesis, research methodology and design, manuscript writing, role of statistics in research, statistical analysis (ANOVA, PCA, Factor), sampling techniques, meta-analysis in ecology and environmental science, quality assurance and control, spectroscopic techniques and quality control,



PCR and its variants, basics of Microsoft Office, journal finder tools and citation databases, research ethics, scientific misconducts, anti-plagiarism software tools, impact factor of journals as per JCR, SNIP, SJR, IPP and concept of UGC care journals, project/grant writing, funding agencies and research schemes.

Dr Mohammad Muslim presented a report on the workshop, where 20 technical sessions were held.

At least 70 applicants had registered for the workshop from various departments, including Zoology, Botany, Environmental Science and CORD. The applicants were from different universities including Kashmir University, Central University of Kashmir and Baba Sahib Bhim Roa Ambedkar University, Lucknow.

Dr Samiullah Bhat talked about how research scholars should approach their research topics and Dr Mohammad Irshad presented a vote of thanks.

In their feedback about the workshop, several participants who spoke at the valedictory session thanked the Department of Environmental Science for organizing the workshop in a very professional manner.

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
- BIJHERA: 01932-228243
- PAMPOR: 01933-294132
- PATTAN: 01954-293507
- QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

This Day in History

- 310 - St Eusebius begins his reign as Catholic Pope
- 387 - Bishop Ambrosius of Milan baptizes Augustinus
- 1025 - Boleslaw Chrobry is crowned in Gniezno, becoming the first King of Poland
- 1506 - The cornerstone of the current St. Peter's Basilica is laid in the Vatican
- 1518 - Bona Sforza is crowned queen consort of Poland
- 1521 - Diet of Worms: Cardinal Alexander questions Martin Luther
- 1552 - Mauritius of Saksen occupies Linz
- 1663 - Osman declares war on Austria
- 1666 - Peace of Kleeef: Netherlands & bishop Von Galen of Munster
- 1676 - Sudbury, Massachusetts, attacked by Indians
- 1688 - "Germantown Quaker Petition Against Slavery": Francis Daniel Pastorius authors 1st formal written protest against African-American slavery in English colonies in Germantown, Pennsylvania
- 1738 - Real Academia de la Historia ("Royal Academy of History") founded in Madrid
- 1775 - Paul Revere and William Dawes ride from Charlestown to Lexington warning the "regulars are coming!"
- 1783 - Fighting ceases in the American Revolution, eight years to the day when it began
- 1797 - France & Austria sign ceasefire
- 1809 - First run of 2,000 guineas horse race at Newmarket, England
- 1848 - American victory at the battle of Cerro Gordo opens the way for invasion of Mexico.
- 1861 - Battle of Harpers Ferry, Virginia, part of the Maryland Campaign (US Civil War)
- 1869 - 1st international cricket match, held in SF, wins by Californian
- 1902 - Denmark is first country to adopt fingerprinting to identify criminals
- 1906 - San Francisco earthquake and fire kills nearly 4,000 while destroying 75% of the city
- 1912 - Tripolitan War: In continuing hostilities, Turkey closes the Dardanelles Straits after an Italian naval bombardment of the coastline
- 1915 - French pilot Roland Garros is shot down and glides to a landing on the German side of the lines during World War I.
- 1916 - US Secretary of State Warns Germany that the USA may break diplomatic relations unless torpedo attacks on unarmed ships stop
- 1922 - Netherlands soccer team defeats Denmark 2-0
- 1924 - 1st crossword puzzle book published (Simon & Schuster)
- 1925 - World's Fair opens in Chicago
- 1927 - Chiang Kai-shek forms anti-government in China
- 1945 - Diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and Bolivia are established.
- 1946 - League of Nations dissolves (3 months after UN starts)
- 1946 - US recognizes Tito's Yugoslavia government
- 1948 - International Court of Justice opens at Hague Netherlands
- 1951 - France, West Germany & Benelux form European Steel & Coal Community
- 1954 - Colonel Gamal Abdul Nasser seizes power & becomes Prime Minister of Egypt
- 1956 - Egypt & Israel agree to a cease fire
- 1958 - Government troops reconquer Padang, Middle-Sumatra Indonesia
- 1961 - CONCP is founded in Casablanca as a united front of African movements opposing Portuguese colonial rule.
- 1979 - Major Haddad declares South-Lebanon independent
- 1980 - Zimbabwe (formerly Southern Rhodesia) declares independence from UK
- 2013 - 27 people are killed and 65 are injured in a cafe bombing in Baghdad, Iraq
- 2013 - Two earth-like planets are discovered orbiting the star Kepler-62

From KO Archives

'ONUS BOTH ON INDIA, PAK FOR SAFE BUS TRAVEL'

Observer News service

NEW DELHI - Prime Minister Manmohan Singh today said that it is the joint responsibility of India and Pakistan as also the local authorities on both sides of the Line of Control (LoC) to ensure full security cover to passengers of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service.

"Notwithstanding the recent dastardly attempt to disturb the bus service between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad by terrorists, the people of Jammu and Kashmir came out on the streets as one to welcome this gesture of reconciliation," he said addressing the Chief Ministers' Conference on Internal Security here.

"I hope the terrorists and extremists in the region have grasped the mood of the people and will not try to disturb this bus service again," he said.

Singh said it was the joint responsibility of the governments of India and Pakistan and the local authorities on both sides of the LoC to work together in providing full security to passengers.

(Kashmir Observer, 18 April, 2005)


OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER KASHMIR NOTICE



Where as an application for transfer of ownership has been received from Nisar Ahmad Sultan S/O Mohammad Qazim Sultan R/o Ashai bagh Nigeen Hazrat (Transferor) of LMV bearing registration No. JK0IP-7777 chasis No: 2121101 Engine No: 21296 Model 2010 in favour of Hilal Ahmad Bhat S/O Farooq Ahmad Bhat R/O Brein Nishat 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 943
Dated: 17/04/2021
fko

Sd/-
Regional Transport Office,
Kashmir



CSIR- INDIAN INSTITUTE OF INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE
Canal Road, Jammu 180 001 (J&K)

ONLINE INTERVIEW
(Through Video Conferencing on MS Team)

ADVERTISEMENT NO.10/2021

Applications (Google Form) from eligible & interested candidates are invited for ONLINE INTERVIEW (Through MS Team) for the purely temporary position of **Project Assistant Under the DBT sponsored project GAP-3103** tenable at CSIR-IIIM, Branch Sanat Nagar, Srinagar-190005 (J&K).

For advertisement details, important instructions and Google Form please visit our website: www.iiim.res.in

The list of eligible candidates and dates for Online Interview will be displayed on CSIR-IIIM Website www.iiim.res.in by evening on **26/04/2021**.

-Sd-
SR. CONTROLLER OF ADMINISTRATION

Government of Jammu & Kashmir(UT)

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (R&B) PROJECT

CIRCLE DIVISION 1ST, SRINAGAR

Opposite Masjid Ibrahim, Hyderpora Srinagar PIN No.190014
E-mail:- pcd.bypass@gmail.com Phone-FAX:-0194-2435218

TENDER NOTICE

E-NIT No PCD-RnB-03 of 2021-22 Dated:-17 /04/2021

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K UT term e-tenders (In Single Cover system) are invited on Item Rate Basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K State Govt. CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Government for the following work:-

S.No	Name of Work	Adv. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of T/ Doc.(Rs.)	Time of completion	Class of Contractor	Major Head Of Accounts
1.	Launching of 70 feet span DS Bailey Bridge at Aalam Gunj Shopain	Rs.5.81 Lacs	Rs.300/-	10 Days	"CEE" "DEE" (See Clause No. 8)	5054 Bridges

Position of AAA/TS **Accorded**

Position of funds: **Committed**

The Bidding documents Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of date given below:-

1.	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	19/04/2021
2.	Period of downloading of bidding documents	From 19/04/2021 01.15 P.M.
3.	Bid submission Start Date	19/04/2021 from 05.00 PM
4.	Bid Submission End Date	26/04/2021 upto 4.00 P.M
5.	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	27/04/2021 at 11.00 A.M in the Office of the Executive Engineer R&B Project Circle Division 1st
6.	Submission of Performance Security (PS)	Within 7 days of receipt of LOA. (The bidder has been provide 3% of advertized Cost as Performance Security within 7 days after opening of Financial Bid)

- 1) Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of **Treasury Challan/Receipt (Debited to M.H.0059 PWD)** and **Bid securing declaration** in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Project Circle Division 1st showing clearly the name of **work along with NIT No. & S.No. failing which the tender will be rejected out rightly.**
- 2) All bidders shall upload the following information and documents along with qualification criteria /qualification information with their bids:-**(Photostat/Original should be clearly seen in all respect with Ink Signed and Seal):-**
 - Valid original Treasury Challan/Receipt (MH.0059) And BID Securing Declaration
 - Valid Registration Card with self attested and Valid GSTIN/ PAN Card No,
 - Experience Certificate as per No. 08 of Detailed NIT.
 - "The Latest Self Attested return GST-3/GSTR-3B and Certificate by the bidder to the effect that he has no sales tax liability/arrears"
 - The Bidder should upload the Tender Document form attached below (Not Mandatory).
 - Bidder shall furnish proof of latest returns in GST-3/GSTR-3B. i.e. latest clearance certificate FORM GST - 3B of the preceding month to the issue of NIT. Illustration: - For the NIT issued in January 2021, the bidder has to upload the latest clearance certificate FORM GST - 3B of the preceding month i.e. of December 2020.
- i. **Additional Qualification:** The tenderer should upload satisfactory completion/experience certificate issued by Executive Engineer in Launching and De-Launching of Bailey Bridge at **least Three Bailey Bridges** of any span.

No: PCD-1st/NIT/346-53
Dtd:- 17 -04-2021

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
R&B Project Circle Division 1st,
Srinagar

DIPK-590/21

How Quitting Afghanistan Presents Fresh Challenges For US



Agencies

President Joe Biden's decision to withdraw foreign troops from Afghanistan ushers in a new set of risks for the United States and its military.

What are those risks, and how does the administration hope to mitigate them?

Does 'withdrawal' equal 'security vacuum'?

Officially, the Pentagon supports the US president's decision to end America's longest war. But many senior US commanders have been voicing their misgivings for months.

General Kenneth McKenzie, head of the US Central Command, recently told AFP that he had "reasons to believe" a withdrawal would allow the resurgence of extremist groups, with the risk of a collapse of the Afghan government.

CIA Director William Burns acknowledged on Wednesday that when the United States withdraws, the "US government's ability to collect and act on threats will diminish."

But he promised that the CIA would maintain "capabilities" in Afghanistan.

Retired General David Petraeus, who has operated in Iraq and Afghanistan, said Washington must be "really careful" with its rhetoric on the withdrawal.

"Ending US involvement in an

endless war doesn't end the endless war. It just ends our involvement. And I fear that this war is going to get worse," he said.

Was it dangerous to announce a deadline?

The military had feared putting a date on the US departure, seeing it as a temptation to the Taliban, emboldened by what they see as a victory over the world's largest and most technologically-advanced army, to attack troops on the ground without consequences.

Biden has warned the Taliban against any such attempt, and Nato has said in a statement that "any Taliban attacks on Allied troops during this withdrawal will be met with a forceful response."

In addition, the allies were careful to say that the withdrawal would begin on May 1 -- the date by which it should have been completed under the Donald Trump administration's agreement with the Taliban.

But they also said it would be completed by September 11, the 20th anniversary of the attacks that prompted the invasion in the first place -- and a date already heralded by jihadists groups as a day of victory over the US.

"The chosen withdrawal date plays into the jihadi narrative of a 'crusader occupation' and seems like an error on the part of the Biden administration that could have been avoided," the Soufan Center said in an analysis.

NASA Awards SpaceX \$2.9 Billion Moon Lander Contract



NASA awarded billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk's space company SpaceX a \$2.9 billion contract to build a spacecraft to bring astronauts to the moon as early as 2024, the agency said on Friday, picking it over Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin and defence contractor Dynetics Inc.

Bezos and Musk - the world's first and third richest people respectively, according to Forbes - were competing to lead humankind's return to the moon for the first time since 1972.

Musk's SpaceX bid alone while Amazon.com founder Bezos's Blue Origin partnered with Lockheed Martin Corp, Northrop Grumman Corp and Draper Dynetics is a unit of Leidos Holdings Inc.

"NASA Rules!!" Musk wrote on Twitter after the announcement.

The US space agency awarded the contract for the first commercial human lander, part of its Artemis program. NASA said the lander will carry two American

astronauts to the lunar surface.

"We should accomplish the next landing as soon as possible," Steve Jurczyk, NASA's acting administrator, said during the video conference announcement.

"If they hit their milestones, we have a shot at 2024," Jurczyk added.

NASA said SpaceX's Starship includes a spacious cabin and two airlocks for astronaut moon walks and that its architecture is intended to evolve to a fully reusable launch and landing system designed for travel to the Moon, Mars and other destinations in space.

SpaceX also responded on Twitter, writing, "We are humbled to help @NASAArtemis usher in a new era of human space exploration."

Unlike the Apollo landings from 1969 to 1972 - the only human visits to the moon's surface - NASA is gearing up for a longer-term lunar presence that it envisions as a stepping-stone to an even more ambitious plan to send astronauts to Mars.

NASA is leaning heavily on private companies built around shared visions for space exploration.

SpaceX will be required to make a test flight of the lander to the moon before humans make the journey, NASA official Lisa Watson-Morgan told reporters. **REUTERS**

Worldwide Covid-19 Death Toll Tops A Staggering 3 Million

RIO DE JANEIRO: The global death toll from the coronavirus topped a staggering 3 million people Saturday amid repeated setbacks in the worldwide vaccination campaign and a deepening crisis in places such as Brazil, India and France.

The number of lives lost, as compiled by Johns Hopkins University, is about equal to the population of Kyiv, Ukraine; Caracas, Venezuela; or metropolitan Lisbon, Portugal. It is bigger than Chicago (2.7 million) and equivalent to Philadelphia and Dallas combined.

And the true number is believed to be significantly higher because of possible government concealment or the many cases overlooked in the early stages of the outbreak that began 16 months ago in Wuhan, China, at the end of 2019.

Around the world, the trajectory of the virus and the race to bring it under control vary widely from country to country.

Even as the US and Britain see their vaccination drives hit their stride and they begin to contemplate life after the pandemic, other places both rich



and poor -- France and India among them -- are lagging behind in putting shots in arms and have imposed new lockdowns and other restrictions as cases soar.

Worldwide, deaths are running at over 12,000 per day on average and new cases at more than 700,000 a day.

The US toll alone is over 560,000, accounting for more than 1 in 6 of the world's COVID-19 deaths, by far the highest reported by any country.

THIS MONTH, THE US RECOMMENDED A PAUSE IN THE USE OF Johnson & Johnson's COVID-19 vaccine while authorities investigate extremely rare but dangerous blood clots, and some European countries are putting the vaccine on hold, too.

Cyprus Hosts UAE-Israel Meet In 'Changing' Mideast



PAPHOS: Cyprus hosted a meeting on Friday of top diplomats from Israel and the UAE, as well as Greece, for talks they said reflected the "changing face" of the Middle East.

"This new strategic membership stretches from the shores of the Arabian Gulf" to the Mediterranean and Europe, Israeli Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi told a news conference in the coastal resort city of Paphos.

Standing alongside Anwar Gargash, advisor to Emirati President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed, he said their encounter

was a sign of "the changing face of the Middle East".

He called for a "strategic partnership in energy between the Eastern Med and the Gulf", following last year's historic normalisation of ties between Israel and the United Arab Emirates.

Gargash said ties with the Jewish state amounted to an "alternative strategic view" aimed at bolstering regional security, adding that the Paphos talks covered economic and political cooperation, as well as "using technology to fight Covid".

The Cypriot and Greek foreign

ministers, unmasked before a backdrop of the Mediterranean, both stressed the new regional grouping was open to all parties.

"The path is open for all countries of the region to join us," said host Nikos Christodoulides, without a direct mention of Turkey, whose troops occupy the northern third of Cyprus and which is in dispute with Nicosia and Athens over gas deposits in the eastern Mediterranean.

Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias, who has visited both Turkey and Libya over the past week, stressed calls for "the withdrawal of all foreign forces" from the North African country, where Turkish troops are posted.

On Iran and its controversial nuclear programme, Ashkenazi reiterated that Israel would "do whatever it takes to prevent this radical and anti-Semitic regime from acquiring nuclear weapons".

At Least 40 Migrants Drown In Shipwreck Off Tunisia

At least 04 migrants drowned in a shipwreck off Tunisia as they tried to cross the Mediterranean to Italy, United Nations and Tunisian officials said on Friday.

The Tunisian coastguard had so far recovered 21 bodies, all African migrants, and rescued three people, Tunisian officials said. The dead included at least one child.

"The boat sank during a trip that started late on Thursday from Sfax... So far, the coastguard has recovered 21 bodies and the search is still continuing," Mouard Mechri, director of Tunisia's civil protection service, told Reuters.



The coastline near the port city of Sfax has become a major departure point for people

fleeing conflict and poverty in Africa and the Middle East and seeking a better life in Europe.

Last month, 39 migrants died off Sfax in a similar accident.

The UN migration agency IOM and the UN refugee agency UNHCR said in a statement: "This tragic loss of life underscores once again the need to enhance and expand State-led search and rescue operations across the Central Mediterranean."

Some 290 people have lost their lives in such shipwrecks this year, they said. **REUTERS**

Russia To Ask 10 US Diplomats To Leave In Retaliation

Agencies

Russia will ask 10 US diplomats to leave the country in retaliation for Washington's expulsion of the same number of Russian diplomats over alleged malign activity, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Friday.

The US government on Thursday imposed a broad array of sanctions on Russia, including curbs to its sovereign debt market, to punish it for interfering in last year's US election, cyber hacking, bullying Ukraine and other alleged malign actions.

Russia denies all the US allegations.

On Friday, Lavrov, speaking at a news conference with his Serbian counterpart, laid out Russia's response.

Apart from expelling 10 US diplomats, he said Moscow

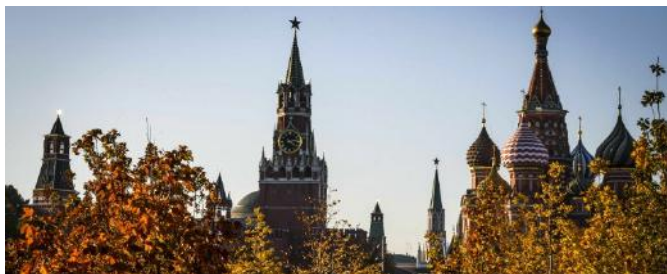
the White House and Kremlin kept communication lines open.

Biden has proposed that he and Putin meet for a summit.

"[Putin] has repeatedly said we're ready to develop dialogue as much as our counterparts are ready to do so. In this sense it is probably positive that the views of the two heads of state coincide," Peskov told reporters before the Russian counter sanctions were unveiled.

"Their views categorically do not coincide when it comes to creating mutually beneficial relations and taking each other's interests into account," Peskov added however.

Fears of US sanctions had caused volatility on Russian markets for weeks and prompted the rouble to fall sharply. The national currency recovered much of that ground though as it became clear the sanctions had stopped



would place eight US officials on a sanctions list and end the activity in Russia of US funds and NGOs which it believes interfere in the country's internal affairs.

He said Russia was also considering possible "painful" measures aimed at US business in Russia.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov had earlier on Friday called the US sanctions unacceptable, even as it left the door open to dialogue.

US President Joe Biden, after imposing the sanctions on Moscow, had called for a de-escalation in tensions and said it was vital

short of crippling measures that would ban US banks from holding Russian debt.

Russia-US ties slumped to a new post-Cold War low last month after Biden said he thought Putin was a "killer" and Moscow recalled its ambassador to Washington for consultations. The envoy has still not returned almost a month later.

The Kremlin says Putin has yet to decide whether he will take part in a US-led climate summit next week. It has also said that it would be hard to quickly organise a Putin-Biden summit. **REUTERS**

Another US Mass Shooting Leaves Eight Dead

Agencies

INDIANAPOLIS: A gunman killed at least eight people at a FedEx facility in the mid-western US city of Indianapolis before turning the gun on himself in the latest in a string of mass shootings in the country, authorities said on Friday.

The incident came a week after President Joe Biden branded US gun violence an "epidemic" and an "international embarrassment" as he waded into the tense debate over gun control, a powerful political issue in the United States.

The gunman responsible for the overnight shooting was not immediately identified and it was not known if he was an employee at the FedEx facility near the airport in the state capital of Indiana, deputy police chief Craig McCartt told CNN.

Several others were injured in the shooting, which started when the gunman opened fire in the parking lot and then went inside and kept shooting. Police say the whole episode lasted just a few minutes.

"It wasn't precipitated by any kind of a disturbance or argument with anyone there," McCartt said.

"He did not get very far into the facility at all, so I think that it probably only lasted one to two minutes, from what we're hearing," he said.

McCartt said the gunman was armed "with a rifle of some sort". When police entered the



plant the gunman "immediately took his own life," he said.

Four people with gunshot wounds were transported by ambulance, including one in critical condition, police said. Three were transported with other injuries, while two were treated at the scene and then released.

One man who was working a twilight shift at the plant told local broadcaster WISH-TV he saw the gunman start shooting and heard more than 10 shots.

"I saw a man with a sub-machine gun of some sort, an automatic rifle, and he was firing in the open. I immediately ducked down and got scared," Jeremiah Miller said.

"My friend's mother, she came in and told us to get inside the car. What we've been doing (since) is telling everyone, our co-workers not to go to work today." Nervous relatives gathered at a hotel on Friday morning near the plant for news of loved ones who work there and were not allowed to use their cell phones on the floor, news reports said.

NEWS MAKERS

Queen Elizabeth II To Bury Her 'Strength And Stay' Prince Philip

WINDSOR: Queen Elizabeth II bids a final farewell to her late husband Prince Philip on Saturday, at a funeral restricted by coronavirus rules but reflecting his long life of military and public service.

The ceremony with just 30 mourners behind the stately walls of Windsor Castle, west of London, will be watched by an expected television audience of millions, with the public urged to stay away because of the pandemic.

But people were still expected to turn out in Windsor, prompting barriers to be erected along the sweeping Long Walk to the castle gates patrolled by uniformed police.

In the town, one man who gave only his first name, Mark, told AFP: "There are hundreds of us today. People are not supposed to come. But this is a once-in-a-generation event."

"He (Philip) was really something." At Buckingham Palace, the



Queen's central London home, Cardiff-born chef Santosh Singh laid purple tulips as a tribute and to mark the end of an era.

"I love the royals. I think they're amazing... It's sad because in time, all this will change," the 57-year-old said.

The Duke of Edinburgh -- described by royals as "the grandfather of the nation" -- died on April 9, aged 99, just weeks after spending more than a month in hospital for treatment of a

heart condition and an infection.

- Minute's silence -

Britain's longest-serving royal consort was an almost constant presence at the Queen's side during her record-breaking reign that began in 1952 as Britain rebuilt from World War II and as its global empire began to unravel.

His death, after 73 years of marriage, has left a "huge void" in her life, the couple's second son, Prince

Andrew, said last weekend.

The Queen released a touching personal photograph of herself with Prince Philip, both looking relaxed and smiling in the Cairngorms National Park in Scotland in 2003.

Images of key moments in the couple's marriage were also shared on the royal family's social media accounts, as most newspapers reflected on her deep personal loss.

"The Queen bids farewell," headlined The Times.

At the service, the Dean of Windsor, David Conner, will pay tribute to Philip's "unwavering loyalty" to his wife, who turns 95 next week, the country and the Commonwealth, as well as his "courage, fortitude and faith".

Government Covid-19 regulations have forced hasty revisions to "Operation Forth Bridge", the long-rehearsed funeral plans for former Royal Navy commander Philip.

Canadian Lawmaker Caught Naked During Video Conference

Agencies

A Canadian Parliament member was caught stark naked in a virtual meeting of the House of Commons.

William Amos, who has represented the Quebec district of Pontiac since 2015, appeared on the screens of his fellow lawmakers completely naked Wednesday. The pandemic has meant many Canadian lawmakers participate in sessions via video conference instead of in person.

A screenshot obtained by The Canadian Press shows Amos standing behind a desk between the Quebec and Canadian flags, his private parts hidden by what appears to be a mobile phone in one hand.

"This was an unfortunate error," Amos said in a statement



sent by email. "My video was accidentally turned on as I was changing into my work clothes after going for a jog. I sincerely apologize to my colleagues in the House of Commons for this unintentional distraction. Obviously, it was an honest mistake and it won't happen again." Claude DeBellefeuille, a legislator for the opposition Bloc Quebecois party, raised the incident in a point of

order after question period, suggesting that parliamentary decorum requires male Parliament members to wear a jacket and tie - and a shirt, underwear and trousers.

Speaker Anthony Rota later thanked DeBellefeuille for her "observations" and clarified that while he had not seen anything, he checked with technicians and confirmed they saw something. He reminded lawmakers to always be vigilant when they are near a camera and microphone.

Amos, the parliamentary secretary to Industry Minister Francois-Philippe Champagne, was visible only to Parliament members and staffers on an internal video conference feed. Because he was not speaking, his image did not show up on the public feed.

Congress Leader Accuses Govt Of Failing To Tackle Covid, Calls Situation Worrisome

Press Trust of India

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Congress vice president Raman Bhalla on Saturday termed the COVID-19 situation in the union territory as "worrisome" and claimed that the government has run out of options as it has failed to tackle the pandemic.

The Congress leader demanded massive testing, tracing of contacts of COVID-19 cases and their isolation to check the spread of the infection.

"The rise in COVID-19 cases and deaths due to the deadly virus in J-K is worrisome. The Jammu and Kashmir government has run out of options and has failed to tackle the pandemic," Bhalla said, addressing a party workers meeting here.

The former minister said the infection is growing exponentially in Jammu and Kashmir and there seems to be no plan with the government to tackle the threat.

"The policies to tackle the pandemic and their implementation only underline the mess created by the government, which utterly failed to utilise the lockdown period to expand the infrastructure of the public health system, ensuring adequate medical equipment, personal protective equipment (PPE) and other supplies.

"The government should have

strengthened the public health system on a war-footing basis during the lockdown period (last year), but unfortunately its priorities laid somewhere else. All these point to the all-round failure of the government in tackling the pandemic," Bhalla said.

He said it looks as if the government has run out of options and is reconciled to the pandemic running its course.

"There is an urgent need for massive testing, tracing and isolating cases on a large-scale in a systematic way. The government must rely on health experts and epidemiologists to formulate policies with regard to testing, contact tracing and isolation of people affected by the virus," he said.

Bhalla said the policies to tackle COVID-19 are being formulated by the bureaucrats that has proved a "disaster".

The Congress leader said the COVID-19 pandemic is at a "dangerous stage" and until an effective mechanism is developed it will be a long and hard battle.

"The government should increase beds with high-flow oxygen in hospitals at the earliest. The government must also purchase more ventilators to augment the capacity of hospitals and increase the strength of doctors and paramedical staff," he said.

Three Drug Peddlers Arrested, One KG Heroin Recovered: Police

Observer News Service

ANANTNAG: Jammu and Kashmir Police Saturday arrested three drug peddlers in Handwara and Anantnag. One kilogram of Heroin and 15 bottles of Codeine Phosphate were recovered from their possession.

A police spokesperson in a statement said that in Handwara, a police party of Police Station Handwara at a checkpoint established in their jurisdiction and intercepted a vehicle (Santro) bearing registration number JK09/0504 with two persons onboard.

They have been identified as Javid Ahmad Khan son of Dulat Mohammad Khan, a resident of Gund Chubutra and Muhammad Yousf Bhat son of Abdul Aziz, a resident of Pingroo. During checking, officers were able to recover 1 kilogram Heroin from the said vehicle. They have been arrested and shifted to police station where they remain in custody. Vehicle used in the commission of crime has also been seized.

Accordingly, a case FIR No. 93/2021 under relevant sections of law has been registered in Police Station Handwara and investigation into the matter has been initiated.

In Anantnag In-charge Police Post Janglat Mandi along with his team at a checkpoint established at Brakpora Anantnag intercepted one person identified as Rayees Ahmad Ganie son of Ghulam Rasool Ganie resident of Brakpora. On checking, 15 bottles of codeine phosphate were recovered from his possession. He has been arrested and shifted to police station where he remains in custody.

In this regard, a case FIR No. 95 /2021 under relevant sections of the law stands registered in Police Station Anantnag and investigation was initiated.

As Covid Cases Surge, Admin Turning Back On People: NC

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: National Conference (NC) Saturday expressed concern over the snow balling of new COVID-19 infections in Kashmir as worrying, saying the administration has turned its back on the exigencies that have cropped up in wake of the increased number of infections and mortality.

In a joint statement, NC MPs Muhammad Akbar Lone and Hasnain Masoodi said that the administration has failed to learn lessons from first wave of COVID-19 to improve its response to the emerging new COVID-19 peak in Kashmir. They stated that people are yet to tide over the rampage induced by COVID-19 and the subsequent failed lock-downs.

"Unfortunately, the government has been yet again caught napping on the issue. Had the ruling regime in J&K come up with a well thought out strategy to cope up with the crises by learning from its past failures, the situation would not have become as dire as it is now," they said.

"We see how in a well-organised manner various state governments across the country have made ample arrangements in the form of creating makeshift hospitals, extra testing facilities, and speeding up vaccination to cope up with the viral sprawl. Unfortunately the big shots in the administration are not available on the ground in Kashmir as the government has decided not to shift Darbar move offices this year also. Regrettably the administration also failed to scale up the existing infrastructure in hospitals and augment existing bed strength and other live saving equipment," they said.

Expressing dismay over the

Avoid Excessive Use Of Heating Gadgets To Get Better Power Supply: CE PDD

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Chief Engineer power development department, Aijaz Ah Dar on Saturday urged people to desist from using heating appliances lavishly during Sehri and Iftaar time for the purposes of uninterrupted power supply to consumers.

KPDCL at present is supplying around 16% more energy as compared to last year. Morning peak (sehri time) load touched 1631 MWs on 15 Apr. which is the highest load recorded ever (avg. being around 1500 MWs) CE PDD said.

"Consumers are requested to rationalise their load & avoid using heating gadgets at Sehri and Iftaar time in order to avoid unscheduled cuts," he said.

He said that extra load on power feeder during peak times is the cause of power breakdown in many areas across Kashmir.

Chief Engineer's statement on frequent power breakdown comes a day after people from many North and South Kashmir complained that the Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDCL) has failed to adhere to the power schedule even in the holy month of Ramadan, leaving the residents across Kashmir



valley to suffer.

People in parts of Srinagar have complained of inadequate electricity, saying that the department has failed to ensure adequate electricity even in the holy month of Ramadan.

"We are facing erratic power cuts despite being assured adequate electricity in the ongoing holy month of Ramadan," says a local from North Kashmir

"The department has even failed to ensure the electricity during Sehri and Iftari time,' another local from central Kashmir said.

However the slight drop in temperature has resulted in additional load on system

Aijaz said that the people should make judicious use of power during month of Ramzan to have uninterrupted power supply.

Compared to last year, we are supplying 47 lac additional units of energy means supplying additional 200 MW of power round the clock.

He said that the department during the winter was running 700 Megawatt down to meet the actual demand of consumers during winters. "There needs 2200 Megawatts in valley but we are only providing 1500 Megawatts. At this moment the demand is still 1950 MWs. This is forcing us to go for curtailment, he added.

This may be true that some areas may have power cuts during Iftar or Sehri time, but we are trying best to have sufficient power supply to everyone. I again request people to make judicious use of electricity, he added. (KNS)

Muttahida Majlis Ulema Appeals People To Get Vaccinated

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Muttahida Majlis-e-Ulema (MMU) Jammu and Kashmir headed by incarcerated Mirwaiz Umar Farooq expressed concern over the second wave of coronavirus that has gripped many parts of the world, including Jammu and Kashmir as cases are rising alarmingly, and stressed on people to hold special prayers in the holy month of Ramzan seeking refuge from almighty against the deadly outbreak.

The MMU also fervently appealed people that keeping in view the Shariah and Islamic teachings and to protect themselves and others from the lethal virus, there is a dire need to strictly follow the COVID-19 SOPs and most importantly getting administered with the Covid vaccine.

MMU in a statement said that Muslim scholars, Ulema and Muftiyaan Kiraam of reputed Islamic institutions across the world have stressed upon Muslims to get administered with Covid-19 vaccine which is in keeping with Islamic rulings.

"So, all the constituents of MMU including its chairman Mirwaiz Umar fervently appeal to people of Jammu & Kashmir not to pay heed to rumours about vaccination and go for it with as soon as possible," the statement said.

MMU in the statement also condemned the authorities for continuing to keep the Mirwaiz Umar Farooq even in the holy month of Ramadan under arbitrary house detention, despite repeated appeals to release him so that he could resume his responsibilities in this holy month for Muslims. MMU said such anti Muslims acts are unfortunate to say the least.

The MMU is an amalgam of Anjuman Auqaf Jamia Masjid, Dar-ul-Uloom Raheemiya, Muslim Personal Law Board, Jamiat Ahle Hadeth, Jama'at-e-Islami, Anjuman Shari'a'n Shian, Karwaan-e-Islami, Itihaad-ul-Muslimeen, Anjuman Himayat-ul-Islam, Jamiat Hamdaniya, Anjuman Ulema-e-Ahnaaf, Dar-ul-Uloom Qasmia, Dar-ul-Uloom Bilaliya, Anjuman Nusrat-ul-Islam, Anjuman Mazhar-ul-Haq, Jamiat-ul-Aima Wal Ulema, Anjuman Aima Wa Mashaa'ikh Kashmir, Dar-ul-Uloom Naqshbandiya, Dar-ul-Uloom Rasheediya, Ahl-e-Bayt Foundation, Madrasa Kanz-ul-Uloom, Perwaan-e-Wilayat, Auqaf Islamiya Khurram Sarhama, Anjuman Tanzeem-ul-Makaatib, Muhammadi Trust and other religious social and educational institutions.

CPI(M) Demands Rollback Of Geology and Mining Policy

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Demanding a rollback of existing Geology and Mining policy in Jammu and Kashmir, CPI (M) Secretary Ghulam Nabi Malik Saturday said if not rolled back it can snatch the livelihood of thousands of people across the region.

From contractors to sand diggers, labourers and transporters who are directly or indirectly associated with the extraction of minerals are in a danger of losing their livelihood. Business of quarry owners, crusher owners, tipper and tractor owners, hot-mix and wet-mix plant owners,

masons and other concerned people has been jeopardised.

People associated with the trade had purchased load carriers, tippers and other vehicles by borrowing money from banks. Now with the implementation of this new policy, they have been left jobless as they are not even able to pay monthly EMIs to the banks. The new policy would not result in unemployment to those involved in the job, it would also allow large-scale exploitation of the mineral resources from the water bodies.

The lack of protective mechanisms in the policy has not only deprived thousands of families of

their livelihood but also exposed consumers to exploitation by a mining syndicate. It has led to the acute shortage of construction material at a time when developmental works had just begun in Kashmir after harsh winter. The skyrocketing of construction material like sand, stones, gravel etc are putting a lot of strain in the market and scores of people have stopped construction work following increase in construction material.

Only locals of J&K must be allowed to carry on with the extraction activities like previous years as it can safeguard the livelihood of thousands of people associated with it.

NC Denounces Woman SPO's Arrest In Kulgam, Terms It 'Vindictive'

SRINAGAR: The National Conference on Saturday denounced the arrest and subsequent termination of a woman special police officer (SPO) for "glorifying militancy" in Jammu and Kashmir's Kulgam district, terming the measure "vindictive".

Saima Akhter, a resident of Frisal area of south Kashmir district and working as SPO, was on Friday arrested under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, a police spokesperson said.

In a joint statement issued here, NC's spokesperson Imran Nabi Dar and District president Kulgam Abdul Majeed Bhat Larmi, said, "The NC denounces the booking and subsequent termination of Saima Akhter of Karewa Mohalla, Frisal, Kulgam serving as SPO and terms the measure uncalled for and vindictive."

The NC leaders said the strict measures against the woman SPO are "revengeful" in nature.

"The measure has been taken after a video started making rounds on the social media platform in which Akhter was apparently outraged by the frequent searches of security forces at her house in Frisal," they said.

The NC leaders said if the woman was at all involved in any militancy activity, she should have been brought to justice by the concerned authorities much before the video surfaced.

"It was only after the video went viral that she was terminated and booked. The entire sequence of events has raised ques-

tions on the whole exercise. The action of slapping the UAPA on her, locals of the area also allege, has been taken with malafide intentions," they were quoted as saying in the statement.

The NC leaders said the woman reportedly is the only bread earner for her family, which besides her, comprises her ailing and aging parents.

"The disproportionate action against the said woman comes as a surprise also since no punitive action was taken against the mob which had beaten an on duty police officer to pulp at New Delhi the other day.

"While the woman from Frisal, who has been arrested, has only pointed to the predicaments suffered by her family in the wake of intermittent night raids by the security forces," they said.

The duo impressed upon the government to compassionately look at the issue and ensure that no clean-handed person is subjected to any quandary.

The police spokesperson on Friday said that on April 14, security forces launched a search operation in Karewa Mohallah of village Frisal on a specific input regarding the presence of militants there.

During the search operation, he said, the search party was obstructed by the woman SPO.

"The lady resisted the search party and turned violent and uttered statements glorifying violent actions of militants," the spokesperson said.

Seven-Year-Old Kishtwar Girls Wins Hearts Online



Observer News Service

KISHTWAR: Kishtwar's 7 year-old girl Samradhi Sen has won lakhs of hearts by her melodious singing and marvelous skill of playing harmonium.

Hailing from a small Hatta Village here, Samradhi Sen's videos are getting thousands of hits online. Apart from her melodious and mesmerising voice, she can also play the harmonium.

She has already participated in several music programmes and auditions at this tender age. The girl has impressed many people and everyone is appreciating her talent.

Her first public performance was witnessed when she participated in Beti Bachao Beti Padoo programme organised by ICDS Department, Kishtwar. For her amazing performance she was awarded by then DC Kishtwar. After that she participated in "Chooona Hai Asman" organised by the District Police Kishtwar in which she was selected for District level singing competition. At the District Level competition which was held at Doda, she

again qualified and got selected for state level competition.

In December 2019, she participated in Bhaderwah Talent Hunt organised by Smart City Foundation in which she represented Kishtwar through her melodious voice and there she was awarded by the Central Tourism Minister.

She has recently showcased her superb singing skills on the stage of "Chooona Hai Asman-Season" organised by RPHQ Batote J&K at Doda whereat she performed in such a way that it earned her a standing ovation from the judges and the audience and finally she lifted the trophy.

She has also started a facebook page and YouTube channel wherein she uploaded her singing videos and tried to entertain the public during lockdown with her singing skills.

Her parents are pinning high hopes from her talent. "She is very keen to learn singing and harmonium playing and she is doing good in that too," they said.

"Our dream is to see her become a professional singer and win a name for the nation as well as for Kishtwar district," they added.

NEWS MAKERS

200 Posts Notified For Persons With Benchmark Disabilities

Agencies

SRINAGAR: In a significant development, the administration of Jammu & Kashmir Union Territory has notified more than 200 posts as suitable for persons with benchmark disabilities.

According to an order issued by the Social Welfare department, around 200 posts have been identified in different departments along with categories of disabled suitable for them.

The move will broaden the scope of employment for persons with benchmark disabilities who are entitled for reservation in government jobs.

The order reveals that the government has also identified posts for categories of persons with disabilities such

IT HAS ALSO BEEN mandated to undertake periodic review of the identified posts at an interval not exceeding three years.

as autism, intellectual disability, specific learning disability, mental illness and multiple disabilities.

The posts have been notified months after an expert committee constituted by the J&K administration last year submitted its report to the government.

On November 27, 2020, the government constituted an expert panel headed by administrative secretary Finance and comprising administrative secretary General Administration Department,

administrative secretary Social Welfare department and others to identify posts in different departments establishments which can be held by respective category of persons with benchmark disabilities in respect of the vacancies reserved for the disabled by the government.

It has also been mandated to undertake periodic review of the identified posts at an interval not exceeding three years.

After the expert panel submitted its report, the General Administration Department on March 17, 2021 conveyed the approval of the competent authority to the acceptance of the report and advised the Social Welfare department to work out the modalities for its implementation—(KNO)

Woman Slips To Death In Kulgam

Observer News Service

KULGAM: A 45-year-old woman died on Saturday after slipping into a Nallah in Gulzarabad area of Damhal Hanjipora in South Kashmir's Kulgam district.

An official said that Gulshana Banoo (45), wife of Farooq Ahmad Malik of Humpathri slipped and fell into a Nallah while crossing a foot bridge between Gulzarabad and Humpathri Kulgam.

"Gulshana had gone to meet her sister. While crossing the foot bridge, she slipped into a Nallah and died on the spot," he said, adding that the body was fished out by locals with the help of Tehsil administration in a span of one hour at Chund Badjialan. He said the body was later handed over to her family members for last rites—(KNO)

'Notorious' Criminal Arrested In Reasi

Observer News Service

JAMMU: A notorious criminal who was evading his arrest for the last three years was arrested in Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday, police said.

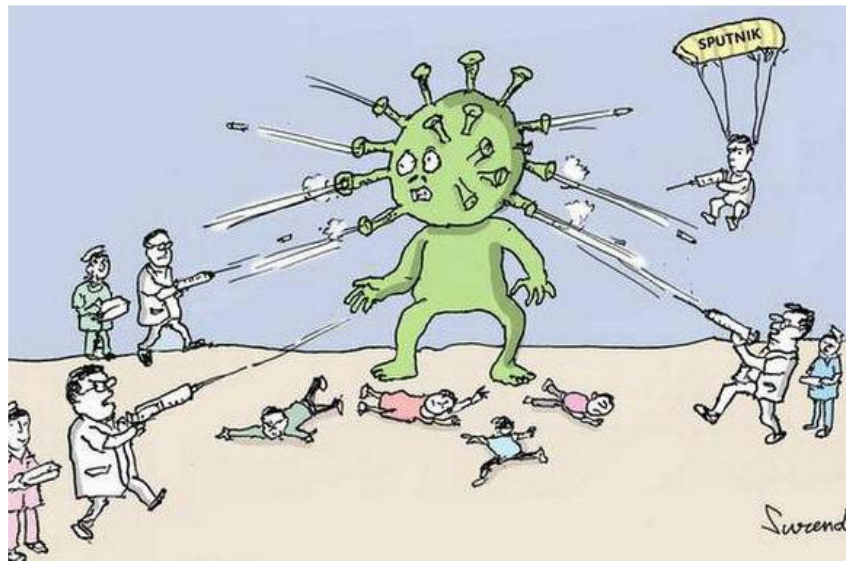
Mohammad Jameel, a resident of Kalyanpur-Marh, was wanted in two cases of kidnapping and attempt to murder registered at police station Reasi between 2018 and 2019, a police spokesman said. He said Reasi police arrested the accused on specific information from Jammu.

His two other associates, Mohammad Murrid and Mohammad Qadir, were arrested by Reasi police this month, the spokesman said.

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NO HOLDS BARRED



The truth is India faces no threat of Islamic terrorism. "Love jihad" is not a cover for a global conspiracy. These are propaganda tools to create a state of permanent distrust and friction. But this mainstreaming of anti-Muslim sentiment for political purposes comes at a huge cost. A society constantly fighting imaginary demons within cannot go far

Children of Lesser God

R. Raj Rao

What is appalling, however, is the double standards when it comes to minorities. If that wasn't the case, would the government and media houses have turned a blind eye to what was happening at the Kumbh Mela in Haridwar, Uttarakhand?

In hindsight, one can safely conclude that the pogrom launched against the Tablighi Jamaatis this time last year was not on account of the coronavirus, but because of Islamophobia. The Jamaatis were singled out because they were worshippers of Allah. Months after the vituperative vilification campaign against the Muslims from all over the world who had gathered at the mosque in Hazrat Nizamuddin, New Delhi, to celebrate the religious event, the Bombay High Court ruled that there was no proof that it was the Jamaatis who were responsible for the spread of coronavirus in India. In effect, the Jamaatis were merely being made the scapegoat for the government's failure to control the pandemic.

What is appalling, however, is the double standards when it comes to minorities. If that wasn't the case, would the government and media houses have turned a blind eye to what was happening at the Kumbh Mela in Haridwar, Uttarakhand? To fulminate against a Hindu religious festival, however, is blasphemy. Worshippers believe that the gods will save them. Some have even gone on record to inane say, when TV reporters, risking their own lives, have landed in Haridwar to randomly interview them, that the fact that "corona is bunkum". They are in denial to that extent.

As I write this piece on Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's 130th birth anniversary, which is also the beginning of the Muslim month of Ramadan, I wonder, ironically, if the founding father of our Constitution was not off the mark in visualising post-independence India as a secular democracy, where the state would have no official religion.

But if religion is one aspect of hypocrisy, the other aspect is politics. As I write this piece, Maharashtra, where I live, goes into lockdown from 8 pm tonight. Why? Because the state has the highest number of the new strain of coronavirus cases, with my city, Pune, having the notorious distinction of topping the list. But then it is we the poor who are to suffer for the spread, even held responsible for it. We have to shut our small shops, our street food stalls, our hairdressing salons, our motorbike repair garages, our laundries, our massage parlours and so on, and stay at home without work and without an income. True, the Chief Minister has announced a relief money package for some of us, but then we wonder how many of us will actually be recipients of the state government's largesse.

Many of us are haunted by dreadful memories of last year's lockdown, when many had to trek for thousands of miles all the way to our hometowns,



Credits: Reuters

some of us dying on the way. We have nightmares just thinking of that time. Thus, we have begun to assemble at major train stations like Pune Junction, and Lokmanya Tilak Terminus, Mumbai in the sweltering heat, to board the first available trains back to our villages. After all, can we be certain that the two-week lockdown announced by the Chief Minister, will not be extended to four, five and six weeks? Can we and our families stay without food and without work for that long? But even here, at the train stations, we have already become victims of police brutality once again, with the police caning us as if we are thugs.

But do any of the restrictions announced by the government apply to our more-than-equal politicians? No way! Former Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis held an election rally close to the holy town of Pandharpur only two days ago. TV channels showed him addressing crowds of attendees, many of them without masks, or with masks lowered to their chins. Why, the man himself was without a mask!

And what about West Bengal, where everyone from the Prime Minister to the Home Minister to the state Chief Minister has been addressing rallies with audiences of thousands, once again without

masks and without physical, let alone social distance? The BJP is out to prove that the wheel has come full circle in West Bengal. From the extreme leftism of Naxalbari in Darjeeling district in 1967, to the left front government of Jyoti Basu for decades afterwards, the electorate has now swung to the extreme right.

Our politicians at election rallies are like children in a toyshop. All they can see, to the exclusion of everything else, are their voters who will bring them votes.

Corona may appear in the world in waves for the next five years or more, but it isn't for our politicians and our religionists. It is merely for us, children of a lesser god.

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

Dr. R. Raj Rao is an internationally known Indian English novelist, poet and critic. He was Professor and Head of the Department of English at the University of Pune in Maharashtra. He has also been a Visiting Professor at universities in Canada and Germany

LOVE JIHAD From Propaganda to Policy

Ghazala Wahab

Moving the Amendment Bill to the Freedom of Religion Act 2003 in the Gujarat Assembly recently, state home minister Pradipsinh Jadeja said, "There is international finance being channelised to lure Hindu girls into marriage and then conversion." In the debate that followed, one Congress legislator tore the copy of the Bill and another accused the government of playing communal politics. None asked the minister to furnish evidence of "international finance" being pumped into the state to trick gullible Hindu girls. Or what steps the government was taking to curb the flow of FDI into Project "Love Jihad".

By not challenging the home minister's assertion, the opposition became complicit in the theory of "love jihad" being a global conspiracy. The response to Jadeja's communal rhetoric must not be political theatre; it demands a counter by facts. When propaganda is not challenged, it becomes policy. "Love jihad", which started as a joke, has now assumed the status of a national threat. Not only are states competing with each other to bring draconian laws, in recent state elections, campaigns pivoted on this. Canvassing for the BJP in West Bengal a few days ago, UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath promised voters that his party would set up "anti-Romeo squads" in the state to check "love jihad".

The biggest evidence of "love jihad" in the hands of these propagandists is: More Muslim men marry Hindu women in comparison to Muslim women marry-



ing outside their religion. I believe this is true. But that's only half the truth. In India, marriages are traditionally fixed by family members and rarely go beyond predetermined boundaries of religion, caste and perceived socio-economic compatibility. Those who choose their own partners are rebels who disrupt this order. Two factors are needed for this rebellion: One, motivation, which implies meeting someone who inspires one to break free; and two, courage, which comes from the confidence that one would be able to succeed in one's rebellion.

In its 2005 report, the Justice Sachar Committee observed that Muslim women are the first to disappear from formal education and the last to join the organised workforce. This peripheral existence renders them at the mercy of the men in their families. This lack of agency over their lives is compounded by two factors:

In which part of India have Muslims been "spreading their faith by resorting to terror and threats"? Shouldn't all of this be a matter of record? There was no factual basis to these observations. They were the product of propaganda. Through constant repetition, this falsehood has assumed the status of an unchallenged truth

Insecurity that has been part of a Muslim's mental make-up post-independence, given the history of communal violence and targeted sexual violence against Muslim women; and the belief that a family's

honour resides in the body of its women. Hence, women must be sheltered/ veiled as far as possible.

Given this, where are the public spaces where Muslim women are likely to meet non-Muslim men long enough for them to fall in love? Muslim women who do manage to pursue higher education mostly do so in all-women, often Muslim-run, institutions. As far as employment is concerned, except for mass media, how many Muslim men do you find in the organised sector, forget women? Not only do average non-Muslim men have little access to Muslim women, even Muslim men are not able to socially interact with many Muslim women outside the family.

None of this is a state secret. Yet, an average citizen shows surprising gullibility in accepting that this socio-economic phenomenon is linked with Islamic terrorism or Islamic takeover of India. One distraught father in Kerala (2017-2018) got the high court to intervene in the marriage of his adult daughter on the plea that her husband intended to supply her to ISIS as a sex slave.

What has brought about this naivete at different levels of the society? The answer is unchallenged propaganda of Islamic terrorism being a threat to India. Hence, anything that gets linked with it, is immediately accepted as truth.

In April 2002, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee said at his party's national convention in Goa, "Wherever I went around the world, the heads of state... complained to me that militant Islam is sowing thorns along their paths... these days, militancy in the name of Islam leaves no room for tolerance... Where-

ever Muslims live, they don't like to live in co-existence with others, they don't like to mingle with others; they want to spread their faith by resorting to terror and threats..."

How exactly did the prime minister reach the conclusion that Muslims "do not live in co-existence with others"? In which part of India have Muslims been "spreading their faith by resorting to terror and threats"? Shouldn't all of this be a matter of record? There was no factual basis to these observations. They were the product of propaganda that the Hindu right-wing has been spreading since the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Through constant repetition, this falsehood has assumed the status of an unchallenged truth.

Unfortunately, Muslims have been complicit in sustaining this propaganda. Instead of being defensive, they should be challenging it at every turn. Of course, some Muslims have carried out acts of terrorism against civilians. They must be condemned unequivocally. But a lot of terrorist violence in India has a political context — as, for instance, in Kashmir. Political violence has to be distinguished from mindless violence in the name of religion.

The truth is India faces no threat of Islamic terrorism. "Love jihad" is not a cover for a global conspiracy. These are propaganda tools to create a state of permanent distrust and friction. But this mainstreaming of anti-Muslim sentiment for political purposes comes at a huge cost. A society constantly fighting imaginary demons within cannot go far.

The Indian Express

The Clock Is Ticking for Biden on Iran

The United States must quickly decide on lifting sanctions and come up with a credible road map for reviving the Iran nuclear deal.

Vali R. Nasr

“If there is no breakthrough in Vienna and Tehran concludes that the United States will not lift sanctions, the nuclear issue can take a dangerous turn and potentially lead the United States to another war in the Middle East

Since early April, Iranian officials have been meeting in Vienna with British, Chinese, French, German and Russian counterparts, the remaining members of the 2015 nuclear deal that the United States abandoned in 2018. The United States is participating indirectly, with European diplomats going back and forth between the Iranians and the U.S. diplomats, led by President Biden’s special envoy, Robert Malley.

On Thursday these negotiations resumed, despite the uncertainty caused by Sunday’s sabotage of Iran’s Natanz nuclear facility, which Iran blamed on Israel. Publicly, Israel denied being behind the attack. But American and Israeli intelligence officials have described it as “a classified Israeli operation,” and Tehran has retaliated by increasing its nuclear enrichment levels threefold.

The negotiators agreed on forming two working groups, one charged to decide the steps Iran has to take to move back into full compliance, and the other to draft a list of sanctions that the United States would have to lift. In the first round of talks, there was agreement on Iran’s to-do list, but no progress on the sanctions the United States would remove.

This diplomatic process, which is crucial to avoiding further conflict in the Middle East and allowing President Biden to focus on competition with China, will falter unless the Biden administration moves quickly. American negotiators should list the sanctions that the United States is prepared to remove in exchange for Iranian compliance. Iran is about three months from breakout time, the time it would take to produce sufficient weapons-grade enriched uranium for one nuclear weapon. If diplomacy fails, the United States will slide into another dangerous crisis in the Middle East.

Iran has been willing to engage the Biden administration and has promised to return to full compliance with the nuclear deal if the United States did so as well. During his presidential campaign, Mr. Biden wrote in an essay for CNN, “If Iran returns to strict compliance with the nuclear deal, the United States would rejoin the agreement as a starting point for follow-on negotiations.”

But that apparent agreement masked disagreements on who should take the first step, and how to manage subsequent steps back to full compliance. The differences intensified after President Biden took office. Members of Congress — as well as the governments of Israel, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates — have been pressuring the White House to insist on including limits on Iran’s military and regional political strategies in a new deal with Iran.

The Biden administration signaled that it was looking past the 2015 nuclear deal at a “longer and stronger” agreement, which would include fundamental changes to Iran’s support for proxy forces in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen, and limits on the number and range of Iranian missiles.

Iran did not turn out to be as desperate as Washington assumed. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the supreme leader of Iran, has said, most recently on Wednesday, that Iran would only talk about the 2015 nuclear deal and would not negotiate directly with the United States until it was restored. He insisted that since the United States had left the deal, the



Biden administration had to take the first step by removing the sanctions imposed by President Trump. Until then, Iran would continue enriching uranium at a fast clip.

The International Atomic Energy Agency’s recent report estimates that Iran has increased its enrichment rate to 20 percent from the permitted 3.67 percent. It added more advanced centrifuges, which have improved its enrichment capacity threefold.

Tehran has also carried out attacks in Iraq and forged a strategic partnership with China. Iran will continue on this path during a stalemate, which will provide an opportunity to Israel and its Arab allies to undermine diplomacy in Washington and in the region.

A combination of these factors seems to have convinced Washington that the path to a longer and stronger accord is through restoring the 2015 nuclear deal. Before the talks began in Vienna, Mr. Malley, the special envoy, remarked that the United States would “have to remove those sanctions that are inconsistent with the deal” in exchange for Iranian compliance.

The United States and Iran differ on which sanc-

tions should be removed. Iran wants a return to where things stood before Mr. Trump took office. The United States is unwilling to commit to removing all Trump-era sanctions, in part because the Trump administration deliberately designated many sanctions as linked to fighting terrorism, which makes them difficult to remove.

Since the Vienna talks began, the U.S. negotiators would not provide a list of sanctions that the Biden administration would remove. Iranian negotiators said that they will come back with their own list. That could make or break the next round of talks.

If there is no breakthrough in Vienna and Tehran concludes that the United States will not lift sanctions, the nuclear issue can take a dangerous turn and potentially lead the United States to another war in the Middle East.

The Biden administration has to act decisively by lifting Trump-era sanctions and coming up with a credible road map for reviving a nuclear deal that the United States and Iran could agree on.

New York Times

The world has been struggling under travel bans, lockdowns and limits on freedom for the last year because of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, Kashmir has had a much longer and more bitter experience of such restrictions.

London-based Kashmiri non-fiction author Iqbal Ahmed recently published an exquisite new book, *The Art of Hospitality: A European Odyssey*, which explores such issues and much more besides.

Writes Ahmed: “lockdown” was a new expression to describe the grim reality in Kashmir. Ever since my childhood, we had called it ‘curfew’ — a medieval word.” Working on the volume during London’s three lockdowns, Ahmed could not but recall Srinagar’s curfews. Indeed, it is striking that, often when he observes a European object or phenomenon, he is transported back imaginatively to Kashmir. We see this translocal dissonance at work, for example, in the comparisons he draws between Swiss and sub-continental mountains and goldsmiths.

In 2019, Venice and Barcelona suffered from over-tourism and Srinagar from zero tourism. These are just some of the sites Ahmed describes over the course of his chapters. Other burghs he visits include Basel, Geneva, Gibraltar, Granada, Milan, Paris and Zurich. He writes about these cities con brio, as the musical notation on the handsome clothbound edition advises.

Until the pandemic and Brexit (which Ahmed writes about with wary disdain), a great pleasure of living in Britain was to travel easily from here to mainland Europe. If there’s one thing the pandemic has taught me, it is not to take these privileges for granted.

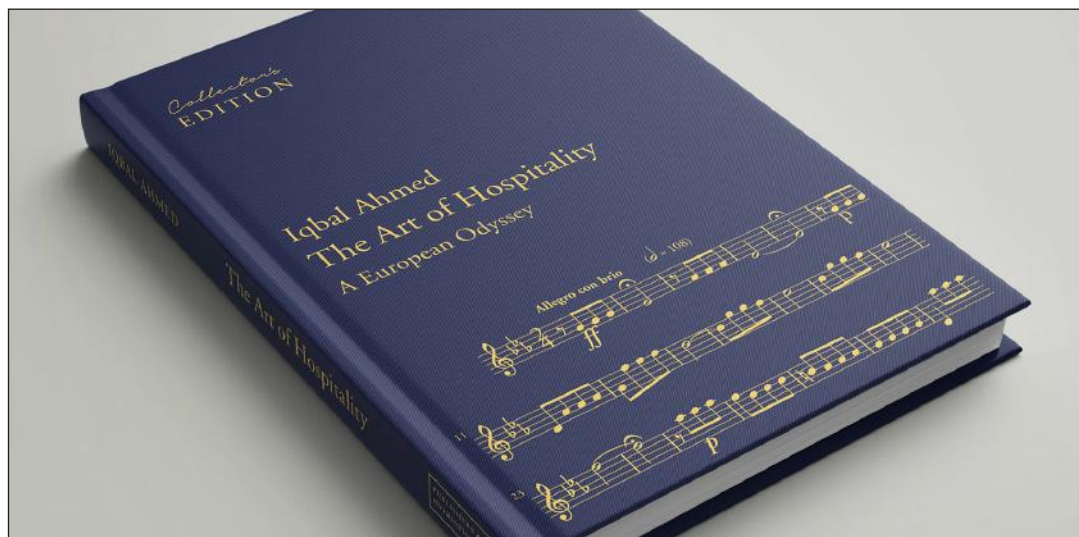
Meanwhile, as a Kashmiri, Ahmed has had this awareness thrust upon him. His open-minded, yet elegantly restrained, book offers up journeys of the mind to the “desk-bound traveller.” One can feel the heat of Andalusia, savour the fresh air of the Alps and visualise Italy’s chic fashion shows. Unlike his travel-writing forebear V.S. Naipaul, Ahmed also chooses to see the good in those people he meets during his peregrinations.

Covid-19 has greatly coloured the writing of this book. In an essay on his experiences as an author, Ahmed declares: “Covid-19 is an all-encompassing tsunami.” Like many others, although he

Lockdowns And Curfews

A review of London-based Kashmiri non-fiction author Iqbal Ahmed’s recently published exquisite new book, *The Art of Hospitality: A European Odyssey*

Claire Chambers



“At the end of his book, Ahmed suggests that Kashmiris have found it hard to adjust to social distancing “because hospitality is so ingrained in Kashmiri culture

has more time from working at home, he has felt less productive and his sleep has been affected.

He is alert to the need for sustainable travel in a rapidly warming planet, and not opposed to the fact that coronavirus has led many “to rethink their relationship with tourism.” Nor does he neglect the exploitative neo-colonial side of globetrotting. Too often, it is brown and black service industry labourers who facilitate the rest and relaxation of white guests.

Yet he recognises that this is changing, and that Indian and Chinese travellers have grown in numbers and adventurousness over the last two decades. His book also functions as a clarion call that a world without movement across borders would be a humdrum and parochial place.

It comes as a sucker punch to read in *The Art of Hospitality*’s final pages that Ahmed’s 19-year career in this industry was cut short prematurely in October 2020.

He acknowledged that he will find it difficult to work in another sector. That said, he expressed optimism about the future of the hospitality industry, because it has weathered many storms in the past. Dedicating his book to the industry’s workers, Ahmed takes hospitality as his main theme.

Hospitality is a trait rightly associated with both Islam and South Asia. In the Islamic tradition, it is an obligation to feed a guest for three days. I myself benefitted from the hospitality woven into the Pakhtunwali social code when I spent a year in Peshawar during the mid-1990s.

At the end of his book, Ahmed suggests that Kashmiris have found it hard to adjust to social distancing “because hospitality is so ingrained in Kashmiri culture.” Yet, the international community has distanced itself from the Kashmir conflict for decades, making the valley’s plight a forgotten lockdown.

This pandemic has shone a spotlight on how various countries look after, or fail to protect, their most vulnerable citizens. I asked Iqbal how well the nations he is most closely associated with have stood up in these testing circumstances. “I think the UK government played fast and loose with the pandemic in the beginning,” he said, “resulting in one of the worst death rates per million population from Covid-19 in the world. Kashmir has fared far better than the UK in this regard.”

At one moment in *The Art of Hospitality*, Ahmed notes that the sobriquet “sick man of Europe” was first bestowed on Italy and then the UK, as these countries dealt poorly with the coronavirus. How ironic that a slur originally used by Britons against Turkey around the time of the Ottoman Empire’s breakup should, in the 21st century, be foisted on the same former colonial power that propagated it.

In these curfewed nights of Covid-19, Ahmed reminds us of Kashmir’s Sisyphean cycle of lockdowns. If freedom is a state of mind, it is noteworthy that Kashmiris’ besiegement also includes severe curbs on internet usage. Yet, despite privations in London and Srinagar, Ahmed’s creativity soars high. He takes his readers on a remarkable imaginative sojourn that is welcome at a difficult time.

Dawn

Researchers find financial stress can lead to physical pain in later years

Agencies

Washington- Family financial stress in midlife is associated with a depleted sense of control, which is related to increased physical pain in later years, according to new research by University of Georgia scientists.

Financial stress can have an immediate impact on well-being, but can it lead to physical pain nearly 30 years later? The answer is yes, and the study published in the journal 'Stress and Health' explains it.

"Physical pain is considered an illness on its own with three major components: biological, psychological and social," said Kandauda A.S. Wickrama, first author and professor in the College of Family and Consumer Sciences. "In older adults, it co-occurs with other health problems like limited physical functioning, loneliness and cardiovascular disease."

Most pain research is neurological, but it's important to also connect it too stressful family experiences, according to the researchers.

"Dr Wickrama and I are both interested in the context surrounding families and how that context impacts the relational, physical and mental health of the individuals in the family," said lead author Catherine Walker O'Neal, an associate research scientist in the College of Family and Consumer Sciences. "Finances are an important compo-



ment of our work because it's such a relevant contextual stressor families face."

The authors used data from the Iowa Youth and Family Project, a longitudinal study that provides 27 years of data on rural families from a cluster of eight counties in north-central Iowa. The data was collected in real-time from husbands and wives in 500 families who experienced financial problems associated with the late 1980s farm crisis.

Most of the individuals

are now over 65 years old, and the couples are in enduring marriages-some as long as 45 years.

Even after the researchers controlled for concurrent physical illnesses, family income and age, they found a connection between family financial hardship in the early 1990s and physical pain nearly three decades later. Additional findings from their study show it's more likely that financial strain influences physical pain, though physical pain can in turn

influence financial strain through additional health care costs.

Physical pain is a biopsychosocial phenomenon, according to Wickrama. The research suggests that stressful experiences like financial strain erode psychological resources like a sense of control.

This depletion of resources activates brain regions that are sensitive to stress, launching pathological, physiological and neurological processes that lead to

health conditions like physical pain, physical limitations, loneliness and cardiovascular disease.

"In their later years, many complain about memory loss, bodily pain and lack of social connections," he said. "Nearly two-thirds of adults complain of some type of bodily pain, and nearly that many complain of loneliness. That percentage is going up, and the health cost for that is going up. That is a public health concern."

Scholarships This Week

Kashmir Observer in association with Buddy4Study.com presents scholarships available for the meritorious students of Jammu and Kashmir

Scholarship Name 1: CSIR Innovation Award for School Children (CIASC) 2021

Description: Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) is inviting applications from young innovative students of India below 18 years of age for CSIR Innovation Award for School Children (CIASC) 2021. In this competition, the students are required to submit their original creative designs and technological project proposals aimed at creating novel and utilitarian solutions of new processes/devices/utilities.

Eligibility: Students or groups of students who are below 18 years of age are eligible. They must be Indian citizens enrolled at a recognized Indian school. They must submit only one entry in their name including any team submissions (if any).

Prizes & Rewards: Cash awards up to INR 1,00,000

Last Date to Apply: 30-04-2021

Application mode: By post to Head, CSIR-Innovation Protection Unit NISCAIR Building, 3rd Floor, 14-Satsang Vihar Marg New Delhi-110067, India

Short Url: www.b4s.in/ob-server/ASC5

Scholarship Name 2: IIT Patna Vishleshan Chanakya Post Doctoral Fellowship 2021

Description: Indian Institute of Technology, Patna invites applications for the IIT Patna Vishleshan Chanakya Post Doctoral Fellowship 2021 from PhD degree hold-

ers. Eligibility: The fellowship is open for candidates below 35 years of age who hold a PhD degree with excellent ideas and working experience relevant to the National Mission on Speech, Video and Text Analytics (NM-SVTA). They must be NET/GATE qualified.

Prizes & Rewards: INR 80,000 per month

Last Date to Apply: 30-04-2021

Application mode: By email and by post to R&D, IIT Patna, Bihra, Bihar, India

Short Url: www.b4s.in/ob-server/CPA6

Scholarship Name 3: Mi Scholarship for Class 11 and 12 Students 2020-21

Description: Xiaomi India invites applications from students studying in Class 11/12 and undergraduate level. The scholarship is meant to support meritorious students who belong to underprivileged sections of the society.

The scholarship is open for Indian nationals only. The applicants must be studying in Class 11/12 or undergraduate (any stream) level. They must have secured at least 70% marks in their previous qualifying examination.

Prizes & Rewards: Up to INR 5,800

Last Date to Apply: 30-04-2021

Application mode: Online applications only

Short Url: www.b4s.in/ob-server/MISC1

Engaging in household chores may improve brain health: Study

According to a new study, engaging in household chores may be beneficial for brain health in older adults. The study found that older adults who spent more time on household chores showed greater brain size, which is a strong predictor of cognitive health.

The findings of the study were published in the journal BMC Geriatrics. "Scientists already know that exercise has a positive impact on the brain, but our study is the first to show that the same may be true for household chores," said Noah Koblinksky, lead author of the study, Exercise Physiologist and Project Coordinator at Baycrest's Rotman Research Institute (RRI).

Koblinksky added, "Understanding how different forms of physical activity contribute to brain health is crucial for developing strategies to reduce the risk of cognitive decline and dementia in older adults."



In this study, the researchers looked at the links between household chores, brain volume and cognition in a group of 66 cognitively healthy older adults living in the community. The participants attended three assessment visits at Baycrest Hospital, including a health evaluation, structural brain imaging and cognitive assessment.

Participants were asked about the time they spent on household chores, such as tidying, dusting, meal preparation and clean up, shopping, heavy housework, yard work, home repairs and caregiving.

The researchers found that older adults who spent more time engaging in such activities had greater brain volume, regardless of how much exercise they did. This was observed in the hippocampus, which plays a major role in memory and learning, and the frontal lobe, which is involved in many aspects of cognition.

Although it is possible that individuals with larger brains are more likely to take up household chores, there could be several explanations for the brain benefits of household physical activity.

First, we know that heart health is closely tied to brain health. It could be that household chores have a similar effect on the heart and blood vessels as low-intensity aerobic exercise.

Second, the planning and organisation involved in household chores may promote the formation of new neural connections over time, even as we age. Third, it could be that the older adults who engaged in more household chores spent less time being sedentary, which has been shown to be associated with negative health outcomes, including poor brain health.

"Besides helping to guide physical activity recommendations for older adults, these findings may also motivate them to be more active, since household chores are a natural and often necessary aspect of many people's daily lives, and therefore appear more attainable," said Dr Nicole Anderson, Senior Scientist at the RRI, Director of the Ben and Hilda Katz Interprofessional Research Program in Geriatric and Dementia Care, and senior author of this study.

This study was funded in part by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)

Some of the Best E-Learning Resources to Ace Govt Job Exams in India

Sponsored Feature

EVERY year various Central and State government exams such as SSC, RRB, UPSC, Banking exams, Defence exams and more are held in India. These exams offer great career prospects to young graduates as well as experienced professionals who wish to secure a well reputed government job in different departments, offices and ministries in India.

With that said, millions of aspirants across India appear for these government exams with a goal to bag a government job. However, only a few thousand succeed and a majority of candidates fail to make it through.

One of the main reasons behind the success and failure of aspirants depends on the quality of guidance and educational resources or study material accessible to students.

With the increase in internet accessibility, many edtech start-ups have come up offering E-learning resources for students to help boost their preparation for their respective government exam.

For instance, SSC CGL aspirants can now enroll in SSC CGL Online Coaching and access other educational resources like online test series and other study material from the comfort of their home. All they need is a smartphone or any other device with an internet connection.

On that note, let's talk about some of the best exam preparation platforms offering top quality E-learning resources to students to help them ace various government job exams.

Testbook

Testbook is one of the most favoured exam preparation platforms by students preparing for various major government job exams. Testbook through its website and app offers a one-stop answer to all essential guidance and educational resources needs of aspirants.

It achieves this by offering online coaching services via 200 plus live and recorded courses and 12000 plus test series for more than 290 government exams including major exams like SSC, Railways, Banking and Insurance exams, Defence, UPSC, UGC NET, CTET and others.



These exam preparation courses include video lectures (live and recorded) from expert teaching faculty, Study notes in PDF form, classes for exam strategy and tips, mock tests, quizzes and practice sets with detailed solutions and in-depth performance reports and more.

These exam preparation courses include video lectures (live and recorded) from expert teaching faculty, Study notes in PDF form, classes for exam strategy and tips, mock tests, quizzes and practice sets with detailed solutions and in-depth performance reports and more.

Apart from this, Testbook offers perhaps one of the largest repositories of online test series for the students to practice enough questions in every subject and topic for their respective exams.

For instance, a student preparing for UPSC IAS can access everything he/she needs for his/her exam preparation on Testbook website such as UPSC CSAT Online Coaching, mock test series, study notes, question bank, preparation strategy and tips, best quality guidance and mentorship and more.

Additionally, a separate section for regularly updated GK and Current Affairs content is available on Testbook website and app for free. Through this Testbook caters to the daily, weekly and monthly current affairs needs of students studying for any competitive exam.

Lastly, it allows students to download and watch recorded videos offline, take screenshots during live classes, save important ques-

tions and tests, interact and clear their doubts with experienced teaching faculty in real-time.

Gradeup

One of India's largest exam preparation portal, Gradeup offers expert mentors guidance, courses, free videos, study material, previous year solved question papers, quizzes, online test series and more for all major competitive exams.

The principal concept behind the success of gradeup website and app is the exam-specific network of highly nurtured expert mentors and students. Through this network students not only receive proper guidance from mentors but also support, challenge and encourage other students as well. They solve each other's questions/doubts and compete with each other via regular live open tests and quizzes.

Apart from this, students can access all the aforementioned study and practice material on the Gradeup website and app by getting the Grade up monthly or yearly membership.

Pocket Aptitude

The pocket aptitude is an exam preparation app specifically designed for the dedicated students

preparing for quantitative aptitude and logical reasoning sections for any major exam such as UPSC, Banking exams, SSC, RRB, CMATE and others.

The app comprises 1800 plus Quantitative aptitude and logical reasoning questions segregated topic-wise, practice tests, study notes with important tricks, formulas and detailed solutions.

The difficulty level of questions ranges from easy, moderate and advanced levels. The app comes with features like save questions and tests so that you can revisit and reattempt them later.

Adda 247

Adda 247 is another fantastic government exam preparation portal that offers everything necessary for better exam preparation. Adda 247 study content includes live and recorded video courses, unlimited mock tests, 2000 plus quizzes, PDF notes and more. Furthermore, it provides students with regularly refreshed current affairs and GK content for their general awareness needs.

The app's content is available in both Hindi and English language. Apart from that, the user interface of the app is easy to use and lets you download content to access them offline and bookmark questions for revision later. The test series consist of full-length mock tests, subject-wise tests, topic-wise tests and previous years solved papers with detailed solutions.

Unacademy

One of India's largest online learning platforms, Unacademy offers live classes by top mentors, test series, quizzes and practice sets and more.

Unacademy has assisted 30000 plus students to achieve their goals with its specially structured courses for various competitive exams. Thousands of students in their success story have given accounts of how Unacademy helped them in cracking some of the toughest exams in India.

Joining hands with some of the top educators in India and designing courses that align with the latest exam syllabus and pattern to help students boost their exam preparation. This is the principal reason behind Unacademy's popularity among aspirants preparing for different government exams in India.

Pharma Firms Cut Remdesivir Injection Prices On Govt Intervention: NPPA



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Prices of Remdesivir injection have been voluntarily curtailed by various drug companies on the intervention of the government, National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) said on Saturday.

Drug companies like Cadila Healthcare, Dr Reddy's Laboratories and Cipla have cut the prices of their respective brands of Remdesivir injection (100 mg/vial). The antiviral drug is used in the treatment of COVID-19.

"Due to the government's intervention, the price of #Remdesivir Injection is now reduced! I am thankful to pharmaceutical companies for joining hands with the Government to fight against COVID-19 Pandemic," Union Minister of State for Chemicals and Fertilisers Mansukh L.

Mandaviya tweeted.

According to the details shared by the NPPA, Cadila Healthcare has reduced the price of its REMDAC (Remdesivir 100 mg) injection to Rs 899 from Rs 2,800 earlier. Similarly, Syngene International has cut the price of its brand RemWin to Rs 2,450 from Rs 3,950 earlier.

Hyderabad-based Dr Reddy's Laboratories has cut the price of REDYX, which used to cost Rs 5,400 earlier to Rs 2,700 now. Similarly, Cipla has reduced P of its CIPREMI brand to Rs 3,000 from Rs 4,000 earlier.

Mylan has also reduced the price of its brand from Rs 4,800 to Rs 3,400. Similarly, Jubilant Generics has cut the price of its remdesivir brand to Rs 3,400 from Rs 4,700 earlier.

Hetero Healthcare has also cut the price of its brand COVIFOR from Rs 5,400 to Rs 3,490 now.

Covid-19 Resurgence: Tourism Players Face Mass Cancellation Of Hotel Bookings

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Amid resurgence in Covid-19 positive cases across India, the hoteliers and houseboat owners in the valley are facing mass cancellation of hotel bookings for the summer season.

Talking with the news agency, Manzoor Pakhtoon, a tour operator, said that amid a spike in Covid-19 cases, the majority of the advance bookings for the summer are getting cancelled.

"The valley is witnessing a huge influx in tourism and for summers there were pre-bookings till May end. However, in view of growing Covid-19 positive cases in the country, prior bookings are getting cancelled," he said.

Secretary Houseboat Association Abdul Rasheed said, that the majority of their advance bookings for the summer season are getting cancelled, while tourists who are already in the valley are cutting short their trip.

"More than 80 per cent of Houseboats are empty now, with no fresh bookings around in view of growing COVID-19 positive cases in the country," Rasheed said.

"With fresh weekend lockdowns in different parts of the country, tourists are reluctant to travel with Covid scare around. Though we are making sure that when the tourists visit us, they are following the COVID-19 SOPs,



but the scare is there," he said.

Meanwhile, a top official from the Floriculture department said gardens and parks would remain open under already set Covid-19 SOPs and guidelines to attract tourists.

After the official opening of Tulip Garden for visitors on 25 March 2021, it has been successful in attracting a huge number of visitors. So far the garden has recorded more than two lakh visitors.

In a move to prevent the further spread of the virus after many students tested Covid

positive, the administration has closed the schools from primary to 12th class.

Meanwhile office of the LG on Saturday ordered the postponement of 11th class examination and ceiling on gatherings and functions to 100 persons only.

"In view of #COVID19, class 11th exams have been postponed. There will also be a ceiling on gatherings and functions restricting to 100 persons from earlier 200," the office of the LG J&K tweeted—(KNO)

Second Covid-19 Wave Expected To Disrupt Fabric Demand: Ind-Ra



The second wave of Covid-19 resurgence can potentially disrupt fabric demand, said India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra).

"Woven fabrics production continued to improve mom, though marginally, in January 2021, despite remaining 21 per cent YoY lower," Ind-Ra said.

"While recoveries for blended and knitted fabrics were quicker, that of woven is expected to be delayed with micro-lockdowns and work-from-home culture."

Besides, export demand for woven fabrics is expected to plunge over Q1FY22 with key destination countries grappling with a second wave of pandemic.

"Fabric exports remained muted in January 2021 on a mom basis, and 17 per cent YoY lower. Demand for imported fabrics surged over December 2020-January 2021, led by restocking by retailers."

"Imports in value terms doubled between November 2020-January 2021 with higher shipments from China, Bangladesh and Vietnam."

Accordingly, the agency expects near-short term disruptions with the closure of retail spaces, malls, shopping centres other than essentials in urban cities would delay the pick-up in domestic demand.

Lately, several state governments have imposed local lockdowns to curb the rising cases of Covid-19 infections.

Furthermore, several state governments have gone in for weekend curfews.

Additionally, malls, restaurants and other type of market places have either been closed down or their operational timing have been restricted as an added measure to dissuade public from staying longer outside, thereby, mitigating the risk of spreading the infection further.—IANS

SDA Allots 51 Shops Of Sangarmall Complex For Rent Below Rs 2000

Rent At Rs 7 Per Sq-Foot, Depends On Space Alloted : Officials



Agencies

SRINAGAR: In a bizarre development, the Srinagar Development Authority (SDA) has allotted 51 shops of Sangarmall Shopping Complex on rent just at a cost of below Rs 2000 per month out of a total number of 125 shops available in the complex.

According to the official figures, among the low rented 51 shops allotted to different individuals and establishments, 12 shop owners were paying even further less than Rs 1000 month-

ly rent till May-2019.

Meanwhile, officials of the SDA said, "The rent of such shops having less than Rs 2000 depends upon the space allotted to the establishment owner and the rent is being revised after every three years. The rent for the shop in the complex is Rs 7 per square feet."

"Whosoever wishes to get the shop on lease agreement has to pay the premium and the cost of the premium depends upon the location and area of the shop in the complex," the official said.

The official figures also state that

till May-2019, SDA was generating just Rs 2,624.47 from the Sangarmall Shopping Complex monthly on the account rental charges of 125 shops of the complex.

Meanwhile, according to official documents, SDA had fixed Rs 692 rate as monthly rent for shop No CB-09 till May-2019.

Similarly, for shop No LGF-CB-10, an amount of Rs 627 has been fixed as monthly rent for the shop by SDA; Rs 593 for shop No LGF-CB-101; Rs 593 for shop No LGF-CB-114.

From another block of the complex, the SDA has fixed Rs 641 monthly rent for shop No KOISK-01 followed by KOISK-02 with Rs 641 and the same amount for shop No KOISK-03.

Till 2019, one space holder 'RE-STURENT' was paying Rs 44044—which was the highest rent being paid by the space holder in the complex.

The space holder FMA/s-309 in the complex was paying a total amount of Rs 13,080 to SDA on account of monthly rent charges followed by FFMA-301-401 that was paying Rs 13,149 rental charges.

Likewise, the space holders FFMA-302-402 and FFMA-303-403 were paying Rs 11,931 monthly charges respectively.

The space holder FMA/s-310 was paying Rs 11,924; FMA/s-308-406 pay Rs 9744, FFMA-306 pay Rs 9833 and FFMA 305-404 pay Rs 9833 respectively to the SDA on account of monthly rent charges of the spaces they have been allotted—(KNO)

WHOSOEVER WISHES TO GET THE SHOP ON LEASE AGREEMENT has to pay the premium and the cost of the premium depends upon the location and area of the shop in the complex," the official said.

Indian Pharma Exports Grow At 18 Per Cent To \$24.44 Billion In FY 21

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pharma exports from India witnessed over 18 per cent growth to \$24.44 billion during the last financial year against \$20.58 billion in FY20, Pharmaceuticals Export Promotion Council of India (Pharmexcil) said on Saturday.

"We have observed a big leap in our exports in the month of March 2021 which is USD 2.3 billion (figures for March are provisional) and is highest among the exports of all the months of this financial year, the growth rate for this month is 48.5 per cent against the exports in March 2020 (USD 1.54 billion)," Udaya Bhaskar, director general of Pharmexcil, said in a release.

Growth rate seems relatively big as the exports of March 2020 was crunched due to

its quality and affordability, the official said adding Drug formulations and Biologicals is the second largest Principal commodity being exported by India.

The Pharma exports body is expecting big growth in Indian vaccine exports in the coming years and the government policy on PLI (production Linked Incentive) scheme will also help the domestic pharma to grow by reducing import dependence and develop export potential in the days to come as most of the countries are looking at India for APIs (active pharmaceutical ingredient) he said.

North America is the largest exporting region for Indian pharmaceuticals with more than 34 per cent share.

Country wise exports to the US, Canada and Mexico have recorded a growth of 12.6, 30 and 21.4 per cent respectively.



lockdown across the world and supply chain disruption, he was quoted as saying.

When the global pharma market is negatively grown by one-two per cent in 2020, there is a big surge in demand for Indian made generics owing to

South Africa being the second largest exporting country, recorded a big jump of 28 per cent growth while Europe was the third largest exporting region which has recorded approximately 11 per cent growth over previous year.

Crude To Be Around USD 60 Per Barrel In 2021



Agencies

NEW DELHI: Global crude oil prices are expected to be in the range of USD 60 a barrel over the long term period as OPEC+ decision to cap supply until demand recovers and the pandemic continuing to keep a check on consumption.

According to a research report by ICICI Securities, Brent has recovered and is over USD 60/bbl since February, 21 vs April, 20 low of USD 21/bbl driven by demand recovery from lows and OPEC+ capping supply to ensure supply deficit since July last year.

"OPEC+ capping supply until demand recovers is estimated to ensure supply deficit of 1.3 million barrels of oil per day in calendar year 2021 and keep Brent above USD 60/bbl," the brokerage said.

The expectation for the crude was that it may surge in 2021 on the back of economies recovering as vaccinations tamed the spread of COVID-19. But the lockdowns again due to fresh surge in Covid cases has delayed demand recovery in Europe.

Also, the probability of US sanctions on Iran's oil exports

being lifted appears to have increased substantially. EU and other signatories to the nuclear deal are talking to Iran and US separately to bring them on the same page and revive the deal. Indications are that US sanctions on Iran exports may be lifted as early as before Iran's presidential elections due on June 18.

"While OPEC+ capping supply should keep Brent above USD 60/bbl, delay in demand recovery and US lifting sanctions on Iran exports would cap further rise. We estimate long-term Brent at USD 60/bbl," ICICI Securities said.

With regard to gross refining margin (GRMs) the outlook is modest as capacity addition is expected to exceed to refined products demand growth. Besides, hit to demand from Covid worsened the outlook. Before the Covid hit, BP PLC estimated that global liquids demand would rise by 10m b/d, but demand for refined products would grow by just 3m b/d by CY40. 9m b/d of refining capacity is under construction or planned mainly in China, India and Middle East.

SHORT TAKES

Nirav Modi Extradition: Finance Ministry's Prompt Measures Helped In Process, Says Official

NEW DELHI: Prompt measures and legal actions taken by the Indian government and PNB helped in securing the extradition of diamondaire Nirav Modi by the UK on Friday, a senior official said.

UK Home Secretary Priti Patel on Friday signed off on the order to extradite Nirav Modi, wanted in India on fraud and money laundering charges related to the estimated USD 2-billion Punjab National Bank (PNB) scam case.

According to the government official, a scam of this magnitude had potential to create instability in the financial sector but the deft handling saved the entire public sector banking space from the crisis and litigation.



The then financial services secretary Rajiv Kumar, who is now Election Commissioner, had directed PNB to file an FIR with the CBI leading to unearthing of the case in January 2018. Besides, a case was filed against the fugitive at the Debt Recovery Tribunal (DRT).

The Mumbai DRT issued order for the recovery about Rs 7,300 crore from Nirav Modi and others in 2019. Later, banks were allowed to seek

passport details from the borrowers seeking loans of over Rs 50 crore.

According to the Finance Ministry official, it was the Nirav Modi scam that led to this decision so that banks could take timely action and inform the relevant authorities to prevent fraudsters from fleeing the country.

Heads of public sector banks in October 2019 were given power to request for issuance of look-out circulars (LOCs) against suspects, even before enforcement agencies file FIRs against them, the official said.

Following the recommendation of an inter-ministerial panel under the then financial services secretary, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in October 2019 revised its 2017 guide-

lines to include heads of PSBs -- the chairman or managing director and CEO -- in the list of officials who can make requests for LOCs.

To put a check on offenders fleeing the country, the government brought the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act 2018. Nirav Modi had escaped from India on January 1, 2018 before registration of a case against him.

A non-bailable arrest warrant was issued by a trial court against him followed by a red corner notice in June 2018 by Interpol. He was arrested by the UK Police in London in March 2019 and his repeated applications for bail, were rejected by the Westminster Magistrates' Court and High Court, London.

Spicejet To Charge No Fees For Changes Done At Least Five Days Prior To Journey



NEW DELHI: Spicejet on Saturday said passengers will not be charged any fees for changing date or time in their tickets at least five days prior to the departure date. Earlier, the zero fee was applicable only for changes done at least seven days prior to the journey, the airline's press release said.

Under the new offering, passengers booking direct domestic flight tickets from April 17 to May 10 can enjoy a one-time waiver on the change fee for the travel period between April 17 and May 15," it clarified.

As states such as Maharashtra and Delhi are going under partial or full lockdown due to rising COVID-19 cases, the airlines are giving more incentives to passengers so that they do not cancel all their travel plans. Spicejet on Saturday said it has also introduced special discounted price for an array of add-on services such as SpiceMax (seats with extra legroom).

Film Producer Shiv Sagar calls on Lt Governor

Agenceis

JAMMU: Renowned film and serial producer, Shiv Sagar on Saturday called on the Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha here at Raj Bhavan.

Shiv Sagar, who is the grandson of legendary Film-maker Ramanand Sagar, discussed with the Lt Governor about his future projects and also briefed him about his upcoming series on Shri Mata Vaishno Devi ji, which he is going to shoot in Jammu & Kashmir.

The Lt Governor observed that the J&K Government is working towards creating a favourable environment for film making in J&K through the New Film Policy to once again bring back the golden era of showcasing the pristine beauty of J&K on the silver screen.

Besides, facilitating the



film-makers coming to the UT, we are also eyeing on maximizing the potential of promising local film talents for transforming J&K into the most preferred film destination, said the Lt Governor.

The Lt Governor also assured full cooperation and support of the UT administration to the film

producer in his upcoming venture.

Sunil Lahri, who is best known for portraying the role of 'Lakshman' in Ramanand Sagar's epic television series 'Ramayan' also accompanied the Film Producer and presented the full volume of Ramayan Serial to the Lt Governor.

PM reviews COVID-19 Surge, Calls For Utilising All Private, Public Facilities To Ramp Up Vaccine Production

NEW DELHI: As the daily COVID-19 cases surged to a staggering record-high level, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday reviewed the availability and supply of ventilators, oxygen and medicines to fight this pandemic and called for utilising the entire national capacity across private and public sectors to produce vaccines, amid concerns in various states about lack of these essentials.

Chairing a meeting to review the status of preparedness to handle the COVID-19 situation, Modi said local administrations needed to be proactive and sensitive to people's concerns. These remarks assume significance in the backdrop of reports of COVID-19 patients and their families accusing the authorities in several states of apathy in providing treatment.

Modi said there is no

substitute for 'testing, tracking and treatment', and that early testing and proper tracking remain key to reducing mortality. "Together India had defeated COVID-19 last year and India can do it again, with the same principles but faster speed and coordination," he said.

Directing officials to ensure close coordination with states, he said all necessary measures must be taken to ramp up the availability of hospital beds for COVID patients and that additional supply of beds through temporary hospitals and isolation centres should be ensured.

He also spoke about a need to utilise the full potential of India's pharmaceutical industry to meet the rising demand of various medicines and reviewed the status of the supply of Remdesivir and other medicines.

On the issue of vaccination, the prime minister directed all officials to make efforts to utilize the entire national capacity, in the public as well as the private sector, to ramp up vaccine production.

Later in a tweet, Modi said, "Reviewed preparedness to handle the ongoing COVID-19 situation. Aspects relating to medicines, oxygen, ventilators and vaccination were discussed. Like we did last year, we will successfully fight COVID with even greater speed and coordination."

The meeting came in the midst of a huge surge in COVID-19 cases across the country with reports pouring in from many states about the shortage of hospital facilities and essentials like oxygen supply.

The prime minister has been holding meetings with chief

ministers and officials on a regular basis to discuss the situation and take measures to curb the pandemic.

A record single-day rise of 2,34,692 cases and 1,341 fatalities have pushed India's COVID-19 tally to 1,45,26,609 and the death toll due to the viral disease to 1,75,649, the health ministry said earlier on Saturday.

The number of active coronavirus cases in the country has also surpassed the 16-lakh mark, the ministry's data updated at 8 am showed.

Registering a steady increase for the 38th day in a row, the tally of active COVID-19 cases has climbed to 16,79,740 in the country, accounting for 11.56 per cent of its total caseload, while the national COVID-19 recovery rate has dropped to 87.23 per cent.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Govt Gears

the past one month. On Friday, the Union Territory recorded 1,144 new COVID-19 cases, including 180 travellers, taking the infection tally to 1,44,021, while two more coronavirus-related deaths pushed the toll to 2,048.

On April 15, the Jammu and Kashmir administration came out with a series of COVID-control measures and announced deferment of the bi-annual durbar move, over a century-old exercise under which the government functions six months each in the twin capitals of Srinagar and Jammu.

The civil secretariat – the seat of Jammu and Kashmir government – and other move offices including the Raj Bhavan were scheduled to close in Jammu on April 30 to May 1 and set to begin functioning in summer capital Srinagar from May 10.

"In view of sharply rising cases of COVID in J&K, the government has taken a few important decisions ensuring safety of employees. Darbar move deferred because of COVID. Secretariat to function in both #Srinagar & #Jammu. Office functioning not to be affected because of e-Office," Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said in a series of tweets on Thursday.

The administration has also ordered the cancellation of Class 10 examination and the postponed of Class 12 papers, besides ordering testing of all incoming travellers at Lakhnupur and inter-state movers at Thandi Khui in Samba district. It also ordered the closure of private coaching centres till April end.

SMHS, Allied

designated as COVID19 wards," reads the order.

"Ward No. 01 shall function exclusively for ENT department, besides, ENT department shall carry out surgeries in their designated OT."

Ward No. 08 comprising 36 beds shall be operated by Medicine (30 beds) as Non-Covid19 ward and Dermatology (06 beds) jointly as rush increases, the order said.

"All routine OPDs/ elective surgeries shall be stopped till further orders and only surgeries of emergency nature/ malignancies/thesis related cases and other referral cases shall be entertained," the order reads, adding, "Emergency eye cases will be entertained in H-Block Eye OPD."

The patient load viz-a-viz duty roster of doctors and paramedical staff should be regulated and rationalized, the order reads,

"Medical Superintendent, SMHS Hospital shall take all measures to avoid intermingling of COVID and Non-Covid patients/ attendants apart from taking measures to safeguard resources/ manpower," it said, adding, "guidelines/ SOPs as laid down by the Govt, in this regard from time to time should be strictly adhered to."

1,145 New

the toll to 2,051, officials said.

Of the fresh cases, 503 were from the Jammu division and 642 from the Kashmir division, they said.

The officials said Srinagar district recorded a maximum of 319 new COVID-19 cases, including 47 travellers, followed by 264 in Jammu district and 112 in Baramulla district.

The number of active cases has now reached 10,910 in the Union Territory, while 1,32,205 patients have recovered so far from the infection, they said.

717 Travellers

reported among the air travellers which is an increasing trend as compared to last year.

The official said the rate of positive cases among the air travellers has increased this time, as compared to last year.

As per the daily information bulletin, in a district-wise break up of COVID-19 positive cases in Kashmir, the number of Covid positive air travellers is an increasing trend, and during the last one week around 717 travellers have tested positive.

Authorities in Jammu and Kashmir had made it mandatory for incoming visitors to go through Covid test and arrangements are in place at Srinagar Airport for COVID-19 testing.

According to the official figures copy of which lies available with KNO, a total of around 1,17,023 tourist visited the valley from June 2020 to 31 March 2021, which also included some foreign nationals. In the month of March 48,162 tourists have visited the valley.

An official from the Tourism Department said that no restrictions have been placed on tourism activities, other than the already placed COVID-19 Sops and guidelines

Incessant Rains

of 0.5 degree Celsius against 1.0 degree Celsius on the previous night which was below 1.8 degree Celsius than the normal for the area, the officials said.

They said there were reports of fresh snowfall in other areas in the higher reaches of the valley and Ladakh region during the last 24 hours.

The plains of the valley, including the summer capital Srinagar, were lashed by rains which continued for most part of the day, they said.

Owing to the snowfall and rains, the maximum temperature settled several degrees below the normal for this part of the season, the officials said.

The Meteorological (MeT) office has said there is a possibility of some improvement in the weather on Monday.

"Fairly widespread rain" has been forecast again on April 20 and "widespread rain" on April 22 and 22 respectively.

Here in Srinagar, the intermittent rains caused water logging at several places causing much inconvenience to the commuters. City's commercial hub Lal Chowk and its neighbourhood areas saw thin movement of people, as the rains had inundated many lanes and streets. Reports of water logging due to incessant rains have also been received from other parts of Srinagar.

Meanwhile, the fresh snowfall in upper reaches and the rains in plains plummeted the day temperature sharply, an official of the weather department said.

He said Srinagar received 24.8mm of rainfall in the last 24 hours till 8:30 a.m.

The rainfall also brought the minimum temperature down as Srinagar recorded a low of 7.2 degree Celsius against 7.8 degree Celsius on the previous night. The temperature was below 0.2 degree Celsius normal in the summer capital of J&K for this time of the year, he said.

Qazigund received 23.4mm of rain and recorded a low of 6.2 degree Celsius against previous night's 7.4 degree Celsius, the official said. Pahalgam received 4.7mm during the time while the famous resort in south Kashmir recorded a low of 5.3 degree Celsius against 3.4 degree Celsius on the previous night, he said.

Kokernag, also in south Kashmir, received 16.2mm of rain and recorded a low of 4.8 degree Celsius against previous night's 6.0 degree Celsius, the official said.

Kupwara received 14.0mm of rain during the 24 hours while the north Kashmir district recorded a low of 6.0 degree Celsius against 6.3 degree Celsius on the previous night, the official said.

Jammu district received 16.4mm of rain, Banihal 26.8mm, Batote 35.4mm, Katra 18.6mm, Bhaderwah 22.2mm and Kathua 4.8mm, the official added.

Admin Rules Out

other tributaries was flowing below the alarm mark.

At 12:03 PM in Ram Munshi Bagh, the water level was recorded at 7.28 ft while in Sangam and Asham, it was recorded 5.37 feet and 4.92 feet respectively.

Pertinently, the most parts of Kashmir received light to moderate rainfall from last couple of days while the Meteorological department (MeT) here has predicted erratic weather conditions till April 28, saying that the light to moderate rains are expected during the period across Jammu and Kashmir.

Landslide, Shooting

the day temperature sharply.

The 270- km highway, the only surface link connecting Valley with rest of the world, was closed for traffic following incessant overnight rains triggering landslides and shooting stones at several places along the highway, officials said. They said landslide and shooting stones at Cafeteria Morh Ramban and Panthyal prompted the traffic authorities to suspend the traffic for the safety of commuters.

A Jammu-bound truck was also hit by stones rolling down a hillock overlooking the highway near Panthyal but the driver and his helper escaped unhurt, they said. The officials said the traffic on the highway, the only all-weather road linking Kashmir with the rest of the country, was allowed from Srinagar towards Jammu and progressed smoothly till 3.30 pm despite incessant rains all along the highway.

However, landslides at various places, including Panthyal, Cafeteria Morh and Digdole, forced suspension of the traffic, they said, adding that several hundred vehicles were left stranded on the highway in Ramban district and efforts are on to clear them.

"No vehicular movement shall be allowed from either side on the highway tomorrow (Sunday) in view of inclement weather/landslides at several places and continuous raining on the arterial road," a spokesperson of the traffic department said.

He said the road clearance agencies have deployed their men and machines at the blocked spots and are making efforts to ensure early restoration of traffic on the highway.

The stranded vehicles would be allowed to move towards their destinations once the road

is made traffic-worthy, the spokesperson said.

Meanwhile, the Srinagar-Leh highway, linking two Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh and the historic 86-km-long Mughal road continue to remain closed for traffic,

Virtual Hearing Of

by Chief Justice Pankaj Mithal and by virtue of it, the hearing of cases in the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir as well as in the District and Subordinate Courts and Tribunals shall be conducted through "virtual mode" only.

"Entry of litigants and public into the Court premises from the very outer gate shall continue to be prohibited," reads the order.

In addition to virtual hearing, the Chief Justice had said that the matters may also be taken up for physical hearing, where the counsel for both the parties to the case give their consent for such physical hearing. "if counsel for either party declines or fails to give such consent in that event the roster bench may consider the request of other counsel for physical hearing," the order reads.

Identification of cases for physical hearing shall be done by the concerned Registrar Judicial a day before the date of listing, the order had said.

"Advocates concerned in a particular case, who intend to get their case listed for physical hearing, shall give written consent for physical appearance and provide the requisite detail of the case to the concerned Registrar Judicial through email at least two days before the date of listing."

The Registrar Judicial concerned, then, shall provide list of such counsel whose cases are listed for physical hearing, well in time to the incharge Security at the main gate to facilitate entry of such counsel, it had said.

"In order to decongest the sections/ offices / Courts, the officials shall be permitted to function in batches with 25 percent reduction on rotation basis."

The roster in this regard, the order had said, shall be formulated by the Registrar Judicial of the concerned wing.

"The officials, who as per the roster are not on duty in the office, shall not leave the station and shall remain available on telephone and electronic means of communication at all times."

Regarding district and Subordinate Courts and Tribunals in J&K and Ladakh, the CJ's order said that entry of litigants and public into the Court premises from the very outer gate shall continue to be prohibited. "Pr. District & Sessions Judges, taking into consideration the urgency involved, apart from virtual hearing, may, where the counsel for the parties / parties in person involved give their consent to appear for physical hearing, permit physical hearing in Criminal trials where accused is / are in Custody, Matrimonial Cases, MACT Cases, Cases under Section 138 of the Negotiable Instruments Act, Compromise matters or in any other matter as deemed desirable in the courts under their jurisdiction."

Panel To Ensure

SKIMS, Principal Government Medical Colleges Kashmir/Jammu, Director NHM J&K, Director Industries and Commerce Jammu/ Kashmir, Director Health and Family Welfare, J&K besides Director Health Services Jammu/ Kashmir as members.

The Committee, as per the order, is to meet frequently and make necessary arrangements for ensuring regular and adequate supply of medical oxygen to all hospitals to meet any current or future needs.

The constituted Committee is to be serviced by Industries and Commerce Department, the order adds.

Sacked Woman

inviting penal action under ULA(P)Act," he said.

He further said that the utterances made by the woman cop on-camera was live streamed for further dissemination on diverse social media platforms with the intention to cause disruption of an ongoing operation and to incite disaffection towards the state.

"This is punishable under the Indian Penal Code and ULA (P) Act. Also, the accused being a police employee, is bound by a code of conduct which was brazenly violated by her. Thus the concurrent departmental action has been taken against her," he said.

Divulging more details of the case, the police spokesperson claimed that the household of the accused was a suspected shelter point of an active Hizb-ul-Mujahideen militant Aslam Dar and the woman cop has been on police radar as a suspected OGW.

"Thus was subjected to search. It remains to be investigated whether her act was meant as a disruption tactic to aid escape of the said militant when the search operation was underway," the police spokesperson said.

He also requested that no heed should be

paid towards those trying to paint the incident in any hue other than a criminal act.

Woman Injured

checkpoint fired warning aerial shots, he said.

The firing resulted in tyre burst of the vehicle and in the ensuing incident, Jaisi Parvaiz Sheikh, a resident of Muran, Pulwama-- who was travelling in the vehicle--sustained bullet injuries in her right arm, the spokesman said.

The driver has been arrested and the vehicle has been seized, he said.

The spokesman said the injured woman was shifted by police to a hospital in Awantipora from where she was referred to Bones and Joints Hospital here for further treatment.

Her condition is stated to be stable, he said.

The spokesman said the condition of the injured police official is also stable.

The matter is being probed, he added.

Rs 12.5K Crore

Councils (DDCs) with the democratic decentralization of functions, funds and functionaries... We want to make J&K the best model of decentralization and grassroots participatory planning," he said.

For the first time, Sinha said, democratic set up at the grassroots level is being involved in the formulation of development plans, thus empowering the common people and making the three-tier Panchayati Raj System more vibrant.

Emphasizing the significance of 'Janbhagidari' (people's participation) in the development process, the LG asked the Deputy Commissioners to ensure maximum participation of public and their representatives while formulating the District Development Plan of their respective districts.

"Around 30 lakh people, one-third of them women, are expected to participate in the planning exercise," he said, asking the deputy commissioners to incorporate DDCs' vision and include works which hold priority as per the needs of the local population.

The Lt Governor advised the Deputy Commissioners to hold regular interactions with DDCs, BDCs and Gram Sabhas, and maintain regional balance, besides ensuring uniform distribution of funds.

He said the J&K administration is clear with its agenda of complete implementation of 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments.

"With the substantial increase in this year's budget for overall districts plan to Rs 12,599.33 crore, which is more than double from the previous year, and with the effective utilization of experiences of Back to Village and My Town My Pride events, the UT can achieve new heights of holistic and equitable development," the LG said.

He said every district would be assigned a Senior Secretary to mentor the Deputy Commissioners and District Functionaries to achieve the outcome; besides 100 per cent physical verification would be ensured.

"Unless a central sector or Centrally Sponsored Scheme has a specific guideline regarding exemption from tendering, every single work will have to be executed through tendering process only," he said.

For promotion of the tourism sector, the Lt Governor asked the Deputy Commissioners to identify unexplored tourism potential areas of their respective districts.

He advised the officials to focus on far flung and remote areas while preparing the District Health Plan.

The meeting was informed about the overall plan ceiling district-wise, an official spokesman said, adding it was also informed that PRI (Programme-Related Investments) grant at the rate of Rs 23.30 lakh per panchayat, BDC grant at the rate of Rs 25 lakh per block, and DDC grant at Rs 1 crore per district have been budgeted for the current financial year.

EGI Slams

"anti-national sentiment".

"Nothing can be further from the truth. Visibly, the police is giving an impression of trying to maintain peace by attempting to control the fallout of violence in a high strung environment, but what is being instead done is an attempt by the security forces to escape from any kind of media scrutiny about the flow of events behind the violence," reads the joint statement issued by President Seema Mustafa, General Secretary Sanjay Kapoor and Treasurer Anant Nath.

"Live reporting from conflict areas, including encounters between government forces and militants, is one of the most important journalistic duties of any responsible media, and requires extreme grit and determination on the part of reporters," the statement added.

However, suggesting a remedy the Guild said that at best, there may be some guidelines that can be issued with respect to reporting from such scenes, with the aim of protecting the integrity of tactics and plans of security agencies, as well as to avoid journalists from interfering

with the evolving situation and from sensationalising the issue that can stir up emotions at audience's end.

"Globally those have been the norms adopted by responsible governments. In this respect, the advisory of Kashmir Police is draconian and undemocratic, and flies in the face of the stellar role journalists have played in reporting conflict in the country. Therefore the advisory must be withdrawn immediately" the handout added.

Amid Strained

Istanbul trip was the grandniece of Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad, the former Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, apart from some scribes and students.

A police official adept in dealing with these cases told Kashmir Observer that a trip to Turkey is akin to taking a flight to Pakistan.

"Since both these countries house a vocal Kashmir support, the visitors there do face background checks," the officer said. "There's nothing alarming about it. It's just part of the process."

Police Probes

in of Darganie Gund in Tral during night hours, a police spokesperson said Saturday. Banu's husband and her in-laws, the police spokesperson said, concealed the incident and took her to a nearby hospital in Aripal, where she was referred to Sub District Hospital Tral.

"But they didn't disclose to doctors regarding bullet injuries. The doctors were informed by them of her suffering of abdominal pain/heart problems. She was referred to SMHS Srinagar--where the doctors diagnosed her of a fired bullet injury," he said.

He further said that as soon as information was received, a police team from Aripal reached the house of the injured woman and during search of her house a fired bullet was recovered, he said.

Police have registered a case FIR No. 25/2021 under relevant sections of law and started investigation, he said. "Further investigation is continuing and evidence is being gathered," he added.

3 OGWs Held In

Kawoosa were arrested by a joint team of police and army's 53 RR for providing shelter, logistics and other material support including transportation of arms and ammunition of the militants of LeT in Magam, Narbal and Beerwah areas of Budgam, a police spokesperson said.

All the three accused, he said, have been in touch with the PaK militant commanders through various social media platforms.

"They were also in constant touch with Lashkar's self-styled commander Mohd Yousuf Dar @kanthro and Abrar Nadeem Bhat. Incriminating material including ammunition and posters of LeT were recovered from the possession of the arrested militant associates," he said.

Accordingly, the police spokesperson said that a case FIR No. 51/2021 under relevant sections of law has been registered in Police Station Magam and investigation into the matter has been initiated

BSF Man Dies

Kupwara was brought to Police Control Room (PCR) hospital for medical formalities.

They said that BSF trooper had died today morning due to brain haemorrhage--

2 Motorcyclists

them when the duo were on their way to Jasrota Fort in the district, a police official said. The two motorcycle borne youth, he said, had earlier paid obeisance at Kali Mata temple before a high tension wire fell upon them.

"The bodies of both the youth have been handed over to their families after completion of medico-legal formalities," the official added.

Snowfall Shuts

An official said that amid the snowfall, the Bandipora-Gurez road has been closed for now. He said that the road will be opened after snow clearance in due course of time.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Mohammad Abbas Shah son of late Ghulam Mohammad Shah, resident of Mirjanpora Nawakadal, passed away at his residence after a prolonged illness. Condolence meeting will be held for three days till Monday 19 April. There will be no Fateha Khwani.

Aggrieved

Abdul Majid Shah 7066226433,
Nisar Sham Shah 9419405466 (brothers)
Ghulam Nabi Bhat,
and Bashir Ahmed Misger

IPL 2021, RCB VS KKR, PREVIEW

KKR Look To Return To Winning Ways Against Formidable RCB



Press Trust of India

CHENNAI: The misfiring Kolkata Knight Riders will look to bring their campaign back on track when they take on table-toppers Royal Challengers Bangalore in the IPL here on Sunday.

In the battle between the world's two best white-ball captains, Eoin Morgan and Virat Kohli, the Bengaluru franchise will hold a slight edge over Kolkata after its two wins from as many outings.

Known for his tactical nous and man-management skills, the World Cup-winning English skipper will be keen to bring KKR back on track after a familiar middle-order collapse cost them the game against Mumbai Indians.

After two ordinary seasons, the purple brigade started its campaign in an emphatic fashion, ticking all the boxes against Sunrisers Hyderabad.

But against their nemesis MI, KKR middle-order collapsed in an inexplicable fashion to suffer their 12th loss from 13 matches.

Morgan's astute captaincy in using his bowling resources was the highlight as KKR had bowled out MI for a modest 152.

In his new role of bowling at the death, Andre Russell has taken six wickets at an impressive average of 7.83, but has failed to deliver with the bat.

With 14 runs from two matches, the big-hitting Jamaican has looked a shadow of his past.

Vice-captain Dinesh Karthik, too, will be under pressure to deliver after his painstaking stay in the middle in the last game.

While Nitish Rana has impressed the most in batting, their

star opener Shubman Gill has faltered after impressive starts, and KKR would hope the youngster fires in the coming days.

On a slow Chepauk deck where batting at the death has been a concern, KKR's bowling has been a revelation with Morgan cleverly using his resources.

Against the star-studded RCB who are yet to fire in unison this season, KKR's bowling would once again look to make an impact.

It would not be a bad idea to bring in left arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav in place of veteran Indian off-spinner Harbhajan Singh, who has bowled just the opening over in each of the two matches.

Boasting a famed batting line-up in Kohli, AB de Villiers, Glenn Maxwell and the talented youngster Devdutt Padikkal, RCB are yet to perform to their full potential.

But it did not matter much as RCB have won both their matches with new signing Maxwell holding fort in the middle and the likes of Shahbaz Ahmed and Harshal Patel making the difference in bowling.

Bought for Rs 14.25 crore in the 2021 auction, Maxwell has bounced back from a poor last season in the UAE.

On a difficult batting wicket, Maxwell's 59 -- his first IPL half-century since 2016 -- was the cornerstone before Bengal left-arm spinner Shahbaz turned it around against SRH in the 17th over, taking three wickets for one run.

In their first match, Harshal Patel's five-for set it up before de Villiers' 48 sealed a two-wicket win over defending champions MI.

Kohli will be keen that his star-studded batting fires in unison against KKR.

'Pakistan's T20 World Cup Preparations Are On Right Track,' Claims Babar Azam

Press Trust of India

KARACHI: His team's frequent batting collapses in the T20 series against South Africa notwithstanding, Pakistan captain Babar Azam has said preparations for this year's World Cup in India are on the right track.

Babar, who led Pakistan to their first-ever T20 series win in South Africa and also captained his side to a 2-1 victory in the ODI series, on Friday said he was satisfied with the performances of his players.

"Yes, it is frustrating that our middle and lower-order batsmen couldn't perform to expectations, but cricket is a team game and not everyone can perform in every match," he said after the match in Centurion.

Babar, who saw Pakistan clinch another tight last over win over South Africa in the fourth and final T20 match, said the batting collapse was disappointing.

"It is always difficult for those coming in after the top-order batsmen get out. I think we just needed one partnership to settle things, but that didn't happen," he said.

From 98 for one, Pakistan lost seven wickets before reaching the target of 145.

Pakistan won the four-match T20 series 3-1 but in two matches, they somehow scamped to victory in the final over against a depleted SA side.

"It's great to win both the white-ball series in South Africa and this will give us lot of confidence for the coming matches.

"The series has helped us try out different combinations and I think we are on track in our preparations for the World T20 Cup, by which time we will have our squad ready for the big event," Babar said.

He admitted that the form of some batsmen was a cause for concern.

"I think as a team we did well, we supported each other and the bowlers also staged some strong comebacks in the series although we couldn't take early wickets," he added.

"The more you are successful against good opposition and in different conditions it helps you develop and become a better batsman."

son at a corner in second-half stoppage time at Goodison Park. Kane hobbled off after treatment, walking around the perimeter of the field unaided toward the locker room.

"I think it's too early to say something," Mourinho said immediately after the match on Friday.

"For him to leave the pitch (at) 2-2 with a couple of minutes to go is obviously because he felt something. But let me be optimistic and believe he has time to recover."

Mourinho added: "We all felt the same fears of something that stops him playing Wednesday (against Southampton in the league) and especially Sunday, but we will see."



'Pakistan Cricketers Will Get Visas For T20 World Cup In India,' Says BCCI

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Pakistan's cricket players, led by Babar Azam, will get visas to compete in the T20 World Cup in India this October, the BCCI's apex council has been told by Board secretary Jay Shah following "government assurances".

Shah told the council in a video conference meeting held on Friday where it was also decided that the

mega-event will be staged across nine venues with Ahmedabad's Narendra Modi Stadium hosting the final.

The other venues are Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Dharamsala and Lucknow.

"The visa issue of Pakistan cricket team has been sorted. However, whether the fans can travel across the border to watch matches is still not clear," an Apex Council member told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

"It will be decided in due course of time. However, we had promised ICC that it will be sorted. The secretary announced during the meeting."

India and Pakistan have not played bilateral cricket for close to a decade now due to diplomatic tensions between the two countries.

Pakistan has been demanding assurances from the ICC that visas will be granted to its players for the 16-team extravaganza, which will complete seven editions this year.

Ranji In December, No Irani, Duleep Trophy This Year As BCCI Releases Domestic Calendar



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The BCCI plans to kick-start its 2021-22 domestic season in September this year with the Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 tournament and has also allocated a three-month window to the Ranji Trophy from December after the marquee event had to be cancelled last season due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, the Duleep Trophy, Deodhar Trophy and Irani Cup are not a part of the tentative calendar prepared by the cricket operations team. Apart from this, five women's competitions have also been dropped from the roster.

PTI has accessed the tentative domestic calendar prepared and discussed at the Apex Council meeting held on Friday.

The 2020-21 season was a severely truncated one with only the National T20 (Mushtaq Ali) and ODI (Vijay Hazare Trophy) championships being held in the wake of pandemic. For women, only the National One-Day meet was organised.

Amid a second wave of COVID-19 cases across India, the BCCI is still hopeful of conducting the do-

mestic season across age-groups in men and women's categories after a curtailed last season.

With India playing the T20 World Cup in October and the mega IPL auctions in the offing next year, it is understood that all stakeholders want to start off with two white ball tournaments -- Mushtaq Ali T20 between "mid-September to October" followed by the Vijay Hazare Trophy in November.

Ranji Trophy, India's premier tournament which was cancelled for the first time in 87 years in 2020, has been planned between December and March in the upcoming season.

The BCCI has also slotted the U-23 tournaments for men and women along with the U-19 events which weren't held during the last season.

The performances in the U-19 One Day Challenger tournament along with Cooch Behar Trophy (days format) and Vinoo Mankad trophy (one day) will help in selection of India colts team for ICC U-19 World Cup next year.

Women's T20 as well as ODI Challenger Trophy will not be played along with these events' under-23 versions. The under-19 women's T20 Challenger Trophy will also not be played.

Complete Calendars (Tentative):

Men

Senior Men

=====

- Syed Mushtaq Ali (T20) (Mid Sept-Oct, '21)
- Vijay Hazare Trophy (One Day) (November, '21)
- Ranji Trophy (First-class) (Dec '21-Mar '22)

U-23 Men

=====

- National U-23 One Day (Mid Oct-Nov, '21)
- CK Nayudu Trophy (days format) (Dec, '21-March '22)

Boys' U-19

=====

- Vinoo Mankad (One Day) (October, '21)
- U-19 One Day Challenger (November, '21)
- Cooch Behar (Multi Day) (Nov '21-Jan '22)

Boys' U-16

=====

- Vijay Merchant Trophy (Multi Day) (October-December, '21)

Senior Women

=====

- Senior Women's T20 League (October, '21)
- Senior Women's One Day league (November, '21)

U-23 Women

=====

- Women's U-23 T20 League (December, '21)
- Women's U-23 One Day League (January, '22)

U-19 Girls

=====

- U-19 T20 League (January, '22)
- U-19 One Day League (last week of March, '22)
- Inter Zonal University Cricket
- Vizzy Trophy (Men) (April, 2022).

MS Dhoni Hails Deepak Chahar After CSK's First Win In IPL 2021

Press Trust of India

CHENNAI: Chennai Super Kings captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni is extremely pleased with the growth of Deepak Chahar as a matured death bowler as the medium-pacer took four wickets to star in their win over Punjab Kings, in Mumbai on Friday. CSK beat Punjab by six wickets to record their first win of the season.

"Overall the years, he has matured into a death bowler too but he's somebody who gets more purchase than other bowlers. If you're looking to attack, why not finish his first four overs. Bravo can bowl at the death. It's not a secret," Dhoni said.

on that day. The ball moved today, but it didn't swing around a lot. There was no dew and enough seam movement," he added. Punjab captain K L Rahul was disappointed with the performance.

"There's not much more to say. If any team loses five wickets in the first seven or eight overs, it's always going to be catch up. They bowled well, we played some bad shots, that's how the game goes.

"It (pitch) was a lot more sticky and tacky than what it looked like. Credit to the CSK bowlers, they bowled in the right channels, Deepak with his knuckle balls got a couple of wickets, getting myself run-out doesn't help the team."

Chahar said it wasn't a 100-



About pushing England all-rounder Moeen Ali up the order, the CSK captain said, "We felt if Moeen bats up the order, we can make use of the resources that we got. Moeen is a very good timer of the ball and plays authentic shots. We have to make the most of the resources."

Recalling the IPL journey, Dhoni, who played his 200th match for CSK, said it was a very long one and made him feel good.

"It started in 2008 -- played in SA, Dubai, and back home. Never thought Mumbai would be our home."

He was not happy with the re-laid pitch at the M A Chidambaram stadium in Chennai.

"After the wicket was re-laid, we found it difficult to adjust to conditions. This is a very good wicket, but it depends on the conditions

110 wicket, adding it was good learning for the team.

"We have pace in our attack, we obviously want to use that. The first game didn't go too well for those two (Richardson and Meredith), it was their first game and I am sure they were a bit nervous.

"That was the chat after the game as well, that's how IPL goes. It can be tough and cruel. Their plans were clear, they did execute it pretty well."

He said he got the responsibility to bowl the first over and set the tone.

"It's a big responsibility for me in the last four years and Mahi bhai has shown faith in me. As a bowler, this is my plan always. You may not take wickets in T20s, so my plan is to bowl dots in powerplays," Chahar signed off.

Shahrukh Khan Believes He Has The Ability To Bat Anywhere

Press Trust of India

CHENNAI: Entrusted with the task of finishing off matches, Punjab Kings batsman M Shahrukh Khan says he has the ability to adapt and skills to bat anywhere. Khan made 47 off 36 balls and helped Punjab cross 100 in their IPL match against Chennai Super Kings in Mumbai on Friday.

"My role is playing down the order as a finisher but you don't expect to go out and blast in every game because there will be situations where the team bundles out and you need to take responsibility and see the team through," he said at the post-match press conference.

"I'm branded as a complete finisher. I am a good batsman. I was batting up the order for Tamil Nadu for a couple of years. So, I've been batting at the top order. I've the skill in me to bat and see the team through in tough situations.

"I think I've really developed my game as a finisher in the last couple of years but still, my core game is still with me. See the ball and play normal cricketing shots," he added.

The 25-year-old right-hander said it was a good learning curve to play in the presence of top players.

"The way they are having conversations with people around the team... Nicholas Pooran, Chris Gayle, David Malan and obviously KL Rahul. The likes of so many big players when they see you in the nets, they say certain things here and there.

"It's really going to improve your batting and obviously new to IPL. A long way to go! Will take a lot of things from them, advice and put out there and use it."

The Tamil Nadu cricketer said coaches Wasim Jaffer and Andy Flower were helping improve his game and take it to the next level.

"New to the IPL, different scenarios compared to the domestic games but here I'm getting to learn a lot of things. I'm trying to improve my game one per cent every session, having a good time with Wasim Jaffer and Andy Flower. Really having a lot of conversations with them."

Khan said the wicket at the Wankhede Stadium was a bit slower on Friday. Punjab lost the match by six wickets having managed only 106 for eight after reeling at 27 for five.

"I think it was a bit slower. Not like the usual Wankhede, what I've seen through the years. Really stopped a lot, didn't expect to play in such a manner. But you know when the dew factor comes in it skids on to the bat really well.

"Yeah, half of the team inside the dressing but still it was you know. Still wanted to hang around for some time and you know assess the pitch a bit more so that slog overs would be a bit easier for me."

"I think if I played that 5 balls in the end in the 20th over, we could've scored 20 runs more which would have been a tight game I guess," the Punjab Kings batter said.

Harry Kane Injured After Scoring 2 In Spurs' 2-2 Draw At Everton

Agencies

LIVERPOOL: Harry Kane scored twice, including a second-half equalizer, before limping off with an ankle injury in Tottenham's 2-2 draw at Everton in the Premier League as both teams stayed on the fringe of the race for Champions League qualification.

The England captain's latest injury comes ahead of Tottenham playing Manchester City in the English League Cup final on April 25 -- the only shot at a trophy this season for Jose Mourinho's team.

Kane rolled his right ankle under the weight of a tumbling Richar-

son at a corner in second-half stoppage time at Goodison Park. Kane hobbled off after treatment, walking around the perimeter of the field unaided toward the locker room.

"I think it's too early to say something," Mourinho said immediately after the match on Friday.

"For him to leave the pitch (at) 2-2 with a couple of minutes to go is obviously because he felt something. But let me be optimistic and believe he has time to recover."

Mourinho added: "We all felt the same fears of something that stops him playing Wednesday (against Southampton in the league) and especially Sunday, but we will see."

The striker has suffered with a number of ankle issues in recent years.

Earlier, Kane moved onto a league-high 21 goals for the season, two more than Liverpool's Mohamed Salah, with his clinically taken equalizer in the 68th minute after a defensive mix-up.

Kane had given Tottenham the lead in the 27th, only for a double from Gylfi Sigurdsson the first coming from the penalty spot following a foul by Sergio Reguilon on James Rodriguez to put Everton ahead.

Sigurdsson's goals came in the 31st and 62nd minutes.

Bajrang Punia Sets Up Asian Wrestling Final Against Nemesis Takuto Otoguro

Press Trust of India

ALMATY: Bajrang Punia did not face much competition while Ravi Kumar Dahiya was impressive as the two Olympic-bound Indian wrestlers reached the finals of their respective categories at the Asian Championships here on Saturday.

Also reaching the medal rounds were Narsingh Pancham Yadav (74kg) and Satywart Kadiyan (97kg), who will fight for bronze after losing their respective semifinals.

Bajrang had no difficulty in getting past Korea's Yongseok Jeong, who hardly attacked in his opening 65kg bout. His first scoring

point was a take-down on counter and earned one more for the passivity of his rival.

Next for him was Mongolia's Bilguun Sarmandakh, whom he pinned to ensure his passage into the summit clash.

He will be up against his Japanese nemesis Takuto Otoguro, who looked in supreme touch.

Bajrang had lost the 2018 World Championship title clash and last year's Asian Championship final to the Japanese.

Ravi Dahiya (57kg) returned to the mat after year with a solid performance. He last competed at this event in New Delhi where he had won gold.

He was slow off the blocks but became his usual dominant self after the first period against Uzbekistan's Nodirjon Safarov in his opening bout. Once he got into his rhythm, his moves were too hot to handle for his rival, as he won 9-2.

Ravi had a lot left in his tank even towards the end while Safarov had lost his steam, making it easy for the Indians to score points.

Next he faced Palestine's Ali M Aburumaila and he won on technical superiority. His title clash will be against Iran's Alireza Nosratalah Sarlak, who was very impressive through his run to the final.

Kadiyan moved to the 97kg quar-

terfights with an easy 8-0 win over Kyrgyzstan's Arslanbek Turdubekov.

He scored two points in the first period with push out while the rest through take-down moves in the second as his rival hardly attacked. In the quarterfinal against Uzbekistan's Mukhammadrasul Rakhimov, he played smart to win 4-1.

He then faced Iran's Ali Khalil Shabanibengar and lost the semi-final by technical superiority in mere 25 seconds.

Karan moved to the 70kg quarters with a hard-fought 3-1 win over Iran's Amirhossein Ali Hosseini but lost the next bout 0-6 to Syrbaz Talgat from Kazakhstan.

Sporadic Violence Marks Fifth Phase Of Bengal Polls



Press Trust of India

SALT LAKE: West Bengal recorded 78.36 per cent voter turnout recorded till 5 pm in the fifth phase of assembly elections that saw scattered incidents of violence, officials said.

Polling was being held on 45 seats in North 24 Parganas, Purba Bardhaman and Nadia in south Bengal, and Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling and Kalimpong districts in the north.

The security personnel were maintaining a tight vigil and they had addressed a few incidents that were reported, an official at the office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) said.

In the Shantinagar area of Bidhanagar, a clash broke out between TMC and BJP supporters with both sides accusing each other of preventing the voters from going to the polling booths.

Bricks and stones were hurled, injuring eight people, officials said.

A huge contingent of the central force was rushed to the spot, they said.

TMC MLA Sujit Bose and BJP candidate Sabyasachi Dutta visited the spot to take stock of the situation.

In Siliguri, a scuffle broke out between TMC and CPI (M) supporters outside a polling booth.

In Santipur in Nadia district, the TMC alleged that personnel of the central forces were asking voters to go back, a charge rubbished by the authorities.

The TMC alleged that a polling

booth in Bardhaman Uttar constituency was captured by the BJP. The allegation was denied by the opposition party, while poll officials said no such incident had happened.

In Bijpur in North 24 Parganas, TMC and BJP supporters clashed after the opposition party alleged that voters were being prevented from going to the booths.

The BJP also alleged that some of its booth agents in Minakha constituency of the same district were "kidnapped" by the TMC.

The TMC said the BJP did not have enough strength to depute agents in all the booths and that is why it was levelling such "baseless" allegations.

A total of 1,13,47,344 people are eligible to vote. Of them, 57,35,766 are men, 56,11,354 are women and 224 are third gender.

Barring these few incidents, the overall situation was peaceful, a poll panel official said.

At many places, voters were seen without masks amid the resurgent coronavirus, raising concerns. The security forces ensured social distancing at the booths, while election officials provided masks, hand sanitisers and polythene gloves to the voters.

The polling started at 7 am and will continue till 6.30 pm in 15,789 stations across the six districts.

The Election Commission has deployed 853 companies of central forces in this phase. — PTI

Private Vehicle Would Not Come Within Expression Of 'Public Place': SC

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: A private vehicle does not come within the expression of a "public place" as per the explanation given under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, the Supreme Court has said.

A bench comprising justices U U Lalit and K M Joseph made the observation while deciding an appeal challenging an order passed by the Punjab and Haryana High Court affirming their conviction and sentence under the NDPS Act.

Two bags of poppy straw were recovered from the accused while they were sitting in a jeep at a public place.

The trial court, after considering the evidence on record, acquitted accused Major Singh but convicted accused Boota Singh, Gurdeep Singh and Gurmohinder Singh, under the NDPS Act and sentenced them to rigorous imprisonment for 10 years.

They were also asked to pay a fine of Rs 1 lakh, failing which they were directed to undergo further rigorous imprisonment for two years.

The accused argued before the top court that the vehicle in question was a private one belonging to accused Gurdeep Singh and was not a public conveyance, though it was parked on a public road.

The apex court held that the evidence in the present case clearly shows that the vehicle was not a public conveyance but a private one belonging to Gurdeep Singh, and



acquitted the accused as they were charged under the wrong section.

"The Registration Certificate of the vehicle, which has been placed on record also does not indicate it to be a Public Transport Vehicle.

"The explanation to Section 43 shows that a private vehicle would not come within the expression 'public place' as explained in Section 43 of the NDPS Act.

"On the strength of the decision of this court, the relevant provision would not be Section 43 of the NDPS Act but the case would come under Section 42 of the NDPS Act," the bench said.

It is an admitted position that there was total non-compliance of the requirements of Section 42 of the NDPS Act, the top court said.

"Total non-compliance of Section 42 is impermissible... In the circumstances, the courts below fell in error in rejecting the submissions advanced on behalf of the appellants. "We, therefore, allow this appeal, set aside the view taken by the High Court and acquit the appellants of the charge levelled against them.

"The appellants be released forthwith unless their custody is required in connection with any other offence," the bench said.

Under section 42 of the NDPS Act, a designated officer has powers of 'entry, search, seizure or arrest' in a suspected narcotics cases.

Section 43 of the NDPS deals with the power of seizure and arrest in a public place. PTI

Why Vaccinated Travelers Should Also Avoid Eating, Drinking On Planes

Agenceis

With America's vaccine rollout progressing at breakneck speeds, we have watched the number of travelers rise rapidly.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced that fully vaccinated people may travel safely, and many health experts say they feel safe traveling again. But although airlines are bringing back food and drink services, experts still warn against eating and drinking on planes.

Robert Wachter, chair of the department of medicine at the University of California at San Francisco and guest host of the podcast "In the Bubble," says when passengers are allowed to turn their masks off for meal services, his comfort with air travel goes away.

"When [planes] turn into a flying restaurant, the dynamics of spread become very different," Wachter says. "I would not eat at an indoor restaurant at this point, even being fully vaccinated, and so the time during which the plane is, in fact, an indoor restaurant is a time when it is somewhat less safe."

A recent study released by the CDC supports Wachter's concerns. Being on packed planes with maskless passengers does increase your risk of coronavirus exposure, despite the plane's ventilation system.

"The crowding on the plane is going to be an issue," says Tom Kenyon, Project HOPE's chief health officer who spent 21 years at the CDC.

"We know that the closer you are to someone with an infectious disease



that's respiratory transmitted, the more likely you are to get infected. It's not transmitted through the ventilation system; it's transmitted through direct contact."

Travelers may wonder why there's still risk at all if they have been immunized. Wachter explains that it's because vaccine protection is great but not an impenetrable shield.

"Being fully vaccinated means that I'm highly protected against getting covid, but not 100%," he says. "That 95% number means five percent still fall through. That 72% number of J&J means 28% fall through."

Kenyon's advice for vaccinated fliers is to be vigilant about wearing your mask (potentially an N95), use disinfectant on your hands after touching surfaces and consider wearing a face shield as the coronavirus can be transmitted through the surface of the eye.

"At some point, you have to take off your mask to take a drink or have a meal, especially on a long flight -

which can put you at risk because everybody does it at once. So I think a face shield would be in order."

Wachter agrees that there is good evidence that some level of eye protection is helpful. In addition to double-masking on a flight, he opted for glasses over a face shield. And while he recognizes there is risk while eating and drinking on a plane, he is also human. When Wachter needed some water or food, he waited to do so until after the flight's meal service.

"I waited a period of time until it looked like everybody had their masks back on before I very quickly gobbled down some food and chugged a bottle of water, in I'd say about 30 seconds, and quickly put the mask back on," he says.

Wachter added: "Despite the fact that I'm fully vaccinated, I still think that you cannot say [flying] is a zero risk thing to do, but I think it's an exceptionally low risk thing to do. And it's an even lower risk if you take those kinds of precautions."

Double-Masking Can Be Potent To Protect People From Covid: Study

Agenceis

WASHINGTON: A new study by the University of North Carolina Health Care shows that wearing two face coverings can nearly double the effectiveness of filtering out SARS-CoV-2-sized particles, preventing them from reaching the wearer's nose and mouth and causing COVID-19.

The findings published in JAMA Internal Medicine also states that the reason for the enhanced filtration is not about adding too many layers of cloth but eliminating any gaps or poor-fitting areas of a mask.

"The medical procedure masks are designed to have very good filtration potential based on their material, but the way they fit our faces isn't perfect," said Emily Sickbert-Bennett, PhD, associate professor of infectious diseases at the UNC School of Medicine and lead author of the study.

To test the fitted filtration efficiency (FFE) of a range of masks, UNC researchers worked with James Samet, PhD, and colleagues in the USEPA Human Studies Facility on the campus of UNC-Chapel Hill. There they filled a 10-foot by 10-foot stainless-steel exposure chamber with small salt particle aerosols and had researchers don combinations of masks to test how effective they were at keeping particles out of their breathing space.

Each individual mask or layered mask combination was fitted with a metal sample port, which was attached to tubing in the exposure chamber that measured the concentration of particles entering the breathing space underneath the researcher's mask. A second tube measured the ambient concentration of particles in the chamber. By measuring particle concentration in the breath-

ing space underneath the mask compared to that in the chamber, researchers determined the FFE.

"We also had the researchers in the chamber undergo a series of range-of-motion activities to simulate the typical motions a person may do throughout their day -- bending at the waist, talking, and looking left, right, up and down," said Phillip Clapp, PhD, an inhalation toxicologist in the UNC School of Medicine who has been testing mask FFE with Sickbert-Bennett since the pandemic began.

According to their findings, the baseline fitted filtration efficiency (FFE) of a mask differs from person to person, due to each person's unique face and mask fit. But generally, a procedure mask without altering the fit is about 40-60 per cent effective at keeping COVID-19-sized particles out. A cloth mask is about 40 per cent effective.

Their recent findings on doubling of face masks show that when a cloth mask is placed over a surgical mask, the FFE improved by about 20 per cent, and improved even more with a snug-fitting, sleeve-type mask, such as a gaiter. When layered over procedure masks, cloth masks improve fit by eliminating gaps and holding the procedure mask closer to the face, consistently covering the nose and mouth. When a procedure mask is worn over a cloth mask, FFE improved by 16 per cent.

"We've found that wearing two loosely fitted masks will not give you the filtration benefit that one, snug-fitting procedure mask will," Sickbert-Bennett said. "And with the current data supporting how effective mask-wearing is at preventing the spread of COVID-19, the best kind of double-masking is when you and the person you are interacting with are each correctly wearing a very snug-fitting mask."

India's Cyber Agency Issues "High" Security Warning For WhatsApp Threats



Agenceis

NEW DELHI: India's cyber security agency has cautioned WhatsApp users about certain vulnerabilities detected in the popular instant messaging app that could lead to breach of sensitive information.

A "high" severity rating advisory issued by the CERT-In or the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team said the vulnerability has been detected in software that has "WhatsApp and WhatsApp Business for Android prior to v2.21.4.18 and WhatsApp and WhatsApp Business for iOS prior to v2.21.32."

The CERT-In is the national technology arm to combat cyber attacks and guarding the Indian cyber space.

"Multiple vulnerabilities have

been reported in WhatsApp applications which could allow a remote attacker to execute arbitrary code or access sensitive information on a targeted system," the advisory said.

Describing the risk in detail, it said that these vulnerabilities "exist in WhatsApp applications due to a cache configuration issue and missing bounds check within the audio decoding pipeline."

"Successful exploitation of these vulnerabilities could allow the attacker to execute arbitrary code or access sensitive information on a targeted system," it said.

The advisory added that users of the app (application) should update the latest version of WhatsApp from Google Play store or iOS App Store to counter the vulnerability threat.

NEWSMAKERS

Hospital Declared COVID-19 Patient Dead Twice Before He Actually Died, Family Claims

Press Trust of India

VIDISHA (MP): A 58-year-old coronavirus patient was declared dead twice in a day before he actually died at a government hospital in Madhya Pradesh's Vidisha district, his family claimed on Saturday.

The hospital management blamed a nurse for the mix-up but claimed it happened only once. Goralal Kori, a railway employee and resident of Sultania village, was admitted to Atal Bihari Vajpayee Medical College and Hospital here on April 12 after he developed coronavirus-like symptoms, his son Kailash Kori said.

Around 2.30 am the next day, a hospital official informed him over phone that Goralal was critical and put on a ventilator, he said.

"The same day (April 13) around 3 pm, I got a call that my father was in a very serious condition. When I rushed to the hospital, a nurse told me that they couldn't save him," Kailash said.



But then another nurse told him that he was alive but struggling to breathe, he added.

"Around 5 pm, I was told that my father needed tracheostomy (a surgical procedure carried out to help a

person breathe). Late in the evening we got a call saying he died during the procedure. When we reached the hospital, the management said they cannot hand over the body as my father had tested COVID-19 pos-

itive," Kailash said.

"The next morning they gave us the death certificate but my brother said he wanted to see the body. When they showed him the body, it was of another person's. My brother went inside the ward to find my father on ventilator support," he claimed.

The hospital then retracted the death certificate and Kori's family returned home, only to receive a call in the evening informing that Goralal had finally succumbed. This time the sad news turned out to be true.

Asked about the mix-up, hospital dean Dr Sunil Nandeshwar said Goralal's heartbeats stopped when he was being put on ventilator but he was resuscitated. "In the meantime, a nurse misunderstood the situation and gave the wrong information," he said.

"The story is being blown out of proportion. We spent more than an hour resuscitating him but nobody is talking about that," Dr Nandeshwar said. — PTI

6kg Gold Worth Rs 2.9 Crore Seized by Chennai Air Customs

Agenceis

CHENNAI: Chennai Air Customs on Saturday said it had seized six kg gold concealed in an Air India flight from Dubai.

In a statement the Commissioner of Customs, Chennai International Airport said the Air India flight was rummaged on intelligence input that gold was likely to be smuggled in from Dubai.

On rummaging two heavy packets were found concealed under one of the seat cushions of the aircraft.

On cut opening, six gold bars weighing 1 Kg each valued at Rs.2.90 crore were recovered and seized as unclaimed under Customs Act.

6 kg of gold worth Rs. 2.90 crore was recovered and seized under Customs Act.

Further investigation is under progress. — IANS

Trained Dogs Can Sniff Out Covid Positive Samples With 96% Accuracy: Study

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PENNSYLVANIA: A proof-of-concept investigation published today in the journal PLOS ONE suggests that specially trained detection dogs can sniff out COVID-19-positive samples with 96 per cent accuracy.

"This is not a simple thing we're asking the dogs to do," says Cynthia Otto, senior author on the work and director of the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine Working Dog Center.

"Dogs have to be specific about detecting the odour of the infection, but they also have to generalize across the background odors of different people: men and women, adults and children, people of different ethnicities and geographies."

In this initial study, researchers found the dogs could do that, but training must proceed with great care and, ideally, with many samples. The findings are feeding into another investigation that Otto and colleagues have dubbed "the T-shirt study," in which dogs are being trained to discriminate between the odours of COVID-positive, -negative, and -vaccinated individuals based on the volatile organic compounds they leave on a T-shirt worn overnight.

"We are collecting many more samples in that study -- hundreds or more -- than we did in this first one, and are hopeful that will get the dogs closer to what they might encounter in a community setting," Ms Otto says.

Through the Working Dog Center, she and colleagues have had years of experience training medical-detection dogs, including those that can identify ovarian cancer. When the pandemic arrived, they leveraged that expertise to design a coronavirus detection study.

Collaborators Ian Frank from the Perelman School of Medicine and Audrey Odom John from the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia provided SARS-CoV-2-positive samples from adult and pediatric patients, as well as samples from patients who had tested negative to serve as experimental controls. Ms Otto worked closely with coronavirus expert Susan Weiss of Penn Medicine to process some of the samples in Penn's Biosafety Level 2+ laboratory to inactivate the virus so they would be safe for the dogs to sniff.

Because of workplace shutdowns due to the pandemic, instead of working with dogs at Penn Vet, the researchers partnered with Pat Nolan, a trainer with a facility in Maryland.

Eight Labrador retrievers and

a Belgian Malinois that had not done medical detection work before were used in the study. First, the researchers trained them to recognize a distinctive scent, a synthetic substance known as a universal detection compound (UDC). They used a "scent wheel" in which each of 12 ports is loaded with a different sample and rewarded the dog when it responded to the port containing UDC.

When the dogs consistently responded to the UDC scent, the team began training them to respond to urine samples from SARS-CoV-2 positive patients and discern positive from negative samples. The negative samples were subjected to the same inactivation treatment -- either heat inactivation or detergent inactivation -- as the positive samples.

Processing the results with assistance from Penn criminologist and statistician Richard Berk, the team found that after three weeks of training all nine dogs were able to readily identify SARS-CoV-2 positive samples, with 96% accuracy on average. Their sensitivity, or ability to avoid false negatives, however, was lower, in part, the researchers believe, because of the stringent criteria of the study: If the dogs walked by a port containing a positive sample even once without responding, that was labelled a "miss."

The researchers ran into many complicating factors in their study, such as the tendency of the dogs to discriminate between the actual patients, rather than between their SARS-CoV-2 infection status. The dogs were also thrown off by a sample from a patient that tested negative for SARS-CoV-2 but who had recently recovered from COVID-19.

"The dogs kept responding to that sample, and we kept telling them no," Ms Otto says. "But obviously there was still something in the patient's sample that the dogs were keying in on."

Major lessons learned from the study, besides confirming that there is a SARS-CoV-2 odour that dogs can detect, were that future training should entail large numbers of diverse samples and that dogs should not be trained repeatedly on the samples from any single individual.

"That's something we can carry forward not only in our COVID training but in our cancer work and any other medical detection efforts we do," says Ms Otto. "We want to make sure that we have all the steps in place to ensure quality, reproducibility, validity, and safety for when we operationalize our dogs and have them start screening in community settings."