

KASHMIR OBSERVER

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P5 STATE

KASHMIR FACES SHORTAGE OF COVID VACCINE

A day after leading hospitals of Kashmir were facing shortage of Remdesivir, several health centres in Kashmir division mainly in Srinagar have run dry of Covid-19 vaccines. A top health official who wished not to be named said that several health centres in Srinagar...

P6

A PEOPLE-CENTRIC RESPONSE

A runaway surge in coronavirus cases threatens to plunge Jammu and Kashmir into the same chaos as is unfolding in Delhi and the other parts of the country. At over 3000 cases a day, we have more than half the number of Pakistan, a country with...



P3 CITY

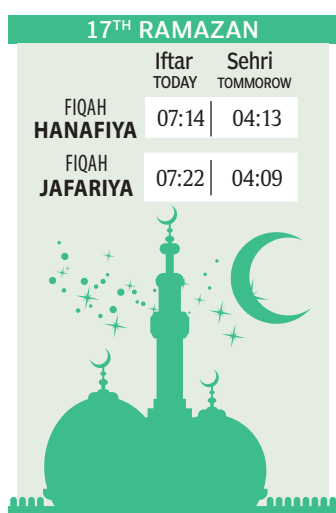
STANDALONE SHOPS TO BE ALLOWED DURING LOCKDOWN: DC SRINAGAR

Administration in Srinagar on Thursday said that wholesale dealers, standalone grocery, vegetable, meat and milk shops may remain open during the 84 lockdown...



Quote!

Have you seen the one who denies the recompense? For that is the one who drives away the orphan. And does not encourage the feeding of the poor. —Quran 107: 1-3



NEWS DIGEST

Shab-e-Qadr Holiday On May 10

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Thursday announced that the holiday on account of Shab-e-Qadr shall now be observed on May 10 instead of May 9. "In partial modification of Order No. 1159-JK (GAD) of 2020 dated 24.12.2020 and No. 1160-JK (GAD) of 2020 dated 24.12.2020, it is hereby ordered that the holiday ● [More On P10](#)

Cash Box Stolen From Masjid

SRINAGAR: Unidentified burglars stole a donation box from a mosque in south Kashmir's Shopian district, reports said Thursday. According to news agency KNT the incident occurred after the 'Taraweeh' prayers at Markazi Jamia Masjid Shopian. Quoting local sources, the report said that there was ● [More On P10](#)

Police Foil Exfiltration Bid, 3 Held

SRINAGAR: Police on Thursday claimed to have foiled an exfiltration bid by arresting three people who were on their way to cross Line of Control (LoC) in Uri area of Baramulla district. In a statement issued here, a police spokesperson said that three youth Majid Rakeeb Konshi of Handwara, ● [More On P10](#)

J&K Sees Biggest Single Day Spike

26 Die, 3474 More Test Corona Positive



File Photo: Abid Bhat

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: Coronavirus cases continue to show a rapid surge in Jammu and Kashmir as 3474 more people tested positive for Covid-19 on Thursday, the biggest single day spike this year, while 26 more people succumbed to the infection across the Union Territory during the last 24 hours.

Among the victims, officials said, seventeen belonged to different parts of Jammu division

while nine hailed from various districts of the Valley. Among others, they said, the victims included three women aged between 50-65 from Kulgam district in south Kashmir, a 75-year-old woman from Anantnag and a 68-year-old man from Batmaloo here.

With these deaths, the fatality count since the outbreak of pandemic last year has reached 2253 in J&K. According to the officials, 2134 new cases of coronavirus were detected in Kashmir Valley while ● [More On P10](#)

Govt Equipped To Deal With Situation: LG



Observer News Service

JAMMU: Urging people of Jammu and Kashmir not to panic, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said Thursday that his administration was

fully equipped to deal with the emerging coronavirus situation in the Union Territory.

Chairing a meeting with the office-bearers and volunteers of Indian Red Cross Society, J&K ● [More On P10](#)

No Shortage Of Oxygen, Vaccines In J&K: Advisor P5

84-Hour Covid Lockdown Begins In J&K



File Photo: Abid Bhat

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: An 84-hour curfew came into force in 11 districts of Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday evening in an effort to contain coronavirus surge across the Union territory.

The lockdown came into effect on Thursday evening, hours after the Union Territory recorded the biggest single-day spike of 3474 coronavirus cases, while 26 more people succumbed to the infection.

According to eyewitnesses, police vehicles fitted with public address systems made repeated announcements in Srinagar and other districts of the Valley announcing the imposition of an 84-hour curfew. The police, they said, asked the shopkeepers to down their shutters and advised the locals to return to their homes.

At many places, eyewitnesses said, police tightened curbs and disallowed people from venturing out. "Today afternoon, ● [More On P10](#)

HC Quashes RTO Kashmir's Circular

Leaves It Open For Authorities To Check Validity Of Outside Vehicles

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir High Court on Thursday quashed RTO Kashmir's March 27 circular, mandating the owners who have purchased their vehicles bearing outside registration number to apply for a new registration within 15 days.

A division bench of Justices Ali Mohammad Magrey and Vinod Chatterji Koul also asked authorities to comply with Section 47 of the Act and Rule 54 of Central

Motor Vehicles for assignment of new registration mark of the vehicles.

However, notwithstanding these directions, the Division Bench left it open for the authorities to "screen, scrutinize, verify" validity and genuineness of documents of any vehicle entering J&K having outside registration.

The Section 47 of the Motor Vehicle Act 1988 deals with assignment of the new registration mark on removal of the vehicle to another State or UT in India. It provides that when a motor vehicle registered ● [More On P10](#)



Centre Mulling New Re-Registration Norms

The road transport ministry has proposed new draft rules that will make it much easier for defence personnel, government employees and others shifting from one state to another to re-register their vehicles. In a statement, the ministry said it is proposing a new system of vehicle registration, wherein allocation ● [More On P10](#)

Vaccinated Elderly 94% Less Likely To Be Hospitalised With Covid

Agencies

WASHINGTON: The Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines being deployed to fight the coronavirus pandemic are highly effective in preventing hospitalizations among older adults, the group most at risk for severe disease and death, according to a federal study released Wednesday.

While not surprising, the results are reassuring because they provide the first real-world evidence in the United States that both vaccines prevent severe covid-19 illness, as they did in clinical trials,

the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said.

In the study, fully vaccinated adults 65 and older were 94% less likely to be hospitalized with covid-19 than people of the same age who were not vaccinated, according to the CDC. People who were partially vaccinated were 64% less likely to be hospitalized with the disease than the unvaccinated.

The risk for severe illness increases with age, and because older adults are at highest risk, the CDC prioritized them for vaccination. About 68% of adults 65 and older in the ● [More On P10](#)

Mercury Shows Upward Trend In Kashmir

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The mercury in Kashmir has been showing an upward trend with the minimum temperature on Thursday rising above normal in all parts of the Valley, officials said.

A meteorological department official said that Srinagar recorded a low of 11.6 degree Celsius against 10.2 degree Celsius on the previous night. The temperature was 2.3 degree Celsius above normal for this time of the season in the summer capital of J&K, he said.

Qazigund recorded a low of 8.6 degree Celsius against previous night's 7.7 degree Celsius and it was above normal by 0.8 degree Celsius. ● [More On P10](#)

TMC To Retain Bengal, DMK Sweep In TN: Exit Polls

KO Web Desk

SRINAGAR: Hours after polling for the assembly elections in five states and one Union Territory ended on Thursday evening, most of the exit polls predicted that the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress would retain West Bengal while the DMK-led alliance would come to power in Tamil Nadu.

Most of the pollsters have also predicted a landslide win for the Left Front government in Kerala



while in Assam, the BJP is likely to retain power.

The counting of the votes in West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Assam, Kerala and UT of Puducherry will

begin on May 2.

Trinamool Congress is likely to get a third straight term in Bengal, though with a majority greatly shrunk, an aggregate of six

exit polls indicate.

The challenger BJP may not get close to their dream of winning 200 assembly seats. But the party is likely to emerge a close second to the Trinamool -- a far cry from its current paltry few seats in the assembly.

The Trinamool Congress, which surged to power in 2011 toppling the 34-year Left citadel, had improved its tally by 27 seats in 2016, winning 2011.

Tamil Nadu assembly elections were conducted in a single ● [More On P10](#)

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**KASHMIR
OBSERVER**

Friday| 30-04-2021

Indian consumers prioritise health and safety over discretionary consumption

Agencies

The findings of a 30-day analysis-based consumer survey by Deloitte (known as wave17**), indicated that health and safety are at the core of all important consumption-led decisions. India currently ranks highest amongst 18 countries in terms of anxiety during the second wave of the pandemic. Twenty one per cent of consumers in India are anxious, followed by Chile (16 per cent), Poland (13 per cent), South Africa (13 per cent), and Italy (13 per cent). With the significant increase in the number of cases, the Indian consumer is seen to cautiously approach the future by prioritising health safety, preferring online channels for purchases, and choosing to delay large purchases. Porus Doctor, Partner, and Consumer Industry leader, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu India LLP said, "Our survey insights are a reflection of the heightened consumer apprehensions, which are at the core of their decision-making. As the health crisis again takes center stage in the country, the average Indian consumer prefers to use digital and online channels wherever applicable."

Key trends emerging from the survey included the following:
Online purchases continue to show a strong trend
Throughout the pandemic, the online medium emerged as the preferred channel for purchase and continues to grow. Here is how consumers have been buying online - medicines (22 per cent), electronics (34 per cent), clothing (33 per cent), food ordering online from restaurants/take-aways (33 per cent), and if available, the next vehicle online (57 per cent) as well due to various restrictions. Cautious consumption
- The spending intent shows consumers are focused more on non-discretionary items as compared with the previous waves of the survey. For instance, 48 per cent of consumers show net spending intent towards healthcare, 33 per cent towards medicines, 42 per cent towards internet, 47 per cent towards groceries, and 44 per cent towards household goods, indicating that consumers want to focus on non-discretionary spends in the time of crisis.
- The consumer persona shows, stock piler (63 per cent), convenience seeker (69 per cent), and bargain hunter (51 per cent) still remain high amongst the Indian consumers.



Concern about returning to the workplace
Indians are significantly more concerned about returning to the workplace than they were in February 2021. About 28 per cent to

day worry about returning to their offices, as compared with 15 per cent in February 2021. Consumers gearing towards an at-home economy

Individuals are not looking to venture out as they do not feel safe about going to a store, restaurant, engaging in in-person activities, staying in a hotel, returning to the workplace, taking a flight, etc.
Other trends include:
- Socially conscious shopping: 67 per cent of consumers prefer more locally sourced items going forward even if they cost a bit more, and 71 per cent prefer brands that responded well during the pandemic.
- Consumer mobility: The findings indicate consumers' intent to stick to their current vehicles for a longer period than they had originally expected (71 per cent); this has been a consistent trend globally.
61 per cent of consumers are putting off regular maintenance for their vehicle, and 47 per cent consider their car doesn't need replacement.
Over the next three months, consumers plan to limit the use of public transit (71 per cent) and ride-hailing (63 per cent).
- Travel and hotel stay: The recent developments have brought about a shift in plans to travel for leisure and business. 46 per cent feel safe staying in a hotel while 48 per cent feel safe while traveling.

General Administration Department.

Civil Secretariat,
Srinagar / Jammu.

NOTICE INVITING DISCOUNT OFFER

Sub:- Extension of date of submission of discount offers.

The date of submission of sealed offers for supply of books to GAD which was previously fixed as 28.02.2021 is hereby extended further by fifteen days from 26.04.2021 to 09.05.2021 at (4:30 pm). The offers must reach the office of the undersigned through speed post/ by hand/ Courier before 09.05.2021 (4:30 pm). The terms & conditions envisaged in the notice are repeated again as under:-

Terms & Conditions

- The offers shall be accompanied by earnest money in the shape of a CDR from a scheduled bank for amount of Rs.3000/= (Rupees three thousand only) pledged to Director Finance, General Administration Department, Civil Secretariat, Jammu.
- The discount should be offered on latest edition books which are in good condition to be placed in Library for the purpose.
- The rates indicated in the offer should be inclusive of all taxes, freight & other charges.
- Successful Distributors/ Suppliers shall supply the books within 10 days from the date of issue of supply order.
- In case the successful Distributor/ Supplier fails to make the supplies within the specified period, the purchase Committee shall forfeit the earnest money deposited and also impose penalty as warranted under rules.
- The Purchase committee has a right to accept or reject all or any offer without assigning any reasons thereof.
- The list of books mentioned in Annexure "A" is available at www.jkgad.nic.in.

Deputy Secretary To Government
General Administration Department

No: Adm/Lib-12/1-09 Dated 26-04-2021

DIPK-973/21

State Surveillance office Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme

Director Of Health Services, Kashmir Health Secretariat (Swast Bhawan)

Address ; Bemina Bye Pass Near Hajj House, Bemina, Srinagar Jammu & Kashmir 190005

Phone/ Fax : 911942440283 email ssu.idsp@gmail.com

SELECTION NOTIFICATION

Selection list of the candidate who had appeared walk-In-interview on 20/10/2020, vide letter no DHSK/IDSP/1286 Dated: 17/10/2020 for the vacant post of state Microbiologist for Division Kashmir, under Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme Vide DIPK No 66521-22 Dated: 17/10/2020.

S.No	Particulars	District/ Division	Total Out of 100 Points	Remarks
01	Mudasir Habib Chantal S/o Habibullah Chantal R/o Sopore Baramulla.	Division	64.66	Selected
02	Bisma Reyaz D/o Reyaz Ahmad Mir R/o Malla Bagh Srinagar.	Division	54.13	Waiting

The candidate shall report to our office along with his original testimonials which shall be verified in our office as per NHM guidelines and if, the candidate has valid certificate he/ she shall be allowed to join. The candidate shall also have to execute and undertaking on affidavit as per format enclosed with this letter as annexure (2 pages) before start of his/her services. The services of the candidate will be governed by following terms and condition:

- The hiring is purely contractual basis initially up to 31st March 2022, subject to approval of the post by MoH&FM, GoI in SPIP of NHM for the financial year 2021-22. The contract may be renewed further based on the performance of the candidate. In case of unsatisfactory performance, the Mission Director NHM on of recommendations of the concerned Chief Medical Officer/Dealing official may terminate the hiring.
- The contractual hiring shall not confer any right on the appointee to claim extension or for regular selection at any point of time.
- The hiring is purely fresh one governed by the Terms and Conditions laid down in the above mentioned notification and all such candidates who were working under NHM, J&K, If appeared in the Walk-in Interview in pursuance to the above stated period of service under NHM for any purpose, one month remuneration will be forfeited for which he/she shall no claim what so ever.
- The candidate shall have to give one month notice before leaving the contractual services.
- The candidate shall not claim any attachment or transfer on any subsequent requests whatsoever and shall serve in the district o posting exclusively.
- The hiring shall also be governed by other Terms and Conditions which are not specifically mentioned herein, but are made applicable in case of such appointments at any time by the office of NHM.
- The candidates shall have to join their duties within seven days from the date of issue of this selection letter positively along with all requisite original testimonials for verification.
- The selection of candidate are purely selected as per their merit.

DIPK-998/21

No: DHSK/IDSP/1558
Dated: 27/04/2021

State Surveillance office (SSO)
integrated disease surveillance Project (IDSP)

OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER KASHMIR NOTICE



Whereas, a joint application has been received from Shri. Danish Amin Bhat S/o Mohammad Amin hat R/O Zaindar Mohalla Srinagar (Transferor) and Shri Abdul Rashid Khan S/O Mohammad Ismail Khan R/O Zainakote HMT Srinagar (Transferee) for transfer of Taveera carriage route

Permit No 4373/MC Covering Vehicle No JK01L-0335
Now, therefore, it is notified for general information that objections, if any to the proposed transfer of the said route permit / vehicle shall be filled in writing in the office of the Regional Transport Officer, Kashmir. Within a period of 7 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily News Paper Kashmir Observer.
Seller and purchaser identified by the authorized representatives of M/S Arsalan Road Lines Namely MS Showkat Ahamd
NO: JK/RTOK /1523
Dated: 29/04/2021
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 Mozen Ali Sofi S/O Mohammad Ramzan Sofi R/O Rakh Shalna Tengan Srinagar (Transferor) of LMV

Car bearing registration No. JK01R-6496 chasis No: 2849950 Engine No: 4479961 Model 2012 in favour of Shakeel Ah Sheikh S/O Mohamad Akbar R/O Mir Mohalla Harwan 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 1535
Dated: 29/04/2021
FKO
Sd/-
Regional Transport Office,
Kashmir

Directorate of Information & Public Relations

Media Complex, Polo-ground, Srinagar / Rail Head, Jammu
Tele: 01942476816; 01942485175 (fax sgr / 01912479692; 01912479643 fax! Jammu

CORRIGENDUM

In continuations to office's Expression of Interest vide endorsement No INF/Tpt-29/2021/313-16 dated 26.04.2021 for providing Pol/Fuel to the Departmental Vehicles of Directorate of Information & Public Relations The Expression of Interest should reach to the Directorate of Information & Public Relations, Media Complex, Polo-ground Srinagar and Rail Head, Bahu Palaza, Jammu by or before 02.05.2021 instead of 27.04.2021.

No: INF/Tpt-29/2021/ 412-15
Dated: 28-04-2021

DIPK-1026/21

Subhash Chander Dogra (KAS)
Deputy Director Information (C)

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER WATER WORKS DIVISION SRINAGAR GIST OF NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER

E-N.I.T No:- 08/WWD of 2021-22Dt:- 27.04.2021

Executive Engineer Water Works Division Srinagar on behalf of Lt. Governor of J&K (U.T), invites tenders bye-tendering mode from approved & eligible 'DEE' Class registered Contractors of Union Territory of J&K. Position of A.A.A.'Accorded'
M.H. 4215 'Imppt. Ext. to Sgr. City'

S. No.	Name of Work	Estd. Cos (in lacs)	Cost of Tender Document (in Rs.)	Time of completion	Class of Contract or
1	Impmts in water supply to MadniKochaNowpora by way of laying and fitting of 65/25mm dia G.I. pipeline in the area.	0.80	50	07 days	'DEE'
2	Impmts in water supply to MirzabaghBahe-Roop Singh by way of laying and fitting of 65/25mm dia G.I. pipeline in the area.	0.68	50	05 days	'DEE'
3	Impmts in water supply to BudooBagh colony by way of laying and fitting of 65/25mm dia G.I. pipeline in the area.	0.56	50	02 days	'DEE'
4	Impmts in water supply to BeeruniKathiDarwaza by way of laying and fitting of 65/25mm dia G.I. pipeline in the area.	0.39	50	07 days	'DEE'
5	Impmts in water supply to TelsariShribhatAlamgari Bazar by way of laying and fitting of 25mm dia G.I. pipeline.	0.26	50	07 days	'DEE'
6	Impmts in water supply to BasantBaghGowkadal by way of laying and fitting of 25mm dia G.I. pipeline in the area.	0.22	50	03 days	'DEE'
7	Laying and fitting of 25mm dia G.I. pipeline for Aug. of water supply at Nund-Reshi Colony Zoonimar (Magray Bagh)	0.21	50	04 days	'DEE'
8	Impmts / Extension of water supply to Armpora lane by way of laying and fitting of 25mm dia sub main to newly developed households from existing pipeline at Aarampora Qamarwari.	0.16	50	03 days	'DEE'
9	L/F of 25mm dia G.I. pipeline for impmts of water supply to UsmanabadUmer Colony Lane No. 04 Lalbazar Srinagar.	0.09	50	03 days	'DEE'
10	Laying and fitting of 25mm dia sub main from 50mm G.I. existing pipeline at Sheikh Colony behind RTO Office Chattabal.	0.05	50	02 days	'DEE'

Note:-For further details, bidders are requested to refer to Fresh E-NIT No:- WWDD/08 of 2021-22Dt: 27-04-2021. Instructions published on website: <http://www.jktenders.gov.in>The dates showing 'bid submission date/closing date' etc. are given below:

1	Date of publishing	27-04-2021
2	Document downloading date	27-04-2021 /1530hrs
3	Bid submission start date	27-04-2021 /1600hrs
4	Bid submission closing date	04-05-2021 /1600hrs
5	Date and time for opening bids	05-05-2021 /1400hrs
6	Place of opening of bids	Office of The Executive Engineer Water Works Division Srinagar.

Note: Bid security declaration duly notarized be uploaded with the bid as per Appendix II as per Finance Deptt. Govt. of U.T. of J&K letter No. A/Misc.(2018)-III-895/J dt. 22-12-2020.

No: WWDD/8240-49
Dated:27-04-2021

DIPK-1029/21

Executive Engineer
Water Works Division Srinagar.

Standalone Shops To Be Allowed During Lockdown: DC Srinagar

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Administration in Srinagar on Thursday said that wholesale dealers, standalone grocery, vegetable, meat and milk shops may remain open during the 84 lockdown which began Thursday evening.

In a detailed order the Deputy Commissioner Srinagar Moham-mad Ajiaz Assad also said that restaurants in hotels can remain functional for in-house guests, to be served only in the rooms.

"There will be no hindrance to the smooth movement of goods and essential supplies, nomads migrating with herds, Darbar Move Officials/ staff, and other products like agricultural / horticultural goods, on the National & State Highways."

He said there shall be no restriction on interstate and intra-state movement of essential goods either.

"All Industrial and Scientific establishments, both Public & Private, are allowed to operate for production purposes, or otherwise. Internet services, IT, Telecom, IT enabled services' sector, including e-Commerce are permitted."

He said there shall be no restriction on the movement of Government Officials for attending office, duties on production of I-Cards and Official Orders.

"All development/ construction works shall be allowed to continue without



“ALLOWING TRANSPORT TO PLY IS NOT an invitation for the people to come out, but the decision was taken for the wellbeing of the people who will have to reach the hospitals or other related places,” he said.

any hindrance."

The vaccination drive shall not be halted, he said. "Localized mobile teams shall be constituted to provide vaccination in colonics, residential areas and containment zones."

Regarding non-permissible activities, he said there shall be a complete 'corona' curfew with no movement of people except for permissible activities only.

"All Educational institutions are already closed and shall continue to remain closed," he said, adding, "All Shopping Complexes, Bazaars, Saloons, Barber Shops, Cinema Halls, Restaurants & Bars, Sport Complexes, Gyms,

Spas, Swimming Pools, Parks, Zoos, etc, shall remain closed."

He said religious and social gatherings such as marriages, attended by up to 50 persons only, whether indoors or outdoors, and funerals / last rites, attended by up to 20 persons only, are allowed.

"Public transport shall be allowed to operate at a maximum of 50% capacity only and this shall be strictly enforced."

He said the Health Department will establish telemedicine facilities for patients isolating at home. "Dedicated Control room numbers for this shall be widely publicized," adding, "Direct admission of

patients in tertiary care hospitals shall be allowed only on referral from a district hospital except for emergencies."

All COVID patients being admitted to tertiary hospitals in

Disaster Management Act provides for penalties in case a person obstructs any officer or employee in discharge of his functions or refuses to comply with any direction given under

DC Takes Stock Of Medical Oxygen Availability

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar Moham-mad Ajiaz Assad on Thursday visited Industrial Estates at Khonmouh and Rangreth and inspected various Medical Oxygen generation Plants including Stealth Oxygen Company, Main Gas and JK Gas Company.

While interacting with plant owners the Deputy Commissioner directed them to ensure uninterrupted supply of Medical Oxygen to the hospitals to fulfil required demand in present time of need.

Meanwhile the DC also

pushed for an increased production at the plant level to cater to local needs for oxygen. Besides he also ordered that no supplier would supply medical oxygen to non-medical purposes for treatment of Covid-19 patients.

However, DC directed to continue supply chain unhindered and storing sufficient cylinders as a back-up emergency. DC directed revenue officers and police to ensure zero diversion of medical oxygen for any purpose other than health Care. He also instructed the concerned to ensure uninterrupted supply of electricity to these plants.

Jammu and Srinagar shall necessarily be based on referral from their respective District hospitals, except for grave emergencies.

"Last but not the least, the public at large is also being informed that Section 51 of the

this Act. Any violation of the above directions will, therefore, lead to prosecution under section 51 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005. SSP Srinagar shall strictly enforce compliance to this order."

SMC To Setup Three Covid Wellness Centres

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Mayor of Srinagar Junaid Azim Mattoo, Thursday expressed concern over the prevailing situation due to pandemic in the Srinagar city.

He was speaking while chairing a meeting in his office chamber regarding setting up of 3 covid wellness centres which will act as emergency centres to three designated hospital of Srinagar.

Mattoo directed the Director Health Services Kashmir to maintain these wellness centres as level II Covid Care facilities to manage mildly ill patients, referred to these centres from the designated covid hospitals and to provide medicines to the under arrangement at covid wellness centres.

The Mayor further desired that covid wellness centres will be monitored and managed by the designated covid hospitals to which the centre will be attached as an extension.

It was decided that the treatment regiment will be from the covid Hospital & no change in the same will be done at the wellness centre unless authorised by the treating consultant.

Moreover, a nodal officer will be designated from each covid hospital as a single point of contact.

Radiological & laboratory support in case will be provided by the designated Covid Hospital

It was further directed that Ehsaan international will provide PPE Kits, Oxygen Concentrators and Oxygen Cylinders for the wellness centre.

Voluntary Medicare society will provide Paramedical and ancillary staff for the wellness centres. They will also help provide wheelchairs and Ambulance for each centre.

Mattoo directed the SMC to provide Beds with accessories, Sanitization / Cleaning at Wellness Centres.

SMC will also provide space for the wellness centres at identified community Halls under its jurisdiction.

SMC Conducts Anti-Encroachment Drive

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Deputy Mayor, Srinagar Parveez Ahmad Qadri Thursday along with several Corporators of SMC, Chief Anti Encroachment Officer, SMC and Anti Encroachment squad of SMC conducted an anti encroachment drive at Jehangir Chowk, Lal Chowk, Maharaj Bazar, Goni Khan and its adjoining areas.

"Several encroachments were removed on spot which were creating inconvenience in pedestrian movement and also hinder-

ing free vehicular traffic," an SMC statement said.

The Deputy Mayor stressed upon people and shopkeepers to maintain social distancing and follow SOP's strictly as per instructions of Divisional/District Administration.

He also gave on spot directions to Chief Anti Encroachment Officer, SMC to utilise the services of his sub-ordinate squad and remove all the encroachments done by the shopkeepers causing inconvenience in pedestrian movement and free flow of vehicular traffic.

KU To Conduct Online Classes For PG End-Semesters

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The University of Kashmir Thursday said that it has decided to start online teaching for all its Postgraduate End-Semesters where students were likely to be promoted to such semesters irrespective of the status of their pending examination.

Announcing a slew of decisions to ensure that there is no loss of academic time of the students in view of the ongoing pandemic situation, the varsity also said that colleges can start online classes for Under-Graduate 6th semester for students who were

likely to be promoted to the said semester irrespective of status of their 5th Semester.

In a detailed order issued by Registrar Dr Nisar Ahmad Mir, the university said the Online Registration for the Electives (OE/GE) and other Departmental Courses of 4th Semester shall commence from 5th May, 2021 and notification to this effect shall be issued by the Office of Chief Coordinator, CBCS.

The order also states that teaching shall continue via online mode till further orders, even as all seminars/workshops shall also be exclusively be held on online platforms.



DESPITE THE IMPOSITION OF SECTION 144, A HUGE RUSH of people was witnessed in Batamaloo in uptown area of Srinagar city on Thursday. KO Photo/Abid Bhat

AAC Pays Tributes To Mirwaiz Yousuf Shah (RA) On 54th Death Anniversary

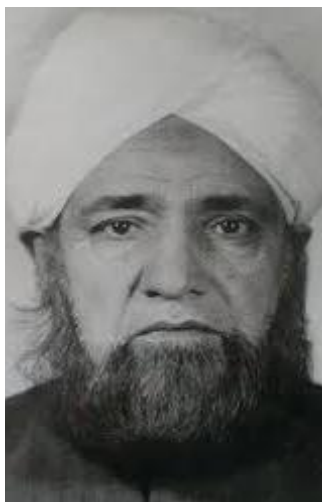
Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Jammu & Kashmir Awami Action Committee (AAC) Thursday paid tributes to Shuhada-e-Badr and J&K's Islamic scholar, "founder of Tehreek-e-Hurriyat Kashmir", Muhajir-e-Millat and Mufasir-e-Qur'an Mirwaiz Moulana Yousuf Shah (RA) on his 54th death anniversary.

In a statement, the AAC recalled Mirwaiz Shah's religious, political, social and literary contribution and paid rich tribute to him for his Dawat-o-Tableegh and Tafseer-e-Qur'an, saying the people of Kashmir are indebted to the Muhajir-e-Millat for his selfless services.

The translation and commentary of the holy Qur'an in Kashmiri language by the late Mirwaiz put Kashmir on the global Islamic map and greatly helped in spread and understanding the message of Qur'an in vernacular language.

The AAC also recalled the great services and contribution of Muhajir-e-Millat towards creating religious, political and social awareness among the masses in J&K



and providing leadership and guidance to them.

Due to the "second wave" of coronavirus Covid-19 and the continued house detention of Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, the commemorative rally at historic Aali Masjid, Eidgah, stands cancelled, AAC said in the statement.

In view of the present situation, the people of Jammu & Kashmir across the divide remember their beloved leader and pay tribute to him for his

selfless social, religious and political contribution with the pledge that despite the unfavourable and distressing circumstances, the mission of the Muhajir-e-Millat will be taken to its logical conclusion, it added.

"The way the Muhajir-e-Millat Mirwaiz Yousuf Shah (RA) led the people of Kashmir despite facing exile and hardships and stood by his stand and principles till the last breath is exemplary and the Awami Action Committee and its leadership is committed to take forward that mission and continue its peaceful struggle."

The AAC statement said the late Mirwaiz's political stand of honouring the will of people of J&K for which he suffered exile cannot be forgotten and is the way to peace and prosperity in the subcontinent.

"Tomorrow, on 17th Ramadhan-ul-Mubarak, the AAC has appealed to people to remember the Shuhada-e-Badr in their prayers, pray for Jannat-ul-Firdous to Muhajir-e-Millat Mirwaiz Yousuf Shah (RA), and ask Allah to grant us refuge from the ongoing pandemic."

“THE WAY THE MUHAJIR-E-MILLAT MIRWAIZ YOUSUF SHAH (RA) led the people of Kashmir despite facing exile and hardships and stood by his stand and principles till the last breath is exemplary and the Awami Action Committee and its leadership is committed to take forward that mission and continue its peaceful struggle.”

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
- PAMPORE: 01933-294132
- PATTAN: 01954-293507
- QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

HIGHWAY STATUS



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

This Day in History

- 1804 - The New Hague Theater opens in The Hague, the Netherlands
- 1860 - Navaho Indians attack Fort Defiance (Canby)
- 1863 - Battle of Snyder's Bluff, Virginia (part of the Vicksburg Campaign of the American Civil War): General Sherman beaten by Confederate forces
- 1897 - English physicist J. J. Thomson announces his discovery of the electron in a lecture to the Royal Institution
- 1904 - Ice cream cone makes its debut
- 1945 - Red Army opens attack on German Reichstag building in Berlin.
- 1945 - Soviet Army frees Ravensbruck concentration camp
- 1945 - US troops attack the Elbe
- 1945 - Record 48 U-boats sunk by the Allies this month
- 1945 - Adolf Hitler commits suicide along with his new wife Eva Braun in the Fuhrerbunker in Berlin as the Red Army captures the city.
- 1961 - Premier Fidel Castro of Cuba receives Lenin-Peace Prize
- 1962 - NASA civilian pilot Joseph A Walker takes X-15 to 75,190 m
- 1974 - US President Richard Nixon hands over partial transcripts of Watergate tape recordings
- 1975 - North Vietnamese troops capture Saigon, ending the Vietnam War
- 1976 - Muhammad Ali beats Jimmy Young in 15 for heavyweight boxing title
- 1984 - 1,700 skiers participate in an alpine event at Are, Sweden
- 1984 - Strong winds cause a 30 min delay in Toronto Blue Jays game
- 1989 - World Wide Web (WWW) is first launched in the public domain by CERN scientist Tim Berners-Lee
- 1990 - US 66th manned space mission STS 31 (Discovery 10) returns from space
- 1990 - US hostage Frank Reed freed after 4 years in hands of pro-Iranians
- 1992 208th & final episode of "The Cosby Show" on NBC-TV
- 1993 - The World Wide Web source code is released by CERN, making the software freely available to all.
- 2002 - A referendum in Pakistan overwhelmingly approves the Presidency of Pervez Musharraf for another five years
- 2009 - Chrysler automobile company files for Chapter 11 bankruptcy
- 2009 - Failed attack on the Dutch Royal Family results in 7 deaths and 17 injured
- 2009 - The United Kingdom formally ends combat operations in Iraq
- 2012 - Overloaded ferry in the Brahmaputra River, India, killing 103 people.
- 2013 - Apple offers the largest bond offering from a private company of 17 Billion
- 2013 - Hannah Warren, who was born without a trachea, at 2, becomes the youngest patient to receive a stem cell bioengineered organ
- 2013 - Bollywood actor Rajesh Khanna is declared "The First Superstar of Indian cinema" at the Dadasaheb Phalke Academy Awards
- 2014 - Masked gunmen and pro-Russian separatists take control of more buildings in eastern Ukraine
- 2015 - US senator Bernie Sanders announces he will seek the Democratic Party's nomination for President
- 2018 - World's oldest known spider, a female trapdoor, dies after being killed by a wasp sting in Western Australia, aged 43
- 2018 - Sajid Javid is named UK Home Secretary by Prime Minister Teresa May
- 2018 - Pakistani city of Nawabshah sets global record for an April temperature, recording high of 50.2C

From KO Archives

‘UNMOGIP ROLE CAN BE DISCUSSED WITH INDIA, PAK’

NEW DELHI - Taking into account the positive strides made in Indo-Pak ties, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan today said discussions could be held with the two countries on the role of UN military observers stationed on either side of the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir.

Annan, who ended his three-day visit, was asked at a press conference here whether it was worthwhile continuing with these observers at a time when India and Pakistan were successfully advancing their peace process.

"We are extremely pleased that India and Pakistan are making steady and truly remarkable progress in their bilateral dialogue," he said adding the UN presence was all part of these efforts.

"Obviously, we need to discuss with parties concerned as the developments evolve on how we handle our presence and role of observers-what it should be," he said.

During his parleys here with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and External Affairs Minister K Natwar Singh, Annan was apprised of the developments in Indo-Pak ties as also the outcome of the recent visit of President Pervez Musharraf.

Annan also lauded India and China for forging a strategic partnership which he felt would have a "salutary effect" on large parts of the world.

Describing India as an "important" member of the UN, he said it has played an active role in all UN organisations.

(Kashmir Observer, 30 April, 2005)

US Eyes Major Rollback In Iran Sanctions To Revive Nuke Deal



WASHINGTON: The Biden administration is considering a near wholesale rollback of some of the most stringent Trump-era sanctions imposed on Iran in a bid to get the Islamic Republic to return to compliance with a landmark 2015 nuclear accord, according to current and former US officials and others familiar with the matter.

As indirect talks continue this week in Vienna to explore the possibility of reviving the nuclear deal, American officials have become increasingly expansive about what they might be prepared to offer Iran, which has been driving a hard line on sanctions relief, demanding that all US penalties be removed, according to these people.

American officials have refused to discuss, which sanctions are being considered for removal. But they have said they are open to lifting any sanctions that are inconsistent with the nuclear deal or that deny Iran the relief it would be entitled to should it return to compliance with the accord. Because of the complex nature of the sanctions architecture, that could include non-nuclear sanctions, such as those tied to terrorism, missile development and human rights.

Biden administration officials say this is necessary because of what they describe as a deliberate attempt by the Trump administration to stymie any return to the deal. Under the 2015 agreement, the United States was required to lift sanctions tied to Iran's nuclear programme, but not non-nuclear sanctions.

Administration officials deny they will remove all non-nuclear sanctions, but have declined to

identify those which they believe Trump improperly imposed on terrorism and other grounds.

"Any return to the JCPOA would require sanctions relief, but we are considering removing only those sanctions that are inconsistent with the JCPOA," said State Department spokesman Ned Price.

"Even if we rejoin the JCPOA — which remains a hypothetical — we would retain and continue to implement sanctions on Iran for activities not covered by the JCPOA, including Iran's missile proliferation, support for terrorism, and human rights abuses." When President Donald Trump re-imposed sanctions after withdrawing from the deal in 2018, he not only put the nuclear sanctions back in but also added layers of terrorism and other sanctions on many of the same entities. In addition, the Trump administration imposed an array of new sanctions on previously unsanctioned entities.

This has put the current administration in an awkward position: Iran is demanding the removal of all sanctions. If the US doesn't lift at least some of them, Iran says it won't agree to halt its nuclear activities barred by the deal known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA.

But if the Biden administration makes concessions that go beyond the nuclear-specific sanctions, Republican critics and others, including Israel and Gulf Arab states, are likely to seize on them as proof that the administration is caving to Iran. Former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has led the charge among Trump alumni to denounce any easing of sanctions.

Former Trump administration officials say all the sanctions are legitimate. Gabriel Noronha, a former State Department senior adviser on Iran, said all the Trump-era sanctions had been approved by career Justice Department lawyers and would have been rejected if they weren't legitimate.

But a senior State Department official involved in the negotiations said officials now "have to go through every sanction to look at whether they were legitimately or not legitimately imposed."

Pakistan PM Imran Khan Hails Saudi Peace Overtures To Iran



Agencies

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Wednesday welcomed Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's statement that Saudi Arabia wants good relations with Iran.

"We welcome the KSA initiative for peace with Iran. Iran is our neighbour and KSA our closest friend. This peace initiative will strengthen the Muslim Ummah," Imran Khan said in a tweet.

In a televised interview late on Tuesday, Prince Mohammed struck a conciliatory tone towards Iran, saying he sought "good" relations.

"Iran is a neighbouring country, and all we aspire for is a

good and special relationship with Iran," he said.

"We do not want Iran to be in a difficult situation, on the contrary we want Iran to prosper and grow. We have interests in Iran and they have interests in the kingdom to propel the region and the world to growth and prosperity," Prince Mohammed said.

"Our problem is with Iran's negative behaviour," he said, mentioning Tehran's nuclear programme, missiles programme and support for proxies around the region.

"We are working with our regional and global partners to find solutions to these problems and we hope to overcome them for good relations that benefit everyone," he added.



THIS SEPT 2017 PHOTO PROVIDED BY RESEARCHER BRIAN MENOUNOS SHOWS A GLACIER in British Columbia, Canada. The Kilnakiini glacier and the adjacent ice field have lost 16 billion tons of snow and ice since 2000 — 10.7 billion tons of that since 2010, according to a study.—AP

Glacier Melt Is Speeding Up, Raising Seas: Global Study

Agencies

PARIS: Nearly all of the world's glaciers are losing mass at an ever increasing pace, contributing to more than a fifth of global sea level rise this century, according to unprecedented research released on Wednesday.

Glaciers — vast bodies of frozen water that sit above ground — have been melting fast since the middle of the 20th century, but until now the full extent of ice loss had only been partially understood.

An international team of researchers has for the first time observed all of Earth's some 220,000 glaciers, excluding

the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets, to properly evaluate the amount and rate of melt over the past two decades.

Analysing images taken by Nasa's Terra satellite, they found that between 2000-2019, the world's glaciers lost an average of 267 billion tonnes of ice each year.

That's enough water to submerge Switzerland under six metres (20 feet) of water — every single year.

But the team also found that the rate of glacier melt had accelerated sharply during the same period.

Between 2000 and 2004, glaciers lost 227 billion tonnes of

ice per year. But between 2015-2019, they lost an average of 298 billion tonnes each year.

This glacial melt has contributed to 21 percent of sea level rises in the study period, the researchers said — equivalent to 0.74 millimetres a year.

The study, published in the journal Nature, found that the fastest-melting glaciers were situated in Alaska and the Alps.

The authors also expressed concern about the retreating mountain glaciers in the Pamir Mountains, the Hindu Kush and the Himalayas, which provide water for more than 1.5 billion people.

Biden Talks Tough On China In First Speech To Congress

President Joe Biden took aim at China in his first speech to Congress on Wednesday, pledging to maintain a strong US military presence in the Indo-Pacific and promising to boost technological development and trade.

"China and other countries are closing in fast. We have to develop and dominate the products and technologies of the future," Biden said.

And in a line that drew some of the strongest applause of the evening, he said, "There is simply no reason the blades for wind turbines can't be built in Pittsburgh instead of Beijing."

Biden has repeatedly identified competition with China as the greatest foreign policy challenge the country faces. He and his fellow Democrats as well as opposition Republicans have all moved toward a harder line on dealings with Beijing.

"America will stand up to unfair trade practices that undercut American workers and American industries, like subsidies to state-owned enterprises and the theft of American technology and intellectual property," Biden said.

He also said he told Chinese President Xi Jinping that the United States will maintain a



strong military presence in the Indo-Pacific "just as we do for NATO in Europe — not to start conflict — but to prevent one."

While offering few specifics, Biden gave more attention to China than any other foreign policy issue in a speech largely focused on domestic policies.

He has been urging lawmakers to pass a sweeping bipartisan package of legislation now making its way through the Senate that would press Beijing on human rights, address the trade imbalance and boost funding for US development of new technologies to compete more effectively with China.

"America won't back away from our commitments to human

rights and fundamental freedoms and our alliances," he said.

Biden also addressed competition with another geopolitical rival, Russia. He said he had made clear to President Vladimir Putin that Moscow's interference in US elections and cyber attacks on government and businesses would have consequences, but Washington does not seek escalation.

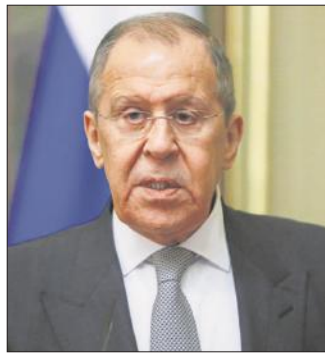
And, in a departure from the go-it-alone foreign policy of his Republican predecessor former President Donald Trump, Biden said he would work closely with allies to counter the threats posed by the nuclear programs of Iran and North Korea. **REUTERS**

Russia: Ties With US Worse Than During Cold War

MOSCOW: Russia's top diplomat said on Wednesday that relations with the United States were even worse than during the Cold War times because of a lack of mutual respect.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said Moscow stood ready to normalise the ties with Washington, but warned that the US should stop posturing like a "sovereign" rallying its allies against Russia and China. He warned: "If the US shuns a mutually respectful dialogue on the basis of a balance of interests, we will live in conditions of a Cold War or worse."

"During the Cold War, tensions were flying high and risky crisis situations often emerged,



but there was also a mutual respect," Lavrov said. "It seems to me there is a deficit of it now." Earlier this month, the Biden administration slapped Russia with sanctions for interfering in the 2020 US presidential. — **AP**

Hard To Predict Afghan Fate After Pullout, Says US General



Agencies

WASHINGTON: The top US general said on Wednesday that it was not possible to predict Afghanistan's fate after the US troop withdrawal, warning of the "worst-case" outcome of a collapse of the government to the Taliban.

"Tough situation, no good answers to any of it," Joint Chiefs Chairman General Mark Milley told the Sedona Forum when asked about the future of Afghanistan.

He said that the Pentagon would withdraw its last 2,500-plus forces by September under the decision announced two weeks ago by President Joe Biden, to end the two-decade US military involvement there.

"What comes after that, I think there's a... range of outcomes, some of which are quite bad, some which are not quite bad," Milley said. "On the worst-case analysis, you have a potential collapse of the government, a potential collapse of the military. You have a civil war and all

the humanitarian catastrophe that goes with it," he said.

That could include the revival of Al Qaeda, the jihadist group behind the 9/11 attacks that was the target of the original US-led invasion of the country in 2001.

"On the other hand, you do have an army, that's a 350,000-strong army and police forces and the Afghan security forces; you do have a government today," Milley said.

"They have been engaged in counterinsurgency operations for quite some time against the Taliban. So it's not a foregone conclusion that there'll be an automatic fall of Kabul, so to speak." Milley said the best outcome would be a negotiated deal between the Kabul government and the Taliban rebels, but he declined to guess which of the possible paths the country would take after US troops leave.

He said that even after the US troop departure, they will still be able to monitor and pursue Al Qaeda if the group seeks to expand its influence.

Deadly California Fire Was Started To Cover Up A Murder: Police



Agencies

SAN FRANCISCO: A California fire that killed two people last year was intentionally set to cover up a murder, investigators revealed in a press briefing.

The Markley Fire was started in Northern California's Solano County on August 18, 2020 near where police found the burned body of 32-year-old missing person Priscilla Castro.

Authorities had previously said Castro was reported missing after she went on a date with Victor Serriteno two days before the fire. She was not seen again.

"Based on an extensive, eight-month investigation, we believe Serriteno deliberately set the Markley Fire in an attempt to conceal his crime," Tom Ferrara, the Solano County Sheriff, said in a briefing Wednesday.

Serriteno, who was arrested in September and accused of killing Castro, now faces additional

charges of arson and the murders of both men — 82-year-old Douglas Mai and 64-year old Leon "James" Bone — who died in their homes as a result of the fire.

The Markley Fire later merged with a series of other fires to form the LNU Lightning Complex, one of the largest wildfires in the state's history, according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

The other fires were believed to have been sparked after nearly 11,000 lightning strikes hit the northern part of the state as it endured a historic heatwave.

Collectively, the fire complex scorched over 363,000 acres across California's famed wine country and burned down almost 1,500 structures after forcing the evacuation of tens of thousands of residents.

The massive inferno tore through the area north of San Francisco for two months and killed six people.

NEWS MAKERS

Michael Collins: Apollo 11 Pilot And 'Loneliest Man Ever' Dies Aged 90

Agencies

Michael Collins, one of the three crew members of the first manned mission to the moon, has died at the age of 90.

Known as the "the loneliest man in history", Collins was the pilot of the Apollo 11 mission, which in 1969 put humans on the moon for the first time. Although he never became a household name like his crew mates Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin, Collins' contribution to the mission was just as important.

As his colleagues Armstrong and Aldrin descended to the surface of the moon, Collins piloted the command module Columbia, spending close to 28



hours alone in orbit.

"Not since Adam has any human known such solitude as Mike Collins is experiencing during this 47 minutes of each lunar revolution," said the mission log. Recalling the events in a 2019 NPR interview, Collins

said of his time alone in space, "I don't think loneliness really comes into the equation, except it seemed to in the minds of the press at the time."

Steve Jurczyk, acting NASA administrator, paid tribute to Collins in a statement saying:

"Today the nation lost a true pioneer and lifelong advocate for exploration in astronaut Michael Collins."

Born in Rome in 1930, Collins graduated from the US Military Academy in 1952, going on to join the US Air Force and later becoming a test pilot, before being selected by NASA as part of Astronaut Group 3 in 1963. Prior to the Apollo 11 mission, Collins flew in space on the Gemini 10 mission in 1966, becoming the fourth man to walk in space.

Collins and his Apollo 11 crew mates didn't fly in space again after the 1969 mission. After retiring from NASA, Collins worked in government and was the director of the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, DC from 1971-1978.

Later in life, Collins advocated for humans going to Mars. "Sometimes I think I flew to the wrong place," he said in 2009.

"As celestial bodies go, the moon is not a particularly interesting place, but Mars is, and Mars is the closest thing to Earth's sister that we've found so far."

Aldrin, now 91, said on Twitter, "Dear Mike, Wherever you have been or will be, you will always have the Fire to Carry us deftly to new heights and to the future. We will miss you. May you Rest In Peace."

In a recent message, sent via Twitter to commemorate Earth Day, Collins said, "I am certain, if everyone could see the Earth floating just outside their windows, every day would be #EarthDay."

PM Package: J&K SSB Assures Justice To Grievances Of Genuine Candidates

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Countering speculations being made on various social media platforms with an attempt to create doubts relating to recently declared result for different posts in various departments advertised vide advertisement notification number 3 of 2020 dated 01.12.2020 under PM Package for Kashmiri Migrants and Non Migrant Kashmiri Pandits, Jammu and Kashmir Service Selection Board Thursday said that the aforesaid examination was conducted in multiple batches and slots from 29th March 2021 to 5th April 2021 at 10 examination venues in Jammu and Srinagar, Budgam.

The Board further elucidated that 26684 candidates had submitted 34097 application forms for various posts/ items, of which, 22431 candidates appeared (against 29154 applications) in the CBT examination. The matter was examined in the Board and the perusal of the main data revealed that there are 830 application forms pertaining to 392 unique candidates (179 candidates for the post of Sub-inspector (Finance) and 213 candidates for the post of Assistant Compiler) who had submitted multiple application forms through different user IDs/ email addresses. Accordingly, all such candidates were issued system generated multiple roll numbers based on unique application numbers assigned to each unique user ID at the time of submitting application forms. Out of 392 unique candidates, 390 have appeared on one unique roll number only and two (02) candidates have been found to have appeared for the post of Sub-Inspector (Finance) on both the unique Roll Numbers assigned to them on different dates, which amounts to resorting to unfair means.

The Board has initiated necessary action as warranted in pursuance of the Jammu & Kashmir Services Selection Board (Conduct of Examination) Regulations, 2013.

Moreover, there are 181 such candidates whose particulars are, to a very large extent, simi-

lar but are actually different individuals as cross verified from the main data.

The Board again stated that the aforesaid examination was conducted in multiple batches/ slots from 29th March 2021 to 5th April 2021. Accordingly, the J&K Services Selection Board vide Notice No. SSB/COE/Mig/2762-69 dated 10.03.2021 notified procedure for compilation of examination scores for multi-session/slot papers wherein it was clearly spelt out that the score of candidates shall be subjected to normalisation procedure based on Percentile Score which is a widely used principle for multi slot / session examination by almost all recruiting agencies across the country. The percentile ranks so derived and equated will be used as input criteria to finalise the merit list.

Moreover, the Board being primarily a recruiting agency of J&K Government has no role in prescribing qualifications, eligibility conditions or issuance of certificates etc. for the posts advertised from time to time. The Board advertises posts in pursuance of the indent/requisition received from the concerned departments and in tune with the Recruitment Rules of the concerned indenting Department.

However, the Board endeavours to notify the detailed terms and conditions with regard to eligibility for appointment at the time of issuing advertisement notification(s) itself. Accordingly, the terms and conditions with regard to eligibility for appointment were given in the Advertisement Notification Number 03 of 2020 at para 1(i) & 1(ii).

"It is also clarified that genuine grievances of candidates who will approach the Board with relevant documents and sufficient material will be looked into with earnestness and fairness in a speedy manner."

Accordingly, aspiring candidates are hereby cautioned against the activities of such unscrupulous elements who intend to mislead gullible candidates or spread misinformation using various undesirable means.

Advisor Khan Asks Officers To Ensure People Follow Covid SOPs, Get Vaccinated

Observer News Service

ANANTNAG: Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Baseer Ahmad Khan Thursday spoke of Covid mitigation efforts, besides the modalities that need to be put in place to tackle the pandemic in the Anantnag and Kulgam districts.

Khan impressed upon the officers to implement the Covid guidelines in letter and spirit while ensuring that basic services like food, water, medicine etc are provided to the people uninterrupted. He called for greater and active involvement of Panchayat Raj Institutions, Urban Local Bodies members, local Auqaf committees and religious leaders in this regard.

Advisor directed the officers to ensure that all target groups besides employees, bankers, traders etc, where chances of virus exposure are more, get vaccinated in nearest future. He further directed to fumigate and sanitise the offices, banks, ATMs and market places where people to people interaction is more.

Khan directed for creation of dedicated control rooms at District, Sub-division & Block levels headed by senior officers and manned by officials of line departments so that the medical emergencies besides public grievances are addressed in real time.

Advisor exhorted for ensuring that wage employment programmes like MGNREGA and agricultural operations go

smoothly with adherence to Covid SOPs, adding the government is taking calibrated measures for saving both lives and livelihoods together.

Highlighting the importance of Information Education and Communication activities for mitigating the infections, he asked the officers to rope in PRI/ULB members, religious leaders and committees at micro level in this regard.

Khan stressed for augmenting and readying the health infrastructure, besides preparing a meticulous and actionable plan to address any medical exigency. He asked both the Deputy Commissioners to have resources assessment done in terms of infrastructure, Oxygen availability, bed capacity, ventilators and man power. He advised them to augment the bed capacity and other infrastructure to be ready for any spike in covid positive cases. He stressed to ensure new oxygen plants are put to trial immediately and within next two to three days these plants be made operational. The Advisor directed the Deputy Commissioners to conceptualise plans for efficient vaccination, management of containment zones, movement of people, food and supplies, medicine, emergencies, avenues of wages and other aspects that need prime focus at this stage. He directed them to have mobile supply vans ready to suffice to the needs of people at their door steps in the containment zones.

Septuagenarian Woman Found Dead In Kulgam

Observer News Service

KULGAM: A septuagenarian woman was found dead in Devsar village of South Kashmir's Kulgam district on Thursday, officials said. They said that the woman identified as Azizi Begum wife of Abdul Ganie Lone, a resident of Kilam Devsar, was found dead inside a sewage trench at 2 pm.

He said that the 70-year-old had gone missing during night hours, two days ago.

The official said that police have taken cognisance of the incident and further investigations have been initiated.

Kashmir Faces Shortage Of Covid Vaccine

'Vaccines Will Be Available In Two Days'

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A day after leading hospitals of Kashmir were facing shortage of Remdesivir, several health centres in Kashmir division mainly in Srinagar have run dry of Covid-19 vaccines.

A top health official who wished not to be named said that several health centres in Srinagar district are facing shortage of Covid-19 vaccines.

He said that several centres are without vaccines from the last two to three days and the issue already has been brought into the notice of the concerned authorities.

People from different parts of Kashmir valley mainly capital city Srinagar said that they have been risking their lives to visit health centres for vaccination but had to return as vaccines aren't available.

They said that they have been asked to come after five days as no vaccines shall be available till then. "Government urges every day to come for vaccination but when we visit the centres, no vaccines are available there," they said.

They requested higher authorities to make vaccines available at the earliest so that people won't face any inconvenience.

State Immunisation Officer acknowledged that there is a shortage of Covid vaccines at some centres of Kashmir division.

"In last two consignments we received two lakh vaccines, one lakh each for a division. However, in the past 10 days more people in Kashmir have turned for

No Shortage Of Oxygen, Vaccine In J&K: Adv Khan

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Lieutenant Governor's Advisor Baseer Ahmad Khan on Thursday said that there was no shortage of oxygen, COVID vaccine, Remdesivir drug in Jammu and Kashmir, stating that J&K is one of the best places, which is managing the COVID situation effectively.

Addressing a presser at DIPR auditorium late Thursday evening, Khan said that the Remdesivir drug is available in ample quantities in J&K and there was no shortage at all. "The medicine is being provided to the places wherever it is needed," he said.

"I want to make it clear that nobody will face hardships in terms of oxygen and other related things," he said. About COVID vaccine, he said, "Jammu and Kashmir had placed 1.25 Crore order of vaccine and it has already been dispatched. Aggressive drive will be launched within a day or two in this regard," he said, adding that the vaccine at present is sufficiently available.

About Tocilizumab, he said that the order has been placed already and it will arrive in J&K tomorrow and

vaccination than Jammu so there is a shortage of vaccines here," he said.

"We have taken up the issue with the Serum Institute of India. The batch is first be-

distribution will be done as per the need.

"We have already put in place the perspective plans and contingency plans and to enhance the infrastructure, the work has been started already. If demand goes up, we are ready to shoulder the situation," he added.

He also appealed to people not to believe in rumours, adding that additional oxygen plants are coming up in Bijbehara, Srinagar and Kulgam.

Meanwhile, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir said that Remdesivir is available sufficiently at SKIMS, SMHS and other hospitals. "Two-three day stock of Remdesivir is available at SMHS and SKIMS," he said.

He added that at present 1600 oxygen connected beds are currently available in the Valley, saying that as against 3.26 Crore LPM oxygen requirement, the Valley has availability of 5.43 Crore LPM at present.

"We are increasing the oxygen connected bed capacity from 1600 to 2500 beds in five days while 111 ventilator beds are available and the critical manpower is being hired in this regard," he said.

ing tested at Kasauli and in coming two days the batch will reach here after which it will be accordingly distributed and people can get vaccinated," he said—(KNO)

“IN LAST TWO CONSIGNMENTS WE RECEIVED TWO LAKH vaccines, one lakh each for a division. However, in the past 10 days more people in Kashmir have turned for vaccination than Jammu so there is a shortage of vaccines here,”

DAK Urges Govt To Ensure Availability Of Tocilizumab Medicine Says It Prevents Covid Deaths

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Doctors Association Kashmir (DAK) Thursday said Tocilizumab drug prevents Covid-19 patients from dying and urged the government to ensure its availability.

Quoting a study, DAK President Dr Nisar-ul-Hassan, in a statement said that Tocilizumab reduces the risk of death when given to hospitalised patients with severe Covid-19 disease.

"The study also showed that the drug shortens the hospital stay and reduces the need for a mechanical ventilator," he added.

Dr Hassan said we have been able to save lives of many Covid-19 patients in Kashmir hospitals with early institution of the drug.

"But, now the drug has run out of stock in valley hospitals putting lives of patients at risk," he said.

Urging government to make the life-saving drug available for Covid-19 patients, Dr Hassan said, "we must ensure that every patient who needs the drug should be able to access it. Originally developed to treat rheumatoid arthritis, the drug combats the disease by quelling cytokine storm which is the hyperimmune response of the infected person to the virus," he said.

"Mortality in Covid-19 patients has been linked to the presence of the cytokine storm induced by the virus," Dr Nisar said adding that excessive production of cytokines leads to respiratory failure and widespread tissue damage resulting in multi-organ failure and death.

"Tocilizumab suppresses the hyperimmune response by blocking receptor for a key cytokine known as interleukin-6 (IL-6) and improves

survival rates and reduces mortality among Covid patients," he said.

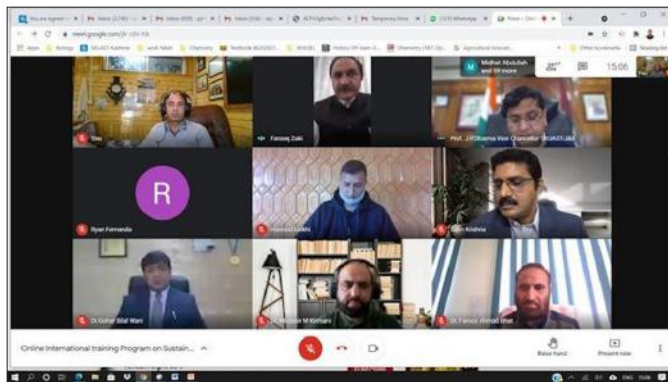
The DAK President said it is vitally important to know that there is no single magic bullet to treat the novel coronavirus and several drugs in combination are needed to tackle the virus.

"With the approval of several therapies, combination of them given at the right time gives a good result," he said.

"Apart from oxygen, moderate to severe patients are given steroids, remdesivir, convalescent plasma and Tocilizumab in various combinations," he added.

"Initially it was believed that deaths were happening because of poor oxygenation. Now we know that intravascular clotting can also lead to lung dysfunction and death. So heparin is given in Covid patients to prevent clotting," said Dr Nisar.

Three-Month Internship For SKUAST-K Students Begins At AIT Thailand



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A three-month on-line international internship training programme, 'Sustainable Asian Aquaculture Systems & Practices', for students of Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, Kashmir at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), Bangkok, Thailand commenced on Thursday.

The internship was earlier scheduled to be conducted physically at AIT, Bangkok, a reputed international higher education institute, but because of the travel ban due to the second wave of COVID19, the SKUAST-K students could not travel to Thailand. Therefore, the internship was conducted online.

The purpose of the training is to expose the students to the international environment, provide them with training from acclaimed international experts to make them professionally competitive for the international market.

More than 50 fisheries graduate students are participating in the training organised by the university's Faculty of Fisheries and AIT Thailand under the World Bank-ICAR funded National Agricultural Higher Education Project for the institutional development of SKUAST-K.

Besides the AIT faculty, the training is being conducted by international Aquaculture experts from Universiti Malaysia Terengganu, Malaysia; KHULNA University, Bangladesh; University of Sunshine Coast, Australia; University of Putra, Malaysia; Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO); Aqua Development Ltd, Korea; and National University of Agriculture, Vietnam.

Vice-Chancellor, SKUAST-K, Prof JP Sharma, who was the chief guest at the inaugural function, emphasised the training of the students in high potential agricultural skills and modern farming techniques, which are market-driven with high potential for entrepreneurship and agribusinesses.

Dr Gohar Bilal Wani gave a brief overview of the program. Prof MH Balkhi focused on fisheries production in the state and stressed that fisheries scientists should introduce new intervention for fish production to bridge the gap between the demand and supply without disturbing the water and land resources and environment. Prof Nazir Ahmad Ganai highlighted the various training programs conducted under NAHEP and also explained how under NAHEP faculty and students were benefited during this COVID-19 pandemic. He observed that SKUASTK and AIT Thailand shall further explore the possibility of dual degree programmes and joint courses to give international exposure to the students.

Dr Vilas Nitivattananon of AIT Thailand briefed about the functioning and achievement of the Asian Institute of Technology and how the Institute is ranked globally. Dr KR Salin gave an account of different training programmes conducted in AIT, the vibrant collaboration they have in different countries and how the students and development departments have been benefited from their expertise.

The inaugural function was attended by more than 70 students and faculty members. The function concluded with a vote of thanks proposed by Dr FA Bhat, Head FRM.

J&K Health Workers To Hold One Hour Strike On May 11

Observer News Service

JAMMU: The health workers of Jammu and Kashmir Thursday announced that they will go for one hour strike on May 11 to press for their long pending demands including DPC of all categories of posts in the health department.

A meeting of Jammu Kashmir Medical Federation Jammu was held in the office chamber of federation under the chairmanship of Sushil Sudan, State President, to press for the long pending burning demands of conducting DPC of all categories of posts in health department, a statement said.

"It was unanimously decided in the meeting that one hour protest against the higher authorities, especially Director Health Services Jammu will be held on May 11 from 4.30 to 5.30 PM in front of Director Health Services office Jammu,"

the statement added.

All the speakers in the meeting strongly condemned the deliberate delaying of DPC (Promotion) by Director Health Services Jammu. In this Covid -19 pandemic situation all the staff of the health department is fighting this infectious virus with best of their capacity but instead of appreciation by the higher authorities all categories of health staff are deprived of their genuine service benefits.

As the Government Gandhi Nagar Hospital, Jammu is declared designated Covid hospital and the health staff discharging their duties may be provided accommodations at par with their counterparts of Medical College Jammu as done previously.

The leaders of various associations also urged the government to release Rs 50 lakh insurance benefits to front line warriors who laid down their life during duties.

NEWS MAKERS

Covid SOP Violation: Police Arrest 202 Persons, Register 281 FIRs

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Police on Thursday said that since the outbreak of 2nd wave of Coronavirus, during the last 10 days, it has arrested 202 persons, lodged 281 FIRs and also realised fine to the tune of 1,245,790/- from 9247 people for violating the guidelines/rules throughout Kashmir valley.

A police spokesperson in a statement said that besides, 18 vehicles were also seized for violating Covid-19 SOPs. "In Central Kashmir Range, 106 persons were arrested, 243 FIRs lodged and fine of 148,420/- was realized from 1019 violators. In North Kashmir Range, 63 persons were arrested, 21 FIRs lodged and fine of 442,470/- was realized from 3688 violators. In South Kashmir Range, 33 persons were arrested, 17 FIRs were lodged and fine of 654,900/- was realized from 4540 violators." Besides, interactive meetings were also held at all the District levels with the Imams, religious leaders and Auqaf Committees as they have a critical role in fighting the pandemic and creating awareness on key measures for preventing the spread of Covid-19. They were requested to cooperate with Police in adherence of Covid-19 guidelines/SOPs during the prayers at Masjid.

AC Approves Transfer Of Land For Herbal Garden In Pulwama, AYUSH Hospital At Baramulla

JAMMU: The Administrative Council (AC) which met here on Thursday under the chairmanship of the Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, approved transfer of land measuring 27 Kanal to the Health & Medical Education Department for developing infrastructure under the Indian System of Medicine (ISM).

The Administrative Council approved the transfer of parcels of land measuring 11 Kanal and 16 Kanal to establish a 50-bedded AYUSH hospital at Baramulla and herbal garden at Pulwama, respectively.

Considering the fact that Jammu and Kashmir is a treasure trove of herbs and traditional medicine, the Health & Medical Education Department is committed to conservation and development of alternative medical practices.

JCB Operator Dies After Hit By Shooting Stone In Uri

Observer News Service

BARAMULLA: A JCB operator died after he was hit by a shooting stone while working in a mine at Naloosa village in Boniyar area of Baramulla district on Thursday.

Officials said that the operator was working at a mine at Naloosa Boniyar within the jurisdiction of Bijhama when the Gypsum slide occurred and buried him along with the machine.

The operator was identified as Shabir Ahmad Beigh son of Mohammad Haneif Beigh, a resident of Jabadar Boniyar.

SDPO Uri confirmed the accident and said that a case has been registered under relevant sections of law. (KNS)

KASHMIR OBSERVER

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K O V I E W

Inoculation not lockdown

J&K administration has imposed three day lockdown in 11 districts to contain the runaway surge in Covid-19 cases. Wednesday witnessed the highest single day spike of over 3000 cases forcing the authorities to go for the extreme measure. It is true that the record spike has left fewer options before the government to reign in the surge but the lockdown can hardly be a viable option. It will deepen the desperation among the people who have either lost jobs or their means of livelihood have been hit during the disruption over the last two years. In this space we have recurrently highlighted the need for the administration to find alternative ways to control the virus. The lockdown, though an easy option, can prove to be a cure worse than the disease.

Besides, at a time, when we already have a vaccine in hand, recourse to lockdown isn't as necessary as it is now. Last year we were fighting the pandemic when we had no defence against it. So, it would be far better if instead of resorting to extended or frequent lockdowns we focus on vaccinations. We need to rush the process to be able to inoculate a critical mass of people. This will automatically bring down the Covid numbers to manageable levels and in time help us get a grip on the contagion.

However, this doesn't seem to be the case as of now. Jammu and Kashmir has joined the list of states that may not be able to begin the vaccination drive for those between the ages of 18 - 44 from May 1. The administration is expected to get these supplies by May 20. This is certain to set back the process of vaccination. More so, when the new mutant strain has been attacking the young too. Among the new fatalities a significant number comprises of the people are below 45.

At the same time, the administration has to strictly implement the Standard Operating Procedure in public, which is something that is not being done. The wearing of mask has to be made mandatory and those violating the SOP in public should be taken to task. What the administration can do and which is eminently possible is to create more awareness about social distancing norms and take action against the people and the businessmen who violate it. It is time people are made responsible for their own health. We have to ensure that both life and livelihood are saved.

O T H E R O P I N O N

The Prickly State

Whether the apocalypse comes with a bang or a whimper, one thing is certain: There are those in power who will deny the very existence of the apocalypse and write letters of complaint, hoping to control the narrative. The mighty Government of India appears to have begun its perception management drive with far greater zeal than it showed in its mission to augment health infrastructure during the pandemic lull, or to ensure universal vaccination before the second surge hit. First, it reportedly asked Twitter to remove tweets that were critical of its handling of the current devastating wave of COVID-19. Now, the aggressive PR campaign has gone international.

On April 26, a letter signed by India's Deputy High Commissioner to Australia addressed to the editor-in-chief of 'The Australian' demanded that the newspaper publish a rejoinder to the article titled 'Modi leads India to viral apocalypse'. The letter lists, as government notes often do, the various schemes and programmes New Delhi has initiated to deal with the pandemic. It does not mention the mask-less election rallies or lakhs attending the Kumbh Mela. It attempts to counter a report high on rhetoric and somewhat opinionated with prickliness and petulance.

The government has a PR problem at the moment because it has a real problem on the ground. And its reaction is reminiscent of Pyongyang when the Supreme Leader is attacked, or the letters to the editor from agitated Chinese envoys. What those countries do not have is a robust and critical media at home. India's government, with its experience of a noisy public discourse, should have known that complaining about a news story will rebound, and only circulate the article wider. Turns out, there is such a thing as bad PR, and the government seems to be excelling at it.

Indian Express



A People-Centric Response

We need to involve youth, mohalla heads and most importantly religious preachers in the fight against the virulent second Covid wave

RIYAZ WANI

Resorting to more longer term lockdowns will be suicidal. It will be tantamount to further pauperizing the people. More so, when there's now a big question mark over the beneficial outcome of such a draconian measure

A runaway surge in coronavirus cases threatens to plunge Jammu and Kashmir into the same chaos as is unfolding in Delhi and the other parts of the country. At over 3000 cases a day, we have more than half the number of Pakistan, a country with 21 times more population. This is a troubling state of affairs. There has been a 700 percent rise in the cases in the last four weeks. And any further spike can overrun the health facilities. This calls for a pro-active government effort to reign in the contagion which currently is not the case.

The administration, on the contrary, is blamed for aiding the all-encompassing second wave in its bid to project normalcy in the Valley following the withdrawal of J&K autonomy on August 5, 2019. The administration is blamed for encouraging thousands of tourists and the locals to visit Srinagar's famous tulip garden and also organizing cultural festivals, music concerts, fashion shows, tourism promotion activities, all part of a coordinated effort to show things are hunky-dory. This at a time when the second wave was fast spreading through some other parts of the country from where tourists were coming.

As is apparent now, this normalcy flaunting by the administration in the middle of a pandemic is now taking a toll on the health of the people. We have already passed the peak of last year, twice over. The tally is set to jump further, health experts warn.

On April 18, in a belated yet cosmetic effort to address the new surge, the administration imposed night curfew. But the problem with this measure is that the conflict-ridden region has no night life for the past three decades. Markets close at 8 pm and the streets become deserted. The administration has since also imposed weekend curfew and extended school closures. And now the Srinagar administration has announced an 84 hour lockdown in the city after the district recorded higher cases in a single day than all of Jammu division. This should hopefully slow down the daily infections. But consid-

ering the new wave has been spawned by a 'double mutant' strain, the staggered restrictions on the movement may not make much of a conspicuous difference. After the economic devastation wrought by an extended Covid related lockdown last year preceded by a seven month security lockdown following the August 5 step, it has become exceedingly difficult for the administration to take a recourse to the move.

This calls for the administration to think innovatively. We need a dual strategy comprising a strict enforcement of Covid-19 protocol in the public sphere and the involvement of the ordinary people. Let each individual be a foot soldier in the fight against the pandemic. It is only when there is sufficient awareness and understanding of the challenge facing us at the level of an individual, can we really hope to turn the corner. We are a region with a thin population, so it shouldn't be difficult to rope in the cooperation of the people in what is turning out to be an existential battle of another kind. Already, people in Kashmir have been largely under a siege for the last two years. This has battered the economy leaving thousands unemployed. So, the government can't and shouldn't go back to curbing the public movement as an easy recourse to tide over the ongoing crisis.

Resorting to more longer term lockdowns will be suicidal. It will be tantamount to further pauperizing the people. More so, when there's now a big question mark over the beneficial outcome of such a draconian measure. Also, with all the community transmission having long set in, the contagion has long outgrown the utility of a lockdown to address it.

So what should the administration be doing instead? Many things other than enforcing the lockdown. For one, there's an urgent need to enforce the safety precautions in order to contain the pandemic. And to start with, there has to be an aggressive campaign to enforce the use of masks. More alarmingly, the masks are conspicuously absent from the faces of a significant number of the people walking on the streets

or those of the passengers using public transport. And none of these violators is taken to task.

This is strange. This government is ready to lock everything down at the drop of a hat, but it shirks from implementing the law when it comes to forcing people to observe Covid precautions.

The government needs to urgently work on two fronts: one, run an earnest awareness campaign alerting people to the deadliness of coronavirus and the urgency of observing safety precautions. Second, take strict action against the people who go out without masks or participate in large gatherings. These are the only pragmatic and hopefully helpful tools to tackle the contagion. That too, with least possibility of damage to the economy.

We also need to involve the community in the effort, including youth, mohalla heads and most importantly religious preachers who will be tasked to exhort people to observe safety guidelines in their respective areas. This should have been done much earlier.

In Kashmir over the last year, the administration has so obsessively regulated and dictated the public lives of people, that the latter have almost forgotten to mind them on their own. This is starkly reflected in the way the fight against Coronavirus has been carried out. Over the past twelve months, the administration has taken to controlling the situation in a way that is no different from the security management of the situation arising out of the repeal of Article 370: This has denied people a sense of agency to act in their own interest. This should force the government to introspect. It is not when it takes each and every decision on behalf of the people and inflicts sweeping lockdowns but when it makes them a stakeholder in these decisions.

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

The author is the Political Editor at Kashmir Observer



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COVID-19 and Individuals with Disabilities

The World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the outbreak of coronavirus disease, COVID-19, to be a pandemic due to the speed and scale of transmission. It is a global public health emergency affecting millions of people around the world. Most people with disabilities are not inherently at higher risk for becoming infected with or having severe illness from COVID-19. However, some people with disabilities might be at a higher risk of infection or severe illness. Evidences sug-

gests COVID-19 pandemic may have certain greater risks on the disability populations, for various reasons as discussed below:-

Due to a range of barriers like poor public health facilities, unsanitary conditions and unhygienic facilities.

Due to difficulty in enacting physical distancing because of additional support needs and relying on caretakers.

Due to need to touch things to obtain information about the objects around as in case of Visually Impaired individuals.

Due to exacerbation of pre-existing mental health conditions as a result and anxiety about contracting COVID-19.

Due to financial pressures, long periods of social isolation, family pressures and conflicts.

Due to language communication difficulty of health care workers as in case of Hearing & Speech Impaired individuals.

Due to being left behind by caretakers who are quarantined or fearful of infection of COVID-19.

However, these impacts can be mitigated by ensuring assistive products, if used, are disinfected frequently; these include wheelchairs, walking canes, walkers, transfer boards, white canes, or any other product that is frequently handled and used in public spaces.

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Mindful Fridays

OCD in Pandemic: Controlling the Uncontrollable

Wasim Rashid Kakroo

Covid-19 pandemic has hit the whole world very hard since February 2020, however, it has specifically put India into a catastrophe after its second wave emerged across various parts of India recently. As per recent reports (recorded on 28 April 2021), 17,988,637 cases of COVID 19 infections have been recorded so far since February 2020 out of which 201,165 have died.

With the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, a significant proportion of the world's population has been exposed to multiple burdens, in addition to immediate hazards like the risk of infection as well as social isolation and economic insecurity. Based on the diathesis-stress model, that helps us to understand the development and maintenance of many mental disorders, these stresses may have an effect on people with previous history of mental disorders due to low resilience, fewer social contacts, and reduced psychiatric care. Thus, a rise in symptom severity may be assumed and one recent research has already noted; for instance, the prevalence of anxiety and depression increased from 4% in 2019 to 20% in 2020 in the Chinese general population. Besides depression and anxiety, an increase at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic has also been predicted for substance use disorders, eating disorders, and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD).

OCD is characterized by the presence of obsessions (which are unwanted and unpleasant thoughts, images, or urges) and/or compulsions (repetitive behaviors or mental rituals aimed at reducing the distress provoked by obsessions). Cleanliness, contamination, and fear of contracting a disease, which are topics of concern for patients with OCD, have now become a point of discussion of news channels and social media.

People with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) experience persistent or recurring thoughts (called obsessions) that are disturbing and cause anxiety.

In order to deal with these intrusive thoughts and resultant anxiety, people with OCD may use compulsions.

Compulsions are repetitive physical behaviors or mental acts that a person feels they must do in order to resolve the anxiety. E.g., a person with contamination OCD may feel his hands have got contaminated after he touches some dusty surface. This thought comes to his mind again and again and he feels if he does not wash his hands immediately, it may lead to him getting infected by some germ and hence may get ill. These thoughts are thus obsessions and these obsessions make him feel anxious. In order to get rid of these intrusive thoughts, and the associated anxiety, he may get involved in excessive ritualized hand washing- a compulsion.

Since COVID-19 pandemic has increased the sense of insecurity with relation to health, it may trigger anxiety and repetitive behaviors for people with OCD, such as frequent hand-washing and repeatedly checking the news.

OCD fears common during COVID-19 pandemic:

OCD can show its presence in numerous ways, but during the COVID-19 pandemic, a person with OCD may find that some obsessions are more common than others.

The following sections will outline these in more detail.

Contamination:

It is one of the most common obsessions among people with OCD. Even during normal circumstances contamination obsession can be difficult to deal with, but during the COVID-19 pandemic, it may become even more challenging.

The real likelihood of contracting illness may cause people with OCD to take extreme steps to keep themselves and their families safe. This could



While we are trying to deal with challenges in terms of infrastructure and medical facilities to those who are suffering because of Covid-19 infection, we should not ignore the mental health needs of people who have developed symptoms of various mental illnesses

include repetitive hand-washing, frequent bathing, frequent and excessive cleaning of surfaces, or being afraid to leave the home or stopping people to leave the home to an extreme level.

Harming others:

Person with OCD may worry a lot obsessively about harming others, either by accident or on purpose.

During a pandemic, people with OCD may obsessively think that they will transmit an illness to another person and hence they may go to extremes to try to avoid doing so by taking precautionary measures beyond what COVID related guidelines are suggesting.

Hoarding:

Researchers consider hoarding (urge to collect unimportant things unnecessarily), a separate disorder that is distinct from OCD. However, many people with OCD also engage in hoarding.

Usually, people with a hoarding disorder collect things that are not useful. However, during a pandemic, they may also hoard items such as medications, alcohol-based hand sanitizers, and toilet paper in quantity far beyond their consumption.

OCD triggers during a pandemic

There are several aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic that might trigger OCD-related fears and behaviors. These triggers include:

- the constant advice from government and non government agencies to wash the hands more often
- the constant advocacy and emphasis on proper hand-washing techniques
- the need to clean the hands every time a person returns home
- the constant advice to leave the home only when it is highly required such as for food and other necessities

These triggers may contribute to the following behaviors:

- widespread panic-shopping, which can lead to hoarding
- reminding family members to wash their hands regularly and, in several cases, forcing them to take showers several times a day
- obsessively looking for information about how long the virus will remain active on different surfaces.

- establishing a routine of excessive regular washing and bathing

People with OCD can become more depressed as a result of nationwide lockdowns, making it more difficult to cope with symptoms.

What is the way forward?

Usually people with anxiety are often under pressure to obey rules to the letter. As a consequence, an individual with OCD can struggle to distinguish between taking reasonable COVID-19 precautions and unreasonable or perfectionistic behavior.

As a clinical psychologist, I recommend that people with OCD create a safety plan based on official public health recommendations. People with OCD will know that they are taking good measures if they stick to the plan.

They should think about their cleaning and hygiene habits more consciously rather than obsessively. There is no need to disinfect anything if a person did not go outside or if no one entered their house. It's a good idea to disinfect often used surfaces once a day.

People with contamination OCD should consider washing their hands with soap just for 20 seconds (or sanitizer) and only:

- after going outside
- before eating
- after going to the washroom
- after coughing, sneezing, or blowing their nose
- before touching their mouth, face or nose

If a person with OCD finds it troublesome to determine whether or not their safety plan is appropriate, they may find it beneficial to ask someone else as a reference.

Coping with OCD during a pandemic

The following sections outline some other ways to cope with the OCD during a pandemic.

Limit news and social media:

During the COVID-19 pandemic, several news outlets are providing free live streaming and regularly publishing news alerts to ensure that everybody has access to information.

People with OCD may feel an urge to check the news excessively due to the amount of frequent updates in the news and on social media.

People who find that they are checking the news more than normal should set a limit for themselves. Setting a cap, such as just reading the news once a day, will help to reduce anxiety.

Such people should limit the number of news sources they use to find facts. They should limit themselves to a few reliable sources of information rather than consuming it from every possible outlet.

Practice self-compassion

Many individuals, including those who did not have a preexisting mental health problem, have been terrified and stressed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

People with OCD should remind themselves that it is natural to feel stressed and that it is not their fault if their OCD symptoms worsen as it can help them feel better.

Self-care will assist people in focusing on what they can handle rather than the pandemic.

People who suffer from OCD or other anxiety disorders should keep socializing with their family and friends. Socializing can be difficult due to physical distance, but video chat apps can help avoid feelings of isolation.

Some other healthy coping behaviors they can use include:

- Do regular physical exercise at home.
- Do regular relaxation/meditation exercises
- Take a balanced diet.
- Maintain daily routine during waking hours.
- Include indoor recreational activities to daily practice
- Read inspirational books (including religious books and biographies of people who have endured tough times), watch inspirational movies, talk over phone or video chat with people who have positive outlook about life even in these difficult times.

Seek online support and teletherapy:

To limit the spread of SARS-CoV-2, which is the virus that causes COVID-19, people may choose teletherapy online or over the phone with a clinical psychologist to deal with OCD and related co-morbidities.

Researchers have found that online modes of psychotherapy including (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, CBT), (Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, ACT), Dialectical Behavior Therapy, DBT) etc. can be effective for people with OCD, and it allows more people to access help.

Researchers have reported that online/over phone psychotherapy can be a viable therapeutic choice for OCD, enabling people to learn various skills and techniques to deal with their OCD from the comfort of their own homes.

Conclusion:

Covid-19 pandemic has put a lot of challenges on humanity and almost all the areas of being human have got affected, most importantly mental health. While we are trying to deal with challenges in terms of infrastructure and medical facilities to those who are suffering because of Covid-19 infection, we should not ignore the mental health needs of people who have developed symptoms of various mental illnesses in post Covid-19 era or who were already battling with mental health issues such as OCD before the Covid-19 pandemics.

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

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Coping During COVID-19

Optimists tend to live longer, healthier and less stressful lives than their pessimistic peers. In addition, an optimistic outlook encourages persistence which often leads to a successful outcome. Positive thinking doesn't mean you're in denial about the reality of a situation

As the coronavirus health crisis continues to affect our daily lives, many of us are struggling to find a silver lining. The daily headlines can feel heavy and social distancing continues to be the norm. If you're searching for ways to stay optimistic during this uncertain time, you're not alone.

Studies show there are many benefits to optimism. Optimists tend to live longer, healthier and less stressful lives than their pessimistic peers. In addition, an optimistic outlook encourages persistence which often leads to a successful outcome. Positive thinking doesn't mean you're in denial about the reality of a situation. It's a tool that helps you face challenges, focusing on solutions instead of becoming overwhelmed by fear or hopelessness.

Ten Tips for Staying Optimistic

Make up mantras. You are not alone. We're all in this together. These aren't just snappy sayings for t-shirts, they're positive affirmations that can be a powerful tool in helping to shape your outlook. Pick one that resonates with you and repeat it often.

Focus on successes. Remembering challenges you have overcome in the past can help inspire you to face future roadblocks. Tough times can become learning opportunities.

Challenge your negative thoughts.



We can't always choose what happens to us, but we can choose the way we respond to it. Reframe the situation and see what possible positive outcomes there are. For example, being "stuck at home with nothing to do" can be reframed as being "safe at home with an opportunity to connect with my family."

Cultivate an attitude of gratitude. Start or end your day with a gratitude practice. Write down three things you are

grateful for each day, or partner with a loved one and share them out loud. Gratitude trains your brain to see the positive.

Stay in the present moment. It's easy to get caught in a spiral of anxious thoughts about the future. We all want to know when this will end. If you find yourself stuck in this negative pattern, try this simple exercise to bring yourself back to the present moment.

Let it go. Similarly, staying in the

present moment can keep you from unnecessarily ruminating on the past. Traumatic events and other circumstances require appropriate support, time and attention to heal, but give yourself grace for minor mistakes or imperfect plans.

Connect with positive people. Social connection contributes to happiness and is strongly correlated with optimism. Seek out the company of people that make you feel good and fuel your positive energy. Likewise, limit interactions with those who leave you feeling drained or pessimistic.

Pay it forward. Performing acts of random kindness for others is a great way to boost your happiness. In addition, those you help and even those who simply witness your kind gestures will also benefit.

Do it for your family. Optimism can be a learned behavior and is a teachable skill. Give your family the many benefits of optimism by setting an example for them to follow.

Practice makes progress. Of course, all new habits take time and continuous practice before they become automatic. Make the choice to be more optimistic each day and enjoy the rewards of your improved outlook.

KVC Health Systems

Report highlights nature-based solutions to mitigate climate change

Agencies

A new report highlights planting urban trees, increasing community green spaces, utilising brownfield sites and building sustainable drainage systems as effective nature-based solutions in cities to improve wellbeing, bring economic benefit, increase biodiversity and fight climate change.

These conclusions, released today (29 April), form part of the Nature-based Solutions report produced by the British Ecological Society which will be published in full on the 12th May. The report will offer, for the first time, a complete assessment of the potential of nature-based solutions to mitigate climate change and benefit biodiversity in the UK.

Our cities and towns may not seem an obvious place to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss. But the high concentration of people mean that nature-based solutions can have significant and direct impacts on people's lives.

Professor Marc Cadotte of University of Toronto-Scarborough and lead author of the built environment chapter of the report said: "Cities are a place where most people interact with nature so improving this environment with nature-based solutions makes a lot of sense. Any space, no matter how small, has value and can have a major contribution to environmental wellbeing.

"The multiple benefits that nature-based solutions bring to cities are inseparable from each other. For example, a project to improve biodiversity in a park will also directly benefit local people, providing access to nature and the wellbeing benefits associated with that."

A key message from the authors' assessment of all the evidence is that there is no single nature-based solution that should be applied to cities. Multiple approaches are needed across different contexts and these need to be diverse, multifaceted and inclusive.

Professor Cadotte added "The implementation of nature-based solutions in cit-

ies is inherently complex and at odds with siloed governance structures. Unified top-level vision is needed to coordinate nature-based solutions across disparate agencies in urban areas, such as parks, construction and sewerage."

Examples of nature-based solutions

The report reviews a wide range of evidence to highlight several ways nature-based solutions can be used to tackle the sustainability and resilience challenges our cities face, such as air pollution, rising temperatures, flood risk and a disconnect with the natural world.

Storing carbon

The report finds that urban areas have substantial potential for carbon capture. One case featured in the report found that despite the city Leicester covering 0.03% of Britain's land area, it accounts for approximately 0.2% of Britain's aboveground carbon store, with over 97% of this is attributable to trees.

Urban soils can also act as an important carbon sink if managed correctly. The retention of fine material derived from demolition on urban brownfield land can result in carbon sequestration. Providing a source of calcium, in the form of crushed concrete or other sources to just 1% of the UK's urban and suburban soils could remove up to 1 million tonnes of carbon dioxide annually.

Providing shade

Planting urban trees can also help cool cities and mitigate air pollution. UK cities already experience average day and night temperatures of 1 to 3°C warmer than surrounding natural and agricultural areas. Urban temperatures and the frequency of extreme heatwaves in the UK are predicted to increase.

Nature-based solutions such as planting street trees and green roofs can reduce urban temperatures through shading and the movement of water to the air (termed evapotranspiration). In Greater London, current

greenspace reduces temperatures by over 0.5°C on clear, still and warm nights.

Removing particulates

40,000 premature deaths each year are attributable to exposure to outdoor air pollution in the UK, and cities are focal points for the production of these pollutants. The report details how urban trees and other vegetation can both sequester carbon dioxide and intercept airborne particulate matter (PM) and other aerial emissions. Modelling in Glasgow has shown that current tree cover in the city removes 3% of the primary particulate matter.

Reducing flood risk while benefiting biodiversity

Storms and the severe flooding they cause are predicted to become more frequent. Sustainable drainage systems which include wetlands, swales and rain gardens can be combined with green roofs, urban forests and meadows to reduce flood surges and move water safely.

Study defines how philosophy can change the understanding of pain

Agencies

Researchers have investigated how philosophical approaches can be used to think in new ways about pain and its management. The researchers advocate not merely reducing chronic pain management to searching and treating underlying physical changes but instead adopting an approach that focuses on the person as a whole.

Dr Sabrina Coninx from Ruhr-Universität Bochum and Dr Peter Stilwell from McGill University, Canada, have investigated how philosophical approaches can be used to think in new ways about pain and its management. The researchers advocate not merely reducing chronic pain management to searching and treating underlying physical changes but instead adopting an approach that focuses on the person as a whole.

Their work was published online in the journal 'Synthese'.

It is not currently possible to

treat chronic pain effectively in many cases. This has encouraged researchers from various disciplines to consider new approaches to pain and its management over recent years. "Pain research and clinical practice do not take place in a vacuum, but instead involve implicit assumptions regarding what pain is and how it can be treated," says Sabrina Coninx, research assistant at the Bochum research training group Situated Cognition. "Our aim is to shed light on these assumptions and discover how we can think in new ways about pain and its management with the help of philosophical approaches." In their work, the authors develop a holistic, integrative and action-oriented approach.

Viewing patients as a whole

In specific terms, they suggest three things: firstly, addressing pain should involve more than just looking for and treating underlying physiological changes. A holistic approach places the focus

on patients as a whole and creates space for their experiences, concerns, expectations and narratives. The influence of socio-cultural practices in the generation of chronic pain should also be taken into account. For example, pain patients are often initially encouraged to protect themselves from injury and avoid activity, which may be helpful in the beginning but can contribute to chronification in the long run.

Secondly, according to the researchers, chronic pain should be understood as a dynamic process in which many different factors interact in a non-linear way. The initial cause of pain, for instance, is not necessarily the cause of its chronification and also does not need to be the most crucial factor in treatment. The complex interaction of subjective experience, expectations, learned behavioural patterns, neural reorganisation, stigmatisation and other factors, therefore, needs to be considered.



Government of Jammu & Kashmir
SKIMS MEDICAL COLLEGE-HOSPITAL
Bemina, Srinagar Kashmir – 190018
Department of Materials Management
0194-2493226, mmo@skimsmc.edu.in

e-NIT No. SKIMS MCH- MMD - 01 of 2021 **Dated: 28/04/2021**

Abbreviated Notice Inviting e-Tenders for Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning (SITC) of Operating Microscope for Spine Surgeries in the Department of Orthopaedics, SKIMS Medical College-Hospital, Bemina, Srinagar.

On behalf of the Lieutenant Governor of Union Territory of J&K through Principal SKIMS Medical College-Hospital Bemina Srinagar, e-tenders are invited from the original manufacturers/their Indian subsidiaries/Indian Agents on the authorization of Principal Manufacturers /Indian Subsidiary if 100% subsidiary of Foreign Principals (for imported equipment) and manufacturers /their authorized dealers for the U.T of J&K (for indigenous equipment) for supply, installation, testing & commissioning of **Operating Microscope for Spine Surgeries in the Department of Orthopaedics**, SKIMS Medical College-Hospital, Bemina, Srinagar.

S.No.	Item Description	Qty	Tender fee	E.M.D
01.	Operating Microscope for Spine Surgeries in Orthopaedics Department	01 No.	Rs. 3,000.00	Rs.4,00,000.00

The detailed tender document is available on www.jktenders.gov.in. The tender document is also available on the websites of SKIMS MCH Bemina and SKIMS Soura i.e., www.skimsmc.edu.in and www.skims.ac.in respectively.

The e-NIT schedule is as per following:

Last date for entertaining any clarification	17/05/2021
Last date for submission of online bids	19/05/2021
Opening of Technical bids on	22/05/2021 at 02:30 PM

Complete bidding process will be online on e-tendering portal www.jktenders.gov.in & the tenders should be submitted strictly in accordance with the provisions of the detailed e-NIT.

No Proposal will be accepted in Physical Form.

Sd/-
Materials Management Officer
(SKIMS MCH Bemina)

No: SKIMS/MCH/MMD/eNIT/S-401/19-20/1338-46
Dated: 28/04/2021
(Not to be published)

DIPK-NB-558/21

Public Notice

I want to renew my fertilizer license bearing No CAOBF/FL/2014-15/1149 located at Nowpora Kalan Sopore Near G.M.E.T College Nowpora . If anybody having any objection in this regard hes/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Chief Agricultrual Officer Sopore within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Zahid Sharif S/O Mohd Dilawar Dar
R/o Nowpora Kalan Sopore ams

Office Of The Assistant Regional Transport Officer Baramulla Notice

Where as an application for transfer of ownership has been received from Imtiyaz Ahamd S/O Mohammad Latif R/O Chakra Uri (Transferor) of Car bearing registration No. DL8CAA-4167 chasis No: MALAM51BLCMI225 Engine No: G4HGCM 454905 Model 2012 in favour of Imtiyaz Ahmad S/O Mohammad Latif (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 332

Sd/-
Assistant Regional Transport Office,
Baramulla

Dated: 28/04/2021
FKO

Public Notice

My name has been wrongly written in my Passport Bearing No: N8930086 as Nasir Shafi Kar S/O Mohammad Shafi Kar R/O Nigeen Bagh Sopore While my correct name is Nasir Shafi S/o Mohammad Shafi Kar R/O Nigeen Bagh krankshivan colony sopore Sopore which needs immediate correction. If anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the concerned office within a period of 3 days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Nasir Shafi S/o Mohammad Shafi Kar
R/O Nigeen Bagh krankshivan colony sopore Sopore lc

Public Notice

My name has been wrongly written in my Passport Bearing No: N6278411 as Amin Shfi Kar S/O Mohamed Shafi Kar R/O Nigeen Bagh Sopore While my correct name is Amin Shafi S/o Mohammad Shafi Kar R/O Nigeen Bagh Sopore which needs immediate correction. If anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the concerned office within a period of 3 days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Amin Shafi
S/o Mohammad Shafi Kar
R/O Nigeen Bagh Sopore lc

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, CONSTRUCTION DIVISION 2ND, J&K SIDCO, HAFT CIINAR, SRINAGAR

No. SIDCO/Const/Div/II/15/44/107
Dated-27-04-2021

M/s Vivek Associates,
Shakarpur, Delhi

Subject:- Construction of 500 KLD (expandable) CETP at I/C Khunmoh, J&K State in favour of M/s Vivek Associates, Shakarpur, Delhi

Ref:-

Letter from Executive Engineer, Constt. Div. 2nd to the agency vide No. No. SIDCO/Const/Div/II/191-93 Dated-25-03-2021 to complete the work within 15 days.

For the information as per agreement made by you with the Corporation for the above noted work the said job was to be completed within a period of 12 months after reckoning the date of start of work as on 19-10-2016.

After hectic efforts of the Corporation you were supposed to complete the balance work by Mar 2018, but as of date after serving several letters to you you failed to deliver. You had assured the work shall be taken on priority and no delay shall be made now and you will not leave the work unattended. You are not mending your ways and means of contractual obligations. You have ditched the organization which tantamount to cheating and treachery to the department.

Now you are directed to complete the balance work within a period of 7 days otherwise the said contract shall be put to foreclosure. And the pending/balance . works shall be completed departmentally or put to tenders at your risk and cost.

This may be treated as final and last notice.

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, CONSTRUCTION DIVISION 2ND,
J&K SIDCO, HAFT CIINAR, SRINAGAR

DIPK-NB-507/21

General Manager Estates Special Sub-Division, JKPDC Srinagar

^{3rd} EXTENSION NOTICE

Of
E-NIT NO: -06 of 2020-2021 Dated: -06-03-2021

Due to poor or no response, the timelines for submission of bids for the tender E-NIT NO: -06 of 2020-2021 Dated: -06-03-2021 for the works depicted at S.No.1 & 5 bearing tender id 2021_SPDC_11219_1 & 2021_SPDC_11929_1 hosted on <http://www.jktenders.gov.in>, are extended as per the following details:-

S.No.	Particulars	Date	Time
	Bid documents submission end date	10-05-2021	1200 Hrs.
	Technical Bid Opening Date	12-05-2021	1200 Hrs.
	Financial Bid Opening Date	The Date and Time of Opening of Price Bids Shall be Intimated to the Technically Qualified bidder later on.	

1. All other terms & conditions would remain same.

Sd/-
General Manager
Estates Special Sub-Division,
JKPDC Srinagar

No: - JKPDC/ 123-129
Dated:-27-04-2021

DIPK-NB-510/21

Chief Medical Officer
Ganderbal

No. DRHS/NHM/GBL/21/276-81
Dated:-28-04-2021

DIPK-1080/21

Amid Covid Chaos And Protests, India's Farmers Eye Record Wheat Crop



While India battles soaring Covid-19 infections, on the outskirts of New Delhi thousands of farmers still occupy camps where they are keeping up a months-long sit-in protest against government legislation that they say harms them.

Underlining the organised nature of the movement as it tries to force Prime Minister Narendra Modi to revoke reforms aimed at making agriculture more efficient, farmers are being ferried to and from villages in order to harvest this year's wheat crop.

The logistical feat is working, at least from the farmers' point of view. They are on track to gather a record 109 million tonnes this year, posing more headaches for a government that some experts say underestimated the strength of rural anger.

To appease protesters, the state grain purchaser is likely to have to procure large quantities of wheat at guaranteed prices, trade sources said, eating into the budget and bloating already high stock levels.

"The government perhaps believed that the agitation would fizzle out as farmers left for harvesting, but they have come up with a smart strategy," said Devinder Shar-

ma, an independent farm and food policy expert.

"I think they are here for a long haul."

A senior official involved in agricultural policymaking said the government had held several rounds of talks with farmers.

"The government is keen to sit with the farmers and address their grievances, but the farmers also need to come with an open mind," said the official, who did not want to be named as he is not authorised to talk to the media.

Protest leader Amreek Singh has no doubt that protests can last as long as is necessary.

Referring to a stack of thick, beige-coloured registers, he explained how the number of demonstrators at his site had remained constant despite the departure of farmers to the village of Shahjanpur in grain-growing Haryana state.

Volunteers have prepared village rosters to ensure that every time a group of farmers goes to harvest the wheat crop, a group of similar size joins the protests, Singh told Reuters at Singhu, one of three protest camps on the outskirts of the capital.

Singh said there was a similar arrangement for Punjab and Uttar Pradesh states, also part of India's grain belt.

At Singhu, organisers have pitched white tents and thatched cottages to house protesters over the summer, and communal kitchens have started stocking up traditional Indian syrups to help farmers stay hydrated.

One of the farmers on Singh's roster is Rajendra Beniwal, who travelled to Shahjanpur, some 100 km (65 miles) north of Delhi, in mid-April to take part in the harvest. He aims to return to the protests as soon as the job is done. **REUTERS**

Banking Is An Essential Service; Allow Covid-19 Vaccinations For Bankers On Priority: ICICI Bank

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI: ICICI Bank on Thursday said it is "much better" prepared to restrict the impact of the second coronavirus wave on its operations because of last year's experience but appealed for banks' employees to be allowed to take vaccinations on a priority basis as they are rendering an essential service.

The second largest lender warned that if banking services were to fail, it can have an adverse impact on the economic activity, and hence it is pertinent for ensuring that at least the branch staff is allowed to take vaccinations.

The comments come at a time when localised lockdowns are being announced across many pockets of the country in view of the rising COVID infections, which are breaching the 3 lakh mark daily and also resulting in over 2,000 officially counted deaths.

"We are an essential services we are all exposed (to customers). We don't have the luxury. But we are not allowed vaccinations, not allowed to board trains, not allowed to board buses. So, what kind of essential services we are?



More push should be there," its executive director Anup Bagchi told reporters.

He warned that if banking operations get affected, we may have to face an economic crisis as well after the ongoing health crisis, and cited the case of a single automated teller machine shutting down for seven days to illustrate his point.

There is a case for "higher sensitivity" when classifying essential services, Bagchi said, stressing that there are other essential services also and bankers exposed to customers in branches should be allowed to vaccinate because they are exposed to walking-in customers.

Starting May 1, the central government has allowed every adult the chance to get vaccinated.

However, concerns are being raised about the efficacy of such a move because of lack of vaccine stocks. **PTI**

India's Unemployment Rate May Rise To 8% In April: CMIE



NEW DELHI: As states go into lockdowns and impose restrictions amid the second wave of Covid-19, the unemployment rate in April is likely to increase to nearly 8 per cent from 6.5 per cent in March, according to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE).

CMIE's CEO Mahesh Vyas said that fast frequency labour statistics indicate that labour market conditions have been deteriorating in April 2021.

"The labour participation rate (LPR) looks unlikely to fall in April. The 30-day moving average LPR indicates that the ratio was rising till April 15 when it peaked at 40.8 per cent. Then it

started falling, but it is unlikely to fall to a level lower than that of March 2021," he said.

Unless there is an unusual bounce in the last week, the April LPR is likely to stabilise at its March level of 40.2 per cent, as per CMIE.

"The April markets seem incapable of absorbing the supply of labour at an LPR of 40.2 per cent. While the LPR has declined in the last four weeks, the unemployment rate has increased," Vyas said.

In the last week of March, the LPR was 41.2 per cent and the unemployment rate was 6.7 per cent. In the following week which ended on April 4, the LPR was stable at 41.2 but the unemployment

rate shot up to 8.2 per cent.

Labour retreated in the next week as the LPR dropped to 40.1 per cent in the week ended April 11. Yet, the unemployment rate was unrelenting as it inched up to 8.6 per cent. In the following two weeks, the unemployment rate has dropped first to 8.4 per cent and then to 7.4 per cent.

"Nevertheless, the unemployment rate during the month of April is likely to be close to 8 per cent after closing March at 6.5 per cent," he said.

April could be the third consecutive month of deterioration in terms of the most important fast-frequency labour statistic, the employment rate, he added. **IANS**

Worker Optimism Shaken Due To Covid-19; Future Outlook Positive In India: Survey

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI: Financial and job security among workers in India has been shaken in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, but the outlook remains broadly positive, according to a survey.

According to ADP Research Institute's People at Work 2021: A Global Workforce View, almost 95 per cent of workers in India have felt concerns over their financial or job security during the pandemic.

Yet, around the same number say they feel optimistic about the next five years in the workplace.

ADP Research Institute surveyed 32,471 workers in 17 countries around the world between November 17 and December 11, 2020.

The survey further noted that 86 per cent respondents report having been impacted professionally in some way due to COVID-19.

Of these impacts, half of the respondents (50 per cent) either lost a job, were furloughed or were temporarily laid off by their employer.

Almost a third took a pay cut (30 per cent), while a quarter (25 per cent) reduced their hours or responsibilities, it said.



ADP President (Asia Pacific) Peter Hadley said, "In a year when many businesses have had to shut temporarily or permanently, or significantly alter their operations, the effects of the disruption and uncertainty on the workforce have been profound."

Hadley further said that the challenge now for employers and HR teams is to find ways to harness the positives while, as far as possible, alleviating the negatives to ensure that staff stay upbeat and motivated.

Workers are more inclined to think that COVID-19 will have a positive rather than negative impact on issues such as obtaining greater flexibility and developing their skills.

"Although many people have been hard hit professionally, there's a sense that what has been an extremely dark cloud could have a silver lining in various ways when it comes to the world of work."

"Particularly in terms of accelerating the shift towards flexible working patterns or enabling workers to develop new skills....," Hadley said.

As per the survey, the respondents said if they were to lose their job, two-thirds of the workers surveyed were extremely or very confident that they could find another job offering the same job satisfaction (68 per cent), flexibility (65 per cent) or better pay (65 per cent) as their current one.

Govt Proposes New Re-Registration Norms For Vehicles Moving To Other State

NEW DELHI: The road transport ministry has proposed new draft rules that will make it much easier for defence personnel, government employees and others shifting from one state to another to re-register their vehicles.

In a statement, the ministry said it is proposing a new system of vehicle registration, wherein allocation would be marked as "IN" series and this will be on pilot test mode.

"This vehicle registration facility under 'IN series' will be available to Defence personnel, employees of Central Government, State Governments, Central/State PSUs and private sector companies/organisations, which have their offices in five or more States/Union Territories."

"The motor vehicle tax will be levied for two years or in multiple of two," it said.

According to the statement, this scheme will facilitate free movement of personal vehicles across any state in the country



upon relocation to a new state.

Station relocation occurs with both, government and private sector employees and such movements create a sense of unease in the minds of employees with regard to the transfer of registration from the parent state to another state.

The step comes in the context of several citizen-centric steps and an IT-based solution for vehicle registration taken by the government.

The draft rules have been placed on the website of the ministry for stakeholders' comments. **PTI**

Unilever Plans \$3.6 Billion Buyback As China And Home Cooks Boost Growth



"Unilever price movement is typically in the 1-3 per cent range historically, and that is where we expect to be this year," Chief Executive Alan Jope told journalists, after the company raised prices by 1% in the first quarter.

Food Leads The Way

Unilever, which makes about 60 per cent of revenues in emerging markets, said underlying sales growth there reached 9.4 per cent in the quarter, led by double-digit increases in China and India following strict lockdowns the previous year.

Pitkethly said easier comparables than last year, a return of sales to cafes and restaurants in places like China, and U.S. retailer restocking of high-end beauty products underpinned its confidence for the rest of the year.

Underlying sales in the group's food and refreshments business, whose brands include Hellmann's mayonnaise and Knorr soups, jumped 9.8 per cent in the quarter, helped by strong demand for home consumption in North America and Europe.

The company noted the devastating surge in COVID-19 infections sweeping India, another key market, but said it was not seeing any material impact on its business from that so far. "We're looking forward to continued growth in Q2," Jope said, pointing to the group's success in digitised ordering, increasing manufacturing capacity and bringing more inventory close to retail.

Unilever also said it was making good progress in separating its slower-growth Elida beauty and tea businesses, which could lead to sales or spin-offs. Elida beauty will consist of brands predominantly sold in Europe and North America, including Q-Tips, Caress, Tigi, Timotei, Impulse and MonSavon, which together generated revenues of around 600 million euros in 2020, the company said. **REUTERS**

Unilever announced a 3 billion euro (\$3.6 billion) share buyback and said it was confident of hitting sales targets this year, after demand from home cooks and China helped it to beat first-quarter sales expectations. Shares in the maker of Dove soap and Ben and Jerry's ice cream climbed as much as four per cent on Thursday, after it joined rivals such as Nestle and Procter & Gamble in reporting strong sales of food and cleaning products respectively in the pandemic.

Underlying sales jumped 5.7 per cent in the three months to the end of March, topping analysts' average forecast of 3.9 per cent, according to a company supplied consensus. "These are encouraging numbers," said Steve Clayton, portfolio manager of Hargreaves Lansdown's Select UK Shares funds. "Unilever gains much of its strength through the group's diversity."

The company said it was confident of delivering full-year underlying sales growth within its mid-term target range of 3-5 per cent, with the first half around the top of the range.

It also forecast a slight increase in underlying operating margin this year, despite double-digit inflation on some raw materials, such as soybean oil and tea. Like several rivals, Unilever said it would need to raise prices to mitigate the impact.

SHORT TAKES

Rahul Bajaj Steps Down As Group Chairman, Niraj To Take Over

After 49 years of helming Bajaj Auto, Rahul Bajaj announced his resignation as chairman of the company on Thursday, announcing that he would take up the role of chairman emeritus from May 1.

Niraj Bajaj, a director on the company's board, will take over as non-executive chairman.

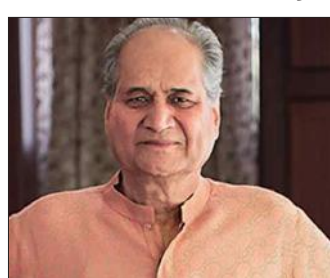
"Shri Rahul Bajaj NSE 3.86 % has made a huge contribution to the success of the company and the group over the last five decades," read a stock exchange notice from Bajaj Auto.

"Considering his tremendous experience and in the interest of the company and to continue to benefit from his experience, knowledge and wisdom from time to time in an advisory role and as a mentor, the board of directors at its meeting held today...approved the appointment of Shri Rahul Bajaj as Chairman Emeritus of the Company for a term of five years with effect from May 1, 2021," the note read.

The company on Thursday reported a 15 per cent rise in consolidated net profit to Rs 1,551 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 2021 on the back of robust sales across domestic and international markets.

The Pune-based company had posted a net profit of Rs 1,354 crore in the January-March quarter of 2019-20. Total revenue from operations rose 26 per cent to Rs 8,596 crore in the fourth quarter, from Rs 6,816 crore in the same period of FY20, Bajaj Auto said in a regulatory filing.

During the period under review, the company sold a total of 11,69,664 two-wheelers and commercial vehicles, up 18 per cent



compared to 9,91,961 units in the January-March quarter of the preceding fiscal, it added.

For the entire 2020-21, the company posted a consolidated net profit of Rs 4,857 crore, down 7 per cent compared to Rs 5,212 crore in 2019-20.

The company's total revenue from operations declined to Rs 27,741.08 crore in the last fiscal as against Rs 29,918.65 crore in 2019-20.

Bajaj said it has sold a total of 39,72,914 units in FY21 as compared with 46,15,212 units in FY20, a drop of 14 per cent.

The company noted that the full-year numbers were not comparable as the first quarter of FY21 was an absolute washout due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The two-wheeler maker said its board has also approved a dividend of Rs 140 per equity share (1,400 per cent) subject to the approval of shareholders.

Total payout towards dividend would amount to Rs 4,051 crore, it added.

Bajaj noted that as of March 31, 2021, its surplus cash and cash equivalents stood at Rs 17,689 crore as against Rs 14,322 crore on March 31, 2020.

With inputs from PTI

SBI Board Approves Raising Up To \$2 Bn



NEW DELHI: The country's largest lender, SBI, said its central Board in its meeting held on Wednesday has approved raising up to \$2 billion through bonds in the current financial year.

The Executive Committee of the Central Board in its meeting on April, 28, 2021 has approved long-term fund raising in single/multiple tranches of up to \$2 billion, SBI said in a regulatory filing. The funds are to be raised through a public offer and/or private placement of senior unsecured notes in US dollar or any other convertible currency during financial year 2021-22, SBI said. — **PTI**

Coca Cola Pledges Rs 50 Crore Towards Facilitating Covid Vaccination, Providing Safety Kits In India

NEW DELHI: Beverage maker Coca Cola India on Thursday committed Rs 50 crore funds towards facilitating COVID-19 vaccination, providing safety kits among others, that will benefit 10 lakh people.

"As efforts accelerate nationwide to provide relief from the devastation of the second wave of the coronavirus, Coca-Cola in India has committed Rs 50 crore to augment the nation's effort in combating the crisis and containing the spread of the pandemic," the company said in a statement.

The initial contribution of Rs 50 crore is towards facilitating COVID vaccination, providing safety kits, creating awareness, and distributing beverages to the country's front line, to positively impact over 10 lakh Indians, it said.

To stand in support of the COVID-19 pandemic, the company has created a special Stop the Spread fund worldwide.

This fund will be channelised towards facilitating vaccine distribution, COVID safety kits (PPE - masks, gloves, sanitizer) and creating awareness around vaccination and sanitary practices to contain the spread of pandemic, it added. — **PTI**

India receives more medical supplies from international community

AGENCEIS

NEW DELHI: More medical supplies from the international community arrived in India on Thursday as the country battles a devastating second wave of coronavirus pandemic that has stretched its healthcare infrastructure to its limit amid surging cases.

Early morning, Russia delivered 20 tonnes of supplies mainly comprising oxygen concentrators, ventilators and medicines.

The medical supplies were brought to Delhi in two transport aircraft operated by Russia's EMERCOM, a state-run agency overseeing civil emergency services.

"Two urgent flights operated by the Russian EMERCOM arrived today which brought a cargo with a total weight of 20 tonnes. These are oxygen concentrators, lung ventilation equipment, monitors, medicines, including coronavirus, and other essential pharmaceutical items," Russian Ambassador Nikolay Kudashev said.

He said the joint fight against the coronavirus pandemic is one of the most important areas of cooperation between the two countries at present.

"It also includes the forthcoming deliveries of the Sputnik V vaccine starting May 2021 and

the subsequent facilitation of its production in India," he said.

"Russia is closely watching the situation in India, which is becoming more and more alarming with unprecedented spread of the coronavirus infection. We sincerely empathise with the Indian people," he said in a statement released by the embassy.

A consignment of 120 oxygen concentrators also arrived early this morning from the UK.

The United Arab Emirates too delivered a consignment of medical supplies that included 157 ventilators and 480 BiPAP (bi-level positive airway pressure) machines among others.

The Romanian embassy said an aircraft carrying 80 oxygen concentrators, 75 oxygen cylinders and 20 high flow oxygen therapy equipment took off in the afternoon of Wednesday from Bucharest and will arrive tonight in Delhi.

"The medical field is one of the main domains of cooperation, with special relevance in moments of crisis, as the one we are facing now," said Romanian Ambassador to India Daniela Sezonov Tane.

"Our solidarity manifested during this unprecedented critical moment for the Indian people represents another confirmation for Romania's engagement in strengthening

and extending our relation with India - a key partner for Romania and the European Union in the Indo-Pacific region," she added.

At a media briefing, Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla said three special flights from the US are expected to bring large medical supplies including oxygen generating equipment and oxygen concentrators.

Two flights are expected to arrive on Friday while the third one is set to come on May 3.

In a release, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) said it is rapidly mobilising assistance to save lives, stop the spread of COVID-19, and meet the urgent health needs of the Indian people.

"Today, the United States deployed the first of several emergency COVID-19 relief shipments to India. Arriving in New Delhi from Travis Air Force base on the world's largest military aircraft, the shipment includes 440 oxygen cylinders and regulators, generously donated by the State of California," it said.

"In addition, on this first flight, USAID will send 960,000 Rapid Diagnostic Tests to identify infections early to help prevent the community spread of COVID-19, and 100,000 N95 masks to protect India's frontline healthcare heroes," it said.

Agenceis

NEW DELHI: The Centre directed the states and Union territories on Thursday to go for intensive and local containment measures in districts with a high number of COVID-19 cases to check the spread of the viral disease.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), however, did not mention anything about the imposition of a lockdown anywhere in the country in the fresh guidelines issued in view of the pandemic for May.

It told the states to take necessary action to ensure sufficient oxygen-supported beds, ICU beds, ventilators, ambulances, including creation of makeshift hospitals.

The fresh guidelines for COVID-19 management came amid a sudden spike in the number of cases and a shortage of beds, ICUs and oxygen in some parts of the country like Delhi.

The MHA asked the states to identify the districts where either the COVID positivity rate was more than 10 per cent or the bed occupancy was over 60 per cent in the last one week. The districts fulfilling any of the above two criteria should be considered for intensive and local containment measures, the MHA said in a statement.

The implementation framework for community containment areas and large containment areas, as advised by the health ministry, has also been enclosed with the MHA order.

The MHA also asked the

states to consider the containment measures, as conveyed in an advisory issued by the health ministry on April 25 for immediate implementation based on an assessment of the situation.

The national directives for COVID-19 management shall continue to be strictly followed throughout the country, the statement said.

The MHA order shall be effective till May 31.

With a record single-day rise of 3,79,257 cases, India's COVID-19 tally has climbed to 1,83,76,524, while the number of active cases has crossed the 30-lakh mark, the health ministry said on Thursday.

The death toll due to the viral disease has gone up to 2,04,832 with a record 3,645 daily new fatalities, the ministry's data updated at 8 am showed.

The home ministry said the focus will be on containment to flatten the current curve of the pandemic.

Movement of individuals shall be strictly prohibited during the night hours, except for essential activities, in areas where the number of cases is high.

Social, political, sports, entertainment, academic, cultural, religious, festival related and other gatherings and congregations have been prohibited.

Marriages will be attended by up to 50 people and funerals by up to 20.

Shopping complexes, cinema halls, restaurants, bars, sports complexes, gymnasiums, spas, swimming pools and religious

places will remain closed.

Essential services and activities such as healthcare services, police, fire, banks, electricity, water and sanitation, regulated movement of public transport including all incidental services and activities needed for a smooth functioning of these activities shall continue.

Such services shall continue in both the public and the private sector.

Public transports like trains, metro, buses and taxis will operate at a maximum capacity of 50 per cent.

There shall be no restrictions on inter-state and intra-state movement, including transportation of essential goods.

All offices, both government and private, will function with a maximum of 50-per cent staff strength.

All industrial and scientific establishments may be allowed to operate subject to the workforce following the physical-distancing norms.

Referring to testing and surveillance, the guidelines said the districts will continue with the "Test-Track-Treat-Vaccinate" strategy and ensure COVID-appropriate behaviour.

The MHA said an analysis should be undertaken with respect to the requirement of health infrastructure so as to manage the present and projected cases (next one month) and necessary action initiated to ensure sufficient oxygen beds, ICU beds, ventilators, ambulances including creation of

makeshift hospitals, as needed. Sufficient quarantine facilities shall also be re-activated.

The states should leverage the government and private health facilities, including the hospitals available with the central ministries, railway coaches, temporary field hospitals etc.

They should ensure that only those satisfying the protocol for home isolation are allowed under home isolation and create a mechanism for their monitoring through call centres, along with regular visits by surveillance teams. Specific monitoring shall be done for the high-risk cases and their timely shifting to a health facility.

Similarly, the elderly and comorbid contacts of the positive cases shall be shifted to quarantine centres and monitored.

The states should also ensure availability of sufficient ambulances for the purpose and coordinate the availability of oxygen, other related logistics, drugs etc.

Oxygen therapy for the admitted cases shall follow the guidelines issued by the health ministry on a rational use of oxygen.

Use of investigative drugs (Remdesivir, Tocilizumab etc.) shall also strictly follow the clinical management protocol and the advisories issued by the health ministry.

The states should ensure 100 per cent vaccination for the eligible age-groups. Details of hospital beds and their vacancy status should be made available online and also released to the media on a daily basis.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

26 Die, 3474

1024 infections were confirmed positive from Jammu Division, thus taking the total number of people infected by the virus in Union Territory to 172551.

Providing district wise details, they said, Srinagar reported 1017 cases, Baramulla 429, Budgam 268, Pulwama 137, Kupwara 71, Anantnag 228, Bandipora 51, Ganderbal 57, Kulgam 181, Shopian 11, Jammu 489, Udhampur 128, Rajouri 111, Doda 48, Kathua 58, Samba 77, Kishtwar 21, Poonch 32, Ramban 17 and Reasi 43.

Moreover, they said, 1617 more patients have recovered—710 from Jammu Division and 907 from Kashmir Valley. There are 26144 active positive cases in J&K, 9815 in Jammu and 16329 in the Valley.

Govt Equipped

through virtual mode, the LG said that the UT administration was equipped to deal with the emerging situation, an official spokesperson said. The LG said that one crore twenty lakh doses are ordered for vaccination of 18 to 45 age-group while many oxygen generation plants have become operational and remaining will also start functioning soon.

"The availability of oxygen is more than double the requirement. We have 54,500 cubic metres of oxygen against the present consumption i.e 25,000 cubic metres, besides 15,000 cubic metres more will be added to the count in coming days," Sinha said, as per official spokesperson.

Emphasizing on dissemination of information with regard to the Covid pandemic, the LG, he said, asked the IRCS and its volunteers to make people aware about all the Do's and Don'ts of Covid. He further said that there were many out there who are propagating misinformation among the people, which needs to be countered with facts.

"Use various media of communication and rope in religious leaders, health workers to spread awareness among people in their local languages. Create JK Covid care groups; besides inform people about expert opinions, usage of double face masks & hand sanitizers. IRCS Volunteers can provide details regarding vaccination, SoPs, precautionary measures, Covid Helpline numbers, home isolation etc, and encourage them to stay at home, and worship at home," the LG said, as per the official spokesperson.

Sinha, he said, also acknowledged the significant role played by Indian Red Cross Society, and lauded the volunteers for their selflessness and dedicated service towards public. He called upon them to renew their commitment and determination in complementing Government's efforts to speed up the vaccination drive and tackle the challenges of Covid pandemic.

"With the collaborative efforts, we can contribute and play our part in helping those affected during the pandemic," the LG said.

In the wake of second wave of coronavirus, the LG, as per the official spokesperson asked the IRCS to carry on their humanitarian activities and reach out to people, especially those living in remote and far flung areas, and help the administration in providing food, medical assistance and other essential items to the needy.

"Having a strong team of volunteers in all 20 districts of the Union Territory, the Red Cross volunteers delivered food, medicines, and clothes to at least 30,000 families across J&K during the COVID-19 pandemic last year, which is praiseworthy," said the LG, as per official spokesperson.

He also assured all possible support of the Administration to the Indian Red Cross Society in their noble cause.

Earlier, Kifayat Hussain Rizvi, Honorary

General Secretary, Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) J&K gave a brief overview about the activities being carried out by the IRCS during Covid pandemic.

84-Hour Covid

cops visited my shop and directed me to down the shutters by 7:00 pm. By evening, I had closed my shop," Mehraj Ahmad, a businessman told Kashmir Observer.

On Wednesday, Secretary of the Disaster Management Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Department Simrandeep Singh had announced imposition of curfew in 11 districts of J&K from 7 pm on Thursday till 7 am on Monday.

"Eleven districts including Srinagar, Anantnag, Baramulla, Budgam, Kulgam, Pulwama, Ganderbal, Jammu, Kathua, Reasi, Udhampur will be under 'corona curfew' from Thursday evening (7 pm) till Monday morning (7 am)," Singh had said.

Here in Srinagar, Deputy Commissioner, Mohammad Aijaz Asad also announced "complete lockdown" in this capital city from 7 pm Thursday, a day after ordering imposition of section 144 CrPc to tackle virus spread.

"There will be Complete Lockdown in Srinagar District from 7:00 pm Thursday (29/04/2021) to 7:00 am Monday (03/05/2021). Exemptions apply to essential services. Detailed order shall follow," Asad had posted on his Twitter handle.

Earlier, the UT administration had announced a 34-hour curfew from 8 pm on Saturday.

On April 8, a night curfew from 10 pm to 6 am was imposed in the urban areas of eight districts, which was extended to the municipal and urban local body limits of all the 20 districts in the UT on April 20.

Health Workers, Journalists Exempted

Meanwhile Kashmir Inspector General of Police Vijay Kumar has directed all the units in the valley to ensure hassle-free movement of doctors and other essential workers, including journalists, during the 84-hour COVID lockdown.

People have been asked to dial '112' in case they require any assistance during the lockdown period.

"During the lockdown period, all the police units have been directed to facilitate hassle free movement of doctors, health workers and essential services," Kumar said on the official Twitter handle of Kashmir zone police.

The IGP said movement of journalists -- both from print and electronic media -- should also be facilitated.

"Journalists are requested to carry their identity cards," he added.

As Jammu and Kashmir is going through a second wave of COVID-19 logging more than 3,000 fresh cases for two consecutive days, the administration has announced an 84-hour lockdown in 11 districts of the Union Territory from 7 pm on Thursday to 7 am on Monday.

HC Quashes RTO

on one State has been kept in another State, for a period exceeding twelve months, the owner of the vehicle shall, within such period apply to the registering authority, within whose jurisdiction the vehicle then is, for the assignment of a new registration mark and shall present the certificate of registration to that registering authority.

Rule 54 of Central Motor Vehicles says that an application for the assignment of a new registration mark shall be made in Form 27 and shall be accompanied by a no objection certificate in Form 28 along with the appropriate fee as specified in rule 81, within a period of thirty days from the date of expiry of the period specified in the section. However it is subjected to the condition that a motor vehicle is intended to be kept in a State for a period exceeding

twelve months and the owner of such vehicle makes a declaration to that effect.

"We have already noticed the scheme of law, which provides for assignment of new registration mark but deem it proper to reiterate that if the vehicle once registered in any State in India, it shall not be required to be registered elsewhere in India, but when the Motor Vehicle registered in one State, has been kept in another State for a period of exceeding 12 months, the owner shall apply to the Registering Authority within whose jurisdiction the vehicle is for the assignment of new registration mark, this is as provided under Sections 46 and 47 of the Motor Vehicles Ac," the court said.

"Therefore, a life time tax that is levied at the point of registration of a vehicle in terms of Section 3 of the Motor Vehicles Act, cannot be levied on a vehicle registered, merely on a presumption that a vehicle registered outside JK, has remained in the Union Territory for a period exceeding 12 months."

The court had on April 22 reserved its judgment on two petitions filed by individuals— Zahoor Ahmad Bhat and Irshad Hussain Munshi—through their lawyers— senior advocate Faisal Qadri with Altaf Mehraj and advocates Fasil Javid and Mukhtar Ahmad respectively.

In both the petitions, challenge was made to circular (bearing No. RTO/K/Estt/85-95) dated 27 March 2021, issued by RTO Kashmir, asking the owners, who had purchased their vehicles from outside Jammu and Kashmir bearing outside registration mark, to apply for a new registration mark within 15 days from 27 March 2021, failing which action as warranted shall be initiated against them.

Both of them had submitted that they had purchased vehicles at New Delhi and registered under Transport Authority Government of NCT Delhi and in terms of provisions of Motor Vehicle Act and Rules, no assignment of new registration mark was required under these sections.

"By a writ of certiorari, the impugned circular to the extent of asking the petitioners to have their vehicles registered for assignment of new registration mark with the (RTO Kashmir), without their declaration in tune with the mandate of Rule 54 of Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989 and without providing any mechanism, is quashed," the court said, and also directed authorities to have the compliance of Section 47 of the Act, read with Rule 54 of Central Motor Vehicles undertaken for assignment of new registration mark of the vehicles.

"Notwithstanding above directions, we leave it open for the respondents (authorities) to screen, scrutinize, verify, validity/genuineness of documents of any vehicle entering in J&K from outside, having outside registration," the court added. (GNS)

Centre Mulling

would be marked as "IN" series and this will be on pilot test mode.

"This vehicle registration facility under 'IN series' will be available to defence personnel, employees of Central Government, State Governments, Central/ State PSUs and private sector companies/organisations, which have their offices in five or more States/Union Territories.

"The motor vehicle tax will be levied for two years or in multiple of two," it said.

According to the statement, this scheme will facilitate free movement of personal vehicles across any state in the country upon relocation to a new state.

Station relocation occurs with both, government and private sector employees and such movements create a sense of unease in the minds of employees with regard to the transfer of registration from the parent state to another state.

The step comes in the context of

several citizen-centric steps and an IT-based solution for vehicle registration taken by the government.

The draft rules have been placed on the website of the ministry for stakeholders' comments. PTI

Vaccinated Elderly

United States - more than 37 million people - have been fully inoculated, the data shows.

Early reports from Israel documented the real-world effectiveness of vaccination, including among older adults, but those reports looked only at those inoculated with the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. In the CDC analysis, both Pfizer and Moderna were represented.

The analysis is one of many by the CDC and other groups to assess the effectiveness of the coronavirus vaccines in real-life conditions. In the United Kingdom, another study released Wednesday found that a single dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech or Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine may reduce transmission of the coronavirus within households by almost 50%. Researchers from Public Health England said that protection was seen around two weeks after vaccination - regardless of a person's age or contacts.

British Health Secretary Matt Hancock called the findings "terrific news," adding that the results further reinforced the need for people to get vaccinated to end the pandemic.

The Public Health England study found that those infected with the coronavirus three weeks after receiving one dose of vaccine were between 38 and 49% less likely to pass on the infection to close contacts, compared with those who were unvaccinated. The study was based on 57,000 people from 24,000 households who were considered contacts of a vaccinated person.

In the United States, CDC Director Rochelle Walensky welcomed that agency's findings about protection for fully vaccinated older adults.

"The results are promising for our communities and hospitals," Walensky said in a statement. "As our vaccination efforts continue to expand, covid-19 patients will not overwhelm health care systems - leaving hospital staff, beds, and services available for people who need them for other medical conditions."

Until now, there had not really been "system-level evidence for both mRNA vaccines at the community level," said Jeanne Marrazzo, director of infectious diseases at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Death rates for hospitalized older adults can be six to eight times that of people younger than 65, Marrazzo said in an email. Over half the individuals in the analysis were over 75.

The data gives clinicians even greater confidence in telling patients, "This vaccine will keep you out of the hospital if you get covid - and that is not a place you want to be!" she said.

Carlos del Rio, a professor of medicine and global health at Emory University, said: "When you see that being fully vaccinated essentially eliminates the risk of being hospitalized with covid even if you get infected, it makes me very happy."

Unlike during the clinical trials, the CDC analysis of data took place as more-transmissible and potentially more-deadly variants of the virus were circulating, primarily B.1.1.7, which was first identified in the United Kingdom and is now the dominant strain in the United States.

The CDC study looked at hospitalizations among 417 participants during the first three months of this year at 24 hospitals in 14 states. Researchers compared prior covid-19 vaccination in a group of 187 patients who tested positive for the coronavirus infection with a very similar control group of 230 patients who tested negative. To determine the real-world effectiveness of the vaccines in preventing hospitalization, they compared the odds of prior vaccination between these groups.

Among the 187 patients who tested positive, for example, only one person (less than 1%) had been fully vaccinated. But in the other group, 18 (8%) had been fully vaccinated. Even though the numbers are relatively small, the difference was still significant because it shows that patients with covid-19 were significantly less likely to have completed full vaccination with the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccine, the data shows.

As expected, the analysis confirmed that vaccination provided no protection to people who had received their first dose less than two weeks earlier. It takes two weeks for the body to form an immune response after vaccination.

Mercury Shows

Mercury settled at 5.7 degree Celsius against 4.9 degree Celsius on the previous night in Pahalgam. The temperature was above normal by 1.3 degree Celsius during this time of the season in the famous tourist resort in South Kashmir, he said.

Kokernag, also in south Kashmir, recorded a low of 8.2 degree Celsius against normal of 8.1 degree Celsius and last night's 7.6 degree Celsius, the official said.

Kupwara recorded a low of 8.6 degree Celsius against 5.5 degree Celsius on the previous night which was above normal by 0.8 degree Celsius for this time of the season in north Kashmir district, the official said.

Gulmarg, the world famous skiing resort in Baramulla district of north Kashmir, recorded a low of 6.4 degree Celsius against 5.0 degree Celsius on the previous night, the official said. It was 2.2 degree Celsius below normal in the resort, the official added.

The weatherman has forecast very light rain or thunderstorms in Kashmir and Pirpanjal range towards afternoon till May 5.

"Isolated very light rain/thunderstorms in Kashmir and Pir Panjal range towards late afternoon," the MeT official said regarding the forecast till next Wednesday. (GNS)

TMC To Retain

phase on 06 April for the 234 assembly seats in the state. Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), All India Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) are the two main political parties in the state and formed alliances with Congress and BJP respectively.

Shab-e-Qadr

on Government account of "Shab-e-Qadr" shall now observed 10th May, 2021 (Monday) instead of 9th May, 2021 (Sunday)," reads an order.

Cash Box Stolen

unaccounted cash in the donation box that burglars stole.

The report further said that police have registered a case after receiving information from the locals.

Police Foil

Waseem Ahmad Khan and Ghulam Mustafa Ahangar of Kupwara, were motivated by a person through the spoof calls on privacy focused app that he would help them to cross the LoC.

The unknown man, he said, told the trio that he would meet them in person once they reached Uri and would eventually tell them the exact crossing point at the LoC.

"Police however received the information from reliable sources in time and due to the timely action, all the three persons were caught at Uri market while onboard a Maruti vehicle (JK01M-0371)," the police spokesperson said.

He further said that after proper counselling all the three persons are being handed over to their legal heirs.

"They were exhorted upon and advised to remain careful in future and not attend or fall prey to un-necessary calls or radicalization," he added

Zampa, Richardson Reach Australia, Spinner Clarifies Bio-Bubble Comment

Press Trust of India

MELBOURNE: Australians Adam Zampa and Kane Richardson on Thursday returned home after withdrawing from the IPL and on arrival, the leg-spinner clarified that his comments on "vulnerability" of bio-bubble had nothing to do with fear of the virus engulfing the controlled environment.

A day after deciding to quit the league midway citing personal reasons, Zampa had said the bio-bubble put in place for the ongoing T20 event was the "most vulnerable" he has been a part of while also suggesting that it should have been held in UAE, like last year.

"Thanks to everyone for the messages of concern. Kane and I have both reached Melbourne safe and sound," Zampa said in a statement.

The Royal Challengers Bangalore duo landed in Melbourne after taking a connecting flight out of Doha.

"... My comments about the vulnerability of the IPL bubble had nothing to do with feeling like the virus would enter the bubble at any stage. The BCCI and RCB had many precautions to make us feel safe. I believe the tournament is in

great hands and will definitely see the finish line," Zampa said.

There were concerns that the players may not be able to make it to Australia after their government temporarily suspended all flights out of India due to the resurgence of a deadly second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Zampa thanked his franchise and BCCI for helping them with the logistics.

"... Thanks to RCB management for the way they dealt with the situation. As soon as we made the choice that we felt the right thing to do was to come home, they were fully supportive and did everything they could to help. Their understanding of the situation made the process a lot easier."

Zampa, who did not get a game this season after being bought for Rs 1.5 crore, said a lot of factors contributed to his decision to leave the IPL.

"I am understanding the velocity of the situation in India and my thoughts go out to the whole country. It was a personal choice to leave for several reasons."

As per the standard guidelines, Zampa and Richardson will spend the next two weeks in hotel quarantine.

'Missing Out On IPL A Blessing In Disguise,' Says Aussie Marnus Labuschagne



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Australian batsman Marnus Labuschagne has admitted that being overlooked at the IPL auction turned out to be a "blessing in disguise" in the light of the rising COVID-19 cases in India.

The 26-year-old, who found no buyers at the IPL auctions in February, expressed concern for his compatriots featuring in the ongoing lucrative league in India.

"It certainly looks like it (missing out on the IPL) was a blessing in disguise," Labuschagne was quoted as saying by 'PA Media'.

"I would love to have played in the IPL, it's a great tournament. But there's always two sides to the coin. If I was in the IPL, I would have been away and to win a Shield is something that doesn't come around often."

"Secondly, you look at the conditions in India now and it's not looking great," Labuschagne, who has linked up with county cricket

club Glamorgan, added.

India is reeling under the second wave of the pandemic with cases rising by over 3 lakh every day, a crisis compounded by shortage of some crucial medicines and oxygen supplies.

The Australian government has suspended all direct passenger flights from India until May 15 due to the spike in COVID-19 cases in India.

The IPL league matches will end on May 23, followed by the qualifiers (May 25, 28) and eliminator (May 26) and the final (May 30) — all scheduled to be held in Ahmedabad.

Labuschagne also revealed that a majority of Australian players aren't feeling unsafe in the IPL bio-bubble but are concerned about returning back Down Under.

"You obviously feel for them. But I haven't spoken to too many guys that are feeling unsafe."

"It's more about getting back into Australia and what does that look like. I just hope that they stay safe and get back to Australia safely whenever they do," he added.

IPL 2021, PBKS VS RCB, PREVIEW

Stuttering Punjab Kings Face High-Flying RCB

Press Trust of India

AHMEDABAD: Punjab Kings will have to play out of their skins to get their stuttering campaign back on track when they face a high-flying Royal Challengers Bangalore in the Indian Premier League here on Friday.

Smarting from a five-wicket defeat at the hands of Kolkata Knight Riders, it will not be an easy task for a struggling Punjab side to stand up to the challenge thrown by a RCB team, which has been firing on all cylinders.

Following four losses and two wins, Punjab are currently placed sixth in the league table with four points, whereas RCB are second with 10 points from five wins, only behind Chennai Super Kings on net run rate.

Apart from the sole loss against CSK, RCB have emerged as strong contenders for a maiden IPL title, with many of their players striking form as the tournament progresses.

Punjab's inconsistent batting has been a letdown so far. In their six games, the KL Rahul-led side have gone on to make the three low totals batting first — 106, 120 and 123.

While Rahul, who has scored 91, 5, 61, 4, 60 not out and 19 so far, has been their most successful batsman this season. He will once again be expected to provide his side with a solid start with the willow.

Mayank Agrawal has been guilty of wasting his starts barring one game while Chris Gayle has made only two good scores in six outings.

The dynamic Nicholas Pooran is having a woeful season to say



the least. The swashbuckling West Indian has managed just 28 runs in the five innings which includes three ducks. His highest was 19 against KKR. The team could replace him with the premier T20 batsman in the world, England's Dawid Malan.

With not enough runs on the board against KKR, the Punjab bowlers could not do much. But the bowling unit has lacked aggression. It was unable to defend 195 against Delhi Capitals and almost conceded the game to Rajasthan Royals while defending 221, pulling out a four-run victory in the end.

On the other hand, RCB will be high on confidence after they held their nerves to pip Delhi Capitals by one-run. While it was Ab de Villiers who delivered once again with the

bat, the bowlers put up a collective effort to give RCB their fifth win of the season.

The RCB batting is top heavy and reliant on the performances of Virat Kohli, Devdutt Padikkal, de Villiers and Australian all-rounder Glenn Maxwell. It augers well for the team that all four players have performed well.

Rajat Patidar showed what he is capable of in the previous match while Kyle Jamieson can also hit a few down the order.

The RCB bowling department has been impressive led by pacers Harshal Patel, the Purple Cap holder, and Mohammed Siraj. The latter did well to defend 14 of the final over against DC, with the dangerous Rishabh Pant and Shimron Hetmyer in the middle.

Umpires Nitin Menon, Paul Reiffel Take Time Out From IPL 2021

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: India's top umpire Nitin Menon has pulled out of the ongoing IPL after his family was struck by a couple of COVID-19 cases, while his Australian counterpart Paul Reiffel's attempts at leaving hit a dead end because of his country's suspension of air travel with India.

It is learnt that Menon, a resident of Indore, has left the IPL bio-bubble after his wife and mother tested positive for COVID-19. Menon is the only Indian in the ICC elite panel of umpires and was recently praised for his work during India's home series against England.

"Yes, Nitin has left as his immediate family members have COVID-19 and he is currently not in a mental state to conduct games," a BCCI official told PTI.

In Reiffel's case, the Australian government's imposition of a travel ban on flights to and from India in the wake of the rising COVID-19 cases here led to him being unable to leave the bubble after initial information suggested that he has made the move.

"I tried to, but the flight through Doha, I wasn't able to go through as an Australian," Reiffel told the 'Herald' and 'The Age' on Thursday from his hotel in Ahmedabad.

"They shut the avenue off. I know a couple of the guys got back that



way through there, but the avenue was closed so I had to stay. Yesterday, I was booked to go, but it got cancelled," he said.

Reiffel will, therefore, now go back only after the end of the tournament on May 30.

"I was 10 minutes away from leaving the bubble, so I'm very lucky," Reiffel said.

Menon is the second Indian to pull out of the tournament after off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin, who

also went home after all his family members tested positive.

Three Australians Andrew Tye, Kane Richardson and Adam Zampa left home due to the unprecedented health crisis in India.

However, the BCCI is going ahead with the tournament and interim CEO Hemang Amin has assured all players and support staff that they remain safe in the bio-bubble. BCCI is likely to replace Menon with an umpire from its own pool of umpires.

Rajasthan Royals Donate Rs 7.5 Crores For COVID-19 Relief

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: IPL franchise Rajasthan Royals on Thursday said it has raised Rs 7.5 crore to provide immediate support to people affected by the second wave of COVID-19 pandemic in India through its foundation.

India is witnessing an unprecedented surge in COVID-19 infections with the country recording a single-day rise of 3,79,257 new cases on Wednesday, pushing the total tally to 1,83,76,524.

"Rajasthan Royals is pleased to announce a contribution of INR 7.5 Crores (over USD 1 million) towards COVID Relief to help with immediate support to people in India impacted by the surge of COVID-19 virus," the franchise said in a statement.

"Players along with the team owners and team management have come forward to raise funds and have been working along with the Rajasthan Royals' philanthropic arm Royal Rajasthan Foundation (RRF) in partnership with the British Asian Trust (BAT)," a release is-

sued by the franchise said.

"The funds raised by Rajasthan Royals will help pan India, with an initial focus on the state of Rajasthan, where the RRF, chaired by Ranjit Barthakur, has numerous initiatives it continues to support."

The health care system is crumbling due to the crisis with hospitals struggling to provide oxygen and a few crucial medicines to the infected patients.

The release said BAT founder, Prince Charles, has "launched an emergency 'Oxygen for India' appeal, which is currently focused on acquisition and distribution of oxygen concentrators, devices that can provide the enriched gas straight from the air, to treat patients".

Rajasthan will face Mumbai Indians on Thursday at the Feroz Shah Kotla ground here.

A few days back, Australia and Kolkata Knight Riders pacer Pat Cummins had donated USD 50,000 to purchase oxygen supplies for Indian hospitals.



Five Female Candidates For India Women Head Coach Job



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Former chief selector Hemlata Kala is among five female candidates who have applied to become the Indian women's team's head coach, a position that has been held by men since 2017.

Mamatha Maben, Jaya Sharma, Suman Sharma and Nooshin Al Khadeer are the others who have presented their candidature for the job.

Among the men, incumbent W V Raman has reappeared after his term ended with the home series loss to South Africa in March.

Former coaches of the team, Ramesh Powar and Tushar Arothe, have also thrown their hat into the ring. Both Powar and Arothe were forced to leave in acrimonious circumstances after developing differences with senior players.

The Madan Lal-led Cricket Advisory Committee is supposed to pick the head coach after the application deadline ended on April 26.

The women's selection committee, headed by Neetu David, are inclined towards a female head coach for the national team, which has a lot of work to do before the ODI World Cup in New Zealand early next year.

"We are yet to hear from the BCCI on the interview date (of candidates). When we get down to that, we will pick the best person for the job whether male or female," World

Cup-winner Lal told PTI.

Purnima Rau was the last female head coach of the Indian team until she was removed in April 2017.

Arothe took over from her and took the team to the ODI World Cup final later that year. Powar replaced him before making an exit in controversial circumstances when veteran Mithali Raj accused him of trying to destroy her career.

Raman took over from Powar and took the team to the T20 World Cup final in 2020.

Among the female candidates, Kala was chief of the selection committee which unearthed stars like Shafali Verma and recently worked with the UP senior team as head coach.

Suman has worked as an assistant coach with the Indian team and was also involved with the Women's T20 Challenge alongside Maben who has also coached Bangladesh and China.

Nooshin also has a substantial coaching experience.

"I have been tracking women's cricket in the country since my playing days. Coaching Railways and now UP has also helped me learn a lot more about the game."

"I also gained a lot of knowledge during my tenure as selector and therefore I feel ready to step into the head coach role," said former India international Kala.

Olympic-Bound Athletes Can Train During Quarantine: SAI

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The Sports Authority of India on Thursday said Olympic-qualified athletes will be allowed to practice and spar in quarantine before they join their respective national camps from a break at home or a competition trip but grant of leave will become an exception now.

The latest move comes after several athletes at various national camps across the country tested positive for COVID-19. In case of Delhi's Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium, the national women's boxing camp had to be disbanded for now after detection of cases among pugilists and support staff.

"...in view of the need for Olympics-bound athletes to continue their training without disruption, SAI has now taken a decision to allow training even during the quarantine period in a controlled environment," the nodal body said in a statement.

Weekly RT-PCR tests are being conducted at SAI centres to keep a check on the infections.

"SAI in consultation with the Indian Olympic Association will de-



cide on grant of leave to Olympics-bound athlete & support staff. Leave will be granted only as an exception by National Sports Federation and SAI as it has been observed that most athletes got infected while travelling," it added.

Athletes are required to go through a seven-day mandatory quarantine when they reach a SAI centre from a home break or a competition and to ensure that their training can continue during this period, the SAI said small groups would be formed.

"...small group of athletes, coach & sparring (training) partners will be formed wherever possible for Olympic bound athletes. The athlete and this group will remain isolated from rest of the environment till quarantine period is over," the SAI stated.

SAI said training in a smaller

group during quarantine period will also ensure that large scale transmission of the virus is prevented.

"During the quarantine period, general fitness and monitored training on a staggered schedule would be allowed," it said.

"...(they) would not be allowed to interact with athletes/support staff in the bio-bubble until the test results of the whole group comes out negative at the end of the initial quarantine period of 7 days," it added.

If any member of the group tests positive for the virus at the end of the quarantine period, the whole group will remain in isolation for another week.

"The entire group would be allowed to merge with the regular training group already in the bio-bubble, once every member returns a negative result."

If the athlete is asymptomatic, fitness activities through video conference under strict medical supervision will be carried out.

"The counselling sessions for such athletes will also be organised to ensure high morale of an athlete is maintained."

Man City Overcome PSG In Champions League Semifinal

Agencies

PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain lost its composure and the match as Manchester City rallied to win 2-1 away from home in the first leg of their Champions League semifinal on Wednesday.

PSG led 1-0 through captain Marquinhos' early header from a corner, but City skipper Kevin De Bruyne equalized in the 64th minute when goalkeeper Keylor Navas misread his dipping cross and it bounced inside his post.

Riyad Mahrez's free kick — through a wall that jumped early and left an inviting gap for the Algeria winger — put the visitors ahead in the 71st.

"We deserved the lead, but in the second half they were better than us. Physically they were a little bit more aggressive, it was difficult for us to recover the ball," PSG coach Mauricio Pochettino said. "We're very disappointed with the two goals. It's difficult to accept that this happened in the semifinal, it's really painful."

After City's quick 1-2 punch, PSG's composure soon crumbled, as has often been the case in recent seasons when under pressure. Pochettino's side finished the game with 10 players as midfielder Idrissa Gueye was shown a red card in the



77th minute for a dangerous tackle on midfielder Ilkay Gundogan.

City could have taken a bigger lead into the return leg next Tuesday, but winger Phil Foden shot straight at Navas after a brilliant jinking run through PSG's flagging defense.

"In football you need to believe," Pochettino said. "Of course we are under a little bit of pressure, but in football you need to try."

City coach Pep Guardiola wants his players to stay relaxed for the return leg, rather than thinking about reaching the final for the first time in the club's history.

"All I want is for us to be ourselves in the second leg," he said. "We are good playing a certain way,

we cannot do it differently."

Chelsea drew 1-1 at Real Madrid in the other semifinal on Tuesday.

City made a bright start, stretching PSG with its quick passing and imposing itself in midfield with some hefty challenges.

But PSG had the first sights on goal and, after Neymar went close, Marquinhos timed his run well to meet Angel Di Maria's corner near the front post and head in the 15th-minute opener.

It was another important goal from the Brazilian, after netting a last-gasp equalizer in the quarterfinals and then scoring in the semis last season.

Di Maria was causing problems

for City's defense with his runs from the right flank, while both Neymar and Marco Verratti were opening City up with their passing.

With City now playing on the break, Foden wasted a good chance near the break when he shot straight at Navas from just inside the penalty area, after being set up by Bernardo Silva's pass from the right.

"In the first half we were too rushed," De Bruyne said. "That's not the way we're set up as a team."

PSG threatened early in the second half, when Di Maria's superb pass over the midfield put Kylian Mbappe into space down the right. He twisted inside and out, putting two City defenders on the floor, but his fizzing cross was too strong and eluded his teammates.

De Bruyne set up City's late winner in the League Cup final last Sunday and again took time to exert his influence after a brief spell out injured. The Belgium star went close with a shot on the turn that went just over on the hour mark.

Four minutes later, he was mobbed by his relieved teammates when his cross was intended for a teammate's head but stunned Navas as it bounced past him.

"It is so hard for the keeper because he always expects someone to touch it," De Bruyne said.

Health Ministry Warns Against Giving Remdesivir Injections At Home



Agenceis

The health ministry on Thursday issued the "Revised guidelines for home isolation of mild/asymptomatic COVID-19 cases", in which it advised against attempting to procure or administer Remdesivir injections at home, underlining that it should be administered only in a hospital setting.

The guidelines stated that systemic oral steroids are not indicated in mild cases and if the symptoms (persistent fever, worsening cough etc.) persist beyond seven days, the treating doctor should be consulted for treatment with low-dose oral steroids.

Elderly patients aged more than 60 years and those with co-morbid conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, heart disease, chronic lung or liver or kidney disease, cerebrovascular disease etc. shall only be allowed home isolation after a proper evaluation by the treating medical officer, it added.

In case of falling oxygen saturation levels or shortness of breath, the person should require hospital admission and seek immediate consultation with the treating physician or surveillance team.

Elderly patients aged more than 60 years and those with co-morbid conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, heart disease, chronic lung or liver or kidney disease, cerebrovascular disease etc. shall only be allowed home isolation after a proper evaluation by the treating medical officer.

According to the revised guidelines, the patients may perform warm-water gargles or take steam inhalation twice a day.

"If fever is not controlled with a maximum dose of tab. Paracetamol 650 mg four times a day, consult the treating doctor, who may consider advising other drugs like non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) (ex: tab. Naproxen 250 mg twice a day).

"Tab. Ivermectin (200 mcg/kg once a day, to be taken on empty stomach) for 3 to 5 days should be considered," the guidelines stated.

Inhalational Budesonide (given via inhalers with spacer at a dose of 800 mcg twice daily for five to seven days) to be given if the symptoms (fever and/or cough) persist beyond five days, they added.

The decision to administer Remdesivir or any other investigational therapy must be taken by a medical professional and it should be administered only in a hospital setting, the ministry said.

"Do not attempt to procure or

administer Remdesivir at home. Systemic oral steroids are not indicated in mild disease. If symptoms persist beyond seven days (persistent fever, worsening cough etc.), consult the treating doctor for treatment with low-dose oral steroids," the guidelines said.

The revised guidelines stated that the asymptomatic cases are laboratory-confirmed cases that are not experiencing any symptoms and having oxygen saturation at room air of more than 94 per cent, while the mild cases are patients with upper respiratory tract symptoms (and/or fever) without shortness of breath and having oxygen saturation at room air of more than 94 per cent.

Those patients eligible for home isolation should be clinically assigned as mild or asymptomatic case by the treating medical officer and they should have the requisite facility at their residence for self-isolation and quarantining the family contacts.

The caregiver and all close contacts of such cases should take Hydroxychloroquine prophylaxis in accordance with the protocol and as prescribed.

The patients must isolate themselves from the other family members, stay in the identified room and away from others, especially elderly people and those with co-morbid conditions like hypertension, cardiovascular disease, renal disease etc.

The patients should be kept in well-ventilated rooms with cross-ventilation, the windows should be kept open to allow fresh air to come in and should at all times use a triple-layer medical mask, the guidelines read.

"The mask should be discarded after eight hours of use or earlier if they become wet or visibly soiled. In the event of the caregiver entering the room, both the caregiver and the patient may consider using the N95 mask.

"The masks should be discarded only after disinfecting it with one per cent sodium hypochlorite," the guidelines stated.

A caregiver should be available to provide care on a 24x7 basis. A communication link between the caregiver and the hospital is a prerequisite for the entire duration of home isolation.

Patients suffering from an immune compromised status (HIV positive, transplant recipients, cancer therapy etc.) are not recommended for home isolation and shall only be allowed home isolation after a proper evaluation, the guidelines read.

ment at Rs 150 per dose.

"Recognising the enormous challenges in the public healthcare system, we have made Covaxin available to state governments at a price of 400/dose", Bharat Biotech said in its announcement. The company is deeply concerned with the critical pandemic circumstances that India is facing at this time, it added.

Bharat Biotech Cuts Vaccine Price For States To Rs 400 Per Dose

Agenceis

NEW DELHI: Bharat Biotech on Thursday announced a cut in price of its COVID-19 vaccine 'Covaxin' it plans to sell to the states to Rs 400 per dose from the earlier Rs 600.

This follows a widespread criticism of its pricing policy as it sold Covaxin to the Central govern-

ment at Rs 150 per dose.

"Recognising the enormous challenges in the public healthcare system, we have made Covaxin available to state governments at a price of 400/dose", Bharat Biotech said in its announcement. The company is deeply concerned with the critical pandemic circumstances that India is facing at this time, it added.

Desperate Indians Turn To Unproven Drugs As Coronavirus Surges

Ashish Poddar kept an ice pack on hand as he waited outside a New Delhi hospital for a black market dealer to deliver two drugs for his father, who was gasping for breath inside with Covid-19.

But the drugs never arrived, the ice that was intended to keep the medicines cool melted and his father died hours later.

As India faces a devastating surge of new coronavirus infections overwhelming its healthcare system, people are taking desperate measures to try to keep their loved ones alive. In some cases they are turning to unproven medical treatments, in others to the black market for life-saving medications that are in short supply.

Poddar had been told by the private hospital treating his father, Raj Kumar Poddar, that remdesivir, an antiviral, and tocilizumab, a drug that blunts human immune responses, were needed to keep the 68-year-old man alive.

Like most hospitals and pharmacies in the Indian capital, stocks had run out. Desperate, Poddar turned to a dealer who promised the medicines after taking an advance of almost \$1,000.

"It's nearby" and "coming" read some of the texts that Ashish received as he waited.

"I wish he had at least told me that he isn't going to come. I could have searched elsewhere," the grieving son said.

India set another global record in new virus cases on Thursday with more than 379,000 new infections, putting even more pressure on the country's overwhelmed hospitals. The country of nearly 1.4 billion people has now recorded over 18 million cases, behind only the US, and over 200,000 deaths — though the true number is believed to be higher.

Death is so omnipresent that burial grounds are running out of space in many cities and glowing funeral pyres blaze through the night.

The few medicines known to help treat Covid-19, such as remdesivir and steroids in hospitalised patients, are scarce. The most basic treatment — oxygen therapy — is also in short supply, leading to unnecessary deaths. Even hospital beds are scarce. There were just 14



free intensive care beds available in New Delhi, a city of 29m people, on Thursday morning.

India's latest treatment guidelines mirror those of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the United States with a key exception: India allows mildly ill patients to be given hydroxychloroquine or ivermectin, drugs used for certain tropical diseases.

There is little evidence they work against Covid-19, and the WHO strongly recommends against hydroxychloroquine's use for Covid-19 of any severity and against using ivermectin except in studies.

While India is a leading producer of medicine globally, its regulation of drugs was poor even before the pandemic. And mounting despair is driving people to try anything.

Dr Amar Jesani, a medical ethics expert, said many prescription drugs can be bought over the counter, including emergency drugs greenlit by Indian authorities for Covid-19.

"Hospitals and doctors are so used to having a 'magic bullet' that will cure you," he said, explaining the use of unproven drugs as Covid-19 cases skyrocket.

When Suman Shrivastava, 57, was infected with the virus, her doctor in Kanpur city in Uttar Pradesh, India's largest state, prescribed ivermectin. When her symptoms worsened, her doctor then asked her to take favipiravir, an antiviral, though it is unproven against Covid-19.

Her nephew, Rajat Shrivastava, said that the drug was hard to find but he eventually located it in a pharmacy which was rationing its supplies by giving a single strip daily to each patient. He eventu-

ally bought extra doses from an online volunteer on Twitter and now his aunt is doing well.

Dr Anant Bhan, who researches public health and ethics in the city of Bhopal, warns there are risks in the do-it-yourself approach. Bhan said antivirals and steroids should be taken in a hospital setting due to the risk of side effects. And drugs that are life-saving at one point could be harmful at another, depending on timing and how severe the symptoms are.

"It's scary because these aren't vitamin pills," he said.

Black market prices for remdesivir, which is produced by several Indian companies, have increased up to 20-fold to about \$1,000 for a single vial, said Siddhant Sarang, a volunteer with Yuva Halla Bol, a youth activist group which is helping patients find medicines and hospital beds.

In September, federal data showed that Indian drug makers had made over 2.4m vials of the drug. But when cases dipped in September, companies destroyed much of their expired stock and production declined.

India was then slow to respond to the uptick of infections in February, and production was only scaled up in March. Earlier this week, Merck announced a deal with five makers of generic drugs in India to produce molnupiravir, an experimental antiviral similar to remdesivir, which is given by IV, but in a more convenient pill form. It's unclear when that might become available.

With demand high, black market dealers are insisting on cash upfront, said Sarang.

"People are going to dealers with \$2,700-\$4,000 in a suitcase," he said.

'Single Dose Of COVID Vaccine Can Cut Transmission By Up To Half'

Agenceis

A single dose of a COVID-19 vaccine can cut transmission of coronavirus by up to half, a Public Health England (PHE) study showed on Wednesday.

Those who were infected at least three weeks later were between 38 per cent and 49 per cent less likely to pass the virus on to people living in the same household, compared with those who had not been vaccinated, according to the study, Xinhua reported.

People included in the research were those who have had a single dose of either the Pfizer or AstraZeneca vaccines, the first two authorized for use in Britain.

Peter English, a retired consultant in communicable disease control, told Sky News that the findings are "extremely encouraging."

"The evidence was already mounting that vaccination will



prevent people from becoming infected. This study shows that even if people who are vaccinated do become infected, they are considerably less likely to be infectious, and to pass the infection on to others," he said.

"This is an extremely encouraging set of findings," he added.

The study, which has yet to be peer-reviewed, included more than 57,000 people living in 24,000 households related to

a vaccinated person. They were compared with nearly 1 million contacts of people who had not been vaccinated.

More than 33.8 million people have been given the first coronavirus vaccine jab, according to the latest official figures.

Meanwhile, a quarter of adults in Britain have been fully vaccinated as the country's vaccination program has been expanded to include people aged 42 and over.

Firmly Support India In Fighting Covid: China



Agenceis

BEIJING: Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Thursday promised to do the utmost in supporting India's fight against the COVID-19 surge and said that anti-pandemic materials produced in China were entering India at a faster pace.

In a letter to External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Mr Wang said that the Chinese side "shares empathy for the challenges facing India and expresses sincere sympathy".

"The coronavirus is the common enemy of mankind, and the international community needs solidarity and coordination for a concerted response. The Chinese side firmly supports the Indian Government and people in fighting the pandemic," he wrote in

the letter, a copy of which was tweeted by Chinese Ambassador to India Sun Weidong.

Mr Wang said that anti-pandemic materials produced in China are entering India at a faster pace to help India fight the epidemic.

"The Chinese side will continue to do its utmost to provide support and help according to the needs of India. We hope and believe that under the leadership of the Indian Government, the Indian people will surely prevail over the epidemic at an early date," he added.

Mr Wang's letter came even as the militaries of the two countries are yet to resolve the disengagement from the remaining areas of eastern Ladakh after the withdrawal from Pangong lake area in February.

Amid Surge, Around 3,000 COVID Patients Go 'Missing' In Bengaluru



Agenceis

Grappling with unprecedented spike in COVID cases, Karnataka is facing another challenge, of tracking and tracing of anywhere between 2,000 to 3,000 Covid positive patients who have "gone missing", state Revenue Minister, R. Ashoka revealed on Wednesday.

After his meeting with various department heads here, Ashoka, who is also Vice Chairman of the Karnataka State Disaster Management Authority, told reporters that he has already directed the state police to track and trace these missing Covid patients.

"At least 2,000 to 3,000 people in Bengaluru have gone of our radar by switching off their phones and left their houses. We don't know where they have gone," he admitted.

Bengaluru, has become epicentre of the viral spread ever since the pandemic broke out, often contributing a minimum 50 per cent to the state's overall tally of Covid patients, fatalities and nearly two-third of patients in ICUs.

"With most of these patients switching off their mobile phones, the Health Department is not able to trace them and most of them are also not available at their given addresses, it is construed as they have 'missing'. Certainly there is a potential threat for these missing patients. These patients can turn out to be super-spreaders," Ashoka warned.

He added that the state had to rope in police as they have required expertise to track switched off mobile phones.

The minister added that the state government was giving free medicines to people, which can control 90 per cent of cases, but these Covid-19 infected people have switched off their mobile phones.

"Some them reach hospitals at a critical stage and desperately look for Intensive Care Unit beds. This is what is contributing more to the already existing confusion," he said.

Ashoka appealed to those who have tested positive for the viral disease to keep their cell phones on so that the official responsible for contact tracing and follow-ups could reach them.

"I pray to them with folded hands that Covid-19 cases will only increase due to this. It is wrong when you try for ICU beds at the last moment," the minister said.

The Karnataka government had recently increased its contact tracing activity after it was found that the officials in Bengaluru and other districts were tracing only four contacts per infected person, while the guidelines mandate tracing at least 20 contacts.

Health Minister K. Sudhakar said Bengaluru had been the victim of this problem ever since the pandemic broke out.

"In my more than one year's experience of handling this pandemic, it is observed at least 20 per cent of the patients do not respond to our phone calls. Though in most of the cases, police track them down in their own way but there are some of them who migrate to other states and take this disease with theme there too," he told reporters at a separate press conference.

NEWSMAKERS

COVID-19: IIT Bombay Finds Innovative Way To Generate Oxygen

Agenceis

MUMBAI: Amid the shortage of medical oxygen for treating COVID-19 patients, the IIT Bombay has come up with an ingenious solution to help address the issue by converting a nitrogen unit into an oxygen generating unit, the institute said on Thursday.

The pilot project, which has been tested successfully, relies on a simple technological intervention of converting a Pressure Swing Adsorption (PSA) nitrogen unit into a PSA oxygen unit, according to an official statement.

It claimed that initial tests conducted at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay have shown "promising results".

The oxygen production could be achieved at "3.5 atm pressure with a purity level of 93 per cent to 96 per



cent", the statement said.

This gaseous oxygen can be utilized for COVID-19-related needs across the existing hospitals and upcoming COVID-19-specific facilities by providing a continuous supply of oxygen, it said.

"It (conversion of nitrogen unit into an oxygen unit) has been done by fine-tuning the existing nitrogen plant setup and changing the molecular sieves from Carbon to Zeolite," the statement said quoting Prof Milind

Atrey, Dean (R&D), IIT Bombay, who led the project.

Mr Atrey said such nitrogen plants, which take air from the atmosphere as raw material, are available in various industrial plants across India.

"Therefore, each of them could potentially be converted into an oxygen generator, thus helping us tide over the current public health emergency," he said.

The pilot project is a collaborative effort among IIT Bombay, Tata Consulting Engineers and Spantech Engineers, Mumbai, who deal with the PSA nitrogen and oxygen plant production, the statement said.

To undertake this study on an urgent basis, an MoU was signed among IIT Bombay, Tata Consulting Engineers and Spantech Engineers to finalise a standard operating procedure (SOP) that may be leveraged across the country, it said.

Delhi Gurudwara Starts "Oxygen Langar", Food Delivery For COVID-19 Patients

Agenceis

NEW DELHI: Amid an acute shortage of medical oxygen in Delhi, Gurudwara Singh Sabha located in Greater Kailash area of the national capital has started "Oxygen Langar" for refilling of oxygen cylinders, where people can come and refill their empty oxygen cylinders.

Former president of Delhi Gurudwara Committee Manjeet Singh GK told ANI that his team is arranging oxygen from Punjab and Haryana to provide oxygen to the people in Delhi. Mr Singh further said that at the moment they have an oxygen supply for only 100 to 150 people.

"If we will have more oxygen then we will be able to run the oxygen langar for 24 hours," he added.



Along with medical oxygen, the Gurudwara also made arrangements for home delivery of food for COVID-19 infected people.

The Gurudwara has also issued a helpline number where people can ask for help regarding food.

The national capital is witnessing over 300 daily fatalities due to COVID-19 for the past seven days. The city reported 25,986 new COVID-19 cases and 368 related deaths on Wednesday, taking the total active cases in Delhi to 99,752.