



P7 STATE

PREGNANT WOMEN MORE AFFECTED BY SECOND WAVE OF COVID-19: DAK

Doctors Association Kashmir (DAK) Monday said that pregnant women should also be vaccinated on priority basis for Covid-19 as expecting mothers are now considered a high risk group....

P4 FATAL AMBITION

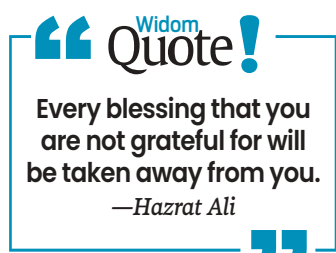
Now that the BJP has suffered a debacle in the West Bengal elections and is unable to form a government in the state, here are a few questions to ponder over. Were all the election rallies that led to a huge spike in corona cases, and even led to the death...



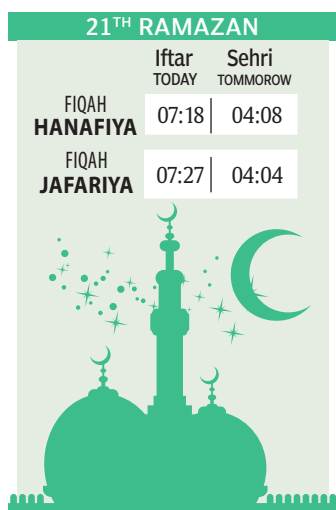
P3 CITY

AMID LOCKDOWN, SRINAGAR WITNESSES TRAFFIC SNARLS

Amid ongoing lockdown in view of the spike in Corona cases across Jammu and Kashmir, the roads in capital city Srinagar and other adjacent areas on Monday witnessed



Widom Quote!
Every blessing that you are not grateful for will be taken away from you.
—Hazrat Ali



NEWS DIGEST

Indo-Pak Troops Trade Fire

JAMMU: Pakistani Rangers violated the ceasefire by opening fire along the International Border (IB) in Jammu and Kashmir's Samba district on Monday, a senior BSF officer said. A BSF spokesman said this is first-ever ceasefire violation by Pakistan along the IB after the two countries signed a fresh agreement to maintain calm along the border. **More On P6**

LG Grets Journalists On Press Freedom Day

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir's Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Monday greeted journalists on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day. The official Twitter handle of the Office of J&K LG quoted LG as saying that the media acts as a strong bridge between the government and people. "On the occasion of 'World Press Freedom Day, I extend my warm wishes to the journalist's fraternity. The media plays a catalytic **More On P6**

Moving Train Mows Down Labourer

SRINAGAR: A labourer was crushed to death on Monday after being hit by a running train in Kakpora area of south Kashmir's Pulwama district. 32-year-old Iqbal Majid Dar of Vailoo Kokernag was killed when a running train mowed him down near '44 point' in Kakapora on Monday, reports said. Dar, who was working as a labourer with IRCON, died on the spot. His body was handed over to his family after completion **More On P6**

Driver Killed After Tractor Overturns

SRINAGAR: A tractor driver died on Monday after his vehicle overturned in Trehgam area of north Kashmir's Kupwara district. Jahangir Ahmad Malik (32) was critically injured on Monday when the tractor (JK-09A 3302) he was driving skidded off the road and overturned in Hayan (B) locality of Trehgam, reports said. The injured man was immediately evacuated to sub-district hospital Kupwara. However, he **More On P6**

J&K Hits New Grim Record Of 51 Deaths In 1 Day

3733 More Test Positive for Covid-19

**Press Trust Of India**

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir reported on Monday 51 coronavirus related deaths, the highest single day fatalities so far, even as 3733 more people across the Union Territory tested positive for the deadly infection during

the last 24 hours.

Among the victims, officials said, thirty five were residents of Jammu division and the remaining 16 hailed from different parts of the Valley. Most of the victims who died of Covid-19 in Valley were residents of Srinagar city.

Among others, the victims included a 55-year-old man from Sanat Nagar, who died at JVC hospital, a day after he was admitted at the one of the facilities for the management of the covid-19 patients. Besides him, an 80-year-old man from Rawalpura was **More On P6**

LG For Speedy Vaccination, Contract Tracing**Observer News Service**

As Jammu and Kashmir struggles to contain the spread of deadly coronavirus infection, the Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Monday

called for speeding up the vaccination drive, besides intensifying testing and contacts tracing across the Union Territory. Chairing a meeting with Deputy Commissioners and Superintendents of Police from across the UT, **More On P6**

Oxygen Supply And Demand To Be Audited

The Union Territory administration on Monday directed constitution of divisional level teams to conduct the audit of oxygen demand within two days and specify the requirement to meet the needs of patients in Covid and non facilities, besides private and army hospitals. Chairing a maiden meeting of the COVID Apex Management Group to review the rapidly evolving COVID-19 situation and accordingly calibrate strategies for its control and mitigation, the **More On P6**

Life Remains Crippled For 4th Straight Day

J&K Likely To Receive Rainfall From Today: MeT

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir will witness another spell of isolated rainfall from Tuesday leading to the increase in precipitation in the coming days, the weather department said Monday. "Light to moderate rain/thundershower is expected at scattered to fairly widespread places during May 5 (afternoon) to 8. There's no forecast of any major rainfall till next 10 days," a MeT official said.

The weather system may lead to temporary disruption of traffic on Banihal-Ramban area mainly during May 6-8, the official said. The weather department has also issued 'yellow warning for **More On P6**

3 Govt Officials Sacked For 'Anti-State' Activities

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: Three government officials including an assistant professor were dismissed from service over alleged anti-state activities in Jammu and Kashmir, drawing strong criticism from PDP president Mehbooba Mufti who said the government has "misplaced priorities" during the pandemic.

It's the first such action after the administration formed a committee last

month that is empowered to look into allegations of involvement in anti-state activities against government employees and recom-



mend dismissal. The separate orders against Assistant Professor, Geography, Government Degree College,

Women, Udhampur, Abdul Bari Naik, Naib Tehsildar, Pulwama II, Nazir Ahmad Wani and Teacher Government Middle School, Kralpora (Kupwara) Idrees Jan were uploaded by the General Administration Department (GAD) on its website on Monday. According to the identical orders, the dismissal of the three officials was directed by Lt Governor Manoj Sinha on April 30 under sub-clause (c) of the proviso to clause (2) of Article 311 of **More On P6**

Mehbooba, Bukhari Slam Sacking Spree

People's Democratic Party (PDP) President Mehbooba Mufti and her political opponent Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari of J&K Apni Party on Monday criticised the government for sacking a government employee on alleged charges of his anti-national activities. PDP president Mehbooba said that government has misplaced priorities during the pandemic. She also posted a three-day-old letter of the General Administration Department **More On P6**

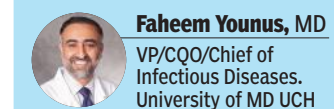
BJP Leader Faces Heat for Slamming Union Minister

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Senior Jammu and Kashmir BJP leader and former MLC Vikram Randhawa got a show cause notice by the party's disciplinary committee; hours after he levelled corruption charges against union minister Jitendra Singh. Randhawa has been asked to reply within two days along with any evidence to prove his claim.

Randhawa, who is the president of Stone Crusher Owners Association, levelled serious allegations of corruption against Singh's office in Jammu over the issue of mining policy and also threatened to immolate himself next week.

Singh's office in Jammu had also taken serious note of the allegations and set a deadline for **More On P6**

**Why Wrong Treatments Are Still Being Used?**

1. Patients and doctors psychologically feel better
 2. Ppl falsely attribute their INCIDENTAL RECOVERY to these meds
 3. Lack of education
- Add Azithromycin, Favipiravir and plasma to the list below and know: these drugs DON'T work



Testing negative on RT PCR / RAT does not mean no Covid. Please isolate yourself if you are having any symptoms and talk to a doctor. If possible check your oxygen saturation in case of other symptoms.



It seems clinical inertia among physicians treating Covid patients in Kashmir is a contributory factor to rate of decline in recovery of such patients.

No defined and unified treatment protocols exist in hospitals and every physician is trying to treat by his own understanding of medicine, which is wrong practice and is not evidence based. Since Covid-19 is new medical entity with evolving knowledge there is no tailored management. However evidence based guidelines will definitely help and minimise harm.

If unified protocols are devised by responsible physicians at higher level and ensure strict trickle down mechanism, the rate of decline will definitely be checked. Clinical inertia and lack of confidence in decision making among treating physicians is definitely contributing to this decline.

'Please Save My Father': Cries For ICU Beds Grow Louder

Auqib Javeed

One of the rattling visuals of the second wave of Covid in Kashmir came on the night of April 29 when a video of a young man pleading the SKIMS authorities to shift his father "struggling to breathe" to critical ward went viral on social media.

The young man along with his sister cried and begged for help—"Please save my father"—until a social-media storm finally reached the ears of SKIMS officials and patient Mohammad Maqbool Wani of Srinagar's Baghi Mehtab area was shifted to ICU (Intensive Care Unit) bed. "ICU bed is basically for

complete monitoring of a sick patient. It doesn't mean only ventilator, it means everything including a ventilator," Dr Nisarul Hassan, an influenza expert, told Kashmir Observer. "Most of the Covid-19 patients can't be on regular beds and need complete monitoring which is possible only in ICU."

However, hours after shifting to the ICU bed, Wani breathed his last.

"He could've been saved if shifted to ICU earlier," Waqar, the deceased person's son, told Kashmir Observer.

As no ICU was vacant in the hospital that night, some attendants present in the ward said the medical staff was so helpless



that "they were literally waiting for any patient on ICU bed to

die" so that the deceased man could've been shifted there.



"What can we do," a doctor expressing his helplessness told

Kashmir Observer. "We don't have any beds available at ICU."

Amid this critical care crisis, Wani's condition deteriorated and his oxygen level dipped to 40.

"The patient's condition panicked us all," said Junaid Ahmad, an attendant whose father was in the same ward. "We requested the authorities and doctors to shift the patient first to ICU. However, there was no response. The patient eventually died at 5:30 AM on April 30."

This incident happened hours after the government claimed that Jammu and Kashmir is one of the best places managing the current Covid situation.

Claiming there was no shortage of lifesaving drugs or medical oxygen in **More On P6**

Study: Post-pandemic world will demand extra care

Agencies

A team of scientists at the University of Waterloo found that designing smaller, more home-like spaces would minimize the spread of viruses while promoting better health and quality of life for residents in the post-pandemic world.

Protecting long-term care residents from outbreaks requires different infrastructure, proper staffing conditions and a culture of quality assurance, researchers found.

"Community outbreaks and lack of personal protective equipment were the primary drivers of outbreak occurrence in long-term care homes, and the built environment was the major determinant of outbreak severity," said George Heckman, a professor in Waterloo's School of Public Health and Health Systems and Schlegel Research Chair in Geriatric Medicine with the Research Institute for Aging.

"We need to distinguish between small-scale living and small-scale housing, using architectural features to create uncrowded and home-like spaces - but within a sufficiently resilient infrastructure to avoid critical staff shortages such as those experienced by some very small homes in

Italy and the United States."

In the U.S., data from geospatial analysis and cellphone tracking showed that outbreaks were more likely when staff commuted from neighbourhoods with high viral circulation, and in large homes with more staff traffic. The researchers said that in the case of Ontario, simulations found that 31 per cent of infections and 31 per cent of deaths could have been prevented if all Ontario long-term care residents had had single rooms. However, 30,000 new private rooms would have been needed.

"Policymakers need to reimagine long-term care infrastructure in a post-pandemic world, keeping in mind that smaller homes support better resident outcomes and are more resilient against infectious outbreaks," Heckman said. "New large-scale long-term care home developments should be strongly discouraged."

Other factors that would improve resident well-being and curb the spread of viral infections include a dedicated infection control officer in all long-term care homes, proper staffing conditions and high-quality assurance frameworks.

Hong Kong, for example, learned from the 2003 SARS outbreak and implemented several policies that led to success when it

came to COVID-19.

They developed guidelines for the prevention of communicable diseases in long-term care, including that all homes have an infection control officer, conduct annual outbreak drills and have a permanent stockpile of personal protective equipment and establish visitation rules that address hygiene and PPE use.

In addition to robust infection control and communication technologies used in Hong Kong, Heckman believes full-time positions, paid sick leave and mental health and well-being support for staff would make a big difference.

The Hong Kong experience underscores the critical importance of learning health systems, of which a culture of quality assurance is an intrinsic component. Ontario, and most Canadian provinces, already have the required information infrastructure to achieve a learning health system.

Based on standardized international Resident Assessment Instrument systems, developed by an international consortium of which Waterloo is a principal leader, their use by communities of practice has led to reductions in inappropriate antipsychotic use and better health outcomes for long-term care residents.



Study links fish oil supplements with heart rhythm disorder

Agencies

According to a new analysis by the European Society of Cardiology, omega-3 supplements are associated with an increased likelihood of developing atrial fibrillation in people with high blood lipids.

The findings were published in European Heart Journal - Cardiovascular Pharmacotherapy, a journal of the European Society of Cardiology (ESC).

Author of the study, Dr Salvatore Carbone of Virginia Commonwealth University, US said, "Currently, fish oil supplements are indicated for patients with elevated plasma triglycerides to reduce cardiovascular risk."

"Due to the high prevalence of elevated triglycerides in the population, they can be commonly prescribed. Of note, low-dose omega-3 fatty acids are available over the counter, without the need for a prescription."



Participants had elevated triglycerides and were either at high risk for cardiovascular disease or had established cardiovascular disease. A total of 50,277 patients received fish oils or placebo and were followed up for between 2 and 7.4 years. The dose of fish oils varied from 0.84 g to 4 g per day.

Clinical trials have suggested that omega-3 fatty acids may be associated with an increased risk for atrial fibrillation, the most common heart rhythm disorder. People with the disorder have a five times greater likelihood of having a stroke.

These studies tested different formulations of omega-3 fatty acids at different doses. The authors, therefore, performed a comprehensive meta-analysis of randomised controlled trials to answer the question of whether fish oils were consistently related to a raised risk for atrial fibrillation.

The analysis included five randomised controlled trials investigating the effects of omega-3 fatty acid supplementation on cardiovascular outcomes.

Participants had elevated triglycerides and were either at high risk for cardiovascular disease or had established cardiovascular disease. A total of 50,277 patients received fish oils or placebo and were followed up for between 2 and 7.4 years. The dose of fish oils varied from 0.84 g to 4 g per day.

The researchers found that omega-3 fatty acid supplementation was associated with a significantly increased risk for atrial fibrillation compared to placebo with an incidence rate ratio of 1.37 (95 per cent confidence interval 1.22-1.54; p<0.001).

Dr Carbone said, "Our study suggests that fish oil supplements are associated with a significantly greater risk of atrial fibrillation in patients at elevated cardiovascular risk."

"Although one clinical trial indicated beneficial cardiovascular effects of supplementation, the risk for atrial fibrillation should be considered when such agents are prescribed or purchased over the counter, especially in individuals susceptible to developing the heart rhythm disorder," Carbone added.

Here's how scrolling through your phone before bed disrupts sleep

Agencies

A recent study explores how scrolling through your mobile phone and its blue light makes it harder to fall asleep. It's widely believed that the emitted blue light from phones disrupts melatonin secretion and sleep cycles. To reduce this blue light emission and the strain on the eyes, Apple introduced an iOS feature called Night Shift in 2016; a feature that adjusts the screen's colours to warmer hues after sunset.

Android phones soon followed with a similar option, and now most smartphones have some sort of night-mode function that claims to help users sleep better.

Until recently, claims of better sleep due to Night Shift have been theoretical. However, a new study from Brigham Young University (BYU) published in the Journal Sleep Health, challenges the premise made by phone manufacturers and found that the Night Shift functionality does not actually improve sleep.

To test the theory, BYU psychology professor Chad Jensen and researchers from the Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center compared the sleep outcomes of individuals in three categories: those who used their phone at night with



the Night Shift function turned on, those who used their phone at night without Night Shift and those who did not use a smartphone before bed at all.

"In the whole sample, there were no differences across the three groups," Jensen said. "Night Shift is not superior to using your phone without Night Shift or even using no phone at all."

The study included 167 emerging adults ages 18 to 24 who use cell phones daily. They were asked to spend at least eight hours in bed and wore an accelerometer on their wrist to record their sleep activity. Individuals

who were assigned to use their smartphone also had an app installed to monitor their phone use.

The measured sleep outcomes included total sleep duration, sleep quality, wake after sleep onset and the time it took to fall asleep.

After not finding significant differences in sleep outcomes across the three categories, the researchers split the sample into two separate groups: one which averaged about seven hours of sleep and another that slept less than six hours each night.

The group that got seven hours of sleep, which is closer to the recommended eight to nine hours a night,

saw a slight difference in sleep quality based on phone usage. The individuals who did not use a phone before bed experienced superior sleep quality relative to both those with normal phone use and those using Night Shift.

Within the six-hour group, which had the least amount of sleep, there were no differences in sleep outcomes based on whether the participants used Night Shift or not.

"This suggests that when you are super tired you fall asleep no matter what you did just before bed," explained Jensen. "The sleep pressure is so high there is really no effect of what happens before bedtime."

The results suggest that it is not blue light alone that creates difficulty falling or staying asleep. The psychological engagement experienced when texting, scrolling and posting are also important factors that affect sleep outcomes.

"While there is a lot of evidence suggesting that blue light increases alertness and makes it more difficult to fall asleep, it is important to think about what portion of that stimulation is light emission versus other cognitive and psychological stimulations," said Jensen.

Night Shift may make your screen darker, but Night Shift alone will not help you fall or stay asleep.

Study examines association between lifestyle patterns, BMI in early childhood

Agencies

In the first of its kind study, researchers used multi-trajectory modelling to examine the longitudinal relationship between concurrent changes in lifestyle patterns and BMI z scores in early childhood. The study was published online in Obesity, The Obesity Society's (TOS) flagship journal.

"The findings will inform early childhood obesity prevention intervention and policy, and will be of great interest to pediatricians, researchers, policymakers and the general public," said Miaobing Zheng of the Institute for Physical Activity and Nutrition, School of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences, Deakin University, in Geelong, Australia. Zheng is the corresponding author of the study.

Experts explain that longitudinal studies investigating the association between lifestyle patterns and obesity in children are scarce. An association between a healthy lifestyle pattern and lower obesity risk has, however, been previously reported in a few cross-sectional studies.

In the present study, the co-occurrence of stable healthy lifestyle patterns along with a concurrent normal BMI z score trajectory of one unit from 18 to 60 months in about half of the children provides new longitudinal evidence supporting that children with healthy lifestyles were more likely to concurrently have nor-



mal BMI z score development.

Data of 439 children were used from the Melbourne Feeding Activity and Nutrition Trial (InFANT) program. This longitudinal cohort of children commenced in 2008 as a 15-month parent-focused cluster randomized controlled trial aiming to reduce obesity risk behaviours in children until 18 months. Additional follow-ups without interventions occurred for children aged 42 and 60 months. Multi-trajectory modelling identified groups of children following similar lifestyle patterns and BMI z score trajectories and multi-nomial logistic regression assessed the determinants of the trajectory groups.

Three trajectory groups of child

lifestyle patterns and BMI z scores were identified and distinguished, showing a mixture of healthy and unhealthy lifestyle behaviours and BMI z scores. Compared to Groups 1 "Unhealthy lifestyle pattern, Low BMI z" and 3 "Unhealthy lifestyle pattern, High BMI z", Group 2 "Healthy lifestyle pattern, Mid BMI z" revealed the most distinctive trajectories across lifestyle patterns and BMI z scores.

Group 2 comprised nearly 53 per cent of children and followed a stable and low trajectory for an unhealthy lifestyle pattern characterized by energy-dense and nutrient-poor discretionary food consumption and television viewing time and a high and rising trajectory for a healthy life-

style pattern of fruit and vegetable intakes and time outdoors, along with a mean BMI z score of 1 unit over time.

Groups 1 and 3 shared similar high trajectories for an unhealthy lifestyle pattern of discretionary food consumption and television viewing time, and low trajectories for a healthy lifestyle pattern of fruit and vegetable intakes and time outdoors. The two groups however differed in BMI z score trajectories, showing stable patterns but at mean scores of 0 and 2 units, respectively. Child sex, breastfeeding duration and maternal physical activity were not associated with the identified trajectory groups.

The study's authors note that the co-occurrence of stable lifestyle patterns and BMI z score trajectories in early childhood highlight the importance of initiating lifestyle obesity prevention early in life, and such interventions could target both children and the mother. A multi-behaviour approach to simultaneously target healthy diet, physical activity and sedentary behaviours could be adapted.

"Young children learn by imitating that which they see daily. There is no doubt that children copy the behaviours observed in the presence of parents: healthy and unhealthy," said Liliana Aguayo, PhD, MPH, a childhood obesity expert, TOS member and research assistant professor from the Hubert Department of Global Health at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia.

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K O V I E W

Oh Didi

Election results in the four states and one union territory have Trinamool Congress Party have gone along both expected lines and contrary to expectations. Perhaps nowhere more so than in West Bengal where the BJP had deployed its vaunted electoral machinery to dislodge the redoubtable Mamata Banerjee, the leader of Trinamool Congress Party, that finally carried the day. Despite losing Nandigram, Banerjee led her party to one of its biggest political victories in the past three decades by halting the BJP juggernaut. This is her third successive win. The loss in the important state is a serious setback for the BJP currently battling a serious backlash due mainly to its shoddy response to the virulent second Covid-19 wave which has led to record infections and deaths across the country. Top BJP leaders including the Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the home minister Amit Shah had campaigned vigorously in the state holding several public meetings and road shows.

This is so far the biggest victory of the Trinamool Congress with over 48 % of all votes polled. In the 2016 Assembly polls, the percentage of votes polled by the party was about 44.9%. The TMC has a strong cadre and has been in power since the last ten years. The party certainly was facing some anti-incumbency issues but it didn't mean that the party was on a weaker wicket.

However, the significance of the Bengal election is beyond the BJP-TMC rivalry. Its outcome is a profoundly important development. The TMC wins is likely to arrest the disarray among the secular forces and give them confidence to stand up to the PM Modi in the upcoming state elections. This has once again underlined that only a broad secular front could confront the BJP with a credible challenge. As things stand, there is no dislodging the PM Modi yet. That is, if no credible political rival emerges from the shadows in the near future, a prospect for which looks bleak.

The likes of Nitish Kumar, Akhilesh Yadav and Mayawati who once showed signs of shaping up into credible national rivals have too paled into insignificance. The caste based parties in Uttar Pradesh who were only hope to stop Modi juggernaut have bitten the dust. And they are unlikely to recover from the beating they took in polls after polls. Modi's appeal has only grown stronger. The BJP under him has set itself up as a formidable force which won't be easy to beat. While the broader opposition is reeling from the abject defeat, the BJP is busy setting up its base in the states where it lacks the presence like Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala, even though it may still not be in a position to credibly challenge the local parties. Things can still turn around for the opposition and also for India if the opposition too develops a potent narrative that offers a persuasive alternative to the one being peddled by the BJP.

O T H E R O P I N O N

The Return of Federalism

With the Trinamool Congress (TMC) winning West Bengal for a third time, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) returning to power in Tamil Nadu after a decade, the Left Democratic Front (LDF) breaking a four-decade-old electoral pattern to retain power in Kerala, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) retaining Assam, and the National Democratic Alliance coming to power in Puducherry for the first time, there is a mandate both for continuity and change in the different regions that went to polls. But the results will also have an impact on national politics in five different ways.

One, there will be a restoration of a degree of balance in Indian federalism — which is good — and greater tension between the Centre and states, which needs careful management. In recent years, especially after the BJP's 2019 win, there has been a perception of the Centre undermining the powers of the states. The fact that three important states, Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Kerala, will be governed by parties which are politically and ideologically opposed to the BJP means that there will be a greater assertion of federal rights. The Centre has a choice — it can either double down or continue with its current approach where the BJP's political aims often supersede the principle of cooperative federalism or it can be more collaborative. The states have a choice too — they can either become more confrontational for the sake of it or adopt a strong but constructive approach. Harmony would be a wiser course of action for both.

Hindustan Times

R. Raj Rao

The most haunting and terrifying image for the world to see on their television screens is that of dozens of funeral pyres simultaneously burning in all our crematoriums and graveyards. We seem to have receded into the Dark Ages!

Now that the BJP has suffered a debacle in the West Bengal elections and is unable to form a government in the state, here are a few questions to ponder over. Were all the election rallies that led to a huge spike in corona cases, and even led to the death of some candidates who contested the elections, worth it? Was it necessary for the elections in West Bengal to be held in eight phases? Is the Election Commission so compromised that it does not have a will of its own, but has merely to kowtow to the wishes of the union government? Small wonder, then, that the Madras High Court recently ruled that the Election Commission should be held accountable for mass murder, a verdict against which the Election Commission has filed an appeal in the Supreme Court. Mamata Banerjee herself plans to drag the Election Commission to court over the Nandigram result. Those of us who were around when the independent-minded T. N. Seshan was the Chief Election Commissioner can see, with a sense of dismay, how the Election Commission has completely lost its autonomy.

The Delhi High Court has warned the central government that contempt proceedings will be initiated against it, if it fails to explain the capital's oxygen shortage. This is a welcome move, for it isn't enough for the higher judiciary to merely go after the Election Commission. They need to gun for the central government itself which misled the nation in March by declaring that India had won the fight against corona, and that the dreaded disease had been more or less eradicated from the country. But did the PM consult doctors before he spoke? Did he not know that other countries had experienced a second wave, and this would sooner or later hit India as well? Did nobody tell him that there were mutant strains of the virus, such as the UK strain, the Brazil strain and the South Africa strain, and that there could soon be an Indian strain that made its appearance?

The current Covid tragedy has led India to go round with a begging bowl, no offence meant, to other countries for help. America has rushed aid to India to the tune of 100 million dollars. The United Kingdom, France, Germany, Belgium, Ireland, Italy, Australia,

Sweden, Switzerland, Norway, Finland, Luxembourg, Portugal, Rumania, Hong Kong, Thailand, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have all come to India's rescue. Even 'enemy' countries like China and Pakistan, and tiny principalities like Bhutan, have offered to contribute their mite.

But do these countries know that while India has asked them for help, the central government continues to go ahead with Parliament's Central Vista Tower project, the cost of which is Rs. 20,000 crore? Do they know that Delhi's present lockdown restrictions do not apply to construction workers at the project site, who go up and down as if all is hunky dory, risking their lives? But, in a month when workers of the world unite, is the government really concerned about the lives of the poor? If it was, we would not have witnessed last year's migrant labour tragedy.

Someone rightly said on Twitter that before the world rushes aid to India, it must formulate strict eligibility criteria for receiving the aid. Speaking of social media, Facebook allegedly removed a post that called for Modi's resignation, and restored it only when there were protests.

If things weren't as bad as reported by the media, except of course the godi media (one godi TV channel did not cover the election results, ostensibly because of the covid crisis, but really because it knew the BJP was losing in Bengal), India would not be isolated by the world today. The US has asked all its citizens in India to leave the country at once. Many other countries have banned flights to and from India. The foreign media has come down heavily on the Modi government. The Australian Financial Review carried a cartoon by David Rowe that showed the Prime Minister blissfully riding an elephant that was dead, without knowing that it had died. This was the cartoonist's way of demonstrating how cut off from ground realities the Prime Minister is. A friend who lives in Canada wrote to say that they are shocked by the invisibility of the political opposition during the present crisis.

The most haunting and terrifying image for the world to see on their television screens is that of dozens of funeral pyres simultaneously burning in all our crematoriums and graveyards. We seem to have receded into the Dark Ages!

Yet religion takes precedence over everything else. The recently concluded kumbh mela threw social distancing and the wearing of masks for a toss, leading to the deaths of many who attended it, including the deaths of some well-known people, like music director Shriram Rathod. But hardly is it over, then the Uttarakhand government now speaks of conducting the Char Dham festival in the middle of May. Whether this other super-spreading event will finally be held or cancelled still remains uncertain.

Two years ago, the BJP was returned to power at the centre with a thumping majority. Can they be sure of the same success if general elections are held today? Many of the party's own members and their families have succumbed to Covid.

Everything is in short supply, from hospital beds to ventilators to oxygen cylinders to vaccines. In the circumstances, is the claim that vaccines will now be available to everyone above the age of 18 anything but a political gimmick to give the government brownie points? Most states have made it clear that they will be unable to vaccinate all adults for now. I myself am stuck, having had my first jab in March, but being turned away wherever I go for my second jab today, six weeks later. It would have been much better if the drive was conducted phase-wise, in accordance with the availability of vaccines. Seniors should have been vaccinated first, then everyone between the ages of 45 and 60, and only then should have the vaccines been thrown open to all, by which time more manufacturers would have entered the fray. This is how most countries handled their vaccination drive.

As of now, we need to retain our optimism in the face of all odds, and hope to see better days in the future. That is, if tomorrow, death does not knock on our door.

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

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



OBSERVER
MAIL

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The Last Friday of Ramadan

This commemorations began some forty-two years ago as an annual affirmation of the Muslim's solidarity with people of Palestine in their struggle for the liberation of al-Quds.

To commemorate this day during Ramadan, a month of struggle is symbolic. It was during Ramadan that Muslims fought their first battle – Badr to liberate Makkah from the clutches of idol worshippers (Mushrikeen).

Since Al-Quds day was first proclaimed, Muslims worldwide have observed this day, drawing attention to the violation of Zionist and desecration of Islam's third holiest Mosque, as well as their continued occupation of Palestine and their repression of the Palestinian people.

The Al-Aqsa Mosque is revered by Muslims as the place from which

the Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) ascended to heaven. Al-Quds is the Arabic name of Jerusalem, Islam's third holiest city after Mecca and Medina. Jerusalem is a holy city, a city of three divine faiths.

Every Muslims should be aware of the continuing threat to the city of al-Quds and the mosque itself.

The mosque structure has been weakened by opening tunnels running below in the name of archaeology and science. These tunnels could be used to plant bombs which could destroy the mosque, and which the Zionist state could blame on individual extremist.

Since the Zionist occupation of Palestine, land confiscation, building illegal settlements, religious persecution, and demolition of the Palestinian homes is a daily occurrence both Muslims and Christians have

suffered the Zionists' brutality and persecution.

History will show no mercy to the Arab nations who have betrayed and abandon the Palestinian Statehood in favor of recognizing Zionist Israel and the "Deal of the Century. And there are many Muslim organizations in USA who have dropped Palestinian cause with donations and trips to Israel by Zionist organizations.

These organization do not commemorate the UN Palestinian solidarity day, NAKBA, or Al Quds Day.

I would like to tell the leaders of Arab nations, for over seventy years you have not been able to stand up against Zionist Israel's. On the contrary you joined the Donald Trump's "Deal of the Century". Your only interest is to change anti-imperialist governments in Iran and Syria.

You might be next too! Look at Saddam Hussain and Ghaddafi.

On Feb. 18, 1979, Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader was the first foreign dignitary to visit Tehran after the revolution. He later told reporters "That I felt as if I was landing in Jerusalem...Today, we are witnessing the victory of the Islamic revolution in Iran and tomorrow we shall see the victory in Palestine".

Jerusalem still endures. It was once described as "the flower of all cities" in a famous song by the Lebanese Diva Fairouz. Listen to the song: Will make you cry! The Flower of The Cities, Fairuz

In the struggle for peace thru justice! Speak Up! Silent No More!

Mohammed Khaku
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Understanding The Science Of Landslides-Part I

Dr Afroz Shah

The landslide hazard poses a consistent threat to people in Jammu and Kashmir, and it usually intensifies during rainy seasons. Proper scientific approach and technology needs to be used to counter any future threat. This will also guide us in understanding why some areas in Jammu and Kashmir are more prone to such hazards and what can be done to avoid or minimize such hazards.

NATURAL disasters like earthquakes, tsunamis, landslides, wildfires, cyclones, droughts, floods etc. continuously pose constant threats to our young, 10,000-years-old, civilization. It is estimated that these hazards have increased recently, in the decade from 1976 to 1985, close to one billion people were affected by disasters and this number had more than doubled in the decade from 1996 to 2005, in which nearly two and a half billion people were affected. In the last decade about 3 billion people were affected and it killed around 750,000 people and cost around US\$ 600 billion.

To cope with the natural disasters it is required to understand the science behind these events and plan a comprehensive program to educate the masses. It is important to put more emphasis on pre-disaster planning, rather than on post-disaster reaction. There are ample evidences to demonstrate that lack of scientific awareness has proved fatal in most of the natural disasters we have witnessed so far in the past. For example, the earthquakes in New Orleans and Port au Prince, which had long been recognised as a catastrophe waiting to happen, but somehow even that awareness did not produce the desired effect! Similarly, there are several places in the world, for example South East Asia, where knowledge about earthquakes, tsunamis, landslides, cyclones, floods etc. is still in its infancy. This has caused colossal loss to life and property. For example in Muzaferabad and Aceh (Indonesia) the tragic examples, in which basic scientific ignorance and the inability to translate the acquired knowledge into timely planned action clearly shows the challenges earth sciences face today.

Landslide is the movement of a mass of rock or debris down a slope. The dimensions of a landslide may be very small or huge, and its movement can be sluggish or very swift. There are various reasons for such movements; for example precipitation (rain-fall), topography, geology (rock and soil types) and human activities, can all trigger landslides. Anything affecting slope conditions can cause slope failure, potentially in an area, which is prone to landslides. This includes human induced slope failures, especially during construction, mining etc. Earthquakes are one of the main causes, which trigger landslides and volcanic eruptions also contribute to these movements. One of recent examples of an earthquake induced landslides occurred in Muzafarabad Pakistan, when a 7.6 magnitude earthquake struck this region in 2005. It is estimated that more than 87,300 people lost their lives and several millions were rendered homeless. This has affected an area of more than 30,000 Kilometre square and triggered thousands of landslides.

The landslide hazard poses a consistent threat to people in Jammu and Kashmir, and it usually intensifies during rainy seasons. Proper scientific approach and technology needs to be used to counter any future threat. This will also guide us in understanding why some areas in Jammu and Kash-



mir are more prone to such hazards and what can be done to avoid or minimize such hazards.

Gravity, the driving force for slope failure

Slopes are generally unstable over a long period of time and therefore, they tend to stabilise by moving to a new and stable condition. This is achieved through the force of gravity, which is the driving force and will always act on the slopes to drag them down. There is always a tug of war between the driving force (gravity) and the resisting force, which is the strength of the rock-mass to uphold against the gravity. A slope may fail, if the driving force exceeds the resisting one.

Gravity makes it possible for us to walk on the surface of Earth. When a surface is flat, it is quite easy to walk, because the gravity acts perpendicular to our feet. However, if the surface is inclined, it is hard to walk, because the force of gravity in this condition has two components (see Figure). For example the figure (c) shows these two components acting on a slope, one is parallel to its surface and the other one is perpendicular. The slope parallel component (Gs) will always try to make anything resting on its surface inherently unstable and cause a shear stress parallel to the slope, which pulls the object in the downward direction. However, the perpendicular component of gravity (Gp) helps to hold the object in place on the slope.

Friction and Cohesion

The forces resisting movement down the slope are grouped under the term shear strength which includes frictional resistance and cohesion among the particles that make up the object. For example, when we want to push an object over a slope, we need some force to do that and that applied force

must overcome the resistance due to friction (which is the area of the object in contact with the sloping surface). In natural conditions, the applied force is from the gravity and it has to overcome the friction and the cohesion among the particles. If the surface is rough, the friction will be more, because the particles of the object are tightly held to the surface. However, when a surface is slippery or polished, it is easy to slide down. Water, makes slopes slippery and therefore, reduces friction, which facilitate the sliding, that is one of the reasons why there is more sliding in wet seasons. Cohesion is the force that keeps material (e.g. a rock) intact. When you pick a rock (e.g. granite) and look at it carefully, you can observe that it is made-up of a number of minerals of different colours. These are held together or interlocked by the forces of cohesion.

When the frictional and cohesive forces become smaller than the shear stress, the object on a slope slips down the slope. Alternatively, when the cohesive forces, which hold rock particles or soil together, are weaker than the shear strength, the rock will fall apart under the influence of gravity.

Slope stability can be measured through the Safety Factor, which is the ratio of the resisting force (Shear Strength) to the driving force (Shear Stress).

$$F_s = \text{Shear Strength} / \text{Shear Stress}$$

If this ratio is slightly more than 1, the slope is close to being unstable, however, if it is significantly greater than 1, (1.5 or 2), then the slope is stable, because the shear strength (resisting and cohesive forces) is much greater than the driving force.

Dr Afroz Shah is Assistant Professor Structural Geology, Universiti Brunei Darussalam

The Pandemic Within the Pandemic

LOICE ACHIENG OMBAGO

Globally, antibiotic use in hospitals has surged since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, and over-the-counter sales, legal in many countries, have soared. This is further fueling the global crisis of antimicrobial resistance, as bacteria evolve and become immune to these drugs.

NAIROBI – Fear of COVID-19 is driving increased over-the-counter (OTC) sales and in-hospital prescriptions of antibiotics – and fueling a silent pandemic in its wake.

Globally, antibiotic use in hospitals has surged since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Even though studies show that only 8% of patients admitted to hospital with COVID-19 also have an infection requiring antibiotics, more than 70% receive them. In addition, many people worried about possible or actual COVID-19 symptoms, and alarmed by global reports about the pandemic, have turned to buying antibiotics without seeing a health-care worker.

This is further fueling the global crisis of antibiotic resistance, as bacteria evolve and become immune to these drugs. We must move quickly – with international policy, national laws, and local action – to control what the World Health Organization has identified as one of the ten leading health threats to humanity.

Antibiotics treat infections caused by bacteria, and have no impact on a virus such as SARS-CoV-2, which causes COVID-19. Overusing them merely accelerates the emergence of antibiotic resistance, which will undercut our ability to treat common diseases. Simple infections such as pneumonia or urinary tract infections, which currently can be quickly cleared by common antibiotics, may prove impossible to treat and become deadly.

This is particularly true in many African, South American, and Asian countries, where access

to health-care workers is limited and there are no restrictions on antibiotic sales. In India, antibiotic sales have risen astronomically in recent years, largely driven by unregulated OTC purchases, including of unapproved drugs. Likewise, in Kenya, all antibiotics can be purchased without a prescription.

Bacteria that develop resistance to multiple antibiotics are responsible for causing difficult-to-treat infections, which are up to three times more likely to kill people than infections caused by non-resistant bacteria. And data from several countries – including China and Egypt – indicate that up to 50% of bacteria-causing infections in critical-care units are resistant to several antibiotics. In the United States, it is estimated that close to three million people get an antibiotic-resistant infection each year, leading to more than 35,000 deaths annually.

Drug-resistant bacteria are also more likely to spread from person to person, and have been known to cause large disease outbreaks in hospitals.

In India, antibiotic sales have risen astronomically in recent years, largely driven by unregulated OTC purchases, including of unapproved drugs. Likewise, in Kenya, all antibiotics can be purchased without a prescription



Many COVID-19 treatment wards around the world are currently grappling with this problem.

As an infectious-disease specialist working on the COVID-19 management front line and also leading the treatment of drug-resistant infections in Kenya, I have often struggled to treat patients with severe bacterial infections that had developed resistance to all available antibiotics. Many of the recently developed drugs that could potentially treat resistant bacteria are often extremely expensive and not available in many countries. A ten-day course of one such antibiotic in Kenya, for example, costs almost \$10,000, putting it beyond the reach of most patients.

In fact, many patients entering the hospital for COVID-19 treatment say that they have already taken one or more antibiotics at home in an attempt to address some of their symptoms. Often, using these drugs had made them feel that they were being treated, so they delayed going to the hospital.

Some may argue that allowing

unrestricted use of antibiotics can enable access to treatment for those unlikely to be able to see a doctor, and may be cheaper for the poor. But the resulting antibiotic resistance is expensive to treat and potentially costs lives.

What must we do to forestall this next pandemic? For starters, the WHO and other global agencies must speak out much more strongly and explicitly against the use of antibiotics in cases of COVID-19, unless these drugs are specifically indicated for another bacterial infection.

In addition, national governments must tighten restrictions on OTC antibiotic purchases. Evidence suggests that introducing and enforcing laws to limit such sales can be effective if these efforts are sustained over time. Requiring pharmacies to display a notice stating that it is illegal to sell antibiotics to customers without a doctor's prescription also has been associated with reduced antibiotic sales.

Hospitals should adopt so-called antibiotic stewardship strategies to reduce unnecessary prescriptions. These measures can lead to reduced antibiotic use and cost, and decrease the risk of antibiotic-resistant infections in hospitals. Effective strategies could include developing guidelines for managing common infections, restricting antibiotic use in viral infections, strengthening laboratory capacity – especially in low- and middle-income countries – to help clinicians identify the correct bacteria to treat, and providing continuing education for all clinicians.

Finally, individuals – despite their understandable fears of COVID-19 – should not risk harming themselves by using antibiotics unnecessarily.

The message is clear: if we do not act now to curb antibiotic use, we will invite a new pandemic. And, unlike COVID-19, no vaccine will save us.

Project Syndicate

LG Announces Special Financial Incentives for Covid-19 Warriors

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Monday approved special Financial Incentives for Covid-19 Warriors of Health and Medical Education Department of J&K.

Frontline workers of Health & Medical Education Department, J&K are rendering valuable services in the challenging Covid pandemic times for saving precious lives of the patients, observed the Lt Governor.

Although, the services rendered by these Covid warriors cannot be

compensated, still the UT Government has decided to incentivize their efforts, the Lt Governor added.

Incentives are exclusively for those frontline workers who directly deal with Covid-19 patients. The decision will benefit more than 17,000 Corona warriors including Resident Doctors, Medical Officers, Paramedical/Nursing staff, Drivers and Class IV employees.

The incentive will be Rs 10,000 p.m. for Resident doctors, PGs and Medical

Officers; Rs 7,000 p.m. for Nursing and Paramedical staff, and Rs 5,000 p.m. for Drivers, Sweepers and Attendants. The tenure of these incentives shall be initially for a period of 03 months and will be paid from May 2021 onwards.

In view of surge in Covid-19 cases and to give a fillip to available medical services at this crucial juncture, the Lt Governor also granted extension up to 31st December, 2021 in favour of the Faculty Members, Consultants, Doctors

working in SKIMS, Soura, Srinagar/Bemina; Government Medical Colleges and Health department who are going to retire from May, 2021 to November, 2021.

The tenure in respect of the doctors presently undergoing various tenure postings viz Registrarship, Demonstratorship, Fellowship, Senior/Junior Residency etc in SKIMS, Soura, Srinagar/Bemina; Government Medical Colleges of the Union Territory have also been extended up to 31st December, 2021.

3 TMC Workers, 1 BJP Supporter Killed In Post-Poll Clashes In Purba Bardhaman

Agenceis

BURDWAN: Four people were allegedly killed in clashes between the TMC and the BJP in West Bengal's Purba Bardhaman district after the election results were announced, official sources said on Monday.

The Trinamool Congress claimed three of its supporters were killed by the BJP, which

rejected the allegations, saying the incidents were the result of "people's resistance".

A few TMC supporters were on the way to Nabagram in the Jamalpur police station area on their motorcycles in the afternoon when they were allegedly attacked in Odishapara by BJP workers, local sources said. They were thrashed and their bikes vandalised, the TMC alleged.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

J&K Hits New

brought to SMHS where doctors declared him brought dead and he tested positive for covid-19. A 55-year-old man from Safakadal, died four days after he was admitted to SKIMS Soura, they said.

A 72-year-old woman from Hazratbal died 11 days after remaining admitted to the tertiary care hospital, officials said. A 35-year-old from Moomin Abad Batmaloo died at SMHS hospital, three days after he was admitted with bilateral community acquired pneumonia. A 58-year-old woman from Hamdaniya Colony Bemina died at SMHS hospital, 11 days after she was admitted at the facility and tested positive for the virus.

A 55-year-old from Karanagar died at GMC Srinagar while a 25-year-old man from Natipora died at home, officials said.

The other victims were a 77-year-old woman from Kulgam, who died at the district hospital, a day after she was admitted there. A 78-year-old man from Safapora Ganderbal died at SKIMS Soura and a 65-year-old from Old Town Baramulla, who died in SDH Sopore, three days after she was admitted there.

About the new cases detected across J&K on Monday, officials said that Kashmir Valley reported 2439 new cases of Covid-19 while 1294 people were also infected by the virus in Jammu division, taking the number of people infected by the virus since last year to 187219 in J&K.

Giving district wise details, the officials said Srinagar reported 1136 cases, Baramulla 232, Budgam 208, Pulwama 296, Kupwara 64, Anantnag 145, Bandipora 85, Ganderbal 51, Kulgam 167, Shopian 55, Jammu 584, Udhampur 86, Rajouri 111, Doda 12, Kathua 112, Samba 209, Kishtwar 9,

Poonch 30, Ramban 44 and Reasi 97 new cases of coronavirus.

There are 34567 active positive cases—12323 in Jammu and 22244 in Kashmir even as 1536 more patients have recovered—626 from Jammu Division and 910 from the Valley, they added.

LG For Speedy

through virtual mode to review the situation, the LG directed for constituting Covid Management teams consisting of DC, SP, CMO, other senior officers including Principal of the concerned Government Medical College at District level, wherever available, besides local monitoring teams at Block level, Tehsil Level and Panchayat level, for effective Covid management, an official spokesperson said.

During the meeting, Sinha, he said, emphasized on enhanced coordination of officers at district level along with constitution of local monitoring teams.

"While reviewing the district-wise status of Covid control measures, the LG directed the district administrations for speeding up the Vaccination drive, besides intensifying testing and contacts tracing across the Union Territory," the official spokesperson said.

He said that the LG also asked the DCs and SPs to maintain effective synergy for strict enforcement of restrictions in the areas being declared as Micro Containment Zones and ensure proper functioning of Covid Control rooms in every District.

"Keep strict vigil on black marketing and rates of essentials, and ensure stern action against those involved in hoarding of essentials & medicines. Every officer should remain available, through online mode also, for providing public utilities and ensuring that important & routine works do not suffer during restrictions and public do not face any inconvenience," the LG said, as per official spokesperson, while instructing the DCs and SPs

The official spokesperson further said that the LG directed the concerned officers for ensuring implementation of an effective Covid Management plan from District level to the villages at Panchayat level.

"Emphasizing on proper functionality of oxygen generation plants, the Lt Governor asked the Divisional Commissioners to keep a close monitoring on functioning of these oxygen generation plants, besides ensuring uninterrupted 24x7 power supply to the oxygen plants and an alternative backup of oxygen supply," he added.

During the meeting, he said, Chief Secretary BVR Subrahmanyam briefed that two divisional level Committees have been constituted to ensure proper and judicious utilization of Oxygen supply, audit of the availability and consumption of oxygen in all hospitals across UT, assess the requirement of each hospital, besides the amount of back up and buffer stock required.

"It was also informed that three war rooms have also been set up under the chairmanship of Secretary, Industries & Commerce to coordinate and ensure supply of oxygen and check hoarding," the official spokesperson said.

"The Lt Governor directed the Health department to ensure the availability of Doctors through online mode for all patients (Covid and Non Covid) to provide them necessary medical advice," he added.

He further said that the LG further suggested for roping in religious leaders and elected representatives for creating awareness among the people regarding the advisories and SOPs

of Union Health Ministry and J&K's Health department to combat Covid-19 spread.

"While stressing upon the efforts to reach out to the people with correct information, the Lt Governor directed the Deputy Commissioners and SPs to provide factual information on Covid situation to counter miscreants at the District level itself," he added.

He further said that the directions were also passed to the concerned officers for completion of the payments under MGNREGA within 10 days instead of 15 days, on priority basis, besides ensuring continuous extension of pensions and benefits of various beneficiary oriented schemes.

According to the official spokesperson Sinha also shared with all DCs and SPs, the decisions and suggestions brought out during an Apex Group meeting. He stressed for judicious and rational admission of Covid patients from level-1 and level-2 hospitals to level-3 hospitals.

Besides Subrahmanyam, the meeting was also attended in person and through virtual mode by LG's advisor Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar, DGP Dilbag Singh, Financial Commissioner, Finance Department, Arun Kumar Mehta, Financial Commissioner, Health and Medical Education Atal Dulloo, Principal Secretary to the Government, Home Department Shaleen Kabra, Principal Secretary, Power Development Department and Information Department Rohit Kansal, Principal Secretary to the Government, Public Works (R&B) Department Shailendra Kumar, Principal Secretary to the LG Nitishwar Kumar, ADGP Mukesh Singh, Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir Pandurang K Pole, Divisional Commissioner, Jammu Dr. Raghav Langer, IGP Kashmir Vijay Kumar, Mission Director, NHM Choudhary Mohammad Yasin, and HoDs of various departments.

Oxygen Supply

Chief Secretary, B V R Subrahmanyam on Monday sought a detailed audit of oxygen demand across all hospitals and medical institutions, an official spokesperson said.

The CS, he said, directed constitution of divisional level teams to conduct the audit within two days and specify the requirement of gaseous oxygen to meet the needs of patients in COVID facilities, non-COVID hospitals, private hospitals, and Army hospitals.

He further said that in the meeting it was also impressed upon the concerned to also include in the audit the estimation for future increase in COVID dedicated beds taking the existing tally from 4200 to 7000; and facilities to be provided at COVID care centres with at least 7000 oxygen-supported beds.

"Similarly, to precisely assess the availability of oxygen in the Union territory through in-house production and imports, Divisional Commissioners were asked to constitute divisional level expert committees to conduct the audit of oxygen generation and storage at various pressure levels. The oxygen supply audit will depict available resources, as well as arrangements, being made to increase supply in the future," he added.

According to the official spokesperson, Subrahmanyam also directed establishment of an oxygen war room headed by the Principal Secretary, Industries & Commerce with subsidiary war rooms under respective Divisional Commissioner to monitor and manage supply and distribution of oxygen in Jammu and Kashmir by coordinating with suppliers and user agencies.

Meanwhile, the Health & Medical Education Department was asked to ensure optimal uses of oxygen across the hospitals with minimal wastage.

"Further, Divisional Commissioners were directed to establish 24x7 call centres in Srinagar and Jammu for proper patient management and strict implementation of hospital referral policy. They were asked to advertise the helpline numbers in print, electronic and social media, besides, circulating them among the larger population through bulk text messages by using Swasthya Nidhi data," the official spokesperson said.

He said that the meeting was informed that COVID call centres will be operated by a team supported by medical professionals. They will collect vital information from patients and suitably direct them to triage points for seeking medical advice and assistance.

"The COVID triage points will be established at district hospitals, CD hospitals at Jammu and Srinagar, and at the emergency blocks of GMC, Jammu/Srinagar, and SKIMS, Srinagar," he added.

The official spokesperson further said that the Chief Secretary reiterated strict implementation of hospital referral policy for efficient patient management across the hierarchy of COVID care hospitals with access to tertiary healthcare reserved for critically ill patients.

"Accordingly, Divisional Commissioners were asked to ensure optimal utilization of resources, wherein the tertiary hospitals would only admit critical COVID patients being referred from district hospitals and walk-in patients would first be evaluated at triage points and suitably referred to proper healthcare facilities based on the severity of infection," he added.

Emphasizing that only vaccination will retard the rate of COVID transmission, the CS, as

per the official spokesperson said that vaccination rate should be maintained. He directed Director, Health Services, Jammu/Kashmir in consultation with Commissioner, Jammu/Srinagar Municipal Corporation to establish mobile vaccination centres with arrangements for AEFI management closer to the residential areas and vaccinate the eligible population amidst ongoing restrictions.

Financial Commissioner, Finance, Financial Commissioner, Health & Medical Education, Principal Secretary, Home, Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor, Principal Secretary, Public Works (R&B), Principal Secretary, Industries & Commerce, besides, Divisional Commissioners, Kashmir and Jammu, Commissioners, Municipal Corporations, Jammu and Srinagar, Mission Director, National Health Mission along with experts from GMC Jammu, IIT Jammu and SMVDU participated in the meeting.

Life Remains

downtown with spools of concertina wire. At many places, armoured vehicles were placed at vital intersections to regulate the movement of people.

However, essential and emergency services were allowed by the law enforcement agencies.

The Jammu and Kashmir administration had initially imposed lockdown in 11 districts -- Srinagar, Anantnag, Baramulla, Budgam, Kulgam, Pulwama, Ganderbal, Jammu, Kathua, Reasi and Udhampur on Thursday last.

However, two days later on Saturday, the Union Territory administration led by Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha announced to extend curfew in four districts of Srinagar, Baramulla, Budgam, and Jammu till May 6 morning instead of May 3

The government had also announced formation of a five-member Crisis Management Group, comprising Chief Secretary; Financial Commissioners - Finance, and Health & Medical Education; Home Secretary and Principal Secretary to the Government, Public Works (R&B) Department to meet the emerging coronavirus situation

J&K Likely

"isolated lightning/ thundershowers with gusty wind 30- 40-kmph" for both Jammu and Kashmir divisions till May 7.

There are four types of colour codes signifying the level of caution: green which means no action, yellow—situation to be watched), amber—government agencies need to be prepared for severe weather and red—action needed by the agencies.

Meanwhile, the official said that Srinagar recorded a low of 11.6 degree Celsius, same as on the previous night. The temperature was 1.9 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 7.3 degree Celsius and it was above normal by 0.5 degree Celsius.

Mercury settled at 5.9 degree Celsius against 4.9 degree Celsius on the previous night in Pahalgam. The temperature was 1 degree Celsius above normal for time of the season in the famous tourist resort in South Kashmir, he said.

Kokernag, also in south Kashmir, recorded a low of 9.1 degree Celsius against normal of 8.4 degree Celsius, the official said.

Kupwara recorded a low of 9.0 degree Celsius against 7.8 degree Celsius on the previous night and the temperature was above normal by 0.6 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 6.0 degree Celsius against 6.0 degree Celsius on the previous night, the official said. It was 1.7 degree Celsius above normal in the resort, the official added. (GNS)

3 Govt Officials

the Constitution and stated that it is not expedient to hold an inquiry in these cases.

The orders said the Lt Governor is satisfied after considering the facts and circumstances of the case and on the basis of the information available that the activities of Naik, Wani and Jan are such as to warrant their dismissal from service.

The orders said the Lieutenant Governor is satisfied under sub-clause (c) of the proviso to clause (2) of Article 311 of the Constitution of India that in the interest of the security of the State, it is not expedient to hold an enquiry in their cases.

Officials said the three officials were named in separate FIRs and also underwent detention.

Naik, a resident of Kulgam, was arrested in March from his rented accommodation in Udhampur, where he was posted about a fortnight back, in connection with four pending cases about radicalisation of youth in his south Kashmir home town, the officials said.

Similarly, they said two FIRs are registered against Jan, a resident of north Kashmir Kupwara district, in police station Kralpora for allegedly inciting people to violence in 2010 and 2016. He had also undergone four months of detention under Public Safety Act.

Pertinently, the GAD had issued an order on April 21 in which sanction was accorded to the constitution of STF for identifying and scrutinizing the government employees who are

involved in anti-national activities and pose a threat to the country's security, and will be terminated from services, if found guilty.

According to the order issued by the General Administration Department (GAD), sanction was given to the constitution of a Special Task Force, for identifying and scrutinizing cases of government employees, to initiate the process under Government Order No. 738-JK(GAD) of 2020 dated 30.07.2020, for action in terms of provisions of Article 311(2)(c) of the Constitution of India.

The order had further stated that Additional Director General of Police (CID) has been nominated as Chairman of the committee and Inspector General of Police, Jammu/Kashmir, Representative of Home Department not Member below the rank of Additional Secretary, Representative of Department of Law, Justice Member & Parliamentary Affairs not below the rank of Additional Secretary and Representative of the Concerned Department, as necessary, not below the rank of Additional Secretary shall be the members.

"The terms of reference of the Special Task Force shall be to scrutinize cases of employees suspected of activities requiring action under Article 311(2)(c) of the Constitution of India," the order had said.

The order had also empowered the STF to compile records of such employees, wherever necessary and to refer it to the Committee constituted vide Government Order No. 738-JK(GAD) of 2020 dated 30.07.2020. It also orders STF to engage with other members of the Terror Monitoring Group (TMG) for identifying such other employees, as necessary besides taking the assistance of other Agencies and Department(s) in this regard, as necessary.

"The Special Task Force shall speedily scrutinize such cases in a time-bound manner and shall be serviced by the Criminal Investigation Department," the order added.

Mehbooba, Bukhari

of the Jammu and Kashmir government which sacked Idrees Jan, a government teacher from Kupwara district.

Besides Jan, an assistant professor and a revenue department official have also been terminated from services for being a "threat to the state".

"In the middle of a pandemic GOI should focus on saving lives instead of firing govt employees on flimsy grounds in Kashmir. No wonder its misplaced priorities have converted India into shamshanghats & kabristans. The living continue to suffer & the dead are deprived of dignity," the former chief minister tweeted.

J&K Apni Party President and former minister Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari also termed the expulsion as an unfortunate and avoidable decision that has deprived a poor family of its livelihood in highly pressing times.

It seems that some elements within the system have misled the Lt Governor on such a sensitive subject which has fuelled the level of insecurity and alienation among the people especially the employees working in the government sector.

It is ironical that the accused teacher was not provided any opportunity to speak or defend himself against the charges leveled against him, Bukhari said in a statement reacting to the dismissal of Jan, and appealed to the LG to revisit his decision.

BJP Leader Faces

Randhawa of 24 hours, asking him to prove his allegations or seek a public apology otherwise get ready to face a defamation case of Rs 1 crore.

This notice of show cause initiates disciplinary proceedings against you in line with directions of Jammu and Kashmir Bhartiya Janata Party President (Ravinder Raina) with regard to addressing a press conference and a series of media interactions by you while leveling unfounded allegations against a senior leader of party holding responsible position in the Union Council of ministers," reads a letter by the three-member disciplinary committee addressed to party Secretary Randhawa.

The letter, signed by the chairman of the BJP's disciplinary committee Sunil Sethi and members Virenderjeet Singh and N D Rajwal, took note of the unparliamentary language used by the leader, terming it highly objectionable.

More so, this has prima facie tarnished the image of the party, believing strictly in discipline and decency. You are hereby directed to file your reply alongwith evidence, if any available with you, within next two days, the letter said, adding on receipt of the reply, the next date in the matter would be fixed. The letter said the proceedings would be done expeditiously and the report will be submitted to J&K BJP president within two weeks positively.

Earlier during the day, Randhawa said he had not rebelled against the party or the leadership, but wanted the facts to reach the high command including Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Randhawa alleged that the registered stone crushers are facing the worst of the times since 2017 and their children are on the verge of starvation due to the mining department.

He made allegations of Singh's Jammu office being hand-in-glove with the mining department of the union territory.

"I want to clarify that BJP has no role in it.

I have been a BJP worker for the last 30 years while Singh is just a decade old and was introduced into the party by me and also ensured a ticket to him in 2014 parliamentary elections," he said.

Reacting to the allegations of the senior party leader, BJP executive member, Sanjeev Sharma expressed his displeasure, saying, "He had levelled allegations on this office as well as the Union Minister directly.

"If he had any proof, he should come forward within 24 hours and make it public or otherwise tender a public apology to the Union minister who has decided to file a defamation case of Rs one crore against him," Sharma told reporters at a presser here.

Meanwhile, the Congress has demanded an impartial probe into the allegations leveled by senior BJP leader against party colleague in the Prime Minister's office.

"It is a serious matter as allegations were leveled against a senior BJP leader in the PMO and bureaucracy we appeal to Lt Governor to order a high level probe to unravel the truth, senior Congress leader and former minister Yogesh Sawhney said.

'Please Save My

the erstwhile state, advisor Baseer Khan addressed a hurriedly-conveyed presser late evening on April 29: "The projection that Covid management system has been weak is totally wrong."

There're 1600 ICU beds for Covid-19 patients across 20 hospitals in the valley, PK Pole, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, said. "We need 3.26 crore LPM oxygen for these beds while we have a surplus availability of 5.43 crore LPM."

While 111 ventilator beds were available, Pole said, efforts are afoot to increase the oxygen beds in hospitals.

However, family members of Covid-19 patients admitted in different Kashmir hospitals are increasingly taking to social media to seek help and highlight the shortage of ICU beds.

"My dearest maamu passed away after leading a selfless life, being extremely generous only to struggle in his final days for a bed in ICU ward," said Bismah Malik, a Kashmir journalist.

Amid this growing online outcry for ICUs, the summer capital's five hospitals—SMHS, SKIMS, CD Hospital, JVC and JLN—were reportedly running out of ICU beds for critical patients.

According to data accessed by Kashmir Observer, SKIMS had only 8 Covid ICU beds available as on April 30—and all were occupied.

SMHS had 11 Covid ICU beds available—out of which 6 were available.

CD Hospital had 16 beds available—all occupied. While JLN had 11 beds available—only 4 were vacant.

Since most of these hospitals receive a large number of Covid-19 patients, the hospital management said, they quickly run out of the beds.

"All the ICU beds in our hospital are fully occupied as we're receiving patients from all across Kashmir," Dr Farooq Jan, Medical Superintendent of SKIMS, Soura, said.

"The only way to deal with this crisis is to fix the referral set up. We should get only those patients from the districts who have severe conditions."

But till that happens, Kashmir heading towards the peak viral curve fears more Waqar-like pleadings for their breathless loved ones in the ICU-deficient hospitals of the valley.

Indo-Pak Troops

on February 25 this year.

"Pakistan Rangers resorted to unprovoked firing along IB at 0615 hours in Ramgarh sector", Inspector General of BSF, Jammu frontier, N S Jamwal said.

There was no casualty in the firing.

The BSF spokesman said Pakistani troops opened unprovoked firing on a patrolling party ahead of the fencing.

India and Pakistan had agreed to strictly observe all agreements on ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC) and other sectors in the February agreement.

The two countries had earlier signed a ceasefire agreement in 2003, but it was hardly followed in letter and spirit with more violations than observance of the pact.

LG Greet Journalists

role in a country's development & acts as a strong bridge between the Government & People.

#PressFreedomDay," Office of LG J&K tweeted.

He also appreciated the journalists for the role played by them in the challenging time of COVID-19.

"I appreciate all the journalists for determined and constructive role being played by them in the challenging time of #COVID19," Office of J&K LG tweeted.

Moving Train Mows

of medico-legal formalities, reports said.

Driver Killed After

succumbed to his injuries barely a few hours after being admitted for treatment.

A police official told local news agency GNS that a case has been registered in this regard.

Water Shortage Hits Shopian Villages As Orchardists Damage Supply Pipes

Executive Engineer Assures Action



Observer News Service

SHOPIAN: The residents of several villages in Shopian district are facing acute shortage of drinking water for the past several days as few orchardists in the area have allegedly damaged PHE pipes to get water for spraying pesticides.

Locals from Trenz, Mohanpora, Pehlipora, Langandoora, Voterpora, Nangandar and its adjacent areas said that they are without drinking water for the past several days as some orchardists have damaged pipes and due to leakage in the pipes not even a single drop reaches to their taps.

They said that some have permanently used PHE pipes to water their hybrid plants thus leaving many villages at God's mercy.

Gulzar Ahmad, a resident of Trenz Shopian said that PHE employees are working tirelessly in the area but the issue is that they have failed to take action against the orchardists who damage government property for their own benefits.

"If at all we get some water, that is contaminated and contains poisonous pesticides," he said.

Locals alleged that despite repeated requests to the concerned authorities to take action against the persons who damaged water pipes meant to provide drinking water to the villagers but so far nothing has been done.

They appealed District Magistrate Shopian and Chief Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) to direct concerned authorities to take action against the miscreants.

Executive Engineer PHE Division Shopian Irfan Ahmad acknowledged that orchardists in the area are damaging pipes to get water for spraying pesticides and watering their orchards.

Ahmad said that he has informed police in this regard several times but so far no action has been taken, however, he added that almost every Shopian resident is involved in such activity.

He assured that action against the persons involved in damaging PHE pipes will be taken.

Oxygen Plant In Ganderbal Hospital Defunct



Observer News Service

GANDERBAL: The construction of an Oxygen plant at District hospital Ganderbal which was started in December last year is yet to be made functional.

Locals told news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), that with each passing day, the cases of Covid-19 are increasing and more and more people are being hospitalised who need oxygen support but authorities are yet to make oxygen plants functional.

Though officials attributed the slow pace of work on the oxygen plant to inclement weather conditions this year

but official sources said that the 50-bed ward at District Hospital Ganderbal that has been kept on a standby for COVID-19 patients was not yet getting piped oxygen from the oxygen manifold but instead getting oxygen through cylinders.

Officials said that as of now there are 175 oxygen cylinders available and the supply was being received on a regular basis.

They said that work on the plant is going on and it will be functional in the next few days.

Chief Medical officer Ganderbal Dr Mehraj Ahmad Sofi said that work on the oxygen plant with a capacity of 1000 litres per minute is going on and will be functional in next two days.

He said that 12 ventilators including two high end ventilators are also available and as of now only six Covid positive patients are admitted and the plant of 1000 lpm will be enough for 100 beds.

He added that virus is spreading like wildfire and people must adhere to Covid appropriate behavior to break the chain—(KNO)

ACB Arrests Principal Kendriya Vidyalaya Doda For Accepting Bribe



JAMMU: The Anti Corruption Bureau Monday said that it arrested the principal of Kendriya Vidyalaya Doda for accepting bribe.

In a statement, ACB said that it received a complaint against the Principal Kendriya Vidyalaya, Doda Rajeev Kumar Mahajan, who is also Incharge Principal, Kendriya Vidyalaya, Bhaderwah. It was alleged that the complainant had applied for the issuance of Transfer Certificate (TC) of his minor daughter who is studying in KV Kishtwar, for her transfer from KV Kishtwar to KV Bhaderwah.

"The complainant contacted Principal KV Bhaderwah seeking her transfer. The I/C KV Bhaderwah, Rajeev Kumar Mahajan, kept on delaying matter and demanded Rs. 25,000/- for managing the transfer of his daughter from KV Kishtwar to KV Bhaderwah. The complainant explained his inability to pay such a huge amount. The

said principal of KV Bhaderwah agreed on an amount of Rs.15000/- to do the needful and called the complainant to Doda near the Post office with the bribe amount."

The statement said that he approached the Anti Corruption Bureau with the complaint of demand for a bribe amount. "On receipt of the complaint, a case FIR No.01 of 2021 U/S 7 PC Act, 1988 IPC was registered in Police Station ACB Udhampur and investigation was taken up."

It said a trap team was constituted. "The trap was successful. The Trap team caught Rajeev Mahajan Principal Kendriya Vidyalaya Doda red handed while demanding and accepting the bribe from the complainant. The amount of bribe to the tune of Rs. 15,000/- was also recovered on the spot. He was arrested and taken in custody by the ACB team. Further investigation of the case is going on."

Pregnant Women More Affected By Second Wave Of COVID-19: DAK

'Should Get Vaccinated Immediately'

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Doctors Association Kashmir (DAK) Monday said that pregnant women should also be vaccinated on priority basis for Covid-19 as expecting mothers are now considered a high risk group.

In a statement DAK president Dr Nisar ul Hassan quoting a new study published in American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, said Covid-19 vaccine has been found to be safe for both mother and the baby.

Dr Hassan said the study showed that the vaccine generates a robust immune response in pregnant women, equivalent to the general population. "Additionally, protective antibodies were also isolated in umbilical cord and breast milk, implying protection to the unborn and the newborn," he said.

He said the CDC recommends that vaccines should be given to pregnant women. "While the Union health ministry is not recommending vaccines to pregnant women at this time as there was no data available to ensure safety in pregnancy," he said.

"But, now we have evidence. And, we should offer vaccines to them," he added. The DAK President said



AS PER A RECENT STUDY BY Oxford University, Pregnant women infected with Covid-19 face a higher risk of complications than previously known."

pregnant women are experiencing more severe illness in the second wave than was observed in the first wave.

"We are seeing an increase in the number of pregnant women requiring intensive care and ending up on ventilators," he said.

While previous reports had concluded that pregnant women were not at increased risk of severe disease, recent evidence suggests that they are more vulnerable to severe Covid.

"As per a recent study by Oxford University, Pregnant women infected with Covid-19 face a higher risk of complications than previously known."

He said the medical litera-

Parents Abandon Two-Month Old Dead Baby In Jammu Hospital

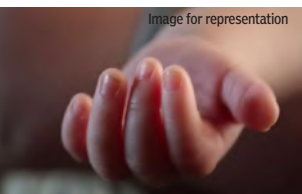
Baby Died Of Cardiac Arrest, RAT Test Declared Him Covid Positive

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In a shocking incident, a two-month-old baby, who tested positive for Covid-19 and died in Jammu hospital on Sunday, was abandoned by his parents, who fled from the hospital without taking the body of their baby along.

Sources in the Shri Maharaja Gulab Singh Hospital Jammu said that a two-month-old baby who tested positive for Covid, succumbed Sunday morning at the hospital.

"His parents left the hospital without taking the body of their



baby along," a hospital source said. "The hospital staff tried their best to catch the baby's parents and persuade them to take the body of the baby along but all efforts failed."

Medical Superintendent SMGS hospital Jammu Dr Dara Singh said that a two-month-old baby was admitted on Sun-

day morning at around 7 am.

"The baby was suffering from congenital heart disease and other problems and he died of cardiac arrest at around 8 PM," he said. "Soon after cardiac arrest, RAT test was done which came positive after which we asked his parents to undergo Covid test as well, but instead of going for testing, they ran away."

He said that the hospital authorities continuously called them but baby's parents did not receive repeated calls. "We have kept the body of the baby in the hospital mortuary," Dr Singh said.

Workshop, Shops Sealed In Baramulla For Violating Covid-19 Lockdown

Observer News Service

BARAMULLA: Authorities Monday sealed a private Workshop besides four other shops in Kunzer area of Tangmarg in northern Kashmir's Baramulla district, for violating the 'Corona Curfew'.

Despite prohibitory orders in

place, the shops were found open, prompting designated authorities to take action, an official said.

The official said that during the inspection it was found that almost forty persons were present working in the compartment of the private workshop.

Maintaining that only manufacturing units are allowed to

work with limited activity and manpower, the official underlined that such relaxation didn't extend to workshops though.

The units were instantly sealed in the presence of Duty Magistrate concerned, the official said adding that cases under relevant sections against the offenders have been taken up.

Mobile Phones, Sim Cards Seized From Inmates In Kot Balwal Jail

Observer News Service

JAMMU: The Counter Intelligence Wing of Jammu and Kashmir Police Monday recovered mobile phones and SIM cards from the inmates in central jail Kotbalwal, Jammu during a surprise raid.

Sources said that a police team raided the jail and recovered mobile phones, SIM cards, chargers and headphones. "The raid was carried out after Jammu police arrested a jail staffer in the Gandhi Nagar firing case."

They said that Royal Singh, a convict in the Amandeep Murder case, was running a nexus in association with the arrested jail staffer.



"Vital leads were developed by police during questioning of arrested jail staffer Kuldeep Kumar led to the raid and subsequent seizure of mobile phones and sim cards."

A senior police official said they cannot rule out the involvement of other jail staff members in providing mobile phone facilities to jail inmates including the militants. (CNS)

Govt Must Stop Disenfranchising Kashmiris, Reinstate Terminated Teacher: JKPC

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Senior Vice President J&K People's Conference Abdul Gani Vakil Monday slammed the Lt Governor led administration over its Kashmir policy which is to disenfranchise Kashmiris from jobs.

In a statement, terming the termination of a teacher of Kupwara from Govt services as injustice and uncalled for, Vakil said the government on one side appeals to Kashmiri youth to join the mainstream and to shun gun but on the other side continues to harass those who joined the mainstream and are doing their jobs peacefully.

"What kind of a policy is this? The UT administration should immediately roll back this anti-employee order and reinstate the terminated teacher of Kupwara.

It is an anti-people move. It is complete harassment. Upon a simple FIR registered how can a govt come to a conclusion whether the person has done any crime or not when there

is no kind of conviction by any court till today, a person is to be deemed innocent unless guilty is proved against him, Vakil asked.

He said when the government is rolling out rehabilitation policy for surrendered Naxals in other states then why it has adopted a different yardstick when it comes to J&K. "For surrendered naxals you are rolling out job policies and for the youth of J&K who has thrown a stone in anger, which is even not proved in the court of law, is labelled as anti national and thrown out of job," Vakil said.

Vakil also appealed to the government to release all political prisoners of J&K on humanitarian grounds given the spike in Covid cases.

"There are a large number of political prisoners lodged in different jails of India. They must be released or shifted to Kashmir valley given the massive outbreak of CoronaVirus in India," so that their families can have a sigh of relief, Vakil added.

25L Vaccines Administered In J&K So Far

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In Jammu and Kashmir, nearly 25 lakh COVID-19 vaccines have been administered so far to the people and the maximum vaccines have been administered to the age group of 45-60-years old individuals, officials figures revealed.

According to the official figures a total of 24, 58,023 vaccination doses were administered to the people among which Dose-I was given to 20,57,947 persons and Dose-II to 4,00,076 persons.

As per the figures, the maximum vaccination till date was taken by the age-group of 45-60 year old.

"The vaccination taken up by this age group includes 10, 56,011 followed by the age-group of above 60-years of age which has recorded a total of 7,49,281 vaccinations in its category," read the figures.

The official figures further reveal that there are a total of 1561 COVID-19 vaccination sites

among which 1545 are government while 16 are private.

Similarly, a total of 1,93,457 COVID-19 vaccine doses were given to the group of 30-45 years old followed by the least number of vaccines that were given to the age-group of 30 years old includes 59,113 doses.

Pertinently, the vaccination drive for above the age group of 18 to 45 years of age started from May 01, 2021. However the vaccination for above 45 years old had started earlier.

As per the statistics, among the total vaccinations administered so far includes 12, 10,366 male, 8,47,213 females and 368 individuals of other categories.

It also reveals that of the total doses administered, Covishield vaccine doses given are 24,54,697 and Covaxin doses given are 5,326.

NEWS MAKERS

Bear Attack: Rescue Ops Continue For 2nd Day In Kangan

Observer News Service

GANDERBAL: The rescue operation by State Disaster Reserve Force, wildlife officials, villagers and volunteers continued for the second straight day to trace the youth, who went missing after bear attack in Dumail Naranag forest area in Central Kashmir's Ganderbal district on Sunday.

An official said that a team of Kangan Police, SDRF unit Ganderbal, locals and wildlife officials intensified the rescue operation on the second day today to trace the missing youth in the forests.

He said that the rescue operation was called off last evening due to darkness.

On Sunday three youth were attacked by a wild bear in the forest area. The official said that two youth were rescued in injured conditions while another went missing in the forest area.

He said that soon after the incident, a team of Kangan police and wildlife officials launched a rescue operation to trace the missing youth. The missing youth has been identified as Javid Ahmad Mir, son of Ghulam Nabi Mir, a resident of Wangath.

Police Arrest 17 Persons, Seize 10 Vehicles For Illegal Mining

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir Police Monday arrested seventeen persons and seized ten vehicles involved in illegal extraction and transportation of raw materials in Baramulla and Bandipora districts in north Kashmir.

A police spokesperson said that in Baramulla, police parties from Police Station Kreeri and Po-

lice Post Mirgund arrested seven persons and seized 6 tractors & a JCB machine involved in illegal extraction and transportation of raw materials at Odina, Yakhmanpora, Diver areas. "They have been shifted to a police station where they remain in custody."

Similarly, the spokesperson said that in Bandipora a Police Party from Police Post Ajas along with teams of Mining and Geol-

ogy Department seized 3 vehicles and arrested 10 persons involved in illegal extraction and transportation of raw materials in SK Bala Ajas, Sumbal. "They have been shifted to a police station where they remain in custody."

Accordingly, he said, cases under relevant sections of law have been registered in concerned police stations and investigations have been taken up.

Private Vehicles Hits 14-year-old To Death In Kangan

Observer News Service

KANGAN: A 14-year-old girl died after she was hit by a private vehicle in Maamer area of Kangan in central Kashmir's Baramulla district.

Officials said that a private vehicle Hyundai I-10 hit a girl on



Monday at Mamer Kangan on

Srinagar-Leh highway killing her on the spot.

The girl has been identified as Khalida Bano (14) daughter of Angrezi Ali Thekrey, a resident of Thekrey Pati, Kangan.

They said that the driver of the vehicles has been arrested.

No Going Back Now: Teams On Edge As COVID Breaches IPL Bio-Bubble



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Players, especially overseas recruits, are feeling edgier following the emergence of two COVID-19 cases in the Kolkata Knight Riders camp on Monday but teams feel "there is no going back" and the IPL should continue despite the ever-increasing threat of the raging pandemic.

Questions are being raised on how a strict bio-bubble created for the world's biggest T20 league was breached after KKR's Varun Chakravathy and Sandeep Warrier got infected with the deadly virus.

Foreign players, who were already anxious about getting home with travel restricted from India, are a more worried lot.

"There is no going back now with half of the tournament done. The news (positive cases in KKR) makes the BCCI's job more challenging," a franchise official told PTI.

"We have been hearing that a player got infected because he was taken outside the bubble for scans. So, it could have happened outside the bubble. As far as I know, everyone is strictly following the protocols laid out by the BCCI and there was no breach there," he added.

Another team official said the tournament should continue as long as more teams are not affected by the virus.

"Even if you have to pause the tournament, how long can you hold back? The only way is to keep isolating the positive cases and keep playing. The players are naturally more anxious now but it is mainly because they are not sure about how they would get back home," said the official.

UK, Australia and New Zealand have banned travellers from India

and a sizeable number of players competing in the IPL are from these countries.

Some foreign players like Australia's Adam Zampa, Kane Richardson and Andrew Tye left in the nick of time before travel bans came into effect but most of them have chosen to stay back and see out the event ending May 30.

"We should let the BCCI decide what is best for all of us. Flooding them with too many opinions on what should be done following the cases at KKR would only lead to more confusion," said another top official of a team.

Five-time winners Mumbai Indians were already testing their players on a daily basis and other teams are likely to follow that in the wake of cases at KKR.

KKR players have been told to isolate in the room and even teams like Delhi Capitals have told its players and support staff to stay in their rooms after the development on Monday.

The two sides played each other four days ago.

"Following the news, we have been told to stay in our rooms and strictly follow the protocols. The players are fully aware that the situation outside is grim and the IPL bio bubble is a much safer environment at this point in time," said a support staff member of a leading franchise.

A former India player competing in the league summed it up aptly.

"There is a lot of anxiety among players. Obviously we are being tested every second day but looking at the situation in the country, you are always scared what next in case you test positive," he said.

"We are hanging in there but you cannot just negate the fear factor," he added.

IPL 2021: KKR Vs RCB Postponed After 2 KKR Players Test COVID Positive



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The COVID-19 storm struck IPL on Monday with Kolkata Knight Riders' Varun Chakravathy and Sandeep Warrier testing positive for the dreaded virus, forcing postponement of the team's game against Royal Challengers Bangalore in Ahmedabad on Monday evening.

The match will be rescheduled some time later during the tournament, which will conclude on May 30.

"Varun Chakravathy and Sandeep Warrier were found to be positive in the third round of testing in the last four days. All other team members have tested negative for Covid," the star-studded league, which features the biggest names in international cricket, said in a press release.

Leg-spinner Chakravathy and pacer Warrier, both 30, have been isolated and the rest of the KKR contingent has returned negative reports for now. Of the two, Warrier has not yet made the playing XI in any of the seven matches KKR have played.

"The Medical Team is in continuous touch with the duo and are monitoring their health. Meanwhile, the Kolkata Knight Riders have now moved towards a daily testing routine to identify any other possible cases and treat them at the earliest," the IPL stated.

"The Medical Team is also determining the close and casual contacts of the two positive cases during the 48 hours prior to collection of the sample that returned the positive test results," it added.

KKR last played on April 29 against Delhi Capitals in Ahmedabad and the development is bound to trigger anxiety in the league, which had been going along smoothly so far in a bio-secure bubble in front of empty stands across six venues.

"Now, the DC players (currently in Ahmedabad) will also have to be tested and every member of the team contingents that came in contact with Chakravathy and Warrier will also be contact-traced through the app watch that has been given to everyone," a BCCI source said.

According to IPL's Standard Operating Procedure for Covid management, any close contact of an infected person has to isolate for six days and return three negative tests on days 1, 3 and 6.

It is learnt that KKR's pace spearhead Pat Cummins revealed the latest development to all the Australian players in the IPL after Chakravathy, while undergoing some shoulder scans for a niggle after Thursday's game, tested positive for the virus.

Chakravathy has appeared in all

of KKR matches so far and has been one of their most successful players with seven wickets under his belt.

The Chennai Super Kings team, which is currently in Delhi but was part of the bio-bubble that included KKR in Mumbai, is also awaiting reports of its players who came in contact with Chakravathy last month.

"All CSK players who have been in touch with Chakravathy have been tested as per contact-tracing protocols. We are awaiting reports," CSK CEO Kashi Viswanathan told PTI.

KKR and CSK had clashed on April 21 in Mumbai.

IPL had dealt with positive cases before the tournament started, including some high-profile names like Axar Patel and Devdutt Padikkal.

However, this is the first instance of positive cases in the middle of the tournament.

"The BCCI and the Kolkata Knight Riders prioritise the health and safety of everyone involved and all measures are being taken in that endeavour," the IPL stated.

Just days before this, three Australian players had pulled out of the league, citing Covid concerns amid a devastating second wave of the global pandemic that has overwhelmed the medical infrastructure of the country.

India are currently recording over 3 lakh cases every day and more than 3,000 daily deaths.

India 2nd In T20, Drop To 3rd In ODI After Updated ICC Rankings

Press Trust of India

DUBAI: India retained the second place in the ICC Twenty20 team rankings but dropped a rung to third in the ODI chart following the annual update carried out on Monday.

India are trailing top-ranked England (277) by five rating points in the T20 team rankings.

During this period, England drew a three-match series against Pakistan 1-1, defeated Australia 2-1 and South Africa 3-0 before losing an away series to India by a 2-3 margin.

New Zealand have also gained in the annual T20I update, moving up from fifth to third after series wins over the West Indies, Pakistan, Australia and Bangladesh. Australia have moved the other way, down from third to fifth.

In other movements at the top of the T20I rankings table, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh have gained one place each to reach eighth and ninth positions, respectively, while the West Indies have dropped two places to 10th.

According to the ICC, these updates eliminate results from 2017-18 and halve the weighting of matches played in 2019-20, which includes the 2019 World Cup.

In the annual update of the ODI

Team rankings, India dropped a place to third behind Australia and new table toppers New Zealand.

The Kiwis have replaced reigning world champions England as the number one ranked side in the ODI rankings.

New Zealand, who defeated Bangladesh 3-0 in their only ODI series during the past year, have advanced two slots after gaining three rating points to reach an aggregate of 121.

Australia are second with 118 points while India and England are both on 115, with the former ahead on decimal points.

England's slip down to fourth position comes in the second annual update since they won the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup at Lord's in the summer of 2019.

In the past 12 months, England have suffered 1-2 series losses to Australia and India, as well as an ODI lost to Ireland.

The latest update, that rates all matches played since May 2020 at 100 per cent and those of the previous two years at 50 per cent, sees Australia move up two places from fourth to second and India drop one place to third. The West Indies have overtaken Sri Lanka to ninth position.

The Netherlands have been allowed to retain their ranking despite only having played four ODIs during the new rating period, since their scheduled fixtures were postponed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

There has been no change of places in either format for Afghanistan, Pakistan or South Africa. Afghanistan are 10th in ODIs and seventh in T20Is, Pakistan are sixth in ODIs and fourth in T20Is while South Africa are fifth in ODIs and sixth in T20Is.

Despite the pandemic, 80 countries have played the requisite six T20Is over the past three years to remain in the rankings. Five countries have lost their ranking after the update — Gambia, Ghana, Hungary, Sierra Leone and Sweden.

The annual update to the Test rankings will be carried out following the conclusion of the ongoing Pakistan-Zimbabwe series.

'Not Letting Us Get Back Home A Disgrace' Slater Lambasts Aus PM Morrison



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Cricketer-turned-commentator Michael Slater, who is currently doing commentary in the IPL here, has launched a scathing attack on his country's Prime Minister Scott Morrison for not allowing its citizens to return from COVID-19 hit India, calling the travel ban a "disgrace".

Australia has shut its borders and not allowing any commercial flights from India because of the massive COVID-19 surge here which has led to all the players, support staff and commentators, who might have wanted to leave the IPL in a fix.

The government has made it clear that Australians who are engaged in the IPL will have to make their own arrangements.

"If our Government cared for the safety of Aussies they would allow us to get home. It's a disgrace!! Blood on your hands PM. How dare you treat us like this. How about you

sort out quarantine system. I had government permission to work on the IPL but I now have government neglect," Slater tweeted.

Threatening a five-year jail term or hefty fine, the Australian government temporarily barred its citizens from entering the country if they happened to be in India within 14 days of their intended arrival.

The decision was announced after a meeting of the National Cabinet last Friday and came into force from Monday.

The move aims at keeping the COVID-19 spread in check in Australia as India is facing a surge in cases.

The decision was also based on the proportion of overseas travellers in quarantine in Australia, who have contracted the infection in India, according to Health Minister Greg Hunt.

Three Australian players left the IPL before the travel ban came into force. The ban is due to end on May 15.

As many as 14 Australian players are competing in the IPL.

Cricket Australia Pledges AUD 50,000 To Help India Fight COVID-19

Press Trust of India

MELBOURNE: Cricket Australia on Monday pledged 50,000 Australian dollars to support India's fight against the devastating second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic and will also raise more funds in partnership with its players' association and UNICEF.

India's daily cases have been upwards of 3 lakh on most days for the past couple of weeks and have also breached the 4 lakh mark. The death toll has been rising by over 3,000 everyday, according to official figures.

"Australian Cricket will throw its support behind India's COVID-19 Crisis Appeal, with Cricket Australia, the Australian Cricketers' Association and UNICEF Australia partnering to raise much needed funds," CA said in a statement.

"Australian Cricket has been deeply saddened by the devastation caused by this second coronavirus wave to hit India, a coun-

try with which Australians share a strong friendship and connection.

"Cricket Australia will make an initial donation of AUD 50,000 and encourage Australians everywhere to give generously at this crucial time in India's COVID-19 response."

The funds raised by CA will be donated to UNICEF Australia, which will utilise it in various relief initiatives in India.

"UNICEF Australia's India COVID-19 Crisis Appeal is procuring and installing Oxygen Generation Plants in hospitals to treat seriously ill patients, providing testing equipments in heavily impacted districts and supporting the distribution of COVID-19 vaccine via the COVAX initiative," the CA added.

The second wave of COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked havoc in India with the health-care infrastructure across the country struggling to cope with the case load amid shortage of oxygen supply and essential medicines.

MI Vs SRH, Preview: Resurgent Mumbai Indians Favourites Against SunRisers Hyderabad

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Back in the groove after two consecutive wins, defending champions Mumbai Indians will be firm favourites to put it past the turbulence-hit and bottom-placed SunRisers Hyderabad in an IPL game here on Tuesday.

Mumbai will enter the game after their four-wicket win over in-form Chennai Super Kings courtesy Kieron Pollard's blitzkrieg.

SunRisers, in contrast, suffered a humiliating 55-run loss to Rajasthan Royals, their sixth in seven games this season. They are also battling a transitional phase in which Kane Williamson has taken over captaincy from an out of form David Warner, leaving him disappointed.

Mumbai openers Rohit Sharma (250 runs) and Quinton De Kock (155 runs) would be itching to give the five-time champions another strong platform and also convert their starts into big scores.

Mumbai's hard-hitting middle-order has clicked in the last two games, which would be quite pleasing for the team management. Pollard (168 runs), who

blazed his way to a match-winning 87 off 34 balls in the last game, would be keen to continue from where he left.

The likes of Krunal Pandya (100 runs), Hardik Pandya (52 runs) and the flamboyant Suryakumar Yadav (173 runs) can be destructive on their day and the trio would be aiming to fire in unison.

Also, it remains to be seen if Mumbai plays Ishan Kishan or Jayant Yadav in place of all-rounder James Neesham, who neither scored big nor was able to pick up wickets.

However, the Mumbai bowlers would need to forget the hammering received at the hands of the CSK batsmen and start afresh.

The pace duo of Jasprit Bumrah (6 wickets) and Trent Boult (8 wickets) have been exceptional at the death and would pose a big threat to the SRH batting unit, which has been inconsistent at best.

Leg-spinner Rahul Chahar (11 wickets) has been the MI's main wicket-taker, but he would need support from Krunal, who has just three scalps. The duo would need to keep things tight to contain the SRH batters.

PV Sindhu, Michelle Li Named IOC Ambassadors For 'Believe In Sports' Campaign

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: World champion and Olympic silver medalist P V Sindhu and world no 11 Canada's Michelle Li have been nominated as athlete ambassadors for International Olympic Committee's 'Believe in Sports' campaign, the Badminton World Federation said on Monday.

The pair have been global ambassadors for BWF's 'i am badminton' campaign since April last year.

"It is an honour to be nominated by the IOC as an ambassador. I stand alongside my fellow athletes in the fight against any form of cheating or competition manipulation. Together we are stronger," Sindhu said in a release.

Lavishing praise on Sindhu, Badminton Association of India (BAI) general secretary Ajay Singhania said: "This is a recognition of her sin-



cerity, fair-play and integrity towards the game she has dedicated and played through her sporting years.

"We at BAI are extremely delighted and proud to see this champion athlete is chosen for this coveted honour at the world stage."

In badminton, manipulation or match fixing, includes influencing the course or the result of a badminton match in order to obtain an advantage for the individual or others.

"We all want to be on the same

start line. It's so important to be fair as that's a true representation of what your ability is," said 2014 Commonwealth Games champion Li.

As part of the campaign, Sindhu and Li will be engaging with the badminton athlete community through online webinars and social media messages to highlight the risks involved and educate them on how best to safeguard and protect themselves in light of opportunities to manipulate their competition.

"Competition manipulation has become an increasingly global concern and protecting honest players is a top priority for the BWF," BWF secretary general Thomas Lund said.

"By joining forces with the IOC in nominating two of our most popular players, Pularla (Sindhu) and Li as ambassadors, we believe we can have a positive impact in the fight to protect integrity in sport."

Protesting Man United Fans Storm Old Trafford, Force Match Postponement

Agencies

MANCHESTER: In an unprecedented moment for the world's richest football competition, the Premier League was forced to abandon one of the biggest matches of the season after an invasion of Old Trafford by Manchester United fans.

The storming of the stadium — shut to fans during the pandemic — came hours before United was due to host Liverpool. As fans protested on the field against United's owners — the Glazer family — flares were set off and thousands more supporters filled the concourse outside Old Trafford.

Ugly scenes erupted as police clashed with supporters who are enraged by 16 years of lack of engagement by the Glazers which peaked with their decision to take



United into a breakaway European Super League which collapsed two weeks ago inside 48 hours.

The players didn't even attempt to make it to the stadium, with United's squad unable to leave its central Manchester hotel due to another outbreak of protests.

The Manchester United Supporters' Trust raised the possibil-

ity of a gate being opened to let fans enter the stadium. The only communication from the club was via an unnamed statement rather than the Glazers.

"We completely acknowledge the right to free expression and peaceful protest," United said.

"However, we regret the disruption to the team and actions which

put other fans, staff, and the police in danger."

The protesters only dispersed after a baton charge by police but the Premier League determined the "dangerous situation that should have no place in football" meant the game couldn't go ahead. A victory for deposed champion Liverpool over second-place United would have clinched the title for Manchester City.

There have been smaller protests at Arsenal and Tottenham since those clubs were part of the six English clubs who tried to join the breakaway European competition.

But there was no significant anger in north London before Tottenham played Sheffield United, winning 4-0 after Gareth Bale scored a hat trick and Son Heung-min also netted to take the team fifth.