



P5 STATE

165 OUT OF 348 COVID ICU BEDS OCCUPIED IN KASHMIR

In Kashmir, of 348 beds designated as COVID ICU beds, around 165 beds have been occupied already. A top health official said that 183 COVID ICU beds are still vacant in Kashmir division but the main four

P6 THINK

MAKING OUR ZAKAT MORE CONSTRUCTIVE

Zakat is one of the five basic tenets of Islam. Zakat means purity. Thus, this implies that a man purifies his yearly earnings by giving away one part of them in the path of God. This further implies that man



P3 CITY

MAYOR SMC SETS TARGETS FOR EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY

Mayor Srinagar Municipal Corporation Junaid Azim Mattu Tuesday held a meeting with senior officers of the Corporation to review works pertaining to Sanitation...



Widom Quote!

A time will come upon the people when one will not care how one gains one's money, legally or illegally.
—Hadith (Bukhari)

100 Kanals Of Land Identified For Firing Range

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The administration of Jammu & Kashmir has identified 100 kanals of land for its use as a small arms firing range by Army in Samba district of Jammu province.

The official documents reveal that alternate land measuring 100 kanals of land at village Deon (Parmandal), Bari Brahmana has been identified for establishment of small arms firing range. "Revenue documents have been prepared by Tehsildar concerned. A joint verification was also conducted by sub-divisional magistrate Vijaypur and Army authorities regarding suitability of FFR and the suitability report from the Army authorities has not been received so far," reads the documents.

According to minutes of a meeting chaired by divisional commissioner Jammu on March 27, it was decided that DC Samba alongwith local military authorities will visit Deon village for joint inspection. They will also ● More On P10



A CRPF man halting a motorcyclist during coronavirus imposed curbs in the Old City of Srinagar on Tuesday. KO Photo, Abid Bhat.

4650 More Test Positive, 37 Succumb To Virus



Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: Coronavirus cases continue to show a massive surge in Jammu and Kashmir as 4650 more people tested positive for Covid-19 on Tuesday, highest ever single-day spike in infections so far, while the deadly infection claimed lives of 37 others across the Union Territory during the last 24 hours.

According to the officials, 25 people succumbed to the infection in Jammu division while 12 people died of virus at different hospitals in Kashmir Valley on Tuesday, raising the

overall fatality count since the outbreak of pandemic last year to 2458 in J&K.

About the fresh cases of infection, officials said, 3178 were reported from Kashmir Valley while 1463 from Jammu division, taking the number of people infected across J&K to 191869.

Providing district-wise details, the officials said that Srinagar reported 1311 cases, Baramulla 352, Budgam 386, Pulwama 240, Kupwara 96, Anantnag 417, Bandipora 107, Ganderbal 31, Kulgam 162, Shopian 85, Jammu 598, Udhampur 220, Rajouri 205, Doda 81, ● More On P10

'Corona Curfew' Extended In 5 Districts Till May 10

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir government on Tuesday extended 'corona curfew' till May 10 in five districts of J&K including Srinagar and Jammu. "In view of the trend in COVID positive cases, the positivity rate and the cases per million, the Corona Curfew in the 4 districts of Srinagar, Baramulla, Budgam and Jammu which is there till 7 am on Thursday, 6 May 2021, will stand extended till 6 am on Monday, 10 May 2021," government said in a tweet. "In addition, Samba district will also be under Corona Curfew from 7 pm on Wednesday 5 May 2021 till 7 am on Monday, 10 May 2021." The government had on Saturday announced ● More On P10

143 People Arrested For Flouting Rules

Police have arrested 143 people in the Kashmir valley in a span of 24 hours for violating lockdown guidelines issued by the administration to curb COVID-19, officials said on Tuesday. They said vehicles were seized as well for flouting the norms in Budgam and Bandipora districts. "During the last 24 hours, police have arrested 143 people, lodged 79 FIRs and also realised fines to the tune of Rs 84,930 from 620 people for violating the guidelines throughout Kashmir valley," an official said. Since the outbreak of the second wave of the coronavirus, the J&K Police has enhanced its efforts to ● More On P6

Covid Hospital To Be Ready By Next Month: Govt

125 ICU Beds In 500 Bedded Corona Hospital In Budgam: Pole

The Jammu and Kashmir government said on Saturday that 125 beds will be used as intensive care units (ICUs) in the DRDO's under construction 500-bedded Covid hospital in Budgam district slated to be completed next month. The remarks in this regard were made by the Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Pandurang K Pole, who visited Reshipora village of Budgam district on Tuesday to take stock of ongoing construction ● More On P6

Now Oxygen Cylinders Only After Registration

J&K administration has begun rationing medical oxygen and made it mandatory for anyone seeking an oxygen cylinder to register first with Covid Control Room set up at the Divisional Commissioners Office in Srinagar. "To ensure and facilitate that Oxygen is available to patients genuinely needing it, the government has decided that refilled cylinders will be provided to them after furnishing requisite prescription from a doctor to the control room set up at Director Industries Jammu or Divisional Commissioner COVID control room Kashmir", a government spokesperson told Kashmir Observer. ● More On P10

22 ND RAMAZAN		
	Iftar TODAY	Sehri TOMMOROW
FIQAH HANAFIYA	07:19	04:06
FIQAH JAFARIYA	07:28	04:02

NEWS DIGEST

Misfire During Wedding Sparks Protest

SRINAGAR: A cop allegedly fired with his service weapon in a marriage ceremony in Nowshera town of Rajouri after which the locals of the area staged a protest demonstration, demanding immediate action against the accused cop. Locals said that heated arguments took place between the cop and a local person during a marriage ● More On P10

Separatist Ashraf Sehrai Hospitalised

SRINAGAR: Muhammed Ashraf Sehrai, chairman of Tehreek-e-Hurriyat was Tuesday shifted to GMC Jammu from Kot Bhalwal Jail after his health started deteriorating. His son said that Sehrai has been shifted from Kot Bhalwal Jail to GMC Jammu. "He was already suffering from many ailments. His health has worsened after his arrest," he said. Muhammad Ashraf Sehrai was booked under the Public Safety Act ● More On P10

Man Killed In Kishtwar Road Accident

SRINAGAR: A man died while nine others were injured in a road accident near Hasti Sarthal area of Kishtwar district on Tuesday. A man was killed and nine others injured after a Tata Sumo bearing registration number JK17-1248, they were travelling in met met with an accident on Sarthal-Kishtwar road, officials said Tuesday. They identified the deceased as Chatur Ram (35) son of Jodh Ram, a resident of Trigam Kishtwar. ● More On P10

Ladakh Logs 89 Cases, 3 More Deaths

LEH: Ladakh's COVID-19 tally increased to 14,315 with 89 fresh cases while the death toll climbed to 148 as three more people succumbed to the disease, officials said on Tuesday. They said 85 fresh cases were reported from Leh and four from Kargil. Of the 148 deaths so far, 104 were reported from Leh and 44 from Kargil. According to the officials, the number of COVID-19 cases in ● More On P10

Developer

Covaxin has been developed by Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech International Ltd in association with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the National Institute of Virology (NIV).

Covishield has been developed by the Oxford-AstraZeneca and is being manufactured by the Serum Institute of India (SII).

Type of Vaccine

Covaxin is an inactivated vaccine, which has been prepared on a tried and tested platform of dead viruses.

This vaccine is developed with Whole-Virion ● More On P10

ENCOUNTER IN SOPORE

Youth Who Joined Militant Ranks 4 Days Back Killed

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: A four day old militant and his associate were killed in an encounter with security forces in Jammu and Kashmir's Baramulla district on Tuesday, police said.

The government forces had launched a cordon-and-search operation at Nathipora in the Bomai area of Sopore after receiving information about the presence of some militants there, a police official said.

As the forces were conducting the searches, the militants fired upon them. The forces retaliated, and in the ensuing encounter, two militants were killed,



the official said.

He added that searches were going on in the area.

According to a police spokesperson, the two militants were associated with ● More On P10

Cong, NC Gun For MoS Jitendra Singh's Resignation

Agences

JAMMU: Several mainstream parties, including National Conference, Apni Party and the Jammu and Kashmir unit of Congress on Tuesday demanded the resignation of Union minister Jitendra Singh and a high-level probe into allegations of corruption levelled against him by BJP leader and former MLC Vikram Randhawa.

J-K BJP secretary Randhawa, who is the president of Stone Crusher Owners Association, has levelled serious allegations against Singh's office in Jammu over the issue of mining policy



and also threatened to immolate himself. The party's disciplinary committee served Randhawa a show-cause notice, hours after he went public against Singh. ● More On P10

Govt Forms 4-Member Panel To Check Illegal Mining Activities

Agencies

SRINAGAR/JAMMU: Government has on Tuesday constituted a four-member panel mandating it to carry an in-depth examination of alleged illegal activities and operations of stone crusher units in and around river Tawi in contravention to the directions of Jammu and Kashmir High Court.

The Committee as per an order would be presided over by O.P Bhagat, Director Geology and Mining, J&K as Chairman alongside R.C Kotwal, Director Finance I&C with additional charge of Mining Department; Romesh Gandotra, Assistant

Mining Engineer as members and Dr. Raj Kumar, In-charge Deputy Director, Geology and Mining as Member Secretary.

The Committee as mandated by the order would be examining the issue of operation of crusher units in Tawi River since 2018 and to look into measures taken to curb illegal mining in Tawi river in compliance of Hon'ble High Court's Order.

The Committee would suggest measures to curb all malpractices with respect of mining and processing of river bed material from Tawi River and also to suggest measures for allowing regulated ● More On P10

Jagmohan Dead At 93

J&K Declares 3 Day Mourning

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Former Union minister and Jammu and Kashmir governor Jagmohan passed away following a spell of illness. He was 93.

President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday paid tributes to Jagmohan and described him as an exemplary administrator and devoted politician. He passed away on Monday.

The Jammu and Kashmir administration has announced three days of state mourning from Tuesday to Thursday on the demise of the former governor.

"Saddened to hear about the demise of Shri Jagmohan Ji, former governor of J&K. He was a great visionary, dynamic and effective administrator. Jagmohan Ji ● More On P10



Dr Irfan Ahmad
DM Cardiology, Consultant Cardiologist GMC, SMHS Hospital

It is a Tsunami of COVID. SKIMS, CD hospital, JLN all are full, SMHS beds are getting exhausted at a rapid pace, there is an urgent need of opening make shift COVID hospital in Haj House or taking over private hospitals

Dr Tariq Trambo
MD, Critical Care, FIPP, Chairman Spine loop International USA

General information: While there are anti-inflammatory drugs that reduce the risk of death from Covid-19, such as dexamethasone, they are only given to people hospitalised with severe #Covid. As of now we have NO antivirals or antibiotics against Covid.

Dr Mohsin Bin Mushtaq Shah
Internal Medicine, GMC Srinagar and Associated Hospitals

If you are having any active symptoms like fever, cold, cough or breathlessness, please delay the vaccination and take opinion of a physician first.



To place an advertisement

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Monday - Saturday (9am - 6pm)

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KASHMIR
OBSERVER

Wednesday| 05-05-2021

Study says consumers' decision to buy product is based on its recommendation online

Agencies

As more people go online for shopping, understanding how they rely on e-commerce recommendation systems to make purchases is increasingly important. Penn State University researchers suggested that it's not just what is recommended, but how and why it's recommended, that helps to shape consumers' opinions.

Through the study published in the Journal of Advertising, the researchers investigated how people reacted to two product recommendation systems. The first system generated recommendations based on the user's earlier purchases -- often referred to as content-based recommendation systems.

The second provided recommendations based on what other people bought -- called collaborative recommendation systems.

The researchers found that people who like to think and solve problems for themselves -- a personality type the researchers

describe as "high need for cognition" -- find content-based recommendations more persuasive.

However, those who are low in their need for cognition are more persuaded by collaborative recommendation systems, which may serve as a signal that other buyers have already vetted the product for them.

The nature of the recommendation system and its degree of confidence in suggesting the right products can be very important in guiding people when making online purchases, said S. Shyam Sundar, James P. Jimirro Professor of Media Effects in the Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications and co-director of the Media Effects Research Laboratory.

"In the pre-Internet era, before artificial intelligence, we would ask another person at a cocktail party, 'I heard you went to Italy, can you give me some recommendations, I'm going there next month,' as a way of gathering information for making our decisions," said Sundar, who is also an affiliate of Penn State's

Institute for Computational and Data Sciences.

"Now, we go online and can access information from just about everybody who has gone to Italy last month, not just the friend you ran into at the cocktail party. You are now able to get that information about the collective experience of others, as well as how it squares with your own background and prior travels."

According to Mengqi Liao, a doctoral student in mass communication and first author of the paper, a subtle "bandwagon effect" may be persuading people.

"From a layperson's perspective, we might not know that these are actually two different recommendation systems," said Liao. "One system might just tell the customer that the recommendation is based on what they bought before. But the collaborative recommendation system conveys that a lot of other people bought this product, which adds another layer of persuasive appeal."

The researchers also found that the effectiveness of the recommendation systems was tied to the type of product that the system

recommended.

When making decisions about experiences, such as movies, travel destination and dining, consumers with a high need for cognition were more likely to respond to information about the extent to which the recommended product reflects their personal preferences -- expressed in terms of percentage match of products recommended by content-based filtering systems.

However, consumers with a low need for cognition preferred collaborative filtering because they were more persuaded by the percentage of other people who purchased the recommended item, which also promoted their intentions to buy the item.

Such differences were not found for recommendations of "search products," information about which can be obtained by searching online. Both personality types preferred collaborative recommendation systems.

"You can think of it as a sort of cognitive outsourcing," said Sundar. "A customer might see the ad for a smartwatch, for example, and

see the features, but think, 'I'm not going to do the hard work of examining all the details and coming to a conclusion of which is better, I'll just outsource this to others.' If they say it's a good smartwatch, then they'll buy it."

According to Liao, most research into recommendation systems focuses on optimizing the suggestions of these systems.

These findings suggest that developers may need to consider other factors, such as personality types and product types, for improving the user experience of their systems, rather than focusing solely on the accuracy of their algorithm's suggestions.

"A lot may depend on how users receive the information on the recommendations provided by the systems," said Liao. "It matters why these systems are providing the recommendations for products and experiences."

The researchers recruited 469 people on an online crowdsourced microtask site for the study and randomly assigned them to an experimental website that either used a collaborative or content filtering algorithm.

Short-term exposure to air pollution may impede cognition, Aspirin could help: Study

Agencies

Exposure to air pollution, even over the course of just a few weeks, can impede mental performance; however, these adverse effects were lessened in people taking nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) like aspirin, according to a new study led by researchers at Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health.

The study is published in the journal Nature Aging and it is among the first to explore short-term air pollution exposures and the use of NSAIDs to mitigate their effects.

Examples of events that would increase someone's exposure to air pollution over the short term could include forest fires, smog, second-hand cigarette smoke, charcoal grills, and gridlock traffic.

The researchers examined the relationship between exposures to fine particulate matter (PM2.5) and black carbon, a component of PM, and cognitive performance in 954 older white males from the Greater Boston Area enrolled in the Normative Aging Study.

They also explored whether

er taking NSAIDs could modify their relationships. Cognitive performance was assessed using the Global Cognitive Function (GCF) and Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE) scales. Air pollution levels were obtained from a site in Boston. Elevated average PM2.5 exposure over 28 days was associated with declines in GCF and MMSE scores. Men who took NSAIDs experienced fewer adverse short-term impacts of air pollution exposures on cognitive health than non-users, though there were no direct associations between recent NSAID use and cognitive performance.

The researchers postulate that NSAIDs, especially aspirin, may moderate neuroinflammation or changes in blood flow to the brain triggered by inhaling pollution.

"Despite regulations on emissions, short-term spikes in air pollution remain frequent and have the potential to impair health, including at levels below that usually considered hazardous," says senior author Andrea Baccarelli, MD, PhD, chair of the

Department of Environmental Health Sciences.

"Taking aspirin or other anti-inflammatory drugs appears to mitigate these effects, although policy changes to further restrict air pollution are still warranted," Andrea added.

The link between long-term PM exposure and impaired cognitive performance in the aging population is well-established. Reported effects include reduced brain volume, cognitive decrements, and dementia development.

Air pollution has also been associated with poor cognition of children and adults. Until now, however, little was known about the effects of short-term exposure to air pollution.

The researchers say future studies should investigate the specific effects of chemical components of air pollution on cognitive performance, exposure sources in the environment, and whether cognitive impairments due to short-term air pollution exposures are transient or persistent. Randomized clinical trials of NSAID use are needed to validate their protective effects.

Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences & Technology of Kashmir

Estates Wing, Main Campus Shalimar – 190 025

Notice Inviting e-Tender

Tender Notice No. 07 of 2021

Dated:- 29.04.2021

For and on behalf of Vice-Chancellor, SKUAST(K), e-tenders (in Single-cover system) for **Electric Stage e-Tenders for the Year 2021-22** on **percentage basis** are invited from approved and eligible Electric contractors whose cards are valid up to 31-12-2021 registered with State PWD, CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Govt. departments for the following work/s:-

S.No	Name of the work	Class of Contractor	Cost of Tender document
1.	Stage-I: a) Main Campus Shalimar Urban Technology Park Habbak b) Dry land (Karewa) Agriculture Research Station Budgam c) KVK Narkara d) Saffron Research Station Konibal, Pampore e) KVK ETC Malangpora f) Mountain Research Centre for Field Crops Khudwani g) Ambri-Apple Research Centre, Balapora h) Mountain Crop Research Station Larnoo	A	500/-
2.	Stage-II: a) FVSc & AH Shuhama b) Faculty of Fisheries Rangil Ganderbal c) Faculty of Forestry Benihama Ganderbal	A	500/-
3.	Stage-III: a) Mountain Live Stock Research Institute Manasbal b) Faculty of Agriculture Wadura, Sopore c) Temperate Sericulture Research Institute, Mirgund d) Mountain Agriculture Research & Extension Stations at Gurez, Bandipora, KVK Kupwara, ARS Langate	A	500/-
4.	Stage-IV: a) Mountain Agriculture Research & Extension, Kargil b) KVK Kargil c) KVK Zanskar d) High Mountain Arid Agriculture Research Institute Stakna Leh e) KVK Nyoma Changthang	A	500/-

- The Bidding document consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, set of terms and conditions and other details can be downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per following schedule:-

1.	Date of Publication of Tender Notice	30.04.2021
2.	Date of start of downloading	30.04.2021
3.	Pre-bid meeting date	NA
4.	Bid submission start Date	30.04.2021
5.	Bid submission end date	10.05.2021
6.	Date & Time of opening of Technical bid/ Financial Bids of qualifying bidders (online)	11.05.2021

Further information can be had from the Office of the undersigned

DIPK-NB-595/21

No. Au/Estates/E-NIT(07)/75
Dated: 01 .05 .2021

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
SKUAST-K

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

DIRECTORATE OF SOCIAL WELFARE

Kashmir, Old Secretariat, Srinagar-190001, Phone No. 0194-2950499,

e-mail: dirswkrm@gmail.com

Subject:- Invitation of applications under Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Dr. Ambedkar Pre-Matric Scholarships for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes, DNT, Scholarship Scheme for the students for the year 2021-22.

NOTICE

Applications are invited from the students belonging to Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (DNTs) of Kashmir Province pursuing education under Pre- Matric Course in Govt./ Govt. recognized private schools/ institutes during the year 2021-22 to be awarded by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Govt. of India, who are not covered under the Schedule Caste, Schedule Tribes and Other Backward Classes and whose annual family income is less than Rs. 2.50 lacs.

The following three castes of Kashmir Division have been identified as Denotified tribes:-
1.Chopan 2. Pohul 3. Sangtarash

Eligibility Criteria:-

Those Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes DNTs students, whose family income is less than Rs. 2.50 lacs per annum will be eligible for applying under Pre-matric Scholarship.

The application form shall be attached with following documents:-

- One passport size photograph duly attested by Head of Institution.
- Permanent Residence Certificate "State Subject Certificate/ Domicile Certificate".
- Parents /Guardians current income certificate, in original ,from the concerned Tehsildar (in case of students whose parents/guardians are not Government employees).
- In case of wards of Government employees, salary certificate issued by the concerned Drawing and Disbursing Officers.
- Valid Caste Certificate from the competent authorities.
- Aadhaar Number alongwith xerox of Aadhaar Card and seeding of Aadhaar with Bank account will lead to smooth transaction of sanctioned scholarship amount in favour of eligible students.
- Payment of Receipt of Fee or authorization for being sponsored by the Institution under above said category/scheme issued by the Institution.

The grant of scholarship is subject to the following:-

- Mere filling of application form will construe no right on the student that he/ she will be granted scholarship.
- Preference will be given to the Government Institutions.
- Scholarship will be restricted to availability of funds and also the merit and income.
- The income limit prescribed for Denotified Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes, DNTs is Rs. 2.50 lacs per annum.

The application forms (as per prescribed proforma annexed as "Annexure "A") shall be submitted by the students to the concerned Head of the Institution by or before 30-06-2021 beyond which no extension will be given. The concerned Head of the Institution will consolidate the application forms alongwith above mentioned certificates/documents alongwith his/her individual recommendations on each application form and prepare the list as per format forming ANNEXURE "B". Annexure "B" along with application forms complete in all respects should be deposited in the concerned District Social Welfare Offices where a student Institution falls by or before 15-07-2021.

PLEASE NOTE:-

- No application form shall be entertained after expiry of the scheduled date.
- (Income certificate with cutting/mutation will lead to rejection of Application forms.)
- Incomplete application form if any submitted by student will be out-rightly rejected.

DIPK-1227/21

No:-DSWK/Sch/2021/1685-34

Dated:- 03.05.2021

Sd/-
(Bashir Ahmad Dar) KAS
Director
Social Welfare Department

ANNEXURE "A" GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR DIRECTORATE OF SOCIAL WELFARE, KASHMIR

FORMAT OF APPLICATION UNDERPRE-MATRIC SCHOLARSHIP SCHEME FOR STUDENTS OF DENOTIFIED, NOMADIC AND SEMI-NOMADIC TRIBES (DNTs) FOR THE YEAR (2021-22)

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Sl.No of Application	Year	Class	Income	Caste

Affix a self attested passport size photograph

Part – I [To be filled up by applicant]

Fresh ☐ (Tick) ☒

- Full Name (in Block Letters):-
- Father's/Mother's Name:-
- State/UT of Domicile
- Full Address For Correspondence:-
- Contact:-
Telephone/Mobile (if any)
E-mail ID (if any)
- Date of Birth(Please enclose Certificate):-

D	D	M	M	Y	Y	Y	Y
- Whether male or female or other:-
Male ☐ Female ☐ (Tick) ☒
- Aadhar No.
- Nationality:-
- Religion:-
- Details of School/Institute, including residential ones:-
(i). Class and Name of the School/Institute studying

(ii).
- Marks obtained in previous class..... %age..... (Please enclose certificate).
- Whether ☒ Day Scholar ☐ Hosteller ☐ (Tick) ☒
- Total Annual Course Fee:-
(Break up of course such as Admission Fee, Tuition Fee and Maintenance Allowance)

S.No	Item	Amount (Rs.)
1.	Admission Fee	
2.	Tuition Fee	
3.	Maintenance Allowance	
	Total:-	

15.Details of Bank Account:-

- Name of the Bank
 - Branch
 - Bank Account Number
 - Type of Bank Account Saving / Current.
 - IFSC Code of the Bank
 - Aadhaar Number
- The application form with incomplete Bank details will lead to rejection.

16. Annual Income of Parents / Guardians of the Students :- Rs.

17. Documents enclosed with the application:-

- Self - attested passport size photograph with signature.
- Date of Birth Certificate
- Income Certificate:
(a). Income certificate from the employer for employed parents/guardian.
(b). For non employed parents/guardian, certificate to be issued by Tehsildar in original.
- Previous Class Marks Card.
- Caste Certificate to be issued by concerned Tehsildar.
- Zerox copy of Aadhaar Card & submission of Aadhaar Number is application form& seeding of Aadhaar with Bank Account will lead to smooth transaction of sanctioned scholarship in favour of eligible students.
- Permanent Residence Certificate (PRC).
- Zerox Copy of Ration Card.
- Specimen of Self Declaration to be submitted by the Student
(i). That I belong to _____ caste of which certificate from concerned Tehsildar is enclosed.
(ii). I hereby declare that the information given above is correct.
(iii). I am not availing any other scholarship for this purpose from any State/Central Govt.
(iv). I have paid an amount of Rs. _____ to _____ Institute for _____ course.
(v). I shall abide by the terms and conditions for sanction of the Pre-matric and Post-matric Scholarship.
(vi). If the information given by me is found to be false/incorrect, the scholarship sanctioned to me, may be cancelled and the entire amount of scholarship will be refunded by me or recovered from me, apart from such penal action as warranted.

Date:-

Place:-

Signature of the Student

Part – II { to be filled up by the Head of the School/Institute)

19.Verification/Information to be furnished by the Head of School/Institute:-

- It is certified that the information filled in the above mentioned columns (1 to 18) by Shri/Kumari _____ So Do Shri _____ who is studying in Class _____ for the academic session _____ in this school/institute is correct.

Date

Place

Name & Designation of Head of the Institution

RECOMMENDATION OF THE DISTRICT SOCIAL WELFARE OFFICER

The student has been duly recommended by the Head of the Institution. This case has been verified and is hereby RECOMMENDED / REJECTED for sanction of Pre-matric scholarship for the year 2019-20.

Date

Place

Name, Seal & Sign. of District Social Welfare Officer

ANNEXURE "B"

FORMAT FOR SUBMISSION OF LIST OF STUDENTS BY CONCERNED HEAD OF INSTITUTIONS AND DISTRICT SOCIAL WELFARE OFFICERS DR. AMBEDKAR PRE-MATRIC SCHOLARSHIP TO THE STUDENTS BELONGING TO DENOTIFIED NOMADIC & SEMI NOMADIC TRIBES (DNT'S) FOR THE YEAR (2021-22)

S.No.	Enrollment No.	Name	Parentage	Residence	Cate- gory	Name of the Institute	Course	Name of the Bank	IFSC Code of Bank	Account No.	Aadhaar No.	Mobile No.	Course/ Tu- tion Fee	Total Scholar- ship Amount
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	

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Covid Mortality Rate Jumps To One Percent In Srinagar

DC Appeals People To Stay Indoors

Observer News Service

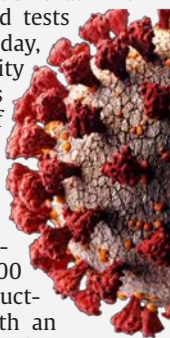
SRINAGAR: The mortality rate due to novel coronavirus has surged to one percent in Srinagar, which was 0.25 percent in February this year, officials said on Tuesday.

An official said that with 3500-5000 Covid tests conducted per day, the capital city Srinagar records an average of around 1000 positive cases on a daily basis, while as in the month of February 1500-2000 tests were conducted in a day with an average of around 30-40 positive cases in a day.

"The mortality has surged to one percent, which was 0.25 percent in the month of February," he said.

According to the official data, Srinagar has a total case-load of 46,784, out of which 36,081 have recovered, 560 have died and 10,143 is the active case load.

Deputy Commissioner Srinagar Aijaz Asad said that being a red zone, imposing strict curfew civil and police administration is on roads to ensure people do not violate the guidelines.



Near To 100 Percent Occupancy Of Beds, ICUs In Srinagar Hospitals

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Amid a spike in the COVID-19 cases, the ICUs and beds in Srinagar's major hospitals are fully occupied with Medical Superintendents of the hospitals stating that the situation at their respective hospitals is quite challenging at present.

The authorities at a few hospitals have also written to the concerned top officials, seeking more beds and ventilators amid the huge patient input.

Medical Superintendent at JVC Hospital, Dr Shifa Deva said the situation at the hospital is very challenging.

Dr Deva said, "we are facing difficulties in suiting the input with our infrastructure and logistics. We are trying to cope up."

She added that the patient inflow is creating confusion, adding that it would take some time to tackle the situation. "The main reason behind such a situation is that patients are reporting very late to the hospital till then their oxygen saturation is very low," she said.

She said that they have written to the government about requirements to enhance the infrastructure at the hospital.

HoD Chest Disease hospital, Dr Naveed Nazir said that at present, ICUs as well as the beds are fully occupied at the hospital. He added that there are 70 ventilators at the hospital and all are occupied.

"As the situation is worsening, the people need to take

proper care and follow the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) in letter and spirit," he said, adding that the people should also get vaccinated. "I appeal to the youth not to believe in hearsay and get vaccinated," he said.

At SKIMS so far the situation is under control, but there is a need to keep the things under control in the society.

Medical Superintendent SKIMS, Dr Farooq Jan said, "Any health structure can fall short if the cases start rising within the society. Thus, the society has the responsibility to adhere to the COVID-19 guidelines in letter and spirit. The situation in Delhi is an example as it has much more medical facilities than J&K," he said.

He appealed people to ad-

here to the guidelines and avoid gatherings, follow SOPs, saying that the things are in the hands of the people. "The situation is under control, but it is worsening with each passing day," he said, adding that the people must consult the doctors at appropriate time for the treatment.

"We have handled the situation so far and the health care is handling the prevalent situation as well with the active support of the people," he said.

Medical Superintendent SMHS, Dr Nazir Choudhary said that the patient has been increasing with each passing day and the situation with regard to the pandemic is worsening.

He added that the required medicines and oxygen is available at the hospital—(KNO)

administration officials on a daily basis impose fines on Covid violators. Though the medical emergencies and essential services are exempted, people can be seen roaming on roads without any genuine reason and that too without face masks," an official said.

Meanwhile, the DC appealed

to people to stay at home and come out only in extreme medical emergencies.

He also appealed to people to follow all Covid-19 SOPs including social distancing, wearing of face masks and vaccination.

Asad said that vehicles of all those persons will be seized who are coming out of their homes.

DC Asks JLNM Authorities To Make New Oxygen Plant Functional In Five days

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Mohammed Aijaz Asad Tuesday visited JLNM hospital Rainawari to oversee the functioning of Oxygen Generation Plants and other facilities made for Covid positive patients.

Director Health Services Kashmir, Additional Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, CMO Srinagar and other officers accompanied the DC during his visit.

The DC was informed that 1000 lpm capacity Oxygen Generation Plant has been made functional recently in addition to 350 lpm oxygen plant to cater the demand of the hospital. He was also informed that work on the 625 lpm oxygen generation plant is going on and shall be completed within a few days to further augment the oxygen generation capacity in the hospital.

The DC directed the concerned to ensure effective functioning of oxygen plants so that patients do not suffer. He also directed them to work in double shifts to make a new oxygen plant of 625 lpm capacity functional within 5 days.

He also inspected other facilities being made available to patients and directed for further improving the health care facilities in the hospital.

Mayor SMC Sets Targets For Effective Service Delivery Reviews Functioning Of The Corporation



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Mayor Srinagar Municipal Corporation Junaid Azim Mattu Tuesday held a meeting with senior officers of the Corporation to review works pertaining to Sanitation, Works Division, Planning, Establishment, Drainage, Town planning, Street Lights and other routine works.

An SMC statement said that Mattu discussed various issues

pertaining to upgrading and improvisation of work mechanism of solid waste management, drainage related projects, its implementation and execution, enforcement and beautification of the city.

While reviewing Drainage works, Mattu sought the status on working of Masterplan of Drainage networks of Srinagar city and also took review of various ongoing projects in place.

Regarding Fixation of consul-

tancy contract for preparation of DPR's and project consultancy services, it was directed by Mayor to take up the process at an earliest by having a meeting with the successful bidder and thereby proceeding further.

On reviewing sanitation, Mayor passed on directions to the concerned to rationalise the sanitation staff equally and balanced throughout out the wards so that no area in a ward is left out as to have better results of sanitation evenly across the city.

"Instructions were passed with regard to redressal of Public grievances on account of different wings including drainage and works related matters."

Review on establishment of Covid wellness centres in the city was also taken up in the meeting.

He also reviewed Enforcement, Works wing, Street lighting, supply and availability of conservancy items in Purchase and Procurement and other functioning of the Corporation.

DC Srinagar Reviews Covid-19 Control Measures

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Mohammed Aijaz Asad Tuesday reviewed the control measures put in place by the district administration to prevent the spread of covid-19 in the district, following fresh surge in different parts of the country.

Referring to the reports of Covid surge, the DC directed CMO, BMO and all ZMOs to review the control measures in their respective jurisdictions and focus on further improving the Covid-19 Control measures to contain the spread of infection.

While taking strong note of complaints received with regard to underweight filling of Medical Oxygen Cylinders by some plant owners, the DC directed for initiating enquiry to ascertain the factual position. He said strict action as warranted by DDMA will be taken against the erring medical oxygen companies.

With regard to augmentation of human resources, the DC directed for preparing a list of retired Doctors and other Paramedical staff at the earliest so that their services can be

utilized during any emerging exigency.

He also directed the officers to work in close liaison with Covid-19 War Control Room for better coordination besides ensuring timely updates regarding availability of beds, medicines, oxygen and other related facilities available in their respective health facilities so that the same is shared with the general public through Covid-19 War Control Room.

The DC further asked them to prepare a concrete programme for at least next one month to fight the Covid-19 and undertake all required measures to further strengthen the health care system to break the chain of infection.

The DC asked the officers to identify a few PHCs which can be used as Covid-19 wellness centers and necessary oxygen concentrators will be installed at these PHCs to further strengthen the system to defeat the Covid-19.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Joint Director Planning, CMO, Srinagar, Nodal Officer Covid-19, BMO, and ZMOs.

LAWDA Demolishes Illegal Structures In Green Belt Areas: Spokesperson

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Enforcement Wing of Lakes and Waterways Development Authority (LAWDA) Tuesday carried out a demolition drive in the area of Nowpora, Saderbal, Baghwanpora Lal Bazar, Shalimar and Teilbal.

A spokesperson of LAWDA said during the drive one ground level raft, one second storey, one single storey (green Belt), one tin shed and three shops were demolished. The violators had resorted to illegal constructions taking the advantage of current lockdown (Covid-19).

Meanwhile, he said, the Lakes & Waterways Development authorities have warned people residing within LAWDA jurisdiction to desist from undertaking illegal constructions or encroachments.

All the public residing within the LDA jurisdiction & in-lake are hereby once again directed not to go for any sort of illegal constructions / encroachments, as the Enforcement wing will continue with demolition of illegal constructions/ removal of encroachments.

AAC Grieved Over Demise Of Adv Nazir Baba's Sister

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Jammu & Kashmir Awami Action Committee (AAC) has expressed condolence with its senior leader, a senior advocate and businessman Nazir Ahmad Baba over the demise of his two sister-in-law's.

The deceased were the life partners of late Er Ghulam Rasool Baba and Lateef Ahmad Baba.

AAC while expressing grief over the demise extended condolence and solidarity with the bereaved family and said the organisation and its leadership stand with them at this hour of grief.

The AAC on behalf of its chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, who could not lead the funeral prayers due to house detention, expressed condolence with the bereaved family especially with Nazir Ahmad Baba and Lateef Ahmed Baba and prayed for Jannat-ul-Firdous to the departed souls.

DEMISE



Departed Soul and not to visit their house for any condolence in view of Covid-19 pandemic

With Profound grief and sorrow we inform the demise hajj Ghulam Nabi Bhat Retired Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) R/o Kanidewar Hawal Srinagar Who Breathed His last On Tuesday 4th May 2021 After a Brief illness (Inna Lillahi Wainna Illahi Rajioon).

The Family Of The Deceased Has Urged Relatives And Friends To Pray For The

BEREAVED Sons & Daughters
Ishtiyak Ahmad Bhat (J&K bank)
Ajaz Ahmad Bhat (SSP)
Ruby Jan, Fozia Kouser
Cell:- 7982657001-9419091281

DIAL-EMMA

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

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

RAILWAYS



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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

This Day in History

- 1260 - Kublai Khan, grandson of Genghis Khan, becomes ruler of the Mongol Empire
- 1494 - On 2nd voyage to New World Christopher Columbus sights Jamaica, landing at Discovery Bay
- 1640 - English Short Parliament rises
- 1646 - King Charles I surrenders in Scotland
- 1762 - Russia & Prussia sign Treaty of Saint Petersburg ending the Seven Years War
- 1789 - French Estates-General meets for the first time since 1614 at Versailles, summoned King Louis XVI
- 1862 - French army intervenes in Puebla, Mexico: Cinco de Mayo
- 1864 - Battle between Confederate & Union ships at mouth of Roanoke
- 1864 - Battle of Wilderness, Virginia (Germana Ford, Wilderness Tavern)
- 1877 - Indian Wars: Sitting Bull leads his band of Lakota into Canada to avoid harassment by the United States Army under Colonel Nelson Miles
- 1920 - German-Latvian peace treaty signed
- 1920 - Polish troops occupy Kiev
- 1921 - Miniature newspaper published (Brighton Gazette 10 x 13 cm)
- 1932 - Japan & China sign a peace treaty
- 1936 - Italian troops occupy Addis Ababa
- 1942 - British assault on Diego Suarez, Madagascar
- 1942 - US begins rationing sugar during WW II
- 1943 - Postmaster General Frank C Walker invents Postal Zone System
- 1944 - Mahatma Gandhi freed from prison
- 1944 - Soviet offensive against Sebastopol, Crimea
- 1945 - Netherlands & Denmark liberated from Nazi control
- 1945 - Uprising against occupying SS troops in Prague
- 1945 - World War II: Admiral Karl Dönitz, leader of Germany after Hitler's death, orders all U-boats to cease offensive operations and return to their bases
- 1948 - 1st squadron of jet aircraft aboard a carrier
- 1955 - Indian parliament accepts Hindu divorce
- 1955 - US performs nuclear test at Nevada test Site
- 1955 - West Germany is granted full sovereignty by its three occupying powers
- 1956 - World championships of judo are 1st held in Tokyo
- 1957 - Adolf Scharf elected president of Austria
- 1964 - Separatists riot in Quebec
- 1965 - First large-scale US Army ground units arrive in South Vietnam
- 1972 - Alitalia DC-8 crashes west of Palermo Sicily; killing 115
- 1976 - Train collision at Schiedam, Netherlands, kills 24
- 1979 - Voyager 1 passes Jupiter
- 1980 - Siege at Iranian Embassy in London ends as the SAS and police storm the building
- 1986 - Hall of Fame & Museum announced to be built in Cleveland
- 1987 - Congress begins Iran-Contra hearings
- 1987 - France performs nuclear test at Mururoa atoll
- 2005 - Tony Blair's Labour Party is re-elected for a third consecutive term in UK general election
- 2006 - The government of Sudan signs an accord with the Sudan Liberation Army
- 2012 - Japan shuts down its nuclear reactors leaving the country without nuclear power for the first time since 1970
- 2012 - 17 people are killed and 47 missing after a flash flood in Nepal
- 2014 - China announces it will upgrade Ethiopia's infrastructure in an effort to improve a China-Africa strategic partnership
- 2015 - Scientists announce the discovery of the oldest & most distant galaxy known to man, EGS-zs8-1
- 2015 - Archaeornithura meemannae, the oldest known prehistoric bird, is discovered

From KO Archives

KU CONTROLLER EXAMS DIES AFTER FALL

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- Controller of Examinations in Kashmir University Dr. Abrar Hussain Khan today reportedly fell to his death from third floor of a building during an inspection on the campus at Hazratbal here, official sources said.

Khan was inspecting (he third floor of a building, under construction and to be used as a store for examination material When he walked over a fragile fibre glass which broke down, the sources said.

They said Khan hit the cupboards before hitting the concrete floor and died on the spot. Police has taken cognizance of the incident and investigation has been initiated in this regard, a senior-police official said.

Kashmir University will remain closed for the day on Thursday to mourn the untimely death of Dr Abrar.

Dr Abrar Hussain who was professor of law had acted earlier in the capacity of Dean Faculty of Law.

He had also served the university in various other capacities including as its Registrar and Chairman Distance Education

(Kashmir Observer, 05 May, 2005)

Pakistan Records Dip In Daily New COVID-19 Cases



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan reported 3,377 new coronavirus cases on Tuesday, the lowest spike in daily new infections in nearly a month, according to official data.

With the new cases, the total number of infections in the country rose to 837,523, the Ministry of National Health Services said.

Last time when less than 4,000 new cases were reported in a day was on April 5, when 3,953 new cases were detected.

In the last 24 hours, 161 new virus-related deaths were reported, taking the COVID-19 death toll to 18,310.

Pakistan has been trying to

contain the virus by increasing vaccination efforts and enforcing safety regulations.

Special Assistant to the PM on Health, Dr Faisal Sultan, has said that about 70 per cent of the population would be vaccinated by the end of this year.

Pakistan is expected to receive 1.2 million doses of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine via the COVAX facility this week.

The shipment is arriving from South Korea, according to health officials.

Pakistan plans to vaccinate 20 per cent of its 220 million population free of cost through this facility.-PTI

Australia Retreats On Jail Threat For India Travellers Amid Fury



Agencies

Australia Prime Minister Scott Morrison has fended off accusations of racism and having “blood on his hands” as he retreated from a threat to jail Australians trying to escape coronavirus-wracked India.

Australia last week banned all travellers from India, including its own citizens, from entering the country until May 15 due to the surge in COVID-19 cases there, and warned offenders will face the maximum penalties of five years in jail and a 66,000 Australian dollar (\$51,122) fine for breaking border rules.

Morrison said it was “highly unlikely” travellers from India would face the penalties amid pressure to overturn them after the decision to close borders came into force on Monday.

“I don’t think it would be fair to suggest these penalties in their most extreme forms are likely to be placed anywhere but this is a way to ensure we can prevent the virus coming back,” Morrison told local broadcaster Channel Nine on Tuesday.

Morrison said the rules would be used “responsibly and proportionately” but they had to be put in place to ease the pressure on the country’s quarantine systems, which saw a 1,500 percent spike in COVID-19 cases from India since March.

Morrison told reporters in the northern city of Rockhampton that his government “will constantly review” the ban and that he is hoping to resume flights from India after May 15 if the health advice permits.

‘Blood on your hands PM’

The temporary restrictions introduced by Australia, which has one of the toughest biosecurity laws in the world, were excoriated by legislators, expatriates and the Indian diaspora.

The Australian Human Rights Commission said it would approach the government directly with its concerns. Some of Morrison’s most prominent allies slammed the ban, including Sky

News commentator Andrew Bolt who said it “stinks of racism”.

Approximately 9,000 Australians are believed to be in India, where hundreds of thousands of new coronavirus cases are being detected every day and the death toll is soaring.

Among those trapped are some of Australia’s most high-profile sporting stars – cricketers playing in the lucrative Indian Premier League (IPL).

Former Australian cricket player Michael Slater, who was working in India as a commentator for the IPL, was among those who pilloried Morrison’s decision as a “disgrace”.

“Blood on your hands PM. How dare you treat us like this,” he tweeted. “If our Government cared for the safety of Aussies they would allow us to get home.”

Morrison dismissed Slater’s comments as “absurd”.

Strict border control

Australia has largely avoided the worst of the pandemic through some of the strictest border controls in the world. There is a blanket ban on travel to-and-from the country unless an exemption is secured.

Non-residents are mostly banned from entering. The 5,800 Australians allowed in each week from overseas must complete a mandatory 14-day hotel quarantine at their own expense.

States have been urging the federal government to set up designated quarantine centres, which could allow more repatriation flights.

Repatriation flights from India may resume as planned by May 15, Morrison said, as the government looks to more than double the capacity in a quarantine facility in the country’s Northern Territory by the middle of this month.

India, which reported more than 300,000 new cases for the 12th-straight day on Monday, is in the midst of a devastating second wave, with hospitals and crematoriums overflowing and supplies of medical oxygen running short.

Australia has reported just over 29,800 cases of COVID-19 and 910 deaths.

“I DON’T THINK IT WOULD BE FAIR TO suggest these penalties in their most extreme forms are likely to be placed anywhere but this is a way to ensure we can prevent the virus coming back.”



Residents walk without face masks while crossing the tarmac of the Gibraltar International Airport near the Spanish border, as from March 28 the British territory eased mask usage outdoors [Jon Nazca/Reuters]

'It's Really Liberating': Mask-Free Life Returns To Gibraltar

Agencies

GIBRALTAR – “It’s really liberating,” said Samuel Calvente, a Gibraltar hotel worker, when asked how it feels to be mask-free outdoors.

“Having that mask on all the time was claustrophobic and stressful, particularly because this is a hot, humid place in summer. Wearing a face mask in 40-degree heat when you’re sweating away is extremely unpleasant.”

Weeks ago, Fabian Picardo, the chief minister of the tiny British Overseas Territory of Gibraltar, announced that with a hugely advanced vaccination programme, for the first time in nine months, there were zero active COVID-19 cases among Gibraltar’s resident population – as continues to be the case – and that some of the most stringent public health measures, such as wearing face masks outside, could finally be lifted.

A world-leading total of 85 percent of Gibraltar’s population is now vaccinated against COVID-19, as well as all of its 15,000 foreign workers.

Only Israel, with roughly 60 percent of its population vaccinated, is anywhere near that figure.

It remains to be seen how quickly two of Gibraltar’s key industries, tourism and retail, can return to their pre-pandemic levels.

Cruise liners still barred from visiting the territory,

which has a population of about 34,000, and, when Al Jazeera visited last week, there was only a thin trickle of pedestrians and cars across Gibraltar’s only land border, with the Spanish city of La Línea.

Although its duty-free shops may remain empty, masks are still obligatory in indoor public spaces and you still have to fill out a COVID-19 contact form in restaurants.

But that said, last week, not even heavy rain showers could stop people flocking to the terraces of bars and cafés.

Locals enjoyed coffees or beers, with pubs once again permitted to open until late hours.

Gibraltar feels like a microcosm of what post-pandemic daily life further afield in Europe could, one day, become again.

“I don’t know how much of an example we are, because this is a very small, closely-knit community,” Ivan Perez, manager of TAG consultancy, an auditing company, told Al Jazeera as he sipped on a coffee in the central Casemates square.

“Equally, if things had gone wrong here, and we’d now got other variants [of the virus] affecting us, at least people further afield would be aware of that. And as a very small population, we’d be easier to test.”

After emerging from the first wave of the pandemic relatively unscathed, nearly all of Gibraltar’s 94 COVID-19 related deaths, as well as the bulk

of more than 4,000 infections, occurred in early 2021.

Cases suddenly rocketed, before plummeting again in February and March and the second lockdown was lifted.

“Nearly 100 deaths in a small community like ours is a lot. If you didn’t directly know the person who died, you’d know their family,” said Perez’s wife Yoana, a product sales adviser.

She said the eased restrictions feel odd, but are above all “a relief”.

“Where I work, indoors, you still have to wear your mask all the time. Then sometimes I go home with my mask still on and have to remind myself it’s no longer necessary.

“At the same time, people come into the shop without a mask on and I have to remind them it’s still needed indoors.”

Asked if she considered Gibraltar as an example to follow, Health Minister Samantha Sacramento told Al Jazeera: “A road map would be one way to describe it, another would be a beacon of hope of how things can be on the other side of all this.”

“I’d say we are an example of how things can work out well when a people unite to work together for a common goal.”

However, one local health expert warned against viewing Gibraltar as a testing ground.

“Gibraltar is a very small community, with very stable social connections, everybody knows who their neighbours are.

US Likely To Authorise Pfizer Vaccine For Age 12 And Up Next Week: Report

Agencies

WASHINGTON: The United States is expected to authorize the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine for children age 12 and up by early next week, US media reported Monday.

Pfizer has applied for emergency use authorization for its Covid vaccine for children and teenagers between ages 12 and 15, according to CNN, citing a government official.

“The FDA will have to amend the emergency use authorization for the vaccine, but the process should be straightforward,” CNN reported.

The US Food and Drug Administration is expected to grant that approval by early next week. After the FDA decision, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advisory com-



mittee will meet to recommend how the vaccine should be used.

A spokeswoman for the FDA declined to give details on the approval timeline, telling The Washington Post: “We are working to review this request as quickly and transparently as possible.”

The Pfizer vaccine is currently authorized for people 16 and older in the United States.

The US pharmaceutical giant said in late March it had submitted data from a clinical trial of 2,260 12- to 15-year-olds that showed the vaccine was highly effective and well-tolerated.

Further testing on younger children is ongoing.

Moderna is conducting trials of its vaccine in teens, with results expected in the summer, as well as in younger children.

Johnson & Johnson is also planning pediatric trials for its vaccine.

Expanding vaccine authorization to include adolescents could open up the US mass vaccination program to millions more people.

The national vaccination rate peaked around April 11, according to official data, and although 55 percent of US adults now have had one or more doses, there’s still a long way to go to achieve population immunity against Covid.

The people most eager to get their shots have, for the most part, already rolled up their sleeves and done so.

US: Taliban Attacks Not Affecting Afghan Troop Withdrawal



Agencies

A United States Pentagon official says “small harassing attacks” by the Taliban in Afghanistan have not had a significant impact on the ongoing US and NATO troop withdrawal from the country.

The statement from Pentagon Press Secretary John Kirby came shortly after the US officially began its troop withdrawal on Saturday.

“What we’ve seen are some small harassing attacks over the course of the weekend that have not had any significant impact, certainly not on our people or our resources there and bases,” Kirby told reporters on Monday.

“We’ve seen nothing thus far that has affected the drawdown, or had any significant impact on the mission at hand in Afghanistan,” he said.

President Joe Biden announced on April 13 that all US troops – which at the time numbered as many as 3,500 – will leave Afghanistan by September 11.

Officials soon after announced that the approximately 7,000 troops in the country as part of a NATO coalition would also leave.

Biden has said the US withdrawal would not be “conditions-based”, meaning the pullout is meant to continue regardless of developments on the ground.

In recent weeks, the Taliban has stepped up its attacks against the US-backed Afghan government, raising the prospect of attacks on US forces.

Meanwhile, fighting in the first quarter of 2021 saw 573 Afghan civilians killed and 1,210

wounded, a 29-percent increase from the previous year, according to the United Nations.

Kirby said the US military will maintain its ability to respond to attacks throughout the pullout, telling reporters that General Austin Miller, the US commander in Afghanistan, “certainly has at his disposal response options to make sure that he’s protecting our troops and our people”.

One incident, an attack on a military airfield in Kandahar used by US forces, was previously dismissed by a US spokesman as “ineffective indirect fire” that resulted in no injuries.

On Saturday, as its forces began the withdrawal, the US military launched a “precision strike” against the source of that fire, officials said.

Ongoing fighting

More than 100 Afghan security forces personnel have been killed in recent weeks as fighting between the Taliban and Afghan government forces has raged in the wake of the US announcement.

The fighting has particularly seen an uptick since May 1 – the initial deadline reached between former US President Donald Trump and the Taliban for the US troop withdrawal.

The Taliban has vowed reprisal for Washington’s choice not to meet that date.

As Kirby spoke to reporters on Monday, Afghan security forces were fighting back widescale Taliban attacks in southern Helmand province, Reuters news agency reported.

The attacks included three major offensives and targeted checkpoints around the outskirts of Lashkar Gah.

Rocket Attack, 3Rd In 3 Days, Targets US Interests In Iraq

BAGHDAD: The Iraqi army said two rockets were fired Tuesday at a base hosting Americans, in the third such attack in three days and as a US government delegation is visiting the country.

The two rockets fell on an unoccupied segment of the Ayn al Asad air base, “without causing damage or casualties,” the army said.

The latest rocket attack follows one against an air base at Baghdad airport housing US-led coalition troops on Sunday night, and another against Balad air base, which hosts US contractors, north of the capital on Monday night.

None of the attacks have so far been claimed, but Washington routinely blames Iran-linked Iraqi factions for such attacks on its troops and diplomats.

Pro-Iran Iraqi groups have vowed to ramp up attacks to force out the “occupying” US forces in recent months, sometimes against Tehran’s wishes, according to some experts.

Iraq’s Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhemi, perceived by pro-Iran factions as too close to Washington, on Tuesday dis-



cussed the presence of 2,500 US soldiers based in Iraq with US envoy Brett McGurk.

The men know each other well – Kadhemi, in his role as head of intelligence, a position he retains to this day, worked closely with McGurk when he was the US-led coalition’s representative.

The military coalition was set up to fight Daesh, which seized control of a third of Iraq in a lightning 2014 offensive.

Iraq declared victory against the extremists in late 2017 and pressure from Shiite public opinion for the US to withdraw all its troops has mounted in the years since.

Kadhemi and McGurk are working on drawing up a timetable for the “withdrawal of combat forces from Iraq,” according to a statement by the prime minister’s office.

NEWS MAKERS

Hands Off My Hijab! Young Muslim Women Protest Proposed French Ban

Sixteen-year-old Mariem Chourak is a devout Muslim who considers wearing a hijab an expression of her devotion to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), but a proposal by French senators might soon deny her the freedom to do so in public spaces.

The amendment to an ‘anti-separatism’ bill designed to strengthen France’s secular values and which applies to girls under 18 has drawn outrage and prompted an online protest under the hashtag #HandsOffMyHijab (#PasToucheAMonHijab) that went viral beyond French borders.

“It’s part of my identity. To force me to remove it would be a humiliation,” Chourak said. “I cannot understand why they would want to pass a law that discriminates.”

The place of religion and religious symbols worn in public is a long-running matter of controversy in France, a



staunchly secular country and home to Europe’s largest Muslim minority.

France prohibited the wearing of Islamic headscarves in state schools in 2004. In 2010, it banned the niqab, the full-face Islamic veil, in public places such as streets, parks, public transport, and administrative buildings.

The amendment pertains to all religious symbols, though opponents say it targets Muslims. Senator Christian Bilhac told lawmakers in April it would protect youngsters.

“Parents should not impose dogma on their children,” he told the upper house.

A group of young women is running the #PasToucheAMonHijab campaign from the living rooms of their families’ flats.

They have drawn support from social media influencers, a US lawmaker and Ibtihaj Muhammad, the first American woman to wear a hijab while competing in the Olympics, among others.

“[The politicians] want our emancipation, they want to save us from this imaginary oppression, but it is they who are oppressing us,” said medical student Mona el Mashouly, 25, in her home city of Strasbourg.

The anti-separatism bill of President

Emmanuel Macron’s government cracks down on forced marriages and virginity tests, and includes stricter surveillance of religious associations. It initially made no mention of preventing minors from wearing the hijab in public.

The conservative-dominated Senate added the amendment, as well as two more that would prevent mothers from wearing a hijab when accompanying children on school trips and ban the full-body burkini swimsuit.

A joint committee from parliament’s two chambers will debate the amendments and they may yet be scratched from the bill.

But for 22-year-old Hiba Latreche, the damage is done.

“[It is] symptomatic of the constant policing of women’s bodies, choices and beliefs that we have in France,” she said, “as well as the instrumentalisation of Muslim women.” -REUTERS

Jamkash Vehicleades, Other Business Units Sealed For Violating Covid SOPs

TANGMARG: Jamkash Motors including Several Business establishments have been Sealed and Case were registered against the owner of Jamkash Motors for violating lockdown in Kunzer area of North Kashmir's Baramulla District.

Sources told CNS that Kunzer Police along with Duty Magistrate has Sealed Several business establishments in different areas of Kunzer including the workshop of Jamkash Motors at Chichilora Kunzer and Two non

essential shops at reram area of Kunzer for violating lockdown and running their Business unnecessarily.

Meanwhile Baramulla Police has also registered Several Cases in Police Station Pattan and Boniyar for violating lockdown in Reshipora Singhpora & Boniyar Uri.

Baramulla Police has once again requests general public of district Baramulla to stay inside as far as possible, and venture out only in case of emergent situation.(CNS)

NC Demands Judicial Probe Into Corruption Allegations Against Dr Jitendra



SRINAGAR: National Conference on Tuesday demanded judicial probe into allegations of corruption levelled against union minister Jitendra Singh by BJP leader and former MLC Vikram Randhawa.

"The allegations coming from none other than the Pradesh Secretary of the BJP and a former Member Legislative Council are grave in nature and cannot be just brushed aside", a spokesperson of the National Conference said in a statement.

The spokesperson said that the truth can come to fore only after an independent and impartial probe is carried out in a time-bound manner.

Apni Party, Provincial President, Jammu, and Former Minister, Manjit Singh also urged Lt Governor Manoj Sinha to hold a high level probe into the nexus between police and local admin-

istration with the mining mafia.

In a statement here, Manjit Singh said that Apni Party has been raising this issue from last several months that nexus between police and administration with the mining mafia has snatched right of local miners and left the people associated with the business jobless.

"The Govt should have paid attention towards the serious issues which has badly affected the local miners engaged in ex-traction of minerals following permission from the administration. However, their rights have been snatched by permitting mining mafia which led to the suffering of people in general," said Manjit Singh.

In reference to the allegations of a ruling party's former legislator, the Former Minister said that the government should order a high level probe into the allegations and transfer such officials from the posts with immediate effect before the initiation of an enquiry.

"A probe is must to expose the mining mafia and their associates which ultimately compelled a former legislator of ruling political party to speak publicly against own party leaders and mining department officials and police department," he said.

One Killed, Two Injured In Doda Road Accident

Observer News Service

DODA: A health worker died on the spot while two others were injured on Tuesday in a road accident near Chapnari in Doda.

A senior police official said that a Maruti vehicle met an accident in which one person died on the spot while two others were injured. The deceased was identified as Lassa Sheikh, who was working in the health department.

The officials said that the injured persons were shifted to GMC Doda for treatment.

Raja Muzaffar, RTI Activist And KO Columnist Bereaved

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Father-in-Law of RTI activist and Kashmir Observer Columnist Raja Muzaffar Bhat, Haji Ghulam Nabi Bhat passed away on Tuesday at Srinagar's

Chest Disease hospital. Deceased Bhat, a resident of Kanidewar Hawal was retired Divisional Forest Officer (DFO). The deceased had been declared COVID-19 positive and was suffering from bilateral pneu-

monia.

The deceased is father of SSP Ajaz Ahmad Bhat and Jammu ad Kashmir Bank officer Ishtiyaq Ahmad Bhat.

The family has urged people not to visit their house for any condolence

meeting in view of COVID-19 pandemic.

"I appeal friends and relatives to pray for the departed soul and not visit our Hawal residence for any kind of Taziyat in view of ongoing pandemic situation," said Bhat.

165 Out Of 348 Covid ICU Beds Occupied In Kashmir

Four Srinagar Hospitals Have Just Three ICU Beds Vacant

Image for representation



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In Kashmir, of 348 beds designated as COVID ICU beds, around 165 beds have been occupied already.

A top health official said that 183 COVID ICU beds are still vacant in Kashmir division but the main four tertiary care hospitals in Srinagar have just three ICU beds vacant.

"With each passing day, more and more ICU beds are being occupied and if the steep surge of the Covid-19 positive patients continues, it seems very soon we will struggle to find a life-support bed for sick patients," an official said.

He said four level three tertiary care hospitals of Srinagar which includes SKIMS

Soura, SKIMS Medical College Hospital Bemina, SMHS Srinagar and Chest disease hospital have just three ICU beds available.

At SKIMS Soura 300 beds including 292 isolation and eight ICU beds have been reserved for Covid patients and among them 289 isolation and six ICU beds are already full.

At SMHS, an official said, there are 203 beds kept for Covid patients which includes 192 isolation beds and 11 COVID ICU beds and among them 174 isolation beds and 10 ICU beds are already full while there is a vacancy of 18 isolation and one ICU bed.

"At SKIMS Bemina, out of 170 beds which includes 166 isolation and four ICU beds, 76

isolation beds and all four ICU beds are full," an official said.

"At CD hospital of 94 total bed capacity 77 are isolation beds and four are ICU beds. All ICU beds are full, however, three isolation beds are available," an official said.

An official at JLNH Hospital said out of 150 including 139 isolation and 11 ICU beds, 30 Isolation and 8 ICU beds are vacant.

"Besides that at PHC Chanapora 20 isolation beds and 04 ICU beds are available," an official said.

The ICU beds which are vacant in Kashmir so far include four at SDH Sopore, seven at Trauma Hospital Bijbehara, six at district Hospital Bandipora, 10 at MCH wing Kulgam, four at AMT School Shopian, 10 at District hospital Pulwama, 12 at District hospital Gandelbal and 08 at CHC Kupwara.

In Kashmir division out of 3,817 isolation beds 2,054 beds are full and 1580 are vacant. Among 348 isolation beds 165 beds are full and 183 are vacant.

Pertinently, there are 24,000 active positive cases in Kashmir division—(KNO)

WITH EACH PASSING DAY, MORE AND MORE ICU beds are being occupied and if the steep surge of the Covid-19 positive patients continues, it seems very soon we will struggle to find a life-support bed for sick patients,"

Adv Khan Pitches For Community Level Involvement To Tackle Covid-19

Observer News Service

PULWAMA: Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Baseer Ahmad Khan, Tuesday chaired a series of meetings with officers, Panchayat Raj Institutions and Urban Local Bodies members, traders and transporter associations, religious leaders of Pulwama and Shopian districts here to take stock of Covid control measures being implemented in the districts to tackle the pandemic towards its end.

Advisor said that the administration and the civil society have to work hand in hand to fight the second wave of this dreaded virus which seems more contagious. He called for greater involvement of PRI and ULB members, local Auqaf committees, traders, transporters religious leaders and civil society in general to fight this pandemic effectively. He stressed on dealing with the situation as per the recommended guidelines and operating procedures

saying that everyone has to play his role in combating the deadly disease. He urged upon the participants to strengthen the hands of administration towards containment of Covid 19 infection as they have pivotal role to propagate the right information regarding the containment of disease.

Highlighting the importance of Information Education and Communication activities for mitigating the infection, Advisor urged upon Ulemas to make regular announcement from Masjids, Khankhas and Shrines advising people to take precautionary measures like wearing of masks, maintaining social distance and hand hygiene. He said that it is testing time for all of us and it is our responsibility to show efficiency to tackle the situation smoothly. He said that there is no shortage of oxygen, drugs and other basic amenities in the UT and people are requested not to pay heed to rumours.

In view of coming festivals, Khan directed traders to ensure that no customer should be allowed to enter the shops without masks. He also stressed on the traders' and transporters' delegations to adhere to the Covid guidelines and restrictions besides forming volunteer groups who will look after the implementation of the guidelines.

Later, several delegations apprised the Advisor of their demands and grievance regarding availability of vaccines, proper healthcare facilities during pandemic and other basic necessities.

DDC Chairman Pulwama, DDC Vice chairman Shopian, DDC Vice Chairperson Pulwama, Chairman, MC Pulwama and Shopian, Director Rural Development, Director Urban Bodies, Director Animal Husbandary, senior officers from essential services departments, members of Auqaf, Ulmas, Traders, Transporters and other concerned officers attended the meetings.

Man Injured During Scuffle In Langate, Critical

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A forty year old man sustained grievous injuries after an inter-family scuffle broke out of a land dispute in Humpora village of Langate area in north Kashmir's Handwara on Tuesday.

Reports said that the incident occurred on Monday evening after members of a family entered into a verbal argument regarding some land dispute.

"The argument only intensified and in the course of time a person was hit by a stick on his head allegedly by his cousin," they said.

The injured person was identified as Khursheed Ahmad Wani son of Mohammad Ahsan

Wani and he sustained severe cranial injuries in the incident and was immediately removed to a nearby health facility in Langate, where the medical staff sensing exigency asked the injured person be taken to District Hospital Handwara.

However soon after administration of first aid, the doctors referred him to SKIMS Soura for advanced treatment.

"The injured person continues to be in critical condition," news gathering agency CNS reported.

Meanwhile, a police official said that the culprit Saif-ud-Din Wani son of Abdul Gani Wani has been arrested. A case has been registered and investigations are on.

Protest In Rajouri After Cop Opens Fire During Marriage Ceremony

Observer News Service

RAJOURI: A cop allegedly fired with his service weapon in a marriage ceremony in Nowshera town of Rajouri after which the locals of the area staged a protest demonstration, demanding immediate action against the accused cop.

Locals said that a heated argument took place between the cop and a local resident during a marriage ceremony in the town following which the cop alleged-

ly fired from his service weapon.

"Although everyone including the local resident escaped unhurt but such an incident is grave in nature and could have resulted in the loss of lives," said the protesting residents while demanding action against the cop.

Meanwhile, Police said that the investigation into the incident has been started and the cop has also been detained.

The cop is posted as PSO with the chairman of the Municipal Committee of Nowshera.

Ashraf Sehrai Admitted To GMC Jammu After Health Deteriorates In Jail

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Muhammed Ashraf Sehrai, chairman of Tehreek-e-Hurriyat was Tuesday shifted to GMC Jammu from Udhampur jail after his health deteriorated.

His son confirmed to a local news gathering agency that Sehrai has been shifted to GMC

Jammu.

"He was already suffering from many ailments. His health has worsened after his arrest," he said.

Sehrai was arrested on July 12, 2020 and slapped with Public Safety Act and since then remained in detention at Udhampur jail.

Police Arrest Nine Persons, Seize Seven Vehicles For Illegal Mining

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Police has arrested nine persons and seized seven vehicles involved in illegal extraction and transportation of raw materials in Baramulla.

A police spokesperson said that Police parties from Police Station Baramulla, Police Post Mirgund and Police Post Kungambara arrested nine persons and seized

three tractors, three tippers & a JCB machine involved in illegal extraction and transportation of raw materials at Baramulla, Chandsma, Singhpora Pattan and Kungambara Chowk.

"They have been shifted to police station where they remain in custody."

Cases under relevant sections of law have been registered in concerned police stations and investigations have been taken up.

NEWS MAKERS

Driver Dead, 11-Year-Old Boy Injured In Budgam Road Accident

Observer News Service



BUDGAM: A tractor driver was killed while an 11-year-old boy was injured after the tractor they were travelling in turned turtle on Tuesday afternoon at Khag area of Central Kashmir's Budgam district.

Officials said that a tractor driver lost control over his vehicle following which the tractor turned turtle, resulting in on spot death of the driver.

However, the boy sustained injuries in the mishap and his condition is stated to be stable.

An official identified the deceased as Zahoor Ahmad of Makhhma Khag.

He said that an 11-year-old boy was also injured in the mishap, who has been admitted at PHC Khag and is stable.

One Dead, Nine Injured In Kishtwar Road Accident

Observer News Service

KISHTWAR: A man died while nine others were injured in a road accident near Hasti Sarthal area of Kishtwar district on Tuesday.

An official said that the man was killed and nine others injured after a Tata Sumo bearing registration number JK17-1248, they were travelling in met with an accident on Sarthal-Kishtwar road.

He identified the deceased as Chatu Ram (35) son of Jodh Ram, a resident of Trigam Kishtwar.

The injured have been identified as Vijay Kumar son of Jagdish Raj, Jagdish Raj son of Sant Ram, Sandeep Kumar son of Amar Nath, Khemla Devi wife of Pawan Kumar, Arjun Kumar son of Amar Chand, Sandeep Kumar son of Amar Nath, Suraj Kumar son of Subhash Chander, Neket Kumar son of Narayan Das and Sunita Devi wife of Raghu Nath and—all residents of Trigam Kishtwar.

SRINAGAR MUNICIPAL CORPORATION.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER LEFT RIVER WORKS DIVISION

TENDER NOTICE INVITING E- TENDERS

NIET NO: 04 e-Tendering/2021-22

Dated: 03-may-2021

For and on behalf of the Srinagar Municipal Corporation, e-tenders are invited on item rate basis from approved and eligible Contractors for the following work:-

S.No	Name of work	Est. Cost (In Lacs)	Cost of Tender Document (Non-refundable)	Time of Completion in days/ Weeks	Class of Contract (Civil)	Head of Account
1.	INSTALLATION OF THREE NUMBER AUTOMATIC BOOM BARRIER / DROP GATE AT CENTRAL OFFICE, SRINAGAR MUNICIPAL CORPORATION, KARANAGR SRINAGAR	Rs.8.35/-	Rs.300/-	12 Days Strictly	CEE/ DEE	Internal resources (SMC/ PLG/2021-22/121-26 Dated: 30-04-2021)
2.	PROVIDING EVEVATOR FACILITIES FOR MAYOR OFFICE BUILDING IN CENTRAL OFFICE PREMISES AT KARAN NAGAR	Rs.33.98	Rs.1200/-	18 Days Strictly	AAY/ BEE	Internal resources (SMC/ PLG/2021-22/121-26 Dated: 30-04-2021)

1 Publish date 03-05-2021 04:00 PM

2 Document download 04-05-2021 10:00AM To 17-05-2021 04:00PM

3 Bid submission/uploading date 04-05-2021 10:00AM To 17-05-2021 04:00PM

4 Bid Opening date 18-05-2021 11:00 PM

5 Submission of hardcopy for successful bidder 19-05-2021 upto 4.00 PM

Other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below:-

TERMS & CONDITIONS:

1. The successful bidder shall have to produce/deposit performance security 3% of the value of contract in shape of FDR/CDR pledged to Executive Engineer LRWD SMC before issuance of allotment to protect the department against any financial loss in the event of default of the successful bidder/tenderer which the successful bidder should submit / deposit within 05 days from the date of formal intimation is issued in his favour from the corporation.

2. The successful bidders/tenders should submit the hard copies of their documents including DD after the opening of tenders.

3. In Case of Holidays/office happens to be closed on the date of opening of bids. Bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue

3(a). The intending tenderer/bidder should attach sales tax clearance certificate with upto date Validation without which no tenders/bids will be entertained.

4. The bid shall be opened online in the Office of Executive Engineer LRWD, SMC at Old Funds office Building Karan Nagar near National School Municipal Park on 29-04-2021 11:00 PM.

5. Bids must be accompanied with cost of tender document in shape of Demand Draft pledged in favour of Chief Accounts Officer SMC payable at Srinagar or Bank receipt of tender fee deposit in the Municipal Account No: 0216010200000007 payable at J&K Bank Brach Balgarden. Scanned copy of the same withmentionofNIET No.& Serial no. to be uploaded along with all other documents including Bid Security Declaration with validitynot less than 180 days from the Bid due date.

DIPK-NB-608/21

No.SMC/EELRWD/360-371 Dated: 03-05-2021.

KASHMIR OBSERVER

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K O V I E W

Line of cooperation

Over two months into ceasefire along Line of Control, there is already ample evidence of life returning to normal among border dwellers. In recent weeks, there have been many reports about the marriage celebrations in border areas of Rajouri and Poonch. Similarly, there have been similar reports from across the line of control. One example that stands out is PaK's Battal valley which over the years has been most impacted by the firing from this side. According to reports in international media the villagers in the area have resumed economic and social activities.

The ceasefire agreement was dramatically signed by the militaries of the two countries in February. The move came reportedly following an extended back channel dialogue between the two countries. Ever since there have been more efforts to improve the relations. Last week Pakistan offered to provide essential medical relief supplies to India, which is in the grips of a virulent second Covid-19 wave and struggling to meet critical hospital needs, including medical oxygen.

There are, however, still apprehensions among the people that the things might go still back to square one. More so among the people living alongside the LoC. There is already an example of what happened to original ceasefire agreement between the two nations which was signed in November 2003. However, by 2010, the agreement had lost its relevance due to frequent ceasefire violations that touched an all-time high in 2020 with over 5,000 incidents of firing and shelling being recorded.

A halt to the frequent firing exchanges will make a redeeming difference to the lives of lakhs of border residents on both sides of the Line of Control. But it won't change anything as far as the situation in the Valley where militancy continues to reign supreme.

The issue of militancy can be addressed if India and Pakistan go back to dialogue. Talks could go a long way to reduce the tension between the neighbours. The calm borders had become an important factor in the normalization of the relations between the neighbours, enabling them to start one of the most promising dialogue processes through 2003-2007 which by accounts of the top leaders of the two countries who were at the helm of it was close to a breakthrough on Kashmir.

But the challenge for the two countries would be to sustain a dialogue should it start. In past many such attempts have been aborted by a major attack in India traced to elements in Pakistan or sometimes the rigid negotiating positions of the two countries. It would be interesting to see how the two countries negotiate their respective conditionalities before reaching out to each other. The dialogue that will follow, as a result, will go a long to usher in peace in the region and turn the LoC into a line of cooperation

OTHER OPINION

Why 2021 is not 2024

The results of assembly elections to West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Kerala — where the Trinamool Congress (TMC), the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and the Left Democratic Front (LDF) won respectively — have resulted in instant analysis of what this means for 2024. The conventional view is that this marks the beginning of a possible third front challenge to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), where regional leaders — especially Mamata Banerjee — will play a critical role. After all, the West Bengal chief minister has shown the model to defeat an aggressive BJP.

There can be no doubt that Ms Banerjee, as well as MK Stalin and Pinarayi Vijayan, have performed impressively. There can also be no doubt that the BJP stares at a stiff political challenge because of its management of the second wave of Covid-19. But it would be premature, on the basis of specific state elections in 2021, to speak of possibilities in 2024.

Three years is a long time in politics — and the BJP may well recover some of its lost political momentum in Uttar Pradesh next year if it wins the state polls. But more importantly, the third front experiment has always confronted two challenges. There is rarely a consensus on who should be the leader of such a front, and taking on Narendra Modi in presidential style elections without a leader is a hard task. Any third front idea also instantly collides with the Congress's ambitions of being the primary opposition force — and till an understanding is developed first among regional parties and then between the regional parties and the Congress, a concerted challenge is unlikely.

Hindustan Times



Arindambanerjee / Shutterstock

Making our Zakat more constructive

The community really deserves to manage our Zakat funds in a more professional and imaginative manner.

Asad Mirza

Zakat is one of the five basic tenets of Islam. Zakat means purity. Thus, this implies that a man purifies his yearly earnings by giving away one part of them in the path of God. This further implies that man should understand that his earnings or his possessions are not a result of his own making but they are a bounty given by Allah. Thus, Zakat is, in essence, a practical acknowledgement of God's bounties. And this admission is no doubt the greatest form of worship. Payment of Zakat every year is obligatory, on every earning Muslim, at the minimum fixed rate of 2.5% per annum, on all wealth that is subject to growth. This amount is given for worthy religious causes 'for the sake of God' and for meeting the needs of the poor and the helpless.

The second point above is more important. It means that through your alms giving or sharing your wealth you are helping the needy, poor and helpless, who are unable to sustain themselves. Thus, through this act of yours you are spreading your wealth and joy among the less privileged. And this is what is enshrined in the Islamic principle of equality of wealth, a concept that has been borrowed even by Karl Marx.

Zakat management in India

Every year, a considerable sum of money is donated in the name of Zakat in India.

Have you ever wondered how much Zakat is being generated in India every year? Let's assume that out of 15 million Muslims, only One Million Muslims contribute the minimum amount of Zakat for a lakh of rupees, which is Rs. 2500. Even at these conservative figures the amount comes out to 25,000,000,000!!! And in reality the actual amount is much more than this.

It leads one to wonder where all this money is being spent and by whom? According to sources, conservatively we can say that 80% of this amount is gobbled by the religious educational institutions. Fair enough, they have their expenses and needs to be taken care of. But does this figure reflect in the quality of education imparted by them or the overall personalities of their students? No not there, but in the style of living of their administrators!

Further according to sources this year most of the institutions that collect Zakat, are deducting 40 to 45 per cent of the Zakat collected as administrative expenses, and these administrative expenses are completely unaccounted for.

This leads us to surmise that our Zakat money is not being used properly and productively for the benefit of the Indian Muslims, to ameliorate their lot. Instead it is being managed in an unsystematic, unprofessional and individualistic manner.

Secondly, most of us consider giving out Zakat as a burden, not as a duty or as a contribution enjoined by Allah to spread joy and wealth within the community. Thirdly, Zakat collection has become a business and many institutes who collect and

survive Zakat are doing it in a professional and un-Islamic manner.

How to manage Zakat more productively

In the current scenario, it becomes incumbent on our religious scholars and leaders to ponder this question. It would be prudent on their part to sit together and constitute a central Zakat Fund for the whole of India, with branches in every state capital and sub-branches in every big city and town.

Every Indian Muslim who has to pay Zakat, should be directed to deposit his contributions in specified bank accounts managed by the Zakat Fund, which in turn should be managed by a committee of religious, community and social leaders and professional accountants and financial experts.

In addition those who are not using the banking or digital financial tools, should deposit their Zakat in a box, which should be placed in every Masjid of the country, along with a box for contribution to the Masjid. These boxes should be opened quarterly and money deposited in the accounts of Zakat Fund. The Imam and Muezzins of the Masjids should be made responsible to manage these boxes and their contents. The Zakat Fund should pay the salaries of the Imams and Muezzins of the

“In the current scenario, it becomes incumbent on our religious scholars and leaders to ponder over this question. It would be prudent on their part to sit together and constitute a central Zakat Fund for the whole of India, with branches in every state capital and sub-branches in every big city and town

mosques, instead of them being disbursed by the respective state Waqf.

They should further be tasked to prepare a database of the needy and destitute in their locality and forward it to the state and central offices. This will engage the local Imams in the collection and disbursement of Zakat to the needy in their area based on real inputs. It will also empower them to handhold the families who are being given financial help, on how to better their life and circumstances and get out of poverty by pursuing an education or a small business and other means to better their family situation instead of relying on community help for life time. Once this starts happening in real terms, then we'll find that the number of poor in the community has come down drastically and instead once who were poor are now

helping others.

The central committee of the Zakat Fund should oversee the total collections and their disbursement. First on the list should be the religious institutions, second destitute families and third would be community projects which would help the community in different fields like, education, medical facilities, scholarships, hostels, and educational expenses for the poor students and entrepreneurial seed funds for giving out loans to deserving individuals to start new ventures.

We can only imagine wishfully, if we have a Central Committee of committed elders who manages this money, then within a span of 2 to 5 years, we'll be able to build a well equipped hospital in every district of the country, a university in every state capital, a secondary school in every village, a degree college in every town and city and homes for destitute, widows, orphans and physically handicapped in every district of the country, to be used by every citizen of the country.

Personal Zakat management

Lastly, we should also discuss as to why most of us consider giving out Zakat as a burden. This is due to our own foolish thinking and money management and desire to get maximum benefit even for doing a good deed. A wrong perception prevails amongst most of us that Zakat should be given out in the month of Ramazan, as the reward for giving out alms in this month is 70 times more. Both these concepts are erroneous and unislamic and have no mention in the Holy Quran.

So, to make our Zakat contribution easier on our pocket and also make it more fruitful, what we can do is to calculate our yearly Zakat and divide it by 12. This sum we should take out from our salary or business profits every month and keep aside and hand over to a needy as someone approaches us, instead of waiting for Ramazan. Remember, your Zakat for the next year becomes due as soon as the current year's Ramazan ends, which means that you are continuously under obligation to the Almighty Allah to pay your Zakat.

These musings are just that of a common Muslim and are based on common sense and practical solutions. Let's hope and pray that our community's religious elders take heed of these ideas and suggestions. This will definitely make our community financially stronger and self-sustainable in a short time and also contribute to the welfare of our brethren in the country through institutions and programmes managed by our Zakat Fund. Ameen.

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

Asad Mirza is a political commentator based in New Delhi. He was also associated with BBC Urdu Service and Khaleej Times of Dubai. He writes on Muslims, educational, international affairs, interfaith and current affairs.



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

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Tough Times call for Strict Measures

It is true that very little can be done on an individual level to combat what is as lethal as the second wave of covid-19 in Kashmir. However, individual precautions are very significant and their efficacy cannot be ruled out.

It is often highlighted how one covid positive person can start a chain of infections. This causes the scale of transmission to multiply, leading to an exponential rise. However, much like the logic that runs exponential rise, run the logic of exponential decay. This implies that each case avoided

is a step towards a chain of infections being averted. Perhaps, this is the aim that we as a society must keep in mind.

Instead of thinking about exponential rise, we should focus on exponential decay and make that our aim. Many on social media have advocated a quite strict way of bringing the cases down. They're asking each individual to assume that the person next to them is infected with covid-19 and follow SOPs as they would near an infected person. They believe that if this is followed for a month, we will see a substantial decline in the number of cases.

Ofcourse, this method isn't one that has been advocated by any credible authorities, paramedics or the government. However, it is purely directed at guiding people to take extra precautions. We must realise that we have no other option. Our health care is severely strained. Even as many in the administration are claiming there's no lack of resources, many patients are running from pillar to post in search of ICUs, Oxygen and medicines.

Therefore, the situation calls for intensifying our own safety precautions even if they may seem too strict.

Our NGOs are also running low on supplies. There's only so much community effort will do if individual precautions are compromised.

Therefore, it is an earnest request to all. Don't allow any lapses. Follow covid SOPs strictly. Avoid unnecessary outdoor trips and avoid indoor meetings. This is truly our time to show how much we love Kashmir and people here. Give it your best for nothing less is going to help.

Tania Shafi
Tanias@rediffmail

Benefits Of Virtual Learning For Disabled Students

Vijay Garg

Online courses depend more on interactive studies like visuals, graphics, and closed-captioned videos. They are known as great levelers. Such studies allow students to choose and share what they want to show. Such programs and studies maintain anonymity about their disability as well. This way all the learners work together towards a common goal of learning and pursuing careers in different fields

There are eight categories in which disabled students are classified according to their disabilities: medical impairment, mental illness, mobility impairment, hearing impairment, learning disability, vision impairment, acquired brain impairment, and intellectual disability. Because certain individuals are physically and mentally challenged, it does not mean that they cannot perform well in academics or professional life. With the advent of eLearning, education is no longer a laborious work for disabled students.

In fact, students with physical disabilities studying online find it more fulfilling and less difficult to get knowledge. While it is difficult for the disabled students to get admission in a conventional education institution, this is not a case when they turn to online learning platforms.

As a matter of fact, many colleges and universities have started conducting online learning platforms. Today, the concept of virtual campuses is evolving rapidly and more students with disabilities are getting enrolled. Technology is also playing a pivotal role in providing the perfect learning solutions to the disabled students. Nowadays, students choose their own location for schoolwork and study.

Besides, students with disabilities find it more comforting to study in the online environment as it gives them more time to complete assignments as well as allow them to sit, rest or walk whenever there is a necessity.

There are certain benefits of e Learning for disabled students that they can avail without having any trouble. Some of them deserve a mention here:

1. For Learning Disabilities

Studying online provides the disabled students time and space to work. With e- Learning, they can review materials and watch video lectures as many times as they need. Through the IT systems and softwares, students who have dyslexia or visual processing disorder can manipulate digital text by changing their font style or size which help them in processing the information effectively.

2. For Physical Disabilities

The most obvious benefit for the physically-disabled students is that they stay in their comfort zone without rushing to a campus or commuting between classes to classes. There are integrated technologies for the students who cannot type such as voice-to-text and voice-activated programs.

3. For Visual Impairments

It is easier for visually-impaired students to access their computer to attend the lecture rather than traveling to the campus. The adaptive technologies like braille keyboards or voice-to-text software and audio recordings are provided for their learning.



Credits : Leher India

4. For Hearing Impairments

Students with hearing impairment can use technology to make their life easier. Through e-Learning, they can view video lectures with subtitles, which they cannot experience in the classroom. Text being the primary mode of communication with the teachers and other fellow students can be an easier way of interacting through forums and emails.

5. For Psychiatric Disabilities

Such disabled students can work and study in their own comfort zone. As it gets difficult for them to cope up with the situation and anxiety, hence their known surroundings will help them better to learn through e-Learning.

For the disabled students, two main factors are beneficial at every level; convenience and flexibility. Online learning provides convenient access for the distant learners and it is more flexible than traditional schooling methods.

There is no hassle of traveling because classes can be attended from home, disabled students can easily set up their home office area according to their personal preferences. Being in their own comfort zone, it will make it easier for them to progress more.

Apart from convenience, e-Learning provides students some flexibility that is not available in the F2F delivery format. Online courses are developed with Universal Designed Learning (UDL) standards. By this, information of the course is presented in multiple ways. For example, a reading assignment available in regular text is also available as an audio file. This will automatically give students the flexibility

to read or head the information and to review it often as they need.

Online courses depend more on interactive studies like visuals, graphics, and closed-captioned videos. They are known as great levelers. Such studies allow students to choose and share what they want to show. Such programs and studies maintain anonymity about their disability as well. This way all the learners work together towards a common goal of learning and pursuing careers in different fields.

As technology is in everyone's hand in the form of computers, laptop, phone or tablet, attending classes online is far better than commuting to college or universities. The technology that is used for e+Learning allows auditory and visual aspects to be accessible to all learners.

It is also noted that adult disabled students prefer online environments better than the traditional format. Being convenient, flexible and accessible to all the disabled students, e-Learning is the most appealing way of encouraging and persuading such students to develop and polish their skills.

In the 21st century, the acceptance of disabilities needs to be promoted among teaching and professional staff and accessibility guidelines need to be developed according to the needs of students, based upon their real-life experiences. Disability is no more a problem as there are many tools, teaching methods and design standards that make everything accessible to the disabled

The author is a retired Principal, Government Girls Senior Secondary school MHR Malout Punjab

The Math That Explains The End Of The Pandemic

Zoë M. McLaren

The United States has vaccinated more than half of its adults against Covid-19, but it could be months until the country has vaccinated enough people to put herd immunity within reach (and much of the world is still desperately waiting for access to vaccines).

Places with rising vaccination rates, like the United States, can look forward to case numbers coming down a lot in the meantime. And sooner than you might think. That's because cases decline via the principle of exponential decay.

Many people learned about exponential growth in the early days of the pandemic to understand how a small number of cases can quickly grow into a major outbreak as transmission chains multiply. India, for example, which is in the grips of a major Covid-19 crisis, is in a phase of exponential growth.

Exponential growth means case numbers can double in just a few days. Exponential decay is its opposite. Exponential decay means case numbers can halve in the same amount of time.

Understanding exponential dynamics makes it easier to know what to expect in the coming phase of the pandemic: Why things will improve quickly as vaccination rates rise and why it's important to maintain some precautions even after case numbers come down.

Exponential decay will cause infections to plummet

Every case of Covid-19 that is prevented cuts off transmission chains, which prevents many more cases down the line. That means the same precautions that reduce transmission enough to cause a big drop in case numbers when cases are high translate into a smaller decline when cases are low. And those changes add up over time. For example, reducing 1,000 cases by half each day would mean a reduction of 500 cases on Day 1 and 125 cases on Day 3 but only 31 cases on Day 5.



The end of the pandemic will therefore probably look like this: A steep drop in cases followed by a longer period of low numbers of cases, though cases will rise again if people ease up on precautions too soon.

This pattern has already emerged in the United States: It took only 22 days for daily cases to fall 100,000 from the Jan. 8 peak of around 250,000, but more than three times as long for daily cases to fall another 100,000. This pattern has also been borne out among the elderly, who had early access to vaccination, and in other countries, such as Israel, that have gotten their Covid-19 epidemics under control.

Infections begin to taper off when herd immunity is reached

Reaching herd immunity is a key goal. It drives cases toward zero by slowing the spread of the virus through a combination of vaccination and in-

It is possible to bring Covid-19 case numbers down quickly via exponential decay even before vaccination rates reach herd immunity. We just need to keep transmission rates below the tipping point between exponential growth and exponential decay: where every person with Covid-19 infects fewer than one other person, on average.

fection-acquired immunity to maintain exponential decay — even as society resumes normal activities.

But contrary to popular belief, reaching herd immunity doesn't prevent all outbreaks, at least not initially. It simply means so few people are susceptible to infections that any outbreaks that do happen tend to be snuffed out and case counts decline. Over time, outbreaks themselves become less and less common.

It is possible to bring Covid-19 case numbers down quickly via exponential decay even before vaccination rates reach herd immunity. We just need to keep transmission rates below the tipping point between exponential growth and exponential decay: where every person with Covid-19 infects fewer than one other person, on average. Every single thing people can do to slow transmission helps — including wearing masks, getting tested and avoiding crowded in-

door spaces — especially given concerns about current and future variants, since it could be what gets us past the threshold into exponential decay.

As more and more people get vaccinated, people can gradually ease precautions while cases continue to decline. Keeping cases down gets easier over time until — and this is the beauty of vaccine-driven herd immunity — it's almost effortless, once enough people are vaccinated, to keep cases sustainably low. That's the power of exponential decay.

Cases will rise again if restrictions are lifted too soon

You shouldn't expect the road to herd immunity to be smooth, though. It's natural for people to want to ease precautions when cases fall and to feel reluctant to step up precautions when cases rise again. The tricky part is that it can be hard to know how much to ease up while keeping cases trending downward so exponential growth doesn't get out of control, as is happening in India.

Swings in case numbers are less dramatic when cases are lower

Fortunately, the exponential dynamics that lead to wild swings in case numbers when cases are high lead to far less dramatic swings when cases are low. And as more and more people are vaccinated, the swings will also shrink, since fewer people are susceptible to infection.

Every vaccination helps keep us in the realm of exponential decay. So does everything else people do to slow the spread of the virus, like masking and distancing. Synchronizing these efforts magnifies their impact by making it nearly impossible for the virus to spread and breaking many transmission chains at once.

The United States is still a long way from reaching herd immunity, but things could improve a lot before then. The worst of the pandemic may be over sooner than you think.

Economic Times

'You Can Bury Your Head In Sand Like Ostrich, But...': Court Raps Centre

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court Tuesday directed the Centre to show cause as to why contempt should not be initiated against it for failing to comply with order on supply of oxygen to Delhi for treating COVID-19 patients.

"You can put your head in sand like an ostrich, we will not," the high court told the central government.

It added that the Supreme Court has already directed, and now the high court is also saying that the Centre will have to supply 700 MT oxygen daily to Delhi right away by whatever means.

"You are part of the city and seeing the situation yourself. No, you don't know. Are you living in ivory towers?," the bench said.

A bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Rekha Palli also rejected the Centre's submission that Delhi was not entitled to 700 metric tonnes of medical oxygen in light of existing medical infrastructure.

It said the Supreme Court's April 30 detailed order directed the central government to provide 700 MT of oxygen per day to Delhi and not just 490 MT.

"We had told you contempt is the last thing in our mind but it is certainly in our mind and don't drive us to that last point. We mean business now. Enough is enough. Be clear on this. We are not going to take no for an answer. There is no way you won't supply 700 MT.

"There is Supreme Court order and now we are also saying that you will have to supply 700 MT oxygen daily to Delhi right away by whatever means. We would not hear anything except compliance," an annoyed bench orally observed.

The bench, which heard for nearly five hours the matter relating to oxygen crisis and other COVID-19 related issues that Delhi is grappling with, said, "We see grim reality everyday of people not able to secure oxygen or ICU beds in hospitals" which have reduced beds due to the gas shortage.

"We, therefore, direct the central government to show cause why contempt be not initiated for not only non-compliance of our order of May as also of order of the Supreme Court dated April 30. To answer the said notice, we direct the presence of Piyush Goyal and Sumita Dawra (senior Central government officers) tomorrow," it said.

The bench also said just because the Delhi government earlier demanded less oxygen, therefore the people of this city should suffer and the Centre will ignore the revised requirement and will let people die.

On the submission of ASG Chetan Sharma that the compliance affidavit of April 30 order will be filed in the Supreme Court by tomorrow morning, the bench "we fail to understand what good a compliance affidavit will be do when as a matter of fact 700 MT of oxygen is not delivered to Delhi. Even the earlier allocated 490 MT and revised 590 MT is not delivered even for a single day."

Sharma submitted that the apex court has not directed supply of 700 MT of oxygen

per day to Delhi.

The court disagreed with him and said a plain reading of the top court's order showed that it had directed the central government to supply 700 MT of liquid medical oxygen by making good the deficit.

The bench noted that the apex court's order recorded Delhi government counsel's submission that as against the demand of 700 MT of oxygen per day, manufacturers have been able to supply only 440 MT.

It said the apex court noted that the projected demand of Delhi in coming days will be 976 MT of oxygen by increasing the medical infrastructure and that the situation must be remedied forthwith.

It asked as to what does this direction of the apex court mean and what was the doubt in it. "This itself is sufficient to show that the Supreme Court has directed that Delhi should be provided with 700 MT of oxygen per day. If there was any doubt, it could be cleared by further reading of the paragraph."

The bench said the top court had noted the assurance given by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta that the national capital with not suffer and its demands of oxygen will be met.

However, the high court said this assurance has not been met and it has seen how big and small hospitals have been rushing to court on SOS basis due to lack of oxygen to treat critical patients.

"It pains us that the aspect of supply of oxygen for treatment of COVID-19 patients in Delhi should be viewed in the way it has been done by the Centre," it said.

It added that on one hand there is need to augment capacities to meet the rising numbers, while on the other hand, the existing infrastructure is crumbling and available beds cannot be put to use.

After the court dictated its order, ASG Sharma said that he has taken the order and it may be uploaded tomorrow morning only.

To this, the bench said, "No, we will upload it today itself." PTI

Strict lockdown should be clamped in areas with COVID positivity rate of over 10 pc: AIIMS director

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: A strict lockdown should be imposed in areas where the COVID-19 case positivity rate is over 10 per cent or the bed occupancy is above 60 per cent, AIIMS Director Dr Randeep Guleria said on Tuesday, while stressing that clamping such restrictions all over the country cannot be a solution, keeping in mind people's livelihood.

He rejected the strategy of imposing night curfews and weekend lockdowns by some states to reduce the number of coronavirus cases, saying "these would not have much of an impact on the transmission cycle".

"There is a need to impose strict regional lockdowns in areas where the COVID-19 case positivity rate is over 10 per cent or the bed occupancy is above 60 per cent to break the chain of transmission. The COVID-19 task force has also been advising for the same.

"It is there in the guidelines of the home ministry, but it is not being strictly implemented," Guleria told PTI.

He said there should be a gradual, graded unlocking in such areas once the positivity rate reduces.

However, he stressed that there should be restrictions on people travelling from areas that have a high positivity rate to places with a low positivity rate to curb the spread of the infection.

On his views about a nation-



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wide lockdown, Guleria said, "A complete national lockdown cannot be a solution, keeping in mind people's livelihoods and the impact it will have on daily wage labourers. Day-to-day activities in areas with a low positivity rate should be allowed with restrictions."

Aggressive containment measures have to be put in place for a sufficient period of time as no healthcare infrastructure can manage this kind of a caseload, he stated.

Guleria's remarks come in the backdrop of the country facing a se-

rious COVID-19 crisis with a spike in the numbers of cases and deaths, and hospitals running out of oxygen and beds.

India's COVID-19 tally has crossed the grim milestone of two crore with over 50 lakh cases recorded in just 15 days.

It has mounted to 2,02,82,833 with 3,57,229 fresh cases reported in a day, while the death toll due to the viral disease has climbed to 2,22,408 with 3,449 more people succumbing to it, the health ministry said on Tuesday. PTI

Covid third wave may hit kids

Mumbai: Preparing for a third wave of the Covid-19 pandemic which is expected to hit kids, the BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) and Maharashtra government are gearing up by setting up Pediatric Covid Care Wards in the city and elsewhere, officials said here on Tuesday.



Taking an early initiative, Chief Minister Udhav Thackeray last week directed all district collectors and municipal commissioners in the state to be ready for the Covid third onslaught which may also hit children in a big way.

Tourism Minister Aditya Thackeray who is Guardian Minister of Mumbai Suburban District has held discussions with BMC Mayor Kishori Pednekar, Additional Municipal Commissioner Sanjeev Jaiswal and other

top officials in this regard.

Among other things, he suggested to the BMC to create separate Pediatric Covid Care Wards anticipating the next wave and the demographics it may target.

"Since last year, our jumbo covid care centres also have units of Covid +ve dialysis and maternity care as well. As the virus mutates and targets different age groups, our response to it must actively mutate as well," said

ble at 6.80 per cent, of the state's new cases, giving rise to huge concerns as the situation is vastly different from the 2020 first Covid-19 hit.

The Pediatric Covid Care Ward is slated to come up at the NESCO Jumbo Covid Care Centre in Goregaon east suburb of Mumbai - and 700 beds are expected to be added.

This would include 300 for a dedicated Pediatric Covid Care Ward comprising Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) with a capacity of 25 beds each to cater to the infants who maybe hit.

Apart from that, the BMC is planning to build four oxygen plants and maintain of adequate stock of medicines like Remdesivir and Tocilizumab injections, masks, PPE kits, etc.

Agencies

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER FLOOD CONTROL DIVISION SAMBA

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

e-NIT No. 02 of 04/2021

For and on behalf of Lieutenant Governor, Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir state, Tenders are invited by the Executive Engineer Flood Control Division Samba, by e-Tendering mode on item rates for below mentioned stage contract from approved and eligible contractors registered with J&K state Govt./CPWD/MES and railways for the following works.

S. No.	Name of works	Estd. Cost (Rs. in lakhs)	Performance Security	Cost of document (in Rs.)	Time allowed for completion	Time and date of opening of the technical bid	Class of contractor	Head of account	Bid validity
01	"Reconstruction of flood protection work in River Devak on Left Side and Right Side Down Stream of National Highway Bridge". Stage contract 2021-22 for a period of six months	Rs. 4.00 lakhs	3% of the advertised cost to be deposited afterward by lowest bidder	200/- under M.H. 0702 (Revenue)	Six months	10-05-2021 at 11:00 A.M.	"A,B,C & D" Class Contractor	M.H. 2711 Maintenance & repair.	180 days
02	"Reconstruction of flood protection work in local Nallah at Khara Madana site in Block Purmandal". Stage contract 2021-22 for a period of six months	Rs. 4.00 lakhs	-do-	200/- under M.H. 0702 (Revenue)	Six months	10-05-2021 at 11:00 A.M.	"A,B,C & D" Class Contractor	M.H. 2711 Maintenance & repair.	180 days

Position of Funds:- Budgetary Provision.

- Date of publishing from: 29-04-2021 (18:00 P.M.).
- The bidding documents can be downloaded from the website www.jktenders.gov.in w.e.f. 29-04-2021 (18:00 P.M.) to 08-05-2021 (18:00 P.M.).
- The bids shall be deposited in electronic format on the website from www.jktenders.gov.in w.e.f. 29-04-2021 (18:00 P.M.) to 08-05-2021 (18:00 P.M.). The bids received will be opened on 10-05-2021 at 11:00 A.M.
- The complete bidding process will be on-line.
- The tender uploaded on the website up to due date will be opened on 10-05-2021 at 11:00 A.M. in the office of the Executive Engineer Flood Control Division Samba in the presence of the bidders who wish to attend. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.
- A pre-bid meeting will be held on 03-05-2021 at 12:00 Noon in the office of the Executive Engineer Flood Control Division Samba to clarify the issues and to answer question on any matter that may be raised at that stage as stated in clauses 19 of instruction to bidder of the bidding documents.
- Bid documents can be seen at and downloaded from the website www.jktenders.gov.in Bid documents contains qualifying criteria for bidder, specification, bill of quantities, condition and other details.
- The site for the work is available.
- Bids must be uploaded along with scanned copy of cost of tender document in the shape of e-challan/copy of receipt from treasury favoring Executing Engineer Flood Control Division, Samba indicating name of work by crediting the requisite charges to MH: 0702 (Revenue). The original instruments in respect of cost of documents, EMD and other relevant documents of L-1 bidder will be required to be submitted to the Executive Engineer Flood Control Division Samba within five days of opening of financial bids on line. No separate intimation about opening of financial bids will be sent by this office/by the tender opening authority. In case the original documents are not submitted by the L-1 bidder within five days after opening of financial bid, the tender will be cancelled and the bidder will not be allowed to participate in any further/future tendering process in the Division for a period of one year.
- The original documents, when submitted by L-1 for the cost of tender documents, EMD specified in the tender document should be same as uploaded online (Scanned copies) otherwise the allotment will not be issued, the tenders will be cancelled and the bidders will not be allowed to participate in any further/future tendering process in the Division for a period of one year.
- Technical bids will be opened on 10-05-2021 at 11:00 A.M. in the office of the Executive Engineer Flood Control Division Samba and the date of opening of financial bid shall be communicated to the successful bidders. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.
- The bid for the work shall remain open for acceptance for a period of 180 days from the date of the opening of bids. If any bidder/tender withdraws his bid/tender before the said period or makes any modification in the term and conditions of the bid, the said earnest money shall stand forfeited.
- Other detail can be seen in the bidding documents.
- The contractors who are working in this Div. and have not completed their works well with in time are debarred from costing tenders.
- In case the work is not started within the time stipulated for start of work, the work will automatically be treated as cancelled and no correspondence shall be made for the same and CDR will be forfeited without any information. However, in case the contractor applies for the grace period before the date of start of the contract that too on valid grounds supported with documents, his request for grace period will be considered for one time only.
- Quantity can be increased or decreased of the above works as per requirement at site.
- Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.
- The interested bidder can download the NIT/bidding document from the website www.jktenders.gov.in
- To participate in bidding process, bidder have to get (DSC) "digital signature certificate" as per Information Technology act-2000, to participate in on line bidding. This certificate will be required for digitally signing the bid. Bidders can get above mentioned digital certificate from any approved vendors. The bidders who already possess valid (DSC) digital signature certificates, need not to procure new digital signature certificate.
- The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital signature. The bids cannot be uploaded without digital signature and no proposal will be accepted in physical form.
- Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned in N.I.T.
- Before submission of online bids, bidders must ensure that scanned copy of all the necessary documents have been attached with bid and serially numbered.
- The department will not be responsible for delay in online submission of bids whatsoever reasons may be.
- All the required information for bid must be filled and submitted online.
- Bidders should get ready with the scanned copies of cost of documents & EMD as specified in the Tender documents.
- The details of documents, EMD specified in the tender documents should be the same, as submitted on line (scanned copies) otherwise bid will not be accepted.
- Bidders can contact the office of Executive Engineer, or NIC authorities for getting DSC or any other relevant details in respect of Tendering process.
- The guidelines for submission of bid online can be downloaded from the website www.jktenders.gov.in.

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS FOR BIDDERS

- Bidders are advised to scan their documents on 100 dpi with black & white option.
- Bidders are advised to download bid submission manually for the help of bid submission process from the "Download" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on home page of www.jktenders.gov.in
- Bidders are advised not to make any change in BOQ (bill of quantity) contents or its name. In no case they should attempt to create similar BOQ manually. The BOQ downloaded from the site should be used for filling the rates and it should be saved with the same name.
- Bidders are required to quote net rate inclusive of all taxes/ carriages in BOQ (XLS) format.
- Bidders are advised to use "My Documents" area in their user on www.jktenders.gov.in e-Tendering portal to store their documents which are used in all Tenders like VAT certificates etc. and attach these certificates as non-statutory documents while submitting their bids.
- Presently, scrutiny of the technical bid is being done after opening of technical bid. Hence, system generated E-mails confirming acceptance of bid are to be ignored.
- The bid i.e. technical bid as well as financial bid is to be submitted online on web portal www.jktenders.gov.in.
- The tender opening authority reserves the right to accept/reject then bid without assigning any reason thereof.
- The Bidders are requested to read the detailed instructions attached with the Bid document also before submission of on line Bids.
- The Key Construction material i.e. Crates and BA Wire shall be provided by the Contractor itself. Material to be purchased from SCICOP, GEM Portal/ Govt. Registered manufacturing units fulfilling the below mentioned specification/ tests from the Design Directorate/ Govt. approved material testing labs and the contractor shall also submit test certificate to the Divisional Office.
- Earnest Money received by the Department as CDR/FDR/DD shall be released in favour of the unsuccessful tenderers after the allotment to the successful tenderer and no request by any bidder shall be entertained prior to allotment of individual work.
- Original documents of any bidder if required at any point of time shall be called for by the department before opening of the financial bids for opening of financial bids or allotment of work. The tenderers. However, before allotting the work or issuing the supply order, the original CDR should be obtained and kept on record.
- Signed for and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor, Jammu & Kashmir State

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER R&B CONSTRUCTION DIVISION No. 1ST SRINAGAR.

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER FOR MACADAM WORKS

NIT No.10 of 2021-22/1521-38

For and on behalf of the President of India, e-tenders are invited on Percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the following works:-

DATED:03-05-2021.

S. No	Name of Work	Adv. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In Rs.)	Time of completion	Class of Contractor	Ref. to T.S	Ref. to A.A	M.Head
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.	Improvement of Pandach Zakoor road from NFR crossing to Zakoor crossing by way of Providing and laying 75mm thick compacted Wet Mix Macadam, 50mm thick compacted bituminous macadam and 40mm thick compacted dense bituminous concrete. (Machine mix to be laid with Paver).	70,00,000/- Incl. C/o Tar	1600/-	07 Days	AAY with HMPO/ Hot Mix Plant Owner	SE PWD (R&B) Sgr-Bud/146 of 2021-22 dtd. 01-05-2021	SE PWD (R&B) Sgr-Bud/143 of 2021-22 dtd. 01-05-2021	5054- C&T
2.	Improvement of road surface in Gousia lane at Fazul haq Colony, Batapora Hazratbal by way of Providing and laying 75mm thick compacted Wet Mix Macadam, 50mm thick compacted bituminous macadam and 25mm thick compacted Semidense with 6mm thick seal coat. (Machine mix to be laid with Paver).	35,00,000/- Incl. C/o Tar	1100/-	05 Days	AAY with HMPO/ Hot Mix Plant Owner	03/TS/2021-22 dtd.05/05/2021	SE PWD (R&B) Sgr- Bud/144 of 2021-22 dtd.01-05-2021	5054- C&T

Position of AAA: Accorded

Position of funds Available

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

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	03/05/2021
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	04/05/2021 from 10.00 AM.
3	Bid submission Start Date	04/05/2021 from 10.30 AM.
4	Bid Submission End Date	11/05/2021 upto 4.00 PM.
5	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	11/05/2021 at 04:30 PM in the office of Executive Engineer (R&B) Construction Division No.1ST Sgr.

Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of Treasury Challan in favour of Executive Engineer (R&B) Construction Division No. 1ST Sgr. (tender inviting authority) and Bid security Declaration as per format given in SBD. The EMD has to be submitted by the lowest bidder L1 (3% of quoted cost) within the period as specified in SBD.

2. The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the Office of Executive Engineer (R&B) Construction Division No. 1ST Sgr. (tender receiving authority).

3. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of Technical bids

4. The earnest money shall be forfeited, If:-

a. Any bidder/ tenderer withdraws his bid/ tender during the period of bid validity or makes any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid.

b. Failure of Successful bidder to furnish the required performance security within the specified time limit.

c. Failure of Successful bidder to execute the agreement within 28 days after fixation of contract.

5. Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.

5.1. Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website www.jktenders.gov.in into acquaint bid submission process.

5.2. To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get "Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)" as per Information Technology Act-2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved Vendor.

5.3. The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital Signature. No bid will be accepted in physical form.

5.4. Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned in Para-1.

5.5. Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents with the bid.

5.6. Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents with the technical bid.

Note:- Scan all the documents on 100 dpi with black and white option.

6. The department will not be responsible for delay in online submission due to any reasons.

7. Scanned copy of cost of tender document in shape of Treasury Challan in favour of Executive Engineer (R&B) Construction Division No. 1ST Sgr. and Bid Security Declaration must be uploaded with the documents of the bid. The original Treasury Challan (cost of tender document), CDR/FDR/BG (earnest money/bid security/ performance security) and relevant bid documents shall be obtained from the lowest bidder before the fixation of contract.

8. Bidders are advised not to make any change in BOQ (Bill of Quantities) contents. In no case they should attempt to create similar BOQ manually.

9. Price escalation and Taxes:- Deduction on account of taxes shall be made from the bills of the contractor on gross amount of the bill as per the rates prevailing at the time of recovery.

10. Bidders are advised to use "My Documents" area in their user on R&B e-Tendering portal to store such documents as are required.

11. All other terms and conditions shall be strictly as per SBD circulated by this office letter No. CE/RBK/HD/29158-88 dated 10-02-2018

No. 1521-38 sd./

Executive Engineer

R&B Construction Division No. 1st Sgr

No:- FCD5-2021-22/5-120/162-83

Dated:- 29-04-2021

DIPK-1209/21

Executive Engineer

Flood Control Division Samba

India's Second Covid Wave Leaves Another 7 Million People Jobless



Agencies

India's unemployment rate rose to a four-month high of nearly 8% in April, and the outlook remains weak with state administrations extending lockdowns to curb a record surge in virus cases.

Unemployment increased to 7.97% from 6.5% in March, with more than seven million jobs lost last month, according to data from Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy Pvt., a private research firm.

"There is a fall in the jobs available. This could be due to the lockdowns," CMIE Managing Director Mahesh Vyas said by telephone. "Since the virus is still quite intense and we are stressed on the medical health-services front, it's likely that the situation will remain tense in May as well."

Daily Covid-19 deaths in India hit a record 3,689 Sunday. The number of new cases slowed slightly Monday after India on Saturday became the first country to register more than 400,000 daily cases.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who announced a strict lockdown in March 2020 that resulted in millions of lost jobs and a record contraction in

economic output, now is urging states to use such measures only as a last resort. Local administrations have been forced to extend curbs as the nation's creaky health infrastructure can't cope with the flood of virus cases, jeopardizing a nascent economic recovery.

The weak employment outlook is a risk for India's chances of reaching double-digit economic growth this year. Many economists already have lowered their projections, while several are warning of possible reductions if provincial curbs are extended further.

Barclays Bank Plc on Monday lowered its forecast by one percentage point to 10%, as "there is growing uncertainty around the number of cases and fatalities," economist Rahul Bajoria wrote in a research note. "Slowing vaccinations are also hurting India's recovery prospects."

Double Whammy

The rise in unemployment comes amid a backlash against government handling of the world's worst Covid-19 outbreak. PM Modi's party lost an election in a key state, while foreign envoys are joining Indians on social media clamoring for help with few medical supplies available.

Petrol, Diesel Prices Hiked As Assembly Elections Over, Results Declared

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Petrol price on Tuesday was increased by 15 paise per litre and diesel by 18 paise as state-owned fuel retailers started passing on the increase in international oil prices to consumers after an 18-day hiatus. Petrol now costs Rs 90.55 per litre in Delhi, up from Rs 90.40, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers.

A litre of diesel comes for Rs 80.91, as against Rs 80.73 previously.

Rates have been increased across the country and vary from state to state depending on the local incidence of taxation (VAT).

Oil companies, who have in recent months resorted to unexplained freeze in rate revision, had hit a pause button after cutting prices marginally on April 15. This coincided with electioneering hitting peak to elect new governments in five states, including West Bengal.

No sooner had voting ended, oil companies indicated an impending increase in retail prices in view of firming trends in international oil markets.

Despite the concerns about rising COVID-19 cases in India denting demand, crude oil prices in the international market have risen primarily on account of strong US demand recovery and a weak dollar.

Prices have been on a continuous uptrend since April 27, an industry



STATE-OWNED FUEL RETAILERS—INDIAN Oil Corporation Ltd (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL)—are supposed to revise rates daily based on input cost.

official said adding Dubai crude oil price has risen by \$2.91 per barrel.

It is expected that the crude oil prices in the international market will remain firm in the near future, exerting upward pressure, he said.

State-owned fuel retailers—Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL)—are supposed to revise rates daily based on input cost.

The April 15 cut of 16 paise a litre on petrol and 14 paise on diesel was the fourth reduction since March 24. In four reductions since March 24, petrol price was cut by 67 paise and diesel by

74 paise.

This reduction was compared to a Rs 21.58 per litre increase in price of petrol since the government raised excise duty in March last year. Diesel prices had increased by Rs 19.18 a litre.

Central and state taxes make up for 60 per cent of the retail selling price of petrol and over 54 per cent of diesel. The union government levies Rs 32.90 per litre of excise duty on petrol and Rs 31.80 on diesel.

In Mumbai, the petrol price was hiked to Rs 96.95 a litre on Tuesday from Rs 99.83, while diesel rates were increased to Rs 87.98 from Rs 87.81, the price notification showed.

Factory Orders, Production Rise At Slowest Rates In 8 Months In April In India: PMI



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

India's manufacturing sector activity was largely flat in April, as rates of growth for new orders and output eased to eight-month lows amid the intensification of the COVID-19 crisis, a monthly survey said on Monday.

The seasonally adjusted IHS Markit India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) was at 55.5 in April, little changed from March's reading of 55.4.

In PMI parlance, a print above 50 means expansion while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

"The PMI results for April showed a further slowdown in rates of growth for new orders and output, both of which eased to eight-month lows amid the intensification of the COVID-19

crisis," said Pollyanna De Lima, Economics Associate Director at IHS Markit.

Lima also noted that "the surge in COVID-19 cases could dampen demand further when firms' financials are already susceptible to the hurdle of rising global prices."

The daily COVID-19 cases in India showed a slight dip with 3,68,147 new coronavirus infections being reported in a day, taking the total tally of cases to 1,99,25,604, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Monday.

"The headwinds facing manufacturers cannot be ignored, however. The surge in COVID-19 cases could dampen demand further when firms' financials are already susceptible to the

■ APRIL SAW THE STEEPEST INCREASE IN INPUT COSTS FOR nearly seven years drive the sharpest upturn in output charges since October 2013. Data for the coming months will be important at verifying whether client demand is resilient to these challenges or if producers will have to further absorb cost burdens themselves to secure new work,"

hurdle of rising global prices," Lima said.

On the prices front, survey participants also signalled a steep increase in input costs, the quickest since July 2014, and upward revisions to selling prices.

"April saw the steepest increase in input costs for nearly seven years drive the sharpest upturn in output charges since October 2013. Data for the coming months will be important at verifying whether client demand is resilient to these challenges or if producers will have to further absorb cost burdens themselves to secure new work," Lima said.

The survey, however, noted that while output and sales increased at the slowest rates since last August due to an intensification of the COVID-19 crisis, there was a faster upturn in international orders.

New export orders increased for the eighth consecutive month in April and at the fastest rate since October 2020. The rise was associated with a pick-up in international demand for Indian goods, the survey said.

On the job front, although manufacturing employment continued to fall, the rate of contraction recorded in April was marginal and the weakest in the current 13-month sequence of job shedding, it noted.

Samsung Pledges \$5Mn, Paytm To Set Up Oxygen Plants To Support Covid-19 Relief Efforts



NEW DELHI: Tech giant Samsung on Tuesday said it has pledged USD 5 million (Rs 37 crore), while Paytm Foundation intends to set up oxygen plants in 12-13 cities as part of efforts to support India's battle against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Samsung will donate USD 3 million to the Centre and states of Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, and provide USD 2 million worth of medical supplies, including 100 Oxygen Concentrators, 3,000

Oxygen Cylinders, and one million LDS syringes (to Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu), a statement said.

LDS or Low Dead Space syringes minimise the amount of drug left in the device after injection, optimising vaccine usage.

The technology has demonstrated up to 20 per cent greater efficiency and if existing syringes were to deliver one million doses, LDS syringes could deliver 1.2 million doses with the same amount of vaccine. Samsung has helped the manufacturer of these syringes increase production capacity, the statement said.

Paytm said Paytm Foundation will set up oxygen plants in 12-13 cities. These oxygen plants would be directly installed at hospitals. It is in dialogue with state governments and hospitals for approvals to set up these oxygen plants that will be provided free of cost to government hospitals by the Paytm Foundation.

Paytm Foundation has also sourced over 21,000 Oxygen Concentrators that would be sent to government hospitals, COVID care facilities, private hospitals, nursing homes as well as Resident Welfare Associations by mid-May.

The massive rise in infections in the second wave of the pandemic has led to hospitals in several states reeling under a shortage of medical oxygen and beds. Social media timelines are filled with SOS calls with people looking for oxygen cylinders, hospital beds, plasma donors, and ventilators.

Organisations across the spectrum have come forward to source and donate oxygenators, breathing machines, and ventilators.

Power Engineers Body Condemns Move To Amend National Electricity Policy



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI: All India Power Engineers Federation on Tuesday condemned the central government's move to amend the National Electricity Policy "to facilitate privatisation".

According to a statement by the AIPEF, the proposed changes require extensive discussions as such time for submission of comments should be six months.

When fundamental changes are being introduced by way of privatization of the power sector, there is no basis to rush through more so under extreme distress caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, it said.

"All India Power Engineers Federation (AIPEF) condemns the government of India's move to amend the National Electricity Policy to facilitate the privatization of the power sector," the statement said.

The body alleged that this is a clear attempt to introduce privatization through the backdoor and deserves to be scrapped.

The purpose of the central

government is not to review or revise the existing National Electricity Policy but the total replacement of existing policy with a new policy to be recommended by the expert group so as to achieve privatization, the body alleged.

As per Electricity Act 2003, National Electricity Policy is to be prepared in consultation with the state governments and Central Electricity Authority (CEA), a statutory body.

However, the body said that the CEA is not included in the proposed schedule of discussion.

Further, only 5 states have been included in an expert group instead of all the states, it added.

K Subramanian, Chief Economic Adviser, has stated that India is the only country that readily implemented a slew of reforms and used this crisis to herald a change in India's economic thinking, it said.

The strategy of government seems to be never waste a crisis and use the crisis of pandemic to streamroll so-called reforms by way of privatizing, it alleged.

SHORT TAKES

Ashok Leyland Scales Down Production, Plants To Work 7-15 Days In May

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hinduja group flagship Ashok Leyland on Monday said it has curtailed production at its manufacturing plants due to dip in demand with the second wave of COVID-19 sweeping across the country.

The company has carefully studied the demand situation, and efforts are being made to match the demand on the one hand, while being cognisant of the disruptions in the supply situation, Ashok Leyland said in a regulatory filing.

"The demand outlook for all our products is expected to be affected temporarily. Accordingly, the operations of our plants have been scaled down and are expected



to work for 7-15 days in May. We will continue to respond to the COVID situation in the country as it unfolds," it added.

At the same time, the company would continue to meet the requirement of defence vehicles and also ensure support of essential parts and aggregates for commercial vehicle portfolio, enabling movement of essential goods and services, the

Chennai-based firm noted.

With a surge in COVID-19 cases across the country, various auto companies have either taken a temporary break from production for a few days or have scaled down manufacturing in order to adjust inventory with a dip in demand.

The company, which is the second-largest commercial vehicle maker in the country, noted that

it is committed to the wellbeing of its personnel, their families and the extended ecosystem, including customers, dealers and suppliers.

"With health and safety first as the focus, our emergency response team, a high-level task force responsible for managing COVID-related protocols, has revisited all the standard operating procedures and is ensuring the implementation of the same," it said.

Vaccination of employees and families is being monitored and enabled through vaccination camps across all facilities, it added.

On Monday, the daily COVID-19 cases in India showed a slight dip with 3,68,147 new coronavirus infections being reported in a day, taking the total tally of cases to 1,99,25,604.

The death toll has increased to 2,18,959 with 3,417 daily new fatalities.

Wait For Justice Gets Longer For Victims Of Nirav Modi As He Files Appeal To Challenge Extradition

Agencies

From central agencies keen to recover millions to unsuspecting victims of his diamond trade, there are many who are anxiously waiting for Nirav Modi's extradition. However, the wait for justice may only become longer if the UK High Court admits his appeal against his extradition to India.

Last week, the fugitive diamond trader approached the UK High Court, seeking permission to appeal against his extradition.

The news of a possible delay in extradition is causing sleepless nights to residents of Nagindas Mansion on JSS Road in Mumbai, which has been home to Modi's twin flagship



companies—Firestar Diamond Inc and Diamond R Us—that are at the centre of the Rs11,400 crore Punjab National Bank scam.

Investigations revealed that it was from here that the illegal diamond trade through alleged shell companies was carried out by the fugitive diamond trader.

Siddharth B. Dave, Modi's neigh-

bour in the century-old building, is fighting a lone battle today. Dave recently lost his mother and aunt during COVID-19 and is the only resident left in the building.

"It is my ancestral house. My concern is that three years have passed, all the illegalities in the building must be demolished," he said.

Three flats in this building were allegedly in possession of Modi and used for running his multi-million diamond trade. Almost half a dozen government agencies—ED, Income Tax, Registrar of Companies and even the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai—have communicated with this address. But now the letters have stopped coming and there are no visitors.

Supreme Court Strikes Down West Bengal Real Estate Law, Calls It "Unconstitutional"

Agenceis

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court today struck down West Bengal's law on regulating real estate sector saying it was unconstitutional as the state's statute encroached upon the Centre's Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act (RERA).

The Supreme Court also said that West Bengal HIRA has failed to include valuable safeguards for the homebuyers'.

A bench of justices DY Chandrachud and MR Shah said the West Bengal Housing Industry Regulation Act (HIRA), 2017 is more or less identical to the Centre's RERA and hence repugnant to Parliament's law.

The state law has encroached upon the domain of the Parliament and hence is unconstitutional, the verdict said.

It said however that homebuyers who have purchased properties under state law before its verdict, will not have to worry as their registration and other acts would remain valid.

The judgement came on a plea of Forum For People's Collective Efforts', an umbrella homebuyers association, challenging the constitutional validity of West Bengal Housing Industry Regulation Act,



2017, which is more or less identical to the Centre's RERA.

Pronouncing the verdict through video conferencing, Justice Chandrachud said that fundamental features of WB HIRA overlaps and is word-to-word

copy of Centre's RERA.

The bench, which passed a lengthy verdict on the issue, said that West Bengal HIRA touches upon entry 6 and 7 of the concurrent list which was occupied by the law passed by

Parliament and set up a parallel regime in the state.

The state doing so is plainly unconstitutional, the bench said, adding that provisions in the legislation shows that there is repugnancy in WB HIRA and RERA.

WB HIRA is directly in conflict with RERA, without any valuable safeguards for the home buyers, the bench said, adding that it is invoking powers under Article 142 to hold that registrations of properties done under the state law before its verdict, will be valid.

The top court had during the hearing of the petition wondered whether a state, in the name of cooperative federalism, enact a legislation under the concurrent list to occupy the same subjects in which Parliament has enacted a law.

It had observed that both Centre's RERA and WB HIRA dealt with issues of providing reliefs to home buyers and to promote real estate sectors but some of the provisions of State's legislation were in direct conflict with the law passed by Parliament.

The Supreme Court had said that a state can have legislation but to supplant the Centre's law and not to be direct conflict or to override it and say that now we will not follow your law but our law

It had wondered why a state would have a similar law enacted when there is already a law passed by Parliament and said many provisions in WB HIRA are repugnant to Centre's RERA.

Delhi Getting 40 Per Cent Of Its Total Oxygen Demand: AAP's Raghav Chadha



Agenceis

NEW DELHI: AAP MLA Raghav Chadha on Tuesday said 41 hospitals with around 7,000 people on oxygen support sent SOS calls to the Delhi government on May 3.

He also said that the national capital received an average of 393 metric tonnes (MT) of oxygen a day last week against the requirement of 976 MT.

"Forty-one hospitals, with 7,142 people on oxygen support, sent SOS calls to the Delhi government on Monday," Mr Chadha said, adding that 'Team Kejriwal' promptly responded to all the SOS calls and delivered 21.3 MT of oxygen to these hospitals.

The AAP leader also rued that "Delhi received an average of 393 MT of oxygen a day last

week against the requirement of 976 MT".

He noted that 393 MT is just 40 per cent of the total demand. Mr Chadha said the city got 433 MT of oxygen, just 44 per cent of the total requirement, on Monday.

Several hospitals here continue to grapple with the shortage of medical oxygen, as coronavirus cases continue to spike every passing day.

On May 1, 12 COVID-19 patients, including a senior doctor, had died at south Delhi's Batra Hospital after the facility ran out of medical oxygen for around 80 minutes in the afternoon.

The tragic incident occurred in less than two weeks of 20 coronavirus patients dying at Jaipur Golden Hospital and 25 at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, amid the oxygen crisis in the national capital.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

100 Kanals Of Land Identified

conduct joint inspection of land for setting up FFR at Sarthal in the district.

It is pertinent to mention that renewal of Nandini FFR is facing opposition from locals who have constructed houses there. "The existing Nandini field firing range is located on the backside of DC Office complex and people are protesting against the firing range as a lot of houses have been built in the vicinity," the documents state.

Before 2014, the Army used 12 locations as firing ranges in J&K but they forfeited these rights after the expiry of stipulated notification period.

However, the administration has re-notified some of these places as FFRs for forces—(KNO)

Covaxin vs Covishield

Inactivated Vero Cell-derived technology. They contain inactivated viruses, which can not infect a person but still can teach the immune system to prepare a defence mechanism against the active virus.

These conventional vaccines have been in use for decades now. There are vaccines for some other diseases as well which are made using the same technology. These diseases are

- Seasonal influenza
- Rabies
- Polio
- Pertussis, and
- Japanese encephalitis

Covishield has been prepared using the viral vector platform which is a totally different technology.

A chimpanzee adenovirus – ChAdOx1 – has been modified to enable it to carry the COVID-19 spike protein into the cells of humans. Well, this cold virus is basically incapable of infecting the receiver but can very well teach the immune system to prepare a mechanism against such viruses.

The exact technology was used to prepare vaccines for viruses like Ebola.

Doses

There is no difference between the two vaccines in terms of dosage. Both of them follow a two-dose regimen, administered 28 days apart.

Storage Guidelines

Both Covishield and Covaxin can be stored at 2-8 degrees Centigrade, which is a household refrigerator temperature. This makes both the vaccines most suited for Indian conditions as most of the vaccines here are kept at the same temperature range.

This also makes the transportation and storage of both vaccines easier.

Efficacy

Both the vaccines have shown more than satisfactory results ever since the inoculation started in India.

The effectiveness of the Covishield vaccine is nearly 90% as per the global reports and Covaxin's 81% according to interim 3rd phase trial results.

Covishield, on the other hand, has shown a very satisfactory efficacy of 62 percent.

Approvals

Covaxin has been granted a restricted-use authorization in clinical trial mode, while Covishield has been allowed for restricted use in emergency situations that can potentially prevent coronavirus infection in people aged 18 years and above.

However, the Drugs Controller General of India (DGI) has not given a market use authorization clearance to any of the vaccines till now.

Price of the vaccines

Both the vaccines are being inoculated free of cost at government health set-ups. The government has put a price capping of Rs 250 per dose for private hospitals and clinics.

Mode of administration

Both Covaxin and Covishield are intramuscular vaccines.

Age of beneficiaries

Covishield has been approved for people aged 18 years and above, while Covaxin can be

given to people aged 12 years and above. There, however, isn't any assurance if the vaccine can be given to children and pregnant women.

4650 More Test

Kathua 134, Samba 50, Kishtwar 15, Poonch 72, Ramban 49 and Reasi 39.

Also, 1878 patients –631 from Jammu and 1247 from Kashmir –recovered in the last 24 hour. There are 37302 active positive cases in the J&K, they added.

143 People Arrested

sensitise the masses about the highly contagious disease.

A slew of measures, including restrictions under section 144 of the CrPC, have been imposed in the region.

Meanwhile, normal life remained affected in Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday as the lockdown in the wake of an alarming surge in coronavirus cases continued, officials said.

Restrictions on the movement and assembly of people continued to remain imposed across the J&K. Police and paramilitary forces put barricades on roads at many places in Srinagar as well as in other district headquarters of the Valley and the Jammu region to prevent the movement of people.

However, essential and emergency services are allowed, the officials added.

Most of the shops, fuel stations and other business establishments remained shut while public transport was off the roads.

Covid Hospital

work on the Covid hospital, an official spokesperson said. He said that the Div Com asserted that the work on the project is to be completed within 35 days and that hospital shall have facility of 125 beds as intensive care units and rest of the beds shall have oxygen supply facility. The construction shall also include 50- double room accommodation facility for doctors and paramedics staff.

He said that the hospital is being constructed across land spread over 72 kanals and the earthwork on the approach road has been completed while as tree felling is also going on in full swing.

Pole was accompanied by Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Shahbaz Mirza, CE PWD, CE PHE, divisional heads or various departments, a team of DRDO headed by Additional CE, (Scientist- E) Ravindra Kumar, ADC Budgam, Tehsildar Budgam, DD Health Services Kashmir and other officers.

During the visit, the official spokesperson said that the Div Com directed concerned officers to ensure supply of electricity and water facility would be made available on war footing, besides developments of approach and interior roads with metal work and construction of 4 culverts within a week's time.

"The Div Com emphasized on carrying out the ground levelling work and extracting of tree routes before Monday. He exhorted upon speedy mettle work and back topping of service, approach and interior roads is also carried out by the concerned department. Health authorities were directed to ensure timely deployment of doctors as well as paramedical staff for smooth functioning of the hospital to ensure better Healthcare facilities to the Covid patients," he said.

He further said that the Div Com was apprised that the hospital shall be constructed with pre-engineered thermal insulated material having life of more than 25 years.

"DRDO team informed that the material and piling work shall be started by Monday and the project, having the facility of sufficient oxygen store shall be completed in time," the official spokesperson said.

While speaking to media, Pole, as per the official spokesperson said that the facility shall be turned into a full-fledged hospital once the Covid-19 pandemic is over

"He said that there is sufficient supply of oxygen available at all hospitals as audit is being conducted to check out supply of oxygen is going smoothly and there are no leakage or

misuse of the same," he added.

Meanwhile, a delegation of local village Reshipora submitted a list of demands with the Div Com demanding jobs, road facility and other benefits be given to the land donors.

"After listening to the delegation, the Div Com assured them that all their genuine demands shall be looked into and addressed on priority," the official spokesperson added.

Now Oxygen Cylinders

He dismissed rumours that there is a ban on supply of Oxygen to private hospitals and individuals in medical need.

"It is clarified that there is 'no ban whatsoever' for any individual who requires medical oxygen during home isolation based on a medical assessment", he said.

The Government has also recently received inputs about black marketing and hoarding of Oxygen. There is also a need to ensure that at a time when there is rising demand for Oxygen at hospitals, there is no misuse or hoarding of Oxygen, the official said.

'Corona Curfew

the extension of the lockdown in the four districts -- Jammu and three others in the valley--till Thursday morning. Later most of the remaining districts in Valley extended the lockdown till May 6.

J&K Declares

will be remembered for his great contributions, reforms in J&K and untiring efforts to serve the society," the office of the Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor tweeted.

A civil servant who made his name as a town planner while serving as the Delhi Development Authority's vice chairperson in the 70s, Jagmohan steered the controversial beautification drive in Delhi as the trusted man of Sanjay Gandhi during the Emergency but his image as a no-nonsense officer and doer endured, earning him key positions, including of governor and Union minister, in the later decades.

"In the demise of Jagmohanji, the nation has lost a unique town planner, able administrator and man of letters. His administrative & political career was marked by unparalleled brilliance. His death leaves a void that will be felt forever. My condolences to his family and friends," Kovind tweeted.

Prime Minister Modi said in his tribute, "Jagmohan ji's demise is a monumental loss for our nation".

"He was an exemplary administrator and a renowned scholar. He always worked towards the betterment of India. His ministerial tenure was marked by innovative policy making. Condolences to his family and admirers. Om Shanti," he said.

Jagmohan's demolition drive in the national capital, especially in old Delhi, as part of the beautification plan during the Emergency (1975-77) proved controversial as it faced protests, which turned violent in some places like Turkman Gate.

He was later made Delhi's lieutenant governor and was praised for preparing the city to host the Asian Games in 1982.

However, it is his legacy as Jammu and Kashmir governor that has polarised opinions most as his hard line on security issues drew him closer to the BJP while inviting fierce criticism from many others, including politicians from the Valley.

Jagmohan was first appointed the erstwhile state's governor in 1984 and completed his five-year tenure. As militancy erupted there, he was made the governor again in 1990 but was removed within a few months as differences between him and the then V P Singh-led government at the Centre grew over tackling militancy in the region.

His book, My Frozen Turbulence in Kashmir, in which he dwelt on his tenure as governor, was a bestseller and went into several reprints.

Jagmohan represented the BJP in Lok Sabha several times from the New Delhi constituency and was a minister in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government.

In his tribute, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said, "Shri Jagmohan Ji will always be remembered for his remarkable tenure as the Governor of J&K. An able administrator and later a devoted politician who took key decisions for the nation's peace & progress. India mourns his sad demise. My deepest condolences to his family. Om Shanti."

The Jammu and Kashmir administration in a notification said it has decided to observe three days of state mourning from Tuesday to Thursday as a mark of respect to former governor Jagmohan.

"The national flag shall fly at half-mast during the state mourning on all buildings and places where it is flown regularly. There shall be no official entertainment/function during the state mourning," the notification said.

Youth Who Joined

Lashkar-e-Taiba and their bodies were retrieved from the site of encounter.

The police spokesperson identified them as a foreign militant Hamas alias Asrar who was active since March 2018 in north Kashmir and a local Wasim Ahmed Lone resident of Hatlangoo Sopore.

"As per police records, both the killed militants were part of groups involved in several crimes including planning and executing attacks on security establishments," the police spokesperson said.

Hamas, he said, was also the mastermind of an attack in Sopore on March 29 in which two Municipal Councillors and a policeman were killed.

"Arms and ammunition including 01 AK-47 rifle, 01 Insas rifle & other incriminating materials were recovered from the site of encounter. Further search is in progress," he said.

He said that the last rites of the killed militants shall be performed after conducting medico-legal formalities and the nearest family members of local militants shall be allowed to participate in the last rites.

"In this connection police have registered a case under relevant sections of law and investigation has been initiated. People are requested to cooperate with police till the area is completely sanitized and cleared off of all the explosive materials, if any," the police spokesperson said.

A local news agency KDC reported that the local militant Waseem Ahmad Lone had joined armed ranks just four days ago.

On Sunday, the family members of a 22-year-old missing youth had urged their son to return home and appealed to the general public and authorities to help them in tracing him, the report added.

Cong, NC Gun

On Tuesday, a group of Congress workers led by its youth wing president Uday Bhanu Chib assembled at the party's headquarters here and staged a protest to press for the Union minister's resignation.

"Randhawa's sensational disclosure removed the lid on the nexus between the mining mafia and the BJP. There should be a high-level probe into the allegations Chib told reporters.

Earlier, Congress councillor Gaurav Chopra alleged that the auctioning of minerals and wine shops was a well-planned conspiracy to loot the locals.

The J&K Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) also took strong exception to the allegations levelled by Randhawa and sought the resignation of Singh pending a high-level probe.

"The serious allegations of 'hafta culture' under the patronage of higher-ups need a probe. Let the law of land and propriety take its course," the JKPCC said in a statement.

It said a high-level probe is a must to expose the alleged nexus.

"This is a test case for the Modi government and the UT administration, and heads should roll to send a clear message, otherwise people will further lose faith in the system," the statement said.

JKAP provincial president and former minister Manjit Singh too said an impartial probe

was imperative to uncover the alleged involvement of the Union minister and mining officials.

"A probe is must to expose the mining mafia and their associates which ultimately compelled a former legislator of the ruling political party to speak publicly against his own party leaders, mining department officials and police department, he said.

"Families of local miners have been suffering due to this nexus, which works in a well-organised manner. We will not allow the mining mafia to flourish in J&K," the JKAP leader added.

Meanwhile, NC has also sought judicial probe into alleged mining mafia involving Union Minister and senior J&K officers

In a statement issued here, an NC spokesperson said that a high level judicial probe by a sitting judge of the Hon'ble Supreme Court should be held into the allegations.

"The allegations coming from none other than the Pradesh Secretary of the BJP and a former Member Legislative Council are grave in nature and cannot be just brushed aside", a spokesperson of the National Conference said in a statement.

The spokesperson said that the truth can come to fore only after an independent and impartial probe is carried out in a time-bound manner.

Since the faith of the people in the system is at stake, the administration must order an inquiry forthwith, as the 'hafta-culture' is highly deplorable, he added.

Govt Forms 4-Member

mining and disposal of river bed material to prevent flash flood incidents, the order states.

The committee, as stated, is to examine the allegations made and the representations received about the high handedness of the department.

The four-member committee shall be serviced by Directorate of Geology and Mining Department, J&K and will submit its report within a week's time, it further states. (GNS)

Misfire During

ceremony in the town following which the cop allegedly fired from his service weapon.

"Although everyone including the local person escaped unhurt but such an incident is grave in nature and could have resulted in the loss of lives," said the protesting people while demanding action against the cop.

Meanwhile, Police said that the investigation of the matter has been started and the cop has also been detained.

Notably, the was reportedly posted as PSO with the chairman of the Municipal Committee of Nowshera—(KNO)

Separatist Ashraf

(PSA) and shifted to Jammu Kot Bhalwal Jail last year. (KNS)

Man Killed

Injured identified as Vijay Kumar son of Jagdish Raj, Jagdish Raj son of Sant Ram, Sandeep Kumar son of Amar Nath, Khemla Devi wife of Pawan Kumar, Arjun Kumar son of Amar Chand, Sandeep Kumar son of Amar Nath, Suraj Kumar son of Subhash Chander, Neket Kumar son of Narayan Das and Sunita Devi wife of Raghu Nath and—all residents of Trigam Kishtwar—(KNO)

Ladakh Logs

Ladakh stands at 1,283 -- 1,138 from Leh and 145 from Kargil.

As many as 149 coronavirus patients were discharged the previous day after they recovered from the infection, taking the number of recoveries to 12,884, the officials said.

Of the 14,315 cases recorded so far in the union territory, 11,871 were reported from Leh and 2,444 from Kargil, they said. (PTI)

T20 World Cup Set For UAE Shift Due To COVID-19



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: This year's T20 World Cup is set to be moved from India to the UAE with the BCCI acknowledging that none of the participating teams would be "comfortable" coming here because "a third wave" of COVID-19 cases is expected at the time of the event.

While a final decision will be taken in a month's time but it is understood that even the Indian cricket board is jittery about holding the 16-team tournament in October-November after the ongoing IPL had to be suspended because of multiple COVID-19 cases inside the bio-bubble.

PTI has learnt BCCI officials have had very recent discussions with some of the top decision-makers in the central government and a shift to the UAE has been more or less agreed upon. The dates of the marquee competition, which was planned across nine venues, have not yet been finalised.

"The suspension of IPL within four weeks is an indicator that it's not really safe to host a global event of that magnitude at a time when the country is fighting its worst health crisis in last 70 years," a senior BCCI source privy to development said on conditions of anonymity.

"There is a chance of a third wave hitting the Indian shores in November. So while BCCI will remain the hosts, the tournament will probably shift to the UAE," he added.

Health experts have warned of a third wave in India in September, a view that has been shared by Maharashtra health minister Rajesh Tope.

The dire situation in India, where a daily addition of over 3 lakh new cases has continued for the past many days, has shaken most of the member boards and the ICC is unlikely to take a risk with safety of international cricket teams.

"You can be rest assured that most

of the top nations wouldn't like to tour India within next six months unless the situation comes to normalcy. The players and their families would be very wary to travel if they are in the middle of another surge.

"So expect BCCI to agree with shift of tournament to UAE," another source also chipped in. he said IPL's suspension after a string of positive cases has made the officialdom very jittery of taking any more risks.

"The IPL in India was a platform to prove to the world as well as participating nations that it is safe to host a tournament even when the second wave is hitting its peak.

"It was going well but the bio bubble has now become porous. What's the guarantee it won't happen again in October-November. Nations like Australia, England and New Zealand are almost certain to have travel advisories in place," he argued.

One of the biggest reasons for conducting the tournament in the UAE is that it can be kept to three grounds — Sharjah, Dubai and Abu Dhabi — and there is no air travel.

"Look six venues for IPL was always a dangerous proposition when they successfully managed with three during the last edition," the source said.

"In UAE, all of them were in one bubble from start to finish while here each team was travelling to three bubbles. Most of the positive cases emerged after bubble travel.

"Therefore even if you reduce the number of venues from 9 to 5 in October, still there will be air travel unlike UAE. Also for players, they would not be mentally in a space to play in India unless the situation drastically improves," he added.

There is an ICC meeting in June where a final decision will be taken but retaining the tournament in India after cancellation of IPL seems far-fetched at this point.

IPL 2021 Suspended Indefinitely After Multiple COVID Cases In Bio-Bubble

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The Indian Premier League was on Tuesday suspended indefinitely after multiple COVID-19 cases were reported in its bio-bubble, ending a month-long relatively smooth run for cricket's most glamorous and cash-rich event in the middle of a raging pandemic.

"The tournament has been suspended indefinitely. We will try to conduct the event in the next available window but this month is unlikely," league chairman Brijesh Patel told PTI.

The announcement came after Sunrisers Hyderabad's wicketkeeper-batsman Wriddhiman Saha tested positive for COVID-19 along with Delhi Capitals' spinner veteran spinner Amit Mishra.

"...we will take stock if we can find a suitable window later during the year. It could be September but these are all speculations. As of now we are not conducting it any further," BCCI vice-president Rajiv Shukla told PTI.

On Monday, Chennai Super Kings bowling coach L. Balaji along with Kolkata Knight Riders bowlers Sandeep Warrier and Varun Chakravarthy had also returned positive results. The spread of infections had led to postponement of two IPL games earlier. The league organisers also issued a formal statement and said that safety of its players and staff is paramount.

"The Indian Premier League Governing Council (IPL GC) and Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) in an emergency meeting has unanimously decided to postpone IPL 2021 season, with imme-



diated effect," the statement read.

"The BCCI does not want to compromise on the safety of the players, support staff and the other participants involved in organising the IPL. This decision was taken keeping the safety, health and well-being of all the stakeholders in mind," it added.

The IPL said BCCI will do all it can to ensure that players in the event get back to their homes safely. IPL features stars from England, Australia, and New Zealand among other countries.

"These are difficult times, especially in India and while we have tried to bring in some positivity and cheer, however, it is imperative that the tournament is now suspended and everyone goes back to their families and loved ones in these trying times," the IPL stated.

"The BCCI will do everything in its powers to arrange for the secure and safe passage of all the participants in IPL 2021."

The tournament began on April 9 and ran smoothly before KKR's COVID-19 cases caused the initial jitters on Monday. The tournament final was planned for May 30.

There was cause of concern in Delhi too as a few groundsmen at the Feroz Shah Kotla Stadium tested positive even though DDCA chief Rohan Jaitley asserted that "none of the groundsmen on duty" were among the infected.

Just days before this, three Australian players had pulled out of the league, citing COVID-19 concerns amid a devastating second wave of the global pandemic that has overwhelmed the medical infrastructure of the country.

The 2020 IPL had also been held in a bio-secure bubble in the UAE and at that time, infections were only reported before the start of the tournament.

India is currently recording over 3 lakh cases everyday and more than 3,000 daily deaths.

'We Will Find A Way To Send Foreign Players Home,' Says IPL Chairman

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: IPL chairman Brijesh Patel on Tuesday said the BCCI will "find a way" to send the league's foreign recruits back to their respective countries after the event was suspended indefinitely due to a COVID-19 outbreak in its bio-bubble.

The suspension of the tournament was announced after Sunrisers Hyderabad's wicketkeeper-batsman Wriddhiman Saha tested positive for COVID-19 along with Delhi Capitals' veteran spinner Amit Mishra.

"We need to send them home and we will find a way to do that," Brijesh told PTI when asked how will the foreigners return home but did not elaborate beyond that.

The foreigners involved in the lucrative league are concerned about returning to their respective countries due to travel restrictions imposed in the wake of a deadly resurgence of the pandemic in India.

The BCCI had assured foreign players of a safe return earlier as well. The IPL had 14 Australian players left, after three pullouts a few days ago, along with 10 from New Zealand and 11 Englishmen. South Africa had 11 players in the league, which also featured nine West Indians, three Afghans and two from Bangladesh.

In a joint statement, Cricket Australia and the Australian Cricketers Association said they respect their government's decision to suspend flights operating out of India due to the COVID surge here and will not seek exemptions for its players stuck in the country ravaged by a deadly second wave of the pandemic.

"CA is in direct contact with the



BCCI as they work through plans to ensure the safe accommodation and repatriation of Australian players, coaches, match officials and commentators back home to Australia.

"CA and the ACA respect the decision of the Australian Government to pause travel from India until at least May 15 and will not seek exemptions."

They further stated, "CA and the ACA thank the BCCI for their efforts and cooperation for the safe repatriation of all participants at the IPL."

Reacting to the big BCCI move, Cricket South Africa (CSA) said it is in contact with its players who will need to home quarantine on arrival from India as per the World Health Organization recommendations.

"Those travelling back to South Africa will undergo home quarantine in line with the current World Health Organization recommendations," it said in a release.

"CSA and the South African Cricketers Association (SACA) are in contact with all players and are assured of their safety and comfort in their respective locations."

CSA said it supported the BCCI decision of suspend the league

keeping in mind the current situation and thanked the Indian board for looking after its players.

"CSA supports the decision to put the health and safety interests of all involved in the tournament first and foremost and has made contact with all of the relevant franchises to ensure the expedited travel of all South African players and support staff back to our shores."

New Zealand Cricket expressed faith in BCCI's ability to handle the situation.

"The players are in a relatively safe environment and those within affected teams are in isolation," read an NZC statement posted by 'ESPNcricinfo'.

"We'll continue to liaise with the BCCI, the ECB and New Zealand government authorities in terms of managing their situation - but at this juncture it's too early to discuss potential options."

India and New Zealand players were supposed to travel together in a charter flight to the UK where they will clash in the World Test Championship final in June.

Of all the foreign recruits, the Australians have been the most vocal about their anxieties.

'Let BCCI Pay 1000 Crores As Damages For Staging IPL' - PIL In Bombay High Court



Press Trust of India

MUMBAI: Bombay High Court has accepted to hear a PIL seeking to penalise BCCI for holding IPL 2021 amidst a raging COVID-19 pandemic in India.

The plea had sought a direction to the BCCI to cancel or postpone the ongoing Indian Premier League (IPL) matches in view of the surge in COVID-19 cases in the country. But as the cases mounted BCCI has put the IPL on hold for now.

Advocate Vandana Shah, in her plea mentioned before the HC on Tuesday, asked whether the IPL is an essential service. She also sought a direction to the BCCI to pay Rs 1,000 crore as "damages" and make donations from their profit to hospitals treating COVID-19 patients.

She said it would not be right to continue holding the matches at this time, and requested a division bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice G S Kulkarni to hear her plea on an urgent basis.

Shah told the court that a bio-bubble of IPL players has also been breached and two players from the Kolkata Knight Riders team and few other non-playing members have tested positive for the coronavirus.

"Due to this, the match scheduled to be held on Monday night was cancelled. Now, the plan is

to shift all IPL matches that are to be played till May 30 to the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai and the D Y Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai. Maharashtra already has a high number of COVID-19 cases," Shah told the court.

The bench, while noting that the court was only concerned with the matches being held in Mumbai, said it would hear the petition on May 6.

Shah further told the court that resources being deployed for the IPL matches should be used for COVID-19 patients.

"Is IPL an essential service? I am also seeking a direction to the Board for Control of Cricket in India (BCCI) to pay Rs 1,000 crore as damages and also make donations from their profit to hospitals treating COVID-19 patients," Shah said.

The final leg of the tournament (knockouts and final match) was to be held in Ahmedabad.

In the petition, Shah said the BCCI should be held responsible for conducting a tournament in such sensitive times.

The petition said even though the IPL players and staff are in the bio-bubble, the possibility of getting infected by coronavirus cannot be ruled out and in such a situation, the spread would be higher as players do not follow the social distancing norms.

BFI Executive Director R K Sacheti Dies Of COVID-19



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The Boxing Federation of India's Executive Director R K Sacheti died on Tuesday after battling COVID-19. He was 56.

The long-serving administrator was fighting the dreaded infection at a hospital here for the past few days and was on ventilator support.

"With a deep sense of sorrow & grief, we inform you that Mr. RK Sacheti, ED (BFI) left for heavenly abode today morning, creating a huge void in the sports world," the BFI said in a statement.

"He has been a Member IOC Olympic Task Force & an able administrator with an unparalleled contribution to Flag of India Sports," it added.

The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) also offered condolences.

"Deeply saddened to hear about the sudden demise of IOA Associate Joint Secretary, BFI Executive Director and dear friend Sri Raj Kumar Sacheti," IOA Secretary General Rajeev Mehta said in a statement.

Sacheti first became BFI ED in 2016 and retained the position after incumbent President Ajay Singh was re-elected in the federation elections held earlier this year.

"...his contribution to the Olympic, and Commonwealth movement in India is fondly remembered," Mehta said.

Last year, Sacheti was invited by the International Olympic Committee's Experts Group to "advise" on the formulation of rules for Olympic Qualifiers."

The Athletics Federation of India too mourned the demise of the seasoned administrator.

"AFI family is truly saddened with the news of passing away of Mr. RK Sacheti, Asso. VP AFI, due to Covid. I have known him for over 30 years. He was part of so many major sports events in India & gave opportunity to many youngsters to work in sports industry," AFI President Adile Sumariwalla stated.

Former BFI secretary general Jay Kowli said "sports world has lost an efficient administrator."

"Remembering all the great moments together. Many thanks for all your contribution to Boxing, RKs," Kowli said in his condolence message.

Indian Archer Talukdar In ICU After Testing COVID-19 Positive

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Former Olympian and World Cup gold medalist Jayanta Talukdar was being treated in an Intensive Care Unit (ICU) for low oxygen count a week after he was diagnosed with COVID-19, his father Ranjan Talukdar said.

"His oxygen level had started plummeting to 92-mark so was shifted to ICU yesterday. He is doing fine with an oxygen cylinder but the level drops the moment it's removed," Talukdar senior told PTI.

He was hospitalised to the Kalapahar Covid Care Hospital on April 27, his father added.

The 35-year-old product of Tata Archery Academy had returned to his hometown about a month ago



after he failed to make the cut for the Olympic-bound India team and possibly contracted the virus from his doctor wife.

"His wife first got the infection but she has now recovered. Possibly from her Jayanta got the infection," the senior Talukdar said.

He further said they live in a faraway place and they were doing

fine after taking the first jab of COVID-19 vaccine.

The 2012 London Olympian had achieved his career best world number two ranking after winning back to back individual World Cup gold medals in the stage one (Porec) and stage two (Croatia) of the World Cup in 2006.

He also won an individual bronze medal at the New Delhi Commonwealth Games 2010 and was a key member of the Indian side with Rahul Banerjee, Tarundeep Rai and Mangal Singh Chhangia who had become world number one in the build up to the London Olympics.

An Arjuna Awardee, Talukdar has also won two Asian Games team bronze medals in 2006 Doha and 2010 Guangzhou.

Badminton Great Prakash Padukone Recovering From COVID-19

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Legendary Indian badminton player Prakash Padukone has tested positive for COVID-19 and is recovering from the infection at a hospital in Bengaluru.

The 65-year-old, who is the first Indian to win the prestigious All England Championships title in 1980, is likely to be discharged later this week.

"Around 10 days back, Prakash, his wife (Ujjala) and second daughter (Anisha), they developed symptoms and got themselves tested and the results came out to be positive," Vimal Kumar, a close friend of the legendary shuttler and director at the Prakash Padukone Badminton Academy (PPBA), told PTI.

"They got themselves isolated

but after a week Prakash's fever didn't come down, so last Saturday, he was admitted to a hospital here in Bengaluru.

"He is okay now. All his parameters are fine, his wife and daughter are at home and he too will be hopefully discharged in 2-3 days," he added. One the most revered figures in world badminton, Padukone had emerged as a role model of Indian sports during his playing days in the 1970s and 1980s.

Padukone was also the first Indian to win a medal at the World Championships after clinching a bronze in the 1983 edition.

He was also the first Indian to be ranked world number one after achieving the feat in 1980 following back-to-back title wins at the Denmark Open, All England Championships and Swedish

India's FIH Pro League Matches In Europe Postponed

Press Trust of India

LAUSANNE: India's upcoming FIH Hockey Pro League away fixtures against Spain and Germany later this month have been postponed due to the international travel restrictions imposed in the wake of surging COVID-19 cases in the Asian country, the world body (FIH) informed on Tuesday.

The Indian men's hockey team was scheduled to play against Spain on May 15 and 16, followed by the two-leg tie in Germany on May 23 and 24.

"FIH, Hockey India as well as the Hockey National Associations of Germany, Spain and Great Britain since the matches initially planned in London on 8-9 May were also postponed - are currently looking at all potential options to rearrange these matches at a later date," the

International Hockey Federation (FIH) said in a statement.

"On behalf of the global hockey community, the International Hockey Federation (FIH) would like to express its support and strong sympathy to the Indian hockey community, as well as their families and friends.

"At this very hard time for India, a country so much linked to the history as well as the current development of hockey, our thoughts are with all Indian people," it added.

Last month, India's FIH Hockey Pro League matches against Great Britain, scheduled for May 8-9 in London, were postponed following the UK government's decision to add India to the travel 'red list' due to the surging COVID-19 cases there.

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