



**P5 STATE**

**COVID POSITIVE LACTATING MOTHERS CAN BREASTFEED THEIR BABIES: DAK**

Doctors Association Kashmir (DAK) on Friday said lactating mothers who are positive for Covid-19 infection can breastfeed their babies. "Breastfeeding in newborns of mothers with Covid is totally safe,"

**P6 THINK**

**SUSTAINING LOCKDOWN 3.0**

In what could be termed as "once in a century" systemic shock, the second wave of Covid19 in the Indian sub-continent is again unleashing devastation both on the health as well as on the economic front. With mutated behaviour, the rapid rise in deadly infections

**P3 CITY**

**IGP KASHMIR TOURS CITY PARTS, REVIEWS SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS**

Inspector General of Police Kashmir Zone Vijay Kumar Friday visited several places of Srinagar City and reviewed security and lockdown arrangements in view of Jumatu'l



**Widom Quote!**

Do not get angry. It starts with madness and ends with guilt. —Hazrat Ali

**Grenade Attack In Old City**

6 Security Men Injured  
Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** At least six security personnel and a civilian were injured on Friday in a grenade blast in Nawab Bazar area of Srinagar. Suspected militants lobbed a grenade towards a joint team of police and CRPF near Nawab Bazar bridge on Friday afternoon that exploded with a bang, eyewitnesses told Kashmir Observer. In the grenade blast, five CRPF personnel, a policeman besides a civilian were injured.

The injured have been identified as Assistant Sub-Inspector Prem Kumar, Constables Harish Kumar, Vijay Kumar, Surinder Kumar, Mudla Giri, all from CRPF 23 Battalion. The injured policeman and civilian have been identified as Constable Fayaz Ahmed and Hazik Ali Digoo of Chanapora here.

A police official said that all security personnel and the civilian were removed to the nearby SMHS hospital for the treatment of splinter injuries.

Soon after the attack, additional CRPF and police personnel reached the area and carried out **More On P10**



A woman oblivious of the deserted surroundings prays at the locked entrance gate of a Sufi shrine in lockdown hit Srinagar- KO Photo Abid Bhat

**J&K Sees Record 5443 Corona Cases In A Day**

50 More People Succumbed To Virus, Toll Cross 2600 Mark

**Observer Monitoring Desk**

**SRINAGAR:** Jammu and Kashmir recorded on Friday the highest ever single day spike of 5443 coronavirus cases, while fifty more people succumbed to the virus across the Union Territory during the last 24 hours.

According to the officials, 29 more people succumbed to coronavirus in Jammu division while 21 others died of Covid-19 related complications

in Kashmir Valley on Friday, raising the total number of fatalities since the outbreak of pandemic last year to 2612

Among the victims, officials said, included a 61-year-old man from Dalgate, who died 12 days after he was admitted to SMHS hospital. A 78-year-old man from Anantnag, died at CD hospital, four days after he was admitted to one of the exclusive

facilities for the management of the covid-19 patients in the Valley.

A 70-year-old man died at GMC Anantnag, three days after he was admitted there, while a 60-year-old man from Nai Basti died within a few hours of his admission to GMC, they said.

A 70-year-old man from S K Colony Anantnag died three days after he was admitted to GMC Anantnag. A 72-year-old man

from Janglat Mandi Anantnag died two days after he was admitted to the facility, they said.

A 55-year-old woman from Boniyar Baramulla died due to cardiopulmonary arrest while suffering from severe Covid Pneumonia with HTN with T2DM, they said.

The other victims include an 80-year-old from Pulwama, a 68-year-old man from Makhdoom Sahib **More On P10**

**Normal Life On A Standstill For 9th Day**

Normal life remained affected in many areas in Jammu and Kashmir on the ninth day on Friday with the imposition of the lockdown in the wake of an alarming surge in coronavirus cases, officials said. Roads across the valley continued to wear a deserted look as public transport remained off the roads and markets were shut, the officials said. They said in the wake of the lockdown announced by the government, restrictions on the movement and assembly of people continued to remain in force in many districts of the UT. The officials said while curfew was in place across the Kashmir valley and in Jammu district, restrictions on the assembly of people were also imposed in many areas of the Jammu division. The officials said **More On P10**

**No Jumatu'l-Vida Prayers For Second Year**

**Agencies**

**SRINAGAR:** No congregational prayers were held in historic Jamia Masjid, Hazratbal shrine besides other major shrines and mosques across the Valley on Jumatu'l-Vida, the last Friday of the ongoing holy month of Ramazan.

However, reports said that prayers with due reverence to covid-19 guidelines were held in local mosques.

It was for the second consecutive year that congregational prayers were suspended in the historic Central Mosque and other major shrines in the Valley. Every year on this day, tens of thousands of devotees would throng Hazratbal Shrine and **More On P10**

**NEWS DIGEST**

**Misfire Injures CISF Man In Uri**

**SRINAGAR:** A paramilitary CISF man was injured on Friday when the service rifle of his colleague accidentally went off in Uri town of Baramulla district. A police official said that constable Manjunath was cleaning his service rifle when it accidentally went off and the bullet hit the wall before rebounding and hitting his colleague Sandeep Dutta. The injured was taken to district hospital **More On P10**

**Lightning Kills Girl, Injures Woman**

**SRINAGAR:** A minor girl was killed and elderly woman sustained injuries on Friday when lightning struck Gambhir Ki Gali in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir.

11-year-old Musarat Naz and 50-year-old Peeri Begum, both residents of Targian Lehati were on their way to mud-sheds with their livestock in Gabbar area of Kotranika in Budhal tehsil when the **More On P10**

**Man Injured**

**In Bear Attack**

**SRINAGAR:** A man was attacked and injured by a black bear on Friday in Mendhar area of Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir.

Mansoor-Ul-Haq was attacked and injured by the wild beast in his native village of Sandote, an official said. Haq received serious injuries in the attack before the bear ran away. He was shifted to sub-district hospital Mendhar in critical condition, the official added. **More On P10**

**Bashir Ahmad Bhat Posted As VC LAWDA**

**SRINAGAR:** Jammu and Kashmir administration on Friday posted Bashir Ahmad Bhat as Vice-Chairman, J&K Lakes and Waterways Development Authority (LAWDA) and Syed Sehish Asgar (IAS) as Mission Director. According to an order issued here, Bashir Ahmad Bhat (IRS), awaiting orders of adjustment Department, as Vice-Chairman, **More On P10**

**LG Releases Compendium Of 1100 Projects Completed By JKIDFC**

**Observer News Service**

**JAMMU:** J&K Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday released a compendium giving details about the 1,100 projects of public importance worth Rs 1,555.16 crore completed by the Jammu & Kashmir Infrastructure Development Finance Corporation (JKIDFC). Sinha emphasised the need for expediting completion of projects while



simultaneously observing necessary precautions related to COVID-19-appropriate behaviour, an **More On P10**

**Fully Prepared To Tackle Situation: Govt**

**Observer News Service**

**ANANTNAG:** As Jammu and Kashmir witnessed the highest ever spike in coronavirus cases on Friday, the Union Territory administration said that it was fully prepared to tackle the emerging situation caused by the pandemic.

Talking to media persons here, the Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, P. K. Pole said that the administration is fully prepared to tackle the situation that has arisen out of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

He also appealed to the public to strictly follow the restrictions and SOPs besides avoiding gatherings to combat it.

Earlier, Div Com inspected various medical and health-care facilities associated with Covid management in the district and took a detailed stock of medical infrastructure and oxygen availability besides the augmentations being made for effective mitigation of the pandemic here, an official spokesperson said.

He further said that the Div Com inspected **More On P10**



**Faheem Younus, MD**  
VP/COO/Chief of Infectious Diseases, University of MD UCH

Want To Do An Act of Kindness?  
Get Vaccinated.

This is how ONE vaccinated person protects another  
Pregnant mother → baby  
Frontline worker → family  
Healthcare worker → patients  
Young person → Grandparents  
Everyone → Community at large  
Don't be stubborn; be kind

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

Attention : Covid patient at home and if he complains of breathlessness don't wait in starting steroid inhaler early. No harm in using it. "Inhaled budesonide (Pulmicort), helped #COVID19 outpatients at extra risk for severe illness recover more quickly.

**Dr. Arvinder Singh Soin**  
Group Chairman, Liver Transplantation, Medanta Hospital

As per our Indian randomised trial (COVINTOC) in @TheLancet, Tocilizumab reduces deaths in severe COVID.

The same also emerged from the world's largest trials on this drug - RECOVERY & REMAP-CAP.

No comparable robust data on any alternative. Let doctors decide & prescribe.

**Mehbooba Urges PM To Release Detainees**

**Agenceis**

**SRINAGAR:** PDP president Mehbooba Mufti on Friday appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to release all political detainees languishing in jails in and outside Jammu and Kashmir immediately in the wake of the worsening COVID-19 situation.

Throughout the world, most countries have released prisoners on parole in view of the alarming COVID crisis. A democratic and civilised country like India shouldn't drag its feet and must release these detainees immediately so that they can return home at a time when life feels so threatened," Mehbooba said in a letter to the prime minister.

The former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister said she did not wish to politicise the human tragedy that has befallen us all.

"It's an unprecedented humanitarian crisis that doesn't discriminate on the basis of caste, colour, religion or social status and has affected everyone. Perhaps the only silver lining in this tragic time is how Indians cutting across religious and regional lines are coming together to lend each other a helping hand," she said.

Mehbooba said worrying reports about **More On P10**

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**LG Asks Doctors To Ensure Best Patient Care**

**Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha visited COVID care hospitals here on Friday and stressed the need for senior doctors to have personal interaction with patients and their attendants to ensure better treatment. Sinha visited the government hospital in Gandhi Nagar, Chest Disease & TB Hospital, and Government Medical College (GMC) Jammu, and took the first-hand appraisal of the infrastructure and patient care management at these facilities. During his visits, **More On P10****

**THE PRINCIPAL GMC INFORMED** the Div Com the 1000 LPM plant is catering to the high flow oxygen needs of patients and another similar capacity (1000 LPM) plant will be commissioned in next two days."



# Mediterranean Diet May Prevent Memory Loss And Dementia, Study Finds

Kate Ng | Independent

A Mediterranean diet, which typically involves more fish, olive oil, nuts, legumes and vegetables, is good for your brain and could lower the risk of developing dementia, a study has suggested. Traditional Mediterranean diets are low in red meat and dairy, and are often associated with health benefits such as reducing the risk of diabetes, high blood pressure and cholesterol, and heart disease. Previous studies have also shown a link between the diet and longer life expectancy. A new study, published in medical journal *Neurology*, suggests that the traditional foods in this specific diet may interfere with the buildup of two proteins, the abnormal buildup of which, is believed to contribute to Alzheimer's-related brain changes. Research has found that the amyloid protein forms into clumps, known as plaques, between nerve cells in the brain and, if allowed to continue, can eventually allow a second protein, tau, to spread rapidly through regions of the brain involved in memory.

Researchers tested each person's cognitive skills, including language and memory, and measured brain volume using scans. The spinal fluid from 226 participants were also collected and tested for amyloid and tau protein biomarkers.

But according to the researchers at the German Centre for Neurodegenerative Diseases in Bonn, people who followed a Mediterranean diet closely showed fewer signs of amyloid and tau buildup compared to those who didn't. A total of 343 people at high risk of developing Alzheimer's were examined



as part of the study and compared to 169 cognitively normal subjects. Researchers tested each person's cognitive skills, including language and memory, and measured brain volume using scans. The spinal fluid from 226 participants were also collected and tested for amyloid and tau protein biomarkers. The study found that for each point a participant lost on not following

the Mediterranean diet, brain scans showed the brain aged an extra year in regions associated with Alzheimer's. It concluded that the findings were in line with other scientific studies that suggest the Mediterranean diet could be a "protective factor against memory decline", adding that this could be explained by the decrease in amyloid and tau proteins present in people who adhered to the diet.

Postdoctoral fellow Tommaso Ballarini, who led the research, said: "These results add to the body of evidence that show what you eat may influence your memory skills later on." Researchers recommended that further studies should be carried out to find out what it means for treating Alzheimer's. Previous studies have also showed a link between a Mediterranean diet and a reduced risk to losing brain function. Last year, researchers from the National Eye Institute in Bethesda, Maryland, found that people who stuck more closely to a Mediterranean diet had a nearly "45 per cent to 50 per cent reduction in the risk of having an impaired cognitive function". Dr Emily Chew, lead author of that study, told CNN at the time that the risk of cognitive decline increased the more people failed to follow the diet - which involved eating more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts and olive oil while reducing red meat and alcohol consumption. She said: "Those who had the highest adherence to the diet had better protection than those who are in the second tier, who had more cognitive protection than those in the last tier."

## 'Online Learning Doesn't Improve Student Sleep Habits'

Agencies

New research from Simon Fraser University suggests that students learning remotely become night owls but do not sleep more despite the time saved commuting, working or attending social events. The study, led by psychology professor Ralph Mistlberger, Andrea Smit and Myriam Juda, at SFU's Circadian Rhythms and Sleep Lab, compared self-reported data on sleep habits from 80 students enrolled in a 2020 summer session course at SFU with data collected from 450 students enrolled in the same course during previous summer semesters. The study results were recently published in the journal *PLOS ONE*. "There is a widespread belief among sleep researchers that many people, especially young adults, regularly obtain insufficient sleep due to work, school, and social activities," says Mistlberger. "The move toward re-

mote work and school during COVID-19 has provided a novel opportunity to test this belief." The student participants kept daily sleep diaries over a period of two-to-eight weeks, completed questionnaires and provided written reports. Fitbit sleep tracker data was collected from a subsample of participants. The team found that students learning remotely in the summer 2020 session went to bed an average of 30 minutes later than pre-pandemic students. They slept less efficiently, less at night and more during the day, but did not sleep more overall despite having no early classes and 44 per cent fewer work days compared to students in previous semesters. "One very consistent finding is a collective delay of sleep timing -- people go to bed and wake up later," says Mistlberger. "Not surprisingly, there is also a marked reduction in natural light exposure, especially early in the day.

The lack of change in sleep duration was a bit of a surprise, as it goes against the assumption that young adults would sleep more if they had the time." Self-described night owls were more likely to report a greater positive impact on their sleep, getting to sleep in, instead of waking up early for that morning class, while morning types were more likely to report a negative response to sleeping later than usual. Sleep plays an important role in immune functioning and mental health, which is why good sleep habits are crucial. "My advice for students and anybody working from home is to try to get outside and be active early in the day because the morning light helps stabilize your circadian sleep-wake cycle -- this should improve your sleep, and allow you to feel more rested and energized during the day," says Mistlberger.

### KASHMIR POWER DISTRIBUTION CORPORATION LIMITED (KPDCL) OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER ELECTRIC DIVISION BUDGAM, KASHMIR

E-mail:edbudgam@gmail.com Tel No:01951-255218

#### Corrigendum

The e-NIT No. EDB/08 of 2021 dated 03/05/2021 & Tender ID No. 2021\_PDD\_123676\_1 issued for "Contract for the Supply, installation, testing and commissioning of various Line materials as well as distribution substations for providing of power supply to proposed 500 bedded Covid-19 hospital at Reshipora by way of creation of 5 No. substations (630kVAx4+200kVAx1) along with HT/LT network under the jurisdiction of Sub-Division Budgam of ED Budgam, KPDCL. is hereby cancelled due to Technical Reasons.

DIPK-NB-636/21  
 No: EDB/748-49

Sd/-  
 Executive Engineer  
 Electric Division Budgam

### Office Of The Executive Engineer Sub Transmission Division Bijbehara

www.jkpdd.co.in Tel No:- 01932-233002 Fax No:- 01932-234397  
 xenstdbijbehara@yahoo.com / xenstdbijbehara@gmail.com

#### EXTENSION

Reference: This office e-NIT No: 07/STB of 2021-22 dated:12-04-2021.  
 Due to poor response the last date of submission of tenders is hereby extended as under:

|   |  |                   |
|---|--|-------------------|
| A | Last date for downloading of e-Bid (extended) :                    | 17/05/2021 1:00PM |
| B | Last date for submission of e-Bid (extended)                       | 17/05/2021 2:00PM |
| C | Online Commercial, technical & Financial e-Bid opening date & time | 18/05/2021 2:00PM |

Other terms and conditions shall remain same.

No:STB:330-34

DIPK-NB-642/21

Sd/  
 Executive Engineer  
 Sub Transmission Division  
 Bijbehara

### Office Of The Convener District Health Society) Kulgam.

No.: NRHM/KGM/80-85

Dated:-6/05/2021

#### ADVERTISEMENT NOTICE

Applications are invited from eligible candidates of District Kulgam (Medical Jurisdiction) on prescribed format for the following vacancies under Emergency COVID Response Package (ECRP) National Health Mission for a period of 3 months. The application forms alongwith copies of relevant documents should reach to the office of undersigned within Seven (07) days from the date of publication of this notice. The applications received thereafter shall not be entertained.

| S. No | Name of the Post / Category | Eligibility Criteria/Minimum Qualification/ Age   | Selection Criteria  | No of Posts/Period of engagement   | Who can apply                           |
|-------|-----------------------------|---|---|--|---|
| 1     | Lab Technician/FMPHW/MMPHW  | (For Lab Technician) Matric with Diploma in lab Assistant training or higher related Qualification from SMF or any other recognized institute<br><br>(For MMPHW/FMPHW) Matric with Diploma in FMPHW/MMPHW training from SMF or any other recognized institute | For Lab Technician<br>1 Matric =20 Points<br>2 Diploma in lab Assistant training or higher related Qualification from SMF or any other recognized institute =60 Points<br>3. Viva Voce=20 points<br>Note :- Item (1) to (2) on Pro rata basis<br>For FMPHW/MMPHW<br>1 Matric =20 Points<br>2 Diploma in FMPHW/MMPHW training from SMF or any other recognized institute =60 Points<br>3. Viva Voce=20 points<br>Note :- Item (1) to (2) on Pro rata basis | Lab Technician=3<br><br>MMPHW/FMPHW=2 (Initially for a period of 03 months extendable up to 06 months) | Candidates from Medical District Kulgam |

#### Terms and conditions:

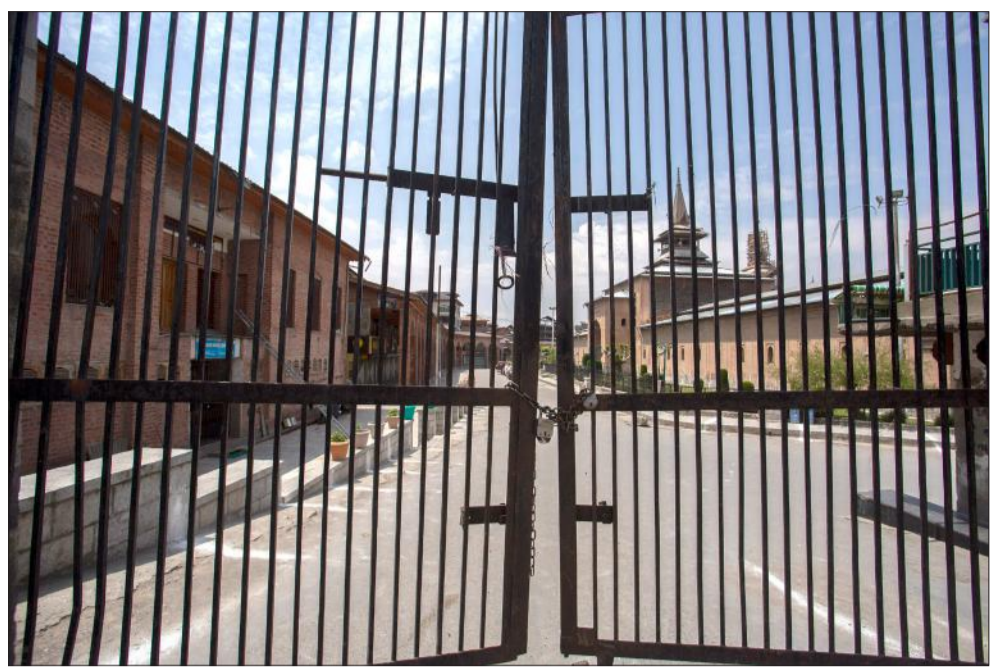
- The engagements for the aforementioned positions are purely contractual for a period of 03 months extendable up to 06 month.
- In case of unmarried Female candidates, Form should be accompanied with duly issued Unmarried Certificate by concerned Tehsilidar.
- The eligibility in terms of qualification shall be determined as on the last date of submission of application forms.
- Incomplete application forms/ documents in any form shall not be entertained.
- It may be noted that if at any stage of verification of the documents even after joining, it is found that the selected candidate(s) has/have submitted incorrect/forged documents or have misrepresented information, he/she shall forfeit his/her claim to the post without any notice.
- The candidates possessing both Diploma as well as higher related qualification, the merit will be calculated on the basis of qualification having higher percentage

DIPK-1383/21

Chief Medical Officer  
 (Convener, District Health Society)  
 Kulgam.

از نیابت قلم آباد  
 درخواست منجانب کلڈماڈیٹر ڈیپارٹمنٹ ڈائریکٹوریٹ ڈی ایچ ایس جہانمہ بمراد اتا گنگی  
 SRO 294 تحت RBA Certificate  
 اشتہار بمراد آگاہی ہر خاص و عام  
 معاملہ منجہ عنوان الصدر میں درخواست سائل دفتر ڈائریکٹوریٹ ڈی ایچ ایس جہانمہ بمراد اتا گنگی سے پورٹ بشمول  
 ریکارڈ طلب کیا گیا ہے جس سے عیاں ہے کہ سائل بھی تحصیل نامہ آگاہی کے ساتھ ساتھ ایک کاپی بھی منجانب ڈی ایچ ایس جہانمہ  
 سرٹیفیکٹ اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کسی مذکورہ امور سے متعلقہ ہونے یا ہونے والے ہونے یا ہونے والے ہونے یا ہونے والے ہونے  
 معیار گرنے بعد کوئی بھی مذکورہ امور سے متعلقہ ہونے یا ہونے والے ہونے یا ہونے والے ہونے یا ہونے والے ہونے یا ہونے والے ہونے  
 نامہ تحصیلدار SUTL

از نیابت قلم آباد  
 درخواست منجانب فرحت شفیع و فضل شفیع اوالد ان محمد شفیع وانی ساکنہ پوچی بمراد  
 اتا گنگی SRO 294 تحت RBA Certificate  
 اشتہار بمراد آگاہی ہر خاص و عام  
 معاملہ منجہ عنوان الصدر میں درخواست سائل دفتر ڈائریکٹوریٹ ڈی ایچ ایس جہانمہ بمراد اتا گنگی سے پورٹ بشمول  
 ریکارڈ طلب کیا گیا ہے جس سے عیاں ہے کہ سائل بھی تحصیل نامہ آگاہی کے ساتھ ساتھ ایک کاپی بھی منجانب ڈی ایچ ایس جہانمہ  
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 نامہ تحصیلدار SUTL



**JAMIA MASJID SRINAGAR WAS ON FRIDAY**, on the occasion of Jumat'ul Vida, kept closed for worshippers as the administration imposed strict lockdown across the city in view of surge in coronavirus cases. KO Photo Abid Bhat.

## Govt For Training Interns, Paramedics For Effective Covid Control Management

### Covid Containment Measures Reviewed In Srinagar



Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Pandurang K Pole and Commissioner Secretary to Govt, In charge Covid Containment Kashmir, Zubair Ahmad Friday jointly chaired a meeting to review the Covid-19 containment measures in Kashmir.

The meeting was held at Divisional Covid Control Room Kashmir where issue related to covid containment were discussed

threadbare.

The meeting among others was attended by Director Health Services Kashmir, Deputy Director, In charge DCCRK, Epidemiologist Kashmir, Nodal Officer SKIMS, HOD Anesthesia, GMC Srinagar, HoD Micro, GMC, CMO and other officers from Divisional Covid Control Room.

During the meeting the chair stressed on conducting training of interns, paramedic staff from next week for effective Covid Con-

rol management in the valley. It was also given out that the training regarding Triage in all Districts shall also be conducted at an earliest.

The chair impressed upon maintaining real-time dashboard of availability of beds. During the meeting, isolation of patients, oxygen supply, bed capacity, vaccination and other related measures were also reviewed.

In order to reduce wastage and burden on Health care, people undergoing Rapid Antigen Test for Covid if detected positive should not go for re-testing with RT PCR.

It is impressed upon Social Media users that for addressing Covid Related SOS calls, Divisional and District Control Room help-lines have been running since last year. The official social media platforms are not for addressing and taking cognizance of SOS calls. The SOS calls are to be addressed through Covid Control Room help lines only.

## IGP Kashmir Tours City Parts, Reviews Security Arrangements

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Inspector General of Police Kashmir Zone Vijay Kumar Friday visited several places of Srinagar City and reviewed security and lockdown arrangements in view of Juma'at'ul Vida.

IGP Kashmir visited Jamia Masjid, Dargah Hazratbal & Lal Chowk areas of Srinagar city and reviewed security & lockdown arrangements of these areas.

He interacted and appreciated the jurisdictional Police Officers for showing high sense of responsibility and professionalism in dealing with the situation.

During the visit, IGP Kashmir directed the officers for implementation of Covid-19 guidelines & SOPs strictly, moreover, he also directed them to act strictly against those found violating Covid guidelines & SOPs.



He said that all the sensitive areas are thoroughly under restrictions and ensure that essentials are provided to the people. He also said that situation is being monitored on daily basis to contain the spread of Covid-19. IGP Kashmir has advised the people to understand the magnitude of the ongoing situation and follow the guidelines/SOPs strictly, adding that the lockdown is for the safety of the people.

## KU's IICP Organises Seminar On Allama Iqbal

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Kashmir University's Iqbal Institute of Culture and Philosophy (IICP) on Friday organised an online seminar on 'Holy Quran and Allama Iqbal's Thought'.

According to a statement issued, Dean, School of Arts Languages and Literature Prof Adil Amin Kak presided over the inaugural session of the seminar, where Registrar Dr Nisar Ahmad Mir was a guest of honour.

In his presidential address, Dr Kak talked about the importance of organising such seminars, which help awaken people from any sort of disillusionment and slumber.

"Allama Iqbal devoted all his life to impress upon Muslims to pursue knowledge in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Quran," he said.

In his special address on the occasion, Dr Nisar underscored various aspects of Allama Iqbal's teachings as well as his philosophical thought.

"The Holy Quran was a source, inspiration and foundation of Allama Iqbal's philosophy and thought," he said, congratulating the IICP for organising seminars and webinars regularly on the teachings and philosophy of Allama Iqbal (RA).

Dr Nisar cited many examples how Allama Iqbal (RA) awakened the Muslim world with his true understanding of the teachings of Holy Qur'an and how he promoted humanity in his philosophical thought based on the correct in-

terpretation of the Holy Quran.

Renowned scholar and professor emeritus at Delhi University Prof Abdul Haq delivered a keynote address on the occasion, underlining therein various facets of Iqbal's understanding of Islam, Holy Quran and its true interpretation that went a long way in awakening the Muslim World.

"It is important for everyone today to go through Iqbal's philosophical thought vis-à-vis Holy Quran and realise the true meaning and purpose of life," he said.

"Allama Iqbal always maintained that the true meaning of the Holy Quran is the promotion of humanity based on universal values of respect, compassion and empathy," Prof Haq said.

Prof Hameed Naseem Rafiabad, Head, Department of Religious Studies, Central University of Kashmir, said that Allama Iqbal's sources were genuine (Quran, Sunnah and precedents of Aslaf). "Allama Iqbal was a great representative of the universal message of humanity in view of his profound understanding of all trends of knowledge as reflected in his works," he said.

Earlier, Coordinator IICP Dr Mushtaq A Ganai highlighted aims and objectives of the seminar, even as presented a brief about the works and research being undertaken at the Centre on Allama Iqbal (RA).



## Dilapidated City Roads Irk Commuters

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Dilapidated roads in the capital city Srinagar are taking a heavy toll on vehicular movement.

The residents of Srinagar say that not just the link roads, the main roads of city center at Lal-Chowk and Downtown are in a shambles. The roads full of potholes not only hinder the traffic movement but also pose threat of accidents, the commuters said.

Several traders' bodies have also appealed to the government, but to no avail.

The commuters say that the roads in downtown are not any different. The locals and business community members



said that the dilapidated roads around important markets like Jamia Masjid had defaced the historic Downtown while hindering the traffic and pedestrian movement.

They said the water logging is rampant in the area and bad condition of roads hinders the traffic movement triggering traffic jams in already congested Downtown.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost all documents of Motor Cycle bearing regd no: JK01T-9317 which I had brought from one Ghulam Mohd Sheikh S/O Abul Ahmad Sheikh R/o Chinar Bagh Dalgte and is still registered with his name. Now I want to apply for the duplicate of all the documents. Anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the RTO Srinagar within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

**Aijaz Ahmad Ganie (Present Owner)**  
S/O Ghulam Mohammad Ganie  
R/O Dargapora Sumbal Sonawari  
9541778757

### DIAL-EMMA

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

### AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311 ✈️

### RAILWAYS

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

### HIGHWAY STATUS

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

## This Day in History

- 1360 - Treaty of Brétigny signed by English & French, ending the first phase of the Hundred Years' War
- 1541 - Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto discovers the Mississippi River
- 1741 - France & Bavaria sign Covenant of Nymphenburg
- 1846 - 1st major battle of Mexican War fought at Palo Alto, Texas
- 1871 - British-US treaty ends Alabama dispute
- 1895 - China cedes Taiwan to Japan under Treaty of Shimonoseki
- 1901 - A British appointed commission estimates today that some 1,250,000 Indians have died after a severe drought, lasting since 1899
- 1902 - Mount Pelée on the French overseas island of Martinique erupts, wiping out the city of Saint-Pierre, killing 30,000 and leaving only two survivors
- 1905 - Union of Nations organizes In Russia under the chairmanship of Paul Miliukov and joins liberal groups demanding parliamentary government and universal suffrage
- 1919 - 1st transatlantic flight take-off by a navy seaplane
- 1919 - Edward George Honey first proposes the idea of a moment of silence to commemorate The Armistice of World War I, leads to the creation of Remembrance Day
- 1925 - French colonial army beats Rifkabylen in Morocco
- 1933 - Mohandas Gandhi begins a 21-day fast in protest against British oppression in India
- 1945 - Canadian troops move into Amsterdam
- 1945 - Chinese counter attack at Tsjangte, supports by 14th air fleet
- 1945 - German General Wilhelm Keitel formally surrenders to the Allies represented by the United States, the UK, France and the Soviet Union in Berlin
- 1947 - Polish resistance fighter Witold Pilecki, who had volunteered to be imprisoned in Auschwitz to gain information about the Holocaust, is arrested by Polish communist police
- 1949 - West German constitution approved
- 1958 - US VP Richard Nixon is shoved, stoned, booed and spat upon by protesters in Peru
- 1960 - USSR & Cuba resume diplomatic relations
- 1963 - JFK offers Israel assistance against aggression
- 1967 - Muhammad Ali is indicted for refusing induction in US Army
- 1970 - Thousands of students protest against the Vietnam War following the Kent State shootings in Ohio
- 1974 - Canadian government of Pierre Trudeau falls
- 1980 - World Health Organization announces smallpox has been eradicated
- 1984 - France performs nuclear test at Mururoa atoll
- 1984 - The Soviet Union announces it will not participate in Los Angeles Summer Olympics in retaliation for the American boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympics
- 1985 - France performs nuclear test at Mururoa atoll
- 1989 - US space shuttle STS-30 lands
- 1994 - Ernesto Perez Balladares elected president of Panama
- 1994 - Jose Maria Figueres becomes president of Costa Rica
- 2008 - Dmitry Medvedev appoints Vladimir Putin as Russian Prime Minister
- 2012 - Dmitry Medvedev is confirmed as Russian Prime Minister by the State Duma, after being nominated by Vladimir Putin
- 2013 - 33 people are killed after an overloaded bus falls into a river in Himachal Pradesh, India
- 2013 - Former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi receives a four year prison sentence for fraud
- 2014 - World's oldest astrolabe (mariner's navigator tool) c. 1498 from Portuguese shipwreck of explorer Vasco da Gama found near Al Hallaniyah Island, Oman
- 2016 - Sadiq Khan (L) is elected Mayor of London, - 1st Muslim mayor of a major Western city



HIJRI CALENDAR

**25**

RAMAZAN -UL-MUBARAK

1442

### PRAYERS

FAJR 4:02

ZUHR 12:27

ASR 5:18

MAGRIB 7:22

ISHA 8:54

## Bashir Ahmad Bhat Posted VC LAWDA

Observer News Service



**SRINAGAR:** Jammu and Kashmir administration on Friday posted Bashir Ahmed Bhat (IRS), awaiting orders of adjustment Department, as Vice-Chairman, J&K Lakes and Waterways Development Authority vice Tufail Mattoo, who has been asked to report to the General Administration Department, for further posting.

According to an order issued here, a copy of which lies GNS, Syed Sehrish Asgar (IAS), Additional Secretary to the Government, Information Department, was also transferred and posted her as Mission Director vice Rubina Kounser (KAS), who has been asked to report to the General Administration Department, for further posting.

## Non-Local Domestic Help Attempts Suicide

Observer News Service



**SRINAGAR:** A non-local domestic help attempted suicide in Nowhatta area of Srinagar city.

Sources said that a 20-year-old non-local domestic help identified as Krishna Kumar attempted suicide when he cut his throat with a sharp object in Ranghamam Mohalla of Nowhatta.

The helper was shifted to hospital for treatment.

Police have taken cognizance of the incident and started investigations. (KNT)

## Erratic Power Supply Irks Srinagar Residents

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDCL) has failed to adhere to the power schedule even in the holy month of Ramadan, leaving the residents of the capital city to suffer.

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

"We are facing erratic power cuts despite being assured adequate electricity in the ongoing holy month of Ramadan," the locals from different Old City said.

"The department has even failed to ensure the electricity during Sehri and Iftar time," the residents said.

Ghulam Muhammad, a local resident said that unscheduled power cuts especially at the time of Sehri and Iftar has added to the miseries of people. "Despite being promised high and tall,



the local consumers are being pushed to the wall by forcing them to reel under darkness."

A KPDCL official said the department could have provided uninterrupted power supply to the consumers in case there would have been cooperation from the consumers.

"We are being forced to go for a curtailment as the people resort to overloading especially during Sehri and Iftar times," he said,

adding that they have limited capacity to provide electricity and thus people should understand and cooperate.

"They must not resort to the overload so that the department is able to provide adequate electricity especially in the ongoing holy month of Ramadan."

He said that against the agreement load of 250 MW in Srinagar, the department is providing 650 MW for the district.

## From KO Archives

## 'UNITED STATES OF KASHMIR SOON'

**ISLAMABAD -** A "United State of Kashmir" under the joint control of Pakistan and India is the only solution to the dragging dispute over the region, a leader of its Pakistan-administered part has said.

"It is the dissolution that could give relief to Kashmiris", Abdul Qayyum Khan, a former prime minister of Pakistani Kashmir and head of Muslim Conference, said in an interview to Urdu daily Ausaf.

The United State of Kashmir would soon emerge, he maintained. Qayyum blamed Pakistan's religious parties for causing "maximum damage" to the Kashmir struggle, saying "they wanted to conquer India rather than Kashmir".

He said jihadi outfits had entirely changed the dimension of Kashmir struggle and their call to "conquer India" had badly damaged the Kashmir cause.

Qayyum said dividing Kashmir into five regions and making them part of a United State of Kashmir was the most practical solution to the problem, though he still favoured Kashmir's accession to Pakistan.

According to him, President Pervez Musharraf had dealt with the Kashmir issue with "great expertise"

(Kashmir Observer, 08 May, 2005)

## UK Advises Under-40s Get Alternative To AstraZeneca Covid Vaccine



Agencies

**LONDON:** The scientific committee overseeing Britain's coronavirus vaccination programme on Friday recommended that under-40s are offered an alternative to the Oxford-AstraZeneca Covid jab.

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) said it was taking the "precautionary approach" for adults aged 30-39, after assessment of blood clot risks.

Professor Wei Shen Lim of the JCVI advisory committee said that those aged 30-39 will be "preferentially offered an alternative to the AstraZeneca vaccine".

This will happen as long as an alternative is available and does not create a substantial delay in vaccination, and as long as the UK keeps its virus situation under control, he added.

Lim said the aim was to "further increase vaccine confidence" as under-40s are due to be vaccinated soon, by showing that the government is putting a "high priority on safety".

The UK -- which launched its mass vaccination drive in December last year with the Pfizer-BioNTech shot -- is still on track to give all adults a first vaccine dose by the end of July, Lim said.

He added that the success of the vaccine rollout means that "a future wave of infection is likely

to be smaller than anticipated". June Raine, who heads the UK's Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, said it was not changing its advice on the AstraZeneca vaccine as side effects were "extremely rare".

From more than 28 million first doses of the vaccine administered in the UK by April 28, there were 242 cases reported of clots combined with low blood platelet levels, or 10.5 per million, she said.

These clots occurred in 141 women and 100 men aged from 18 to 93, and the overall case death rate was 20 percent, with 49 deaths.

Six cases have been reported after a second dose of the vaccine. Raine said this meant that the benefits of the AstraZeneca vaccine still outweigh the risks of coronavirus for the vast majority of people.

For younger people, this ratio is "more fully balanced," she said, however.

Nearly 128,000 people have died from the virus in the UK, the highest figure in Europe.

The UK has now administered nearly 35 million first doses of vaccine and more than 16 million second doses.

A government spokesman said it would follow the advice, adding: "The Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine is safe, effective and has already saved thousands of lives in the UK and around the world..."

"More than 50 million vaccines overall have already been administered, and our current vaccine supply and rate of infection means we are able to take this precautionary step while remaining on track to achieve our target of offering a vaccine to all adults by the end of July."



An image shows Israeli construction cranes and excavators at a building site of new housing units in the Jewish settlement of Kochav Yaakov (File: Ahmad Gharabli/AFP)

## Possible Israel War Crimes In East Jerusalem: UN

Agencies

**T**he United Nations urged Israel on Friday to call off any forced evictions in Israeli-annexed East Jerusalem warning its actions could amount to "war crimes".

"We call on Israel to immediately call off all forced evictions," UN rights office spokesman Rupert Colville told reporters in Geneva.

"We wish to emphasise that East Jerusalem remains part of the occupied Palestinian territory, in which international humanitarian law applies," Colville said. "The occupying power ... cannot confiscate private property in occupied territory."

Transferring civilian populations into occupied territory is illegal under international law and "may amount to war crimes", he added. Colville's comments came after 15 Palestinians were arrested in Israeli-annexed East Jerusalem overnight after protests over an eviction threat against four Palestinian families.

The second straight night of arrests in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood was fuelled by a years-long land dispute between Palestinian refugees and Jewish settlers in the strategic district near Jerusalem's Old City.

Tensions are high over a long-running legal case over

the homes of four Palestinian families on land claimed by Jews, which is due to go before the Supreme Court on Monday.

Colville demanded Israel halt actions that "further contribute to a coercive environment or leads to a risk of forcible transfer".

"We further call on Israel to respect freedom of expression on assembly, including with those who are protesting against the evictions, and to exercise maximum restraint in the use of force," he said.

Meanwhile, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Britain urged Israel to halt settlement-building in the occupied West Bank.

"We urge the government of Israel to reverse its decision to advance the construction of 540 settlement units in the Har Homa E area of the occupied West Bank, and to cease its policy of settlement expansion across the Occupied Palestinian Territories," the European nations said in a statement.

"If implemented, the decision to advance settlements in Har Homa, between East Jerusalem and Bethlehem, will cause further damage to the prospects for a viable Palestinian State."

**Sheikh Jarrah scuffles**  
Jerusalem, which contains sites sacred to Judaism, Islam and Christianity, is at the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Israel captured East Jerusa-

lem, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip in a 1967 war. The Palestinian Authority views East Jerusalem as the capital of a future state, and most of the international community regards the settlements that Israel has built there and in the rest of the occupied West Bank as illegal.

Israel's annexation of occupied East Jerusalem is also not recognised by the majority of world leaders. Palestinians have long pointed to a series of state-sanctioned policies designed to expand Israeli-Jewish presence in the city at the expense of Palestinian residents, ranging from house demolitions, daily police harassment, and settlement expansion.

In Sheikh Jarrah, Israeli settlers and border police again attacked a Palestinian vigil in the neighbourhood.

On Thursday night, the area was sealed off as far-right Israeli lawmaker Itamar Ben-Gvir set up an office outside one of the Palestinian homes taken over by Israeli settlers.

"I came here because children and women are being attacked every evening," he said.

After he spoke, Israeli settlers taunted and provoked the Palestinians, who were breaking their fast for Ramadan outside. Scuffles ensued and Israeli police arrested at least 15 Palestinians.

## Australia Borders Could Be Shut Until Late 2022



Agencies

**A**ustralia is likely to remain shut to visitors until late 2022, the country's trade and tourism minister said Friday, as another global coronavirus surge smashed hopes of a quick reopening.

Minister Dan Tehan said a wave of cases on the Indian subcontinent showed Australia's near blanket ban on arrivals was still essential to keep the country Covid-free.

Since March 20, 2020, Australians have been barred from travelling overseas and a hard-to-get individual exemption is needed for foreign visitors to enter the country.

It is "very hard to determine" when borders could reopen, Tehan told Sky News, "the best guess would be in the middle to the second half of next year."

Before the pandemic, around one million short-term visitors entered the country each month. That figure is now around 7,000. Anyone who does enter must

undergo 14 days strict hotel quarantine.

A recently established travel bubble with New Zealand has had mixed success, being paused for cities where the virus jumped from quarantine facilities before being contained.

Australia has recorded 29,886 cases since the pandemic began. A large proportion were detected in hotel quarantine.

Vaccination rollout has been slow, with just 2.5 million vaccines administered in a country of 25 million people, each needing two doses.

The prospect of the country being closed for almost three years will come as a hammer blow to the US\$40-billion-a-year tourism industry.

"The hope would be that we might be able to see a few more bubbles set up and we'd be able to see more travel undertaken, but we're in a pandemic," he said.

"It's going to very much depend on how we are able to deal with the global pandemic."

## Qatar Finance Minister Arrested Over Alleged Misuse Of Public Funds



Agencies

**DOHA:** Qatar's finance minister Ali Shareef al-Emadi has been arrested over alleged abuse of power and misuse of public funds, state media said on Thursday.

The official Qatar News Agency later reported that the country's ruler, Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, had issued a decree "relieving" Emadi of his post. Sheikh Tamim also asked Trade and Industry Minister Ali bin Ahmed al-Kuwari to "carry out the duties of minister of finance", it added on its Twitter page.

While there have been previous high-level arrests in corruption cases in Qatar, official sources said Emadi is the highest-profile figure to face such allegations under Sheikh Tamim.

"The attorney general ordered the arrest of Minister of Finance Ali Shareef al-Emadi, (to) question him on what was mentioned in reports regarding crimes related to civil service that involved damage to public money, abuse of function and abuse of power," state media said.

The Qatar News Agency said that an investigation had been launched, but did not give any further details.

Emadi has served as finance minister since 2013. He is also the president of the executive board of the national carrier Qa-

tar Airways and chairman of the board of Qatar National Bank, the region's biggest lender.

He is also on the board of Qatar Investment Authority, the country's sovereign wealth fund.

While he is not part of the royal ruling class, he comes from an affluent and influential family with large investments in the country, including trade and real estate.

Hussein Ibish, a Washington-based Gulf expert, tweeted on Thursday that it was "pretty remarkable" that Emadi was arrested "on suspicion of corruption and embezzlement".

Qatar-based diplomats told AFP that the arrest had come as a surprise.

"This is actually great, it shows Qatar is taking corruption seriously -- if that is what it is found to be -- and helps build the image of the rule of law being complied with," a diplomat in Doha told AFP.

**Troubled times**  
Emadi stewarded the economy through a three-year economic blockade imposed on Qatar by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt over allegations it was too close to Iran and funded extremists.

Doha has always denied the accusations. He won accolades for not allowing the currency to devalue in the face of extreme external pressure, liquidating almost a quarter of Qatar's economic reserves to weather the storm.

Emadi also presided over massive spending for the 2022 World Cup, which Qatar is to host.

Gas-rich Qatar is one of the smallest Arab states, with a population of 2.8 million, most of whom are foreigners.

## Russia Authorizes Single-Dose Sputnik Light Covid Vaccine For Use

**R**ussia has authorized the one-shot Sputnik Light version of its Covid-19 vaccine for use, the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) said on Thursday, a move that could help vaccine supplies go further in countries with high infection rates.



Developed by Moscow's Gamaleya Institute, the slimmed-down vaccine, which the RDIF said is 79.4% effective against Covid-19 and costs under \$10 a dose, has been earmarked for export and could increase the number of people with partial immunity.

One of its main potential uses is as a vaccine that can be shipped to a country in the grip of an acute outbreak which needs to be subdued quickly.

"The single-dose Sputnik Light vaccine demonstrated 79.4% efficacy according to analyzed data taken from 28 days after the injection was administered as part of Russia's mass vaccination program between December 5, 2020 and April 15, 2021," the RDIF said in a statement.

A Phase III clinical trial involving 7,000 people was under way in Russia, the United Arab Emirates, Ghana and other countries, the RDIF said. Interim results are expected later this month.

According to authorities, around 8 million Russians have so far been fully inoculated with the flagship two-dose Sputnik V, named after the Soviet-era satellite that triggered the space race in a nod to the project's geopolitical importance for Moscow.

Russian scientists last month said Sputnik V was 97.6% effective against Covid-19 in a "real-world" assessment based on data from 3.8 million people.

The slower pace of vaccination in Russia compared to other countries with domestically produced vaccines has provoked questions over its export intentions from some European officials. The European Medicines Agency has not yet approved data taken from Austria on Tuesday said it would only buy Sputnik V after EMA approval.

"The single-dose regimen solves the challenge of immunizing large groups in a shorter time, which is especially important during the acute phase of the spread of coronavirus, achieving herd immunity faster," said RDIF head Kirill Dmitriev.

He added that the two-dose Sputnik V vaccine would remain the main source of vaccination in Russia, which has already authorized two other vaccines for use. **REUTERS**

## Ayatollah Khamenei: Israel 'Not A Country, But A Terrorist Base'

Agencies

**I**srael is "not a country, but a terrorist base", Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said Friday and urged Muslim nations to fight it, as they marked an annual day of pro-Palestinian rallies.

"Israel is not a country, but a terrorist base against the nation of Palestine and other Muslim nations," Khamenei said in live televised remarks marking Al-Quds (Jerusalem) Day.

"Fighting this despotic regime is fighting oppression and terrorism, and (doing so) is everyone's duty," he added.

His remarks came amid high tensions between the regional arch-foes, following a series of maritime attacks, an explosion at an Iranian nuclear facility and the assassination of a top nuclear scientist, which Tehran blamed on Israel.

Quds Day has been held annually since the early days of



Iran's Islamic revolution in support of Palestinians, but this year did not feature the usual nationwide rallies due to COVID-19 limitations.

But despite the restrictions a number of people came out "spontaneously" in the capital Tehran, state TV said, showing the usual burning of flags and chants of "Death to America" and "Death to Israel".

Khamenei also stressed that "the decline of the enemy Zionist re-

gime has begun and will not stop".

He blasted Israel's normalization of ties with "some weak Arab governments" as attempts to undermine "the nightmare of Muslim unity," calling on Palestinians to continue their resistance and for Muslim governments to support them.

The Islamic republic does not recognise the State of Israel, and supporting the Palestinian cause has been a pillar of Iran's foreign policy since the 1979 revolution.

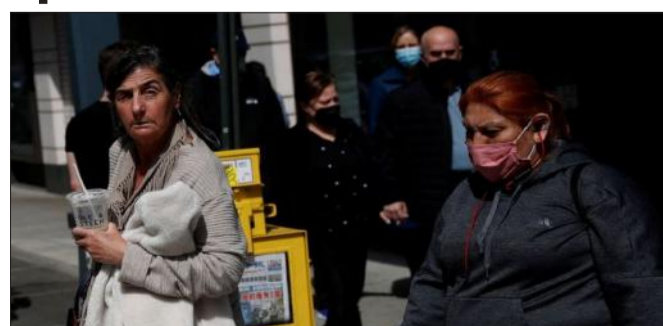
### NEWS MAKERS

## 'You Feel Naked': Some Americans Hesitate To Shed Masks Despite Eased Outdoor Rules

**A**nita Glick felt somewhat liberated as she walked her friend's dog around Washington's Capitol Hill neighborhood this week, her face mask looped around a wrist thanks to US health authorities' new guidance on outdoor mask wearing.

But even under the eased US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention rules, which say people like her who are vaccinated against Covid-19 need not wear masks outside in most cases, the 70-year-old retired teacher said she would keep hers on around others as a courtesy.

"I don't really want to make a total stranger go through, 'Should I cross the street? Has she been vaccinated? Could she be infected?'" said Glick, fully inoculated since February.



She added that she might keep wearing masks in the future to help with her seasonal allergies, even though "they're a pain, and they fog up my glasses, and if I've just eaten something I'm smelling it all day".

Many vaccinated Americans started tentatively shedding their masks this week, a major break

from behavior they were conditioned to exhibit for more than a year to help curb the coronavirus pandemic.

Beyond their disease prevention benefits, masks in the United States have become symbols of political views and morality. Those associations have made it harder for some

people to take off their masks, despite the developing scientific guidance.

Interviews with more than a dozen people in and around the nation's capital revealed a variety of reasons why some Americans are reluctant to remove their masks - or never felt compelled to wear them outside in the first place.

College students Emmanuel Long and AJ Barber, both 19 and fully vaccinated, wore masks this week while visiting the Lincoln Memorial.

Long worried the CDC was premature in saying masking outdoors is not necessary unless in crowds, since Covid-19 is still a very real risk, particularly for immuno-compromised people.

"You feel naked if you don't go outside with a mask on," Barber said. **REUTERS**

## Blessings Galore: Malian Woman Gives Birth To 9 At Once

Agencies

**A** Malian woman has given birth to nine babies at once - after expecting seven, according to Mali's Minister of Health and the Moroccan clinic where the nonuplets were born.

It appeared to be the first time on record that a woman had given birth to nine surviving babies at once.

The five girls and four boys, and their mother, "are all doing well," Mali's health minister said in a statement.

The mother, 25-year-old Halima Cisse, gave birth to the babies by cesarean section on Tuesday in Morocco after being sent there for special care, Mali's top health official announced.

Associated Press reporters saw some of the babies wiggling their



hands and feet inside incubators Wednesday in the private Ain Borja clinic in Casablanca. Medical staff checked their status regularly in the neonatal ward wallpapered with cartoon characters.

Cisse had been expecting seven babies. Malian doctors, under government orders, sent her to Morocco for the births because hospitals in Mali, one of the world's poorest countries, are ill-equipped to provide adequate care for this exceptional multiple pregnancy.

The Casablanca clinic's director Youssef Alaoui told Moroccan state TV that they had been contacted by Malian doctors about the case a month and a half ago. They were not expecting nine babies, he said.

Cisse gave birth prematurely at 30 weeks and is now in stable condition after heavy bleeding for which she was given a blood transfusion, he said.

The cesarean was ordered after Cisse had "birth pains," Alaoui, the clinic director, said. The babies weigh between 500 grams and one kilogram (1.1 and 2.2 pounds).

The Guinness Book of World Records said in an email to The AP on Wednesday that its current record for most living births at once is eight, and that it is verifying the Morocco birth.

## Quds Day: Twitter Sees Storm #FromKashmirToPalestine



Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Keeping up the tradition of expressing solidarity with the oppressed people across the globe, tens and thousands of people on Friday took social media platform Twitter by storm by demonstrating solidarity with the people of Kashmir and Palestine.

The last Friday of the holy month of Ramazan or Jumat-ul-Vida is observed as Al Quds Day every year across the world to express solidarity with the oppressed people, especially the people of occupied Palestine. However, this year due to the coronavirus pandemic, the people found a noble way to express solidarity with their oppressed brethren – Twitter.

Newly constituted Majlis-e-Ulama initiated the social media campaign in Kashmir Valley in view of the pandemic.

"International Quds Day is an annual event held on the last Friday of Ramadan that was initiated by the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979 to express support for the Palestinians and oppose Zionism and Israel," Tweeted Maulana Masroor Abbas Ansari, a senior member of the Majlis and leader of Ittihadul Muslimeen.

Majlis' call for solidarity with the hashtag #FromKashmirToPalestine evoked overwhelming response on Twitter. The potential reach of the Twitter storm was 330000 and it had over 400 contributors by the time it ended around 5:00pm.

"We wanted to convey a message to all the oppressed people, including that from occupied Palestine that we stand in solidarity with their struggle. We have achieved our desired results," Masroor said.

He further said that Ittihadul Muslimeen took the decision of taking to social media in wake of the ongoing pandemic and to ensure people don't breach government issued protocols.

"Social media is a very good platform to make your voice heard. This was the need of the hour. Today, we made it clear that come what may, we will always stand behind our oppressed brother in Palestine and we stand for Al-Quds," he said.

Another member of the Majlis Ulama Aga Syed Hadi Mousvi had also supported the twitter storm.

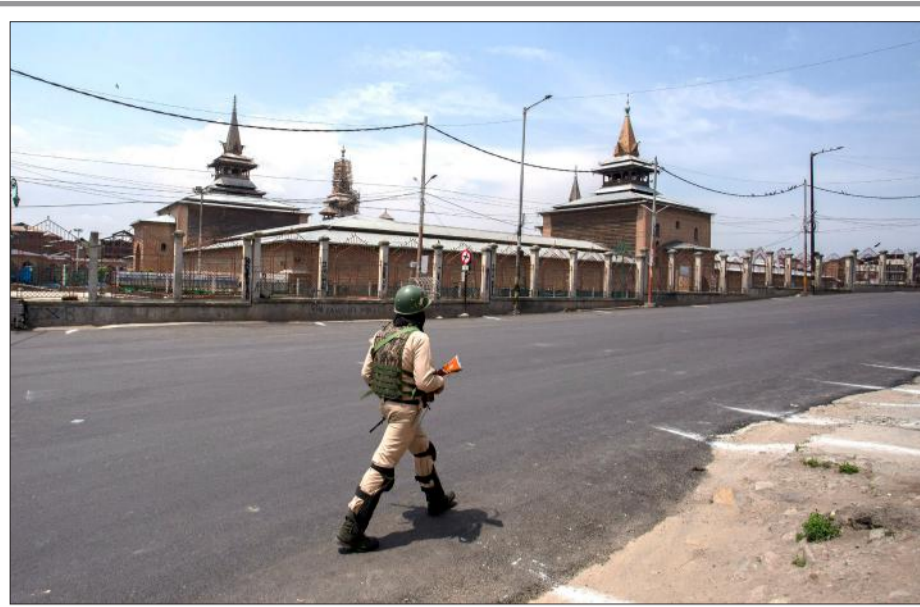
"In view of the ongoing Covid-19 lockdown, a public procession for Quds day (Jummat-ul-vida) would not be possible. However, observing this day is still possible through social media and we can still raise voice against the oppression this day," he Tweeted.

"Following the orders of our leader, let's observe 7May, 2021, the last Friday of this holy month of Ramadan through social media. Let us start a wave of protest in favour of the oppressed using #FromKashmirToPalestine," the Tweet added.

Besides the influential Shia leaders, hundreds of netizens also shared pictures and videos of Kashmir and Palestine to draw parallels of the sufferings between the people of the two nations.

Some netizens had also posted heart wrenching pictures showing either Palestinian kids crying over the dead corpses of their parents or the parents breaking down in tears over their beloved ones.

It bears mention Hurriyat Conference observes the day as Al-Quds and Kashmir Day every year.



**A CRPF MAN PASSES THROUGH THE HISTORIC JAMIA Masjid which remained closed on Jumat-ul-Vida due to a government imposed lockdown to stop coronavirus spread. KO Photo, Abid Bhat**

## Sitting Idle During Lockdown Has Repercussions On Mental Health: Top Kashmir Medico

People Must Keep Themselves Busy

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** At a time when people are confined within the four walls of their houses due to the prevailing Covid-19 lockdown, Psychiatric experts have severe apprehensions of people developing mental health issues.

Psychiatrists believe that people staying at home for days together with Covid trauma and without keeping themselves busy can have repercussions on their mental health.

Dr Mohammad Maqbool Dar, Head of the Department (HoD), Psychiatry, Government Medical College Srinagar while delving into the topic says that there has been subsequent increase in the number of cases related to psychiatric diseases among people ever since the successive lockdowns had to be imposed in the wake of corona virus outbreak.

Talking about the most common mental health issues that people have developed during these lockdowns, Dr Maqbool says, "Most of the psychiatric patients have developed five types of illnesses during this period like depression, anxiety, dissociative and panic disorders besides obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), while post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) has also been witnessed in some patients".

Giving details about the symptoms of these diseases, he said, "If we talk of depression, the patients suffering from this mental health issue are usually in bad mood, they sleep less, have poor concentration and sometimes even develop suicidal thoughts also".

In case of panic disorder, a patient feels intense anxiety which remains there for a few minutes, he experiences chest pain, headache, choking sensation in throat and also sometimes feels he is about to experience heart attack and these patients also visit cardiologists for treatment, Dr Maqbool said.

The patients suffering



functioning from two places simultaneously with its OPD at IMH, Kathi Darwaza Srinagar and General Psychiatry Hospital Unit at SMHS hospital, but due to Covid-19 outbreak, the General Psychiatry Hospital Unit at SMHS Hospital has been converted into Covid facility and people are now visiting IMH Kathi Darwaza for counselling and treatment. The de-addiction centre that was functioning from SMHS Hospital has also been shifted to the IMH.

After the imposition of lockdown, Dr Maqbool informed that they have made OPD, counselling and other services available online also.

On the directions of Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, a help line has also been made available for the general public for online counselling and psychiatric consultation. "Three of our clinical psychologists receive calls from the public thrice a week at Covid Control Room in Divisional Commissioner's office and Psychiatrists have also given numbers for wide publicity and are receiving calls from the people for on-line consultation and counselling regarding covid and mental health issues" HoD Psychiatry said.

He said people can take the precautions to maintain their mental health or they can avail counselling on helpline numbers already publicised through various media.

Health & Medical Education Department through its National Health Mission has started Tele-counselling facility for people who are dealing with mental trauma, stress and depression after having lost their loved ones during covid-19 pandemic. In respect of Srinagar district, the affected individuals have been advised to contact Dr Maqbool HoD Psychiatry on cell no 7889818196, Dr Junaid Nabi Assistant Professor on 9797199799, Dr Rayees Assistant Professor on 6005027377 and Dr Hadika Senior Resident on 9622932343.

## Defence Forces Engaged In Helping Covid-Hit: Defence Minister

Observer News Service

**NEW DELHI:** The armed forces as well as organisations like the Defence Research and Development Organisation and National Cadet Corps (NCC) are engaged in mitigating the sufferings of the people amid the Covid-19 surge, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said here on Thursday.

In a blog post on his website, Rajnath enlisted the steps, including mobilisation of health professionals and setting up of new Covid facilities, taken by the defence ministry's organisations to deal with the surge.

Some 200 drivers of the armed forces are on a standby for driving oxygen transporters to various parts of the country, he said

in a post. Also, 10 TATRA (a truck used to transport heavy equipment) and 15 large vehicles are on a standby to trans-ship any medical supply arriving at the Palam airport.

The Army on Friday mobilised two of its field hospitals from Northeast by air to Patna to assist the government of Bihar, while separately setting up an exclusive Covid management cell in Delhi with a Lt General-rank officer heading it. The cell will coordinate real-time responses to address the exponential rise in Covid cases across the country, including Delhi where assistance to civil administration in the form of testing and transportation of medical equipment is already being provided. (PIB)

## 1300 Oxygen Supported Beds To Be Set Up In Jammu In 5 Days



Observer News Service

**JAMMU:** The Jammu and Kashmir Government on Friday assured that consistent efforts are on to ensure oxygen supply as well as manpower and more than 1300 oxygen supported beds are to be set-up in Jammu division to fight the deadly Covid-19.

According to sources administrative secretary of Tribal Affairs Department, Dr Shahid Iqbal, who has been tasked to look after the COVID-19 management in Jammu province

through Health and Medical Education department, said that specific directions have been received from the office of Jammu and Kashmir's Lieutenant Governor to set-up more than 1300 oxygen supported beds in next five days.

He informed that persistent efforts are on to augment both oxygen supply as well as manpower across the province.

At last he assured that all Jammu districts to get focused support in clear access to oxygen uninterrupted supply.

## Hailstorm Damages Fruit, Vegetable Crop In Kulgam

Observer News Service

**KULGAM:** Hailstorm wreaked havoc to orchards in several villages of South Kashmir's Kulgam district, officials and locals said on Friday.

The locals of the district said that on Friday afternoon, windstorm, hailstorm and rains damaged fruit and vegetable crop in different villages of Kulgam including Churat, Pahloo, Sopat, Devsar and many others villages.

The assessment of the total damage was not known immediately, however, locals said that orchards suffered heavy damage.

"This year, we expected a good crop, but the hail and windstorms have not only dashed our hopes, but also left the orchardists in desperation," said a local farmer.

The locals have demanded



adequate compensation from the government and district authorities for their losses.

Meanwhile, Chief Horticulture Officer Kulgam, Mohamad Iqbal said that there is no need to worry we have already setup control Room number (6005955575) for farmers they can call and get advice from the Agricultural University on what kind of Sprays they need to get good quality of fruit and vegetables. (KNO)

## Two Minors Killed In Pillar Crash

**SRINAGAR:** In a tragic incident of its kind two minor cousins were killed instantly after a pillar collapsed on them in Kutpora Tangmarg area of Baramulla district.

Family sources told news agency Global News Service (GNS) said that the duo were playing in the courtyard and in the due course of time a cement pillar broke and collapsed on them. In the incident, both the girls died on the spot, they said.

The deceased duo has been in the meantime identified as Urfi Jaan and Soliha Jaan, aged between 8-9 years.

A police official concerned confirming the incident to GNS said that they are ascertaining the nature of incident.

Meanwhile a pall of gloom has descended over the area on the tragic death of the two minor girls. (GNS)[07/05, 6:56 PM] +91 70064 40782:

## Lightning Kills Girl, Injures Woman

**SRINAGAR:** A minor girl was killed and elderly woman sustained injuries on Friday when lightning struck Gambhir Ki Gali in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir.

11-year-old Musarat Naz and 50-year-old Peeri Begum, both residents of Targian Lehati were on their way to mud-sheds with their livestock in Gabbar area of Kotranka in Budhal tehsil when the lightning struck the area around 3:00 afternoon on Friday, officials said. In the incident, the minor girl was killed while the middle-aged woman sustained injuries.

The injured woman was removed to the hospital for treatment.

## 'Do Not To Take Steroids Without Doctor's Advice'

Dr Minia Says Most Positive Cases Mild, Do Not Require Oxygen Support

**JAMMU:** Most of the Covid-19 patients fall under 'mild' category and they do not need oxygen support at all. Regular check of oxygen saturation levels and taking appropriate medicines is enough for such patients to recover, said Senior Resident Doctor, Department of Internal Medicine, GMC Jammu, Dr Rajesh Minia, while dispelling the panic and urge to hoard oxygen cylinders by the public.

Explaining the types of Covid-19 patients, Dr Minia says that they are of three types-mild, moderate and severe. "While most of the patients are of mild category and can recover easily, it is only the moderate and severe cases which need special care and treatment," he informed.



Dr Minia advised all patients to regularly check their oxygen saturation levels and get alerted only if the levels fall below 93. If such severe level is reached, he says, that patients should contact a doctor immediately.

The Senior Resident Doc-

tor also urged the public, especially the mild category patients not to take steroids unnecessarily and without doctor's advice. "Only an expert doctor can diagnose better, especially in case a patient has other diseases in addition to Covid infection", he

cautioned. He also requested the public not to hoard oxygen cylinders unnecessarily, thereby causing shortage for the needy.

Dr Rajesh Minia has also requested the patients to take doctors' advice seriously, follow Covid-preventive protocols and make way for severe patients by not occupying covid-care beds against doctors' advice.

He informed that a round-the-clock Divisional Control Room has been established to address all medical advice and queries and can be reached at 0191-2520982, 2549676, 2674444, 2674115, 2674908.

Meanwhile, according to official report 54 covid patients have been discharged in the past 24 hours including 16 from GMC Jammu, 19 from Chest

Disease & TB Hospital, 4 from Super Specialty Hospital and 15 from MCH Jammu. In all, 2673 patients have recovered from these hospitals till date.

In GMC Jammu, 60 Covid-19 patients have been admitted in the past 24 hours, 11 have been admitted in Chest Disease & TB Hospital, 1 in Super Specialty Hospital and 21 in MCH Jammu.

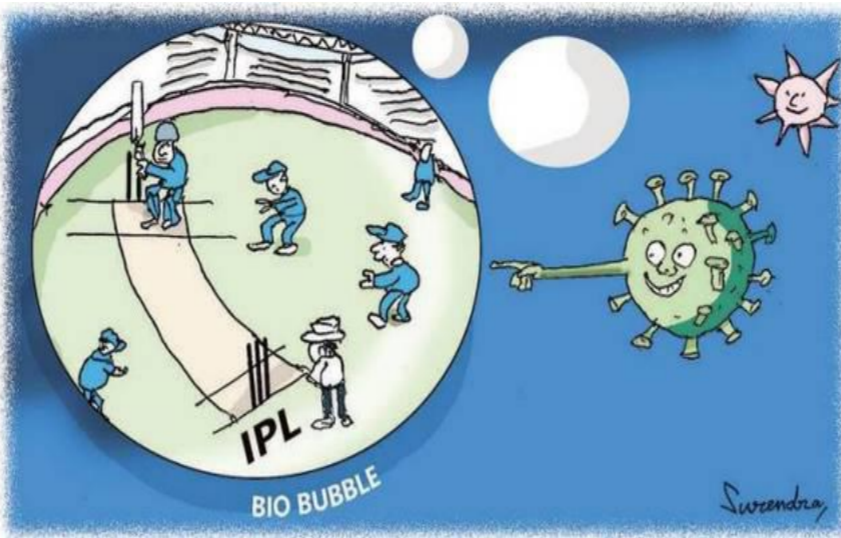
In the past 24 hours, GMC Jammu has reported 19 Covid-19 deaths and one other has been reported from Chest Disease & TB Hospital Jammu.

In GMC Jammu and other Category-II dedicated Covid Health Centres, 617 out of 804 Covid dedicated beds are occupied, while 117 are still vacant; 106 out of 688 oxygen beds are also vacant in these hospitals.

KASHMIR  
OBSERVER

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NO HOLDS BARRED



Since the other three engines of economy i.e. consumption, investments and net exports are down and out, it's the moral and constitutional duty of the Govt. to amplify its spending program and lubricate the economy till the time other constituents come out of bad weather

# Sustaining Lockdown 3.0

Surviving the economic emergency



Ejaz Ayoub

In what could be termed as "once in a century" systemic shock, the second wave of Covid19 in the Indian sub-continent is again unleashing devastation both on the health as well as on the economic front. With mutated behaviour, the rapid rise in deadly infections is ravaging livelihoods, shrinking incomes, disrupting supply chains, impacting labor supply and severely damaging the consumer and investment sentiment. Unlike other Indian states which are going through a second Covid19 lockdown, J&K is witnessing an unaffordable third consecutive lockdown since 2019. As a result the intensity of economic strangulation experienced by households, individuals and businesses in this region is far worse than what is being felt in mainland India.

Life vs Livelihood

There has been divided opinions in the region when it comes to the decision of imposing stringent lock-downs for containing the spread of Covid19. Those in favor say that its the only way to save lives and avoid overwhelming the UT's modest healthcare system. Those against it argue that devastating livelihoods will have more socioeconomic repercussions compared to consciously planned partial or smart lock-downs. This is not for the first time since last year that this dichotomous debate has taken place. Govt.'s around the world have been struggling to trade off between closing the economy and containing the spread of virus. However, a recent research by OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) on data from 45 countries suggests that the choice is not binary at all. In-fact data supports that rapidly containing the pandemic sooner may well lessen the economic impact drastically. In the short run (may be a quarter or less) the economy might suffer but the longer time frame of around 12 months shows that economies which prioritized containment of virus were better placed in terms of recovery, creating livelihood and economic opportunities for its people. However, the rider to it is that the lockdown for the sake of it without amping up the vaccination program and boosting the healthcare systems is a costly mistake. Lockdown is an opportunity that needs to be leveraged to make sure the spread of infection gets halted, and in case it reoccurs people should be well prepared to handle it through vaccination. That seems to be the only available option to save lives and livelihoods both.

Before embarking on the economic fallout of this third consecutive lockdown on the regional economy and the possible approach that can help in mitigating the economic pain, it is essential to briefly highlight some sanguine characteristics of the current situation. Firstly, unlike last year when there was no breathing gap between the unprecedented August 2019 lockdown and the 2020 pandemic lockdown, J&K this time is entering the lockdown after a much needed 8-9 months of working season. Although these past few months in terms of economic activity have been far below the normal capacity, however, the depleted household savings and business risk appetite got a much needed replenishment. This paltry yet timely replenishment is expected to prove handy in surviving the unfolding tide. Secondly, unlike last year when a complete halt in the intrastate and interstate movement of goods created supply side bottlenecks, this time around the Govt. has been extremely cautious in keeping



**The Government needs to announce an immediate business support package. Businesses in J&K can no longer be rescued with meager support like credit facilities, interest remissions and moratoriums. That phase is long gone. It's not a liquidity issue any longer. They are facing insolvency now**

the macro flow of goods least disturbed. Thirdly, while the virus was totally novel and there was no available remedy to fight it out last year, this time there is plenty of hindsight experience and importantly a range of effective vaccines available in the markets. However, despite these hopeful characteristics, the expected economic fallout on account of the unfolding lockdown is going to test the very limits of Kashmir's widely debated resilience this time.

Economic Impact

Among four main engines of economic output i.e. Personal Consumption, Business Investment, Govt. Spending and Net exports, J&K's economy is primarily driven by consumption and Govt. Spending with a mild support from investment and exports. These two components create a major portion of our economic output, household incomes and employment. Being a consumption driven economy, J&K, besides consuming domestic production, also imports goods worth Rs. 60,000 crore (approx) annually. Consumption supports trading sector which is the largest employment provider in J&K's economy after agriculture. It provides livelihood to over 10 lakh people which is almost a quarter of J&K's total workforce. The impact of lockdown is going to hit trading activities very negatively resulting in immediate downsizing of the workforce. This will eventually lead to job and income losses instantly.

Agriculture sector which generates most of its income through export of cash rich produce like Apples, walnuts, saffron etc too shall be feeling the pain of market slowdown in mainland India. This demand slump is expected to reduce the anticipated cash inflows in this essential conduit of the regional economy. Being the main tributary of the rural revenue, the stunted agrarian income will have immediate repercussions on the retail segment of regional urban centers. Another sector which is closely linked to trading is the transport sector. From passenger vehicle

operators to logistical entities facilitating movement of goods in the economy, this sector supports over 3 Lakh people in J&K. The ongoing imposition of the lockdown is going to throw some serious challenges at the livelihood of these people. Another 3 lakh people associated with handicrafts might have to witness tied up capital in unsold inventories on account of global slowdown and demand shock in mainland India. Since these artisans produce mostly luxury items like shawls, carpets, walnut wood and paper mache items, these items are the first ones to get out of the consumers shopping basket during times of slowdown.

Manufacturing sector which creates employment for over 1.5 lakh people in the region is suffering from a more toxic ailment besides demand shock. The nature of last year's financial package which surrounded primarily around bank credit & moratorium has bloated their balance-sheets with huge amounts of debt. This is resulting in a very excruciating fixed monthly obligation of debt servicing and loan repayments. The shock on their cash inflows on account of the lockdown is going to throw all their cost equations out of the window. This might result in widespread layoffs, bank defaults and even foreclosures.

The negative sentiment surrounding the pandemic has also halted most of the business investment decisions. Instead of business expansion in terms of machines, brick & mortar establishments and workforce, people tend to retrace in all aspects of spending. Take for example the labour and material intensive construction sector of J&K which supports Lakhs of people in the economy. The nature of lock-downs is such that it sets in a very negative sentiment and as a result all the construction projects in the pipeline take a back seat. This leads to further contraction in economic output, job creation and overall demand in the economy.

Crisis of any sort do not impact businesses only. Importantly it diminishes the spending sentiment of even

those which have stable salaries. People tend to postpone their buying decisions which ends up spiraling down the demand even further. This demand shock sends tremors to all layers of the economy ranging from big purchases like cars, houses and tractors to non-durable sales like apparel, consumer goods and even services like healthcare, personal care and entertainment etc.

As per the last CMIE (Centre for monitoring Indian Economy) survey J&K's unemployment rate was 11.4% for the month of April 2021. With lockdown rolling out in the month of May 2021, this number is going to go deep south for sure. Job losses result in income loss which in turn slumps the demand in the economy further. A very lethal recipe.

Sustaining the shock

The magnitude of the ongoing crisis is something which is global and happens once in a century. As such the ability to survive such a colossal shock is beyond individuals capacity. This is where the Govt., both at the UT as well as the central level, needs to step up and rescue the people from this health and economic emergency. Since the other three engines of economy i.e. consumption, investments and net exports are down and out, it's the moral and constitutional duty of the Govt. to amplify its spending program and lubricate the economy till the time other constituents come out of bad weather. Govt alone has the capacity as well as reach to afford this scale of expenditure. Yes, Govt. revenue is shrinking but saving the present by borrowing from the markets and spreading the repayment in a staggered manner in coming years is the most viable option right now. Govt. is the custodian of all our collective assets. These assets are worthy enough to create income in coming times which can sustain such expenditures. Individuals or small social organizations cant.

There is a need for a smart lockdown rather than a complete lockdown after the infections are plateaued. Importantly, the administration has to come

up with an exhaustive vaccination program on a war footing. That alone will make this lockdown worth bearing. Last one year has plenty of lessons which has taught us that lockdown alone can be counterproductive. Besides vaccination, it is essential that Interstate and Intra-UT supply chains are allowed to operate without much disruption.

financial support:

Almost 2.5 lakh households in J&K fall below the poverty line. Last few years of constant lockdown might have pushed even more people into abject poverty. Had it not been for the numerous social organizations which are doing a commendable job in supporting the needy, the condition of the people at the bottom of the economic ladder would have been quite grim. The first and immediate response from the Govt. should therefore be to announce a three months sustenance allowance for these vulnerable sections of society. Even Rs. 6000 per household for three months will incur a paltry cost of only Rs. 150 crore to the state exchequer. That's not even 0.14% of the state's expenditure size. This expenditure will not only provide a safety net for the destitute but will also create instant demand in the economy due to their high marginal propensity to consume.

The Govt. needs to announce an immediate business support package. Businesses in J&K can no longer be rescued with meager support like credit facilities, interest remissions and moratoriums. That phase is long gone. Its not a liquidity issue any longer. They are facing insolvency now. The inflexible debt contracts with banks on the other hand is a total mismatch with the volatile income shocks. The Government will have to come up with a major business revival response. The scale of expenditure might demand Govt approaching the union Govt for funds as well as issuing long term bonds in the markets. Taxes which the Govt. survives on will only come if businesses survive, people find employment and the economy survives the shock of the century. Therefore rescuing businesses is a win win situation for both the Govt as well as the people.

Another effective route of pushing low cost liquidity in the system to spur demand will be to pay three months salaries & pensions of the Govt. Employees in advance. Monthly salary outlay towards Govt. Employees working for the GoJK is around Rs. 3200 to 3300 crore. Paying three months in advance will infuse a liquidity of around Rs. 10,000 crore in the system instantly. The only cost that the Govt. will have to bear a nominal interest amount charged on arranging the funds in advance from short term market borrowings. But the amount of demand that it will create in the other layers of the economy will soften the pain of demand shock substantially.

For the rest of the world the health and economic emergency witnessed is something which occurs once in a century. For J&K, the added prequel of August 2019 made the twin pandemic lock downs even more excruciating and absolutely unaffordable. Sustaining this shock without a magnanimous Govt. support is therefore beyond imagination. The Govt. both UT as well as the Union, therefore needs to come up with an immediate economic response which caters to the economically vulnerable sections, impoverished households and dying businesses of Jammu and Kashmir.

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

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# Last Leg of an Opportunity

Aaqib Anjum Aaf

**Fasting means going beyond ones own desires. Desires before the wish of a friend mean nothing. Mufti Mu ammad Taqi Usm ni says,**

*raz -e-dost ke aage ye kh hisheN kaisi,*

*khul s-e-ishq ka maqal hai aarzu kya hai?*

Opportunity is something that everyone wishes for, in the day and in the night. Wise is the one who recognises opportunity and takes benefit from it. The month of Ramadan serves as a great opportunity to collect huge rewards from Allah Ta'la by doing little and minute things, possibly helping a needy with some money. Qur'n speaks out that "Then everyone will know what he has put forward." (81:14)

Those who benefit from these opportunities are those who win, for example, Allah Ta'la states in the Qur'n, "We have been your friends in the worldly life, and (will remain as such) in the Hereafter. And for you here is whatever your souls desire, and for you here is whatever you call for". (41:31)

The month of Ramadan is an opportunity for us so we can fix ourselves and our society for which we then earn accordingly. The month of Ramadan instills in us hope, responsibility, and discipline – and this is where we are required to strive in conjunction with the warning, "so that you may be God-fearing". (2:183)

The Last Friday of this Ramadan is here, and this opportunity is about to disappear if we don't pay heed. In general, there is no specific prayer or 'ib dat' for the Last Friday or what is known as "Jumma'tul wid". The Prophet of Allah (PBUH) used to pray throughout the last ten days of Ramadan, and used to wake up in the nights to pray.

Accountability is what this month tends to instill in us, and the opportunity is at its last phase, giving us more time, so that we may benefit and get what our souls desire. The duties in this time may vary from helping others in material terms or it may mean helping ones own self in following the commands of the Creator.

Realise your worth and value in these circumstances: understand your responsibility and fulfill your duty.

A society that is not based on the idea of faith is destined to an evil fate. It is the self sacrificing nature of fasts that tells us the spirit of Islam which goes beyond the narrow ambitions of individualism. It is this spirit of a community praying to One God that drives home the mission of spreading peace and justice with worship.

Ramadan has rushed past many of us this time. But there's still time. The last Friday of Ramadan is a bitter sweet occurrence. It provides us an opportunity to give our best shot with the bitter realisation that Ramadan is soon to bid us adieu.

With only a few days left for Ramadan to end, the opportunity to avail benefits are few. It is the last of the days yet Allah has allowed us to know that there's the greatest reward in these nights. But the last Friday holds a message that everything prefixed by a "last" is suffixed by an end.

The Last Friday of the Ramadan reminds us of our



reality, that we've got a good chance to live a good life. The belief in the idea of faith requires that the prerequisites of faith be completely followed. A man cannot become good unless and until he gives up things that he likes on his own.

Shaheen Iqbal Asar expresses this thus:

*roz-e-mahshar ki tau lat se ye pata chal j yega, z st kitni muk tasar hai ye abhi mat p chhiye*

A tradition appears in Musnad A mad that Sayyidah Aa'isha (rz) was enquired about the daily life of the Prophet (PBUH). She replied, his character is the Qur'n. The month of Ramadan gives us the opportunity to follow his lifestyle and discipline our life and the Last Friday gives us a warning that, "time is ticking, and it is going to get over".

This is what we need to understand whenever we witness anything "last" in our life, and today it is the Last Friday of the month of Ramadan.

Fasting is going beyond ones own desires and

surrendering everything to the will of God who has commanded us to worship Him. So, desires before the wish of a friend mean nothing. Mufti Mu ammad Taqi Usm ni says,

*raz -e-dost ke aage ye kh hisheN kaisi, khul s-e-ishq ka maqal hai aarzu kya hai?*

Learning from the warning that everything is fleeting, we should cherish this honour conferred on us by Allah Ta'la and try our best to live our lives according to the required standard. This standard is our helpline and helps us when there is no help.

Zaki Kayf appears to express this grace of Allah Ta'la saying,

*"rif'atoN ki justj mai thokareN to kh chuke, ast N-e-yaar par abh sar jhuk kar dekhiye"*

The author is a Biographical Researcher and author. He tweets at @AnjumAaqib

Asthma. Obesity. Cancer. Depression. Advances in industry and technology have manifested in the phenomenon we call 'diseases of civilization', and they go far deeper than constricted bronchioles and excess fat. We are ill within and without. Mental illness, spiritual illness, rapidly depleting natural resources, fast-paced lifestyles, and suffocation amidst the fumes and crowdedness of our cities.

## Fast and furious lifestyle

We bathe in, consume and inhale chemicals, insert them into our bodies, and then wonder why we struggle. Our eyes are more accustomed to the light of our screens than the light of the sun, and constant entertainment, stimulation and instant gratification characterizes our evolving state. The beautiful, steadfast patience required to plant and nurture a seed and wait for it to grow, has been stolen from us, and replaced tragically with dopamine hits from social media 'likes' and followers, with quick, convenient and never-ending. The subsequent impact this has on our souls and character is immeasurable. Our relationship with the natural world is in crisis.

A fast and furious lifestyle is more desirable than any other, and speed of action, thinking, the pace of day, of travel and communication, is increasingly seen as necessary for progression and success. On this path, we have prostituted our planet. Violently abused her solely for our own gains with no regard or responsibility for her welfare in return, and while doing so, plunged our souls into a state of disrepair.

Children grow up in concrete jungles, nurtured not by the sight of flowers and the feeling of soil or sand beneath their feet, instead, it is through the caress of polymers and metals and synthetic cloth. Playgrounds are tarmacked and more time is spent on Playstations than playing in the branches of trees. E numbers and artificial preservatives define our diets and the first and last thing we see each day is a screen. Our bodies, that are made from the earth, that will return to the earth, and that are fundamentally linked to the earth in many ways. We drive to the artificially constructed gym, (usually an artificially lit, electrically charged atmosphere pumping with music) to exercise our bodies.

Those same bodies that crave the light of the sun, the caress of rain on our skin, the wind invigorating our limbs, is drowning. When they cry out for help, in the form of disease and illness, we quickly medicate with more chemicals.

We are in a terrible state of disrepair. Modern developments combined with a capitalist, consumption-driven society have snowballed into what is fast becoming a disaster.

## The derogatory image of being green

On the rare occasions when the motives with which we interact with the earth are not economical, for example, crude oil for your car or straighteners or kettle or laptop, they remain in pursuit of a superficial mystique. We lack the patience and resilience to climb spiritual mountains and when we climb physical mountains it is with the attitude of conquering the earth, of emerging superior, dominant, rather than a meditative, humbling encounter. We stick flags in the ground at the peak and

# Our Abuse of the Earth Is a Reflection of Our Internal State

HIBA KHAN



**The Book is intrinsically linked to the physical universe, and the streams, the valleys, the clouds puffing through the sky all offer unique paths to access The Divine. Reading of the Quran must be accompanied by devoted and meaningful engagement with and reflection on the original creation**

count the ascension as a profound achievement. If only we knew of the true potential for real ascension accompanying every encounter with God's creation.

When we visit places of natural beauty it is so we can take impressive pictures for Instagram, and more time is spent thinking up captions and getting filters right than absorbing the atmosphere and internalising the incredible details.

In developing countries, the mindset is also visible; farming, residing in villages and not being up to date with technology is seen as backward and undesirable. Those who call for protection and honouring of the planet are generally labeled hippies and it is only when the general public sees a photo of a dying polar bear or starving seal pup that anything stirs. Any stirring does not last any longer than a few minutes or go beyond a trendy campaign before our insatiable lifestyles kick back in and we choose

to forget again.

I was raised with a sense of environmental consciousness, and remember feeling very strongly about turning the tap off while brushing my teeth, recycling plastics and boycotting unethical brands even at primary school, but have slowly realised how complex the issue truly is. It is not a case simply of our degradation of the earth and unnatural lifestyles resulting in us developing physical and mental diseases. It begins before that. The very fact that we are ABLE to abuse our planet shows that we are diseased. Humanity has turned outwards, despite the fact that the purpose for our existence is to discover and be nourished with what is within. The destitution of our souls and our lack of inwardness is manifested in the ferocious destructive force we have set forth on the earth. The filth and darkness we have unleashed on the oceans, the forests, the air and the soil is actually a reflection of the filth

and darkness within you and me.

## The truth

The only place God uses the word 'Ayat', literally meaning 'Signs', other than regarding the verses of His book, is when referring to the natural world. The honour and elevation afforded to the planets and trees and rivers are unrivaled in our existence, not only are they provided with this unique status, but throughout the Holy Book and tradition, the earth and its creatures are sworn by and protected. The very structure of the cosmos itself contains spiritual meaning for humans and our lifestyles undermine the purposeful sanctity woven into our universe.

We must learn to recognise the universe as the 3-dimensional topographical manifestation of Quran i.e. Divine Speech. The natural world and all its wonders are almost like the pop-up part of the pop-up book, tangible illustrations of the profound message sent unto us.

The most sacred thing in existence as we know it, is the timeless speech of our Lord, and now we know that the place He chose to be direct reflections of His blessed words is the natural environment, we must learn to treat the oceans and animals and mountains and plants with due respect. Not only does this mean that if we disrespect or abuse the earth, we are disrespecting God, but we also forego perhaps the single most powerful and significant route to attain nearness to God. Allah swt weaves His reality into original creation, and the potential this holds for us is demonstrated by the fact that the Prophet SAW reached awareness of and nearness to God before prophecy, through immersing himself in natural creation. Pondering the wondrous creation of God and retreating from the artificial world set the scene for the descending of the revelation to our Beloved.

It was after spending extremely long periods of time in the cave of Hira that the Prophet SAW was made ready to receive the Quran. The purifying effect on the soul and the bestowal of clarity on the mind that seclusion in nature alone can bring is not seen anywhere else.

There are signs in this for you and I, that proximity to God cannot be reached simply by reading the pages of the Book. The Book is intrinsically linked to the physical universe, and the streams, the valleys, the clouds puffing through the sky all offer unique paths to access The Divine. Reading of the Quran must be accompanied by devoted and meaningful engagement with and reflection on the original creation. The Creator is suffused into His Creation, but we cannot see it. In occupying ourselves with everything manmade and artificial, instant and unnatural, we have forfeited the most potent and necessary pathways for the success of our souls.

We claim to seek God fervently, yet in our actions and attitudes deny the very existence of the treasure map He provided us with. We are lost.

In Part 2 we will look at the Prophet SAW as an environmentalist, the concept of meditation, seclusion, and slowing down in Islam as well as how we can begin to change ourselves and those around us to heal, reconnect and discover the Creator through Creation.

Amaliah

# 'Sugary drinks consumption may lead to increased risk of colorectal cancer'

Agencies

If you are obsessed with sugar-sweetened drinks then you need to think twice before having them regularly.

A new study led by Washington University School of Medicine has found a link between drinking sugar-sweetened beverages and an increased risk of developing colorectal cancer in women under age 50. The findings suggest that heavy consumption of sugary drinks during adolescence (ages 13 to 18) and adulthood can increase the disease risk.

The study, published in the journal Gut, provides more support for public health efforts that encourage people to reduce the amount of sugar they consume.

"Colorectal cancer in younger adults remains relatively rare, but the fact that the rates have been increasing over the past three decades -- and we don't understand why -- is a major public health concern and a priority in cancer prevention," said senior author Yin Cao, ScD, an associate professor of surgery and of medicine in the Division of Public Health Sciences at

Washington University.

"Due to the increase in colorectal cancer at younger ages, the average age of colorectal cancer diagnosis has gone down from 72 years to 66 years. These cancers are more advanced at diagnosis and have different characteristics compared with cancers from older populations.

"Our lab is funded by the National Cancer Institute (NCI) and the National Comprehensive Cancer Network to identify risk factors, the molecular landscapes, and precision screening strategies for these cancers so that they can be detected earlier and even prevented," said Cao, who also has a master's of public health.

"In past work, we have shown that poor diet quality was associated with increased risk of early-onset colorectal cancer precursors, but we have not previously examined specific nutrients or foods."

Compared with women who drank less than one 8-ounce serving per week of sugar-sweetened beverages, those who drank two or more servings per day had just over twice the risk of developing early-onset colorectal cancer, meaning it was diag-

nosed before age 50.

The researchers calculated a 16 per cent increase in risk for each 8-ounce serving per day. And from ages 13 to 18, an important time for growth and development, each daily serving was linked to a 32 per cent increased risk of eventually developing colorectal cancer before age 50.

Sugar-sweetened drink consumption has been linked to metabolic health problems, such as type 2 diabetes and obesity, including in children. But less is known about whether such high-sugar beverages could have a role in the increasing incidence of colorectal cancer in younger people. Like early-onset colorectal cancer rates, consumption of such drinks has increased over the past 20 years, with the highest consumption level found among adolescents and young adults ages 20 to 34.

The researchers analyzed data from the Nurses' Health Study II, a large population study that tracked the health of nearly 116,500 female nurses from 1991 to 2015. Every four years, participants answered

surveys that included questions about diet, including the types and estimated amounts of beverages they drank.

Of the total participants, over 41,000 also were asked to recall their beverage habits during their adolescence.

The researchers identified 109 diagnoses of early-onset colorectal cancer among the nearly 116,500 participants.

"Despite the small number of cases, there is still a strong signal to suggest that sugar intake, especially in early life, is playing a role down the road in increasing adulthood colorectal cancer risk before age 50," said Cao, also a research member of Siteman Cancer Center.

"This study, combined with our past work linking obesity and metabolic conditions to a higher risk of early-onset colorectal cancer, suggests that metabolic problems, such as insulin resistance, may play an important role in the development of this cancer in younger adults."

With the increasing rates in mind, the American Cancer Society has recently lowered the recommended age for a first screening colonoscopy to 45, down from the

previously recommended age 50 for people at average risk. Those with additional risk factors, such as a family history of the disease, should start even earlier, according to the guidelines.

Since the study only included female nurses, most of whom were white, more work is needed to examine this link in people of more diverse races, ethnicities and genders.

While sugar-sweetened beverages were linked to an increased risk of early-onset colorectal cancer, some other drinks -- including milk and coffee -- were associated with a decreased risk.

This observational study can't demonstrate that drinking sugary beverages causes this type of cancer or that drinking milk or coffee is protective, but the researchers said that replacing sweetened beverages with unsweetened drinks, such as milk and coffee, is a better choice for long-term health.

"Given this data, we recommend that people avoid sugar-sweetened beverages and instead choose drinks like milk and coffee without sweeteners," Cao said.

## Career Opportunities in Nutrition & Dietetics

Vijay GarG

The demand for nutritionists/dietitians has significantly increased over the years, owing to increased awareness amongst individuals to stay healthy and avoid high-calorie diets resulting in hypertension, obesity, and other food-related diseases.

Many people mistakenly use the terms "dietitian" and "nutritionist" interchangeably. Although these two professions are undoubtedly related, they maintain distinctive qualities. Dietitians emphasize on food management, whereas nutrition emphasizes on the promotion of health by way of healthy food.

The main difference between Nutritionists and Dietitians is that Nutritionists are not held accountable by a regulatory college so that anyone can use the Nutritionist title. However, if you're looking to make a career as a Nutritionist, it's best to gain as much educational and hands-on experience as possible.

Even though Nutritionists aren't regulated, it doesn't mean that they don't offer good advice. Some Nutritionists may actually have extensive education in diet and nutrition. Some may even have bachelor's degrees, just like a Dietitian. However, for individuals to call themselves a Nutritionist, mandatory education is not required most of the time. Unlike dietitians, the nutritionist profession is much less protected under the law. In fact, nutritionists that do not intend to use the titles of "dietitian" or "registered dietitian" are often free from government regulation.

Roles and Responsibilities:

- Professionals in the field of dietetics often focus their efforts on specific populations, facilities or initiatives, including:
- Designing individual nutritional therapies to address specific health issues, such as unhealthy weight, diabetes or hypertension
- Developing facility-wide nutrition programs for health care, educational, correctional and other institutions
- Increasing public awareness of proper nutritional standards and habits
- Improving the accuracy and comprehension of food labels
- Ensuring the safety of our food supply
- Researching how changes in diet (such as reducing sugar intake) affect health (by reduc-

ing blood pressure)

- Working with food manufacturers to improve the nutritional quality of prepared foods
- Professionals in the field of nutrition often focus their efforts on specifics of nutrients, nourishment, and health, including:
- Researching how the body's functions are affected by nutrient supply
- Investigating the relationship between genes and nutrients
- Studying how diet affects metabolism
- Examining the process of nourishment and the association between diet, disease, and health
- Providing health advice and promoting healthy eating
- Advising about special diets
- Educating health professionals and the public about nutrition and its importance

Working as part of a multidisciplinary team/ supporting the work of other

Clinical Dietitians/Nutritionists provide medical nutrition therapy for patients in institutions such as hospitals and nursing care facilities. They assess patients' nutritional needs, develop and implement nutrition programs, and evaluate and report the results. They confer with doctors and other health care professionals in order to coordinate medical and dietary needs. Some clinical dietitians specialize in the management of overweight and critically ill patients, such as those with renal (kidney) disease and diabetes.

In addition, clinical dietitians in nursing care facilities, small hospitals, or correctional facilities may manage the food service department.

Community Dietitians/Nutritionists develop nutrition programs designed to prevent disease and promote health, targeting particular groups of people. Dietitians in this practice area may work in settings such as public health clinics, fitness centers, corporate wellness programs, or home health agencies.

Corporate Dietitians/Nutritionists work in food manufacturing, advertising, and marketing. In these areas, dietitians analyze foods, prepare literature for distribution, or report on issues such as the nutritional content of recipes, dietary fiber, or vitamin supplements.

Management Dietitians/Nutritionists oversee large-scale meal planning and preparation in health care facilities, company cafeterias, prisons, and schools. They hire, train and direct other

dietitians and food service workers; budget for and purchase food, equipment, and supplies; enforce sanitary and safety regulations, and prepare records and reports.

Consultant Dietitians/Nutritionists work under contract with health care facilities or in their own private practice. They perform nutrition assessments for their clients and advise them about diet-related concerns, such as weight loss or cholesterol reduction. Some work for wellness programs, sports teams, supermarkets, and other nutrition-related businesses. They consult with food service managers, providing expertise in sanitation, safety procedures, menu development, budgeting, and planning.

Sports Dietitians/Nutritionists work under contract with athletes. They teach athletes/fitness enthusiasts effective ways to improve health, optimize performance, manage weight, advice on dietary practices and exercise. They also foresee the intake of vitamins, minerals, or supplements.

Pediatric Dietitians/Nutritionists are responsible for encouraging healthy food choices for children of all ages and backgrounds by assessing and coordinating nutritional menus. revolve around the health of children with and without special needs, such as those with obesity or diabetes. Pediatric dietitians plan menus, incorporating balanced diets supporting healthy nourishment. They also counsel children or parents on healthy eating and basic nutrition

Knowledge of diet and nutrition is just one factor that takes to successfully work in a dietetics and nutrition job. Everyday duties will necessitate distinct skills, and by perfecting and refining these skills you can make yourself more competitive and your work will be much more attainable and enjoyable. The vital skills necessary for pursuing this program are as mentioned below:

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) projects that employment for dietitian nutritionists will grow 16% from 2014 to 2024, much faster than the average for all occupations. It notes that the role of food in good health is well known, leading to a larger role for dietitian nutritionists and nutrition and dietetic technicians in patient care and to advise people who want to improve their health.

Vijay GarG Ex.PES-1 is Retired  
Principal Government Girls Senior Secondary  
school MHR Malout punjab

## Defence forces engaged in helping Covid-hit: Rajnath Singh

Srinagar: Amid several demands and suggestions to bring in the armed forces to not just handle logistics, but to also set-up warlike field hospitals to combat the ongoing second wave of the Covid-19 cases across the country.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh writing in a blog post about his ministry's response, and that of the armed forces, in "fighting the invisible enemy", called it a "once in a century crisis".

"Sensing the emergency situation, the whole Government machinery immediately swung into action by mobilizing all possible resources. Along with the efforts put together by the scientific community, health professionals, civil administration, the Armed Forces too have pitched in this battle against an invisible yet deadly enemy."

In his post, Singh wrote that the Indian Army, Air Force, Navy, and other organisations of the Ministry of Defence like DG AFMS, DRDO, OFB, DPSU, NCC, Cantonments Boards, etc "are engaged to help mitigate the sufferings of the people. Mobilisation of additional health professionals, setting up of new COVID facilities, deployment of IAF transport aircraft and IN Ships to provide

logistic support to facilitate the supply of oxygen from friendly foreign countries and within the country and setting up of new oxygen plants are some of the ongoing efforts of the Ministry of Defence".

He recounted the many steps taken in the last few weeks in aiding the effort. Foremost, he said, "I have directed the Armed Forces to extend all possible assistance to the civil administration to tide over the crisis" as "people have great faith and trust in the capabilities of the Armed Forces".

Emergency Financial Powers have granted to the armed forces for the formation commanders to set up medical facilities in addition to the emergency financial powers delegated to Director General Medical Services (Army/Navy/Air Force) and other officers.

Also, nearly 750 beds in various Military Hospitals have been set aside for civilian use while the AFMS also dedicated 19 hospitals, over 4,000 beds and 585 ICU units across the country, Singh said.

DRDO, he mentioned, has set up 500-bed facilities in New Delhi and Lucknow, a 900-bed hospital in Ahmedabad and converted ESIC Hospital

in Patna to Covid-19 hospital with 500 beds. It is working to establish similar hospitals in Muzaffarpur and Varanasi.

Other steps include granting extension to the Short Service Commissioned Doctors of AFMS till December 31, redeploying recently retired medical officers, 100 beds at Lucknow and Prayagraj provided by the Army, and many more in other areas, and keeping 200 drivers on standby for driving oxygen transporters to various parts of the country.

The Air Force has carried out 50 sorties, airlifting 61 oxygen containers of 1,142 MT capacity from abroad, and 344 sorties, airlifting 230 containers of 4,527 MT capacity domestically till May 5. Navy too, he said, has deployed nine warships for the purpose of transporting oxygen-filled containers and first consignment reached Mangalore on May 5. The Indian Army has repaired two civil oxygen plants at Agra to facilitate the resumption of supply of up to 1,800 cylinders per day.

Also, 23 mobile oxygen generating plants are being brought from Germany and a tender for another 23 big sized plants has also been floated. -PIB

انتقال پر ملال

یہ خبر انتہائی دکھ کے ساتھ دی جاتی ہے کہ محمد اشرف مخدومی ولد غلام احمد مخدومی ساکنہ مخدوم صاحب سرینگر مورخہ 7 مئی 2021ء بروز جمعہ المبارک اس دارقانی سے رحلت کر گئے۔ اللہ تعالیٰ مرحوم کو جنت الفردوس نصیب کرے۔ مرحوم کی اجتماعی فاتحہ خوانی مورخہ 10 مئی 2021ء بروز سوموار ان کے آبائی مقبرہ واقع مخدوم صاحب میں صبح 10 بجے انجام دی جائے گی۔ جس کے بعد موجودہ حالات کے پیش نظر گھر پر کوئی تعزیتی مجلس منعقد نہیں ہوگی۔

سوگواراں  
نذیر احمد مخدومی، محمود احمد مخدومی (برادران)

**Sad Demise**

We inform the sad demise of Mr. Tasleem ahmad zargar s/o late ghulam mustafa zargar r/o elhibagh arfeen colony near crpf camp he left heavenly abode on Friday 7/05/2021 he was laid in rest at their ancestral graveyard malkah near police station note ladies/gents are request not to come at home.

### Indian Red Cross Society

Union Territory of Jammu &amp; Kashmir

Red Cross House  
Exchange Road, Srinagar  
0194-3510091

#### DASTI QUOTATION

IRCS, J&K UT Branch, Exchange Road, Srinagar calls rates from registered dealers / suppliers with GSTIN from Jammu & Kashmir for supply of 500 Dry Ration packs in the first instance, having below mentioned items in the pack. The rates should be inclusive of GST.

The required supply has to be delivered at the office premises of Indian Red Cross Society, UT of J&K, Exchange Road, Srinagar and Red Cross Bhawan, Kachi Chawni, Jammu.

The supplies have to be made within three (03) days from the date of acceptance of supply order.

The suppliers from Jammu Division shall submit sealed quotations / rates at Red Cross Bhawan, Kachi Chawni, Jammu and suppliers from Kashmir Division shall submit sealed quotations / rates at Red Cross House, Exchange Road, Srinagar.

Sealed quotations/rates should reach by or before 12<sup>th</sup> May, 2021. The rates can also be submitted on our official email ID: [info@iresjk.org](mailto:info@iresjk.org)

| S. No. | Item                    | Rate per pc.  |
|--------|-------------------------|---------------|
| 1.     | Oil 01 ltr Grade 1      | 01 bottle/pkt |
| 2.     | Atta 05kg               | 01 bag        |
| 3.     | Salt 1kg                | 01 pkt        |
| 4.     | Red Chilli Powder 500gm | 01 pkt        |
| 5.     | Turmeric Powder 500gm   | 01 pkt        |
| 6.     | Saunf Powder 500 gm     | 01 pkt        |
| 7.     | Bathing Soap            | 01 pc         |
| 8.     | Washing Soap            | 01pc          |
| 9.     | Liquid Milk Pack 160ml  | 01 pc         |
| 10.    | Sugar 500gm             | 01 pkt        |
| 11.    | Chai Meethi 250gm       | 01 pkt        |
| 12.    | Chai Namkeen 500gm      | 01 pkt        |
| 13.    | Channa Dal 500gm        | 01 pkt        |
| 14.    | Rajma Dal 500gm         | 01 pkt        |

Sd/-  
(Kifayat H. Rizvi) IAS Retd.  
General Secretary

DIPK-NB-653/21



## Covid Crisis Poses Economic Risk In Q1 FY22; 'Muted Impact' Likely: Finmin



**NEW DELHI:** As states take to lockdowns amid the severe Covid crisis, the Finance Ministry in a report has said that second wave of the Covid-19 poses a downside risk to economic activities during April-June, although the impact is expected to be muted compared to that in the first wave.

The 'Monthly Economic Review' for April 2021 published by the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) said that learning to "operate with COVID-19" provides a silver lining of economic resilience amidst the second wave.

"The second wave of COVID-19 has posed a downside risk to economic activity in the first quarter of FY 2021-22. However, there are reasons to expect a muted economic impact as compared to the first wave. Learning to "operate with COVID-19", as borne by international experience, provides a silver lining of economic resilience amidst the second wave," it said.

Noting that the global economy recovered further in March and April, powered by vaccination drives and fiscal stimuli by few large economies, it said that in India the momentum in economic recovery since the first wave moderated in April due to the second wave of coronavirus.

It said that agriculture continues to be the silver lining with record food grain production estimated in the ensuing crop year on the back of predicted normal monsoons. Rural demand indicators

like tractor sales recorded a growth of 172 per cent and 36 per cent compared to a low base in March 2020 and even the pre-Covid month of March 2019 respectively.

Industrial production showed mixed trends. While Index of Industrial Production (IIP) in February 2021 registered a broad-based decline of 3.6 per cent (YoY) and 3.9 per cent compared to January 2021, the eight-core index posted growth of 6.8 per cent (YoY) in March 2021 and 11.1 per cent compared to February 2021.

In FY 2020-21, the core sector contracted by 7 per cent compared to 0.4 per cent growth in FY 2019-20 with fertilizer being the sole growing sector and electricity recovering steadily in the second half.

The Purchasing Managers Index for manufacturing rose further to 55.5 in April with consumer goods as the strongest-performing category, followed by capital goods and then intermediate goods. The rebound was also reflected in RBI's survey estimates on capacity utilization and manufacturers' optimism for the current year, the report said.

In the second half of FY 2020-21, GST collections registered a good growth and collections exceeded Rs 1 lakh crore in each of the last six months owing to economic recovery. GST collections registered another record high of Rs 1.41 lakh crore in April, indicative of continued economic recovery.--IANS

## KCCI Seeks Financial Sustenance For Lockdown Affected Daily Earners



Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:--** Stating that the fresh lockdown has pushed people who survive on daily earnings to starvation in Jammu and Kashmir, the Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industries (KCCI) President, Sheikh Ashiq Friday appealed the Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha to announce "financial sustenance package" for the affected.

In a statement issued, Ashiq said: "While the business community was still struggling to revive after the unprecedented developments since August 2019, the fresh spell of lockdown has created havoc for many of the families, which survive on daily earnings."

The KCCI President said, "From the transporters to Shikara Wals to small shopkeepers, people

from various walks of life including local laborers and street vendors have not been able to earn even a penny."

"One can only imagine the plight of families who have not been able to earn anything in the given conditions," Ashiq said.

He said given the fact that several states have already announced special financial packages for such affected people, it was the responsibility of the Raj Bhawan to announce similar or even magnanimous packages for the affected in Jammu and Kashmir. Ashiq said in the absence of a democratically elected government, all hopes are pinned on Raj Bhawan for the success of the people in these testing times.

He said the Raj Bhawan should also start free meals for the Covid patients and their attendants

undergoing treatment at government facilities.

The KCCI also sought public cooperation in making the fight against Covid19 a success. "Every effort in these testing times has to be collective and Raj Bhawan will have to take a lead on this for collective response to the crises which has befallen on Jammu and Kashmir," the Kashmir Inc President said.

The KCCI also sought improvement in distribution of oxygen to the affected families.

Ashiq also appealed to the people to refrain from any hoarding of life-support-systems like oxygen concentrators once the patient recovers. Ashiq hailed the humanitarian groups, which have been working day and night to provide assistance to the affected.

## Whatsapp Scraps May 15 Deadline For Accepting Privacy Policy Terms

**NEW DELHI:** WhatsApp has scrapped its May 15 deadline for users to accept its controversial privacy policy update and said not accepting the terms will not lead to deletion of accounts.

WhatsApp had faced severe backlash over user concerns that data was being shared with parent company Facebook.

A WhatsApp spokesperson told PTI that no accounts will be deleted on May 15 for not accepting the policy update.

"No accounts will be deleted on May 15 because of this update and no one in India will lose functionality of WhatsApp either. We will follow up with reminders to people over the next several weeks," the spokesperson said in an emailed response to a query on Friday.

The spokesperson added that while a "majority of users who have received the new terms of service have accepted them", some people have not had the chance to do so yet.

However, the company did not clarify the reason behind the decision and did not divulge the number of users who have accepted the terms so far.

In January this year, WhatsApp had informed users about the changes in its terms of service and public policy through an in-app notification. Users were initially given time till February 8 to agree to the new terms in order



to continue using the platform.

According to WhatsApp, the key updates include more information about its service and how it processes user data; how businesses can use Facebook hosted services to store and manage their WhatsApp chats; and how WhatsApp partners with Facebook to offer integrations across the company products.

WhatsApp has insisted that the acceptance of the privacy policy update does not expand its ability to share user data with Facebook.

However, user backlash over WhatsApp's alleged sharing of user information with Facebook forced the company to postpone the February deadline to May 15.

The WhatsApp spokesperson said the company has spent the last few months working to "clear up confusion and misinformation".

"As a reminder, this update does not impact the privacy of personal messages for anyone. Our goal is to provide information about new options we are building that people will have, to message a business on WhatsApp, in the future," the spokesperson said.

The company further stated that it will take every opportunity to explain how it protects people's personal messages and private information.

The softening of stance on the deadline comes at a time when digital platforms like Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp have become lifelines for people looking for oxygen cylinders, hospital beds, plasma donors and ventilators as the country reels under the deadly second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

India is the biggest market for WhatsApp, and the platform—as per government data—has 53 crore users in the country.

India remains a critical market for Internet companies like Facebook with its large population base and burgeoning Internet adoption.

The country is the world's second-largest telecom market and the biggest consumer of data.

Following the backlash faced by WhatsApp earlier this year, the popularity of rivals like Telegram and Signal surged as users thronged these platforms.

WhatsApp, in the past, has said it is open to answering any questions from the government on the privacy issue and that it will continue to explain to users that their messages are end-to-end encrypted.

It had also sought to assuage user concerns through blog posts and tweets by its Global Head Will Cathcart and even full-page ads in leading dailies in India. — PTI

## 'Drop In Some Food Prices Will Push CPI Inflation Down To 4.0% In April'



Agencies

**A** high base and an unseasonal drop in some food prices will push CPI inflation down to 4.0 per cent in April, Barclays said in a research report on Friday.

According to the report, Core inflation will stay elevated, and rising commodity prices globally may pose some challenges in coming months.

The CPI inflation data for April is expected to be released by the statistics ministry on May 12.

"We expect CPI inflation to fall to 4.04 per cent y/y in April, below the January low and down from 5.5 per cent in March. The drop in inflation will be driven primarily by two factors – a high base owing to last year's pandemic-related lockdown, and an unseasonal fall in some food prices," Barclays said.

This year, despite the new restrictions, supply chains have not broken down to the same extent as 2020 and hence the effect on perishable prices has been opposite, with reduced traffic in stores causing prices to fall.

Looking at the details, the investment banker said it expects food prices to rise 0.1 per cent m/m, which is significantly below the seasonal trend typically seen in the lean season before sowing. Prices for cereals, vegetables

and dairy products remain in check and are offsetting the increase in prices of non-perishable items, such as cooking oil, pulses and prepared foods.

Still there is a limit to how much perishable prices can fall, and the unusually low prices could pose upside risks to food inflation in H2 21. Overall, we forecast food prices will rise 1.8 per cent y/y in April, the research report said.

Among other sub components, fuel costs likely declined modestly in April, but may rebound in May, as prices have started to rise following the completion of recent regional elections.

Barclays has forecast core inflation will ease to 5.4 per cent, from 5.7 per cent in March. In addition to increases in the education and healthcare components, the expectation is that rising gold prices to add to upward pressure on m/m momentum.

We believe concerns over the increase in core WPI inflation are overblown and expect the pass-through from higher commodity prices to be limited by weak underlying demand, the report said.

Research by the RBI also suggests that the rise in core WPI inflation will pass through only to core goods CPI inflation (22.0 per cent weight in CPI basket) and will amount to just 20bp for every 100bp rise in core WPI in the current environment.

## India Asks State Banks To Withdraw Cash Held Abroad Over Cairn Dispute: Report

Agencies

**E**arlier this week a guidance was sent to state-run banks to withdraw funds from their nostro accounts, one of the government officials told Reuters.

India has asked state-run banks to withdraw funds from their foreign currency accounts abroad, two government officials and a banker said, as New Delhi fears Cairn Energy may try to seize the cash after an arbitration ruling in a tax dispute.

Cairn was awarded damages of more than \$1.2 billion plus interest and costs in December in a long drawn-out tussle with the Indian government over its retrospective tax claims.

While New Delhi has filed an appeal, the London-listed firm has started identifying Indian assets overseas, including bank accounts, that could be seized in the absence of a settlement, which Cairn says it is still pursuing.

The company has regis-



tered its claim against India in courts in the United States, Britain, France, the Netherlands, Singapore and Quebec, moves that could make it easier to seize assets and enforce the arbitration award.

"Earlier this week a guidance was sent to state-run banks to withdraw funds from their nostro accounts," one of the government officials, who asked not to be named, told Reuters, adding that the finance ministry had issued the guidance.

A nostro account refers to an account a bank holds overseas at another bank in the currency of that jurisdiction. Such accounts are used for international trade and to settle other foreign exchange transactions.

The finance ministry did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

### SHORT TAKES

## Melinda Gates Gets Nearly \$2 Billion From Cascade Investment

Agencies

**M**elinda French Gates, soon-to-be Microsoft magnate Bill Gates' ex-wife, received nearly \$2 billion in shares and holdings from Cascade, an investment company created by Bill Gates.

The company transferred stock in two of Mexico's largest companies, including a Coca-Cola bottler and a broadcaster, to Melinda Gates, as well as around \$1.5 billion of shares in Canadian National Railway Co. Altogether, the transferred securities were worth over \$1.8 billion, Bloomberg reported.

The transfer comes after the two announced their divorce on Wednesday after 27 years of marriage. The couple is among the larg-



est landowners in the US.

Melinda Gates now owns shares of Coca-Cola Femsa and Grupo Televisa. Cascade Investment, Bill Gates' biggest asset, oversees a vast port-

folio comprising real estate, energy and hospitality as well as stakes in dozens of public companies.

As per the Bloomberg Billionaires Index, the founder of Microsoft

Corp, Bill Gates is worth a whopping \$144.2 billion. Melinda French Gates, a former Microsoft manager who's gained international prominence co-running the charitable organisation, also founded Pivotal Ventures, an investment and incubation company. Melinda Gates is also the beneficial owner of shares of Canadian National Railway Co and of AutoNation Inc.

"By now many of you have heard the news that my parents are separating. It's been a challenging stretch of time for our whole family. I'm still learning how to best support my own process and emotions as well as family members at this time, and am grateful for the space to do so. I won't personally comment further on anything around

the separation, but please know that your kind words and support mean the world to me. Thank you for understanding our desire for privacy while we navigate the next phases of our lives," she wrote.

The couple has three daughters who stand to inherit less than one per cent of their parents' wealth.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, so far, has given away over \$50 billion to causes like healthcare, education, gender equality and efforts to combat climate change. Following the announcement of divorce, both Bill and Melinda said they would continue to work together at the foundation, even though "we no longer believe we can grow together as a couple in this next phase of our lives".

## Govt To Distribute Over 20 Lakh Mini-Seed Kits To Boost Pulses Output In Kharif 2021



**T**he government on Thursday said it will distribute over 20 lakh mini-kits of seeds worth Rs 82.01 crore as part of a strategy to boost pulses production in the kharif season of the 2021-22 crop year (July-June).

Sowing in the kharif (summer) season begins with the onset of southwest monsoon from June, which the Met Department has forecast to be normal this year.

Tur, moong and urad are the key pulses grown during the kharif season.

In a statement, the Agriculture Ministry said a detailed plan has been chalked out in consultation with the state governments for both area expansion and productivity improvement of tur, moong and urad.

"Under the strategy, utilising all the high yielding varieties (HYVs) of seeds that are available either with the Central Seed Agencies or in the states will be distributed free of cost to increase area through inter-cropping and sole crop," the ministry said.

For the coming Kharif 2021, it is proposed to distribute 20,27,318 (almost 10 times more seed mini kits than 2020-21) amounting to Rs 82.01 crores, it said.

The total cost for these mini-kits will be borne by the central government to boost the production and productivity of tur, moong and urad.

Further, these mini-kits used for inter-cropping and urad sole crop will cover an area of 4.05 lakh hectare in the Kharif 2021 season.

In addition to this, the usual programme of inter-cropping and area expansion by the states will continue on a shar-

ing basis between the Centre and state, it said.

The mini kits will be supplied by the central agencies/state agencies to the destination at the district level approved under the strategy by June 15, the statement added.

India is still importing around 4 lakh tonnes of tur, 0.6 lakh tonnes of moong and around 3 lakh tonnes of urad for meeting its demand.

"The special programme will increase the production and productivity of the three pulses of tur, moong and urad to a great extent and will play an important role in reducing the import burden and usher India to become Aatmanirbhar (self-reliance) in the production of pulses," the ministry said.

For effective implementation of the Kharif mini kit programme, the ministry said a massive outreach with the concerned district will be held both through a series of webinars by the central government and state governments concerned to ensure that there are no hiccups.

From a meagre production of 14.76 million tonnes in the 2007-08 crop year, pulses production has now reached 24.42 million tonnes in the 2020-21 crop year, which is a phenomenal increase of 65 per cent.

This success is largely attributed to several significant interventions at the central level.

The government has consistently been focussing on bringing new areas under pulses along with ensuring that productivity is also increased in the existing areas under cultivation, the ministry noted. (PTI)

## LG Discusses Covid Preparedness With Senior Army Officials Of Northern & Western Commands

- Asks them to enhance the capacity at 100-bedded Covid care facilities to 200 beds with oxygen support
- LG assures J&K Government's support to Army in enhancing Covid-19 facilities in the UT

**JAMMU:** Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha today discussed Covid preparedness and containment measures with the GOC-in-C, Northern Command, Lieutenant General Y K Joshi and senior Army officials from Northern and Western Commands, here at Raj Bhavan. Lieutenant General S. Hari Mohan Iyer, Chief of Staff, Northern Command and Major General Neeraj Gosain, GOC 26 Div were present in the meeting.

While appreciating and lauding the ongoing efforts of the Army in providing necessary support in form of Covid care hospitals, the Lt Governor asked the senior Army officials of Northern and Western Commands to explore the possibility of enhancing the capacity at 100-bedded



Covid care facilities to 200 beds with oxygen support.

The Lt Governor further asked the officials of Northern Command to collaborate their efforts with Western Command to augment the 100 beds

capacity of Covid-19 centre at Army Public School Domana, Jammu to 200 beds.

The Lt Governor assured that J&K government will provide every possible assistance and resources to the Army for

enhancing the already existing Covid care facilities in the UT including medical infrastructure, equipment, and oxygen supply.

The senior Army officials apprised the Lt Governor about the efforts put up by the Army

in the UT of Jammu and Kashmir to combat the pandemic including Western Command's 100-bedded Covid care centre at Army Public School Domana in Jammu; 250-bedded Covid hospital in Kashmir's Rangreth area jointly operationalized by Chinar Corps and Civil Administration.

It was informed that treatment of Covid positive cases is also being done at Military hospitals after the referral of Civil Administration.

Sh. BVR Subrahmanyam, Chief Secretary; Sh. Arun Kumar Mehta, Financial Commissioner, Finance Department; Sh. Atal Dulloo, Financial Commissioner, Health and Medical Education; Sh. Nitishwar Kumar, Principal Secretary to the Lt Governor also attended the meeting.

## Retired military doctors to provide online consultation to civilian patients

Press Trust of India

New Delhi: The government has roped in retired military doctors to provide online consultation to civilian patients across the country under a telemedicine platform of the Union health ministry.

The initiative has been taken by the defence ministry as part of overall measures to help the civilian authorities in dealing with the rising cases of COVID-19.

"Ex-defence doctors will now provide online consultation on e-Sanjeevani OPD to all citizens of the country. Veterans have come forward to answer the call of the nation and offered their services to help the people needing medical care," the defence ministry said in a statement.

It said the service can be availed by any civilian on the website <https://esanjeevaniopd.in/>. The e-Sanjeevani OPD is a flagship telemedicine platform

of the government developed by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC).

"It provides free consultations to Indian citizens and is functioning extremely well," the defence ministry said.

It said due to the surge in COVID-19 cases, the demand for doctors has gone up while their availability has gone down due to deployment in COVID facilities.

"This is where the defence veterans are stepping in to help," it added. The ministry said the response from the retired defence doctors has been good and more retired professionals are expected to join soon.

"Subsequently, a separate nationwide ex-defence doctors' OPD is envisaged. Their vast experience and expertise will help the larger clientele to obtain consultation from their homes and tide over the current situation," it said.

## Third wave of coronavirus may not happen if strong measures are taken: PSA VijayRaghavan

Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** There may not be a third wave of coronavirus in the country if strong measures are taken and effectively implemented at the state, district and city-level, the country's top scientific officer said on Friday, two days after he warned that this wave was inevitable.

K VijayRaghavan, Principal Scientific Adviser, said the "insidious asymptomatic transmission" can be stopped if the guidance about precautions, surveillance, containment, treatment and testing is followed.

"If we take strong measures, the third wave may not happen in all places or indeed anywhere at all. It depends on much how effectively guidance is implemented at the local level in the states, districts and cities everywhere."

"The guidance about precautions, about surveillance, about containment, about treatment and about tests. This insidious asymptomatic transmission can be stopped if we follow the guidelines. This sounds difficult, it is difficult and we can and must do it," he said in a press briefing.

On May 5, VijayRaghavan said

as the virus mutates further, a third wave of COVID infection is inevitable and it is necessary to be prepared for new waves.

He said it was not expected that the second wave would hit the country with such ferocity.

"Phase three is inevitable given the higher levels of circulating virus, but it is not clear on what time-scale this phase three will occur," he had said.

Responding to a question on when the second wave which has already infected lakhs and killed thousands, will ebb, VijayRaghavan said it has already started declining in some places.

The number of cases and the positivity will decline and there will be a lag in hospitalisation and mortality, he added.

"There are other places of great concern all over the country. We must watch out and make sure that we take all steps to reduce and go up to the levels which are difficult to manage," he cautioned.

In the briefing, Additional Secretary in the health ministry Arti Ahuja said the COVID-19 case positivity is more than 15 per cent in more than 24 states and union territories including Goa, West Bengal, Karnataka, Delhi, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and



Chhattisgarh, while it is between 5 to 15 per cent in nine states.

The case positivity is less than five per cent in three states.

In Goa, case positivity is 48.5 per cent, Haryana (36.1), West Bengal (33.1), Karnataka, Delhi and Rajasthan (29.9 per cent), Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh (27.9 per cent) and Maharashtra 23.5 per cent.

Twelve states -- Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, Uttar

Pradesh, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Haryana and Bihar -- have over one lakh active COVID-19 cases each at present, while the count is between 50,000 and one lakh in seven.

Ahuja said Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand are among states and union territories showing

continued plateau or decrease in daily new COVID-19 cases.

However, Karnataka, Kerala, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Bihar, Punjab, Assam and Odisha are among those showing an upward trend in daily new cases of the infection remains a cause of concern, she added.

Bengaluru Urban and Mysuru; Chennai; Kozhikode, Kottayam, Alappuzha Emakulam,

Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala; Gurgaon; Patna; North 24 Parganas and Kolkata; Chittoor, Guntur and Kurnool in Andhra Pradesh are some of the districts showing continued increase in cases since last two weeks, Ahuja said.

"There have been peaks and falls in different places in India and all over the world at different times and it is useful to understand how and why the rises of infections take place, why the strength varies and how they fall and what can happen subsequently," VijayRaghavan said.

Infections rise when the virus has the opportunity to infect humans. When the virus runs out of opportunities, the infection falls, he explained.

If the virus runs out of opportunities, the people it can potentially infect is lower drastically. This happens because people who have been infected earlier are unlikely to be re-infected for a while, he said.

People who are vaccinated, those who wear masks, maintain distance and isolate themselves from those who are infectious are also protected. Without the opportunities of transmission and containment steps, the peaks will fall.

"When the virus runs out of

opportunities, it is (however) not eliminated. Therefore, if new opportunities arise, so will the cases. New opportunities may arise because virus may find uninfected people who were previously careful, and are now lax. New opportunities for infection may arise if people become complacent or unprotected, assuming the surge is over.

"The frequency and sizes of such ups and downs must be reduced. This is in our hands," VijayRaghavan said.

So keep effective distance and ensure adequate ventilation, do not crowd indoors or outdoors, wear masks appropriate to your occasion he stressed.

As the vaccination rolls out and the coverage is maximal, each and every measure that is taken can prevent or reduce rises and fall in current locations.

The health ministry has urged states and union territories to prioritise beneficiaries awaiting their second dose of COVID-19 vaccine and utilise supplies of vaccines through 'Government of India channel' in 70:30 ratio for second dose and first dose respectively.

The cumulative number of COVID-19 vaccine doses administered in the country has reached 16.50 crore, it added.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

### Grenade Attack

searches to nab the attackers.

A local news agency KNT reported that the government forces fired shots in air after they were pelted with stones by unidentified youth.

### No Jumat-ul-Vida

Jamia Masjid to offer congregational prayers on the last Friday of Ramazan.

Similarly, large congregations would also be held at other shrines and mosques across the length and breadth of the Valley.

Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Wakf Board had already announced suspension of celebrations and congregational prayers on Jumatul Vida at Masjids and Shrinages affiliated to it, in view of threat of the coronavirus.

Aniuan Auqaf Jamia Masjid on May 6 also announced that Jumat-ul-Vida and Shab-e-Qadr programmes at the grand Masjid stand cancelled due to exponential rise in COVID-19 cases and lockdown which has been imposed in the wake of second wave of coronavirus.

The Anjuman in a statement had stressed upon the people to spend these holy occasions especially the last 10 days of Ramazan at their homes by holding special prayers, zikr-o-azkaar and munaajaat besides praying to Almighty Allah to grant us complete refuge from the deadly virus.

"The Anjuman stressed upon the people to religiously follow the COVID-19 SOPs and guidelines saying the priority must be to save lives and prevent the virus from spreading. The best way to do that right now is to stay indoors. It also reiterated its appeal to people to get administered with Covid vaccine."

### J&K Sees Record

Srinagar, a 70-year-old man from Pulwama, an 80-year-old woman from Tral, A 68-year-old man from Mallabagh Srinagar, A 65-year-old from Illahibagh Srinagar, 80-year-old man from Safapora Ganderbal, a 60-year-old man from Illahi-Bagh, and a septuagenarian man from Sumbal Bandipora.

About the new cases of infection, officials said, 1,868 were reported from the Jammu division and 3,575 from the Kashmir division thus taking the total number of infected people in the union territory to 206954.

Giving district wise details, the officials said that Srinagar reported 1071, Baramulla 496, Budgam 384, Pulwama 118, Kupwara 198, Anantnag 568, Bandipora 93, Ganderbal 169, Kulgam 344, Shopian 134, Jammu 639, Udhampur 292, Rajouri 300, Doda 37, Kathua 226, Samba 121, Kishtwar 39, Poonch

95Ramban 67 and Reasi 52 fresh cases of coronavirus.

Moreover, officials said 2752 more COVID-19 patients have recovered—954 from Jammu Division and 1798 from Kashmir. There are at present 44307 active positive cases—15571 in Kashmir and 28736 in Jammu, they added. (With GNS inputs)

### Normal Life

security forces have sealed several roads by putting barricades at many places in the city here as well as in other district headquarters of the valley to prevent the movement of people. They said while the restrictions were being implemented strictly, essential and emergency services were allowed.

On April 29, the Jammu and Kashmir administration imposed a curfew in 11 districts in a bid to tackle the surge in COVID-19 cases, which was subsequently extended to all the 20 districts the next day.

The curfew, which was supposed to end at 7 am on May 3, was extended in the twin capitals of Jammu and Srinagar besides Budgam and Baramulla till 7 am Thursday.

However, the authorities in the Kashmir valley have now ordered extension in the restrictions till Monday morning in all districts.

### LG Releases Compendium

official spokesman said.

The lieutenant governor asked JKIDFC to take comprehensive measures for achieving the target of completing 1,000 more projects during the current financial year.

He also laid special emphasis on regular monitoring of projects for ensuring their speedy execution, besides maintaining transparency in the execution of works by bringing out the information regarding development works undertaken by the Corporation in public domain.

The publication of compendiums giving details about the projects is part of the efforts to enhance transparency and accountability in the working of the Corporation. It will also be made available in the e-book format, the spokesman said.

JKIDFC has brought about a new culture of innovations such as geo-tagging, online billing and processing of payments, and systems for oversight by senior functionaries, for which a dashboard has been developed relating to key aspects of status of project implementation. The dashboard is available in public domain for citizens' oversight as well, he said.

Earlier, the Corporation had published compendiums of 500 and 800 projects.

During 2019-20, 500 projects were completed under JKIDFC, whereas 600 more projects have been completed during 2020-21.

### Fully Prepared

the newly commissioned 500 LPM oxygen plant and reviewed its functioning briefly at the dedicated Covid Hospital (Trauma Hospital) Bijbehara. Pole also directed the health officials to utilise the oxygen supply rationally while ensuring the health of the patients is not compromised.

On this occasion, the Div Com inaugurated the Pukaar Helpline at DC office Anantnag which will function round the clock and serve as a single point contact for the people of the district to register their grievances with the administration.

"He also reviewed the functioning of the district Covid control room which has been working for mitigating the problems of covid and non covid persons in the district," the official spokesperson said.

The Div Com, he said, later visited GMC Anantnag and took stock of functioning of Covid dedicated ward besides the recently commissioned 1000 LPM and old 350 LPM oxygen plants.

"The principal GMC informed the Div Com the 1000 LPM plant is catering to the high flow oxygen needs of patients and another similar capacity (1000 LPM) plant will be commissioned in next two days," he said.

As per the official spokesperson, Pole directed the Principal GMC for making proper teams which will oversee the working of oxygen plants besides conducting fire and emergency audit of the hospital and removing the critical points. He also called for strict "no entry" for unauthorized persons in oxygen plants and other important locations.

"Stressing on proper functioning of triage centre at GMC, the Div Com asked the health authorities to monitor its working on daily basis and allocate the facilities to Covid patients as per their need and condition," he said. The official spokesperson further said that while addressing the team of doctors, the Div Com emphasized for deferment of non-emergency surgeries so that the human and material resources are utilised for effective Covid mitigation.

"He also passed directions for minimizing entry of attendants to covid wards, separate entry and exit points for Covid and non-covid patients to reduce chances of virus exposure besides deputing volunteers (Ex-servicemen, SDRF etc) who would help ensure the same," he added.

He further said that the Div Com also visited

the CMOs office and took stock of the functioning of Covid Control Room there.

"He was informed by CMO Anantnag that the control room and similar control rooms at Block level are working round the clock to monitor the home isolation of positive patients, requirements of Covid persons, testing process and referrals across the district," he added.

As per the official spokesperson, Pole directed for further augmentation of the control room with proper dovetailing of resources besides aggressive testing of the people in containment zones.

Deputy Commissioner Anantnag, Dr. Piyush Singla, ADC, Ghulam Hassan Sheikh, ADDC, Bashir Ahmad, SDM Bijbehara, CAO, CMO, Dy CMO, MS Trauma Hospital Bijbehara and other concerned officers were present during his visit.

### LG Asks Doctors

the Lt Governor enquired about the number of patients being treated at the hospitals, patients discharged after recovery and availability of oxygen-supported beds. The Lt Governor, while inspecting the functionality of oxygen generation plants in the hospitals, directed for effective rationalization of available resources to cater to the requirements of the patients.

He directed the hospitals to ensure that best possible care is given to the patients through regular rounds of Heads of Departments (HoDs) and senior doctors in the wards. He also emphasized on strict compliance of the hospital referral policy and triage in the hospitals.

"Doctors must have personal interaction with the patients and their attendants to ensure better treatment," the LG said.

He directed the health department officers concerned to increase COVID-dedicated beds with oxygen support in the shortest possible time for providing best patient care in the COVID care hospitals.

At Chest Disease & TB hospital Jammu, the Lt Governor enquired from incharge of triage facility, Dr Rajeshwar Sharma, about the number of patients being treated, number of patients discharged after recovery, and health infrastructure available in the hospital to treat all COVID-19 patients.

In order to strengthen the health workforce, the Lt Governor directed the authorities of COVID care hospitals to increase the paramedical staff, besides rationalizing the medical staff from peripheral hospitals of the district.

Directions were also passed for strict compliance of duty rosters at all hospitals.

It was informed that the trial run of 2400 LPM (litres per minute) capacity oxygen generation plant in GMC Hospital here is going on and the same would be made fully functional by May 8, enabling the addition of about 125 coronavirus-dedicated beds at the facility in Jammu.

### Mehbooba Urges

prisoners dying due to COVID-19 and subsequent lack of medical attention have been trickling in.

At a time when the system is struggling to cope with this horrendous situation, lives of prisoners may be the least priority, she said.

"As far as Kashmir is concerned, it is no secret that hundreds, or may be thousands of detainees and political prisoners arrested since August 2019 continue to languish in jails both in and outside J-K.

"Most of them are detained under preventive laws and don't face any prosecution. Many continue to be held even after courts granted them bail. Most recent reminder of the lurking threat to their lives is Mohammad Ashraf Sehrai's death who lost his life because he contracted COVID in jail and was deprived of medical care," she added.

The PDP president hoped that the prime minister will give due consideration to the matter and order the release of detainees.

### Misfire Injures

Baramulla where his condition is stated to be normal.

"The fire hit on his left hip after rebound from the wall," the official added. (GNS)

### Lightning Kills

lightning struck the area around 3:00 afternoon on Friday, officials said. In the incident, the minor girl was killed while the middle-aged woman sustained injuries.

The injured woman was removed to the hospital for treatment.

### Bashir Ahmad

J&K Lakes and Waterways Development Authority vice Tufail Matoo, who has been asked to report to the General Administration Department, for further posting.

The order further states that Syed Sehrish Asgar (IAS), Additional Secretary to the Government, Information Department, was also transferred and posted here as Mission Director vice Rubina Kounser (KAS), who has been asked to report to the General Administration Department, for further posting.

## Virat Kohli, Wife Anushka Donate Rs 2 Crore For COVID-19 Relief Work



Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** India captain Virat Kohli and his actor wife Anushka Sharma have donated Rs 2 crore to a fund-raising project, which will raise a total of Rs 7 crore to support the country's fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

The two are raising money through crowd-funding platform Ketto.

"...Virat Kohli and Bollywood superstar Anushka Sharma are aiming to raise Rs. 7 crore for COVID relief in India," a press release from the celebrity couple stated.

"They are kickstarting a fund-raising campaign #InThisTogether on the crowd-funding platform Ketto and are putting Rs. 2 crore for this initiative."

The campaign will run for seven days on Ketto and the proceeds will be directed to ACT Grants, the implementation partner which will work towards providing oxygen, medical manpower, vaccination awareness and tele-medicine facilities all through the pandemic and the amount.

"We are going through an unprecedented time in the history of our country and our nation needs all of us to unite and save as many people as possible. Anushka and I have been shocked to see the human suffering since last year," Kohli said.

Kohli said that he and his wife had tried to help as many people as possible in their fight against the virus.

"We have been working towards helping as many people as possible all through the pandemic and now, India wants our support more than ever," he said in a statement that was also shared on his social media handle.

"We are starting this fund-raiser with the confidence that we will be able to raise substantial funds to aid those in dire need. We are confident that people will come forward to support fellow countrymen in crisis. We are in this together and we shall overcome this."

Anushka said it has been painful to watch the suffering of people as the country's health-care system struggled to cope with the case load.

"Virat and I have been hugely pained looking at the inexplicable suffering that people are going through and we hope that this fund will aid in our fight against the virus that we are all helplessly witnessing," she said.

Gayatri Yadav, spokesperson ACT Grants said, "Having strong voices like Anushka and Virat help drive fundraising efforts will go a long way towards helping us realise this goal. On behalf of India's start-up ecosystem, ACT Grants is truly grateful to have them join this mission."

## 'It Was Chaos, Relieved To Be Back Home,' Says Chris Morris



Press Trust of India

**JOHANNESBURG:** South Africa and Rajasthan Royals all-rounder Chris Morris is "relieved" to be safely back home after witnessing "chaos" unfold once COVID-19 cases in the IPL bio-bubble came to light.

Morris, along with his 10 other South African players have reached home, after the IPL was suspended following six cases of COVID-19 -- four players and two coaches from three different teams.

"Look, obviously I'm relieved," Morris, who is currently undergoing a 10-day mandatory quarantine at home, told iol.co.za.

Morris said they came to know about the COVID cases in Kolkata Knight Riders -- Varun Chakravarty and Sandeep Warrier -- on Sunday night.

"The moment we heard that, when players are testing positive, inside the bubble, then everyone starts asking questions. The alarm bells definitely started going off for all of us," he said.

"By Monday when they postponed that game (between Kolkata and Royal Challengers Bangalore), we knew the tournament was under pressure to continue."

The T20 league was suspended after Sunrisers Hyderabad's wicketkeeper-batsman Wriddhiman Saha and Delhi Capitals' Amit Mishra tested positive on Tuesday. Later, Chennai Super Kings' bowling coach I Balaji and batting coach Michael Hussey also contracted the virus.

"I was chatting to our team doctor, whose room was across the hallway from my mine in the hotel, and Kumar (Sangakkarra, the Royals' head coach) came around the

corner, and drew his finger across his throat, and then we knew it was over," said Morris.

"And then it was chaos! The England guys especially were panicking because they needed to isolate in hotels in England first, and apparently there weren't any rooms."

Gerald Coetzee, who was named the replacement for Australian Andrew Tye, had arrived in India only last week and Morris said he tried to comfort the young pacer as he was panicking a bit.

"I know poor Gerald was panicking a bit. I mean he's only 20 and all this is going on," said Morris, who was the costliest IPL buy ever with a whopping Rs 16.25 crore contract.

"I tried to keep him under my wing a bit and made sure he was ready when the 12.30am pick up came at the hotel. It was eerie, it was just a handful of us in that whole hotel at the time."

There was criticism of the league happening at a time when a devastating health crisis was unfolding outside the bubble with more than 3000 people dying every day in India.

"For me, this was always a two-fold thing; on the one hand we're playing a tournament, all happy and smiling in a bubble, while outside so many people are suffering," Morris said.

"On the flip side of it, there was the fact that by playing, we were ensuring people actually stayed at home, watched us and at least had something to smile about or something else to think about -- even if it was being unhappy with how we played in a game -- for three hours each night."

## Jadeja Returns As India Announce Squad For WTC Final, England Series

Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** The fit-again duo of all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja and batsman Hanuma Vihari returned to a 20-strong Indian squad announced on Friday for next month's World Test Championship final against New Zealand and a five-match series against England.

The selectors also picked four standby players--Abhimanyu Easwaran, Prasidh Krishna, Avesh Khan, and Arzan Nagwaswalla, the BCCI stated in a press release.

K L Rahul, who underwent a surgery after being diagnosed with appendicitis, and Wriddhiman Saha, infected with COVID-19 during the recently-suspended IPL, have been included subject to their fitness.

Both Jadeja and Vihari had endured injuries during the away series against Australia earlier this year.

Out-of-form spinner Kuldeep Yadav and pacer Navdeep Saini have been left out of the squad, which is expected to depart for England for the twin assignments in the third week of this month.

The WTC final against the Black Caps will be held from June 18 in



Southampton followed by the Tests against England from August 4.

The Test series against England will start in Nottingham, followed by matches at the Lord's (August 12 to 16), Leeds (August 25 to 29), The Oval (September 2 to 6) and Manchester (September 10 to 14).

India Squad:

Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill, Mayank Agarwal, Cheteshwar Pujara, Virat Kohli (Captain), Ajinkya Rahane (vice-captain), Hanuma Vihari,

Rishabh Pant (wicket-keeper), Ravichandran Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Jasprit Bumrah, Ishant Sharma, Mohammed Shami, Mohammed Siraj, Shardul Thakur, Umesh Yadav, KL Rahul (subject to fitness clearance), Wriddhiman Saha (wicket-keeper; subject to fitness clearance).

Standby players:

Abhimanyu Easwaran, Prasidh Krishna, Avesh Khan, Arzan Nagwaswalla.

## If T20 World Cup Is Unsafe In India, Better Not Play Over There: Pat Cummins

Press Trust of India

**MALE:** Australian pace spearhead Pat Cummins believes if hosting the ICC T20 World Cup amidst raging COVID-19 pandemic is a "drain on Indian resources" or is "unsafe", it would be prudent to shift it to the United Arab Emirates.

The postponement of Indian Premier League after multiple cases of COVID-19 inside the bio-bubble has led to a big question-mark on whether the marquee ICC event should be held in India where a third wave is expected around that time.

"If it's going to be a drain on resources or it's not going to be safe, then I don't think it's right to play it over here. That's the first question which needs to be answered," Cummins was quoted as saying by the 'Age' newspaper.

Cummins said cricket authorities should check with Indian government and do what's best.

"It probably too early to say. It's six months away. The priority should be for cricket authorities to work with the Indian government to see what's best for the Indian people," Cummins said.

Cummins feels hindsight always provides better perspective like many who feel that IPL could have been held in UAE this time also.

"The IPL in the UAE last year was brilliant, it was really well run, but millions of people were saying it should have been played in India, so what do you do? You can see both sides. They set up this tournament with all the best advice."

Cummins, who has himself donated USD 50,000 to India's COVID-19 fight, has a lot of empathy for what the country is currently facing.

"Around the hotel there is less staff



and when you hop in the bus to go to training there is normally a few hundred people waiting. There's no one out there now and no crowds at games."

He spoke about how half of the KKR's Indian squad has had COVID-19 at some point last year.

"Close to half our [KKR] squad has had it at some point over the last year," Cummins said.

"Their families are all currently in lockdown in different cities across India. A lot of the family structures are different to Australia, where you've got three generations all living in the one place."

"They [Indian teammates] always try to stay upbeat and positive, but it's really tough out there. We're always checking in with them to see how they're going."

Being in a bubble keeps people detached but when they see the sufferings, they are bound to feel helpless, said world's premier Test bowler.

"I've felt quite helpless and quite

detached from it all being kept in comfortable hotels. We were playing games and training like every other year. It just felt that I should be doing more for the people around us."

In fact, when Cummins was coming to India for the IPL, he had divergent opinions thrown at him.

"The first thing I wanted to do was make sure playing the IPL was the right call. Speaking to people back home, some had the view that it didn't seem right cricket was going on over here in amongst all the COVID cases," he said.

"But the response I was getting from people in India was the opposite. They all said that with so many people in lockdown they really appreciate the fact that for three or four hours each night they can watch the IPL."

"It gives people a routine, it helps to keep them in homes. Everyone thought it was a positive the IPL was still going on."

## Indian Rowing Team Of Arjun Lal And Arvind Singh Qualifies For Olympics



Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** Indian rowers Arjun Lal and Arvind Singh qualified for the Olympics in men's lightweight double sculls event after finishing second in the final race of the Asia/Oceania Continental Qualifying Regatta in Tokyo on Friday. Another Indian, Jakar Khan finished fourth in the men's singles sculls final which offers five Olympic quotas but he missed out as a country gets only one qualifying spot from this regatta.

The top three qualify for Olympics in men's lightweight double sculls event.

"A country can qualify in only one boat from this regatta and since Arjun Lal and Arvind Singh had finished second in men's lightweight double sculls, they will qualify," Rowing Federation of India presi-

dent Rajlaxmi Singh Deo told PTI.

"Jakar Khan finished fourth in men's singles sculls and unfortunately, he will not qualify for Olympics. Arjun Lal and Arvind Singh were better placed as they were second," she added. Arjun Lal and Arvind will be the only Indian rowers in Tokyo Games which open on July 23 as the country will not participate in other Olympic qualifiers due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"There is another Olympic qualifier in Italy but we are not sending anybody due to the COVID-19 situation. So, this will be our only participation in the Olympics," Deo said referring to the deadly second wave in the country which has led to several countries imposing bans on flights from India.

## PCB Completes 1st Phase Of COVID-19 Vaccination For Players And Staff



Press Trust of India

**LAHORE:** Pakistan's national team players and support staff have got their first jabs of vaccination against COVID-19, country's Cricket Board said on Friday.

The inoculation drive was conducted in collaboration with Pakistan government's National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC), the PCB said.

In the first phase, 57 men players, 13 officials of the men's team and 13 NHPC men and women coaches were vaccinated.

A number of franchise players and support staff besides PCB match officials involved in the February-March phase of the Pakistan Super League (three match referees, three umpires) were also vaccinated.

The vaccination drive started on March 4 in Karachi and carried on for more than two months, before its conclusion on May 6 when eight players part of Pakistan's squad for the ongoing Test series against Zimbabwe were given second doses in Harare.

"... we requested the NCOC for

vaccines during the HBL Pakistan Super League 6. The vaccination drive started in Karachi and our first priority was to get the players and support staff involved in the tournament vaccinated," PCB Chief Operating Officer Salman Naseer said in a statement.

"After the initial round of vaccination in Karachi, we focused on getting the remaining members of the men's squad, who were not involved in the PSL 6, vaccinated before the tours of South Africa and Zimbabwe."

In the next phase, remaining domestic men cricketers, national women cricketers, age-group cricketers and support staff of the domestic, national women and age-group teams will be vaccinated.

"The PCB is fully behind the government's vaccination drive and once again urges people across Pakistan to get vaccinated in order to ensure the health and safety of their own selves and their families," Naseer said.

"Our players both men and women and PCB management will continue to provide full support and backing to the NCOC vaccine awareness initiatives as they have

## Sports Ministry To Spend Rs 73.14 Lakh On Sailors' European Training Stint



Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** Tokyo Olympic-bound sailors Nethra Kumanan (laser radial), Vishnu Saravanan (laser standard) as well as KC Ganapathy and Varun Thakkar (skiff 49er) will train in Europe ahead of the Tokyo Olympics after the Sports Ministry's Mission Olympic Cell (MOC) on Friday approved their respective proposals.

The total cost of international training for the four athletes is Rs 73.14 lakhs.

Saravanan, included in the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) after securing his Tokyo berth at the Mullanah Open Sailing Championships in Oman, will train with his coach in Malta for 28 days.

In addition, the MOC has also cleared his proposal to be in Vilamoura, Portugal, for 14 days to train and compete in the Medemblik Regatta. A total budget of Rs 26.46 lakh has been approved for

this purpose, a Sports Authority of India statement read.

Kumanan, also inducted in TOPS after Mullanah Open, will train in Gran Canaria, Spain for 28 days. She will compete in the Medemblik Regatta and then train and compete in Hungary. The MOC has approved a budget of Rs 20.54 lakh for her besides air fares.

Similarly, Ganapathy and Thakkar, who too were included in TOPS after the Mullanah Open, will train in Cascais, Portugal for 28 days and also participate in the Medemblik Regatta. The MOC has approved a budget of Rs 26.14 lakh for the duo.

"As with the coaches of the Laser sailors, the coach fee for the 49ers and the cost of chartering boats are part of the budgets," the SAI statement said.

The four sailors created history last month when they became the first from the sport to qualify for the Olympics from the country.

## Ole's Man United Set Up EL Final Clash Against Villarreal

Agencies

**ROME:** Manchester United has finally reached a major final under Ole Gunnar Solskjaer.

Not that he was in the mood for celebrating on Thursday night.

An inspired goalkeeping performance by David de Gea ensured United was only beaten 3-2 by Roma in a wild second leg of the Europa League semifinals, allowing the English team to complete an 8-5 victory on aggregate.

It ended a run of four losses in the semifinals of major tournaments in the last 18 months for Solskjaer, who is under pressure to win United's first trophy since 2017. That came in the Europa League, when Jose Mourinho was manager.

Yet Solskjaer was critical of his team for giving Roma so many chances at the Stadio Olimpico to turn around a semifinal that looked over after United scored five second-half goals to win the first leg 6-2 last week.

"We played one very good half at Old Trafford that got us through," he said. "The second half today was disappointing. Very, very poor."

Villarreal will be United's opponent in the May 26 final in the Polish city of Gdansk after beating Arsenal



2-1 on aggregate in the other semifinal. The second leg finished 0-0 on Thursday night.

Roma created enough clear-cut opportunities to pull off what would have been another remarkable comeback, three years ago after it recovered from 4-1 down against Barcelona in the Champions League quarterfinals, winning the second leg 3-0 at the Olimpico to advance.

Goals by Edin Dzeko and Bryan Cristante, in the 57th and 60th minute, briefly put Roma 2-1 ahead and that was the least the Italian team deserved after regularly breaching United's defense. The visitors were thankful for a slew of saves by De Gea in both halves, ensuring Nicola

Zalewski's deflected 83rd-minute winner on the 19-year-old's debut proved only a consolation for Roma.

"It was always going to be one of those games that was going to be open," Solskjaer said. "It could easily have been 6-6. A strange game of football."

"Lukily we have one of the best goalkeepers in the world in nets," he added about De Gea, who has fallen behind Dean Henderson in United's pecking order in recent weeks.

Roma couldn't keep United at bay at the other end as Edinson Cavani showed his prowess as a finisher, opening the scoring in the 39th minute by taking a touch from Fred's pass and smashing in a shot from just outside the area.

The 34-year-old Uruguayan's second goal, a header from Bruno Fernandes' cross in the 68th, made it 2-2 and came as a relief for United because Roma was threatening to score at will.

"We ended the match thinking we could have made it to the final," Roma coach Paulo Fonseca said.

Winning the Europa League was Roma's only potential route back into the Champions League for next season, when it will be coached by Mourinho after the team chose this week to part ways with Fonseca.

## India Blocks China-Made Wireless Device Imports: Report



Agenceis

India has held up approvals for import of wifi modules from China for months, driving companies such as United States-based computer makers Dell and HP and China's Xiaomi, Oppo, Vivo and Lenovo to delay product launches in a key growth market, two industry sources have told the Reuters news agency.

Imports from China of finished electronic devices – like bluetooth speakers, wireless earphones, smartphones, smartwatches and laptops – containing wifi modules are being delayed, the sources said.

India's Communications Ministry's Wireless Planning and Coordination (WPC) Wing has withheld approval since at least November, according to the sources, who were familiar with lobbying efforts by firms seeking clearance.

More than 80 such applications by US, Chinese and Korean firms have been pending with the WPC since then, one of the sources said. Even applications from some Indian firms, which bring in some finished products from China, are awaiting WPC approval, the sources added.

Dell, HP, Xiaomi, Oppo, Vivo and Lenovo did not respond to requests for comment.

India's communications ministry did not respond to a request for comment either. Both sources said the government had still to respond to representations made by industry lobby groups and individual companies.

India's hard stance against Chinese imports comes amid Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for greater economic self-reliance.

His nationalist policies have helped boost the growth of smartphone assembly in the South Asian nation, and the sources believe the government's intention is to persuade companies to locate more of their production of electronic devices in India.

"The government's idea is to push companies to manufacture these products in India," one of the sources said.

## Haryana Home Minister Wants All Oxygen Plants Under Military Control



Agenceis

CHANDIGARH: Amid a rise in oxygen demand owing to spiraling COVID-19 cases, Haryana's Home and Health Minister Anil Vij on Friday said control and management of all oxygen generation plants should be handed over to military or paramilitary forces for their safety and smooth functioning.

Later, according to a statement, Mr Vij said if an oxygen plant stops functioning due to any reason it can cost lives.

"Control and management of all Oxygen Generation Plants should be handed over to military or paramilitary forces for safety and smooth functioning of the plants," Mr Vij said in a tweet.

On Wednesday, Mr Vij had said 60 oxygen plants will be set up in the state with the support of the central government. According to a government release, the plants will be installed at various government hospitals with bed ca-

"But tech companies are caught in a difficult situation – making in India would mean big-ticket investments and a long wait for returns, on the other hand the government-imposed hurdle on imports means a potential loss of revenues."

India had previously allowed companies to self-declare wireless equipment, a move that made imports easier, but new rules in March 2019 mandated firms to seek government approval.

While India's market and export potential have turned it into the world's second-biggest mobile equipment maker, technology analysts and industry insiders say it does not yet have the size or scale for companies to invest heavily in making IT products and smart wearable devices.

Wary of Chinese tech

The long delay in WPC approvals also underscores India's strategy to cut China's influence in its technology economy, especially after a border clash with Beijing last year, though tensions have eased since.

Modi's government this week omitted Chinese electronics maker Huawei from a list of participants in its 5G mobile telecommunications trials, though European and South Korean rivals were permitted.

And once 5G deployment begins in India, New Delhi will likely block mobile carriers from using Huawei's telecommunications gear, Reuters has previously reported.

US firms Apple, Cisco and Dell were last year caught up in India's border tensions with China, as Indian ports held up imports of their products from China.

In another example, reported by Reuters late last year, India's tight control of quality clearances for electronic goods from China slowed the import of an Apple iPhone model.

Now that firms have obtained safety clearances from India's quality control agency, getting WPC approval has become the main obstacle to importing electronic devices from China.

## UK Labels Covid "Variant Of Concern" Linked To Travel From India

Agenceis

LONDON: British health officials on Friday labelled a coronavirus variant first found in India a "variant of concern" due to evidence it spreads more easily, with Prime Minister Boris Johnson saying the situation needed careful handling.

Public Health England designated variant B.1.617.2, one of three variants identified in India that has spread to Britain, a variant of concern. Surge testing was being carried out in areas where evidence indicates community spread.

Cases of the B.1.617.2 variant increased to 520 from 202 over the last week, PHE said, mainly in London and the northwest town of Bolton, with almost half the cases related to contact with a traveller.

"I think we've got to be very careful about that," Johnson told reporters, in reference to the variant.

"We're doing a huge amount, obviously, to make sure that when we do find outbreaks of the Indian variant that we do surge testing, that we do door-to-door testing."

PHE cited evidence that it spreads more quickly than the original version of the virus and could spread as quickly as the so-called "Kent" variant which fuelled England's second wave of infections.

The public health body said other characteristics of the B.1.617.2 variant were still being investigated.



"There is currently insufficient evidence to indicate that any of the variants recently detected in India cause more severe disease or render the vaccines currently deployed any less effective," PHE said in a statement.

The original India variant, B.1.617, was first detected in October, but PHE has categorised three different subtypes, all with slightly different mutations.

Other variants of concern include variants first identified in Kent, southeast England, as well as South Africa and Brazil.

Two weeks ago, India, which is experiencing a deadly surge in cases, was added to Britain's travel

"red list", meaning travellers have to quarantine in special hotels.

But the move, which came in on April 23, was announced on April 19, giving travellers notice if they wanted to change plans and beat the hotel quarantine.

Britain has recorded 4,428,553 coronavirus cases and 127,583 deaths since the pandemic hit its shores, making it one of the worst hit countries in the world. About 66% of the adult population has now been vaccinated and lockdown restrictions are being eased.

India is reporting record daily death counts. In total it has recorded 21.49 million cases and 234,083 deaths.

## 4-digit Security Code in CoWIN From May 8: Here's How it works

Agenceis

The CoWIN system is introducing a new feature of four-digit security code from May 8 to minimise data entry errors about vaccination status that would subsequently reduce inconvenience caused to citizens, the health ministry said.

It has been noticed in some instances that citizens who had booked their appointment for COVID-19 vaccination through the CoWIN portal but did not actually go for vaccination on the scheduled date have received SMS notification that a vaccine dose has been administered to them, it said.

Upon examination, it has been found to occur largely on account of the vaccinator wrongly marking the citizen as vaccinated, an instance of data entry error by the vaccinator, it stated.

"In order to minimize such errors and the subsequent inconvenience caused to the citizens, the CoWIN system is introducing a new feature of four-digit security code in the CoWIN application from May 8.

"Now, after verification, if the beneficiary is found eligible, before administering the vaccine dose, the verifier/vaccinator will ask the beneficiary about his four-digit code and then enter the same in the CoWIN system to correctly record the vaccination status," the ministry said in its statement.

This new feature will be applicable only for citizens who have done an online booking for a vac-



ination slot.

The four-digit security code will be printed in the appointment acknowledgement slip and will not be known to the vaccinator. The code will also be present in the confirmation SMS sent to beneficiary after successful booking of an appointment.

The appointment acknowledgement slip can also be saved and shown from the mobile.

This will ensure that for those citizens who have booked an online appointment, the data entries regarding vaccination status of a citizen are recorded correctly, the ministry said in a statement.

This will also reduce the opportunities of impersonation and wrongful use of flexibilities provided in CoWIN for facilitating vaccination coverage.

The ministry advised the citi-

## Rahul Gandhi Writes To PM Modi Over COVID-19 Surge

Says Govt's Failures Have Made Another National Lockdown Inevitable

Agenceis

New Delhi: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday said the government's alleged failures have made another devastating national lockdown almost inevitable, and called for providing financial and food support to the most vulnerable.

In a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he suggested that the government should not be concerned about the economic impact of the lockdown as the human cost of the spread of the virus would have tragic consequences for the people.

"Your government's lack of a clear and coherent Covid and vaccination strategy, as well as its hubris in declaring premature victory as the virus was exponentially spreading, has placed India in a highly dangerous position: today the disease is growing explosively.

"It is currently on the verge of overwhelming all of our systems. GOI's failures have made another devastating national lockdown almost inevitable," he told the prime minister. India has seen a record number of 4.14 lakh fresh Covid cases and around 4000 deaths in the last 24 hours.

Gandhi said it is critical that our people are prepared for such an eventuality of a lockdown. He has been demanding that the government provides Rs 6000 in the accounts to each poor family to tide over the crisis.

"To prevent a repeat of the manifold suffering caused by last

year's lockdown, the government must act with compassion and provide critical financial and food support to our most vulnerable people," he said, adding that it must be also ready with a transportation strategy for those who will require it.

The former Congress chief said that when the COVID-19 tsunami continues to ravage our country unabated, the people of India must be your foremost priority in such an unprecedented crisis.

"I urge you to do everything in your power to stop the needless suffering that our people are going through," he said.

Gandhi also called for rapidly vaccinating the entire population and dynamically assess the efficacy of all vaccines against all new mutations as they are identified.

He also called for scientifically tracking the virus and its mutations across the country using genome sequencing as well as its disease patterns.

Gandhi also urged the government to be transparent and keep the rest of the world informed about our findings.

"I am aware that you are concerned about the economic impact of a lockdown. Inside and outside India, the human cost of allowing this virus to continue its march unimpeded will result in many more tragic consequences for our people than any purely economic calculations your advisors are suggesting," he said in his letter to PM.

## Canada Opens 1-Time Immigration Program; To Benefit Indian Students

Agenceis

Indian students will be the major beneficiaries of Canada's new one-time immigration programme which opened for applications on Wednesday.

Under the programme, over 90,000 international students and temporary essential workers, already in Canada, will be given permanent residence (PR).

Under it, 40,000 international students, 30,000 temporary workers in selected essential occupations and 20,000 temporary workers in health care will get permanent residence.

To be eligible, international students must have completed a post-secondary programme in Canada in the last four years.

Foreign workers must have at least one year of Canadian work experience in a health care profession or another pre-approved essential occupation.

Indian students will benefit proportionately more than others as they - numbering 220,000 last year - make up more than a third of all foreign students currently in Canada.

Before the pandemic closed international travel, Canada had planned to admit 341,000 immigrants in 2020.



The new PR programme aims at making up for the shortfall in immigration numbers in 2020 by prioritizing those already in Canada. Moreover, a record 401,000 new immigrants will be admitted in 2021.

Highlighting the significance of Wednesday's programme, Immigration minister Marco Mendicino said, "The pandemic has shone a bright light on the contributions of newcomers in essential jobs, as we have recognized the caregivers, cooks and cashiers as our everyday heroes. With this new pathway, we are recognizing their key role in our economic recovery, allowing them to set down roots in Canada and help us build back better. Our message to them is simple: your status may be temporary, but your contributions are lasting-and we want you to stay."

## NEWS MAKERS

### Maharashtra Top Cop Disguises As Common Man To Test Police Staff

Agenceis

Pune: Disguised as a common man, Pimpri Chinchwad police commissioner Krishna Prakash paid surprise visits to three police stations under his jurisdiction to check the promptness and efficiency of the personnel on duty there.

Mr Prakash himself gave information about the sequence of events that unfolded during the intervening night of Wednesday and Thursday.

As part of the exercise, he visited Hinjawadi, Wakad and Pimpri police stations. In order to change his appearance, the commissioner sported a fake beard and wore a Pathani dress as well as a skull cap. Assistant Commissioner of Police Prerna Katte also accompanied him by posing as a common citizen.

Mr Prakash said that instructions were issued to all the police stations to treat common citizens nicely and get their complaints lodged.

"To test the ground reality, I along with ACP Katte disguised as common citizens and visited three police stations and a couple of nakabandi points in the jurisdiction at

night," he said.

"During the visits to Hinjawadi and Wakad police stations, we found that the staff on duty there were prompt in listening to our woes and were seen taking efforts in registering their complaints," he said.

But during the visit to Pimpri Chinchwad police station, he found that the staff was seen evading their duties by asking them to go to a police chowky attached to the police station.

"It was found that the staff there initially did not give the kind of treatment that was expected from them, although they treated well later. It might be because one of the duty officers recognised me," he said.

At Hinjawadi Prakash complained about some anti-social elements harassing them, while at Wakad, he told the police personnel that the gold chain of his wife was snatched away by a motorcyclist.

At Pimpri police station, he complained against the ambulance driver for demanding exorbitant charges for ferrying a patient.

Mr Prakash is a 1998-batch IPS officer.

### WhatsApp Scraps May 15 Deadline For Accepting New, Controversial Privacy Policy: Report

Agenceis

NEW DELHI: WhatsApp has scrapped its May 15 deadline for users to accept its controversial privacy policy update and said not accepting the terms will not lead to deletion of accounts.

WhatsApp had faced severe backlash over user concerns that data was being shared with parent company Facebook.

A WhatsApp spokesperson told news agency Press Trust of India that no accounts will be deleted on May 15 for not accepting the policy update.

"No accounts will be deleted on May 15 because of this update and no one in India will lose functionality of WhatsApp either. We will follow up with reminders to people over the next several weeks," the spokesperson said in an emailed response to a Press Trust of India query today.

The spokesperson added that while a "majority of users who have received the new terms of service have accepted them", some people have not had the chance to do so yet.

However, the company did not clarify the reason behind the deci-

sion and did not divulge the number of users who have accepted the terms so far.

In January this year, WhatsApp had informed users about the changes in its terms of service and public policy through an in-app notification. Users were initially given time till February 8 to agree to the new terms in order to continue using the platform.

According to WhatsApp, the key updates include more information about its service and how it processes user data; how businesses can use Facebook hosted services to store and manage their WhatsApp chats; and how WhatsApp partners with Facebook to offer integrations across the company products.

WhatsApp has insisted that the acceptance of the privacy policy update does not expand its ability to share user data with Facebook.

However, user backlash over WhatsApp's alleged sharing of user information with Facebook forced the company to postpone the February deadline to May 15.

The WhatsApp spokesperson said the company has spent the

last few months working to "clear up confusion and misinformation".

"As a reminder, this update does not impact the privacy of personal messages for anyone. Our goal is to provide information about new options we are building that people will have, to message a business on WhatsApp, in the future," the spokesperson told the news agency.

The company further stated that it will take every opportunity to explain how it protects people's personal messages and private information.

The softening of stance on the deadline comes at a time when digital platforms like Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp have become lifelines for people looking for oxygen cylinders, hospital beds, plasma donors and ventilators as the country reels under the deadly second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

India is the biggest market for WhatsApp, and the platform -- as per government data -- has 53 crore users in the country.

India remains a critical market for Internet companies like Facebook with its large population base and burgeoning internet adoption.