



P3 CITY

SRINAGAR ADMIN TO SET UP STAR PHCS WITH 150 ADDITIONAL BEDS

To further strengthen the patient care facilities in Srinagar, the District Administration, Srinagar is setting up 5 Model Primary Health Centres termed as STAR PHCs at different locations in the district...

P6 THINK

POWER PLAY OF LANGUAGE USE

The current violent attacks on Palestine have shaken the Muslim conscience with macabre visuals of bombings, bloodsoaked rubble and helpless cries of children, mothers and fathers unsettling every sensible human. The notion of...



P5 NEWS

COVID DEATHS IN KASHMIR HIGHER THAN REPORTED: DAK

The Doctors Association of Kashmir (DAK) on Saturday said that the actual number of people dying from Covid in Kashmir is higher than what is reported...



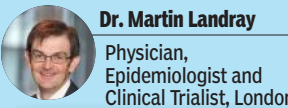
Dr. Yasir Wani
Consultant Paediatrician

#B16172 variant is surging very fast!
Epidemiologists now estimate it is 60% faster than even #B117 UK/Kent variant, which is already 50% faster. If true, it could make it fastest transmission one to be found worldwide!



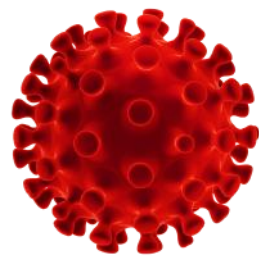
Dr. Ambrish Mithal
Chairman Endocrinology & Diabetes, Max Healthcare

Sugars fluctuate widely in #Covid due to infection and steroids
Control of #diabetes during #covid19 is vital - to prevent Mucormycosis- #BlackFungus
#Insulin often needed for control, TEMPORARILY
Don't avoid insulin if advised by your doctor.
#COVIDEmergency2021
#pandemic



Dr. Martin Landray
Physician, Epidemiologist and Clinical Trialist, London

RECOVERY publication: Convalescent plasma in 11569 hospitalised patients
- no significant reduction in mortality
- no significant increase in chances of being discharged alive at 28 days
- no significant reduction in progression to invasive mechanical ventilation or death



Govt Extends Corona Curfew In J&K Till May 24



KO Photo: Abid Bhat

Firdaus Ali

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Saturday extended till May 24 the curfew imposed to contain the spread of coronavirus in the Union Territory.

"The Corona Curfew imposed in all 20 distts (districts) of J&K till 7 am on Monday, 17/5/21 is extended further till 7 am on Monday, 24/5/21. The curfew will be strict except for a few essential services," the Department of Information and Public Relations

(DIPR) said in a tweet on its official handle on Saturday. The curfew imposed by the administration across the UT was scheduled to end on May 17. Meanwhile, police on Saturday claimed to have arrested 137 persons, filed 70

FIRs and also realized a fine of Rs 128,480 from 874 people for violating the Covid-19 guidelines throughout Kashmir valley during the last 24 hours. Besides, 6 vehicles were also seized in Bandipora for violating guidelines, restrictions, a

police spokesperson said. In Ganderbal district, he said, 12 shops were sealed on the spot after being found open in violation of lockdown. On April 29, the Jammu and Kashmir administration imposed curfew in **More On P10**

NEWS DIGEST

IED Recovered In Pulwama: Police

SRINAGAR: An improvised explosive device (IED) weighing 10 kg was recovered in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama district on Saturday, with police claiming to have foiled a plan by the militant outfit Jaish-e-Mohammed to carry out an attack. The IED was recovered following inputs that militant outfit Jaish-e-Mohammed was planning to carry out the attack, an official said. **More On P10**

Cardiac Arrest Kills Border Guard

SRINAGAR: A Border Security Force (BSF) personnel died on Saturday after suffering a cardiac arrest in the border town of Uri in Baramulla district. 33-year-old Constable Manjeet Kumar of BSF 23 Battalion BSF posted at Chand post along LoC in Uri suddenly felt dizziness, vomited and fell down on the ground during patrolling, news agency GNS reported Saturday. The report said that Kumar's colleagues on sensing emergency **More On P10**

3 Jama'at Members Booked Under UAPA

SRINAGAR: At least three members of the banned socio-political organisation Jama'at-e-Islami (JeI) have been booked under unlawful activities Act (UAPA) in south Kashmir's Kulgam district. Mudasir Hasan Mir, Abdul Hayat Alai, both residents of Sallar and Farooq Ahmad Bhat of Lever village in the south Kashmir district have been booked on charges of harbouring, aiding militants **More On P10**

Excessive Use Of Paracetamol Harmful: Expert

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The excessive use of paracetamol by coronavirus patients can damage the liver and can cause severe gastrointestinal upset in elderly patients besides aggravate paracetamol poisoning among alcoholics and people with borderline kidney function and liver diseases, a senior gastroenterologist said

Saturday.

Dr Nisar Ahmad Shah, Professor of Medicine, Gastroenterology, Government Medical College (GMC) here said on Saturday that Covid was known to cause a variety of gastroenterological problems like dyspepsia, diarrhoea, abdominal pain; oesophageal, gastric & duodenal ulcers, hepatitis and pancreatitis **More On P10**

LG Sets 10 Day Timeline For 100% Vaccination Of Above 45 Age Group

Emphasizes On Utilization Of Covid Care Centres For Rural Population, Patients In Home Isolation

JAMMU: The Corona Curfew imposed in all 20 Districts of J&K till 7 am on Monday, 17th May, 2021 is extended further till 7 am on Monday, 24th May, 2021. The curfew will be strict except for a few essential services. Other restrictions and SOPs for weddings etc. outlined by the administration earlier will remain in force.



The decision was taken as a part of the Covid Containment measures after a detailed assessment of the present Covid scenario in the UT done by the Lieutenant Governor, Manoj **More On P10**

Police Arrests 20 For Taking Part In Pro Palestine Demos

Says Keeping A Close Eye on Social Media Posts

Ajaz Ali

SRINAGAR: A day after sporadic pro-Palestine demonstrations were reported from parts of the Kashmir Valley, the Jammu

and Kashmir police on Saturday arrested 20 persons and warned protesters of legal action if found involved in "inciting violence on the streets of the Valley."

According to reports, twenty people have been arrested by police from several localities of this capital city for holding pro-Palestine demonstrations **More On P10**



Artist Of 'We Are Palestine' Graffiti Arrested

A professional artist whose graffiti of a sobbing Palestinian woman went viral on social media was arrested by police in a raid at his house in Padshahi Bagh area of this capital city, reports said Saturday. 30-year-old Mudasir Gul, as per the reports, was picked up by a police team from his Padshahi Bagh home on Friday night for drawing graffiti on a platform showing **More On P10**

Sarjan Barkati Detained 2 Days After Eid Speech



The Jammu and Kashmir Police on Saturday arrested popular religious preacher Sarjan Barkati from his residence at Reban, Shopian in South Kashmir. His wife Shabroza Akhter confirmed that Barkati was arrested by Zainapora police from his residence on Saturday morning, Barkati **More On P10**

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COVID-19 POSITIVE HOME ISOLATION PATIENTS

Shri Manoj Sinha
Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor

Patient must isolate himself from other household members

The patient should be kept in a well-ventilated room with cross ventilation

Patient should at all times use triple layer medical mask. In the event of care giver entering the room, both care giver and patient may consider using N 95 mask

Mask should be discarded only after disinfecting it with 1% Sodium Hypochlorite

Patient must take rest and drink lot of fluids to maintain adequate hydration

Follow respiratory etiquettes all the time

Don't share personal items with other people

Frequent Hand Washing is a must

Ensure cleaning of surfaces in the room that are touched

Self-Monitoring of Blood Oxygen Saturation (SpO2) with a Pulse Oximeter, Temperature and other signs or symptoms is strongly advised.

WHEN TO SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION

Difficulty in breathing

Persistent pain pressure in the chest

Dip in oxygen saturation (SpO2 < 90% on room air)

Mental confusion or inability to rise up

For Free Ambulance Service please call Toll Free No. 108

For any sort of query including medical advice
24x7 Divisional Control Room

<p style="font-size: x-small;">Jammu</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">0191-2549676 / 2520982 / 2674444 / 2674115 / 2674908</p>	<p style="font-size: x-small;">Kashmir</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">0194-2440283 / 2430581 / 2452052 / 2457313 / 2457312</p>
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Issued in Public Interest by:
Health and Medical Education Department, J&K

For any kind of Covid 19 query log on to www.covidrelief.jk.gov.in

@kinformation @dipr-jk @diprjk



Scholarships This Week

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

Scholarship Name 1: COVID Crisis Support Scholarship Program 2021

Description: COVID Crisis Support Scholarship program aims to support children who are left vulnerable and with very little or no financial support for their further education owing to a COVID-led crisis in their family.

Eligibility: The scholarship is open for Indian students from Class 1 to Graduation. They must have been through any of the following crisis situation - loss of parent(s) since January 2020 or loss of job/employment of an earning family member. Students should be enrolled and continuing their education.

Prizes & Rewards: Up to INR 30,000 per year and mentorship benefits
 Last Date to Apply: 30-06-2021

Application mode: Online applications only
 Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/CCSP1

Scholarship Name 2: IIM Ahmedabad Centre for Transportation and Logistics Post-Doctoral Fellowship 2021

Description: Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad invites applications for IIM Ahmedabad Centre for Transportation and Logistics Post-Doctoral Fellowship 2021 from Ph.D. degree holders.

Eligibility: The fellowship is open for candidates who hold a Ph.D. from a reputed Institute or University in India or abroad, specializing in transportation and/or logistics (defined broadly). Also, candidates who have defended their dissertation are also eligible to apply.

Prizes & Rewards: As per the rules of the institute
 Last Date to Apply: 31-05-2021
 Application mode: Via email only
 Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/APF8

Scholarship Name 3: NIUA New Delhi Intern - Research Assistantship 2021

Description: National Institute of Urban Affairs New Delhi invites applications for NIUA New Delhi Intern - Research Assistantship 2021 from bachelor's or master's degree holders. The fellowship is meant for a research project entitled, "Citizen-Centric Smart Governance (CCSG) - CDG - Living Lab".

Eligibility: The fellowship is open for candidates who hold a Bachelor's or



Master's Degree in any of the fields - Electrical and Communication Engineering, Computer Science, Telecommunication Engineering, Urban Planning, Architecture, Economics, Development Studies, or other closely related fields. They should also be a fresher/ recent graduate with 0-2 years of work experience and preferably provide a dossier of relevant work experience by way of URLs, etc.

Prizes & Rewards: Up to INR 15,000 per month plus other benefits

Last Date to Apply: 31-05-2021
 Application mode: Online applications only
 Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/ANA8

Office Of The Executive Engineer Mechanical Hospital And Central Heating Division Srinagar

(Tele-fax No: 019-2496089, e-mail id: xemmhchdk@yahoo.in)

(SHORT TERM)

GIST of E-NIT NO: MHCHD/TS /2021-22/20/e-tendering
 Dated:-12-05-2021

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K UT e-tenders are invited from registered/reputed/experienced firms with J&K Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the below mentioned work:-

Name of Work	Est. Cost (Rs. in Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In rupees)	Time of completion (in days)	AA Accorded Vide No:	TS No
1	2	3	4	5	6
SITC of Open-well Submersible Pumping Units along with allied Mechanical works for water supply at Govt. Chest Disease Hospital, Srinagar.	1.45	200	05	08-MCS of 2021, Dt:27-04-2021	MHCHD/TS15 of 05/2021

- The Tender document Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in from 12-05-2021 (18.00 hrs).
- The bidders shall deposit their bids in electronic format on the above web site from 13-05-2021 (10.00 hrs) to 19-05-2021 (14:00 hrs) in two (02) cover.
- The bids uploaded on the website up to due date and time will be opened on 19-05-2021 (16.00 hrs) or any date convenient to the department in the office of Executive Engineer, MHCHD, Srinagar.

Sd/-
 Executive Engineer,
 MHCHD, Srinagar

No: MHCHD/ TS/835-39

Dated:12-05-2021

DIPK-1586/21

DEMISE

With profound Greif and sorrow, we inform the demise of Sheikh Abdul Rashid R/o Karra Lane, Adda Batamalo, Srinagar who breathed his last on Friday after brief illness. (Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Illahi Raa-joun).



The family of deceased has urged relatives and friends to pray for departed soul and not to visit their home for any condolence in view of covid-19 pandemic.

The fateha khawani will be held at graveyard near District Court Complex, Moominabad, Batamalo on 18-05-2021 at 09.30 AM

BEREAVED

1. Sheikh Suhail Ahmad (Son)
2. Wasim Ahmad (Son in Law)
3. Latief Ahmad (Son in law)

Cell :- 7006568455, 7006343315, 7006735059

DEMISE

With Profound grief and sorrow, We inform the sad demise of Bashir Ahmad Mattoo on 13th of May 2021 S/o Gh Rasool Mattoo Presently residing at Syed Aabaad, Saida Pora, Near Khaar Masjid. Previously residing at Main Chowk Nawakdal Srinagar. The mourning shall be observed for three days only.



It is also informed that in view of prevailing circumstances no congregational Majlis e Fateh khawani will be held at Ancestral Graveyard.

BEREAVED FAMILY

اظہار تشکر

ہمارے والد بزرگ حاج محمد افضل خان ساکنہ شیر آباد کھور پن مختصر علالت کے بعد بروز سوموار 10 ماہ 2021ء شام 9 بجے اس دارفانی سے رحلت کر گئے۔ ہم ان تمام لوگوں کے



شکر گزار ہیں جنہوں نے ہمیں اس غم کے وقت ہمارے دوست خانہ پر تشریف لاکر یا بذریعہ ٹیلی فون ہمارے ساتھ تعزیت کر کے ہماری ڈھارس بندھائی اور تجہیز و تکفین و دیگر لوازمات میں پیش پیش رہے۔ خاص طور پر ہمسایہ محلہ کٹی، ایجوکیشن منجھت کے ملازمین و دیگر اشخاص شامل ہیں جن کا ہم فرما فرما کر شکر یہ ادا نہیں کر سکتے۔ ہم بذریعہ اخبار ان کا دل کی محبت گہرائیوں سے شکر یہ ادا کرتے ہیں اور اللہ تعالیٰ سے دست دعا ہیں کہ ان لوگوں کو ہر پریشانی، موجودہ عالمی وبائی بیماری سے محفوظ رکھیں اور تندرست رہیں۔

آپ کے دعا گو

بشیر احمد خان، غلام محمد خان (برادران)

عرفان خان (فرزند)، ڈاکٹر محمد شفیع (فرزند)

7006332704, 9906486255

انتقال پر ملال

یہ خیر امتیازی دکھ کے ساتھ دی جاتی ہے کہ شوکت احمد خان ولد ملوک



خان ساکنہ کنڈہ تار صدرہ بل سرینگر مورخہ 12 مئی 2021ء مطابق ۲۹ رمضان المبارک ۱۴۴۲ھ بروز بدھوار اس دارفانی سے رحلت کر گئے۔ اللہ تعالیٰ مرحوم کو جنت الفردوس نصیب کرے۔ موجودہ صورتحال کے پیش نظر مرحوم کی اجتماعی فاتحہ خوانی منعقد نہیں ہوگی اس کے ساتھ ساتھ مرحوم کے آبائی گھر میں بھی کوئی تعزیتی مجلس منعقد نہیں ہوگی۔

سوگواران

محمد آصف، رئیس احمد، منزل احمد، مدثر احمد (فرزندان)

لطیف احمد، رفیق احمد، مشتاق احمد (برادران)

7780870760, 7006048881, 7006410434

Directorate of Handicrafts & Handloom, Kashmir

Exhibition Grounds (Kashmir Haat) Srinagar-190001

Subject: Selection list of candidates for the post of "Junior Instructor, (Chain Stitch)" Industries & Commerce (Handicrafts), Department District Cadre Anantnag under item No. 239 (03 of 2012), Operating of waiting list thereof

Ref: Communication's of the Administrative Department, Industries & Commerce. IND/DOH/31/2017, dated 20.03.2020. IND/DOH/31/2017, dated 08.09.2020. IND/DOH/31/2017, dated 29.12.2020. IND/DOH/31/2017, dated 12.04.2021.

ORDER NO:203 DHHK of 2021
 DATED: 06 05.2021

Whereas, Administrative Department, Industries & Commerce Department vide communication No. IND/DOH/31/2017, dated 20.03.2020, forwarded a copy of selection list along with the waiting list received from J&K Services selection Board vide No. SSB/Secy/Sel/244/2018/1325-30, dated 10.02.2020, for issue of formal appointment order in favour of the selected candidate namely Mr. Showkat Ahmad Bhat S/O Mohd Sultan Bhat R/O Nov/bug Anantnag, under open merit category for the post of "Junior Instructor (Chain Stitch)" District Cadre Anantnag, under item No. 239 (03 of 2012 dated 28.12.2012), after observing all necessary codal formalities; and

Whereas, formal appointment order was issued by the Directorate of Handicrafts & Handloom, Kashmir vide Order No. 17 DHHK of 2020, dated 17.06.2020, in favour of Mr. Showkat Ahmad Bhat S/O Mohd Sultan Bhat R/O Nowbug Anantnag, against the available post of Junior Instructor (Chain Stitch) in the pay Level-4 (25500-81100), District Cadre Anantnag; and

Whereas, in terms of appointment order, the appointee was required to report the Assistant Director Handicrafts, Anantnag within a period of 21 days from the date of issue of the appointment order, failing which his appointment shall be deemed to have been cancelled without any further notice; and

Whereas, the Assistant Director Handicrafts, Anantnag vide communication No. ADH/ANG/340-41, dated 16.07.2020, reported that the appointee candidate namely Mr. Showkat Ahmad Bhat S/O Mohd Sultan Bhat R/O Nowbug Anantnag, is already working as Senior Craft Instructor (Gubba Craft) in the department pursuant to the Order No.384 HD of 2018 dated P6.01.7018, and has not joined his service as Junior Instructor (Chain Stitch) in District Anantnag; and

Whereas, the matter regarding failure of the appointee to report within stipulated time was accordingly taken up v/ith the Administrative Department vide this office communication No. DHHK/Estt/A/1726, dated 10.08.2020, for operating of waiting list.

Whereas the Administrative Department vide communication No. IND/DOH/31/2017, dated 08 09 2020, conveyed the approval for operating of waiting list, in favour of the candidate next in order of merit, after following all the requisite codal formalities viz, issue of notice to the appointee, cancellation of appointment etc; and

Whereas, the matter was again taken up v/ith the Administrative Department vide this office communication No. DHHK/Estt/A/2453, dated 11.09.2020, for dispensing of the direction regarding issue of notice to the appointee; and

Whereas, the Administrative Department vide communication No. IND/DOH/31/2017, dated 29.12.2020, conveyed the authorization for operating of waiting list, read with the instructions issued by the General Administration Department vide circular No. 08 JK (GAD) of 2019, dated 04.12.2019.

Whereas, the Circular No. 08 JK (GAD) of 2019, dated 04.12.2019, issued by the General Administration Department envisages for incorporating the clause of standard condition in all the appointment orders issued by the departments which is reproduced as under;

"The candidate who fail to join within a period of 21 (twenty one) days from the date of issuance of the appointment order shall forego their right to appointment which shall be deemed to have been cancelled ab-initio without any further notice".

Whereas, Mr. Mohd Shamim Dar S/O Mohd Ramzan Dar R/O Much Bawan Anantnag, is the only candidate in the waiting list furnished by the J&K Services Selection Board

Now, therefore the appointment of Mr. Shov/kat Ahmad Bhat S/O Mohd Sultan Bhat R/O Nov/bug Anantnag, under open merit category for the post of "Junior Instructor (Chain Stitch)" District Cadre Anantnag, issued vide Order No. 17 DHHK of 2020, dated 17.06.2020, is hereby cancelled ab-initio.

Consequent upon the above, sanction is hereby accorded to the temporary appointment of Mr. Mohd Shamim Dar S/O Mohd Ramzan Dar R/O Much Bawan Anantnag, as Junior Instructor (Chain Sitch), District Cadre Anantnag IN THE PAVY Level -4 (25500-81100), and posted against teh available vacancy in District Anantnag

The appointment of the appointee shall be subject to the fulfillment of following condiciotin

- The appointee shall report to the Assistant Director Handicrafts, Anantnag within a period of 7 days from the date of issue of the order.
- In case of the failure of the appointee to join within the stipulated period, his appointment shall be deemed to have been cancelled without any further notice.
- The appointee shall be allowed to join only on production of the following certificates in original:-
 - Academic / Technical Qualification Certificates,
 - Matriculation / Date of Birth certificate.
 - Reserved Category certificate, if any.
 - Health Certificate issued by Chief Medical Officer,
 - Domicile Certificate issued by the Competent Authority.
- Certificates from the concerned authorities to the effect that no loan under self employment scheme has been taken by the appointee.
- All ohter relevant documents / certificates as ere required for fresh appointment
- The appointee shall give an undertaking duly attested by the First Class Magistrate in the shape of an affidavit so the effect that in case adverse report about his character and antecedents is received from Additional Director General (CID), J&K to whom reference shall be made toy the concerned Head of the Office, the candidate shall have no right to claim his appointment as such shall be deemed to have been cancelled ab-initio.
- If on verification, the certificate (s) produced by the appointee are proved to be fake or forged, the appointment shall be cancelled ab-initio.
- The salary of the appointee shall not be drawn and disbursed to him unless satisfactory report is received in his favour from toe Additional Director General (C3D) J&K
- The appointee shall be on probation for a period of 02 years.
- The appointee shall be governed by the "New Pension Scheme" notified vide SRO-400 of 2009, dated 24-12-2009.
- The concerned Drawing & Disbursing Officer/ Head of the Office will also verify the genuineness of the qualification certificates and other allied documents of the appointee.

No. DHHK/Estt/C/885-90

DIPK-1576/21

Director, Handicrafts & Handloom, Kashmir,



SRINAGAR ADMINISTRATION SATURDAY CONVERTED A COMMUNITY HALL at Baba Demb in Srinagar into a Covid wellness centre. KO Photo: Abid Bhat

Srinagar Admin To Set Up Star PHCs With 150 Additional Beds



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: To further strengthen the patient care facilities in Srinagar, the District Administration, Srinagar is setting up 5 Model Primary Health Centres termed as STAR PHCs at different locations in the district.

This was stated by the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Mohammed Aijaz Asad during his visit to different primary level Health care centres in Srinagar on Saturday.

The DC accompanied by Joint Director Planning Mohammad Yaseen, Chief Medical Officer Srinagar, Dr Jameel and other senior officers conducted inspection of various health institutions and enquired about facilities available and additional support required for extending best possible healthcare services to patients particularly in wake of present situation arisen due to 2nd wave of Covid-19.

The DC directed the CMO Srinagar to take up the necessary measures in this regard so that all 5 designated Star PHCs start functioning with upgraded infrastructure at an earliest.

The DC said that 5 Primary Health Centres including at Batamulla, Khonmoh, Lasjan, Sangam and Nishat are being upgraded to Model PHCs. He said each Model PHC will have minimum 25-30 bed capacity with oxygen support system meeting present requirements of Covid-19.

The DC directed the CMO Srinagar to take up the necessary measures in this regard so that all 5 designated Star PHCs start functioning with upgraded infrastructure at an earliest. Executive Engineer ME Department has been asked to immediately start work on installation of Oxygen pipes.

The DC said administration has chosen to upgrade existing infrastructure to ensure early operationalization of these Model PHCs to make better healthcare facilities available to patients in the district. He also said that the objective of setting up of Star PHCs is to add additional infrastructure support to various health institutions in the district to ensure better healthcare at nearest possible health facilities so that unnecessary rush to tertiary care hospitals is reduced.

THE DC DIRECTED THE CMO SRINAGAR TO TAKE UP THE necessary measures in this regard so that all 5 designated Star PHCs start functioning with upgraded infrastructure at an earliest.

No Compromise On Quality Education, Academic Activities: Director NIT

SRINAGAR: Director National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar, Prof. (Dr.) Rakesh Sehgal on Saturday said that there will be no compromise on the quality of education, academic activities to be imparted to students through online mode.

Following the Corona Curfew, he said presently online classes are being held across all departments for all semesters and are smoothly from the past several weeks. "The syllabus and other academic activities are continuing as per the schedule and will be completed on time. Institute will continue to touch skies in the future," he said.

Dr Sehgal said that last year 2020 also NIT Srinagar conducted its exams smoothly and did not compromise on academics. "We are equipped with the latest technologies and these situations should not deter our com-

mitment and courage, he said. "Technology is getting updated each passing day and it is important for educational institutions like us that we should not miss these developments to ease the education system for our students," he said.

Apart from online classes, Director NIT Srinagar said that they are exploring online resources and material for students, so that they will not feel any mental pressure. Registrar NIT, Prof. Kaiser Bukhari also stated that they are virtually connected to students and will not compromise on their academic activities anymore.

"Despite COVID19 pandemic last year, NIT Srinagar conducted all the exams on time. As the situation does not allow physical classes, same procedure and method are being followed this year also," he said.

Dean Academic Affairs, NIT Srinagar Prof. Najeeb-ud-din said both syllabus and exams will be completed on time. He informed that online classes are undergoing in all departments and both mid-semester and end-semester exams are being conducted virtually.

Dean Academic Affairs, NIT Srinagar Prof. Najeeb-ud-din said both syllabus and exams will be completed on time. He informed that online classes are engaged in all Departments and both mid-semester and end-semester exams are being conducted through online mode.

Prof. Najeeb-ud-din said the mid-term examinations of B-Tech 4th, 6th & 8th semesters, and other PG courses have been completed while as examination of B Tech 2nd semester & M Sc Chemistry 2nd Semester students will begin from 17th May 2021 onwards.

Eight Chemist Stores Sealed In Srinagar For Violating Norms

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Mohammad Aijaz Asad Saturday ordered for immediate suspension of operations of 8 Chemist Shops in Srinagar for contravention of rules like absence of qualified persons, not maintaining sale purchase records, unhygienic conditions, cold storage drugs not maintained properly, records of psychotropic drugs not maintained in violation of norms and etc.

The Deputy Commissioner passed the directions while conducting surprise inspection of chemist shops in various areas of Srinagar City.

The 8 chemist shops whose operation has been suspended for 5 days from May 15 to May 19, 2021 include Lutfan Medicate Kaksarai, Medlife Chemists and Druggists Kaksarai, New Light Medical Hall Kaksarai, Co-operative Medical Store SMHS hospital, Metro Professional Pharmacy Rainawari, K. I. Medi-

cate Rainawari, Biocare Medicate Rainawari and New Health Zone Rainawari.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Commissioner has asked all Chemists operating in Srinagar to adhere to the laid down norms strictly. Any attempt at overcharging shall lead to initiation of criminal proceedings. He also urged general public to lodge complaints in case they face any grievances in purchase of Medicines at the COVID-19 war room contact Nos. of DDMA Srinagar.

DGP Stresses For Augmentation Of All Resources In Fight Against Covid

Visits Covid Care Facility At PCR Srinagar, APHQ



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Director General of Police, J&K, Dilbag Singh Saturday afternoon visited Armed Police Headquarters (APHQ), Karan Nagar, and PCR, Kashmir in Srinagar and reviewed the Covid situation with officers/doctors and emphasised on appropriate response and preparedness.

The DGP reviewed Covid situation and response of the Police in view of the 2nd wave. He stressed for augmentation of all possible resources in the fight against COVID-19 in such a way that appropriate arrangements of care are available at all the levels. He directed that all police units must put best foot forward and contribute in fight against COVID.

The DGP also took stock of functioning of the Armed Police wing and complimented

Armed Police for role in multifarious tasks in the Jammu and Kashmir and currently having huge deployment in ensuring the lockdown in view of surge in COVID cases. He also praised the role of Armed Police in counter insurgency grid.

Singh said that to prevent the spread of COVID infection all the necessary measures have to be implemented effectively and efficiently. The DGP said that strict adherence of related advisories can prove helpful in bringing down the surge in COVID cases.

Later on, the DGP visited police Control Room Kashmir where he inspected the newly created COVID care facility for policemen with mild or moderate symptoms. He also took stock of the arrangements of oxygen in the Police hospital. He stressed for augmentation of oxygen supply to meet any exigency.

173 Patients Screened At Triage Centre SKIMS-JVC Bemina

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: As many as 173 including 166 covid-19 positive patients have been screened so far at Triage Centre SKIMS-JVC Medical College, Bemina.

Sharing details, Nodal Officer Triage Centre SKIMS-JVC Bemina, Dr. Basharat said that 22 patients have been screened in the past 24 hours alone, while as the centre has been functioning smoothly, conducting screening, admissions and referrals of patients.

He said that a team of doctors and paramedics assess patients at the centre, which is a first arrival point for patients where they remain under proper observation of doctors and go under screening for health check-up before their referral, if needed, to a tertiary care hospital as per their health status and severity.

Nodal Officer said that there are all required facilities available at the centre including oxygen beds, dedicated nursing staff, covid care medicine and all possible help is being provided to

the patients they require during the course of their treatment.

He said that the patients are also sent for home isolation in the event of their better health conditions and very sick patients are referred to the tertiary care hospital for better treatment and observation.

Urging people to avoid all gatherings including religious as well as social for containment of virus, Nodal Officer further stressed that people must follow covid protocol including use of face mask, maintaining hand hygiene and social distancing religiously.

It may be recalled that Government has established number of Triage centre including SKIMS Bemina where covid patients are screened before being referred to Tertiary care and other main hospitals like SKIMS Soura, SMHS, CD Hospital and JLN Hospital, depending on severity of symptoms. For other districts, the concerned District hospitals and new Government Medical Colleges at Anantnag and Baramulla are functioning as Triage centres.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have purchased a vehicle bearing Regd No; JK01M-3056 from one Aijaz Ahmad Dar S/o Ali Mohammad Dar R/o Sarai dangerpura sumbal. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may contact on +91 70060 34174 within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained. tariq Ahmad Khan S/o Jan Mohammad Khan R/o Baran Pather, Batamalloo Srinagar

RIZVI FAMILY BEREAVED

With profound grief and sorrow we inform the sad demise of our beloved father, **Syed Ali Shah Rizvi, son of Late Syed Murtaza Shah Rizvi of Khanqah-e-Sokhta Nawakadal, presently at Baghwanpora Lal Bazar, Srinagar** who passed away in the intervening night of Friday and Saturday (May 14 and 15, 2021).



His Fateha Khawani will be held on **Monday, 17th May, 2021 at 7:30 am. Due to present COVID pandemic circumstances, the condolence will conclude at their graveyard at Madeen Sahib Hawal only.**

However, people who wish to visit the residence for condolences can do so while wearing masks and maintaining social distancing and other SOPs.

BEREAVED

Fida Hussain Mir, Mirza Zulfikar Ali Beigh, Mirza Manzoor, Ishaq Hussain Magloo, Syed Muzaffar Mosvi (Son-in-Laws) Aga Syed Muzaffar Rizvi, Syed Shah Nawaz Rizvi (Sons) 7006088928

DIAL-EMMA

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

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311 ✈️

RAILWAYS

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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

This Day in History

- 1204 - Baldwin IX, Count of Flanders, is crowned as the first Emperor of the Latin Empire of Constantinople
- 1527 - Florence becomes a republic
- 1571 Johannes Kepler, by his own calculations, is conceived at 4:37 AM
- 1606 - 2,000 foreigners murdered in Russia
- 1648 - Battle of Zhovti Vody: Bohdan Chmielnicki's cosacks defeat Polish King John Casimir after 18 days of battle
- 1771 - The Battle of Alamance, a pre-American Revolutionary War battle between local militia and a group of rebels called "The Regulators", occurs in present-day Alamance county, North Carolina.
- 1795 - Hedges Treaty: Bataafse Republic becomes French vassal state
- 1803 - Peace of Amiens between French Republic and Great Britain ends
- 1811 - Peninsular War: Allies defeat French at Albuera
- 1822 - Greek War of Independence: Turks capture the Greek town of Souli.
- 1860 - Chicago: Republican convention selects Abraham Lincoln as candidate
- 1863 - Battle of Champion's Hill, Mississippi bloodiest action of Vicksburg Campaign
- 1875 - Earthquake in Venezuela & Colombia kills 16,000
- 1907 - In the Pact of Cartagena, Great Britain, France, and Spain agree to maintain the status quo in the Mediterranean and along the Atlantic coast of Europe and Africa
- 1918 - The Sedition Act of 1918 is passed by the U.S. Congress, making criticism of the government an imprisonable offense.
- 1936 - 1st British air hostess Daphne Kearsley flies to France
- 1941 - Last great German air attack on Great Britain (Birmingham)
- 1945 - Violent battles around Sugar Loaf and Half Moon, Okinawa
- 1948 - Chaim Weizmann elected 1st President of Israel
- 1948 - Egyptians enter Gaza
- 1956 - Egypt recognizes People's Republic of China
- 1957 - US launches its 3rd atomic submarine, USS Skate, at Groton Conn
- 1960 - Big 4 summit in Paris collapses as USSR levels spy charges against US
- 1960 - Theodore Maiman operates the first optical laser, at Hughes Research Laboratories in Malibu, California.
- 1965 - Bomb destroys USAF base Bien Hoa South Vietnam
- 1968 - Earthquake kills 47 in Japan
- 1969 - Venera 5 lands on Venus, returns data on atmosphere
- 1974 - USSR performs nuclear Test at Eastern Kazakh/Sempalitinsk
- 1975 - India annexes Principality of Sikkim
- 1975 - Junko Tabei from Japan becomes 1st woman to reach summit of Mt Everest
- 1983 - Lebanese parliament accepts peace accord with Israel
- 1989 - Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev and Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping meet in Beijing and formally end a 30-year rift
- 1991 - Queen Elizabeth II becomes 1st British monarch to address US congress
- 1992 - US space shuttle STS-49 lands (maiden voyage of Endeavour)
- 2003 - In Casablanca, Morocco, 33 civilians are killed and more than 100 people are injured in the Casablanca terrorist attacks.
- 2007 - Nicolas Sarkozy becomes the 23rd President of France
- 2011 - Space shuttle Endeavour launches for its final commission in space



HIJRI CALENDAR

04

SHAWWAL -UL- MUKARRAM

1442

PRAYERS

FAJR 3:53
ZUHR 12:27
ASR 5:21
MAGRIB 7:29
ISHA 9:03

From KO Archives

'INDIA, PAK WILL FIND JK SOLUTION'

WASHINGTON - Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, and Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf, will find a solution to the Kashmir issue within the parameters they have laid down, three US-based experts on South Asia have hoped.

Rafiq Dossani of Stanford University, Robert Hathaway, Director of the Woodrow Wilson Centre, and Michael Krepon, President Emeritus of the Stimson Centre, were cautiously optimistic about the resolution of the issue keeping in mind that India has rejected any redrawing of boundaries in a possible solution.

The discussion included the conclusions in a book titled 'Prospects for Peace in South Asia' edited by Dossani and another scholar Henry Rowen.

The Kashmir issue, according to the book, is "enduringly rooted in national identity, religion and human rights. It has also influenced the politicisation of Pakistan's Army, religious radicalism and nuclearisation in both countries."

The book, while acknowledging the risks, is "optimistic about peace in South Asia." The key argument is (barman) of the domestic concerns, such as territorial integrity in both countries and civil-military rapprochement in Pakistan, that were fuelling the conflict, have abated.

Hathaway said that Musharraf seems to have realised that he cannot create the kind of Pakistan he wants unless he reins in extremism and repairs his relationship with India.

(Kashmir Observer, 16 May, 2005)

As Israel Bombards Gaza, BDS Urges Renewed Economic Pressure



Radmilla Suleymanova

As Israel's bombardment of Gaza intensifies and the Palestinian death toll mounts, the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement is issuing a fresh call to action for consumers around the world to vote with their wallets and bring economic pressure to bear on Israeli and multinational firms it labels as "complicit" in Israel's abuse of Palestinian human rights.

"There is a growing consensus that Israel now, like South Africa in the past, is an apartheid state that must be met with targeted sanctions, boycotts and divestment," Omar Barghouti, co-founder of the BDS movement, told Al Jazeera.

Launched in 2005 by 170 Palestinian unions, refugee networks, women's organisations, professional associations, popular resistance committees and other Palestinian civil society groups, the group has gained support and met fierce institutional resistance in its mission to win justice for Palestine.

At least 122 Palestinians, including 31 children, have lost their lives this week and 900

Palestinians have been wounded, as Israel's assault on Gaza has intensified and hostilities have mounted between Israeli settlers and Palestinians in the occupied West Bank.

At least six Israelis and one Indian national have also been killed in rocket attacks fired from Gaza into Israel.

Amid the bloodshed, the BDS movement released a renewed call for five actions that supporters can initiate to help end Israel's occupation.

The measures include pushing for a military embargo of Israel; mobilising local community organisations to cut ties with Israel and firms that enable its occupation of Palestine, as well as boycotting products and services of those firms; and mobilising pressure for institutional investors to divest from them.

The list of firms targeted for non-violent action by BDS reads like a Who's Who of the global economy: Elbit Systems, Hewlett-Packard, Puma, Caterpillar, General Mills/Pillsbury, Hyundai Heavy Industries, Volvo, Barclays Bank, Alstom, Motorola Solutions, CEMEX, JCB, G4S/Allied Universal, AXA and CAF, among others.

Big Promises, Few Doses: Why Russia's Struggling To Make Sputnik V Doses



Agencies

Transforming the site of what once was a Soviet-era car factory into a state-of-the-art facility churning out Russia's Covid-19 vaccine Sputnik V was the easy bit.

Making doses in bulk, finding qualified staff and getting equipment have been much bigger headaches for Moscow-based biotech firm R-Pharm and other private Russian companies picked to make the country's flagship shot to fight the pandemic.

President Vladimir Putin has trumpeted the vaccine around the world, and said in March that Russia had signed agreements for the production of 700 million doses of Sputnik V vaccine abroad.

But Russia had produced just 33 million vaccines as of May 12 and exported fewer than 15 million, according to a Reuters tally that counted each vaccine as consisting of two doses.

Russia's output is much lower than the hundreds of millions being made each month by Pfizer and AstraZeneca.

Interviews with four manufacturers and two people involved in the production process and Russia's supply chain highlight how difficult it is to make Sputnik V and ramp up production.

The problems are a warning to foreign partners -- including in India -- that are planning to mass produce the vaccine and those countries relying on Moscow to supply their inoculation programs.

With the United States and European countries focused on vaccinating domestic populations, Russia has stepped in the breach, offering shots to more than 50 countries, from Latin America to Asia.

But delays in getting shots to those countries gives China and the United States time to fill the gap.

In another blow, Brazil's regulator has denied approval to import Sputnik V, citing incomplete data on its safety and efficacy.

The Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF), which is responsible for marketing the vaccine abroad, said the manufacturing capacity for Sputnik V was increasing globally as new manufacturers come on board.

Fear, Rage & Mourning In Palestine

Israeli Airstrike Kills 8 Children, 2 Women From Same Family In Gaza



Agencies

Eight children of a Palestinian family have been killed in an Israeli airstrike against a refugee camp in the besieged Gaza Strip.

The pre-dawn airstrike by Israeli warplanes against al-Shati refugee camp also killed two women from the Abu Hatab family and injured 15 others, the Palestinian Ma'an news agency reported.

The warplanes targeted their home near the al-Sousi mosque west of Gaza with three missiles, without prior warning.

The development came as Israel has been pounding the blockaded enclave with repeated airstrikes for the past several days.

At least 139 Palestinians, including 39 children and 22 women, have been killed and about 1,000 others injured in Gaza in the Israeli regime's latest round of aggression that began on Monday.

The United Nation said on Friday that it estimates some 10,000 Palestinians have had to abandon their homes in Gaza "due to the ongoing hostilities" amid an Israeli offensive.

Hamas rockets hit Israel's Haterim Airbase

On Friday night, al-Qassam Brigades, which is the military arm of the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas, pounded Israel's Haterim Airbase with rockets in response to the regime's bloody onslaught against Palestinians

in the besieged Gaza Strip, Lebanon's Arabic-language al-Mayadeen television news network reported.

There were no immediate reports about possible casualties among Israeli troops or the extent of damage inflicted on the Haterim Airbase, which is located in the Negev Desert on the western outskirts of Beersheba.

Earlier, Al Jazeera reported that a fresh wave of rocket attacks had been conducted from Gaza Strip against various targets in the occupied territories, with al-Qassam Brigades announcing that they had hit Tel Aviv with several rockets.

Al-Qassam Brigades also said it had struck the Israeli city of Ashdod to the north of the Gaza Strip with a round of rockets, reported Turkey's Anadolu news agency, which quoted the Israeli military as saying that the attack sounded warning sirens in the city as well as in Beersheba.

The resistance groups in the Gaza Strip have so far fired hundreds of rockets toward the occupied territories, some of which have flown as far as Jerusalem al-Quds, in retaliation for Israel's ceaseless airstrikes against the blockaded enclave.

Gaza Tower Housing Al Jazeera Office Destroyed By Israeli Attack

AL JAZEERA

A building that housed international media offices including Al Jazeera's in the Gaza Strip has been hit by an Israeli air raid that demolished the structure.

It was not immediately clear if there were casualties in Saturday's attack. Live Al Jazeera video showed the 11-storey al-Jalaa building, which also houses a number of residences and other offices, crashing to the ground after being bombed as dust and debris flew into the air.

The building also housed The Associated Press news agency bureau.

A statement from Al Jazeera condemned the attack, calling on "all media and human right institutions to join forces" in denouncing the bombing and to "hold the government of Israel accountable".

"Al Jazeera condemns in the strongest terms the bombing and destruction of its offices by the Israeli military in Gaza and views this as a clear act to stop journalists from conducting their sacred duty to inform the world and report events on the ground," the statement read.

"Al Jazeera promises to pursue every available route to hold the Israeli government responsible for its actions."

Meanwhile, the AP said on Saturday it was "shocked and horrified" by the Israeli air attack.

"This is an incredibly disturbing development. We narrowly avoided a terrible loss of life," AP President and CEO Gary Pruitt said in a statement.

"The world will know less about what is happening in Gaza because of what happened today," Pruitt said.



Israel said its "fighter jets attacked a high-rise building which hosted military assets belonging to the military intelligence of the Hamas terror organisation".

"The building also hosted offices of civilian media outlets, which the Hamas terror group hides behind and uses as human shields," it said.

Al Jazeera's Safwat al-Kahlout, reporting from Gaza City, said a resident of the building received a call from the Israeli army warning of the impending attack about an hour before it was hit.

Al-Kahlout, who was in the building at the time, said he and colleagues "started to collect as much as they could, from the personal and equipment of the office, especially the cameras".

After watching at least three missiles hitting the building, and its subsequent collapse, al-Kahlout said he had worked at the building for 11 years, and often did live reporting from its roof.

"I have been covering lots of events from this building," he said. "We have lots of good memories with our colleagues."

Scores of structures have been demolished, sometimes after a warning phone call or missile "tap", by Israeli attacks in the Palestinian enclave.

"Now, one can understand the feeling of the people whose homes have been destroyed by such kind of air attacks," al-Kahlout said. "It's really difficult to wake up one day and then you realise that your office is not there with all your career experiences, memories that you've had."

Reacting to the news of the attack, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said the Biden administration had told the Israelis that the safety and security of journalists was "a paramount responsibility".

In Gaza, at least 140 people have been killed, including 39 children and 22 women, since the Israeli bombardment began on Monday.

In Israel, at least nine people have been killed in rocket attacks from armed groups in Gaza.

Early on Saturday, an air attack hit a three-storey house in Gaza City's Shati refugee camp, killing eight children and two women from an extended family.

Israeli Military Accused Of Using Media To Trick Hamas



Agencies

Early on Friday, just after midnight, the Israeli military put out an ominous statement to the media: "IDF air and ground troops are currently attacking in the Gaza Strip."

The terse statement set off frenzied speculation that Israel had launched a ground invasion of Gaza -- a much-feared scenario that would mark a bloody escalation of this week's operation against Hamas fighters.

Some reporters were even told outright the incursion had begun.

Hours later, the military issued a "clarification". There were no troops inside Gaza. But by then, several major news outlets had erroneously reported the ground offensive was under way.

While the army attempted to play down the incident as a misunderstanding, well-placed Israeli military commentators said the media had been used as part of an elaborate ruse to lure Hamas fighters into a deadly trap that may have killed dozens of them.

Late on Thursday, after days of airstrikes, Israel announced it was calling up thousands of reservists and amassing troops along the border ahead of a possible ground invasion.

In another sign of escalation, Israeli tanks stationed along the border opened fire at targets inside Gaza.

In previous rounds of fighting, ground incursions have resulted in widespread destruction in Gaza and heavy casualties on both sides.

That set the stage for the late-night deception. According to Heller,

Israel began scrambling forces along the border in what appeared to be final preparations for an invasion.

Then came the announcement to the media, issued simultaneously in Hebrew and Arabic on Twitter. There followed alerts in major outlets that the invasion was under way.

The Israeli moves sent Hamas fighters rushing into defensive positions in an underground network of tunnels known as the Metro, according to Heller and other Israeli reports.

Israel called in 160 warplanes and bombarded the tunnels for 40 minutes, the military said. Heller said it was his understanding that scores of fighters had been killed, though he said it was impossible to say.

"What we saw tonight was a very sophisticated operation that had a media aspect to it," Heller said.

Hamas has not commented on the incident, and it was impossible to confirm the Israeli reports.

Heller said veteran Israeli correspondents, who have close ties to the military and in many cases have served themselves, knew that there was no way Israel was sending troops across enemy lines at this stage.

Heller and other military correspondents even put out statements on Twitter assuring the jittery public that there was no ground operation.

The Associated Press, based on its analysis of the army's statement, phone calls to military officials and on the ground reporting in Gaza, concluded there was no ground incursion and did not report there was one.

Confusion Reigns After US Lifts Mask Guidance



Agence France-Presse

WASHINGTON, UNITED STATES: To mask or not to mask?

That is the question facing US states, businesses and people in their everyday lives in the wake of the bombshell announcement by the top health authority lifting most restrictions for those fully vaccinated against Covid-19.

President Joe Biden hailed the change in guidance by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, calling it a "great day" for America.

But if the idea sounded straightforward in theory, it has raised questions about how to implement it practically -- the foremost being, how do you tell if a person is fully vaccinated?

Then there is the trauma felt by many reluctant to let go of safety measures in the world's hardest-hit country, where more than 580,000 have lost their lives to the virus.

The CDC's recommendations are non-binding, and actual policy is left for the relevant local authorities or employers to decide.

It also doesn't apply to planes, buses, trains, and other forms of public transportation, or to medical settings such as hospitals.

The situation has left CEOs and local officials caught in a dilemma -- whether to follow the scientific recommendations right away, or make sure people are comfortable with it.

"Before, masks were important, and all of a sudden they are not," remarked Ivan Matta, a 47-year-old from New York who

works in a travel company.

Matta is still wearing his mask outside, despite being fully vaccinated.

"I believe there are lots of people who won't use the mask even if they aren't vaccinated," he added.

Mask use is also a politically divisive issue, with conservative-leaning parts of the country much quicker to go without than liberal areas.

Matters came to a head in Congress Friday, when an aide to far right Republican Marjorie Taylor Greene shouted at Democratic representative Eric Swalwell to take off his mask.

"No one should be bullied for wearing a mask. So I told the bully what I thought of his order," Swalwell later tweeted.

Regulatory patchwork

The states of Maryland and Virginia said Friday they were following the new CDC guidance and lifting their indoor mask mandates, while places like New York state and Washington have said they are "reviewing" the new recommendation, but haven't yet moved to change rules on indoor masking.

Symbolizing the disconnect, first lady Jill Biden on Friday was photographed with her mask on during a visit to the National Museum of African American History and Culture in the capital.

A day earlier, she quipped "We feel naked!" without a mask.

The rest of the country is a patchwork of regulations. Minnesota and Pennsylvania are standing by their current rules, Connecticut says it will update next week.

NEWS MAKERS

Iran FM Cancels Austria Trip Over Israeli Flags on Govt Buildings

TEHRAN: Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has cancelled his official trip to Austria over its move to hoist Israeli flags on government offices in the capital, Vienna, amid the occupying regime's unabated aggression against Palestinians.

Stephanie Lajin, an Austrian journalist, announced on her twitter account on Saturday that Zarif's trip had been called off at the last minute due to the hoisting of the Israeli flags.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi had earlier condemned Austria for raising Israeli flags over government offices in Vienna, where intensive talks over the revival of 2015 Iran nuclear deal are underway.

Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz had earlier offered condolences to the Israeli regime and ordered the hoisting of the illegal entity's flag over government offices in the capital.

"Nihao Mars": China Spacecraft Touches Down On Red Planet, Makes History

Agence France-Presse

BEIJING, CHINA: China's probe to Mars touched down on the Red Planet early Saturday to deploy its Zhurong rover, state media reported, a triumph for Beijing's increasingly bold space ambitions and a history-making feat for a nation on its first-ever Martian mission.

The lander carrying Zhurong completed the treacherous descent through the Martian atmosphere using a parachute to navigate the "seven minutes of terror" as it is known, aiming for a vast northern lava plain known as the Utopia Planitia.

The mission "successfully landed in the pre-selected area", state broadcaster CCTV

said, launching a special TV programme dedicated to the mission called "Nihao Mars".

The official Xinhua news agency cited the China National Space Administration (CNSA) in confirming the touchdown.

It makes China the first country to carry out an orbiting, landing and roving operation during its first mission to Mars -- a feat unmatched by the only other two nations to reach the Red Planet so far, the US and Russia.

China has now sent astronauts into space, powered probes to the Moon and landed a rover on Mars, the most prestigious of all prizes in the competition for dominion of space.

Three-month mission



Zhurong, named after a Chinese mythical fire god, arrives a few months behind America's latest probe to Mars -- Perseverance -- as the show of technological might between the two superpowers plays out beyond the bounds of Earth.

Six-wheeled, solar-powered and roughly 240 kilograms,

the Chinese rover is on a quest to collect and analyse rock samples from Mars' surface.

The launch of China's Tianwen-1 Mars probe which carried the rover last July marked a major milestone in China's space programme.

The spacecraft entered Mars' orbit in February and after a prolonged silence state media announced it had reached the "crucial touchdown stage" on Friday.

The landing was set to be a nail-biter for the China National Space Administration (CNSA), with state media describing the process of using a parachute, rocket to slow descent and buffer legs as "the most challenging part of the mission".

Covid Deaths In Kashmir Higher Than Reported: DAK

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Doctors Association of Kashmir (DAK) on Saturday said that the actual number of people dying from Covid in Kashmir is higher than what is reported.

In a statement, DAK said official figures of Covid-19 deaths are an underestimate. The reported death toll is an undercount and only provides a snapshot of the true toll virus has taken, he said.

The statement said only those deaths make it to the official count that have been confirmed as Covid-19 through RT-PCR testing.

"But the test can miss more than 30 percent of positive cases. We see many patients who test negative on RT-PCR test, but show CT features consistent with Covid-19 disease, but they are not reported," the statement said. It said that while elderly people



ple have the highest rates for hospitalisation and death, many are not tested for Covid in hospitals. "Older people don't develop typical Covid symptoms. In them, feeling weak or confused

may be the only sign of having the infection."

The statement said that when patients lack classic signs, health professionals are less likely to think of the diagnosis.

This means many patients die undiagnosed.

"Many patients with heart or lung disease die of Covid, but their death is attributed to their underlying condition," the statement said.

It said that many people with Covid symptoms don't get tested for the virus because of the fear of stigma and quarantine of family members.

"Social stigma makes people hide their illness and keep them away from seeking health care. Accurate data is vitally important for appropriate response which is key to mitigate further disaster.

To deal with the problem, we must understand how bad it is.

Poor quality data equals poor decision which in turn leads to lost opportunity to improve population health in a crisis. Without accurate tallies, response won't be enough to defeat the outbreak," the statement concluded.

JK Gases Supplying 1200 Oxygen Cylinders Daily To hospitals

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: While Jammu & Kashmir Government has augmented capacity of oxygen production at different hospitals on war footing; Private Industrial Sector is also lending support to Government in its fight against Covid crisis with the production of Oxygen in their industrial Units.

One such unit, JK Gases, situated at Old Airport Rangreth, Srinagar has come forward to fight against oxygen scarcity and is assisting the government since the emergence of second Covid wave which has forced public and private sector to mobilise their resources for tackling and mitigating the pandemic effect and save precious lives.

According to the Incharge JK Gases, Javid Ahmad the Oxygen Concentration Plant is producing 250 cubic meters of oxygen per day which equals to 1200 cylinders and is one of the largest oxygen plants in J&K.



He said that since April 10 the demand for oxygen increased manifold and their Oxygen Concentration Plant has kept pace with the rising demand and has enhanced its production capacity continuously. The said plant is running round the clock to maintain the demand oriented supply to its full potential.

"Before April 10, JK Gases was supplying 400 Cylinders to the hospitals", Javid Ahmad said. At present hundred percent of the oxygen cylinders are being supplied to

the hospitals mostly, SKIMS, SMHS and SKIMS Bemina to help the covid infected patients.

Pertinently, J&K Government has been reiterating that there is no shortage of oxygen and is fully catering to demand in all the districts.

A senior officer of Industries & Commerce department when contacted said that apart from oxygen plants functioning in hospitals, there are four oxygen manufacturing plants in Kashmir Division having an overall production capacity of 17400 cubic metre which works out to a total production of roughly 2483 oxygen cylinders in 24 hours.

The officer said the Industries & Commerce department is closely monitoring the oxygen plants and has deployed Industrial promotion Officers (IPOs) to maintain oversight of the whole production and distribution process, which helped streamline the oxygen distribution to a large extent.

Son Exhausts Father's Money On PUBG, Escapes From Home

Observer News Service

UDHAMPUR: A man had to seek police help in tracing his PUBG addicted son who had escaped from home after consuming Rs two lakh, reserved for house construction, on the game.

PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds (PUBG) is an online gaming app that is most popular among teens. The game is highly addictive and various countries have imposed a ban on the game as they say it was having an adverse effect on teenagers.

As per details, a man resident of Rehambal in Udhampur district of Jammu and Kashmir, de-

posited Rs 2 lakh in his son's bank account so that he can withdraw it later, as construction work of his house was going on.

Two days back when the man sent his son to bank for withdrawing the said amount from his account, he didn't return back. When the son went missing and was not traced after hectic efforts, his father lodged a missing report with the police.

Police later traced the missing youth in Delhi following his call records.

During scrutiny of his bank account, it was learnt that youth had spent all the money on PUBG game.

Magisterial Inquiry Ordered Into Death Of Covid Patient In Poonch

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Authorities in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district on Saturday ordered a magisterial inquiry into the death of a 65-year-old COVID-19 patient after her relatives alleged medical negligence by doctors during her treatment.

Poonch District Magistrate Inder Jeet ordered the inquiry and asked the inquiry officer, Additional Deputy Commissioner Basharat Hussain, to submit his report within seven days, officials said.

In an order, the DM said a video went viral on social media after the woman, a resident of Mangnar village of Haveli Tehsil, succumbed to

COVID-19 at Poonch district hospital on Friday with her relatives accusing the hospital authorities of negligence in handling the case.

The order said the Medical superintendent, district hospital, Poonch has reported that the attendant manhandled the doctor on duty.

"The allegations are of very serious in nature and need to be thoroughly investigated," the district magistrate said and ordered an inquiry by additional deputy commissioner.

"He (Hussain) shall impartially inquire into the matter and submit the factual report within seven days positively. He shall be fully cooperated by Health authorities," the order said.

Robust Mechanism In Place To Combat Covid-19 Pandemic: DC Pulwama

PULWAMA: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Pulwama, Baseer ul Haq Choudhary Saturday said that the District Administration has placed a robust mechanism to deal with the situation arisen due to 2nd wave of the Covid -19 in the district.

While briefing the media today, the DC stated that in order to tackle the challenges mounted by COVID-19 pandemic effectively, the Administration has converted DH Pulwama into a COVID facility where better medical and other facilities are provided to the Covid Patients.

He said that there are 575 Beds with adequate oxygen supply available at different locations in the district where 161 covid positive patients are being treated and by the end of this month the bed capacity would be enhanced from 1250 to 1300.

He further informed that 98 percent covid patients are treated in the district

while only 2 percent patients are referred to other hospitals.

Regarding availability of Oxygen, the DC said that 1300 lpm Oxygen Plant is supplying oxygen to the district which is further augmented by the availability of 550 - 600 oxygen cylinders available in the District.

There are 86 containment zones in the district besides 244 surveillance teams have been constituted to monitor the situation in these zones, he added.

He further said that COVID kits containing oximeters and essential medicine are being distributed to the Patients so that they can monitor the prognosis of the disease in home isolation.

The DC said that the Administration is dealing with the situation as per recommended guidelines and urged all the stakeholders to play an active role in combating the deadly disease.

Qazigund Resident Found Hanging In Rented Accommodation

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A 35-year-old man was found hanging on Saturday in his rented accommodation at Qazigund area of South Kashmir's Kulgam district.

The person is a resident of Kund belt of South Kashmir's Kulgam district. A senior police official said that the man has been identified as Shabir Ahmad Naikoo (35) son of Sonaullah Naikoo, a resident of Waripora Kund. He was found hanging at Qazigund area of Kulgam.

He said that the Naikoo was residing in a rented accommodation at Qazigund in the house of Chulam Ahmad Mir son of Abdul Salam Mir, a resident of Chaimullah since November 25 last year. The officer said that it is premature to say whether it was a suicide or a murder. He said that a case under relevant sections of law has been registered to ascertain the cause of the incident. (CNS)

leaves' and accordingly a case vide FIR number 60/2021 under relevant sections of NDPS Act was registered in police station Sumbal and further investigations taken up, they said.

However, the duo later in the day managed to escape from custody. Subsequently, they said, "an alert was sounded which led to their re-arrest within an hour".

When contacted, DIG North-Kashmir Range Sujit Kumar said that both the accused have been arrested.

"An enquiry into the incident will be initiated as to see under what circumstances the duo managed to escape custody," he said.

SRINAGAR: Two drug-peddlers were arrested within hours after they allegedly escaped from police custody in Ajas area of north Kashmir's Bandipora district on Saturday, officials said.

They said two drug peddlers identified as Mubashir Ahmad Lone, a resident of Lone Mohalla Ajas, and Showkat Ahmad Shiekh, a resident of Rather Mohalla Ajas, were arrested by a party during a naka checking at Bazipora Ajas Saturday.

The duo was caught with a large quantity of Charas hidden in maize

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER IRRIGATION DIVISION KULGAM
NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS
e-NIT No:05 /IDK/2021-22

For & on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor J&K Union Territory, e-tenders are invited (in single cover system) "on item rate basis" from registered PWD contractors whose registration cards are valid in terms of standing rules for the following works:-

S. No.	Name of work	Adv. Cost Rs.in lacs	Bid Security	Class of Contract	Time for Compl	Cost of tender Document	Major Head	Tender Receiving authority
1	Plugging of breach by way of cement concrete on lakut khull at RD 400mts B/o Sounman canal.	0.49		DEE	10 days	200/-	M&R	Exe Engineer IDKulga m.
2	Silt/slip clearance /re sectioning from RD 2280mts -6300mts on Banimullah canal main	2.19		DEE	10 days	200/-	M&R	Exe Engineer IDKulga m.
3	Checking of leakages of aqueducts and flume RD 3100,3300,3520,3800,5400,5700and 6000mts of right distributaries of Banimullah canal.	2.70		DEE	10 days	200/-	M&R	Exe Engineer IDKulga m.
4	Checking of leakages of aqueducts and flumes RD 1725,2250,2490,2810 and 2900mts of right distributary of Banimullah canal.	2.55		DEE	10 days	200/-	M&R	Exe Engineer IDKulga m.
5	Removal of silt/slips/earth from vessu canal at Daungan and kp colony at vessu.	0.47		DEE	10 days	200/-	M&R	Exe Engineer IDKulga m.
6	Removal of silt/slips/earth from Gama ladi Gukhari ladi and largam ladi at vessu.	0.65		DEE	10 days	200/-	M&R	Exe Engineer IDKulga m.
7	Removal of silt from Mergladi branch of Mav. Khull from RD 0-500 mts at Tarigan kulgam.	0.67		DEE	10 days	200/-	M&R	Exe Engineer IDKulga m.
8	Const. of lining wall on yari canal at damaged spot near RD 4500mts	2.54		DEE	10 days	200/-	M&R	Exe Engineer IDKulga m.
9	Silt clearance of khrewan ladi b/o Gudmarch canal from RD 0-1500mts at spots	0.45		DEE	10 days	200/-	M&R	Exe Engineer IDKulga m.

The bidding document and other details can be downloaded from the website:
<http://jktenders.gov.in>

The bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings (if any), book of quantities (BOQ), set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the website:
[WWW.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in)

As per the Schedule of dates given below:

i	ii	iii	iv	v
Publishing date of NIT	12/05/2021	Download start date	12/05/2021	Bid submission start date
			12/05/2021	12/05/2021
			20/05/2021 upto 04:00 PM	Bid opening date
				21/05/2021 at 11: 00 AM

2. Bids must be accompanied by bid security and cost of tender document as specified in the table above and pledged in favour of the Executive Engineer Irrigation Division Kulgam. Bid security will have to be in any one of the forms as specified in the bidding documents and shall be valid for six months after the opening of the bid. Bids will be opened in the office of the Executive Engineer Irrigation Division Kulgam on 21/05/2021 at 11: 00 AM. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue in presence of the bidders who may wish to be present.

3. Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copies of all necessary documents like Bid Security Declaration, *treasury challan (MH-0701/0702)*, GSTIN /Registration card duly renewed and the successful bidder i.e L1 must submit the Bid Security Declaration/ Treasury Receipt, (in original) in the office of tender receiving authority after opening and declaration of successful bidder. **Further the bidder must upload the contact details viz valid Phone No/ email ID.**

4. The department will not be responsible for delay in online submission due to any reason.

5. The tenders shall remain valid for 90 days from the date of opening of bid.

6. As soon as the contract is fixed with the successful bidder, he has to enter into an agreement with the department. However, non-drawal of agreement will not prevent the contract from being enforced upon him.

7. The bid security declaration shall be invoked if:-
a) Any bidder withdraws his bid during the period of bid validity or makes any modification in terms & condition of the bid.
b) The successful contractor fails to execute an agreement with the department within 10 days after fixation of contract.
c) The successful bidder fails to start the work within one week from the date of fixation of contract. The tender opening authority reserves the right to accept/reject the bid without assigning any reason thereof.

8. Watch & ward of dept. Material issued for the work (s) shall be exclusively the responsibility of the successful contractor/bidder & in the event of any loss/theft of the materials, the same shall be the responsibility of the bidder, the cost thereof shall be recovered from the bidder @ double the stock issue rates.

9. Any kind of damage which may occur in any work during the course of execution due to torrential rains/heavy snow fall/cyclone/floods etc. shall be the responsibility of the bidder till the work is finally handed-over to the Department.

10. The taxes viz. Income tax, Service tax & Cess shall be deducted from the bidder's claims as admissible under rules.

11. The bidders are advised not to make any change in BOQ (Bill of Quantities). In no case they should attempt to create similar BOQ manually. The BOQ downloaded should be used for filling item rate inclusive of all taxes & it should be saved with the same name as it contains.

12. The unit rates & prices shall quoted by the bidder entirely in Indian Rupees and the rates quoted shall be deemed to include price escalation and all taxes upto completion of work unless otherwise specified.

13. If the bidder does not quote rate for any item of the BOQ, such item/items shall be deemed to be the part of the overall/total contract value and no rate shall be allowed for such item/items.

14. The date of start of work shall be reckoned within one week from the date of issuance of LOI/Contract allotment as the case may be.

15. **Furnishing of hard copies of bids immediately after submission of e-tenders is dispensed with. The same should be obtained only from the bidder who is declared as L1 after opening of financial bids as per the Finance department's No; O.M No; A/24 (2017) -651 Dtd; 07/06/2018**

16. **In case the executing agency shall fail to complete the work within the stipulated time, the penalty upto 10% of the contract value shall be imposed on account of delayed completion.**

17. Other terms & conditions shall be the same as laid down in the PWD Form-25 duoble.

No:
Dtd:
DIPK-1596/21

Executive Engineer
Irrigation Division Kulgam

BOTTOM

Four Arrested For Thrashing Masjid Imam, His Relatives In Doda

Observer News Service

BHALESSA: Four persons have been arrested after a 22-year-old Hafiz-e-Quran, a Masjid Imam, his father and brother were allegedly beaten after on Friday in Bhalessa area of Doda district in Chenab region.

A senior police official said that a scuffle broke out between two groups after Friday prayers in which three persons identified as Abdul Wahid his brother Muhammad Rafi and their father Nisar Ahmed — all residents of Banjar Kahal village in Bhalessa were injured.

They were shifted to SDH Gandoh, he said, adding that Abdul Wahid (Hafiz-e-Quran) who lead

Taraweh prayers in the locality in the month of Ramadan, was referred to GMC Doda due to serious injuries.

Meanwhile, members of the Masjid Committee said that the fight took place after Friday prayers when committee decided to give Hadiya to Hafiz-e-Quran, collected for him.

"A local resident over some issues related to the prayer leader slapped one of his (Imam) cousins, which lead to the scuffle and resulted in injuries to three persons," he said.

Police has arrested four persons and registered FIR under number 42/21 under section 341, 323, 504, 506, 147 IPC section. (CNS)

Two Drug Peddlers Arrested After Fleeing From Police Custody In Bandipora

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Two drug-peddlers were arrested within hours after they allegedly escaped from police custody in Ajas area of north Kashmir's Bandipora district on Saturday, officials said.

They said two drug peddlers identified as Mubashir Ahmad Lone, a resident of Lone Mohalla Ajas, and Showkat Ahmad Shiekh, a resident of Rather Mohalla Ajas, were arrested by a party during a naka checking at Bazipora Ajas Saturday.

The duo was caught with a large quantity of Charas hidden in maize

leaves' and accordingly a case vide FIR number 60/2021 under relevant sections of NDPS Act was registered in police station Sumbal and further investigations taken up, they said.

However, the duo later in the day managed to escape from custody. Subsequently, they said, "an alert was sounded which led to their re-arrest within an hour".

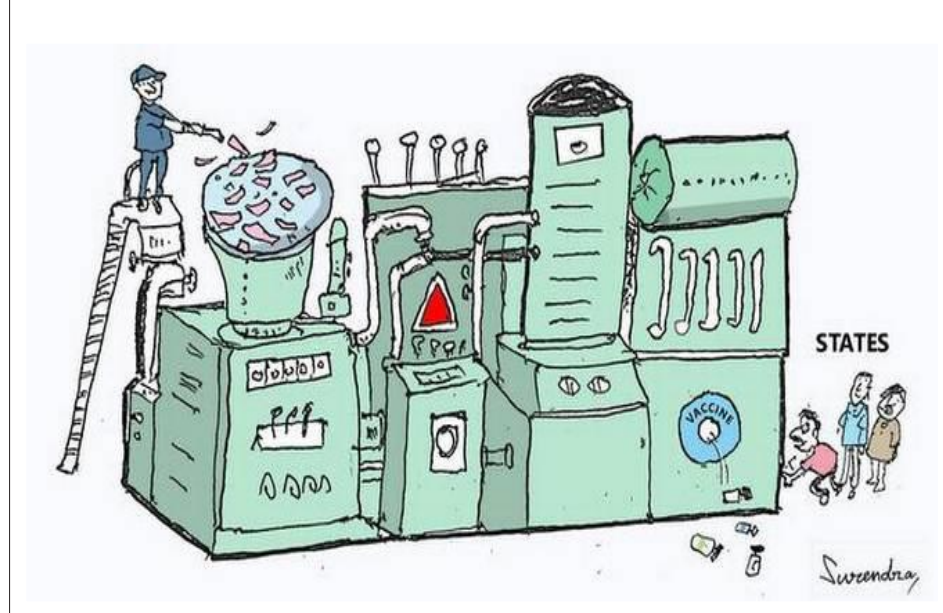
When contacted, DIG North-Kashmir Range Sujit Kumar said that both the accused have been arrested.

"An enquiry into the incident will be initiated as to see under what circumstances the duo managed to escape custody," he said.

KASHMIR
OBSERVER

Printed & Published by Sajjad Haider on behalf of the Kashmir Observer LLP
Published from: # 5- Boulevard, Srinagar-190001
Printed at: KT Press Pvt. Ltd, Rangreth Ind Area, Srinagar.
RNI Registration No: 69503/98
Postal Registration No-L/159/KO/SK/2014-16
Editor-in-Chief: Sajjad Haider
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NO HOLDS BARRED



Critic and researchers have pointed out the need to use terminologies in an informed and dispassionate manner. A significant breakthrough that has taken place in this context is the UN report which categorically classifies Israel as an 'apartheid' state, replacing the term 'persecution' for its ill-treatment of Palestinians

Power Play of Language Use

The radical potentials of terminology in aiding the cause of occupied Palestine

Ahymon Ayoub

The retaliatory action that followed from Palestinian end was given the whole spotlight and assumed a disproportionately hyperbolic character almost reversing the roles of the oppressed and the oppressor. The highly asymmetrical distribution of power and weaponry was easily glossed over too

The current violent attacks on Palestine have shaken the Muslim conscience with macabre visuals of bombings, blood-smearred rubble and helpless cries of children, mothers and fathers unsettling every sensible human. The notion of Ummah- a unified single body spread across cultures, sensibilities, geographies sharing the essence of unity nevertheless, seems to be resurrecting at the present moment. Muslims divided by nationalities and other markers of identity are brimming with support and love for the oppressed Palestinians and calling out the war-mongering tactics of the Israeli state. The collective emotional locus of this Ummah is centered on how Israeli state is violently pushing further its project of settler colonialism amidst the global community of nation states, playing mute spectator lest their personal interest are harmed. In such an emotionally charged atmosphere, Muslims, on an individual level feel helpless with no favorable mobilization and channelization mechanisms at hand. This becomes particularly concerning when the global news and social media is handled by the powerful lot who can mislead the conversations taking place around the topic by deploying problematic and ambiguous jargons and this is where we have a formidable duty to perform.

It may seem that such ambiguity recycles itself amongst the unlettered, lay populace, which is quite not true. Twisting the linguistic and syntactic nature of sentences and exploiting them to their purpose is a popular apparatus used by the oppressor to portray itself as innocent or to diminish the criminality of its excesses. At the present instance also, the language algorithm is clearly failing the cause of Palestine and Palestinians with Western Media constantly twisting the narratives to favor the culprit. Deploying euphemisms, understatement and adopting passive tones, cherry-picking statements out of the context is how the media tries to wrongly shape up the discourse to the best interests of the oppressor. In the series of attacks also, launched against Sheikh Jarrah residents to forcefully evict them from their homes and to usurp their lands, the same set of tactics were deployed to portray the assaults as innocent. Terms like "clashes", "fresh violence", "escalation" were used to introduce the audience with one sided violence creating a smokescreen of ambiguity all over. Vocabulary to encompass inhumane desecration of Al-Quds by Israeli forces and assaults against the worshippers suddenly went missing. The retaliatory action that followed from Palestinian end was given the whole spotlight and assumed a disproportionately hyperbolic character almost reversing the roles of the oppressed and the oppressor. The highly

asymmetrical distribution of power and weaponry was easily glossed over too. While some well-meaning reports and online conversations even within Muslim context adopted the usage of the term like 'ethnic-cleansing' to refer to the assaults, such portrayals are nevertheless problematic, unjust and taxing on the oppressed. The oppressor on the other hand benefits from such renewed colonial tropes packed up in cute neologisms. To dissect the term cleansing, it presumes the presence of something unclean that warrants tidying up, some laundry works essentially to be taken up by the already 'cleansed' i.e the Saviour. Not only is the term lazy and irresponsible, but inherent are racist dispositions and total acquittal of the culprit. Amendments in discourses on the local level can be made relatively easily by being more cautious and informed. In public spaces like the media houses, the employment of the problematic lexicon has met serious challenges over time. Critics and researchers have pointed out the need to use terminologies in an informed and dispassionate manner. A significant breakthrough that has taken place in this context is the UN report which categorically classifies Israel as an 'apartheid' state, replacing the term 'persecution' for its ill-treatment of Palestinians. Human Rights Watch

also noted that Israel's policies are racist and based on apartheid. Association of the term apartheid with Israel has always irked the latter as officially it claims to follow a non-discriminatory policy irrespective of race, nationality, or ethnicity. Criticism however stems from the Israeli policies that enforce a separation between Israel and West Bank inhibiting the movement of Palestinians within the West Bank into Israel. Israel also has repeatedly contested the usage of the term 'Apartheid Wall' that indicates the forced separation of the two regions based on ethnicity. Instead, it prefers to call it 'Security Wall' which helps the state maintain its existence. Employment of apt jargon has had practical and policy implications. The Boycott and Divestment Movement has, for example, gained strength and momentum with such explicit statements made by Human Rights groups and civil society members. The effects of the lexicon used are therefore more far-reaching and therefore warrant constant scrutiny to detect the tropes used against the Subaltern.

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

The author is a researcher with a special focus on Religion and Gender.

In 1984, Palestinian American intellectual and Columbia University Professor Edward Said famously argued that Palestinians are denied "permission to narrate". More than 30 years later, in 2020, Maha Nassar, a Palestinian American Associate Professor at the University of Arizona, analysed opinion articles published in two daily newspapers – The New York Times and The Washington Post – and two weekly news magazines – The New Republic and The Nation – over a 50-year period, from 1970 to 2019. Perhaps unsurprisingly, she found that "Editorial boards and columnists seem to have been quite consumed with talking about the Palestinians, often in condescending and even racist ways – yet they somehow did not feel the need to hear much from Palestinians themselves." Nassar's research, like many others before it, clearly demonstrates that more than three decades after the publication of Said's landmark essay, the exclusion of Palestinian voices from mainstream media narratives in the West – and the attempts to erase the humanity of the Palestinians or whitewash Israel's crimes against them – continue unabated.

Sadly, however, this unjust status quo has not only remained unchanged since Said brought it under the spotlight – it has deteriorated. In recent years, social media became a lifeline for many who want to raise awareness about causes and struggles ignored or undermined by mainstream media outlets.

Yet tech companies are now actively working to exclude Palestinian voices from their platforms, thereby expanding the calculated erasure and silencing of the Palestinians to social media. In April, for example, Zoom, Facebook and YouTube blocked the online academic event "Whose Narratives? What Free Speech for Palestine?" co-sponsored by the Arab and Muslim Ethnicities and Diasporas (AMED) Studies program at San Francisco State University, the Council of UC Faculty Associations (CUFCA), and the University of California Humanities Research Institute (UCHRI). The event was to feature anti-apartheid activists from around the globe, including Palestinian resistance icon Leila Khaled and South Africa's former ANC military leader Ronnie Kasrils. This event was in fact a repeat of an open classroom co-organised by Dr Rabab Ibrahim Abdulhadi (AMED Studies) and Dr Tomomi Kinukawa (Women and Gender Studies) of San Francisco State University that Zoom initially censored in September 2020. Then, as now, Zoom and other social media companies said they decided to block the event from their platforms due to the planned participation of Leila Khaled. They claimed, as Khaled is affiliated with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), a "US-designated terrorist organisation", allowing the event to proceed would be in violation of US laws prohibiting material support for terrorism. As repeatedly asserted by numerous legal experts, the argument put forth by the social media companies is without merit. It not only ignores all relevant legal

Digital apartheid

Omar Zahzah

precedents and falsely alleges violations of US law, but also amounts to an attack on academic freedoms. Indeed, in an open letter to Zoom executives published in October last year, experts from Palestine Legal and other legal organisations stressed that Zoom's censoring of the AMED event constitutes "a dangerous attack on free speech and academic freedom, and an abuse of your contract with our public university systems". They added that "[Zoom's] status as an essential public service does not give you veto power over the content of the nation's classrooms and public events." These warnings, however, went unheeded, with Zoom and other social media companies completely ignoring the growing criticism of their biased policies and escalating their efforts to silence Palestinian

Israel and its allies are not only pressuring Big Tech to silence the Palestinians from outside. Facebook's oversight board, an independent body tasked with deliberating on the platform's content decisions, includes former director-general of the Israeli ministry of justice, Emi Palmor.

speech on their platforms. In April, after Zoom refused to host the "Whose Narratives?" event for the second time – following pressure from an Israeli government app and several right-wing Zionist organisations – Facebook not only took down publicity posts about the event, but also deleted the page of the AMED Studies program from its platform in its entirety, effectively erasing a vast archive of talks, discussions and documents on the Palestinian liberation struggle and its relationship to freedom movements from around the world. These materials were being intentionally shared and stored on Facebook for academics, activists, organisers and the community at large to be able to engage with them free of charge and without restriction. Coming on the heels of Zoom's repeated attempts to arbitrate what is and is not acceptable speech in academia, Facebook's deletion of the AMED page made clear Big Tech's modus operandi when it comes to Israel-Palestine: censor material related to the Palestinian struggle on Israel's demand, and ignore any criticism of these unlawful and unjust actions. Israel and its allies are not only pressuring Big Tech to silence the Palestinians from outside. Facebook's oversight board, an independent body tasked with deliberating on the platform's content decisions, includes former director-general of the Israeli ministry of justice, Emi Palmor. Palmor personally managed Israel's Cyber Unit in the past, which successfully lobbied for the removal of thousands of pieces of Palestinian content from Facebook. While it is only logical to assume Palmor's presence

on the oversight board is contributing to Facebook's anti-Palestinian actions, Big Tech's routine silencing of Palestinian voices cannot be blamed on such overtly pro-Israeli actors in its higher echelons alone. Since the very beginning, social media companies have gravitated towards and aligned with centres of power in the US capitalist and imperialist structures. They even partnered with the US Department of Defence, coordinating surveillance and big data analysis. So it is not that a few powerful pro-Israeli voices are coopting social media companies into silencing dissent; the industry itself is rotten to its core. Let us not forget how Big Tech executives and employees have orchestrated a huge land grab and gentrification in the San Francisco Bay Area, displacing thousands

a result of the attack. On Monday, Israeli occupation forces again fired at Palestinians, who had gathered at Al-Aqsa to pray and protect the site from settler violence, with rubber-coated bullets, stun grenades, and tear gas; reporters, journalists and medics were among the wounded. In the latest act of collective punishment, Israel began a ruthless bombing campaign in the Gaza Strip on Monday night, flattening civilian infrastructure and media offices. The current death toll is estimated to be at least 65, 16 of whom are children, with 365 wounded, according to the Gaza Ministry of Health. On Wednesday night, settler and police violence against Palestinians in the city of Lydd (also known as Lod) peaked as hundreds of Israelis stormed the city, attacking Palestinian protesters following the murder of 33-year-old Palestinian man, Musa Hasouna. Israeli Border Forces were eventually transferred to Lydd from the West Bank. Furthermore, fascist Israelis participated in an attempted lynching of a Palestinian man in Bat Yam, forcibly removing him from his car and beating him unconscious. The Israeli Supreme Court has since delayed the Sheikh Jarrah forced removals for 30 days, but activists have identified this as a stalling tactic meant to diffuse momentum and support for the Sheikh Jarrah residents. In a recent CNN interview, Mohamed El-Kurd, a Palestinian poet and activist from Sheikh Jarrah, powerfully turned the age-old media trope of Palestinians being inherently "violent" on its head by responding to the reporter's leading question with one of his own: "Do you support the violent dispossession of me and my family?" As usual, US mainstream media organisations attempt to hide the asymmetrical nature of Israel's aggression by defining its latest and ongoing attacks on the Palestinian people as "clashes" or a "conflict". Mainstream media's ongoing efforts to whitewash Israel's deadly occupation, coupled with the dire and rapidly escalating situation of Palestinians in Sheikh Jarrah as well as all Palestinians resisting in support of them, make unrestricted access to social media especially crucial for Palestinians and their allies. But rather than amplifying the righteous struggle of Palestinians resisting violence and displacement, social media companies are furthering the interests and agenda of the very government attacking them. This latest round of social media censorship of Palestinian posts about Sheikh Jarrah is part of a larger pattern of repression, given the long and well-documented complicity between Israel and social media companies in regulating and censoring Palestinian content and accounts. Instagram officially attributed these latest deletions to a "global technical issue". Twitter likewise claimed the restriction of the account of Palestinian writer Mariam Barghouti, which was subsequently reinstated following a huge social media outcry, was an "accident". Activists and watchdog organisations have expressed doubts about such explanations, given the targeted nature of the removals and censures.

Khalid Bashir's Latest 'Kashmir Discovery' Setting Records Straight

Mir Seeneen

With coming events casting their shadow by mid-thirties, one sees Jawahar Lal Nehru's troupe making rounds of the valley for rigging ideology. Headquartered at Mujahid Manzil, Abdullah as the face of Muslim Conference would soon get swayed by Congress congregations and change the camp—which had become one of the first groups to resist the regime—into National Conference.

AFTER busting medieval myths with his tell-all treatise hailed as an exceptional fact-finder on Kashmir history, the hardy historian has returned with yet another probing paperback.

The 300-odd pager—KASHMIR, Looking Back in Time: Politics, Culture, History—published by Atlantic is recreating Kashmir's post-1931 phase triggered by a baffling butler and immortalized by the blood of the 20-odd Kashmiris gunned down by the Dogra regime.

That macabre episode set the stage for Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and his politics of appropriateness.

In Khalid Bashir Ahmad's new book, Abdullah is Don King of "The Rumble in the Jungle?" fame.

Don was America's most famous hype man—behind the boxing bout between Muhammed Ali and Joe Frazier—who had notoriously shot dead a robber and stomped an employee to death over a debt.

In Kashmir's political ring of yore, Abdullah was playing Don King by creating hype around his machismo, swaying beleaguered masses with his rhetoric, and unleashing ire on his opponents.

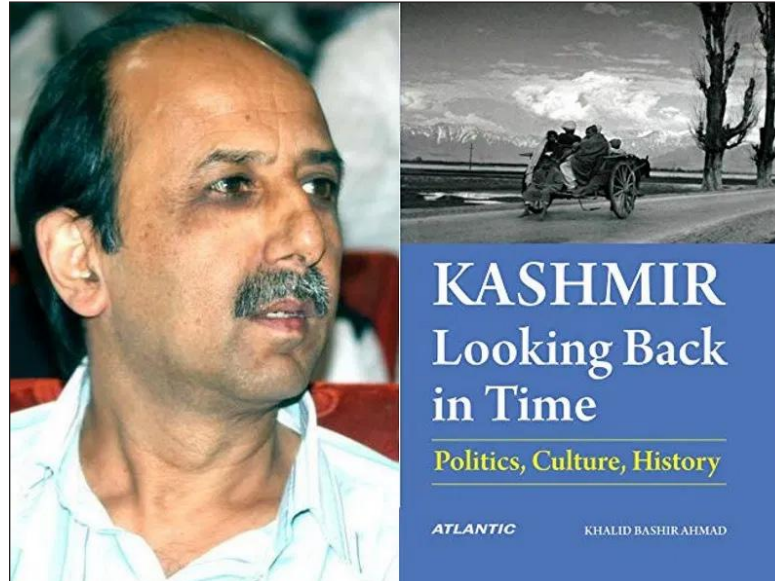
The man had a say and he made most of it as the frontman in this new history text.

With coming events casting their shadow by mid-thirties, one sees Jawahar Lal Nehru's troupe making rounds of the valley for rigging ideology. Headquartered at Mujahid Manzil, Abdullah as the face of Muslim Conference would soon get swayed by Congress congregations and change the camp—which had become one of the first groups to resist the regime—into National Conference.

The 'tall leader' conveniently sidelined the pioneers of Muslim Conference and would even shrug his miffed better half—the 'benign begum' who would salvage his reputation by rescuing the abducted Muslim women of Jammu in the later part of 1940s.

Abdullah ditched friends and hugged fiends, and thus ended up losing his sway as the 'supreme leader'.

National Conference founder and fountainhead would swear his



Extolled for his pioneering work like 'Kashmir: Exposing the Myth Behind the Narrative', 'Kashmir: A Walk Through History' and 'Jhelum: The River Through My Backyard', Khalid Bashir Ahmad is now back with another history text reconstructing the 20th century's turbulent years of Kashmir.

allegiance to the cruel crown he confronted as the poster boy of 'Quit Kashmir' movement. He was appointed as an emergency administrator by Hari Singh on the heels of Partition.

Later, the banished Dogra king would send a distress dispatch to the President of India expressing his bitterness against Abdullah and Delhi's plot to overthrow him.

That plea to president came from the erstwhile monarch whose Prime Minister, RC Kak—a Kashmiri Pandit—would first raise the call for Independent Jammu and Kashmir, when the Two-Nation Theory was bleeding subcontinent.

Khalid Bashir's Sheikh Abdullah profile is scientific—carefully bypassing redundancy and rigmarole—just like his previously published account of the world's least known genocide: Jammu Massacre of 1947.

This former bureaucrat has displayed a gritty researcher's flair

while unearthing archives, tracing witnesses, and making able use of his contacts. Some of these chapters loaded with multiple details and voices remind one of the author's seminal piece on Kashmiri Pandit migration of 1990.

And that's the reason why this historical fact-finding is ending many misconceptions and confusions created by media and some shallow scholars, with their out-of-place anecdotes, agenda-driven analysis, partial history reportages, and bent of reproducing historical narratives without proper context.

But as a silent servant of art, Khalid Bashir seems declimating cults and canons, and creating new history consciousness with his exhaustive exploration.

And since most of these recorded events have not been attributed to any dubious chronicler or accidental historian makes this book an objective reading of Kashmir history.

Khalid Bashir Ahmad

A native of Srinagar and part of system during the most intriguing times of Kashmir politics, Khalid Bashir talks about the holy relic theft, culture of cinema, sports and way of life in the valley.

His chapter on how Kashmiris would embark on the grueling seapilgrimage is a revival of the past window.

The chronicler who's a gutsy explorer at the same time talks about the renaming of places and the rumour republic. Both renaming and rumours stand weaponised in the strife-zone now.

And then there're canards and conspiracies drawn by the "poet of east" for pleading the case of his oppressed homeland. As bizarre as it may sound, Sir Mohammad Iqbal's detractors—and the crown apologists—had dismissed his laments and longings for his roots as his bid for prime ministership!

The book talks about the 1939 Kashmiri Pandit agitation against the Dogra crown's temple custody in Srinagar. To oppose the move tooth and nail, the minority community hit the streets with stone-pelting, sit-ins and seething parades.

There's a mention of some dubious characters under Dogra regime, broke residency, and the evolution of journalism in Kashmir.

Foreign-educated sovereign, Hari Singh had allowed newspapers in Srinagar previously gagged by his predecessor. Later that mediascape would produce some fiery scribes eventually taking shelter in politics.

But while documentation of Kashmir history is still work in progress, Khalid Bashir's scientific approach is already provoking a change. With this new book, he has only tried to set the records straight.

KASHMIR, Looking Back in Time, is indeed a story of the loss of intellectual tradition of Kashmir and gradual emptying of its cultural opulence.

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Mir Seeneen is a Srinagar-based scribe whose works have appeared in TRT World, Deccan Herald, and many other publications.

How To Get Rid Of Brain Fog Caused By The COVID-19 Pandemic

If you're struggling to focus lately (who isn't?), try one of these tips to improve your stress and sharpen your mind.

Anika Nayak

Feeling loopy? The coronavirus pandemic has continued to disrupt our lives and it has taken a toll on us — emotionally, mentally and physically. A year of being isolated at home has made people more stressed, anxious and fearful of what the future may look like. Due to the social distancing measures in place, we haven't been able to resume the activities we're used to doing, so we're not actively engaging our brains.

Instead, our brains feel fuzzy and it's slowing us down. We may be taking longer to do tasks or forgetting them altogether.

"Brain fog is used to describe feelings of exhaustion, confusion and lack of concentration," said Jessica Gold, an assistant professor in the department of psychiatry at the Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis.

Brain fog, also described as quarantine brain, is actually how your brain is responding to all the chaos that's going on right now, Gold said. "There's only so much our brains and bodies can handle living in a state of uncertainty for the past year," she said. Understand that you're not alone and that it's completely normal to be feeling this way.

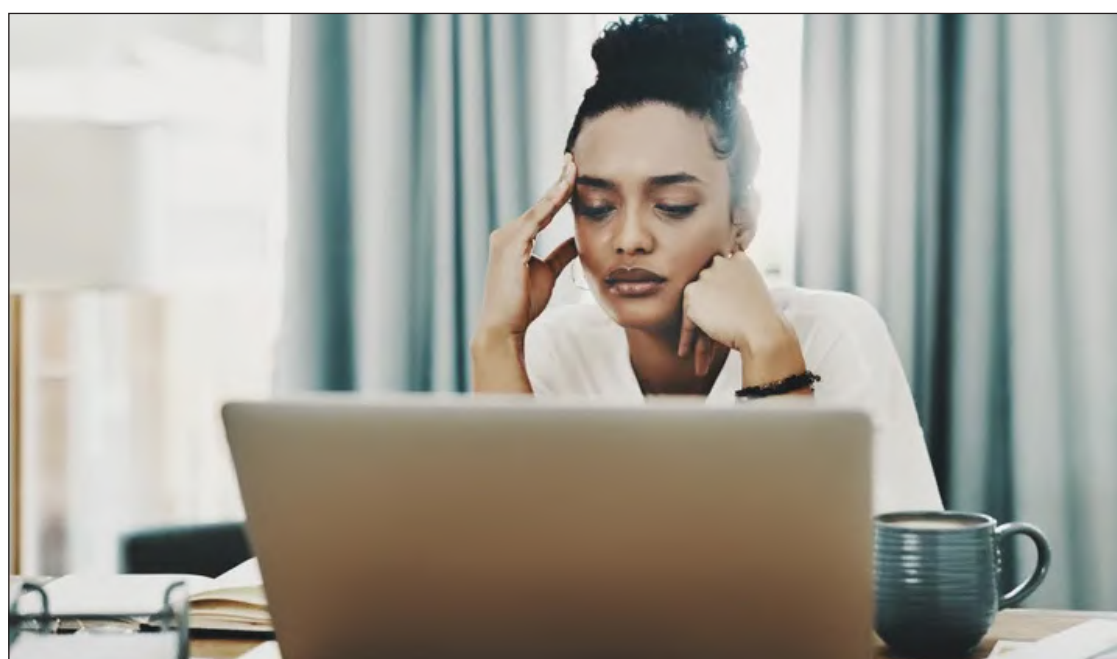
Luckily, there are some ways to get rid of some of your brain fog symptoms and increase your mental clarity. Here's what you can do:

Take breaks

Chances are, you're working continuously if you're doing most of your activities at home. The pandemic makes us feel like our days are blended together and it may feel like you're working all day if there's no sense of time.

Take care of yourself by taking breaks often. When you start to feel overworked or exhausted, pause and step away from your screen for a moment. "While taking a break, make sure you're doing something that is not work-related to allow your brain to rest and recover," Gold said.

Go on a walk with friends, take a spontaneous coffee break, or phone a family member. Consider taking more vacations and time off work. Find ways to stimulate your mind and improve your mood through activities that make you happy.



Try a mindfulness exercise

Mindfulness can help us regain the focus, concentration and alertness from our brain fog. By being aware of the present moment, we can calm our mind and body, which has been in "survival mode" during this crisis.

"Mindfulness meditation quiets your mind, but it also removes the mental 'cobwebs,' creating a sense of awakening in your brain. This break on our brains allows it to reboot and be effective," said Cynthia Catchings, a licensed therapist at Talkspace.

Carve out some time for mindfulness each day, whether it's doing a meditation or deep breathing practice. If you're looking for more physical activity, try an online or in-person yoga class.

Socialize with others

If you've been staying at home for the past year, chances are you've not had much social interaction with others in-person. The good news is that fully vaccinated people can now engage in gatherings with other people.

"Lifting some of the strict restrictions we've been tied to for the past year can help reduce the brain fog. If you have been disconnected for a year, now you can safely ease back into socializing with others," Gold said.

She suggested making plans with other people whether it's going for a walk together or doing a lunch date. Taking this slowly and steadily will not only help with all that numbness but also help with transitioning back into this "new normal."

Get a good night's sleep

The amount of shut-eye you get every night has a tremendous impact on your overall health and well-being. The extreme stress caused by the pandemic may be leading to a lot of sleepless nights.

"Sleep gives us the restoration our body needs in order to pay attention and think better," Catchings said.

While it's easier said than done, try to get at least six to eight hours of sleep at night. It may be helpful to build a consistent sleep and wake schedule, limit your screen time before bed, and do some-

thing relaxing, like taking a warm bath, in the evening to make sure you get a good night's rest.

Rebuild your routine

During the earlier months of the pandemic, you may have attempted or even started a routine to provide some structure to your days. Now, that routine may seem tedious and tiresome as you continue to do it over and over again. That can leave your mind feeling fuzzy or as if you're just rolling through the motions.

Try to incorporate joy-induced activities in your routine that you will look forward to throughout the week, Gold said. She suggested doing a "fake commute" if you once commuted to work, which entails replacing that time you had for commuting to work with a long walk or drive. By drawing a fine line through your personal and professional life, you are restoring that work-life balance and engaging your brain in a different way.

Engage in positive self-talk

It's normal to feel completely out of it right now. Don't be too hard on yourself.

"Give yourself some grace. Tell yourself that it's OK to be adjusting to all of this and that it's OK to be feeling what you're feeling," Gold said.

Whenever you don't have the brain power to devote to any task, give yourself some positive self-talk and validate what you're feeling. This inner support can combat some of that anxiousness and self-doubt.

Talk to a mental health professional

If brain fog is inhibiting your ability to get through the day, it's probably time to get some help. Consider scheduling an appointment to connect with a mental health professional now. (And if cost is a barrier, online therapy services like BetterHelp and Talkspace are more affordable options.)

"A mental health professional like a psychiatrist or therapist will work with you to manage your brain fog. We're here for you and will help you get better," Gold said.

Huff Post

Dental procedures during pandemic safe: Study

Agencies

Want to go for a dental check-up but afraid due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic? Take heart, according to a small study SARS-CoV-2 infection risk at the dentist's office is low.

SARS-CoV-2, the virus behind Covid-19, spreads mainly through respiratory droplets, and dental procedures are known to produce an abundance of aerosols - leading to fears that flying saliva during a cleaning or a restorative procedure could make the dentist's chair a high-transmission location.

Researchers from the Ohio State University in the US, set out to determine whether saliva is the main source of the spray, collecting samples from personnel, equipment and other surfaces reached by aerosols during a range of dental procedures.

Among the 28 patients enrolled for the study, salivary bacteria were detected in condensate from only eight cases and of those, five patients had not used a pre-procedural mouth rinse. The SARS-CoV-2 virus was identified in the saliva of 19 patients, but was undetectable in aerosols in any of the cases.

Microbes from irrigants contributed to about 78 per cent of the organisms in aerosols while saliva, if present, accounted for 0.1 per cent to 1.2 per cent of the microbes distributed around the room.

By analysing the genetic makeup of the organisms detected in those samples, the researchers determined that watery solution from irrigation tools, not saliva, was the main source of any bacteria or viruses present in the spatter and spurts from patients' mouths.

Even when low levels of the SARS-CoV-2 virus were detected in the saliva of asymptomatic patients, the aerosols generated during their procedures showed no signs of the coronavirus. In essence, from a microbial standpoint, the contents of the spray mirrored what was in the office environment. The study was published in the Journal of Dental Research.

"Getting your teeth cleaned does not increase your risk for Covid-19 infection any more than drinking a glass of water from the dentist's office does," said lead author Purnima Kumar, Professor of Periodontology at Ohio State.

Study finds people are persuaded by social media messages, not view numbers

People focused more on self-related factors - how they felt about the video - when considering how much influence it would have on others

Agencies

People are more persuaded by the actual messages contained in social media posts than they are by how many others viewed the posts, a new study suggests.

Researchers found that when people watched YouTube videos either for or against e-cigarette use, their level of persuasion wasn't directly affected by whether the video said it was viewed by more than a million people versus by fewer than 20.

What mattered for persuasion was viewers' perception of the message as truthful and believable.

"There wasn't a bandwagon effect in which people were persuaded by a video just because a lot of other people watched it," said Hyunyi Cho, lead author of the study and professor of communication at The Ohio State University.

"The message itself was most important for persuasion." The study will appear in the June 2021 issue of the journal Media Psychology.

The study involved 819 demographically diverse American adults aged 18-35.

Most of them were shown two YouTube videos either for or against vaping. The pro-vaping videos were commercials for e-cigarette brands. The anti-vaping videos were public service announcements produced by anti-smoking nonprofit organizations.

The researchers, though, manipulated the view numbers that participants saw for the videos. Participants saw view numbers either around 10, 100, 100,000 or 1,000,000.

Participants rated how persuasive the videos were to them: whether they affected their curiosity about e-cigarettes, positive attitude toward e-cigarette use, and susceptibility to using e-cigarettes in the future.

Results showed that participants were more persuaded when they rated them as more truthful and believable. The number of views that the video had did not have a direct impact on how much they were persuaded.

Participants were also asked how much they

thought the videos they watched would influence other young adults, Cho said.

Results showed that how participants themselves viewed the videos - whether they thought the videos were believable and truthful - was directly related to their estimation of the videos' impact on other people.

"People focused more on self-related factors - how they felt about the video - when considering how much influence it would have on others," Cho said.

"They concentrated less on other-focused factors - such as view numbers - as a reason why a video might be persuasive."

In addition, participants in the study didn't think that mass media would have as far of a reach as social media would.

Some participants saw the videos in a mock TV condition rather than in the YouTube condition. Overall, participants in the TV condition estimated the videos would have fewer views than did

the participants in the YouTube condition.

"Social media may be seen as more pervasive than mass media like television because sites like YouTube do not have the same geographic boundaries as mass media may have," Cho said. Overall, the results suggest that people should not equate the popularity of YouTube videos and other social media posts with how many people find their messages persuasive or are persuaded by them, Cho said.

"We may choose to watch a YouTube video because it has a lot of views, but that is different from whether we are persuaded by the message," she said.



Government of Jammu & Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER R&B ELECTRIC DIVISION SGR
NOTICE INVITING TENDERS
NIT No: 19/e-tendering of 2021-22/R&B DATED: - 11.05.2021

For and on behalf of the LT Governor of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, e-tenders (In Single cover system) are invited on item rate basis from approved and eligible Electrical Contractors registered with J&K State Govt. CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the following works:-

S.No.	Name of Work	Est. Cost (In Rupees/lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In Rupees)	Time of completion	Time & Date of Opening of Bid	Class of Contractor
1	Internal Electrification of 01 BHK Staff Quarters at Govt. Womens College Srinagar.	4.69 lacs	200.00	15 days	18.05.2021	"A" Class Electrical

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

1.	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	11-05-2021
2.	Period of downloading of bidding documents	11/05/2021 10.00 A.M
3.	Bid submission Start Date	11/05/2021 from 10.00 A.M
4.	Bid Submission End Date	18/05/2021 up to 4.00 P.M
5.	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	18/05/2021 at 6.00 P.M in the Office of the Executive Engineer R&B Electric Division Srinagar

02. Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of Treasury Challan in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Electric Division, Srinagar (tender inviting authority) (The Date of Treasury Challan should be between the date of start of bid and Bid Submission End date) pledged to Executive Engineer R&B Electric Division, Srinagar (tender receiving authority).

03. All Bidders has to submit Bid Security Declaration Form instead of Earnest money as per the circular of Finance Department (Bid Security Declaration Form is as per Annexure "A" below). The 1st lowest Bidder has to produce an amount equal to 3% of contract as performance security in shape of CDR/FDR/ within 02 Days before fixation of contract and shall be released after successful completion of work.

04. Bidder must read term/condition in tender document carefully.

AAA/TS = Accorded
Position of Funds = Available

Executive Engineer,
(R&B) Electric Division
Srinagar

NIT No. 19/e-tendering/ERB/336-43 DIPK-1642/21

ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
AWANTIPORA, KASHMIR.
Tele: 01933-247954/247955. Website: www.iust.ac.in

Appointment of Vice Chancellor

Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) has been established by Act no. XVIII of 2005 of the Government of Jammu & Kashmir. The "Search Committee" constituted by the Hon'ble Chancellor of the University (Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor, J&K) is seeking applications / nominations for the position of Vice Chancellor, IUST.

The Vice Chancellor, being the academic and administrative head, is expected to be:

- A person possessing the highest level of competence, integrity, morals, and institutional commitment.
- A distinguished academician, with a minimum of 10 years of experience as Professor in a University or 10 years of experience in a reputed research and/ or academic administrative organization with proof of having demonstrated academic leadership.
- Not more than 65 years of age on the closing date of receipt of applications of this advertisement.

Salary and Service Conditions:

- The post shall carry a pay of Rs. 2,10,000/- (Fixed) per month with Special Allowance of Rs. 11,250/- plus usual allowances as admissible.
- The terms and conditions of the services shall be those as set forth in the Act, Statutes and Ordinances of the University.

Procedure for Appointment :

- Appointment will be made from a panel of names recommended by the Search Committee constituted under the provisions of Islamic University of Science and Technology Act 2005.
- The advertisement and the link for application are available on the website www.iust.ac.in. The link for online application shall be available from **17th May, 2021**.
- The applications may be submitted online and a detailed CV send through email address vcsearchcommittee@islamicuniversity.edu.in latest by **15th June 2021**.
- The Search Committee reserves the right to consider eminent persons outside the list of such applications/nomination.

Sd/-
Prof. Naseer Iqbal (Registrar)

No: IUST/Reg/Adm/21/E/171
Dated: 14-05-2021

JAMMU AND KASHMIR PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
RESHAM GHAR COLONY, BAKSHI NAGAR, JAMMU.
website: <http://jkpsc.nic.in> Jammu: 0191-2566541, 2566710 (F)
email: jkpscsecretary@gmail.com Srinagar: 0194-2310523, 2310369 (F)

Sub: Qualification of DNB (broad specialities) with MD/MS & DNB (super specialities)-equivalence thereof.

NOTICE
DATED: 11.05.2021

Through the medium of this notice, all the aspiring candidates who have applied for various posts in Health & Medical Education Department on the basis of DNB qualification are hereby informed to submit certificate for equivalence of the qualification of DNB (broad specialities) with MD/MS & DNB (super specialities) with DM/M.Ch. from National Board of Examinations (NBE) to the effect that their DNB qualification has been acquired after meeting the requirement(s) laid down/prescribed in the Gazetted Notification No.MCI-12(2)/2010-Med. Misc dated 11.06.2012 read with Notification No.MCI-12(2)/2018-Med.Misc/142810 dated 31.10.2018 at the time of interview. In case this certificate is not submitted at the time of interview, the candidate may not be allowed to appear in the interview.

In case of fresh notifications, the aspiring candidates shall mandatorily have to attach such verification/ equivalence certificate along with the application form itself so as to acquire the prescribed eligibility.

Sd/-
(R. K. Katoch) KAS
Secretary
J&K Public Service Commission.

No: PSC/Secy/DNB qual/2021 Dated:11.05.2021
DIPK-1585/21

Government of Jammu and Kashmir
J&K Services Selection Board
Hema Complex, Sector-03, Channi Himmat, Jammu
(www.jkssb.nic.in)
NOTICE

Subject: Extension in last date of filling of Online Application Form for UT/Divisional/District Cadre Posts of various categories in different Departments issued vide Notification No. 02 of 2021 dated 26-03-2021.

Whereas, the J&K Services Selection Board (JKSSB) vide Advertisement Notice No. 02 of 2021 dated 26-03-2021 invited online applications from eligible candidates for participating in the selection process for UT/Divisional/District Cadre Posts of various categories in different Departments; and

Whereas, the online portal for receipt of applications from the eligible candidates has been activated on 16-04-2021 and the last date for filling of online application form is expiring on 12-05-2021; and

Whereas, the Jammu & Kashmir Services Selection Board has received number of representations from the candidates for extension in the last date for filling of online application forms; and

Whereas, the matter has been examined by the Board and it has been decided to extend the last date for submission of online application for various posts advertised vide aforementioned advertisement notification No. 02 of 2021 dated 26-03-2021.

Now, therefore, in the light of above, the last date for submission of online applications for various posts advertised vide Advertisement Notice No. 02 of 2021 dated 26-03-2021 in respect of different Departments shall now be **20-05-2021** instead of 12.05.2021.

This is the last /final extension for filling of online application forms and thereafter no more requests in this regard shall be entertained.

By Order.

(Sachin Jamwal) KAS,
Secretary
J&K Services Selection Board

No. SSB/Secy/Advt./2021/3788-3803 Dated: 12-05-2021
DIPK-1618/21

GST Council Meet To Discuss GST Relief On Covid Items



Tribune News Service

NEW DELHI: Days after the Finance Ministers of Punjab and West Bengal had questioned the Centre for not convening the GST Council for over six months, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Saturday that its next meeting will be held on May 28.

The last GST council meeting was held in October last year.

Earlier this month, Punjab Finance Minister Manpreet Badal had raised concerns about the Centre taking unilateral decisions on subjects that come under the purview of the GST Council.

Punjab wants the GST Council to discuss whether GST should be exempted on Covid related items as well as giving relief to most-impacted sectors such as aviation, hotels, commercial reality and retail.

State Finance Ministers are likely to seek additional compensation due to the frequent lockdowns and disruptions following the second Covid wave.

This was indicated by West Bengal FM Amit Mitra. Seconding Badal's call for a GST Council meeting to discuss en-

hanced compensation to states, Mitra had said the GST shortfall was expected to be Rs 1.56 lakh crore in 2021-22, without taking into consideration the impact of Covid Wave-2. "Now due to Covid Wave-2 and lockdowns, the compensation will be much higher than what was earlier projected," he wrote in the letter to Sitharaman earlier this week.

Questioning the Government for not holding any meeting of the GST Council for the last six months, Badal had said rule-making by officials has led to the harassment of law-abiding businessmen who may not have indulged in any misdemeanour at their end.

The Punjab Finance Minister has also sought transparency in GST data which gives little information whether the revenue inflow during a month relates mostly to the preceding month or are arrears.

"I'm informed it is difficult to repair a bad tax system if not done in the formative years. The promise of assured compensation does provide a ready catalyst for such a mid-course correction for some more time," he wrote to Sitharaman.

Covid Drains Bank Accounts Of Uninsured

Moderator

CHENNAI: Besides its debilitating health impact, Covid is draining the finances of its victims, particularly the uninsured, causing some to get into long-term debt.

While 49-year-old Mukund Murli got away with a Rs 20,000 bill for his hospital stay due to a health cover purchased by his employer, fellow Chennai resident S Hari Charan had to take a personal loan, which requires him to pay an EMI of Rs 6,500 for four years to clear his hospital bill.

The surge in cases and the subsequent capacity constraints are forcing the middle-class to avail of private healthcare services they cannot afford. Manoj Dubey found himself paying out-of-pocket to the extent of Rs 5 lakh after his two children and uninsured aged parents were hit by Covid, requiring hospitalisation.

Although Dubey had insurance for his wife and kids, he had to borrow from family and friends due to the non-availability of cashless treatment. There are several stories of companies going the extra mile to help employees through financial support, but there are also thousands



who have lost livelihood or suffered pay cuts. Those who lost their jobs face the double whammy of losing income as well as their employer's group health cover.

Financial planners say that the pandemic has underlined the need for health insurance now more than at any other time in the past. Last year, the insurance regulator asked companies to offer a low-cost cover for Covid treatment — Corona Kavach. This cover was to expire in March this year, but the regulator has told companies they can renew it until September. While over a crore have already availed of the policy, there is still a very large uninsured population.

"It can be a financial nightmare. It could be a once-a-year premium for medical insurance of Rs 6,041, or without it Rs 6,600 a month for four years if a personal loan is availed of," said Suresh Parthasarathy, CEO of financial planner myasetsallocation. When there is a Covid infection, in many cases, more than one family member gets infected. "The costs rise proportionately," Parthasarathy added.

COVID RELIEF PACKAGE

Houseboat Association Express Disappointment On Being Left Out



Agencies

SRINAGAR: After the government on Friday announced a relief package to the tune of Rs 2.94 crore for the selected tourism players in Jammu and Kashmir in view of the ongoing pandemic, Houseboat Association said they have been left out despite apprising the LG administration of their plight.

Mushtaq Ahmad Chahiya Chairman Hoteliers Club while welcoming the initiative for the Shikarawalas and other selected tourism players said the hotel industry from the last two years have received no bailout package.

"This is a welcome initiative by the government, and we hope the government may come with a comprehensive bailout package for hoteliers as well," he said.

Manzoor Pakhtoon, associated with the Tourism industry and a se-

nior member of the United Forum of Tour Operators echoed the same disappointment after being left out of the relief package.

"It is a welcome step for the people who have been selected under this relief category but at the same time tour operators' forum has been left out. We have pinned our hopes the government may announce a bigger package which will include all stakeholders associated with the tourism industry," Pakhtoon said.

General Secretary Houseboat Association Abdul Rasheed told the news agency that they are disappointed after they were being left out of the relief package.

"There is nothing for houseboat owners in this Covid relief package, our industry has been neglected, though we have approached all for the relief assistance but nothing has

happened on ground," he said.

He further said, there are around 950 houseboat owners and manpower associated with it, but it is unfortunate, the industry has been left out.

Pertinently LG Administration of Jammu and Kashmir led by Lt. Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday approved the release of Rs 2,94,22,000 (Rupees two crore ninety four lakh and twenty two thousand only) for 14,711 tourism players including shikarawalas, ponywalas, tourist guides, dandiwalas/sledgewalas/palkiwalas.

In a survey conducted by the Tourism department Kashmir, it has asked for the relief of amount of Rs 2,92,54,000 for 4444 shikarawalas, 1370 tourist guides, 6663 ponywalas, 2150 dandiwalas/sledgewalas, while as Jammu Tourism department has asked for relief amount of Rs 1,68,000 only for 13 tourist guides and 71 ponywalas—(KNO)

Nc Seeks Comprehensive COVID Sustenance Package For Jk Economy

SRINAGAR: National Conference on Saturday asked the GOI to shun its ostrich-policy towards the sinking economy of Jammu and Kashmir, saying any further delay in sustaining local businesses, trade, employment, Agriculture and its allied will have a disastrous impact on the local economy which is already on the deathbed.

Far from the days when J&K was one of the better performing states with a booming economy among the top of low fiscal deficit and low poverty states with GDP of 100,000INR during 2016-17, Party's Additional General Secretary Sheikh Mustafa Kamaal said the pathbreaking strides that the state was making have been ruined due to reckless clampdown and successive COVID-19 lock downs with horticulture, real estate, agriculture processing, manufacturing, tourism, transport and handicraft sectors taking a major hit. "It won't be an exaggeration to say that the local economy of Jammu and Kashmir, in particular Kashmir, is lurking towards an imminent catastrophe. The prime reason for impeding JK economy besides clamp downs and

lock downs is the gross failure of the GOI to recompense the losses induced by the deluge of 2014. Now with another lock down in place, the scope of any fast recovery of our economy seems to be a far cry," he said.

Referring to the packages doled out by the local JK administration, Kamal said the packages were cosmetic in nature that failed to curb the investment inversions and nurse back to health the ailing manufacturing, horticulture, tourism, transport and handicraft sectors. "Similarly nothing was done to check Job lay-offs, sluggish recruitment process, business closures and bankruptcy and other ominous issues faced by our people. The little to no public spending also has had a devastating impact on JK economy. Now that the fresh COVID induced curbs have returned, the local tourism players, marginal traders and transporters have again hankered down, this time bearing more pain than ever before. The government, ditching its responsibility, has turned volte

face to the plight of shut businesses and transport as a result of which the people associated with tourism, travel, transport, handicraft and real estate are facing immense hardships. Most of them have been impoverished or are on the very brink of it. The laidback attitude of the government has severely pummeled the labourers, hawkers, marginal transporters and small traders. Where are they supposed to go?" he added.

Dismayed at the ostrich-policy of JK administration and GOI over the exigencies, which have propped up in wake of the ongoing lock down, Dr. Kamal called for a comprehensive covid-19 sustenance policy for the ailing economy of JK. He said the package should consider loan waiver, extension of moratorium to term loans and working capital, changing the NPA norms and reduction of electricity, and water utility bills by 70%. "Extending the benefits of BPL to APL consumers during the COVID crises will also go a long way in easing the burden of people," he said.

Coal Off-Take To Face Temporary Headwinds Due To Covid Resurgence: Ind-Ra

NEW DELHI: Domestic coal production as well as off-take could face temporary headwinds due to the second Covid wave-led restrictions along with localised lockdowns, said India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra).

Accordingly, the ratings agency report cited factors like lower month on month (MoM) power demand on curtailed industrial activities supporting the trend.

"Nevertheless, normalised inventory levels at power stations shall support coal off-take and thus production, on the previous year's low base," the report said.

India's coal offtake spurred up 16.3 per cent MoM and 12.4 per cent YoY in March 2021 to 65.7MT, driven by a 16.7 per cent MoM higher domestic power demand.

"Accordingly, while domestic coal production improved



28.9 per cent mom in March 2021 to 87.5MT, it was lower 3.1 per cent yoy due to the above-average inventory levels at end-February 2021."

"Overall, coal production and offtake were only 2.9 per cent and 3.5 per cent lower YoY, respectively, in FY21 despite Covid-19 outbreak, supported by a steady recovery in economic activities over 2HFY21."

According to the report, import prices for Indonesian-origin thermal coal, primarily consumed in the power sector, shot up 36 per cent MoM up to end-April 2021 on a strong Chinese demand and stocking requirements ahead of the high-demand summer season. IANS

Cairn Looks To Seize Air India Assets To Recover \$1.7 Billion Award Due From Indian Government

NEW DELHI: UK's Cairn Energy Plc has brought a lawsuit in the US court that potentially can lead to seizing of Air India's overseas assets such as airplanes to recover USD 1.72 billion from the Indian government which an international arbitration tribunal had awarded after overturning levy of retrospective taxes.

Cairn on May 14 filed a lawsuit in the US District Court for the Southern District of New York seeking declaration of Air India as the 'alter ego of Indian government' by virtue of control and as a state-owned company it "legally indistinct from the state itself", three sources with direct knowledge of the development said.

PTI had on March 28, 2021 reported that Cairn will bring lawsuits to pierce the corporate veil to establish that certain state-owned entities are India's alter ego under Bancor for enforcing the arbitration award.

The Bancor guidelines deal with determining when a judgment against a foreign state is enforceable against its agencies.

Sources said the May 14 lawsuit seeks to make Air India liable for discharge of the arbitration award against the Indian government.

While Cairn said it is "taking necessary legal steps to protect shareholders' interest in the absence of a resolution to the arbitral award", sources in the government said India will take all necessary steps to defend against any such "illegal enforcement action".

India, they said, will contest the move on grounds that the government has challenged the arbitration award in the appropriate court in The



Hague and it is confident that the award will be set aside.

Sources said the government has also engaged a counsel team which is ready to defend against any enforcement action.

While they maintained that neither the government nor any PSU has received any such notice, sources aware of the Cairn lawsuit said the case has been brought only on Friday and notices in due course will come to the concerned authorities.

The government sources said as and when any such notice is received, the government/concerned organisation shall take all necessary steps to defend against "any such illegal enforcement action".

Cairn had first moved courts in the US, UK, Canada, France, Singapore, the Netherlands and three other countries to register the December 2020 arbitration tribunal ruling that overturned the Indian government's Rs 10,247 crore demand in back taxes and ordered New Delhi to return the value of shares it had sold, dividends seized and tax refunds withheld to recover the tax demand.

Subsequent to the courts in the US and other places giving recognition to the arbitration award, the firm has now begun bringing lawsuits to pierce the corporate veil between the Indian government and its owned companies such as in oil and gas, shipping, airline and banking sectors, to seize their overseas assets to recover the money awarded.—PTI

SHORT TAKES

Airtel Rolls Out Covid Support Services On Its Digital Platform

NEW DELHI: Bharti Airtel has rolled out a range of Covid support initiatives for customers by leveraging its digital platforms.

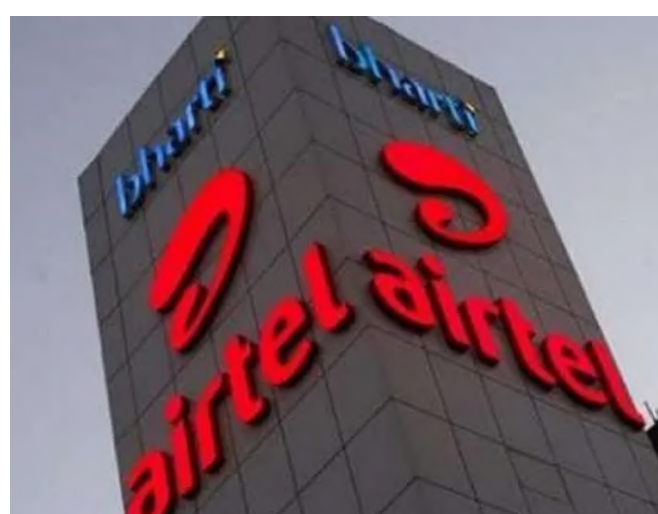
Airtel has integrated easily accessible bouquet of Covid support resources and related information in the Airtel Thanks app's Explore section.

Accordingly, it has now provided Covid SOS resource which aggregates verified and updated contacts for important supplies such as medicines, oxygen, plasma donors, ambulance, hospital beds (regular, O2, ICU), and testing centres.

With a few clicks, the platform connects users to these service providers/resources and tries to ensure that users do not have to waste precious time to access this data, the company said in a statement.

All the information available on Covid SOS is painstakingly verified by their teams. The platform is powered by Airtel IQ, it said.

Also, Airtel Thanks users can also book a vaccination slot for



ACCORDINGLY, IT HAS NOW PROVIDED COVID SOS resource which aggregates verified and updated contacts for important supplies such as medicines, oxygen, plasma donors, ambulance, hospital beds (regular, O2, ICU), and testing centres.

themselves and their loved ones through the app. With the CoWin platform APIs integrated with Airtel Thanks app, information on nearest vaccination centres and available slots is updated on real time basis.

Users need to download the latest version of Airtel Thanks app (iOS, Android), go to the Explore section and click on the Covid support banners to access relevant resources, the company said.

Besides, businesses of all sizes can now set up FREE Covid Helpline for their employees within two minutes with Airtel IQ - a cloud communication platform. Airtel is giving 5000 minutes with each Helpline account so that businesses can stay connected with their employees and organize their efforts.

This feature is particularly useful for medium to small sized companies who can set up a secure helpline instantly without any in-house telco infrastructure, the company said. IANS

Jio Announces Free Talk Time Offer For Jiophone Users During Covid Pandemic

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Reliance Jio on Friday said it is working with Reliance Foundation to provide 300 free minutes of outgoing calls per month, which amounts to 10 minutes per day, for the entire period of the pandemic.

The scheme will be available to Jiophone users who have not been able to recharge due to the ongoing pandemic, the company said in a statement.

Reliance Jio is the first company to announce free talk time for users in the second wave of pandemic wherein many states have imposed lockdowns or lockdown-like restrictions as a desperate measure to restrict the spread of the virus.

"Jio working with Reliance Foundation will provide 300 free minutes of outgoing calls per month (10 minutes per day)



for the entire period of the pandemic, to Jiophone users who have not been able to recharge due to the ongoing pandemic," Jio said in a statement.

In addition to free talk time, Jio has announced that for every Jiophone plan recharged by a Jiophone user, they will get an additional recharge plan of the same value for free.

"In these unprecedented times of the COVID pandemic, we at Jio want to ensure that staying connected remains accessible and affordable for all customers, especially the less-privileged sections of our society," the statement said.

However, these offers are not applicable on annual or Jiophone device bundled plans.

Ex-IAS Officer Booked For Spreading Misinformation: Police

Press Trust of India

UNNAO: A former IAS officer has been booked for spreading misinformation by tweeting a seven-year-old photograph of dead bodies floating in the Ganga in Unnao and claiming them to be recent ones spotted in the river in Ballia, police said on Saturday.

Police said the 1982-batch, UP-cadre officer Surya Pratap Singh was booked on May 13 after he tweeted an Unnao picture of 2014 vintage, claiming that bodies being seen in them were spotted a day earlier in the Ganga in Ballia district.

Earlier, officials said, a total of 52 bodies found floating in the Ganga in Ballia district on Tuesday were retrieved and were disposed of after proper last rites.

In an FIR lodged at the Unnao Kotwali police station, the retired IAS officer Singh has also been accused of claiming on social media that 67 bodies were buried on the Unnao riverbank using JCB and without performing any last rites.

Kotwali police station's SHO Dinesh Chandra Mishra said the case against Singh was lodged on May 13 on complaints by several city residents.

The former outspoken officer had been booked on May 13 after he tweeted the picture of floating bodies and wrote in Hindi, Tairati laashon aur ukharhte saanso kaa UP model (The UP model of floating bodies and gasping breaths)."

SHO Mishra said the case against Singh has been booked under various sections of the Indian Penal Code, the Information Technology Act, the Disaster Management Act and the UP Public Health and Epidemic Diseases Control Ordinance, 2020.

Quoting from the FIR lodged against the former IAS officer, Mishra said the case against Singh was registered on the complaint by various Unnao residents.

He said the residents also accused Singh of falsely claiming on social media that 67 bodies were buried on the riverbank using JCB and without performing their last rites, in an insult to the Hindu religion.

The SHO said the people also accused the former IAS officer of observing on social media that it was the Yogi model of the governance in Uttar Pradesh where the living ones fail to get the treatment and the dead ones their last rites.

Due to this tweet, the atmosphere of the district became tense. In the probe, the tweet was found to be misleading with old pictures of Unnao linked to Ballia, Mishra said.

About the authenticity of the floating bodies tweeted by Singh, Mishra said on being contacted, the Social Media Cell of the Unnao Police found that the photograph tweeted by Singh dated back to January 13, 2014, in which around 100 bodies were seen floating on the Ganga in Unnao's Pariyar Ghat.

Mishra said the IAS officer, by tweeting an old picture of dead bodies floating in the Ganga in Unnao and claiming them to be those spotted in Ballia, has deliberately created a feeling of animosity among people belonging to different religions.

Reacting to the registration of the criminal case against him, Singh, in a fresh tweet asked, "Were no bodies floating in Unnao? Will the truth change after registering a case against me?"

No Denial Of Vaccine, Essential Services For Lack Of Aadhaar, Says UIDAI

NEW DELHI: The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) on Saturday asserted that no one should be denied vaccine, medicine, hospitalisation or treatment just because they do not have an Aadhaar.

The UIDAI made it clear that Aadhaar should not be misused as an excuse for denial of any essential service. The statement assumes significance given the second severe wave of COVID-19 pandemic, which has swept through the nation.

In a statement, the UIDAI said there is a well-established exception handling mechanism (EHM) for Aadhaar, and that it should be followed to ensure delivery of benefits and services in the absence of the 12-digit biometric ID.

If a resident does not possess Aadhaar for some or the other reason, they must not be denied essential services as per Aadhaar Act.

"No one shall be denied vaccine, medicine, hospitalisation or treatment for want of Aadhaar," UIDAI said flagging certain reports which claimed that some essential services like hospitalisation, were being denied to the residents for want of Aadhaar.

If one does not have Aadhaar or if Aadhaar online verification is not successful due to some reason, the concerned agency or department has to provide the service as per specific norms laid out in Aadhaar Act, 2016, it informed.

The Aadhaar-issuing body has advised that in case of any such denial of service or benefit, the matter should be brought to the notice of the higher authorities of concerned departments.

The UIDAI emphasised that Aadhaar is meant to bring transparency and accountability in public service deliveries through effective use of technology and there are exception handling regulations issued by it through circular dated October 24, 2017, to ensure that no beneficiary is denied of benefits/services for the want of Aadhaar.

"Also, relevant provisions are there in the Aadhaar Act under Section 7 to ensure that there is no exclusion and no denials. Further, the Cabinet Secretariat OM dated 19 December 2017 has clearly explained the exception handling mechanism by using alternate means of identification for extending benefits and services to the residents who do not possess Aadhaar or in cases where Aadhaar authentication is not successful due to any reason," UIDAI said.

India in a day recorded 3,26,098 COVID-19 cases that took the tally to 2,43,72,907, while 3,890 new fatalities pushed the death toll to 2,66,207, according to Union health ministry data updated on Saturday.

The total number of Covid vaccine doses administered in the country has crossed 18 crore mark.

India Needs To Restore Deterrence To Stop China From Attempting To Nibble At LAC: Shivshankar Menon

NEW DELHI: India needs to restore deterrence if it wants to stop China from attempting to nibble at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and changing its status quo, noted strategic affairs expert and former National Security Adviser and foreign secretary Shivshankar Menon said on Saturday.

In an online discussion, he said making noises or building some international coalition in response to what China has been doing will be ineffective and India needs to strengthen itself along the LAC to make sure that the neighbouring country is not able to change the situation in its favour.

"The answer is not making noise or building some international coalition or passing resolution at the UN. To my mind (it) is ineffective. If you want to stop them from nibbling at the LAC and changing the status quo, you need to restore deterrence which we did partially around Pangong in August. You need to restore it across the line," he said.

Menon, whose book 'India and Asian Geopolitics: Past, Present and Future' has just been released, was replying to a question at the discussion organised by the Indian Women's Press Corps. He also called for a broader vision of India's relationship with China.

"If we are saying peace and tranquillity is an essential condition for the rest of the relationship, then how do you explain the fact that in 2020, China again became your biggest trading partner overtaking the US which has been your number one trading partner in 2019. How do you

explain the first quarter of this year, where trade has boomed between you and China, maybe because of medical supplies and the outrageous prices they are charging, whatever it is," Menon said.

The former NSA also said that problem arises when attempts are made to spin the issues.

"The problem is when we start spinning these issues when we play them for domestic politics when we start telling lies about what is happening, what is not happening. Then you cannot deal with it effectively on the ground. Then it becomes very difficult," he said.

He said there was a need to think about how far India can economically decouple itself from China and what it is going to do to strengthen itself on the LAC to make sure that China cannot keep changing the situation in its favour whenever it suits it.

Asked whether the perception of India's mishandling of the second wave of the coronavirus crisis will have an impact on its image, Menon said it was not possible now to gauge if there would be any long-term impact.

"I do not know about the long-term impact. I do not think we can say anything yet. But it certainly means that people will not rely on you to some extent," he said.

On what should be India's foreign policy priorities, Menon said it must focus on consolidating relations with countries in the neighbourhood as also in the Indian Ocean region which included Southeast Asian nations.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Govt Extends

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 UT also witnessed a 34-hour curfew from 8 pm on April 24 till April 26.

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

Curbs Continue for 17th Day
The lockdown imposed in Jammu and Kashmir in the wake of an alarming surge in coronavirus cases entered the 17th day on Saturday as the normal life remained affected in most areas of the union territory, officials said.

Markets remained shut and public transport was off the roads, the officials said.

However, private cars were seen plying in some areas of the city here and other district headquarters in the valley and the Jammu region, they said.

The officials said while the restrictions on the movement and assembly of people continued to remain in force, the curbs were not strict.

Several roads have been sealed by security forces and barricades have been put in many places in the city here as well as in other district headquarters of the valley to prevent the movement of people.

63 More Succumb

Saturday, taking the overall death toll to 3090.

Among the victims from the Valley, officials said, included a 66-year-old man from Habba Kadal, who died nine days after he was admitted to SKIMS Soura. Besides him, a 70-year-old man from Naid Kadal, died four days after he was admitted to SMHS hospital.

A 46-year-old woman from Nagam, they said, died a week after she was admitted to GMC Anantnag. Also, a 62-year-old woman from Dooru died five days after she was admitted there, they said.

Six persons including four women patients died of Covid-19 in one night in south Kashmir's District Hospital Pulwama. Among them included a 70-year-old woman from Shangerpora Pulwama, a 60-year-old man from Trich Pulwama and a 65-year-old woman from Dangerpora Pulwama, they said.

They said an 82-year-old man from Newshehra Srinagar died nine days after she was admitted to JNNM hospital Rainawari. A 65-year-old woman Molpora Rainawari and a 69-year-old woman from Khanyar Srinagar also succumbed to the hospital, they said.

A 65-year-old woman from Ahmad Nagar Srinagar died at SKIMS Soura, a day after she was admitted there, they said. A 75-year-old woman from Chanapora Srinagar died at SKIMS Bemina, a day after she was admitted there, they said. They said that a 62-year-old woman from Fateh Kadal Srinagar died within a few hours of her admission to SMHS Hospital.

An 80-year-old from Soibug, Budgam, died a fortnight after he was admitted to the SMHS hospital, they said. They said that 45-year-old woman from Burzhama, Dargah, Srinagar died four days after she was admitted at SMHS hospital.

About the new cases of infection detected in J&K, officials said that 1728 were reported from Jammu and 1949 from the Valley, raising the total number of people infected by the virus to 240467.

Giving district wise details, the officials said that Srinagar reported 404 cases, Baramulla 129, Budgam 262, Pulwama 390, Kupwara 110, Anantnag 188, Bandipora 147, Ganderbal 80, Kulgam 160, Shopian 79, Jammu 621, Udhampur 163, Rajouri 250, Doda 46, Kathua

137, Samba 145, Kishtwar 34, Poonch 102, Ramban 108 and Reasi 122.

Moreover, they said, 4140 more patients have recovered, 1086 from Jammu Division and 3054 from Kashmir Valley. There are 51475 active positive cases, 19960 in Jammu and 31515 in Kashmir.

'B.1.617 Variant

Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) New Delhi, B.1.617 variant is responsible for the recent surge in COVID-19 cases in Jammu Division of JK UT, an official spokesperson said.

According to him, the Principal & Dean GMC Jammu, Dr. Shashi Sudhan Sharma said that the Department of Microbiology at GMC, Jammu besides testing of COVID-19 samples is also coordinating with NCDC New Delhi for routine sequencing of positive sample and as per the latest report received from them UK Variant was reported in >60% samples in March, 2021.

"However, in April the percentage of UK Variant dropped to 47% and B.1.617 increased from 5.8% to 38%. It is pertinent to mention here that the variant of SARS COV2 has been observed to originate from a specific geographic location and with the time was able to move to other locations of the Globe," the official spokesperson said.

He further said that these two variants found circulating in the UT have UK and Western Coastal States as the sites where original virus mutated and their observed changed in frequency in UT is through Epidemiological investigation.

"Dr. Shashi Sudhan Sharma further added that till date 434 samples have been sent to NCDC from Jammu Division among which a report of 64 samples is still awaited," he added.

IED Recovered

Few suspects were questioned and an IED weighing 10 kg has been recovered in Pulwama, the official said, adding that a major attack had been averted.

Cardiac Arrest

evacuated him to nearby Army Hospital. However the doctors there declared him brought dead.

A senior police officer said that according to the initial reports the BSF trooper has died due to heart failure, adding that autopsy report, conducted at SDH Uri, into his death was however awaited.

3 Jama'at Members

and hatching conspiracy after their arrest by police, news agency KNT reported.

Quoting sources, the report said that a case FIR number 35/2021 has been registered against the trio.

They have been booked under section 10 (Penalty for being a member of an unlawful association, etc.) 11 (Penalty for dealing with funds of an unlawful association) 13 (Punishment for unlawful activities) 18 (Punishment for conspiracy, etc) 19 (Punishment for harbouring, etc) 20 (Punishment for being member of gang or militant organisation) 38 (Offence relating to membership of a militant organisation) 39 (Offence relating to support given to a militant organisation) 40 (Offence of raising fund for a militant organisation) of ULA (P) Act.

Excessive Use

like illness but all these problems are self limiting and need only symptomatic treatment.

"Besides, "Covid is known to cause anxiety symptoms; but it is Covid itself and not anxiety which causes gastroenterological symptoms", he said, while clarifying the relative effects of coronavirus anxiety and gastro problems.

Dr Nisar also clarified misconception regarding the risk to patients suffering from gastroenterological problems and said such patients

are not at any additional risk of super added infection.

As most of the doctors recommend paracetamol for mild Covid related symptoms, Dr Nisar asked for limited intake of paracetamol.

"A normal individual can take up to 2 grams (4 tablets of 500mg tablets) per day without any problems whereas those having liver problems and severe renal problems need caution," he said.

However, he quickly added that excessive use of paracetamol can damage the liver and can cause severe gastrointestinal upset in elderly patients, those who indulge in alcohol abuse, people with borderline kidney function and liver disease and fasting aggravates paracetamol poisoning.

He also said steroids can cause a lot of side effects and advised that steroids should never be taken of your own. He cautioned that steroids involve almost every system of our body hence have multi systemic effects and side effects.

"In the gastro-intestinal system, steroids are known to cause gastric and duodenal ulcers especially if taken along with pain killers", the prominent doctor said about the side effects of steroids taken by some people during Covid infection.

Moreover, Dr Shah recommended early Covid vaccination and extra precautions for those patients who have gastroenterological conditions requiring immunosuppressive treatment for ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease, autoimmune hepatitis etc.

While strongly pitching for early vaccination, Dr Shah said that vaccination is the only shield and weapon against Covid-19 infection and appealed to people to get vaccinated without any fear.

LG Sets 10 Day

Sinha and members of Covid Task Force during a series of meetings with Deputy Commissioners, SSPs, and other concerned officers.

During the meetings, the Lt Governor sought District-wise feedback on important aspects of Covid management system pertaining to testing, impact of corona curfew, hospital referral system, functionality of oxygen generation plants, availability of Covid dedicated beds, daily trend of Covid cases, recovery rate etc.

The meetings also discussed the way forward for tackling the spread of the corona virus more effectively.

Stressing on bringing uniformity in the patient care system across J&K, the Lt Governor called for coordinated efforts from all the stakeholders to contain the spread of the deadly virus. Work as a unit to achieve favourable results. Together we can overcome the challenges, the Lt Governor told the officers.

While taking District-wise status of the impact of restrictions on level of transmission, the Lt Governor noted that the restrictions have shown positive results.

Emphasizing on intensifying vaccination drive, the Lt Governor set the timeline of 10-days for achieving the target of 100% vaccination of the above 45 years age group with the first dose of Covid vaccine.

Laying special emphasis on full utilization of new Medical Colleges, the Lt Governor asked the concerned officers to ensure that people living in adjoining areas of Medical colleges must go to these health institutions for treatment.

Operationalization of ventilators by the trained manpower in Medical colleges should be ensured, besides the capacity of Covid dedicated beds must be increased gradually, maintained the Lt Governor.

Take comprehensive measures to ensure testing, active case detection and contact tracing, and early hospitalization wherever

required for saving precious lives. Saving the life of every citizen of Jammu & Kashmir is our top priority. All the resources and funds are being made available to tackle Covid pandemic. Everyone needs to work unitedly to save lives, the Lt Governor asked the officers.

On utilization of Covid Care Centres, the Lt Governor asked the concerned officers to reach out to the patients in home isolation, besides rural population where home isolation is not feasible, and encourage the patients to shift to these facilities. Ensure the availability of all the required facilities in these Covid Care Centres for better care of patients, added the Lt Governor.

Taking note of the rise in positive cases in rural areas, the Lt Governor directed the health department to intensify testing in rural areas and other urban localities with high positivity rate.

Terming ASHA and Anganwadi workers as the frontline warriors in rural areas, the Lt Governor laid emphasis on strengthening surveillance by Home to Home teams for identifying suspected cases.

While taking district-wise stock of distribution of Covid kits, the Lt Governor passed specific directions for speeding up the process, besides distribution of Covid kits among the people with Covid symptoms after recommendation of doctors.

On Tele-medicine facilities, the Lt Governor directed the health department to ensure that facility is in place and is functional in every district.

After detailed deliberations and inputs from various concerned officers, the meeting decided to open Mughal Road to facilitate the movement of trucks carrying fruits, and seasonal migration of Gujjar-Bakerwal community.

The Lt Governor asked the Health Department to constitute a committee of top health experts which shall submit its report in a time bound manner suggesting measures to deal with future health emergencies and third wave of corona virus.

On issuance of passes during the restrictions, the Lt Governor instructed the Divisional Commissioners to ensure that passes facilities are being available in every district to facilitate the movement of people. Deputy Commissioners are empowered to issue Curfew movement passes, he added.

Speaking on Oxygen availability in J&K, the Lt Governor observed that the capacity and availability of medical oxygen in the UT has been increased significantly. In coming days, more oxygen generation plants are coming up in J&K which will further add to the present capacity, he added.

The government is aiming to achieve the desired goal of having oxygen generation plants in all Government Medical Colleges soon, the Lt Governor maintained.

Clear-cut assessment of additional requirements for installation of new oxygen plants must be done to ensure the functioning of these plants soon after their installation, observed the Lt Governor.

Senior officers must show decent behaviour while ensuring strict enforcement of restrictions. Punitive action must be taken against those indulging in hoarding of medicines and their black-marketing, maintained the Lt Governor.

The Lt Governor reiterated the directions issued for completion of the payments under MGNREGA, on priority basis, besides ensuring continuous extension of benefits of various beneficiary oriented schemes.

The Lt Governor also appreciated all the concerned officers, frontline health workers for putting up determined efforts in the fight against Covid pandemic.

Police Arrests 20

on Friday amidst a government imposed curfew to contain the spread of coronavirus.

Inspector General of Police Kashmir Vijay Kumar confirmed the arrest of 20 persons in Srinagar.

Friday's demonstrations came in the backdrop of Israeli airstrikes on Gaza leading to the killing of over 139 people, including 39 children and 22 women. Eight people have also been killed in the attacks by Hamas.

Meanwhile, in a strongly worded statement issued here on Saturday, a police spokesperson said that a very close watch was being kept on the elements who were attempting to leverage the "unfortunate situation in Palestine to disturb public peace and order" in the Kashmir valley.

"We are a professional force and are sensitive to public anguish. But J&K police have a legal responsibility to ensure law and order as well. It, however, wouldn't allow cynical encashment of the public anger to trigger violence, lawlessness and disorder on Kashmir streets," the spokesperson said.

He further said that expressing opinion was a freedom but engineering and inciting violence on streets was unlawful.

"All irresponsible social media comments that result in actual violence and breaking of law including Covid protocol will attract legal action," he said.

He added that the IGP Kashmir Vijay Kumar has urged cooperation of all citizens in this regard.

Pertinently, the police statement came a day after sporadic demonstrations were witnessed in parts of the Valley. On Friday afternoon, scores of people hit the streets in Kawdara locality of the old city and staged a pro-Palestine demonstration and denounced Israeli aggression in the occupied territories. Prior to that, a graffiti with Palestinian flags had appeared in the Padshahi Bagh locality to express solidarity with the suffering Palestinians.

Artist Of 'We Are

a sobbing woman with her head covered with Palestine flag, reports said. The artist had also written "WE ARE PALESTINE" next to the image of the woman.

According to the reports, cops took Gul to the platform and directed him to deface the graffiti. He was later shifted to the police station where he remains detained.

When contacted, an official at the Police Station Sadler told Kashmir Observer that the man is currently under detention. However, he refused to divulge grounds of detention or charges slapped against Gul.

"We can give you more details if you visit the police station," the official said before hanging up the call.

Sarjan Barkati

was arrested, two days after delivering Eid speech, in his native village on Thursday, for the first time after his release last year. Residents said that he was on the stage for just a few minutes in which he talked about the situation in Palestine and denounced Israeli regime for its crimes against innocent people.

A police official from Zainapora police station told Kashmir Observer that Barkati wasn't arrested for his speech against Israel. He said Barkati was arrested for making "provocative statements" during his speech.

He however said they haven't registered any FIR against him yet.

When contacted SSP Shopian Amrit Pal Singh told Kashmir Observer that Barkati has been taken into "preventive custody".

Barkati was released in the last week of October 2020 after remaining in jail for over four years.

Kitty Litter To Help Devon Conway Prepare For WTC Final Against India

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: New Zealand batsman Devon Conway is sprinkling kitty litter on practice wickets to simulate spin bowling on the rough, hoping this will help him counter the likes of Ravichandran Ashwin during the World Test Championship final against India next month.

The 29-year-old has been named in the 20-member visiting NZ squad for the two-match Test series against England beginning on June 2. The squad will then be trimmed to 15 for the World Test Championship Final in Southampton starting on June 18, as per ICC regulations.

Conway, who impressed in his first international season for his adopted home country last summer in ODIs and T20s, says he has been sprinkling kitty litter on practice wickets to simulate spin bow-

ing pitching in the rough created by bowlers' footmarks.

"Basically the idea is to get the ball to sort of spit out of the rough," Conway, who has featured in three ODIs and 14 T20s for New Zealand, told New Zealand broadcaster Spark Sport. Kitty litter is granulated clay which absorbs waste products of pets like cat or dogs.

"It's a bit harder to play, but good practice. It's about finding a gameplan to combat that and just practice how you're going to play in the game," said the left-handed batsman.

"When it does roughen up and the ball does spit and turn a lot, it's all about being positive."

Conway said he didn't want to rely on just defending against spinners.

"If you're going to look to just defend throughout, at some point there might be a ball that's going to have your number."

'Self-Explanatory' That Aussie Bowlers Were Aware Of Ball-Tampering: Cameron Bancroft



Press Trust of India

SYDNEY: Cameron Bancroft, one of the three central figures in the infamous ball-tampering scandal, says it is "self explanatory" that apart from Steven Smith, David Warner and himself, Australian bowlers were also aware of the illegal tactics during the Newlands Test.

Bancroft was caught on camera using sandpaper on the ball in the third Test against South Africa in 2018, a scandal that had rocked Australian and world cricket.

In an interview with 'The Guardian', asked if some of the bowlers knew what he was doing, Bancroft replied: "Yeah, look, all I wanted to do was to be responsible and accountable for my own actions and part."

"Yeah, obviously what I did benefits bowlers and the awareness around that, probably, is self-explanatory," he added.

Asked again if his bowling colleagues had some knowledge of what was happening, he replied: "Uh... yeah, look, I think, yeah, I think it's pretty probably self-explanatory."

The Australian bowling attack in the Newlands Test had comprised pacers Mitchell Starc, Pat Cummins, Josh Hazlewood, Mitchell Marsh and spinner Nathan Lyon.

Bancroft, who is currently playing for Durham in the English County Championship, said he wanted to

be "liked" by his teammates and in turn "lost control" of his values.

"I invested too much to the point where I lost control of my values. What had become important to me was being liked, being well valued, feeling really important to my teammates, like I was contributing something by using sandpaper on a cricket ball."

"That's something I don't think I even understood until that mistake happened. But it's part of the journey and a hard lesson I needed to learn."

The 28-year-old rued that he was not able to make a better decision at that time.

"I guess one thing I learnt through the journey and being responsible is that's where the buck stops (with Bancroft himself). Had I had better awareness I would have had a much better decision," said Bancroft.

The trio of Bancroft, Smith and Warner were banned for their roles in the ball tampering scandal.

While Bancroft was handed a nine-month ban, then skipper Smith and his deputy Warner were suspended for a year each.

CA also slapped Warner, who was declared the plottier-in-chief, with a lifetime leadership ban while Smith was banned from leading Australia for two years.

Head coach Darren Lehmann also resigned in the aftermath of the scandal.

I GUESS ONE THING I LEARNT through the journey and being responsible is that's where the buck stops (with Bancroft himself). Had I had better awareness I would have had a much better decision."

England's IPL Players Won't Be Selected For Test Squad Against NZ: Reports

Press Trust of India

LONDON: England are unlikely to rush their Indian Premier League players straight from quarantine to the Test squad against New Zealand as they would be lacking red-ball practice, according to reports.

This will mean that the likes of Jos Buttler, Jonny Bairstow, Chris Woakes, Sam Curran and Moeen Ali, who are serving a mandatory 10-day quarantine after returning from the currently-suspended IPL, are likely to miss the two Tests against NZ, starting on June 2.

Their isolation period expires at the weekend, leaving little more than two weeks before the first Test at Lord's.

"The timeline is considered too tight for the (IPL) returning players, meaning calls up are expected for the likes of Ollie Robinson, Craig Overton and James Bracey," according to a report in 'BBC Sport'.

"While fitness levels could be managed, the lack of red-ball practice could be a concern — particularly with other options having spent several weeks competing in the County Championship," said another report in 'The Independent'. Head coach Chris Silverwood will



on Tuesday convene his first selection meeting since taking full control of the process from Ed Smith.

England men's cricket managing director Ashley Giles had earlier hinted that players who returned from the suspended IPL are unlikely to feature in the Test series

against New Zealand.

There were 11 Englishmen in various franchises in the suspended IPL. The IPL was suspended on May 4 after multiple COVID-19 breaches its bio-bubble with multiple players testing positive for the dreaded virus.

WHILE FITNESS LEVELS COULD BE MANAGED, the lack of red-ball practice could be a concern — particularly with other options having spent several weeks competing in the County Championship."

WV Raman Alleges 'Smear Campaign', Urges BCCI To Stop It

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Sacked as women's cricket team coach, WV Raman has alleged that a "smear campaign" against him has gained unwarranted traction and urged the BCCI president Sourav Ganguly to stop it.

In a mail that has also been marked to National Cricket Academy head Rahul Dravid, Raman wrote it will be "extremely disconcerting" if his candidature was rejected due to reasons other than "my incompetency as a coach".

In a surprising move, Raman was not retained as the head coach of the senior women's team by the Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC) which picked Ramesh Powar for the top job.

It was under Raman that Indian team cherished a runner-up finish at the women's T20 World Cup last year.

"I presume you might have been told different views about my style of functioning and work ethic. Whether those views conveyed to the officials of the BCCI had any impact on my candidature is of no consequence now," Raman wrote in the letter which is in possession of PTI.

"What is important is that the smear campaign seems to have gained some unwarranted traction with some BCCI officials which needs to be halted permanently. I am prepared to give an explanation should you or any of the office bearers require it."

He said he was not used to "moaning and whining" but was bringing up the issues in case the BCCI president wishes to do a course correction.



"If I were to be rejected due to my incompetency as a coach, there is no argument on a judgment call at all. But what will be extremely disconcerting is if my candidature was rejected due to any other reasons," said the former India opener who played 11 Tests and 27 ODIs between 1988 and 1997.

"Especially if it was due to allegations from people who were more focussed on achieving their personal objectives at the expense of the overall hygiene and welfare of the Indian women's team and the pride of the country."

The stylish former left-handed batsman's letter to the two former captains is sure to ruffle a few feathers given that it has always been the coaches who have either stepped aside or sacked following fallouts with players, most notably ODI captain Mithali Raj.

While Raman's letter didn't name anyone, it is understood that he was writing about the star culture that prevails in the team, which he said is probably doing more harm than good.

"If some people in the system have been highly accommodative to the extent of being seemingly obsequious to an accomplished performer for years on end and if that performer feels constrained to adhere to the culture, then I would leave it to you to decide if the coach was asking for too much."

"In a coaching career spanning 20 years, I have always created a culture in which the team always comes first and insisted on no individual overriding either the game or the team."

He said "paying heed to only one individual's views while disregarding everyone else's over a long period of time has resulted in gaping holes in the process and the system."

"The time has come for you two accomplished former legends to salvage women's cricket falling which things could gather momentum in the wrong direction," he warned.

"I have some suggestions that might help in the improvement of women's cricket. I will be delighted to share those if you are interested," he signed off.

Pakistan Swap Test For Two T20s During West Indies Tour Starting July 27

Press Trust of India

KARACHI: The Pakistan Cricket Board on Friday said it has dropped one Test match and instead opted for two extra T20 internationals on the tour of the West Indies in July-August this year.

PCB CEO Wasim Khan said after consultations with Cricket West Indies, Pakistan would now be playing two Tests and five T120 internationals between July 27 and August 24 in the Caribbean.

"In consultation with the CWI and keeping an eye on this year's ICC Men's T20 World Cup, we have agreed to replace one Test match with two additional T20s," Wasim said.

The tour, which will take place following the conclusion of the ODI and T20I series in England, will commence with back-to-back T20Is in Barbados on July 27 and 28 before action shifts to Guyana for back-to-back T20Is on July 31 and August 1 and series finale on August 3.

After a two-day practice match on August 6-7 in Guyana, the side will move to Jamaica where the two Tests will be held at Sabina Park from August 12-16 and August 20-24.

"The tour to the West Indies is always a valued and prized tour for the Pakistan cricket teams. The Caribbean cricket history, backed up by the excellent playing facilities, supporting crowds and great ambience, encourages and motivates the players to produce their very best," Wasim said.

"In consultation with the Cricket West Indies and keeping an eye on this year's T20 World Cup, we have agreed to replace one Test match with two additional T20Is. This is aimed at providing further T20 content for both teams, as we

Pakistan's Tour of West Indies Full Schedule

- July 27, 1st T20I, Kensington Oval, Barbados
- July 28, 2nd T20I, Kensington Oval, Barbados
- Jul 31, 3rd T20I, Guyana National Stadium, Guyana
- Aug 1, 4th T20I, Guyana National Stadium, Guyana
- Aug 3, 5th T20I, Guyana National Stadium, Guyana
- Aug 6-7, Two-day practice match, Guyana
- Aug 12-16, 1st Test, Sabina Park, Jamaica
- Aug 20-24, 2nd Test, Sabina Park, Jamaica

continue to prepare and build-up to the global ICC event."

The PCB CEO said the series in the West Indies is part of a gruelling but exciting and entertaining season of cricket for Pakistan.

"In addition to playing England, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and the T20 World Cup and the away series, we will be hosting New Zealand, England, West Indies and Australia in the next eight months."

"This makes every series important and critical for our side as we aspire to feature in the top three across all formats by 2023."

Pakistan last toured West Indies in 2017 and won the Test series with captain, Misbah-ur-Haq and senior batsman, Younis Khan also retiring from international cricket on the tour.

Misbah is now head coach of the national team, while Younis is the batting coach.

Lisa Sthalekar Angered By BCCI's Treatment Of Veda Krishnamurthy

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Former Australian women's team captain Lisa Sthalekar feels the BCCI neither checked on Veda Krishnamurthy after the twin tragedies in her family nor communicated to the bereaved India cricketer its decision to not consider her for the upcoming tour of England.

Earlier this month, the flamboyant middle-order India batter lost her elder sister Vatsala Shivakumar to COVID-19, two weeks after her mother succumbed to the dreaded virus.

On expected lines, she was not included in the Indian Test and ODI team for next month's tour of the United Kingdom, but ICC Hall of Famer Sthalekar was not convinced with the BCCI's handling of the whole episode.

"Whilst not selecting Veda for the upcoming series may be justified from their point of view, what angers me the most is that as a contracted player she has not received any communication from BCCI, just to even check how she is coping," Sthalekar said in a note on her Twitter handle.

She added, "A true association should deeply care about the players that play the game... not focus solely on just the game at any cost. So disappointed."

The 28-year-old Bengaluru-based Veda recently paid an emo-

tional tribute to her sister and mother, who succumbed to the virus in a span of two weeks.

The all-rounder, who has been helping others through her social media by amplifying their requests for aid, has represented India in 48 ODIs and 76 T20s.

Sthalekar, the first player to achieve the double of 1000 runs and 100 wickets in women's One-Day Internationals, felt the time has come for a player association for the Indian women's team.

"As a past player the ACA (Australian Cricketers' Association) have reached out daily to see how we are and provided all kinds of services. If there was a need for a player association in (India) surely it is now."

The 41-year-old Sthalekar, now a commentator, said being looked after has become more important at the moment, with the pandemic wreaking havoc across the world.

"The stress, anxiety, fear and grief that many players have experienced through this pandemic will take its toll on them as individuals and inadvertently affect the game," Sthalekar signed off.

Bengal's wicketkeeper-batsman Shreevats Goswami, who has also had stints in the Indian Premier League (IPL) besides representing the country in the U-19 level, backed Sthalekar. Goswami said state cricket associations in India don't care about their players.

IOA Chief In Favour Of Conducting Tokyo Olympics Amid COVID-19 Pandemic

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Opposition to the Olympic Games will be there amidst a raging COVID-19 pandemic but conducting the biggest sporting spectacle in Tokyo will send out a strong message that the world is moving beyond the catastrophic situation, IOA President Narinder Batra said on Saturday.

The Tokyo Olympics, which was scheduled to be held last year, was postponed because of the pandemic.

The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) President, who is also an International Olympic Committee (IOC) member, is hoping that the Games will be held as scheduled, from July 23.

"Life has to move on and conducting the Olympics will give a strong message that we have moved beyond the COVID-19 pandemic," Batra told PTI in an interview.

"Opposition to the Games will always be there but it is now up to the organising committee of Japan and IOC to decide."

"But as far as Indian athletes are concerned we are taking all neces-



sary precautions and have been preparing to the best of our abilities to put up our best-ever performance in the Olympics," the IOA chief added.

Batra's comment has come after critics from Japan on Friday submitted a petition, calling for the Games to be cancelled as the host nation fights a fourth wave of coronavirus infections.

The petition, signed by 3,50,000 people was submitted to the IOC and International Paralympic Committee (IPC) chiefs as well as Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike.

The petition came in the backdrop of a Japan adding three more areas to a state of emergency, exactly 10 weeks from the scheduled opening of the Games.

The IOA chief also assured that the travel ban imposed on India by Japan wouldn't affect country's participation in the Games.

Japan on Thursday suspended entry of foreign nationals from 153 nations, including India in the wake of the recent surge in COVID cases across the globe.

"This is a temporary travel ban which has been issued by many countries but when it comes to Olympics, there are different protocols in place which a member nation has adhere to," Batra said.

"I assure all the accredited Olympics-bound Indian athletes that they will face no problem in entering Japan. There are enough guarantees being ensured by the Organising committee and IOC," he said.

"There will be no restrictions for them."

The IOA chief further said that India has been following all protocols, including timely vaccination of all Tokyo-bound athletes and officials.

"We have been following all COVID protocols of the Organising Committee and IOC as per as vaccination of our athletes are concerned."

"We have also been in discussion with the government about the safe travel of our athletes to Japan. We are also exploring the option of one-way chartered flight for our contingent to Japan for the Games so that they don't have to come in contact with other persons," Batra said.

Indian Football Team To Leave For Qatar On May 19 For World Cup Qualifiers

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The Indian football team will leave for Qatar on May 19 after the gulf country, in a big relief, accepted All India Football Federation's (AIFF) request to allow its players to train there ahead of the 2022 World Cup Qualifiers next month.

Not only that, Qatar has even agreed to the AIFF's request to waive the mandatory 10-day hard quarantine after reaching there. The players will have a preparatory camp of nearly two weeks in a bio-bubble in Qatar before the first match on June 3.

"We are planning to fly the team on May 19 evening. There will be no quarantine (of the players) and they will be in a bio-bubble," AIFF general secretary Kushal Das told PTI on Saturday.

He said the players will assemble in New Delhi and they will be tested for COVID-19 before their departure to Qatar.

India is already out of reckoning for a 2022 FIFA World Cup berth but is still in contention for a 2023 Asian Cup spot in the joint qualifiers. The



remaining three matches — against Qatar (June 3), Bangladesh (June 7) and Afghanistan (June 15) — are crucial for Asian Cup qualification.

Qatar was picked by the Asian Football Confederation in March as the centralised venue to host the remaining Group E matches owing to the coronavirus-related travel and quarantine restrictions.

Das had on Wednesday said the national team cannot train in the

country right now given the COVID-19 surge and it was considering foreign options for a camp ahead of the World Cup qualifying round matches.

A national camp under head coach Igor Stimac was earlier planned in Kolkata from May 2 to 21. After that, the team was to leave the country on May 22 for Dubai where a week-long camp as well as a friendly match — not international — was planned.

Govt, Public Dropped Guard After First COVID Wave: RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat



Agenceis

After the first wave of COVID-19, the government, administration and public dropped their guard which led to the current situation, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat said on Saturday and urged people to stay positive and proactive to fight the pandemic.

Addressing a lecture series 'Positivity Unlimited', Bhagwat said the country should stay united and work as a team in these testing times, instead of pointing fingers at each other.

"We are facing this situation because, whether it was the government, administration or public, everyone dropped their guard after the first wave despite indications from doctors, he said. Bhagwat said there is talk of

a third wave. But, we will not be scared. We shall stand like a rock. We have to stay positive and take precautions to keep ourselves COVID negative in the present situation, he said.

The RSS chief said that this is not an appropriate time to point fingers and all should avoid making irrational remarks.

Citing England's situation in World War II when everything seemed going against it, Bhagwat said a quote was written on the then prime minister Winston Churchill's desk which read, "There is no pessimism in this office. We are not interested in the possibilities of defeat. They don't exist".

Similarly, he said, in this situation we can't give up on courage. We need to also have steely resolve.

Covid Victim Dies 24 Hours After Rape In Bhopal Hospital



Agenceis

BHOPAL: A 43-year-old Covid victim was raped by a ward boy at Bhopal Memorial Hospital and Research Centre last month, following which she died the next day.

However, soon after the incident the accused was arrested. Sources said that even after a month, the family members of the victim were not informed about the incident that has brought the police under the lens.

The woman was admitted to the facility after she had tested Covid positive. She was raped by the ward boy on April 6 following which her health deteriorated and she died the next day.

Sources said that accused Santosh entered into the woman's ward at 4 am on April 6 and asked her to undergo a medical check up. He first molested the Covid victim, took her to the bathroom in the name of the check up and raped her. After that her health worsened and she was then put on a ventilator but she died the next day.

The matter came light when the organisations fighting for the rights of Bhopal gas tragedy victims, flagged the "pathetic condi-

tion of Covid wards" in the hospital.

They had written to Justice (Retd) VK Agarwal, chairman of a committee for medical rehabilitation of Bhopal gas tragedy victims, about the incident.

The Bhopal Group for Information and Action, an NGO working with the survivors of the 1984 Bhopal gas tragedy, had also written to the officials on Wednesday about this shameful incident, and sought an investigation.

They further said that this matter should also be brought to the notice of the high court.

Former chief minister Kamal Nath tweeted, "Rape and molestation of the Covid victim who was hospitalised in Bhopal, is extremely shameful! It is very disgraceful that the victim had died and instead of taking action, the hospital management and the police kept the whole matter discreet."

The Bhopal police are in touch with the victims' kin and the case will now be presented in the court for justice.

"No attempt has been made by the Bhopal police to suppress and hide the case," a senior police official added.

India's Covid Situation Hugely Concerning, Says WHO Chief



Agenceis

UNITED NATIONS: India's COVID-19 situation remains hugely concerning, with several states continuing to see a worrying number of cases, hospitalisations and deaths, WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said on Friday, warning that the pandemic's second year will be "far more deadly" than the first for the world.

Ghebreyesus added that the WHO is responding to the COVID-19 surge in India and has shipped thousands of oxygen concentrators, tents for mobile field hospitals, masks and other medical supplies.

"India remains hugely concerning, with several states continuing to see a worrying number of cases, hospitalisations and deaths," he said at the daily media briefing.

"And we thank all the stakeholders who are supporting India," the WHO Director-General said.

India is in the midst of a deadly wave of the coronavirus pandemic, with 3,43,144 people testing positive for the virus on Friday, taking the country's caseload to 2,40,46,809. The death count stands at 2,62,317.

India's COVID-19 tally crossed the 10 million mark on December 19 and in under six months it has doubled, surpassing the grim milestone of 20 million cases on May 4.

Ghebreyesus pointed out that the emergency-like situation was not restricted to India.

"Nepal, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand and Egypt are just some of the countries that are dealing with spikes in cases and hospitalisations," he said adding

that some countries in the Americas still have high numbers of cases and as a region, the Americas accounted for 40 per cent of all COVID-19 deaths last week.

There are also spikes in some countries in Africa. "These countries are in heightened response mode and WHO will continue to provide support in all ways possible," he said.

Noting that COVID-19 has already cost more than 3.3 million lives across the world, Ghebreyesus said, "We're on track for the second year of this pandemic to be far more deadly than the first."

He lamented that vaccine supply remains a key challenge and that saving lives and livelihoods with a combination of public health measures and vaccination - not one or the other - is the only way out of the pandemic.

No Denial of COVID-19 Vaccine, Essential Services For Lack Of Aadhaar: UIDAI

Agenceis

The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) on Saturday asserted that no one should be denied vaccine, medicine, hospitalisation or treatment just because they do not have an Aadhaar.

The UIDAI made it clear that Aadhaar should not be misused as an excuse for denial of any essential service. The statement assumes significance given the second severe wave of COVID-19 pandemic, which has swept through the nation.

In a statement, the UIDAI said there is a well-established exception handling mechanism (EHM) for Aadhaar, and that it should be followed to ensure delivery of benefits and services in the absence of the 12-digit biometric ID.

If a resident does not possess Aadhaar for some or the other reason, they must not be denied essential services as per Aadhaar Act.

"No one shall be denied vaccine, medicine, hospitalisation or treatment for want of Aadhaar," UIDAI said flagging certain reports which claimed that some essential services like hospitalisation, were being denied to the residents for want of Aadhaar.

If one does not have Aadhaar or if Aadhaar online verification is not successful due to some reason,



the concerned agency or department has to provide the service as per specific norms laid out in Aadhaar Act, 2016, it informed.

The Aadhaar-issuing body has advised that in case of any such denial of service or benefit, the matter should be brought to the notice of the higher authorities of concerned departments.

The UIDAI emphasised that Aadhaar is meant to bring transparency and accountability in public service deliveries through effective use of technology and there are exception handling regulations issued by it through circular dated October 24, 2017, to ensure that no beneficiary is denied of benefits/services for the want of Aadhaar.

"Also, relevant provisions are there in the Aadhaar Act under

Section 7 to ensure that there is no exclusion and no denials. Further, the Cabinet Secretariat OM dated 19 December 2017 has clearly explained the exception handling mechanism by using alternate means of identification for extending benefits and services to the residents who do not possess Aadhaar or in cases where Aadhaar authentication is not successful due to any reason," UIDAI said.

India in a day recorded 3,26,098 COVID-19 cases that took the tally to 2,43,72,907, while 3,890 new fatalities pushed the death toll to 2,66,207, according to Union health ministry data updated on Saturday.

The total number of Covid vaccine doses administered in the country has crossed 18 crore mark.

Covid Patients On Home Care Should Not Take Remdesivir: AIIMS Doctors

Agenceis

NEW DELHI: COVID-19 patients on home care should not take Remdesivir medication and they should get admitted at a hospital if the oxygen level drops below 94, AIIMS doctors advised on Saturday.

The doctors were addressing a webinar on 'Medication and Care in Home Isolation' for COVID-19 patients.

"Remdesivir should never be taken at home. Positive attitude and regular exercise are a must for patients in home isolation," said Dr Neeraj Nishchal of All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS).

Dr Manish, also from AIIMS, said if the oxygen level goes below 94, patients should be admitted, adding that while checking oxygen level, age of the patient and other chronic diseases should be kept in mind.

Dr Neeraj, however, said that 80 per cent of infected patients experience very mild symptoms and suggested a repeat RT-PCR test if the first test report comes negative.

"If the RT-PCR test comes out to be negative, but symptoms are present, it is recommended to go for another test. Whether hospitalization is required is to be decided based on the intensity of the disease," he said.

sation, cleanliness, use of medical grade masks and taking medicines on time are essential.

We should plan for daily essentials and prepare a list of contact numbers for health-related information, health workers, hotlines, etc. Along with this, contact numbers of friends, other family members and neighbours should also be kept handy for emergency situations. Proper care and planning should be done also for the children in the family, Dr Neeraj said.

Doctors said that mild and asymptomatic patients should be kept in home isolation. Such patients should take utmost care to keep safe distance from other family members, especially children.

It was advised that positive patients should always wear three-layered masks which should be discarded after proper sanitization every eight hours.

Patient and caregiver both should wear N-95 masks while interacting with each other, the doctor said.

The AIIMS doctors also advised that pulse oximeters should be used to monitor oxygen levels in the body, very carefully.

Artificial nails or nail polish should be removed before use and the patient's hand should be warmed if it is cold. Take rest for at least five minutes before testing. If the observation is constant for five seconds, the figure indicates oxygen level in your body, doctors said.

Informing about the use of Ivermectin and Paracetamol, Dr Manish said that their use depends on the immunity level and other patient-specific conditions so one should take medicines only as prescribed by the doctors.

While informing about the medicines taken to fight COVID-19, he said, many patients insist on the use of Azithromycin, but the guidelines clearly discourage the use of these tablets.

Same instructions are given about Revidox. It is not recommended to use Revidox in home isolation, said the doctor.

During the discussion, both experts clearly said that no medication should be taken during home isolation without consulting doctors.

The decision of home isolation for patients above 60 years and with comorbidities like hypertension, diabetes, heart disease, chronic ailments related to kidneys and lungs, should be taken only after consulting doctors, they said.

The commonly observed symptoms among COVID-19 patients are fever, dry cough, tiredness and loss of taste or smell. Irritation in throat, headache, body ache, diarrhoea, rash on skin and redness in eyes are also observed in rare cases.

If you observe any of these symptoms, you should immediately isolate yourself from others, Dr Neeraj said.

Suggesting measures COVID-19 patients need to take to manage

Azad Writes To PM, Gives Suggestions On COVID-19



Agenceis

NEW DELHI: Former Union health minister and senior Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad today wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, suggesting measures to increase COVID-19 vaccine manufacturing in the country, party officials said.

In his letter, a copy of which has also been sent to Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan, Mr Azad has also given suggestions for further augmenting health infrastructure in view of the COVID-19 pandemic, they said.

Congress officials said the former Rajya Sabha member, whose tenure ended earlier this year, also made a few recommendations for increasing capacity of vaccinators in the country besides ensuring more supplies for vaccination to counter the pandemic in the country. The letter was written to the Prime Minister this morning for his consideration, they said. Prime Minister Modi today chaired a high-level meeting on the COVID-19 situation and the ongoing vaccination drive.

Top officials from different ministries attended the meeting.

NEWS MAKERS

Delhi Police Arrest 15 People, File 17 FIRs Over Posters Critical of PM Modi

Agenceis

Delhi Police have registered 17 FIRs and arrested 15 people for allegedly pasting posters critical of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in connection with the vaccination drive against COVID-19, officials said on Saturday.

The posters reading "Modiji humare bachon ki vaccine videsh kyu bhej diya (PM why did you send vaccines of our children to foreign countries?)" were pasted in several parts of the city, they said.

On Thursday, police received information about the posters following which senior officers of the districts were alerted. And based on further complaints, as many as 17 FIRs were registered under sections 188 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant) of the Indian Penal Code and other relevant sections including Section 3 of the Prevention of De-



facement of Property Act across various districts of the Delhi Police, the officials said.

A senior police officer said, "More FIRs are likely to be registered if further complaints are received in this regard. As of now, investigation is underway to ascertain as to on whose behalf these posters were being put up at various places across the city and ac-

cordingly further action will be taken in the matter."

Giving details, police said three FIRs were registered in northeast Delhi and two persons were arrested from there. Three FIRs were registered in west and another three FIRs in outer Delhi, they added.

Two FIRs were registered in Central part of the city and four persons were arrested. Two FIRs were registered in Rohini and two persons were arrested, while one FIR was registered in east Delhi and four persons arrested. One FIR was registered in Dwarka and two persons were arrested, police said.

One FIR was registered in north Delhi and one person was arrested. He claimed that he was given Rs 500 to paste these posters, they said. Another case was registered in Shahdara wherein police have recovered the CCTV footage of the incident and are trying to nab the person involved in the act, police added.

Rajasthan MLA Suggests Taking Services Of Quacks To Treat COVID Patients

Agenceis

KOTA: A Congress MLA wrote to Rajasthan Health Minister Dr Raghunath Sharma, urging him to avail services of quacks to treat COVID patients in rural areas.

In a letter dated May 13, Sangod legislator Bharat Singh Kundanpur said as doctors can't reach each of the around 40,000 villages in the state and resources are inadequate to meet the challenge, services of quacks should be utilised as people have faith in them.

"While a large number of people have died from the infection in medical colleges, there is hardly only one or two people who could have died under the supervision of quacks," he said.

He said though the government has taken steps time to time against quacks but "judag" has its own significance in the country.

The medical services given by quacks are available round the



clock throughout the year, he stressed, adding that their affinity with people inspires trust in them.

He further said quacks in villages also stay in touch with doctors in cities and help patients reach them in the hours of need.

In the current times of joblessness, quacks are an "example" of the "skill development" programme of the Narendra Modi government at the Centre as quacks give employment to others, the MLA said.

Lightning Strike Likely Killed 18 Elephants In Assam, Say Experts

Agenceis

GUWAHATI: After a thorough examination of the carcasses of 18 elephants found dead in a forest in Assam's Nagaon district, and circumstantial evidence, a team of experts suggested that the animals could have been killed by a lightning strike, an official release said today.

However, the samples collected by the team are being examined for micro-biological and toxicological aspects in the laboratory to rule out the possibility of the deaths caused by poisoning or other diseases.

"This freak natural incident is also being corroborated by meteorological reports," the release said.

A final report would be released only after all the examinations have been completed, it said.

The incident happened on Wednesday night at a hill in the Kundoli proposed reserve forest in the Kathiatoli range.

It was found that carcasses were lying in two groups. Fourteen adult elephants were found atop the hill,

and another four bodies were found scattered on the foothills on Thursday.

Detailed examination of the carcasses was carried out while viscera and other samples were collected for forensic investigations.

Veterinary experts from the College of Veterinary Science, Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department, District Veterinary Officer, doctors from the Assam State Zoo, and other wildlife organisations were engaged in conducting post-mortem examinations and collection of samples.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had expressed concern over the incident and asked Environment and Forest Minister Parimal Suklabaidya to visit the spot to inquire into the matter.

Mr Suklabaidya on Friday ordered an inquiry into the matter and a committee, headed by Deputy Conservator of Forest KK Deori, was instituted.

The committee was directed to submit a preliminary report within three days and a detailed investigation report within 15 days.