



**P3 CITY**

**COVID-19: SRINAGAR AIRPORT WITNESSES 75 PERCENT DECREASE IN FOOTFALL**

Amid spike in Covid-19 positive cases in Kashmir, and other parts of India, footfall at Srinagar International Airport has come down to a record low of 75 percent, while daily flight movements have...

**P6 THINK**

**BEYOND THE OBVIOUS: INDIA'S PRO-PALESTINE POSITION**

Indian for most of its history, before as well as after independence, has been in favour of the Palestinian position. After Israel's independence, India took more than two years until September 1950 to...



**P5 STATE**

**APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR, VACCINATION ONLY TOOL TO FIGHT COVID**

As Covid pandemic has disturbed every aspect of life, including social relations in public & private life due its contagious nature and devastation in terms of deaths...



**Quote!**

In the middle of every difficulty lies opportunity.  
- Albert Einstein

**NEWS DIGEST**

**Siblings Held With Six Grenades: Police**

**SRINAGAR:** Police on Thursday claimed to have arrested two brothers after recovering six grenades from their possession in north Kashmir's Kupwara town. Jahangir Ahmad Hajam and his brother Abdul Hameed Hajam, residents of Khawarpara village of Tangdhar near the Line of Control (LoC) were arrested. **More On P10**

**Geelani's Brother-In-Law Passes Away**

**SRINAGAR:** Haji Mukhtar Ahmad Makhdoomi brother in law of former Hurriyat Conference (G) chairman and veteran separatist Syed Ali Shah Geelani breathed his last on Thursday at a hospital here. A retired government employee, Makhdoomi passed away in the wee hours on Thursday at the SK Institute of medical sciences (SKIMS), here where he was undergoing treatment for the last six days. He is survived by three sons and two daughters. **More On P10**

**2 Schools Sealed For Violating Covid SOPs**

**SRINAGAR:** The authorities on Thursday sealed two schools for violating Covid-19 guidelines in Beerwah area of Central Kashmir's Budgam district. Officials said that the authorities after receiving a complaint visited these schools and found them running community classes. He said both the schools in Chewdara village of Beerwah namely Al-Huda and Al-Asar were found open and running community classes. **More On P10**

**Motorcyclist Knocks Pedestrian To Death**

**SRINAGAR:** A 52-year-old pedestrian was killed after he was hit by an unknown biker in Shangus area of South Kashmir's Anantnag district on Thursday afternoon. An official said that a 52-year-old pedestrian identified as Gulzar Ahmad Sheikh of Shangus was hit by a motorcyclist this afternoon. However, he was immediately rushed to a nearby hospital where doctors declared him brought dead. A police official said. **More On P10**

**Cleaner Killed After Truck Falls Into Gorge**

**SRINAGAR:** An 18-year-old truck conductor was killed on Thursday after he fell into a 300-feet deep gorge at Khooni Nallah area of Ramban district, an official said. Station House Officer (SHO) Ramsoo, Rouf Ahmed Khan said that an 18-year-old boy, a truck conductor by profession, identified as Talib Ali, son of Mohammed Khali of Shangus, was in a cabin of truck bearing registration number JK02AG-7873 when he opened the window and accidentally fell into a deep gorge. **More On P10**

## 'Strictest' Corona Curfew To Be Imposed Today



KO Photo: Abid Bhat

**Agencies**

**SRINAGAR:** The Jammu and Kashmir police has decided to impose strictest curfew in the Valley, especially this capital city on Friday as it's the death anniversaries of Mirwaiz Molvi Muhammad

Farooq and Peoples Conference founder Abdul Ghani Lone.

According to sources, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir Vijay Kumar on Thursday held deliberations with all DisG and SSSP through virtual mode to take

stock of the situation.

"It was decided that Police shall enforce the strictest corona curfew tomorrow (May 21)," they said.

Across India, May 21 is observed as anti-terrorism day. "The IGP instructed all field officers to remain. **More On P10**

## Second Covid Wave Targeting Young: Expert

**Observer News Service**

**SRINAGAR:** Urging people to understand the gravity of the situation and maintain physical distance at their homes too, a senior doctor said Thursday that the second wave of coronavirus is highly infectious, targeting mostly younger people and leaving a trail of death.

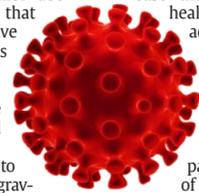
People need to understand the gravity of the situation and should take precautionary measures even at home," Dr Ishrat Hussain Dar, Professor Medicine, Government Medical College (GMC), Srinagar said Thursday, while

advising people to maintain physical distance at their homes too.

"Rushing to crowded places will increase the chances of getting infected with the disease that may aggravate health of a person," he added.

The senior expert termed Covid-19, a formidable and killer disease and acknowledged the pan World spread of the virulent SARS COV2 disease and large-scale devastation and deaths caused by it.

He said the second Corona wave is highly infectious, targeting mostly younger people and leaving a trail. **More On P10**



**J&K Logs 67 More Deaths, 4169 New Cases**  
Firdaus Ali

**Jammu and Kashmir reported on Thursday 67 more coronavirus related deaths while 4169 people tested positive for virus across the Union territory during the last 24 hours.** Officials said that 41 fatalities were reported from Jammu division and 26 from Kashmir Valley thus taking the death toll since the outbreak of pandemic in J&K last year to 3422. Among the victims from the Valley, officials said. **More On P10**

**Family Booked For Violating Funeral SOPs**  
Observer Monitoring Desk

**P**olice on Thursday filed a case against a family from north Kashmir's Bandipora district for flouting guidelines related to the burial of a coronavirus victim. According to reports, a Covid-19 patient from Chak-Arsala Khan area of Bandipora district succumbed to infection on Wednesday at the SKIMS Bemina, where he was being treated by the doctors. The health department officials, as per the Covid-19 guidelines, shifted the body to his native village for burial. However, the family members of the victim, reports said, did not adhere to the Covid-19 guidelines and gathered. **More On P10**

**'Black Fungus' A Notifiable Disease**

**A**s cases of 'black fungus' among COVID-19 patients in the country rise to cross 7,000, the Centre on Thursday urged all states and union territories to declare it as a notifiable disease under the Epidemic Diseases Act to ensure mandatory surveillance to tackle the "new challenge". The Delhi High Court also asked the Centre to take steps to import Amphotericin-B used for treating Mucormycosis, also known as 'black fungus', from wherever. **More On P10**

**Health Dept To Keep Check On Attendants**

**Agencies**

**I**n a bid to contain the spread of deadly coronavirus infection in the healthcare institutions, the department of health on Thursday directed the Chief Medical Officers (CMO) and Medical Superintendents of all District Hospitals to monitor influx of attendants in dedicated Covid hospitals and health centers. In an order issued by Director Health Kashmir Dr. Mushtaq Ahmad Rather on Wednesday, reads that "Kindly refer to the subject cited above. In this context, as has been directed by the Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir during the course of the meeting held on. **More On P10**

**14% Rise In NPS Contribution Of Employees**

**Observer News Service**

**JAMMU:** Fulfilling the demand of the employees working under National Pension System (NPS), the Jammu and Kashmir government on Thursday announced enhancement of its monthly contribution to 14% from the month of April, 2020.

"The Government shall make fourteen percent (14%) of matching contribution from April 2020," reads an order issued by the Department of Finance on Thursday. According to an official spokesperson, the move. **More On P10**

**Ban On Constructions In Gulmarg To Continue: HC**

**Agencies**

**SRINAGAR:** Jammu and Kashmir High Court on Thursday said that its directions regarding ban on all types of constructions in Gulmarg and Tangmarg shall continue. "The earlier directions of the Court stopping of construction activities at Gulmarg/Tangmarg, shall remain in operation and if any person is found violating the same and

continues with the construction activities his/her property shall be sealed forthwith and that no building or construction material shall be allowed to be transported in the area," said a division bench of Chief Justice Pankaj Mithal and Justice Vinod Chatterji Koul.

"It would be obligatory upon the Deputy Commissioner, Baramulla, SSP, Baramulla and the Gulmarg Development Authority to ensure that no

construction activities are carried out without the leave of the Court," the court said, adding, "The Court however do not intend to usurp or take over the functions of the Development Authority or the BOCA and, as such, leaves it open for the authorities to entertain applications for the repairs and constructions of the buildings in accordance with the Master Plan and the By-laws but the sanction, if any, **More On P10**

**LAWDA Asked To Take Call On AYUSH Hospital**

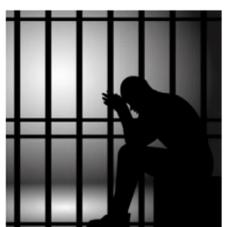
**J**ammu and Kashmir High Court has asked LAWDA to take a call on 50-bedded AYUSH Hospital at Shalimar here, leaving it open for the authority to decide even on demolition or sealing of the construction. Disposing of an application by Director ISM, a division bench of Chief Justice Pankaj Mithal and Justice Vinod Chatterji. **More On P10**

**Jailed SOG DySP, 2 Govt Teachers Sacked From Services**

**Ajaz Ali**

**SRINAGAR:** Continuing its drive to terminate the public servants "in the interest of the security of the State" the Jammu and Kashmir administration on Thursday sacked DySP Davinder Singh besides two government teachers from north Kashmir's Kupwara district.

The dismissal order of suspended DySP Davinder Singh, who was arrested while ferrying two Hizb-ul-Mujahideen militants in a vehicle on the Srinagar-Jammu Highway



in January last year, was issued by Jammu and Kashmir administration on the directions of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday. **More On P10**

**GMC Jammu To Fill 313 Posts For 500 Bedded Covid Hospital**

**Observer News Service**

**JAMMU:** The Government Medical College (GMC) Jammu on Thursday advertised 313 new contractual posts for the upcoming 500 bedded temporary Covid Hospital in collaboration with the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO).

The advertisements issued here by GMC Jammu has invited as per Performa, from eligible candidates, for engagement in this 500 bedded temporary Covid Hospital initially for a period of one year extendable up to maximum of three years (One year at a time and further extension subject to good performance and conduct), an

official spokesperson said. He said to fill the vacancies, a walk in interview shall also be conducted for newly created 35 posts of Medical Officers and the date of interview is scheduled on May 24 at Committee Room GMC Jammu at 11 am.

Similarly, two other separate advertisements have also been issued for hiring 16 Nursing Supervisors, 195 Junior Staff Nurses, 47 Pharmacists, 12 Lab Technicians and eight X-Ray Technicians under different pay scales with prescribed eligibility criteria and age limit for any given post.

The twin advertisements read that the application as per prescribed format should reach the office of. **More On P10**



As the revival of tourism season seems far from sight in wake of corona surge, the administration has again shifted focus on de-weeding famous Dal Lake. KO Photo, Abid Bhat

**India-China Ties At Crossroads: Jaishankar**

**Press Trust Of India**

**NEW DELHI:** The relationship between India and China is at a crossroads and its direction depends on whether the neighbouring country adheres to various agreements on maintaining peace and tranquillity along the border, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Thursday referring to the eastern Ladakh standoff.

Jaishankar said the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit in 1988 to China 26 years after the 1962 conflict led to a consensus on having stability along the frontier which was followed by the. **More On P10**



# COVID-19: Srinagar Airport Witnesses 75 Percent Decrease In Footfall

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Amid spike in Covid-19 positive cases in Kashmir, and other parts of India, footfall at Srinagar International Airport has come down to a record low of 75 percent, while daily flight movements have reduced to around 15, said an official.

A top official from the Srinagar Airport said that after the spike in Covid-19 positive cases in the valley, "the footfall at the Srinagar Airport has gone

down to 75 percent with a footfall of around 2000 per day."

The official said, with the sharp decrease in the footfall at Srinagar Airport, the daily flights movements have also come down from 45 to around 15 flights on a daily basis. However the night and cargo flight services are still actively operating from the Airport.

"Under the Covid guidelines all services are intact at Srinagar Airport, however it is just a footfall which has come down in view of the prevailing Covid-19 situation in Kashmir and other parts of the country," he said.

Tourism activities had gained

pace and addition of night flights recorded a footfall of around 12000 at the airport, after which more airlines were mulling to start the night flight operations. However, with the resurgence of Covid-19 hitting badly the valley including the other parts of the country the daily footfall came down with around 1000 arrivals and 1000 departures.

Officials further said that airport authorities are ensuring all the Covid-19 SOPs and guidelines are followed and all the inbound passengers are tested on arrival for Covid-19 by the health officials deputed at the airport by the Divisional Administration Kashmir.

# APHC Pays Tributes To Mirwaiz Farooq, Abdul Gani Lone

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** On the 31st martyrdom anniversary of Mirwaiz Molvi Mohammed Farooq and the nineteenth martyrdom anniversary of Abdul Gani Lone, APHC Thursday paid tributes to them.

All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) in a statement also paid tributes to the martyrs of Hawal, "killed by forces" while carrying the body of Mirwaiz.

APHC said that Mirwaiz, being the scion of Mirwaiz family was an acclaimed Islamic preacher and a greatly gifted orator whose delivery of religious sermons was so powerful and soul stirring that it was widely emulated by preachers across the valley.

"It deeply affected those who listened to him spiritually, bringing them closer to Allah and making them take stock of their own deeds with a view to self improvement."

APHC said that Mirwaiz was a multifaceted visionary who played a pioneering role in the educational and social upliftment of his people through the institutions he headed and also otherwise, and his contribution in these areas will always be recalled with respect and appreciation. "Unfortunately many of his dreams for development of these sectors remained unful-

filled as his life was cut short."

APHC said that a dearly loved and popular leader Mirwaiz led his people boldly from the front in their political struggle. "He was an ardent and lifelong advocate of the realisation of the will and aspirations of the people of J&K in deciding their future and personally suffered on this account as he was jailed and repeatedly persecuted."

APHC said that Mirwaiz Farooq was a man of peace. He always advocated peaceful coexistence and friendship between the neighbouring countries of India and Pakistan and was among the first exponents of dialogue as a means of conflict resolution between the neighbours.

It said that Abdul Ghani Lone was a heedful and fearless leader who sacrificed his life for his belief in a peaceful and pro people resolution of the Kashmir issue. He was an intellectual who connected with the aspirations of his people and advocated it at wherever he got a chance to do so.

APHC said that people of J&K will always remember these great selfless leaders and will follow their footsteps. It reiterated that it will pursue the vision and mission of these great stalwarts in seeking the resolution of the Kashmir conflict.

## 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
- BUBHERA: 01932-228243
- PAMPORE: 01933-294132
- PATTAN: 01954-293507
- QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

## HIGHWAY STATUS

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

## This Day in History

- 1260 - Hao Jing, envoy of Mongol leader Kublai Khan imprisoned by order of the high Chancellor of China, Jia Sidao at the Song Dynasty court of Emperor Lizong while attempting to negotiate with the Song
- 1420 - Treaty of Troyes: Henry V of England and his heirs would inherit the throne of France upon the death of King Charles VI of France
- 1809 - Battle of Aspern-Essling: Austrian archduke Karl beats Napoleon
- 1856 - Lawrence, Kansas, is captured and sacked by pro-slavery forces
- 1864 - Russia declares an end to the Russian-Circassian War and many Circassians are forced into exile. The day is designated to be the Circassian Day of Mourning.
- 1879 - Battle of Iquique: Chilean naval forces overcome Peruvian ships (War of the Pacific)
- 1911 - French troop enter Fez in Morocco to quell anti-European agitation
- 1918 - US House of Representatives passes amendment allowing women to vote
- 1920 - Mexican President Venustiano Carranza is executed by army generals after fleeing an armed rebellion in Mexico
- 1931 - Belgian government of Jaspar falls
- 1940 - Allied counter attack at Atrecht, northern France
- 1940 - Reynaud forms French government
- 1941 - SS Robin Moor becomes the first US ship sunk by a U-boat during World War II
- 1941 - German airforce occupies airport at Maleme, Crete
- 1944 - Hitler begins attack on British/US "terror pilots"
- 1953 - French government of Mayer resigns
- 1956 - Jordan government of Said el-Mufti forms
- 1956 - US explodes 1st airborne hydrogen bomb over Bikini Atoll
- 1957 - French government of Mollet resigns
- 1958 - Indonesian paratroopers reconquer Morotai Island
- 1966 - Muhammad Ali TKOs Henry Cooper in 6 for heavyweight boxing title
- 1968 - USSR performs nuclear test (underground)
- 1981 - Francois Mitterrand becomes president of France
- 1982 - British troops land on Falkland Islands
- 1985 - Israel exchanges 1,150 prisoners with the PFLP-GC in return for 3 Israeli soldiers
- 1987 - Military coup in Fiji under Lt. Col Sitiveni Rabuka
- 1988 - US performs nuclear test at Nevada Test Site
- 1992 - China performs nuclear test at Lop Nor, PRC
- 1993 - Venezuela president Carlos Andres Perez fired
- 1994 - South Yemen secedes from Yemen
- 1998 - Indonesian president Suharto resigns after 31 years in power
- 2001 - French Taubira law officially recognizes the Atlantic slave trade and slavery as crimes against humanity.
- 2003 - An earthquake hits northern Algeria killing more than 2,000 people.
- 2006 - The Republic of Montenegro holds a referendum proposing independence from the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro. The Montenegrin people choose independence with a majority of 55%.
- 2012 - 120 people are killed and 350 injured by a suicide bomb in Sana'a, Yemen
- 2013 - Microsoft announces the release of Xbox One
- 2014 - José Mário Vaz is elected President of Guinea-Bissau
- 2014 - Russian President Putin signs agreements with China in Beijing in relation to trade and infrastructure
- 2014 - Thai army declared martial law and closes down several news stations
- 2016 Mullah Akhtar Muhammad Mansour, leader of the Afghan Taliban is reportedly killed by a US drone in Pakistan



HIJRI CALENDAR

**09**

**SHAWWAL -UL- MUKARRAM 1442**

## PRAYERS

**FAJR 3:48**  
**ZUHR 12:27**  
**ASR 5:23**  
**MAGRIB 7:32**  
**ISHA 9:08**

# DC Srinagar Distributes Ration Kits Among Shikarawallas In Dal Lake

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** In order to extend a helping hand to the Shikarawallas in Dal Lake Srinagar, the District Administration Srinagar today distributed ration kits among the boat owners.

The initiative was taken by DDMA Srinagar, as a part of relief measures undertaken to offer assistance to the underprivileged

and needy groups whose livelihood has got affected due to the 2nd wave of Covid-19 pandemic.

DC Srinagar Mohammad Aijaz Asad riding in a shikara with the ration kits handed over the same to shikara owners. As many as 300 ration kits were distributed among the Shikarawallas at various Ghats in the Dal Lake.

The Additional Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar Syed Hanief

Balkhi, Tehsildar Khanyar and other concerned accompanied the DC during the distribution process.

Meanwhile, the Shikara owners association have thanked LG Administration for extending the relief amount in favour of Shikarawallas during the pandemic through Tourism Department. They also expressed gratitude to the District Administration of Srinagar for providing ration relief to the Shikarawallas.

# DC Srinagar Visits Various Panchayats



Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** On the direction of Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Mohammad Aijaz Asad today visited various Panchayats in Srinagar to set into motion the process of setting up of the Covid Care mitigation infrastructure to strengthen the Covid-19 management and containment measures at Panchayat level.

The aim of setting up of covid care centres is to create basic minimum infrastructure to provide isolation facilities

at Panchayat level as many households may not have option for isolation of Covid positive patients in their own houses.

The facility would be having a minimum 5-bedded Covid Care Centre including one Oxygen supported bed in each Panchayat for the patient requiring immediate medical attention.

During the visit, the DC inspected available infrastructure in panchayat of Khonmoh-A, Khonmoh-B, Balhama-A and Balhama-B.

The Panchayat level Covid care Centers shall be equipped with necessary medical kits, and linked to nearest Health Centres.

On the occasion, the DC said that the building of Primary Health Center (PHC), Zewan will be handed over to health Department. He directed for making the Center operational within weeks time.

It was informed that the PHC will cater population of Khonmoh and Balhama Panchayats.



**WORKERS REMOVE WEED FROM DAL LAKE** in Srinagar on Thursday. KO Photo Abid Bhat

## Departmental, Grocery Stores Permitted To Provide Home Delivery

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Amid Covid-19 Curfew across Jammu and Kashmir, District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) Srinagar on Thursday issued the orders for allowing the enlisted departmental stores and grocery shops to provide home delivery services of essential commodities in district Srinagar.

According to an order, the DDMA said that grocery stores enlisted in Srinagar shall designate two employees each from their store for taking orders telephonically and deliver the same to respective places within a radius of 3 Km around the store.

"In order to provide door step service of essentials, avoid contact and unnecessary movement it seems imperative to allow controlled/ regulated home delivery of essential commodities, District Disaster Management Authority has decided to allow home delivery of essential commodities by various departmental stores/grocery shops in district Srinagar," reads the order.

The order reads that under no circumstances, whatsoever, the stores shall remain operational for regular business and the shutters to remain closed all time till further orders.

"Moreover, the time slot for home delivery services shall be 6.00 AM to 10.00 AM in the morning and 7.00 PM to 9.00 PM in the evening. Additional Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Mr. Khurshid Ahmad Shah shall be Nodal officer for providing vehicle passes to the store owners for std purpose only and has further allowed any other departmental store/grocery shop intending to provide services can apply in DDMA office Srinagar or email at controlroomddma@egsr54@gmail.com for facilitation /permission," the order states.

## SAD DEMISE

**Mushtaq Ahmed Sheikh (Haji) Naseemabad**  
 Nowgam Srinagar has left abode. His fate khawani will be held on (22nd May-2021) Saturday 9:30 am at his ancestral graveyard in Gupkar Road Sonwar near Nursing Home.

**Bereaved Family**  
 Sheikh Fasal Haji (7780847258)

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**OFFICE OF THE EXAMINATION PG CONDUCT UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR**  
 NAAC Accredited Grade "A+" | HAZRATBAL, SRINAGAR

### NOTICE

It is notified for the information of **M.A Private 3rd/4th Semester Fresh (Batch 2019), Backlog(batch 2017)** and eligible Division Improvement candidates that the link for downloading of Examination Forms shall remain available on the University website <https://egov.uok.edu.in/eConduct> on the following dates:

i) Date of commencement of Examination Forms/Fee: **21-05-2021**

ii) Last date of Examination Form: **31-05-2021**

**NOTE:**

a) Examination Fee of only Verified forms will be added to the student fee invoice . If your form is Not Verified, send email to [pgconduct@uok.edu.in](mailto:pgconduct@uok.edu.in)

b) Payment of fee can be made online anytime even after the last date of submission. However, forms will not be accepted until all payments are complete.

c) In case of any issue while downloading the Examination Form, the concerned candidates are also directed to please contact the said email and there is absolutely no need to visit the Main Campus for clearance of issue. The candidates are also directed to retain Hardcopies of Examination Forms and the email confirmation of online fee payment for future course of action.

Notice No.F/PG Exam form Private/PG/KU/21 Sd/-Assistant Controller of Examinations (PG Conduct) Dated: 20-05-2021

## Skuaast-Kashmir Organized Kalazeera Day At Advanced Research Station For Saffron & Seed Spices, Pampore

Srinagar, May 19, 2021: Kalazeera Day in collaboration with the Directorate of Extension SKUAJST-K and sponsored by AICRP Spices-ICAR, DST, New Delhi and PPV&FRA, NARS, New Delhi was organized at Advanced Research Station for Saffron & Seed Spices, Pampore. Officers of the varsity, scientists of the Station/Heads of KVK's, Officers of the line Departments and Kalazeera growers participated in the said event, following COVID-19 SOPs.

Prof. J.P Sharma Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, SKUAJST-J&K being the chief guest on the occasion who highlighted the importance of Kalazeera cultivation and emphasized the need for espousal of scientific practices being demonstrated at Advanced Research Station for Saffron & Seed Spices. On the occasion Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor laid stress on compiling & publishing of booklet on production technologies of Shalimar Kalazeera-1 developed by SKUAJST-K. It was desired that the farmers should use the land resources for double the cropping intensity, thereby increasing the total returns from Saffron and Kalazeera as both are perennial and high value crops. Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor applauded the Scientists for their diligent efforts and suggested them to explore possibilities for standard processing in Kalazeera for quality retention and post harvest losses. He further stressed to conduct demonstrations and impart trainings to the farmers for adoption of the latest production technologies. Prof. D.M. Makhdoom, Director Extension, Prof. Sarfaraz A. Wani, Director Research and Prof. Gulzaffar, Registrar also spoke on the occasion and stressed that the technologies developed by SKUAJST-K should be fully adopted by the farmers for higher yield gains.

The role of Research Station in transferring the technological knowhow of Kalazeera at the gross root level was appreciated by farmers. An interaction session between farmers and scientists was also arranged during the programme.

Earlier, Dr. B.A. Alie, Head of the Station briefed about the research initiatives being carried out at the station and also highlighted the importance of Kalazeera and other spices and their potential in improving the economy of the farmers.

*From KO Archives*

## Time Ripe For Kashmir Pact: Pak

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The time is ripe for a deal between India and Pakistan on Kashmir and the two countries should seize the opportunity to end the long running issue, Pakistan Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri said on Thursday.

"At the moment conditions are particularly propitious," he told reporters during a stopover in Kuala Lumpur on his way home from visits to Australia and New Zealand.

"Both leaders have to show courage and take difficult decisions and the fact there are peace constituencies in both countries should be a help to them," Mr Kasuri said.

He said a major confidence-building measure in the search for a solution to the Kashmir issue would be an agreement on the Siachen glacier in talks beginning on May 25. "It is doable" I think if we have agreement on this it will act as a major confidence-building measure. It will also help in the process of resolution of Jammu and Kashmir. It requires just a bit of political will. The defence secretaries need to try to convince each other that their fear and apprehension is misplaced."

(Kashmir Observer, 21 May, 2005)

## Tribal Elders Broker What World Leaders Couldn't – A Ceasefire Between Local Taliban And The Afghan Govt



Tribal elders in eastern Afghanistan achieved something that has long eluded world leaders – a ceasefire between the Taliban and the Afghan government.

The month-long stoppage in hostilities in the Alingar district of Laghman province, one of the hardest hit by violence, was called to allow local farmers to harvest their wheat crop and students to sit annual examinations. "A ceasefire has been something the world's most powerful countries were trying to establish in Afghanistan, but unfortunately, couldn't," Jaber Alkozai, resident of Alingar, told Reuters on Wednesday.

Tribal elders drafted a demand letter, known locally as an "Ariza", which was then signed by two local officials of each the Taliban and the government.

Reuters has reviewed a copy of the letter. There were no reports of fighting in Alingar since the ceasefire began on Tuesday, despite heavy clashes elsewhere in Laghman.

The ceasefire, which will last until June 21, is not the first such agreement during the war, but it comes at a critical time. Fighting has intensified across the country in the wake of Washington's announcement that it would unconditionally pull out all US troops by September.

Washington-led Western capitals and other influential regional countries have so far been unable to convince the Taliban to halt fighting against Afghan forces for an extended period, despite protracted attempts and talks.

Qari Nabi Sarwar, a tribal elder of Alingar, said farmers had been facing another year of the loss of ready-to-harvest wheat due to fighting. Dozens of stacks of wheat were burned to ashes

in previous years after being hit in crossfire by ammunition, including rocket launchers.

"Farmers were preparing to get the result of their toil, and the Taliban and Afghan forces were fingers-on-triggers, looking for a small excuse to fire at each other," Sarwar told Reuters by phone.

Farmers in the region plan to begin their wheat harvest on May 22, which marks the first day of the third Afghan solar month of Jawza, traditionally the start of harvest across the country.

Haji Abdul Waris, a member of the delegation that approached both sides, told Reuters the ceasefire would also prevent thousands of students from missing their exams "as their schools are turned into trenches".

Locals are happy with the development because they believe it serves as an important example that a ceasefire across Afghanistan can be achieved by "true and honest" tribal elders, Alkozai said.

Asadullah Dawlatzai, a spokesman for the Laghman provincial governor, said the government was working with local tribal elders and religious scholars to expand the ceasefire into other areas.

"Through this, the local government is trying to reach a permanent ceasefire even if it is on a village, district or provincial level," he said, adding that it was also in force in Laghman's provincial capital, Mehtarlam.

A spokesman for the Taliban did not respond to requests for comment. A source in the insurgent group confirmed the Taliban had agreed to the arrangement, which they described as an agreement with locals, not the government.

The one-page demand letter, signed by local government officials, the military and the Taliban, stipulated that both sides would remain limited to areas already held and would undertake no movement or operations during the ceasefire.

"Both sides must take tribes' problems into consideration and help them in solving them; whichever side violates the above mentioned items will be guilty before the tribe," the letter said. **REUTERS**

## Arctic Warming Three Times Faster Than The Planet: Report

Agence France-Presse

**OSLO, NORWAY:** The Arctic has warmed three times more quickly than the planet as a whole, and faster than previously thought, a report warned on Thursday.

Arctic sea ice looks set to be an early victim of rising temperatures, with each fraction of a degree making a big difference: the chance of it disappearing entirely in summer is 10 times greater if Earth warms by 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels compared to 1.5C, the goal set by the 2015 Paris Accord.

The alarming finding comes from the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) in a report timed to coincide with a ministerial meeting this week of the Arctic Council in Reykjavik, which gathers countries bordering the region.

"The Arctic is a real hotspot for climate warming," said Jason Box, a glaciologist at the Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland.

In less than half a century, from 1971 to 2019, the Arctic's average annual temperature rose by 3.1C, compared to 1C for the planet as a whole.

That's more than previously suspected. In a 2019 report on Earth's frozen spaces, the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) concluded that Arctic surface air temperature has likely increased "by more than double the global average".

**- Forest fires -**  
According to researchers, a turning point came in 2004 when the temperature in the Arctic surged for largely unexplained reason.

Since then, warming has continued at a rate 30 percent higher than in previous decades. The region is now experiencing "more and longer lasting winter warm events," Box told AFP.

During the summer months from June to September, there is added heat from the ocean, which is increasingly free of ice and the insulation it provides. And the warming is not com-



ing to an end any time soon.

According to forecasts in the report, by the end of the century average temperatures in the Arctic are expected to rise 3.3 to 10 degrees above the average for the period 1985-2014.

The final figure depends on how rapidly humanity draws down greenhouse gas emissions.

Warming has immediate consequences for the Arctic ecosystem, including changes in habitat, food habits and interactions between animals -- including the iconic polar bear -- and the migration of some species.

From Siberia to Alaska, forest fires have also become a problem. "This is what 3C looks like, it's not just numbers, it's forests on fire," said Box.

"The impacts of wild land fires are not limited to public safety concerns, such as protecting life and property," said US researcher Michael Young, Arctic Council Wildland Fire Projects Coordinator.

"The smoke they produce also contains carbon dioxide and black carbon, which both contribute to climate change."

**- Global impact -**  
The consequences are also dramatic for the four million people who live in the region, especially indigenous peoples.

"Hunters in northwestern Greenland report that the period when travel by dog sleds on sea ice is possible has decreased from five to three months," said Sarah Trainor, director of the Alaska Center for Climate Assessment and Policy.

## Gaza's Health System Devastated Amid Ongoing Conflict



Gaza already feeble health system is being brought to its knees by the fourth war in just over a decade.

Hospitals have been overwhelmed with waves of dead and wounded from Israel's bombardment. Many vital medicines are rapidly running out in the tiny, blockaded coastal territory as is fuel to keep the electricity going.

Two of Gaza's most prominent doctors, including the number 2 in Gaza's coronavirus task force, were killed when their homes were destroyed during barrages since Israel's attack started 10 days ago.

Just as Gaza was climbing out of a second wave of coronavirus infections, its only virus testing lab was damaged by an air strike and has been shut. Health officials fear further outbreaks among tens of thousands of displaced residents crowded into makeshift shelters after fleeing massive barrages.

At one UN-run school where 1,400 people were taking shelter, Nawal al Danaf and her five children were crammed into a single classroom with five other families. Blankets draped over cords crisscrossed the room to carve out sleeping spaces.

"The school is safe from the war, but when it comes to corona, with five families in a room, everyone infects each other," said al Danaf, who fled Israeli tank shelling on the northern Gaza town of Beit La-

hiya a few days ago.

Blankets and laundry dangled from the railings of the school's balcony, as women looked down into a yard where children were playing and men sat chatting. No one wore a mask or could do any social distancing in the cramped quarters.

Gaza health infrastructure was already collapsing before this latest war, said Adnan Abu Hasna, a spokesman for UNRWA, the UN agency that provides vital assistance to 75 percent of the enclave's population who are refugees.

"It's frightening," he said. The sector has been battered by three previous wars between Israel and Hamas, the party that governs Gaza.

Israel's attacks on Gaza follow spiking tensions in occupied Jerusalem during the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan. Hamas fired rockets into Israel after Israeli police deployed heavy-handed tactics against Palestinian worshippers in and around Al Aqsa Mosque in the last week of the holy month.

Another flashpoint in recent days has been a court case that could end with Palestinian families evicted from occupied East Jerusalem homes in Sheikh Jarrah claimed by Jewish settlers.

Since then, Israel has struck hundreds of targets across the Mediterranean coastal strip. Israel says it seeks to cripple Hamas by targeting its leaders. But the powerful bombs dropped on crowded Gaza have

killed 300 Palestinians and caused significant damage to the territory's infrastructure.

**Tearing down Gaza, again**  
In each Israeli aggression on Gaza, hospitals and clinics were damaged or destroyed, and medical personnel killed. And after each, authorities had to slowly rebuild, hampered by the blockade imposed by Israel and Egypt since Hamas took power in 2007.

Other turmoil also weighed on the system. More than two years of weekly Friday Palestinian protests at the border with Israel against the blockade produced a constant stream of casualties from Israeli fire – more than 35,000 injured, many with lifelong disabilities and around 100 still awaiting reconstructive surgery and amputations.

Now health facilities are struggling to handle both the casualties of war and the everyday needs of Gaza's 2 million people.

"It's layer-upon-layer of crisis. And there never is really enough time between each crisis to rebuild," said Matthias Schmale, the UNRWA director in Gaza.

"The (health care) system has gradually been quite significantly weakened. I wouldn't say it's on its knees, but getting close."

Gaza health officials say at least 300 Palestinians, including 65 children, have been killed in air strikes and more than 1,700 wounded.

**Displaced families flee to UN schools**

The bombardment has driven more than 56,000 Gazans from their homes, fleeing into 59 schools run by UNRWA.

The UN agency is providing them with water and basic hygiene supplies, including face masks. More than 22,000 are seeking shelter with host families or relatives.

UNRWA learned from the last war, in 2014, when some 292,000 displaced people crammed into its schools and other shelters during 50 days of fighting. **-AP**

## US Says It Opposes UN Resolution Calling For Gaza Cease-Fire

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The United States said Wednesday it opposes a proposed UN Security Council resolution calling for a cease-fire in the conflict between Israel and Gaza's Hamas rulers, reiterating that it could interfere with the Biden administration's efforts to end the hostilities.

France drafted the resolution after the US blocked at least four attempts to have the council issue a press statement calling for an end to the violence, giving the same reason. Diplomats said all other council members supported the statement.

A press statement requires agreement by all 15 council members, but a resolution requires only at least nine "yes" votes and no veto by the United States or any of the four other permanent members.

A French government spokesman had said "very intense discussions" were taking place with the United States on Wednesday about the proposed resolution, which UN diplomats said calls for a cease-fire and humanitarian aid for Gaza.



But a spokesperson for the US Mission to the United Nations said later in the day: "We've been clear and consistent that we are focused on intensive diplomatic efforts underway to bring an end to the violence and that we will not support actions that we believe undermine efforts to de-escalate."

The spokesperson commented on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of discussions.

The White House said that in a Wednesday phone call President Joe Biden told Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that he expected "a significant de-escalation today on the path to a cease-fire." But Netanyahu said later he was "determined to continue this operation until its aim is met."

It was not clear if, or when, France would circulate the draft

resolution to all council members or call for a vote, which would likely lead to a US veto.

French President Emmanuel Macron and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi held talks in Paris earlier this week and they had a meeting Tuesday with Jordan's King Abdullah II via video conference on the Gaza conflict. In a joint statement, France, Egypt and Jordan said they "called on the parties to immediately agree on a ceasefire" and would work with the UN and other partners to ensure humanitarian help for the population of Gaza.

The 193-member General Assembly scheduled an open meeting on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict Thursday and about a dozen ministers were expected to attend in person.

Assembly spokesman Brenden Varma said Wednesday that dozens of countries were expected to speak during the day-long session, but no statement or resolution was expected.

The ambassadors of Niger, which chairs the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and Algeria, the current chair of the UN's Arab Group, requested Thursday's meeting.

## No Sanctions, Pressures Will Deter Us From Supporting Palestine: Iran

Agencies

**BEIRUT:** As Israel continued to pummel Gaza with air and ground attacks for the second week, the commander of Iran's elite Quds Force Brig. Gen. Esmail Qaani sent a letter to Mohammed Deif, the supreme commander of Hamas's military wing, Izzadin al-Qassam Brigades, in which he pledged that Tehran would not abandon the Palestinians.



The latest round of fighting with Israel, Qaani said, "has opened a new era in the conflict with the Zionist enemy."

Qaani praised Hamas and the Gaza-based terrorist groups for engaging in a "great battle that once again proved the weakness of the enemy."

He added: "I kiss the hands that are carrying the weapons of Jihad (holy war) to defend Jerusalem and its holy sites. We will never be satisfied until this entity (Israel) is removed from the blessed land of Palestine and the liberation of every grain of its soil."

Qaani vowed to fulfill the promise of his predecessor, General Qasem Soleimani, and continue all out aid to the resistance groups. "We will not leave Palestine alone, regardless of the pressures and siege," he wrote in the letter, which was published by the Palestinian news agency SAFA.

Soleimani was assassinated in a US drone strike in Baghdad on January 3, 2020. He was responsible, among other things, for military and tactical support for Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad in the Gaza Strip.

Qaani described Deif as a "living martyr" and "brave commander." Israeli army reportedly tried but failed twice to kill Deif since the fighting began. Deif has been Israel's "most wanted" Palestinian commander for the last 26 years for his direct involvement in military operations.

In the letter, Qaani reminded the Hamas of the recent statement by Iran's Supreme Leader Sayed Ali Khamenei, who said that "the decline of the enemy Zionist regime has begun and will not stop."

Sayed made his statement in a speech marking Al-Quds Day, an annual event held on the last Friday of Ramadan that was initiated by his predecessor Ruhollah Khomeini in 1979 to express support for the Palestinians and

oppose Zionism and Israel.

"We are living with you the great battle of the 'Sword of Jerusalem' that you are waging on behalf of the Muslims and in defense of their honor, dignity and sanctities," Qaani wrote to Deif.

Hamas has called its rocket assault on Israel Saif al-Quds ('Sword of Jerusalem').

According to Qaani, the battle of the "Sword of Jerusalem" has "brought the Muslims' attention back to Jerusalem and the holy sites."

In an indirect reference to the Palestinian Authority and Arab countries that signed peace treaties with Israel, the Iranian military commander said that those who "sold Palestine represent only themselves and will regret their betrayal."

Last week, Qaani told Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh during a phone conversation that Iran continues to support the "battle against the Zionist enemy."

Haniyeh, for his part, praised Iran's support for the Palestinians and said that the "battle in Palestine is a fight involving the whole Islamic Ummah," according to the Iranian Tasnim News Agency.

In a related development, the commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps Major General Hossein Salami on Wednesday pledged Iran's unwavering support for the Palestinians.

He also praised the "strong resistance put up by the Palestinians in the face of the Israeli raids on the Gaza Strip, saying, "More than two-thirds of Zionist cities were attacked by Palestinian rockets from Gaza, leaving no safe haven for them."

Salami said that the "defeat of Israel is a sign of the defeat of the US. The Americans and the Israelis are stuck between two defeats; if they retreat, they have failed, and if they stand, they have failed, too."

## Pfizer Vaccine Can Be Stored In Fridge For A Month: US Regulator



Agence France-Presse

**WASHINGTON:** The Pfizer-BionTech Covid-19 vaccine can be stored at refrigerator temperatures for up to a month in the United States, the country's health regulator announced Wednesday, in a change expected to help distribution of the shot.

The US Food and Drug Administration said it had made the decision "based on a review of recent data submitted by Pfizer," and will allow vials of the vaccine to be stored at refrigerator temperatures of 2-8 degrees Celsius (35-46 degrees Fahrenheit) for up to one month.

The vials were previously only allowed to be kept at such temperatures for five days.

"This change should make this vaccine more widely available to the American public by facilitating the ability of vaccine providers, such as community doctors' offices, to receive, store and administer the vaccine," said Peter Marks, director of the FDA's Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research.

The European Medicines Agency on Monday also approved the storage of the Pfizer vaccine in fridges for up to a month.

The FDA had already relaxed conditions for the vaccine's storage in February, allowing it to be kept "at conventional temperatures commonly found in pharmaceutical freezers for a period of up to two weeks" rather than ultra-low freezer temperature of -80 to -60 degrees Celsius.

### NEWS MAKERS

## "Sitting In His Wheelchair...": Gaza Strike Kills Disabled Palestinian Man, Wife, Child

Agence France-Presse

**Deir el-Balah,** Palestinian Territories: Disabled Palestinian Eyad Saleha, 33, was waiting for lunch Wednesday when a missile fell on his family home in Gaza, killing him, his pregnant wife and their three-year-old daughter, his brother and authorities said.

The family's living room was blasted to bits, and the mangled parts of a child's red bicycle lay amid the wreckage. Inside their toppled fridge, grey dust covered a bowl of fresh red tomatoes.

Israeli air strikes have killed 227 people including 64 children in the besieged coastal en-

clave since May 10, according to the health ministry in Gaza.

Rockets fired by Palestinian armed groups have killed 12 people including one child in Israel in that same period, Israeli police have said.

Israel's army has said it seeks to avoid "collateral damage" from strikes that are aimed at military targets.

It has also repeatedly said that misfired rockets from Palestinian groups which have landed inside Gaza Strip could be responsible for civilian deaths in the enclave, although there was no immediate indication a Palestinian rocket caused the family's death.

The Israeli army did not provide specific comment on



Wednesday's strike in Deir el-Balah, which tore through the seaside building's facade and destroyed all three rooms in

the extended family flat. It killed Saleha, his 33-year-old wife Amani, and their daughter Nagham.

Distraught at the morgue, Omar Saleha, 31, said his brother Eyad had been unable to walk for 14 years, and was not a fighter.

"What did my brother do? He was just sitting in his wheelchair," he said.

"What did his daughter ever do? What did his wife do?" asked the younger brother, who was with neighbours when the strike hit.

"They were just getting ready to have lunch."

**- 'How many more?' -**  
He said Saleha was unemployed, and shared the flat with his mother and three brothers.

Like many others in the impoverished coastal enclave, they relied on aid from the UN agency for Palestinian refugees.

The Gaza health ministry on Wednesday reported the killing of a "disabled man, his daughter and pregnant wife".

## DC Budgam Urges People To Follow Covid SOPs

Observer News Service

**BUDGAM:** District Development Commissioner Budgam Shahbaz Ahmed Mirza while talking to media persons during press briefing appealed the general public of District Budgam to follow all SOPs and other instructions strictly.

He said as for as Covid status of District Budgam is concerned since 1st April 2021, 9030 positive cases were recorded, among these 4871 have since recovered, presently there are 4295 active cases. Regarding recovery rate, it has improved and reached to 53.9%. Since yesterday gradual decrease of 12% among positive cases has been recorded in the district. This has been achieved due to strict imposition of lock down measures all across the district. There are apprehensions that positivity rate may show rising trend in coming days as we have started

aggressive testing. Presently around 3000 tests are done on daily basis at all designated testing sites. In addition teams have been constituted who shall go door to door to carry out on spot testing of all asymptomatic as well as symptomatic patients.

The DC further added that in order to negotiate any emergency we have added another 50 bedded facility at Nagam Chadoora equipped with all necessary equipments particularly oxygen facility.

Regarding yesterday's LGs directions relating to establishing a 5 bedded Covid care facility at all panchayat locations is concerned, the DC said in this connection the requisite exercise has since begun and we are on the job. Consultations in this regard with all concerned authorities particularly Department RDD and Health has been conducted in a meeting convened here earlier today.

## DC Shopian Appeals People To Follow Covid SOPs

Observer News Service

**SHOPIAN:** The Deputy Commissioner, Shopian, Sachin Kumar Vaishya Thursday at Mini Secretariat, Arhama, Shopian briefed the media about the present situation of Covid-19 pandemic in the district and applauded the people of Shopian for following all the guidelines and other SOPs in letter and spirit and said that the recovery rate of Covid positive patients in the district is improving well while the death rate has also been declined.

Sachin Kumar said that imposing the lockdown and corona curfew does not mean that the people may suffer but our aim is to save precious lives of people. He appealed the people of the district not to go out of their homes unnecessarily but stay at home to avoid the spread of deadly virus. He said that after imposing lockdown, we have witnessed continuous decline in number of positive cases. He said that efforts are on to ensure strict adherence to Covid-19 protocols to break the chain of coronavirus. He further said that all the requisite measures are being taken to defeat the 2nd wave of Covid-19 as the first wave was defeated.

He said that all the health functionaries are on their toes, working with great dedication, zest and zeal and leave no stone unturned in facilitating the patients and provide them all the healthcare facilities which they need off and on. He said that more precautions are needed in the coming days which are

too much crucial, so the people should refrain to go out but the need of the hour is to remain indoors to get rid of this virus. He also said that all the Magistrates, Doctors and Police are cooperating well with District Administration and are working round the clock to break the chain of spread of Covid-19 pandemic in the district.

DC said that there are 45 positive cases in the district while the recovery rate is increasing day by day. He said that 98% vaccination has been done and the process is on to achieve the cent percent target within a short-possible time. He reiterated that the District Administration is always on forefront has enhanced infrastructure with better healthcare facilities in the District to save the lives of people. He added that there is no dearth of health care facilities in the hospitals and our health institutions are well equipped with oxygen, concentrators, bulk cylinders and other requisite equipments etc and the patients admitted are well treated.

He sought the people's cooperation in each and every respect and stressed for adherence to the precautionary measures to curb the disease completely and said that District Control Room Shopian is functional 24x7 at Mini Secretariat Arhama Shopian and in case of any urgency the people can contact the numbers:- 6006500451, 7889588603, 01933260825 and 01933260044.

Government of Jammu and Kashmir

## 'We Treat Dejected Ailing Covid Patients, Give Them Hope Of Surviving Ordeal'

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** As Covid pandemic has disturbed every aspect of life, including social relations in public & private life due to its contagious nature and devastation in terms of deaths, many families are grappling with covid infected patients all alone with the fear in hospitals of getting infected. Last year the social stigma that was wrongly attached to the disease and infected individuals has gone away to a large extent. The Government, health care authorities and the media have been working to dispel the myths, rumours and misconceptions in the society about the disease and covid positive patients.

The covid patients need compassion, help and good treatment and in this difficult situation health care professional like Nurses have shouldered the responsibility to treat covid positive patients with commitment and affection. It is they who have debunked and dispelled all the negative stories and demonstrated that by following proper safety protocol and SOPs, patients can be treated without any fear.

"The role of nurses during the current pandemic is appreciable who are working as frontline warriors to help corona patients and are dealing with them very closely and rendering all assistance to them. There is no reluctance and hesitation among nurses to have



physical contact while administering injections, medicine to positive patients. They are executing their job sincerely, effectively and professionally to give hope to hapless patient and attend them round the clock. Nurses are the at the frontline who are first to attend and respond when a covid patient is brought to hospital", said Haseena Sofi, Assistant Nursing Superintendent, Officer incharge Nursing Administration, SKIMS, Soura, Srinagar.

"In some cases families have abandoned covid patients fearing that infection may get to them, but nurses are creating a family atmosphere for a patient and don't let the patient feel lonely. Patients are our family", said Haseena Sofi while giving details of the compassionate behaviour of nurses in dealing with admitted ailing persons.

Many nurses also succumbed to pandemic across the globe but

there is no retreat from discharging professional duty at a time of health emergency and crisis', Haseena Sofi said. "In fact nurses are risking their lives for patients without hesitation", she said emotionally.

This pandemic has forced every individual to stay indoors while nurses continue to work day and night in hospitals with a purpose to serve patients to help people to emerge out of this gloomy phase. 'We shall overcome', She said, 'from this temporary stage and enter in a new phase of life with return of normalcy.'

She revealed that SKIMS Administration has increased the capacity of the institute by increasing work force. The nurses staff strength has been augmented in the institute with the addition of 133 nurses to cater to more than 400 covid patients undergoing treatment in the Institute said Assistant Nursing Superintendent.

She said that hospitals are like places of worship as you serve humanity, treat dejected and ailing patients giving them hope to survive and meet their near and dear ones.

She expressed her gratitude to nurses for their relentless efforts and work and prayed for their safety and good health.

"When a patient recovers, nurses feel delighted as the relationship between a patient and nurses is like a family" she said and added that "Patients share the same sentiments towards us".

## COVID-19: 96 Percent Recovery Rate Recorded In Bandipora

Observer News Service

**BANDIPORA:** The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Dr. Owais Ahmad Thursday said that district administration is taking all possible measures to break the chain of coronavirus infection and that the recovery rate has increased in the past few days in the district.

The DC said this while briefing the media regarding the Covid-19 management and control measures undertaken by the district administration.

Dr. Owais said that the recovery rate in the district has increased from 84 percent to 96 percent from past few days while the positive rate is 6

percent in the district. He said more than 6328 persons have recovered so far from the disease out of the 7552 positive cases in the district. He said there are 1142 active positive cases as on date in the district.

Divulging further details, the DC said that the district administration is making all out efforts to ensure strict adherence to Covid-19 SOPs and is also fully prepared to deal with any arising situation.

He said the administration has 1100 bed capacity to cater to positive cases including 180 Oxygen supported beds.

He said Corona Curfew has yielded good results so far and a decline in Covid positive cases has been seen. He sought further support from the general public in the fight against the Covid-19 to overcome the situation that evolved due to the 2nd wave of Covid-19.

The DC said various measures have been taken to strengthen the system to fight the war against Covid-19 and in this regard bed capacity is being augmented at various health facilities and Covid care centres in the district.

He also informed that district Administration Bandipora has started Community Triaging for effective Covid-19 management and in this regard Community Triaging teams are going door to door for better supervision of Covid-19 management at zone-level.

Dr. Owais thanked the people for cooperating with the administration and solicited further support to contain the pandemic effectively.

## Supplement Administrative Efforts To Combat Covid-19 Challenge: DC B'la Urges People

Observer News Service

**BARAMULLA:** The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Baramulla, Bhupinder Kumar Thursday urged upon the people to cooperate with the administrative functionaries and supplement govt efforts while combating the challenge of COVID-19 pandemic. He said that only coordinated and joint initiatives of different stakeholders may prove beneficial to come out of these critical circumstances.

The DC made these remarks during a press conference convened to brief the people about various means and measures taken by the administration regarding COVID control.

Enlisting various initiatives, the DC said that 05 additional COVID-19 wellness centers have been established in addition to the already existing centers so as to cope up with the growing challenge. He added that a well equipped additional ward was also established

at GMC Baramulla wherein the patients can be treated efficiently.

Regarding the availability of oxygen supply, the DC said that 03 oxygen plants are currently operating in the district and efforts are afoot to augment its stock position. He added that there is nothing to worry about the scarcity of oxygen supply besides emphasized upon the people not to heed the rumours that are making rounds in this regard.

When asked about the status of COVID-19 vaccination programme, the DC informed that about 70 percent of the target have been achieved and about 2.75 lakh eligible beneficiaries having age above 45 years and frontline workers, have been vaccinated.

Moreover, Kumar said that various welfare measures were taken and Rs 4.42 Cr was released among 44,200 registered building and construction workers as part of ist instalment of COVID-19 relief announced by J&K administration.

## Adv Khan Reviews Covid Mitigation Measures In Sopore

Observer News Service

**SOPORE:** Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Baseer Ahmad Khan, today visited Sopore town of Baramulla district and convened a meeting with all stakeholders regarding COVID-19 mitigation measures being implemented in the area to combat the global pandemic.

Advisor had a detailed discussion with the stakeholders comprising representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions, religious heads, transporters, traders and prominent citizens who presented their feedback and suggestions with regard to the issue.

Advisor, while deliberating on the COVID pandemic and its ramifications, said that the fight against this dreaded virus is a collaborative effort of local administration and the civil society. He sought cooperation from the participants to tackle the pandemic effectively towards its end. He said that the government is working unrelentingly to deal with the situation in the best possible way and the cooperation of people is imperative on this account. He asked the religious heads and PRIs to disseminate information about SOPs and preventive protocols regarding Covid to be followed in order to avert this monstrous virus.

"Understanding the gravity of the situation efforts of the government need to be supplemented by the whole community and in this endeavour the role of traders, hoteliers, transporters and religious leaders

become more important and crucial", Advisor maintained.

Emphasising the need to disseminate right information countering the rumours and misconceptions regarding the epidemic, Advisor said that accurate knowledge about the exact situation is essential to contain this virus. He asked the religious leaders to make the people aware about the disease and its preventive measures through Mosque in Sopore five times daily.

Advisor said that the Lieutenant Governor is taking day to day review of the COVID-19 situation and is personally monitoring the performance of each department. He said the recent decision of LG government regarding establishment of 5 bedded Covid Care Centre in each Panchayat under CAPEX budget is a unique initiative which shall help greatly the people at grass root level. Also, the initiative taken by the LG regarding reinforcement of tele-medication to the patients through Tele-consultations at each level will go a long way in containing this pandemic.

Advisor sought the status of tele-medication and the call centers working in Baramulla district.

Deputy Commissioner informed that 24x7 helpline is already functional and around 400 calls are being received daily besides a team of dedicated doctors attend the calls and give consultations over the phone which has reduced the influx of patients to the health care centers.

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Now I want to apply for its duplicate. If anybody having any objection in this regard may contact the concerned authorities within a period of seven days after which no objection will be entertained.  
**Ashiq Hussain Bhat**  
S/o Gh. Mohd Bhat  
R/o Safapora Ganderbal

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یہ خیر انتہائی دکھ کے ساتھ دی جاتی ہے کہ شفیقہ زوجہ علی محمد بٹ مرحوم  
مریٹر کورٹ روڈ لاچوک حال بند پورہ  
بہ مالو نزدیک مسجد الحمدیٹ سرینگر  
مورخہ 20 مئی 2021ء مطابق  
نے شوال رمضان المبارک 1442ھ بروز  
ہجرت اس دارفانی سے رحلت  
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کے گھر پر تقویت پری تین یوم تک رہے گی۔  
سوگواراں  
(فرزند و فرزند بھتیجی)  
INF 8899047677

**یوم شہادت**  
**سراج عقیدت**

بے باک، عہد ساز اور سرکردہ مذہبی و سیاسی رہنما شہید ملت میر واعظ مولوی محمد فاروق صاحب، 21 مئی 1990 کے جاننا شہدائے حول کوانے 31 واں سال شہادت، شہید حریت خواجہ عبدالغنی لون کوانے 19 ویں سال شہادت پر جموں و کشمیر عوامی مجلس عمل زبردست خراج عقیدت پیش کرتی ہے۔ تنظیم عوام کے تین شہید ملت کی منہمی ذمہ داریوں، بے لوث دینی، سماجی، علمی اور سیاسی خدمات اور جموں و کشمیر کے عوام کی بے باک ترجمانی پر انکی جرأت، ہمت، استقامت، عظمت اور شہادت کو اس کے ساتھ سلام پیش کرتی ہے کہ انکی دینی اور سیاسی مشن کی آبیاری اور تکمیل تک ہماری پراسن جدوجہد جاری رہیگی۔ انشاء اللہ۔ ائمہ مساجد سے درخواست ہے کہ وہ نماز جمعہ کے موقعہ پر شہدائے کثیر کیلئے خصوصی دعا کریں۔

شہید محمد مقبول شاہ	شہید فاطمہ بیگم	شہیدہ شکیلہ بیگم	شہیدہ شمیر اختر	شہید نثار حسن خان	شہید علی محمد بٹ	شہید علی محمد خان	شہید جاوید احمد بیگ	شہید فاروق احمد بیگ
شہید محمد رفیق میر	شہید لطیف احمد شخ	شہید علی محمد ککو	شہید عاشق حسین ڈار	شہید بلال احمد مسکر	شہید محمد عارف قریشی	شہید محمد شفیق شاخساز	شہید جان محمد مسکر	شہید نذیر احمد شہری
شہیدہ جلا بیگم	شہیدہ سکینہ اختر	شہیدہ دلشادہ	شہید غلام نبی بٹ	شہید عمران الدین	شہید اشفاق احمد اختر	شہید جان محمد راجہ	شہید رحمان مہاجن	شہید بلال احمد اختر
شہید شوکت احمد شاہ	شہید محمد سلطان شاہ	شہید عبدالاحد صوفی	شہید نذیر احمد بابا	شہید شہیر احمد بٹ	شہیدہ بی بی جان	شہید محمد لالہ شخ	شہید نذیر احمد	شہید غلام نبی ماگرے
شہید مشتاق حسین،	شہید محمد یوسف راتھر	شہید بلال احمد میر	شہیدہ پوشہ	شہید عبدالحمید	شہید غلام رسول بیگ	شہید رفیق احمد خان	شہید اعجاز احمد راتھر	شہید غلام قادر بٹزاری
شہید نذیر احمد راجہ	شہید محمد شفیق بیگ	شہید غلام رسول راتھر	شہید محمد مقبول ککو	شہید شہیر احمد خان	شہید بلال احمد بیگ	(شہدائے حول کے بعض اسمائے گرامی)		

**نوٹ:** اس سال COVID-19، لاک ڈاؤن اور سربراہ تنظیم جناب میر واعظ ڈاکٹر مولوی محمد عمر فاروق کی لگاتار نظر بندی کے سبب ہفتہ شہادت کی جملہ تقریبات ملتوی کی گئی ہیں۔

**جموں و کشمیر عوامی مجلس عمل سرینگر**

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K O V I E W

## Glimmer of hope

In first signs that the Covid-19 curve may have reached its peak, around 200 districts have been reporting a decline in cases for the last two weeks. Similarly, the positivity rate has also registered a decline over the past seven days. This was the first seven-day period since February 16-22 that the country reported a decline in case positivity over the preceding seven-day period. This has also been acknowledged by the head of India's Covid-19 Task Force, Dr V K Paul. The "pandemic curve is stabilising," Paul said adding the contagion is "shrinking overall". This is a good news as the virulence of the second wave has wrought havoc. Thousands have died and so many families have been destroyed.

There are, however, still states like Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Odisha where the cases are still spiking. Hopefully, the cases in the states will also reach their peak soon. But as Paul has also cautioned the decline in the number of cases is only an early indication of the situation being on the mend. Any complacency in following the SOPs, containment and testing could result in a renewed surge.

But while the union government enforces containment and the SOPs, the speedy vaccination is the only viable solution to the lingering crisis. But the vaccines are running out. In Kashmir, there has been a vaccine shortage for the last several days. Similarly, there has been an acute shortage of jabs in other parts of the country. The vaccination over the last 100 days has been a tardy affair and signals India is in for a long haul. According to an estimate, around 94.5 crore people need to be given two shots of Covishield or Covaxin for herd immunity which means a requirement of 189 crore vaccine doses. But going by the average so far, the daily supply of vaccines is 15 lakh or 4.5 crores each month. At this rate, India could take another 3.5 years to inoculate 70 per cent of its population. This would be a long time and the country could hardly afford it. Moreover, this would make people vulnerable to yet another Covid-19 wave and which alarmingly is anticipated to even infect children.

So, we need vaccines. But as of now there's only one company manufacturing vaccines. So, as Union Minister Nitin Gadkari has suggested there's a need for more pharma companies to make Covid-19 vaccines. The suggestion was earlier made by the former prime minister Manmohan Singh to the government. This is the only viable way the shortfall of the vaccines could be addressed. Sooner we vaccinate people, earlier we could emerge from this catastrophe and reopen the economy.

O T H E R O P I N O N

## Bottom Rung

At a time when the Centre ought to be devising inclusive plans to widen the access of children from marginalized communities to education, the government seems to be doing the opposite. The Union budget slashed the fund allocation for the scheme from Rs 110 crore to Rs 1 crore. This, at a time when the pandemic has reduced educational opportunities for millions of the most vulnerable children, particularly those living in poor or rural areas.

Their plight is in keeping with the flagrant discrimination they face even at the best of times. In 2018, Dalit students of a school in Himachal Pradesh were segregated and made to sit outside the home of the head of the school's management committee to watch the telecast of the prime minister's 'Pariksha Pe Charcha' speech. Indeed, Dalit children are often segregated even within class and forced to perform manual scavenging activities. Given that misogyny is closely entwined with caste hatred, it stands to reason that some of the worst sufferers of such blatant discrimination will be girls. It is estimated that about 75 per cent of them drop out of primary school in spite of laws that hold out affirmative action — reservations — for the Dalit community. This bolsters the high illiteracy rate among Dalit girls and their subsequent invisibility from public life even though the community represents around 17 per cent of the total population in India.

Such prejudice is antithetical to the spirit of affirmative action that has been considered the hallmark of progress in India. It is thus alarming that the National Education Policy, which was rolled out in July last year in the middle of the pandemic, has allegedly failed to acknowledge the extent of the crisis in education on account of caste-based discrimination. Crucial, time-bound provisions for improving infrastructure in schools by 2022 that were detailed in the draft document — computers and internet connectivity in all schools, infrastructure and materials to support differently-abled students, safe drinking water, separate and functioning toilets with running water for girls and boys — are missing in the NEP. This is only to be expected from a policy that views education as a vocation and not a means for social empowerment. The increasing privatization of education in India — high costs and minimal stipends will put education even further out of the reach of Dalits and adivasi students — will only aggravate the problem.

Telegraph India



PLO leader Yasser Arafat with Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and PV Narasimha Rao, centre, in New Delhi in 1980. (Keystone-France / Gamma-Keystone via Getty Images)

# Beyond the Obvious: India's Pro-Palestine Position

Haris Rashid

**‘The Indian position on the Palestine-Israel issue was not driven by its anti-colonial struggle/solidarity but by realpolitik. To say that anti-colonialism was the sole yardstick of India's diplomatic attitude towards Israel would be an antithesis in itself**

Indian for most of its history, before as well as after independence, has been in favour of the Palestinian position. After Israel's independence, India took more than two years until September 1950 to recognize the nation. The establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries had to wait for four decades until January 1992. To rationalize the support for Palestinian aspirations and the absence of diplomatic relations with Israel, India has been dressing its policy in an anti-colonial language. Certain statements given by leaders of the Indian national movement like Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru on Palestine and Israel are said to set the moral foundation of India's official policy. Therefore, India often claims that its position on Israel was inspired by its own struggle against colonialism.

However, this article argues that the Indian position on the Palestine-Israel issue was not driven by its anti-colonial struggle/solidarity but by realpolitik. To say that anti-colonialism was the sole yardstick of India's diplomatic attitude towards Israel would be an antithesis in itself. During the Suez Canal crisis, Nehru upheld the non-establishment of the ties with Israel in the Lok Sabha days after the Israeli invasion of Egypt, declaring that "in view of the existing passion," diplomatic exchanges were not possible. However, among all the imperial powers involved in the crisis, Israel was the only outcast. India did not apply the same yardstick to other aggressors, British and France; rather it sought closer ties with them. Thus, it is not possible to explain India's Israel policy within the context of its opposition and disapproval of Israel's policy or its connections to colonialism.

From the perspective of realpolitik, two factors were responsible to shape Indian attitude towards Israel. Before the independence of India, it was the competition of the Indian National Congress (INC) with the Muslim League over who would represent the interests of Indian Muslims. Further INC's support for Palestine was a failed bid to stop India's partition on religious grounds. After independence, India's policy towards Israel was informed by its adversarial relations with Pakistan and its own interests in the Middle East.

Colonial India saw INC leaders like Gandhi and Nehru oppos-

ing the Muslim League's demand for a separate state of Pakistan on religious grounds. Since Israel's demand for a separate Jewish homeland was also driven by religious aspirations, INC was compelled to oppose the demand. The opposition was further consolidated by INC's bid to appease Indian Muslims by appearing pro-Muslim. Writing in his Harijan weekly in 1938 regarding the Palestine-Israel issue, Gandhi observed, "Palestine belongs to the Arabs in the same sense that England belongs to the English and France to the French." However, after it became apparent that India was destined for partition, Gandhi took a contrary stand to his earlier position. In June 1946, he told the American journalist Louis Fischer, "The Jews have a good cause. I told (British Zionist MP) Sidney Silverman that the Jews have a good case in Palestine. If the Arabs have a claim to Palestine, the Jews have a prior claim." One month after Great Britain handed over the problem of Palestine to the United Nations, Gandhi told a Reuters correspondent, "If I were a Jew, I could tell them: 'Don't be silly as to resort to terrorism, because you simply damage your own case, which otherwise would be a proper case.'" Hence it is clear that it was the domestic compulsion that informed Indian nationalists' attitude towards Israel.

Post-independence, India had to compete with Pakistan for its interests in the Middle East. It was further complicated after Nehru took the Kashmir issue to the UN. Pakistan by its virtue of being an Islamic country had friends in the Middle East. In absence of other avenues, India sought to pursue its interests in the Middle East through the prism of the Palestine issue. It established its pro-Arab credentials by highlighting its historic support for Palestine and its anti-Israel policies. Apart from supplying oil to India and contributing towards India's energy security, Arab support was also crucial for India after Nehru took the Kashmir issue to the UN in 1948. India needed all the support that it could muster on the Kashmir issue and was afraid that it would lose Arab support to Pakistan if it normalized ties with Israel. It was simple: One Israel versus all the Arab states. Therefore, it sought to counter or minimize the influence of Pakistan in the Middle East through its pro-Palestine credentials.

Given all these factors, what then would explain the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Israel in January 1992? It was a calculated move by the then Indian Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao who took this decision right after the position of Palestine weakened following the 1990-91 Kuwait crisis. Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat identified himself and his people with Iraqi aggressor, leading to several Arab nations turning their backs on Palestine. The setback to PLO was followed by Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries' readiness to endorse a negotiated settlement with Israel. For India, this meant Palestine was no longer needed to pursue its interests in the Middle East. It could now establish diplomatic relations with Israel without losing Arab countries' support in the Middle East. Hence the timing of the decision to establish diplomatic relations with Israel was crucial.

It is worth mentioning that despite no diplomatic relations with Israel, India did not shy away from seeking help from Israel on multiple fronts. In March 1949, even before it had recognized Israel, India sought agricultural assistance from Israel. The Ministry of Agriculture had asked the representative of the Jewish Agency in India, to take up the request "with your people in Palestine." During the 1962 Sino-Indian debacle, Nehru sought military assistance from Israel. Later India would also seek Israel's assistance during military conflicts with Pakistan in 1965 and 1971. All these years, India had also established closer ties with Israel's intelligence establishment. The help was extended by Israel despite India's hostile attitude towards Israel because it needed India's support but at the same time was well aware of the compulsions of the Indian government. It knew that Indian diplomatic posture was rooted in realpolitik and not some moral concept of anti-colonialism. When Palestine became irrelevant to India's interests in the Middle East, it departed from its anti-colonial position.

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

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## Create manpower for rehabilitation

It is welcome to note that The Union Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry has launched a 6-monthly Community Based Inclusive Development (CBID) Program on rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities. This CBID course has been co-designed by the Rehabilitation Council of India and the University of Melbourne for co-

operation in the disability sector. The program aims to create a pool of grass-root rehabilitation workers at the community level who can work alongside ASHA and Anganwadi workers to handle cross-disability issues and facilitate inclusion of persons with disabilities in the society. The program provides competency-based knowledge and skills among

these workers to enhance their ability to successfully discharge their duties. Initially, the program will be available in English, Hindi, and 7 regional languages, namely, Gujarati, Marathi, Odia, Bengali, Telugu, Tamil, and Garo. This year, the classes for the first batch of about 600 students are expected to commence in August. Hope that the program will create

trained manpower in identifying risk cases, Apprising the parents/guardians about the nearest early intervention centers, and guiding them for availing Government benefits for Persons with Disabilities.

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Mindful Fridays

# Parenting Children With Disabilities During Covid-19 Pandemic

Wasim Kakroo

Despite the challenges, most people have adjusted their lives to follow ever changing guidelines related to COVID-19, which include self-isolation, social distancing, and the wearing of face masks. However, for children with various types of intellectual and developmental disabilities as well as for their parents, these daily requirements and inconsistencies of the pandemic are extremely challenging. Children with intellectual disability, moderate to severe developmental delay, autism spectrum disorder, muscular dystrophy or brain disorders like cerebral palsy are likely to have the same risk factors as the general public, however due to relatively weaker immune system they are more susceptible to the COVID-19 infection, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Children with disabilities can find it difficult to remain confined in enclosed spaces without any social interaction, and it can lead to them feeling irritated, fidgety, and showing aggressive behaviour, among other things. As a result, their parents might be going through a really difficult time. The difficulty is further exacerbated by the fact that the stress that their children would feel earlier before COVID-19 pandemic that was shared among parents, schools, and vocational training centres must now be handled solely by their parents or guardians. Their inadequate and poorly understood means of expression, as well as their poor comprehension, makes it difficult for parents to convey the seriousness of the situation caused by the pandemic. It also becomes difficult for their parents/caregivers to alleviate their anxieties and/or behavioural issues caused by disrupted routines and their frequent desire to leave their homes.

While working from home to keep a job, or living with no job for a daily wage worker, performing all household tasks and observing all the standards of sanitization and at the same time attending to their child's various disabilities puts any parent on an emotional overload with almost no breathing space.

COVID-19 and the ensuing lockdown can cause children with disabilities to experience a variety of difficulties as a result of the drastic changes and resulting stress. As a result, parents and guardians of these children must be prepared to manage and direct their children during the pandemic so that both such children as well as their parents/caregivers feel less stressed and more competent to deal with the challenges created by the pandemic in their lives.

Following are the general guidelines for parents and caregivers of children with special needs:

- 1. Cleanliness of Children:** After the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, hand sanitisation has become the standard, whether by washing with soap and water or rubbing with alcohol-based solvents. Sanitation can seem to be a simple task, but it is rarely so, particularly for children with developmental disabilities or behavioural issues. The value of this aspect is further underscored by children's natural propensity to touch surfaces and handle objects without any regard for hygiene. As a result, it is important that they be taught how to properly and frequently sanitise their hands. This training should meet the government-recommended protocol for handwashing, which is to wash hands with soap and water for around 20 seconds. The fact that children with disabilities tend to have a weak immune system multiplies the risk and makes them more vulnerable to various infections. As a result, extra caution should be exercised in keeping their bodies clean. Children should be taught to cover their nose and mouth with a clean towel while sneezing and coughing. Parents should keep their children away from strangers or visitors from other countries. Since the corona virus can spread from person to person, it's a good idea to teach kids to keep at least two meter away from everyone they might communicate with. This, in turn, would prevent the virus from spreading through droplets produced when an individual coughs or sneezes. The majority of children with disabilities have trouble following directions and learning from their experiences. Since most children are good at imitating, their parents should model acceptable behaviour for them, and the children should be encouraged to replicate it. Caregivers of such children must remember that their instructions may need to

**“ Caregivers should participate in activities that promote their own well-being and relaxation, such as listening to music, reading a book, or even participating in physical activities or indoor sports. They should keep their support network strong, even if they can only call or text friends and family. Socializing is essential for regulating your mood and maintaining your sense of self-awareness**



- 2. Eating habits and health of children:** Almost all parents find it difficult to get their children to eat nutritious foods on a regular basis, however, this task can be even more difficult while dealing with children with various disabilities owing to increased rigidity, sensory problems, behavioural issues etc.

Here are five ways to assist your child with disability to begin eating and exploring healthier food choices:

- Improve your own eating habits: One of the most effective ways to inspire your child to eat a balanced diet is to set a good example for them. It would be difficult to expect your child to choose to eat better if you eat unhealthy foods on a regular basis. Discuss each food and the nutrients it contains the next time you sit down with your child for a nutritious meal.
- Work together with your kids in the kitchen: Cooking is a valuable skill because it promotes language development and independence. When it comes to cooking, there are many language concepts to focus on, including sequencing, following instructions, and expanding vocabulary, among others. Allowing your child to cook with you allows them to add their own touch to their food, increasing the probability that they will consume it.
- Try to eat at the same time every day: This is necessary for children with disabilities, as it can give a structure to their daily meal times, but you can allow them some flexibility. E.g., lunch will be served between 12:30 and 1:00 p.m.
- Interrupt your child's activities every now and then to praise them for good behaviour. This is especially relevant for children who have been disruptive and demanding while the meal is being prepared.
- Constant snacking and nibbling on fast food should be avoided at all costs.

- 3. Children's exercise routine:** In these trying times, when we've been confined to our homes for weeks, our everyday tasks have been reduced to eating and cleaning. The resulting significant lack of exercise can be harmful to our health. This lack of exercise in children with disabilities may result in a rapid increase in body mass and the loss of previously learned skills. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that children exercise for at least an hour per day. It may be any type of workout, such as playing video games, yoga, or stair climbing. Exercises for children should be tailored to their physical disabilities. Before exposing their children to new activities and techniques, parents should seek advice from their consultant occupational therapist/physiotherapist.

- 4. SLEEP:** A sufficient amount of sleep is critical for children. While adults are recommended 8 hours of sleep per night, children should get 10-11 hours per night to be well rested. Children with developmental disabilities, such as autism, are known to have a high incidence of sleeping problems. Trouble falling asleep, regular waking up in the middle of the night, and difficulty waking up in the morning are all examples of sleep problems found in children with disabilities.

Following is the list of simple strategies that might help your child get a good night's rest:

- Create a reliable, regular bedtime routine: Establish a regular bedtime routine by various positive reinforcements. If this schedule is not well established, it would be difficult for children with intellectual disabilities to re-adjust to the routine following the reopening of schools or vocational teaching centres.
- Schedule energizing activities to morning time: Jumping, roughhousing, tickling, and screen time are only a few of the things that kids with developmental disabilities

enjoy. Although these activities are enjoyable and provide sensory feedback and exercise, they also make it difficult to sleep. To help them have a sound sleep, try more relaxing things like puzzles, listening to slow music, deep pressure and massaging, breathing or yoga exercises, reading or listening to old favorite stories etc. in the evening and especially around the bed time.

- Think Positively: All people benefit from positivity, regardless of age, situation, or disability. Before bedtime, boost your child's morale by going through all the positive aspects of their day. Save a difficult conversation about their behavior for the next day, and instead focus on the positive actions of the day. Extra praise should be given to the child for healthy sleeping habits. Let your child understand exactly why they are being praised so that they can repeat the behavior in the future. Use unique compliments like "You slept all night!" or "You stayed in your bed all night!"



**Children with disabilities can find it difficult to remain confined in enclosed spaces without any social interaction, and it can lead to them feeling irritated, fidgety, and showing aggressive behaviour, among other things. As a result, their parents might be going through a really difficult time**

- 5. MEDICINES:** Thyroid and epilepsy are common medical disorders that accompany developmental disabilities, congenital disabilities, and congenital heart diseases. For this, primary health centres should be consulted, or general medications should be purchased from the nearest medical store. It is important to take medications continuously for conditions such as schizophrenia and mood disorders. Breaking a medication's course without consulting a doctor can result in more complications. Thus it is advised that for parents to have enough stockpile of medicines on hand during the lockdown.

- 6. LEARNING NEW SKILLS:** This pandemic and the ensuing lockdown, has given us enough time and this time can be used by parents/caregivers to teach new skills. A good portion of each day can be devoted to train children about various new skills. Brushing, combing, wearing shoes and tying shoelaces, colouring, gardening, and hand and leg washing, for example, could be taught to children if enough time was set aside each day. Regular online contact with the therapist must be maintained if the child is being assisted by a behaviour therapist, physiotherapist, occupational therapist, speech therapist, or special educator. Internet-based materials may also be used to teach the children various skills.

- 7. RESPONSIBILITIES/DUTIES:** Some people believe

that children with disabilities should not be entrusted with household chores. It's important to remember, however, that the responsibilities you give them and the work they do can help in moulding them and helping them build their own identities. Smaller roles and duties may be delegated to them at first. For example, they can be assigned the tasks responsibly such as gathering the newspaper in the morning and putting it in the appropriate location; folding clothing, and watering the plants; keeping their belongings safe and clean; and cleaning the dining tables after dinner. This will help them in developing a sense of accountability. Small roles may be assigned to children in each of the tasks performed by elders, which would boost the child's trust and aid them in the development of identity.

- 8. ENTERTAINMENT:** The lockdown may also be seen as a time to have some fun. It's beneficial to hear stories and watch videos. Television, computer games, and YouTube videos have all been part of the disabled population's daily routine. A schedule can be made for this by allocating one hour per day to watch these. Continuous watching programmes over screens can have a detrimental effect as it can lower the cognitive abilities of the child acquired up to that point. Child's entertainment activities should also include various board games and other games in which parents and siblings of the child may take an active part thereby reducing the possibility of technology addiction.

- 9. BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS:** In a situation where it is necessary to isolate oneself, everyone has a tendency to feel disturbed and enraged. In the case of children with disabilities, this may be more intense. So, in order to resolve this issue, we must focus more on the activities and tasks to do. When children perform desired tasks, they can be praised, and the activity can be videotaped and shown to them later so that they understand what behaviors are expected of them and confidence could be built up using it. It is important not to provoke them unnecessarily.

- 10. EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS:** Children with intellectual disabilities often lack some emotional intelligence related skills. Although they have a hard time recognising their own and others' abilities, feelings, and behaviours, yet they have the potential to imitate. So, they could be trained and many of the requisite skills could be learned by them through imitation. Children with learning disabilities or difficulties can experience emotional issues as a result of their disabilities, so their strengths must be identified and nurtured appropriately. Children who lack emotional intelligence are more likely to suffer from depression and anxiety. To minimise it, the chances of them being left alone must be decreased, while the chances of them interacting with family members must be increased. Anxiety and fear are at an all-time high in these unpredictable times. If the lockdown situation worsens and the child begins to exhibit different problems with relation to their emotions, online programmes and tele-counselling should be used as such problems if left unaddressed may turn into something more difficult to manage.

- II. PSYCHOLOGICAL, PHYSIOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING OF CAREGIVERS:** Studies show that primary care for children with disabilities is mostly offered by their mother or a motherly figure in many households. Ideally, all responsible adults in the household should share this burden. If you have a partner at home, make an agreement to share childcare responsibilities. Working together will keep your entire family occupied and ensure that no one person (Mother) is overburdened. Family support can have a positive effect on children's overall development. Primary caregivers should look after their families, but they should not neglect their own well-being and happiness. Caregivers should participate in activities that promote their own well-being and relaxation, such as listening to music, reading a book, or even participating in physical activities or indoor sports. They should keep their support network strong, even if they can only call or text friends and family. Socializing is essential for regulating your mood and maintaining your sense of self-awareness. Email, video chatting, and social media are all options for interacting with others and seeking help. If negative feelings become overwhelming, it is important to seek help from a mental health professional in your area or through online resources (teletherapy/teleconsultation). Sleep patterns should be checked, and a routine should be formed and followed. It is very likely that we would experience physiological and psychological discomfort if we are quarantined for an extended period of time. This is a good time to reconnect with yourself and your family, as well as focus on improving your relationships. Take this opportunity to spend time with your family, to appreciate the beauty of nature by electronic means, to tell your children bedtime stories, and to sing forgotten lullabies. All of these activities will leave you with beautiful memories to reminisce about. Finally, note that being kind to yourself will not only help you remain calm through this trying period, but it will also ensure that you have the strength you need to take care of your disabled children and the rest of your family. Together, we shall overcome this.

*Views expressed in the article are the author's own responsibility and are not a substitute for medical advice*

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# What Will Happen If Bees Go Extinct?

Buzzing about these plant pollinators? From books to honey gin, here's how you can help

Eva Waite-Taylor | Independent

**W**orld Bee Day – celebrated annually on 20 May – is a day adopted by the United Nations from the Slovenian Beekeepers Association to raise awareness of the importance of protecting and preserving bees and other pollinators. It honours not just honeybees, but bumblebees (of which there are 21 species) and the 77 species of solitary bees, too.

While bees are most commonly known for honey, these intelligent creatures are also behind most of the food we love – fruit, veg, chocolate and even coffee.

And Albert Einstein once famously said that “if the bee disappeared off the face of the Earth, man would only have four years left to live”. But why are bees so important?

Essentially, bees are crucial for the pollination of plants – pollinating a third of the food we eat and 80 per cent of flowering plants – many fruit, veg and crops that feed livestock depend on bees to pollinate them.

While there are other methods of pollination – including wind, birds, bats and other insects – wild bees are among the most important, because they are capable of pollinating on a much bigger scale.

Their importance is so great, that it has been estimated that if wild bees disappeared, it could cost UK farmers £1.8bn a year to pollinate crops manually, making them essential for our food supply.

Sadly, the bee population is depleting. Since 1900, the UK has lost 13 species of bee, and a further 35 are considered to be under threat of extinction. The known causes of bee decline include pesticides, habitat loss and climate change.

But it's not all bad news. Plantlife previously told The Independent that thanks to the lockdown measures that were in place, a number of insect-harming practices have been unintentionally put on hold, such as

mowing roadside verges. This has benefited bees because they depend on full, flower-rich verges for survival. Just one hectare of road verge can produce 60kg of nectar sugar – which is said to be enough to support more than six million honeybees.

Luckily, there are plenty of other ways you can be a hero and do your bit to protect these all important creatures – most of which can be done in the comfort of your own home or outdoor space.

In honour of World Bee Day, we've compiled a round-up of all the best ways you can help save the bees, and we're buzzing about it.

You can trust our independent round-ups. We may earn commission from some of the retailers, but we never allow this to influence selections, which are formed from real-world and expert advice. This revenue helps us to fund journalism across The Independent.

**Bumblebee Conservation Trust lavender bumblebee tote bag**

This is the only charity in the UK dedicated to the protection of bees. The team works across the UK supporting bumblebee-friendly habitats, raising awareness and gathering scientific evidence about bumblebee populations to safeguard their future.

It donates a proportion of every sale to the charity, so by buying one of the many products on the site, you are helping to protect the future of the bees. Replace single-use plastic bags with this 100 per cent organic tote – it's durable enough to carry your everyday essentials and a great print. We also loved the artwork sold on the site – particularly the Queen bee (£20, Bumblebeeconservationteemill.com) and the bumblebees (£20, Bumblebeeconservationteemill.com) prints.

**Warner's honeybee flavoured gin**

Released in partnership with the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) to protect Britain's pollinators, this gin contains 28 botanicals, including lavender, rose and a dollop



of honey from its own beehives. Each bottle comes with a packet of wildflower seeds so you can plant your own bee-friendly garden. And Warner's has recently joined 1% for the Planet, a not-for-profit charity bringing brands and businesses together to create change. As such, this distiller is giving environmental projects a helping hand along with the bees – we love to hear it.

**Primrose lavender plants**

Preserving wild habitats and restoring ecological agriculture is key to saving bees. If you have a garden or small outdoor space, plant the flowers that are essential for pollinators. A study by scientists at the University of Sussex found that lavender grosso plants are a favourite among bumblebees.

With one of the strongest fragrances, and deep violet in colour – this isn't just great for the bees, it's also a nice treat for you.

**'Planting for Honeybees: The Grower's Guide to Creating a Buzz'** by Sarah Wyndham, published by Quadrille Publishing Ltd

Sarah Wyndham Lewis offers a practical guide – including advice on which plants you should grow along with when and where to plant them – to help honeybees flourish in your outdoor space. And if you don't have a garden, don't disregard it as you can do your bit, even with a windowsill.

**Beehive bee revival kit**

Inspired by a spontaneous encounter with a tired bee – Beehive began designing

a bee revival keyring to make sure people are well equipped with the essential solution (a mix of sugar and water) to help tired bees survive.

If you see an exhausted bee – often one that's away from nature or flowers – Beehive advises you move it onto a nearby plant or ensure it's out of harm's way and feed it a couple of drops of the sugary water solution next to it, so it can slurp it up. The syrupy mix is intended to mimic the quality of the food available to bees, providing a one-off energy boost that will help them to continue pollinating.

Refilling the solution couldn't be easier, simply fill the bottle halfway with white granulated sugar and top the rest up with water. Replace the cork and shake for 30 seconds.

**Home of Juniper gold plated bee necklace**

A simple gold necklace is the perfect addition to your everyday jewellery collection – and this delicate bee number is a lovely way to show your support. The brand donates 10 per cent of sales to the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, so you can't go wrong.

**The Scottish Bee Company Scottish Heather honey, 227g**

Buying honey from independent brands helps local beekeepers cover costs of protecting bees. While it is a little more expensive than your average shop bought alternative, this Scottish Heather honey is rich in flavour and award-winning for a reason. Add a little luxury to your morning breakfast, we promise you won't regret it.

The Scottish Bee Company has also started a sister charity, RePollinate, which aims to protect and improve the environment by promoting Scotland's threatened pollinator population through education programmes and scientific research. For every jar of honey purchased, 10p is donated to the charity.

## Hypertension, tobacco top most causes of premature mortality

Agencies

**H**ypertension and tobacco are the topmost causes of premature mortality and people consuming tobacco in any form are at high risk of many diseases, as nicotine is solely responsible for constricted arteries, heart failure, inflammation, many types of cancers, blindness, and gangrene, while it also complicates existing hypertension.

The above was mentioned by noted interventional cardiologist Dr. (Prof) (Col.) Shekhar Kashyap while speaking at a webinar on 'Hypertension, COVID-19 and Tobacco – A Deadly Triad'.

Kashyap is the former Head of Department (Cardiology), Army's Research & Referral Hospital in New Delhi.

"Although the tobacco lobby promotes that nicotine does not cause hypertension, it affects all the organ systems. Tobacco consumption in any form be it cigarettes, chewable, and nicotine gum causes an increase in blood pressure and

elevates heart rates. Nicotine cessation can help immediately. Within 20 minutes of cessation, blood pressure returns to normal and 15 years of cessation eliminates all hazards of smoking," added Kashyap.

Hypertension is the most widely prevalent vascular disease among the low and middle-income group countries.

It is also one of the biggest causes of premature deaths in the world.

Today, one in every four men and one in every five women today are suffering from hypertension.

"Those who consume tobacco have poorly controlled hypertension. It is a myth that smokeless tobacco or non-combustible tobacco has no ill effects. There are ample studies to prove that these cause many diseases," Kashyap said, adding that tobacco blunts the effects of medicines taken to stabilise blood pressure.

Kashyap said persons with cardiometabolic factors face a higher risk of severe Covid-19 condition along with complications and mortality.

Chewing tobacco can increase the risk of Covid-19 as the person does not wear a mask, the hand to mouth contact increases, salivating and spitting puts others at risk, and sitting together to drink and smoke leaves no room for social distancing, thereby increasing the risk of spreading the infection.

"To counter the threat of Covid-19, it is imperative to combat the misinformation campaigns. The studies that purportedly claim consumption of alcohol or smoking can prevent Covid-19 may be manipulated and, therefore, as a vigilant society, there needs to be a high index of suspicion around such studies, he added.

Kashyap advised that people should rely on information and guidelines from credible sources such as the WHO, US CDC, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and ICMR.

He said that there is a lot of ground that needs to be covered, which can begin with sensitising kids at the kindergarten level about the harmful effects of tobacco on our health.

## J&K Lakes & Waterways Development Authority Srinagar

**Head Office, Vice Chairman, J & K Lakes & Waterways Development Authority, Miskeen Bagh Khanyar, District Srinagar – 19003**  
email: - vclwda@yahoo.com

**Implementing Agency, Executive Engineer, Executive Engineer Lake Division 1st, J & K LWDA**  
email: xenlakadiv1st@gmail.com

**Gist of Fresh Short Term Notice inviting e-Tender**  
Fresh Short Term e-NIT No:- 10 of 2021/2022 Date:- 18/05/2021

For and on behalf of The Honble Governor of J&K UT, fresh e-tender on short term basis in (Two cover System), are invited from reputed and resourceful A class contractors/Firms/companies/joint venture of repute on comprehensive and extensive basis, which should be uploaded on the e-Procurement web portal <http://www.jktenders.gov.in>, up given bidding schedule for the below mentioned work and as per the details mentioned in this e-tender notification and to whom all the terms and conditions of detailed NIT /Tender Documents/ PWD Form NO:- 25 are accepted. The detailed tender document, Specifications and drawings can be downloaded on the e-procurement Portal <http://www.jktenders.gov.in>.

S.No	Name of work	Advertised Cost of Work	Class of Contract	Cost of Doc.	Period of completion	Tender receiving authority
01.	Extraction of lily pads inside Dal lake on front side along Doledeh, from NPL bund towards Charchinari and from Kabuter Khana towards SKICC including carriage of extracted lily upto designated dumping site (Part_A)	Rs.4,67,69,320.00	AAY & Above	5000/-	07 calendar Months	Vice Chairman J&K LWDA
02.	Extraction of lily pads inside Dal lake on front side along Doledeh, from NPL bund towards Charchinari & from Kabuter Khana towards SKICC including carriage of extracted lily upto designated dumping site including carriage of extracted lily upto designated dumping site (Part_B)	Rs.3,67,17,265.00	AAY & Above	5000/-	07 calendar Months	Vice Chairman J&K LWDA

Online bidding schedule:-

01	Date of issue of Tender Notice	18/05/2021
02	Date of downloading of bidding documents	20/05/2021 from 10.00 A.M
03	Bid submission start date	21/05/2021 from 10.00A.M
06	Bid Submission end date	28/05/2021 up to 04.00 P.M
07	Date & time of opening Bids (on line)	29/05/2021 at 2.00 P.M

For bidding please visit [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in)  
We look forward to your active participation.  
For and on behalf of The Honble Governor of Jammu & Kashmir UT  
No.LD-I/922-950  
Dated:22.04.2021  
Executive Engineer  
Lake Division 1<sup>st</sup>,LDA  
DIPK-NB-830/21

Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir  
Government of Jammu & Kashmir  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (R&B)**  
**LANDSCAPING DIVISION KMR. ENGINEERING COMPLEX, RAJBAGH, SRINAGAR**  
TENDER NOTICE  
NIT No. e-06/2021-22/LSD/Srinagar/Jammu  
Dated:- 19/05/2021

For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor, e-tenders (In single cover system) are invited on Percentage basis from approved and eligible 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 (Rs. in Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (Amt in Rs.)	Earnest Money/ Bid Security (Amt in Rs.)	Time of completion	Time & Date of Opening of Tender	Class of Contractor	Head of Account
1	Development of plantation and Maintenance of central verges from Bemina Crossing towards JVC	Rs.1.920Lacs	Rs. 200/-	Bid Declaration Certificate	Working Season	27.05.2021 at 11.00AM	"DEE"	MH 3054 M&R (Srinagar)
2	Development by way of grill work and other maintenance of central verges of Parimpora Chowk including Islands	Rs.2.385Lacs	Rs. 200/-	Bid Declaration Certificate	Working Season	27.05.2021 at 11.00AM	"DEE"	MH 3054 M&R (Srinagar)
3	Maintenance/Development of plantation and landscaping area of bypass, islands of pohroa chowk in clid. Face lifting of park at Pantha Chowk.	Rs.1.703Lacs	Rs. 200/-	Bid Declaration Certificate	Working Season	27.05.2021 at 11.00AM	"DEE"	MH 3054 M&R (Srinagar)
4	Development of Central Verge on NTR Road by way of grill work, Face Lifting, washing.	Rs.2.828Lacs	Rs. 200/-	Bid Declaration Certificate	Working Season	27.05.2021 at 11.00AM	"DEE"	MH 3054 M&R (Srinagar)
5	Restoration of damaged grill panels and tree guards at various sites of Sub-Divisions 3rd damaged time to time.	Rs.2.00Lacs	Rs. 200/-	Bid Declaration Certificate	10Months	27.05.2021 at 11.00AM	"DEE"	MH 3054 M&R (Srinagar)
6	Repair/maintenance of tools and machinery including water motor/Pump/lawn mower/ Water tank etc. (Part A)	Rs.0.77Lacs	Rs. 200/-	Bid Declaration Certificate	10Days	27.05.2021 at 11.00AM	"DEE"	MH 2059 M&R (Srinagar)

**Position of Funds:-Available.**  
Administrative approval:-Accorded.  
Note:- The above mentioned work shall be mandatorily completed during the current financial year 2021-22.  
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](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) as per schedule of date given below:-

1.	Date of issue of Tender Notice	19.05.2021
2.	Period of downloading of bidding documents	19.05.2021 04.00 PM
3.	Bid submission Start Date	19.05.2021 from 04.00 PM
4.	Bid Submission End Date	26.05.2021 up to 06.00 PM
5.	Deadline for receiving the Hard copy (Original e-challan or Treasury challan/receipt and EMD)	Hard copy to be submitted by the successful bidder (L1) only within seven days after Financial evaluation.
6.	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	27.05.2021 at 11.00AM in the office of the Executive Engineer R&B Landscaping Division, Rajbagh, Srinagar

- Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of e-challan or Treasury challan/receipt (Non-refundable) along with bid security declaration certificate as per format (Annexure A), failure to do so shall render the bidder as Non-Responsive.
- First lowest bidder has to submit Performance security Deposit 3% of allotted cost in shape of CDR/FDR/BG (BG validity should be 45days more than bid validity days i.e 120+45=165Days) pledged to Executive Engineer R&B Landscaping Division, Rajbagh, Srinagar (Tender receiving authority).
- The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web site [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of prospective bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the office of Executive Engineer R&B Landscaping Division, Rajbagh, Srinagar (Tender receiving authority)
- The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of bids.
- The earnest money shall be forfeited, if-  
a) Any bidder/tenderer withdraws his bid/tender during the period of bid validity or makes any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid.  
b) Failure of successful bidder to furnish the required performance security within the specified time limit.  
c) Failure of successful bidder to execute the agreement within 28 days after fixation of contract.
- 50% of the normal deposits (deducted at 10% from running bills) to be released after virtual completion of the work and balance 50% after completion of DLP.
- Additional performance security required as per NIT conditions shall be released after virtual completion of the work.
- Earnest money in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG shall be released after DLP is over successfully.
- Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.
- Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) to acquaint bid submission process.
- To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get "Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)" as per Information Technology Act-2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved vendor.
- The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital Signature. No financial bid will be accepted in physical form.
- Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned in Para-1.
- Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents with the bid. Besides, Original/Photocopies of documents related to bid be submitted physically /by registered post / through courier before date specified in Para - 1.  
Note:- Scan all the documents on 100 dpi with black and white option.  
The department will not be responsible for delay in online submission due to any reasons.
- Scanned copy of cost of tender document in shape of e-challan or Treasury challan/receipt in shape of CDR/FDR if applicable pledged to Executive Engineer R&B Landscaping Division, Rajbagh, Srinagar must be uploaded with the bid. The original e-challan or Treasury challan/receipt (cost of tender document non-Refundable), CDR/FDR (earnest money/bid security) and relevant documents to be submitted to the Executive Engineer R&B Landscaping Division, Rajbagh, Srinagar by registered post/ Courier /by hand, by the successful bidder (L1) only within seven days after financial evaluation.
- Bidders are advised to use "My Documents" area in their user on R&B-Tendering portal to store such documents as are required.
- Price escalation and Taxes:- The unit rates and prices shall be quoted by the bidder entirely in Indian Rupees and the rates quoted shall be deemed to include Price escalation and all taxes up to completion of the work, unless, otherwise specified. Deduction on account of taxes shall be made from the bills of the contractor on gross amount of the bill as per the rates prevailing at the time of recovery.
- Bidders are advised to use "My Documents" area in their user on R&B-Tendering portal to store such documents as are required.
- In case of CRF and any other specified project. The relevant guidelines/standard bidding document shall be followed.
- Instruction to Bidder (ITB)
- All bidders shall include the following information and documents with their bids:-  
a. Copies of original documents defining constitution/legal status, place of registration and principal place of Business.  
b. Scanned Copy of Valid Registration Card along with latest Renewal.  
c. Valid PAN Card,  
d. GST Registration Certificate (GST REG-25) along with latest GST clearance certificate (GSTR-3B)  
e. The bidder at his own responsibility and risk should visit and examine the site of the work and its surroundings before submission of bid.  
f. All documents relating to the bid shall be in the English Language.
- If the bidder does not quote rate for any item of the rate list/quantity schedule, cost of such item/items shall be deemed to be part of the overall/total contract value and no rate shall be allowed for such item/terms in the allotment of contract.
- 1% Labor Cess shall be deducted at the time of payment.
- The Service Tax will be deducted from the gross amount as per the rates in vogue at the time of payment.
- Price escalation and Taxes:- The rate quoted by the bidder shall be deemed to include price escalation and all taxes upto completion of the work. Deduction on account of taxes shall be made from the bills of the contractor on gross amount of the bill as per the rates prevailing at the time of recovery.

No.-LD/511-19  
Dated:-19-05-2021.  
Sd/-  
Executive Engineer R&B Landscaping Division, Rajbagh, Srinagar  
DIPK-1793/21

## Coronavirus Vaccines Have Spawned 9 New Billionaires: Campaign Group



Agence France-Presse

PARIS, FRANCE: Profits from Covid-19 jabs have helped at least nine people become billionaires, a campaign group said Thursday, calling for an end to pharmaceutical corporations' "monopoly control" on vaccine technology.

"Between them, the nine new billionaires have a combined net worth of \$19.3 billion (15.8 billion euros), enough to fully vaccinate all people in low-income countries 1.3 times," The People's Vaccine Alliance said in a statement.

The alliance, a network of organisations and activists campaigning for an end to property rights and patents for inoculations, said its figures were based on the Forbes Rich List data.

"These billionaires are the human face of the huge profits many pharmaceutical corporations are making from the monopoly they hold on these vaccines," said Anna Marriott from charity Oxfam, which is part of the alliance.

In addition to the new mega-

rich, eight existing billionaires have seen their combined wealth increase by \$32.2 billion thanks to the vaccine rollout, the alliance said.

Topping the list of new vaccine billionaires were the CEO of Moderna Stephane Bancel, and his BioNTech counterpart Ugur Sahin.

Three other neobillionaires are co-founders of the Chinese vaccine company CanSino Biologics.

The research comes ahead of the G20 Global Health Summit on Friday, which has been a lightning rod for growing calls to temporarily remove intellectual property protections on Covid-19 vaccines.

Proponents say doing so would boost production in developing countries and address the dramatic inequity in access.

The United States, as well as influential figures like Pope Francis, back the idea of a global waiver on patent protections.

At a Paris summit seeking to boost financing in Africa amid the pandemic on Tuesday, French President Emmanuel Macron called for the removal of "all these constraints in terms of intellectual property which blocks the production of certain types of vaccines".

The European Commission said Wednesday it would be a "constructive" voice in WTO talks on the issue.

## Second Covid Wave Humanitarian Crisis, Not Economic; Likely To Have Peaked: Report



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI: The second wave of the pandemic in India is more of a humanitarian crisis rather than an economic one, and is likely to have peaked, a Japanese brokerage said on Thursday.

Nomura said it expects the overall hit to sequential growth in April-June to be much less severe than last year when there was a complete nationwide lockdown, and less than what the drop in mobility suggests. It estimated the economy to contract by only 3.8 per cent in June quarter as compared with March quarter.

"...lockdowns are more nuanced this time and consumers and

businesses have adapted," it said, adding that international experience also suggests the same.

Highlighting that the improving global growth will act as a tailwind, the brokerage said it expects the current lockdowns to last six more weeks.

The brokerage said vaccinations are "trailing" at present, but the pace of inoculation will pick up after June as its analysis indicates increased supply.

"We expect half of the population to be fully vaccinated by end-2021 and India to reach its vaccine pivot point in Q3 (September quarter), which should boost domestic consumption," it added.

Maintaining its 10.8 per cent GDP growth estimate for 2021-22, Nomura said the full impact of easy financial conditions should become visible as the pandemic's uncertainty ebbs and vaccinations rise.

However, in what can be a potential area of concern, the brokerage said it expects cost pressures to intensify from supply chain disruptions, high global commodity prices and rising rural wages, and the core inflation remaining at an elevated 5.3 per cent for 2021.

"We expect a reverse repo rate hike in October and maintain our call for 0.50 per cent of repo rate hikes in H12022," it said.

## Received 40,300 Requests For User Data From Indian Govt: Facebook Report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI: Social media giant Facebook said it has received 40,300 requests from the Indian government for user data in the second half of 2020.

This was 13.3 per cent higher from the January-June 2020 period when India had made 35,560 total requests, according to the Facebook's latest Transparency Report.

The US-based company restricted access to 878 items in India during the second half of 2020 in response to directions from the IT Ministry for violating Section 69A of the Information Technology Act, 2000, including content against security of the state and public order.

According to the report, India made 40,300 total requests in the July-December 2020 period, of which 37,865 were legal process requests and 2,435 were emergency disclosure requests.

The number of total requests made by India ranked second to the US, which had made 61,262 requests during the July-December 2020 period.

Globally, government requests for user data increased by about 10 per cent to 191,013 in the second half of 2020 from 173,592 in the first half of 2020.

Information related to 62,754 users/accounts were requested in India, and some data was produced for 52 per



cent of the requests.

"Facebook responds to government requests for data in accordance with applicable law and our terms of service. Each and every request we receive is carefully reviewed for legal sufficiency and we may reject or require greater specificity on requests that appear overly broad or vague," the report said.

Facebook said that during the July - December 2020 period, it had "restricted access in India to 878 items in response to directions from the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology for violating Section 69A of the Information Technology Act, 2000, including content against security of the state and public order".

Of these, 10 were restricted temporarily, it added.

"We also restricted access to 54 items in compliance with court orders. In response to an order from Justice Alexandre de Moraes of Brazil's Supreme Court related to 12 profiles and Pages of supporters of Brazilian President Bolsonaro, we restricted access globally to this content, including in India," it added.

## Rise In Cyber Fraud Amid Pandemic; Company Working Relentlessly On User Safety: Airtel CEO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI: Airtel CEO Gopal Vittal on Thursday warned about a rise in cyber frauds amid a massive surge in online transactions during the second wave of the pandemic, and asserted the company is working "relentlessly" and coming out with safety features to ensure customers are not vulnerable to fraudsters.

In an e-mail outreach to customers, Vittal highlighted the modus operandi being adopted by fraudsters and also drew attention to cyber frauds related to digital payments.

"With the growing second wave of the pandemic and lockdowns in various parts of the country, there has been a massive increase in online transactions. Unfortunately, there has also been a corresponding increase in cyber fraud," Vittal said.

Sounding out a warning on the kinds of fraud that users could likely face, he said that Airtel has developed an "industry-first feature" that is geared towards conducting secure online transactions "without the fear of being duped by a fraudster".

"Please note that Airtel does not sell VIP numbers on the phone and will never ask you to download any third-party apps. In both instances, please immediately call 121 to confirm. In



fact, I would say when in doubt simply call 121," Vittal advised in his mail to Airtel subscribers.

Cautioning against fraudsters calling customers pretending to be Airtel employees, he said that this could be under the pretext of an incomplete Know Your Customer (KYC) form.

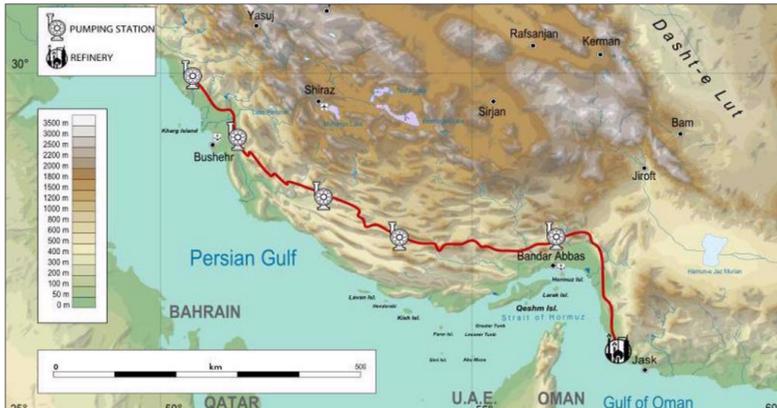
The fraudster may request the customer to install the 'Airtel Quick Support' app from the Google Play Store to allow them to help.

As no such app exists on the play store, when the customer tries to install it, they are redirected to TeamViewer Quick Support App. "The TeamViewer Quick Support app allows the fraudster to remotely take over the device and accounts associated with the device.

And so, if the customer does install it, they allow the fraudster into all their accounts connected to the device," Vittal said urging users to guard against such instances.

Similarly, the fraudster may call or send an SMS claiming to be from Airtel and promising highly discounted VIP numbers.

## Iran To Bypass Key Oil Chokepoint By Exporting From Jask Terminal



Agencies

Iran looks to begin as soon as next month crude oil exports from the Jask terminal on the Sea of Oman, without the need to have tankers travel through the Strait of Hormuz, a top industry official said on Wednesday.

Iran began sending crude oil through the Goureh-Jask Crude Oil Pipeline project, which will allow it to bypass the critical oil chokepoint the Strait of Hormuz, according to Masoud Karbasian, chief executive of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC).

"After the oil reaches Jask, which takes less than a month, in the near future, the official opening ceremony and commis-

sioning of this national project will be held in the presence of the President," Karbasian said, as carried by the Shana news service of the Iranian oil ministry.

According to Iran, the pipeline "aims to transfer one million barrels of crude oil per day, store and export it through a new terminal in Jask, and guarantees continuation of Iran's crude oil exports, decentralization of export terminals and their diversification."

The Goureh-Jask pipeline, which was estimated to cost US\$2 billion, is 1,100 kilometers (684 miles) long and will carry crude oil from the Goureh oil terminal in the northwest of Iran to the Jask region on the Sea of Oman, without tankers having to pass

through the Strait of Hormuz.

In the Persian Gulf, just two oil producers—Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)—currently have some (limited) options for bypassing the Strait of Hormuz, where the daily transit in 2018 was 21 million barrels of oil per day, or the equivalent of some 21 per cent of global petroleum liquids consumption. Iran, like all others, currently relies on the Strait of Hormuz to get its oil to the market, although most of its sales are currently covert because of the U.S. sanctions.

Meanwhile, Iran is preparing to boost production and exports of crude oil as indirect talks on the nuclear deal with the United States continue to progress, government officials said, as quoted by Bloomberg.

## Housing Loan Market Grows By 9.6 Pc In December Quarter: Report



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI: The housing loan market in the country witnessed a rebound and registered a year-on-year growth of 9.6 per cent in terms of portfolio outstanding (PoS) in the third quarter of FY2021, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, says a report.

The portfolio outstanding of the sector stood at Rs 22.26 lakh crore as of December 2020, as compared to Rs 20.31 lakh crore as of December 2019, according to a quarterly report released by credit information bureau CRIF High Mark.

The industry had witnessed 10.4 per cent growth in PoS in December 2019 quarter over December 2018 quarter.

The report said the growth was flat in quarters ending March 2020, June 2020 and September 2020 due to COVID-19 pandemic, the resulting nationwide lockdown and suspension of most of the business and lending activities in large parts of the country.

"However, there has been a

rebound in housing loan originations in the quarter ending December 2020, leading to 4.52 per cent growth in portfolio outstanding," the report noted.

Affordable housing segment (ticket size up to Rs 35 lakh) constituted 90 per cent of the market by volume and nearly 60 per cent by value as of December 2020. Within the affordable segment, loans under ticket size of Rs 15 lakh comprised 70 per cent by volume and 38 per cent by value.

According to the report, young borrowers and millennials (less than 36 years), with high aspirations and commensurate disposable incomes are increasingly being seen as an attractive audience for housing loans, with a share of 27 per cent in the annual originations in FY20-21 (till December 2020).

Public sector banks have retained the largest market share in housing loans by value and volume, with a near 45 per cent share over the last three years. As of December 2020, the top five public sector banks constituted nearly 30 per cent of the housing loan industry book by value, the report said.

As of December 2020, top five private banks constituted 15 per cent of the industry book by value, the report said.

### SHORT TAKES

## Over 20% of PSU Bank Staff Infected With Covid-19: Report

Agencies

EVEN as the RBI makes efforts to move swiftly to minimise the adverse economic impact of the second wave of COVID-19, the central bank has a new worry: The vulnerability of bankers themselves.

Bloomberg Quint reported that RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das held a virtual meeting with officials of public sector undertaking (PSU) banks on Wednesday, where soaring cases of infection came up for discussion.

"Bankers told Das that by their estimates as many as 14-22% of public sector bank staffers have been infected by the COVID-19 virus," Bloomberg Quint reported.

While many parts of the



country continue under lockdown restrictions, banks have remained open, despite curbs on work hours, increasing risk of infection.

Bloomberg Quint reported that the PSU bank officials said more bank employees have died in the last 45 days of COVID-19 than in whole of 2020. Bloomberg Quint quoted PSU bank staff as saying the COVID-19 surge had hit operations of banks, leading to suspen-

sion of deposit collections in rural areas.

Earlier this month, industrialist Uday Kotak revealed that Kotak Mahindra Bank lost 17 employees in April alone, equal to the number of personnel that died in the 12 months of FY21.

Bloomberg Quint reported that Das had told the PSU bankers that the Centre was pushing for priority vaccination for bank staff, who had been declared as frontline workers last year.

Last week, the Union finance ministry informed state governments that they should consider a special dispensation for vaccination of staff of banks, insurance companies, business correspondents, payment systems and other financial services providers on priority.

## Gautam Adani Becomes Asia's Second Richest Person, Surges Past China's Zong Shanshan



Indian business magnate Gautam Adani has surged past Chinese billionaire Zong Shanshan to emerge as Asia's second richest person, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index.

The Adani Group chief's net worth, as per the index, stood at \$66.5 billion against Zhong Shanshan's \$63.6 billion. Adani now stands only behind his Indian competitor and head of Reliance Industries Limited (RIL), Mukesh Ambani, in terms of most wealth owned by an individual in Asia.

In February this year, Ambani has surged ahead of Shanshan to become Asia's richest person. The RIL chairman also tops the chart of richest individuals in India.

Shanshan, founder and chairperson of the Nongfu Spring beverage company, and the majority owner of Beijing Wantai Biological Pharmacy Enterprise, was once the world's sixth richest person. His net worth, however, has taken a drubbing over the past several months.

In the global billionaires' list of Bloomberg, Ambani and Adani are placed on the 13th and 14th position, respectively.

## Founder Of TikTok's Chinese Owner Stepping Down As CEO

BEIJING: The founder of TikTok's Chinese owner said Thursday he will give up his job as CEO to focus on longer-term initiatives, a step that comes amid uncertainty over whether the Biden administration will force the sale of the popular short video service's US arm.

Zhang Yiming said Liang Rubo, a co-founder, will succeed him as ByteDance Ltd CEO. Zhang said leaving day-to-day management will "enable me to have greater impact on longer-term initiatives," but gave no details of his next role.

ByteDance is waiting to find out whether the Biden administration will revive former President Donald Trump's efforts to force the sale of TikTok's US arm.



Trump said the service was a security threat because it gathered too much personal information about millions of American users.

Regulators also are stepping up anti-monopoly enforcement against Chinese e-commerce giants and other internet companies, though there is no indication ByteDance has been targeted.

Zhang founded ByteDance in 2012. Its first short-video platform, Douyin, was launched in 2016. TikTok was launched outside China the following year. The company said last year that TikTok had 700 million users globally.

ByteDance, headquartered in Beijing, says it operates in 150 markets and has more than 60,000 employees.

The Trump administration's plan called for ByteDance to be required to sell TikTok's US arm to the software maker Oracle and retailer Walmart.

The Biden administration, which took office in January, suspended that while it reviewed potential security threats posed by Chinese tech companies. PTI

# 116 Ex Civil Servants Raise Questions Over Govt's Covid Management

## Agencis

**NEW DELHI:** The central government should provide for free vaccination to all Indian citizens and greatly ramp up RT-PCR testing in both rural and urban areas, a group of former civil servants said on Thursday in an open letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

They said the government seems to be more concerned with managing the narrative of "efficient" management of the COVID crisis rather than addressing the crucial issues at stake.

The letter is signed by 116 former civil servants, including former Cabinet Secretary K M Chandrasekhar, former health

secretary K Sujatha Rao, former foreign secretary and ex-national security adviser Shivshankar Menon, former adviser to the Prime Minister TKA Nair, former chief information commissioner Wajahat Habibullah and former lieutenant governor of Delhi Najeeb Jung.

"We are aware that this pandemic threatens the entire

world and is not going to leave the citizens of India untouched."

"And yet, what nubs our senses daily is not just the cries of the citizenry for medical assistance and the death toll in its thousands but the manifestly casual attitude of your government to the magnitude of the crisis and its implications for the mental

and physical health of the community of Indians," the letter said.

Despite warnings from the international community and Indian scientists, the breathing space between the first and the second waves was not used to augment critical resources such as medical staff, hospital beds, oxygen supplies, ventilators,

drugs and other medical supplies, it said.

"Even more inexcusably, no advance planning was done to secure adequate stocks of vaccines, despite India being one of the major vaccine suppliers to the world," said the letter, written by them under the aegis of Constitutional Conduct Group

(CCG).

"The complacency displayed by you and your ministerial colleagues at various forums not only diverted attention from the looming threat but probably also contributed to both state governments and citizens letting down their guard at a crucial juncture, it said.

## CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

### 'Strictest' Corona

alert and take preventive measures in view of anti terrorism day," they said.

It is pertinent to mention here that Mirwaiz Muhammad Farooq was assassinated by gunmen at his Nigeen residence on 21 May 1990 while his close aide Abdul Ghani Lone was assassinated by gunmen on the same day in 2002 when he was in commemoration rally at Eidgah, the Mirwaiz's final resting place.

Meanwhile, normal life continued to remain affected in Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday for the 22nd consecutive day due to lockdown in the wake of the unrelenting surge in coronavirus cases, officials said.

Police and paramilitary forces kept barricades on roads at many places in Srinagar as well as in other district headquarters of the Valley and the Jammu region to prevent the movement of people. However, essential and emergency services are allowed, the officials added.

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

In a statement issued here, a police spokesperson said that 216 persons were arrested, 107 FIRs lodged and also a fine of Rs198190 was realized from 1469 people for violating the guidelines throughout Kashmir valley.

Besides, he said, 8 vehicles were also seized in Kulgam for violating guidelines, restrictions. In Budgam district, the police spokesperson said, 12 shops were sealed for defying the corona curfew.

"Further, in Khanshab town, Waterhail and Charar-e-Sharief area of Budgam, Police arrested 44 persons and seized 35 vehicles for defying corona curfew," he added.

### Second Covid

of death as many people have also succumbed to this disease.

Emphasizing on mandatory wearing of masks at every social gathering particularly in hospitals, offices, markets, religious places and homes, Prof Dar asked people to protect themselves and family by wearing triple surgical or cotton masks and to avoid putting on filter masks.

"Passengers should also wear multiple masks," he said, while also recommending wearing of masks by private transporters

"Family members of an infected person need to take precautions and adopt safe protocol in letter and spirit like using PPE, Gloves and Masks," he said.

He further said that home isolated persons should be treated in a similar way by their family members as Covid-19 patients are being attended in a hospital.

"Wash hands with soap if the sanitizers are not readily available at home. Soaps help as much as a disinfectant," he added.

### J&K Logs 67

included a 72-year-old woman from Alooohi Bagh here, who died five days after she was admitted to CD hospital here. Besides her, a 70-year-old woman from Tral died at District Hospital Pulwama and a 59-year-old woman from Bomai, Sopore died at SKIMS Soura, a day after she was admitted to the hospital.

Two elderly women from Aung and Qazigund also succumbed to the virus at the Government Medical College (GMC) Anantnag, officials said.

Also, a 56-year-old man from Baramulla died at GMC Baramulla, nine days after he was admitted to the facility. A 70-year-old man from Pampore and a 75-year-old Nowpora Srinagar died at hospital in Srinagar, they added.

Regarding the fresh cases, officials said, Jammu reported 1518 cases and 2651 from Kashmir Valley, taking the number of people infected across the UT to 260057.

Giving district wise details, the officials said that Srinagar reported 674, Baramulla 333, Budgam 393, Pulwama 187, Kupwara 206, Anantnag 255, Bandipora 215, Ganderbal 117, Kulgam 206, Shopian 65, Jammu 499, Udhampur 180, Rajouri 158, Doda 79, Kathua 174, Samba 117, Kishtwar 55, Poonch 56, Ramban 124 and Reasi 76 new cases of coronavirus.

The number of active cases stands at 50,554 while 2,06,081 patients have recovered from the infection so far, officials said.

### Family Booked

in huge numbers to attend the funeral rites. They also participated in the Ghulof of the deceased despite the same was done by the authorities as per the Covid-19 SOPs.

Acting swiftly, the reports said, the authorities registered a case under FIR No. 76 of 2021 U/S 269, 188 at the Police station Bandipora.

### 'Black Fungus'

it is available in the world to bridge its shortage "before we lose more precious lives" even as a Union minister said Indian companies have placed orders for importing 6 lakh vials of this key anti-fungal drug. Minister Mansukh Mandaviya also said 11 pharma firms in the country will produce the drug with five more approvals being given.

"You have to get the medicine from wherever in the world. You have to take steps right now. Wherever it is available in the world get it," said a bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Jasmeet Singh which was assured by the Centre that it has already started taking steps to import the medicine.

The court said the Centre should inform it about the steps taken to import the medicine, the shortfall of which was coming in the way

of the treatment of this fungal infection which has been on the rise in the national capital and elsewhere in the country. The infection that affects the nose, eyes, sinuses, and sometimes even the brain is being detected among patients who are recovering or have recovered from COVID-19.

Central government standing counsel Kirtiman Singh and Amit Mahajan informed the court that as on May 19, there are 7,251 patients of black fungus in the country and this includes 200 in Delhi. Some states have also reported fatalities due to this disease with Maharashtra recording 90 deaths.

The issue of shortage of the medicine for treating black fungus was raised by advocate Rakesh Malhotra.

Minister Mandaviya said the shortage of the anti-fungal drug will be resolved soon.

"Black Fungus (Mucormycosis) curing drug #AmphotericinB's shortage will be resolved soon! Within three days, 5 more Pharma companies have got New Drug Approval for producing it in India, in addition to the existing 6 pharma companies," he said in a tweet.

Mandaviya, who is the Minister of State for Chemicals and Fertilizers, also said that existing pharma companies have already started ramping up the production of the drug.

"Indian Companies have also placed orders for importing 6 lakh vials of #AmphotericinB. We are leaving no stone unturned to smoothen the situation," he noted.

In a letter to the states and the UTs, the Union Health Ministry said that in the recent times a "new challenge" in the form of a fungal infection Mucormycosis has emerged, and is leading to prolonged morbidity and mortality amongst COVID-19 patients.

The letter said the disease is reported from many states amongst COVID-19 patients, especially those on steroid therapy and deranged sugar control.

"You are requested to make Mucormycosis a notifiable disease under the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, wherein all government and private health facilities, medical colleges will follow guidelines for screening, diagnosis, management of mucormycosis, issued by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (GoI) and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).

"And, make it mandatory for all these facilities to report all suspected and confirmed cases to health department through district-level chief medical officer and subsequently to Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) surveillance system," said Lav Agarwal, Joint Secretary in the health ministry, in the letter.

Some states like Rajasthan, Telangana and Karnataka have already declared Mucormycosis as a notifiable disease.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said dedicated centres will be set up for treatment of the disease at three city government-run hospitals.

The treatment of the fungal infection requires a multidisciplinary approach involving eye surgeons, ENT specialists, general surgeon, neurosurgeon and dental maxillofacial surgeon, among others, and administration of Amphotericin-B injection.

The Indian Medical Association (IMA) also wrote a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, urging him to allow eligible pharmaceutical companies to manufacture Amphotericin-B drugs in the country.

At the high court, the two-judge bench said there are two things premium here, that is, time and human lives and if the supplies of the drug are not proper, it would be neither here nor there and it would not serve the purpose as the shortage is by two-third of the total demand.

You need to import this to bridge the gap between your plan to enhance the capacity and completing manufacture before we lose more precious lives. So act fast on this, it said, and asked the Centre to file a status report on present production capacity of the medicine, details of producers licensed to produce it, and by when it would be manufactured with the increased capacity.

Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope said he told Prime Minister Modi that Mucormycosis is a matter of prime concern for the state at present, and the government needs more supply of the medicine used for its treatment.

"I have informed the Centre that Mucormycosis is the prime concern before the state government. I insisted that we need more allocation and supply of Amphotericin-B as the number of cases in the state is higher," Tope told reporters in Mumbai after a virtual meeting convened by the prime minister.

Tope had earlier said that Maharashtra faces a shortage of Amphotericin-B and the state needs 1.50 lakh to two lakh vials of the medicine, but has received only 16,000 vials from the Centre.

Of the 1,500 patients of black fungus detected so far in the state, some 850 were undergoing treatment in hospitals, while 90 COVID-19 survivors have died so far, he said.

According to an advisory issued by the ICMR, conditions such as uncontrolled diabetes, weakening of immune system due to use of steroids, prolonged ICU/hospital stay, co-morbidities/post-organ transplant/cancer, voriconazole therapy (used to treat serious fungal infections) in COVID-19 patients increase the risk of mucormycosis infection.

In addition, COVID patients undergoing oxygen therapy in the ICU, where humidifier is used, are prone to fungal infection because of

exposure to moisture, it said.

But this does not mean that every COVID patient will get infected by Mucormycosis. The disease is uncommon in those not having diabetes but can be fatal if not treated promptly. Chances of recovery depend upon early diagnosis and treatment, it added. (PTI)

### Health Dept

17th May 2021, you are directed to monitor the influx of attendants in Dedicated Covid Hospitals (DCHs) and Dedicated Covid Health Centres (DCHCs) under your administrative control by ensuring strict adherence to SOPs / guidelines already circulated in this regard so as to prevent them from getting infected & contain transmission of infection to others."

"In addition, you are also directed to make sure that the attendants do not manipulate oxygen devices in the health institutions falling under your administrative control and also put in place signages/ posters advocating the hazards of manipulating oxygen devices & increasing flow of oxygen which is deleterious to the health of patients." The order adds.

### 14% Rise

is going to benefit thousands of employees appointed by the government after 2010 who are being governed under this system.

"Pertinent to mention here that government was making a monthly contribution equivalent to 10% of Basic pay and Dearness allowance of each employee which has now been increased to 14% w.e.f April, 2020 taking its employees at par with those employed by central government," he said.

He further said that the employees were demanding the same and government has fulfilled it that also retrospectively from April, 2020 which is going to benefit substantially thousands of employees working under the National Pension System here.

### Ban On Constructions

shall not be implemented without taking prior approval of the Court."

The court also discharged amicus curiae or of any commissioner or the committee regarding the subject matter of the PIL, concerning the illegal and unauthorized constructions being raised in Gulmarg and Tangmarg in violation of the Master Plan.

"Any amicus curiae appointed earlier stands relieved of his office and so are the commissioner(s), if any appointed from time to time. The Committee(s), if any, shall also stand dissolved. It is made clear that on filing of the affidavits as directed above, if necessary, the Court may consider for the appointment of amicus curiae, commissioner or a committee afresh subsequently," the court said. (GNS)

### LAWDA Asked To

Koul observed that the plea reveals that the erstwhile State of J&K vide order dated 15th December 2010 had transferred the State land measuring about 15 kanals of the Estate Harwan Srinagar (North) in favour of Health & Medical Education Department for establishing the hospital of Indian Systems of Medicines (ISM).

The department submitted the Detailed Project Report (DPR) which was duly sanctioned and approved at the construction cost of Rs. 67.743 lakhs. Accordingly, the department applied to the LAWDA on 20th September 2013 for granting permission for the construction of 50-bed AYUSH Hospital but the LAWDA failed to decide the application and communicate any order.

Thus in accordance with the Regulation 7(iii) of the Control of Building Operation (Revised) Regulations 2001 on the expiry of the maximum period of 90 days from the date of application and completion of requisite formalities, the building was constructed which is almost complete except the interiors, treating the permission to have been granted, the plea reads.

In the meantime on 14th October 2015, an order came to be passed by the court, holding the construction of the AYUSH Hospital unauthorized for being raised in violation of Master Plan. Accordingly, AYUSH Hospital was sealed.

B. A. Dar, Sr. AAG submitted that the AYUSH Hospital was completed on the basis of the "deemed permission" and therefore its sealing on the basis of the high court order was "unjustified, more particularly when the order has been passed behind the back of the department."

However, advocate Asifa Padroo submitted that the Director ISM was informed by the LAWDA on 25th September 2013 not to undertake any construction for not obtaining "No Objection Certificate" from the various departments and as such Regulation 7 (iii) of the Regulations would not come into play and there would not be any deemed permission in favour of the department.

".....we are of the opinion that the matter as to whether the application of the department for grant of permission stands granted and the construction of the AYUSH Hospital is in accordance with the sanctioned map, if any, requires to be considered afresh by a speaking order, influenced by any finding or observation recorded by the Court whereupon it will be open for the LAWDA to take appropriate action either under Section 7 (providing for demolition) or Section 8 (providing for sealing) of the Act in accordance with law," the division bench said. (GNS)

### Jailed SOG

the Lieutenant Governor is satisfied after considering the facts and circumstances of the

case and on the basis of information available that the activities of Davinder Singh, Deputy Superintendent of Police (Under Suspension) S/o Deedar Singh R/o Overigund Tral, Pulwama are such as to warrant his dismissal from service," reads the order issued by the General Administration Department (GAD).

"The Lieutenant Governor is satisfied under sub-clause (c) of the proviso to clause (2) of Article 311 of the Constitution of India that in the interest of the security of the State, it is not expedient to hold an enquiry in the case of Davinder Singh. Accordingly, the Lieutenant Governor hereby dismisses Davinder Singh from service with immediate effect." The dismissal order adds.

On January 10 last year, the security agencies in Jammu and Kashmir went into a tizzy when police disclosed the news of Davinder's arrest with two Hizb militants. The case was initially lodged by J&K police which was later taken over by the NIA. Singh was suspended from the Jammu and Kashmir Police in January this year.

Singh was posted with the anti-hijacking wing of Jammu and Kashmir Police in Srinagar, and was part of the security staff that had received a group of foreign diplomats who visited Kashmir.

Meanwhile, the LG-led dispensation has also terminated two government teachers through separate orders issued on Thursday.

According to the order issued by the GAD on behalf of LG, the services of Bashir Ahmad Sheikh, a resident of Dildar Batpora in Karnah area of Kupwara and Mohammad Yousuf Ganie son of Ghulam Qadir Ganie, a resident of Trich area of Kupwara have been terminated from immediate effect.

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

Earlier this month, three government officials including an assistant professor were dismissed from service over alleged anti-state activities in Jammu and Kashmir.

Pertinently, the GAD had issued an order on April 21 in which sanction was accorded to the constitution of STF for identifying and scrutinizing the government employees who are involved in anti-national activities and pose a threat to the country's security, and will be terminated from services, if found guilty.

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

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

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

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

### GMC Jammu

Principal, Government Medical College, Jammu by or before May 23, Sunday.

All the three advertisements are also available on website: www.gmcjammu.nic.in.

### India-China Ties

signing of two important agreements in 1993 and 1996 on maintaining peace and tranquillity at the border.

The stability at the border led to the expansion of relations in several sectors, but it was adversely impacted following what happened in eastern Ladakh, he said at a webinar organised jointly organised by the Financial Times and the Indian Express.

At a media briefing, Spokesperson in the Ministry of External Affairs Arindam Bagchi said full restoration of peace and tranquillity in the border areas would enable progress in the bilateral relationship.

The ties between the two countries came under severe strain following a deadly clash in the Galwan valley in eastern Ladakh in June last, over a month after the border standoff began between the Indian and Chinese militaries in multiple friction points in the region.

"I think the relationship is at a crossroads and which direction we go depends on whether the Chinese side would adhere to the consensus; whether it would follow through on the agreements which we both have done... What is very clear in the last year is that border tensions cannot continue with cooperation in other areas," he said.

Asked about China's attempts to expand influence in the region and competition between the two countries, Jaishankar said India is ready to compete and it has its inherent strength as well as the influence that goes deep

into the Indo-Pacific on the one side and Africa and Europe on the other.

"It is one thing to compete, it is another thing to have violence on the border," he said.

"I am ready to compete. That is not the issue for me. The issue for me is how do I manage a relationship if the basis of the relationship has been violated by one side," he said.

The external affairs minister said the economic relationship and ties in other sectors between the two countries were driven by the stabilisation of the border through the 1980s and 1990s.

"I do not have a clear cut answer at this point of time. We had the border conflict of 1962 and it took us really 26 years to have the first prime minister's visit in 1988 when Rajiv Gandhi went to China. There was a 1988 sort of consensus which stabilised the border," he said.

He was asked about where things stand now in ties between the two nations.

Jaishankar said the agreements in 1993 and 1996 on border management paved the way for the expansion of overall ties.

"Those agreements essentially stipulated that you will not bring large armed forces to the border and the Line of Actual Control would be observed, respected and there would be no attempt to change the status quo unilaterally. Now what we saw last year was actually China departing from the 1988 consensus," he said.

Jaishankar said there is definitely going to impact the ties if the peace and tranquillity at the border are disturbed, "if you disturb the peace and tranquillity if you have bloodshed as you pointed out if there is intimidation if there is continuing friction at the border."

To a question on further disengagement in eastern Ladakh, Bagchi said that full restoration of peace and tranquillity in the border areas would enable progress in the bilateral ties.

He also referred to Jaishankar's telephonic talks with the Chinese foreign minister last month.

Bagchi said Jaishankar conveyed to his Chinese counterpart that while the process of disengagement had commenced earlier this year it remained unfinished and emphasised on early completion of the process. "In this context, the two sides have agreed in the interim that they would maintain stability on the ground and avoid any new incidents," he said.

"It is our expectation therefore that neither side should take any action that is not keeping with these understandings. Full restoration of peace and tranquillity in the border areas would enable progress in the bilateral relationship," Bagchi added.

India and China completed the withdrawal of troops and weapons from the North and South banks of Pangong lake in February following a series of military and diplomatic talks.

The two sides are now engaged in talks to extend the disengagement process to the remaining friction points.

There was no visible forward movement in disengagement of troops in the remaining friction points as the Chinese side did not show flexibility in their approach on it at the 11th round of military talks with the Indian Army on April 9.

The Chinese military is currently conducting a drill in its training areas near the Ladakh region.

Chief of Army Staff Gen M M Naravane said on Wednesday said India is keeping a constant eye on activities by the Chinese military. He also hoped that both sides will be able to make forward movement in resolving issues in other areas.

### Siblings Held

by police at a checkpoint in main market Kupwara, a police spokesperson said Thursday. The checkpoint, he said, was established on specific information regarding the movement of militants.

"During the searches, two persons were found in suspicious condition and on seeing the search party they tried to escape from the spot. However, they were chased and apprehended," he said.

He also claimed that six grenades were recovered from their possession which they were supposed to provide to the militants.

The police spokesperson further said that a case under FIR No. 160/2021 U/s 3/4 Explosive Substance Act has been registered in Police Station Kupwara.

### Geelani's Brother

Born on April 15, 1927 at Tujjar Sharief area of Sopore, Makhdoomi qualified Matriculation exams from Lahore University with distinction. He joined the Education department in 1945 and served till 1982.

He remained as Imam /Khateeb Jamia Tujjar Sharief for a long period of 30 years. (KNS)

### 2 Schools Sealed

were sealed by the authorities."

He also appealed to the people to cooperate with the admin and follow the instructions and guidelines issued by the government from time to time.

### Motorcyclist Knocks

soon after the incident, the biker has managed to flee from the spot as it was a hit and run case, adding that an investigation has been taken up in this regard.

### Cleaner Killed

"Rescuers immediately swung into action and retrieved his body from a 300-feet deep gorge," he said, adding that proceedings under section 174 CrPC have been initiated.

## Rahul Dravid Will Be India Head Coach For Sri Lanka Tour

Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** National Cricket Academy chief and former India captain Rahul Dravid is set to be the head coach of the Indian white-ball squad that will tour Sri Lanka in July.

Dravid, who stopped travelling with the India A and U-19 teams after taking over as NCA head in Bengaluru, will be the head coach of the second-string side in the absence of Ravi Shastri, who will be busy with the Test side in England at the same time.

"He will travel with the team to Sri Lanka in all likelihood," a BCCI source told PTI.

PTI had reported on May 17 that Dravid was being considered for the assignment.

Bowling coach Paras Mhambrey will also be a part of the support staff.

India are expected to play three ODIs and as many T20s in Sri Lanka in July though the schedule has not been announced yet.

The squad will have plenty of fringe players and some established white-ball specialists.

Hardik Pandya, Shikhar Dhanwan and Shreyas Iyer are in the running for captaincy.

It remains to be seen if Iyer recovers in time from his shoulder surgery to play in Sri Lanka.

## England To Allow 4000 Fans For India-New Zealand WTC Final

Press Trust of India

**SOUTHAMPTON:** The World Test Championship final between India and New Zealand in Southampton will be held in the presence of 4000 spectators, Hampshire County Club head Rod Bransgrove has said.

The COVID-19 situation has improved in the UK and around 1500 people were allowed to watch the county game between Leicestershire and Hampshire at the Ageas Bowl, which hosts the WTC final from June 18.

"We're staging a four-day county game from today and for the first time since September 2019 fans were allowed for a cricket match in England. The other county games of this round will begin tomorrow and those games too will see crowds," Rod Bransgrove, the head of Hampshire County Club, told Cricbuzz on Wednesday.

Bransgrove told the website that the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) and the ICC are permitting a crowd of "4000 people" in the eagerly-awaited clash.



"I understand 50 percent of the permitted crowds will be taken by the ICC for its sponsors and other stake holders and we will be selling the rest 2000 tickets. We have already received more than double applications from the fans," Bransgrove said.

"It is a high-interest game and there is a good demand for it."

The Indian team, currently quarantining in Mumbai for two weeks, depart for the UK on June 2. Virat Kohli and his men will undergo a 10-day quarantine in Southampton but are expected to be allowed to train during the period.

"We are waiting for the Indian team to complete their quarantine in India and arrive here. We are ready to host them," Bransgrove said.

## Govt To Provide Medical, Accident Insurance To 13,000 Athletes, Coaches

Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** The government has decided to widen its medical insurance cover for sportspersons by increasing the number of beneficiary athletes and including coaches and support staff from this year in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Sports Authority of India (SAI) said on Thursday.

The SAI said with this decision, the coverage would increase to more than 13,000 athletes, coaches and support staff.

Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju said the well-being of athletes, coaches and support staff are his ministry's priority and the decision is in line with that objective.

"We want to ensure that all our athletes and contractual staff have health cover during these difficult times and even after," he said.

"They are our national assets."

All national campers, probable national campers, Khelo India athletes and junior campers training at SAI Centres of Excellence across the country will be provided an insurance cover of Rs 5 lakh each. Earlier the cover was limited to only the elite athletes.



"This is new because this is for all contractual coaches and staff who were not covered before," an official source told PTI. The health insurance also includes Rs 25 lakh accident or death coverage.

"Through this initiative, we are ensuring that all national-level athletes have insurance cover not just during the national camps but throughout the year," Rijiju said.

"We have significantly raised the insurance cover for Khelo India scholars and junior athletes up to Rs 5 lakh per athlete each year," he added.

This policy will come into effect irrespective of the dates of a nation-

al camp and even if camps have not been in operation this year.

"This will ensure continuity in the insurance and will provide much needed support to national-level athletes, coaches and support staff associated with National camps."

SAI has asked the National Sporting Federations (NSFs) to identify athletes and support staff for inclusion in the insurance scheme.

Data of those covered under this insurance scheme will be stored in the National Sports Repository System to "create a transparent, easy to access process which can be monitored regularly."

## Sports Ministry Invites Applications For National Sports Awards

Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** The Sports Ministry on Thursday invited applications for the national sports awards, allowing eligible athletes, coaches, universities and other entities to self-nominate and apply online for a second year running because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The last date of submitting applications is June 21.

"In view of the current pandemic situation, the nominations for the National Sports Awards will be ac-

cepted online, this year," the Ministry said in a release.

"Last year the Sports Ministry had for the first time allowed for self nomination of applicants in view of the pandemic."

"This year too, self nomination will be allowed. National Sporting Federations will also nominate athletes for the top honours," it added.

Till 2019, applicants needed recommendations to be able to apply but the condition was waived off last year as the COVID-19 lockdown pre-

vented smooth movement of people.

Last year, 74 recipients were bestowed with the awards. The prize money was also increased significantly with the Khel Ratna awardees receiving Rs 25 lakh, Arjuna awardees Rs 15 lakh, Dhyanacharya (Lifetime) Rs 15 lakh, and Dhyanchand winners Rs 10 lakh.

In an unprecedented move, cricketer Rohit Sharma, women's hockey team captain Rani Rampal, wrestler Vinesh Phogat, paralympian Mariyappan Thangavelu and TT player Manika Batra were jointly awarded the Khel Ratna last year.

## Difficult To Host T20 WC In India, Teams Would Be Nervous: Mike Hussey

Press Trust of India

**SYDNEY:** Former Australia batsman Mike Hussey, who tested positive for COVID-19 in IPL's bio-bubble, has advocated moving this year's T20 World Cup from India to the UAE as he feels teams will be "nervous" to travel there because of the raging pandemic.

Batting coach Hussey was among three members of the Chennai Super Kings contingent who contracted the virus during the IPL, which had to be suspended after cases were detected in four teams.

"I think it's going to be very difficult in my view to play that tournament in India," Hussey told 'Fox Cricket' upon his return to Sydney, where he is undergoing a 14-day quarantine.

Hussey had also spent two weeks isolating in India after testing positive for the virus in Delhi



from where he was transported to Chennai in an air ambulance.

"We're talking about eight teams in the IPL. I think there are probably similar number, maybe more teams coming in from overseas (for the T20 World Cup), there'd be more venues. As I said earlier, if they're playing in different cities, that is when the risk goes up."

"I think they'll have to look some pretty big contingency plans, perhaps looking at the UAE or somewhere like that that could host the World T20. I think there will be a lot of cricket boards around the world that'd be pretty nervous about going back to India for a cricket tournament," said Hussey.

UAE has already emerged as

the back up venue and the ICC is likely to take a call on the tournament on June 1.

Talking about his ordeal in India, Hussey said he had symptoms but he never feared for his life.

"At the time I thought I didn't feel great, but not life-threatening or anything like that. But it does take its toll on you after a while I guess. My initial test came up as a weak positive, and we were sort of hoping the next would be negative and it'd be alright, but unfortunately I got retested the next day and that came back positive."

"To be honest, I had already started feeling some of the symptoms so I was thinking, 'I'm pretty sure I've got it.'"

"Plus I was sitting next to the bowling coach (L Balaji) on the bus a few times, so I thought, 'If he's got it then there's a pretty good chance I've got it as well,'" he added.

## PCB Secures UAE Approval To Stage Remaining PSL Matches In Abu Dhabi

Press Trust of India

**KARACHI:** The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is set to stage the remaining matches of the sixth edition of the Pakistan Super League in Abu Dhabi after receiving all outstanding approvals and exemptions from the UAE government. There was uncertainty regarding the completion of the T20 league which was suspended after 14 games in March following cases of COVID-19 inside its bio-bubble.

"Pakistan Cricket Board has confirmed it has received all outstanding approvals and exemptions from the United Arab Emirates government for the staging of the remaining 20 HBL Pakistan Super League matches in Abu Dhabi," the board said in a statement.

On Wednesday, PCB had said it would be forced to postpone the remaining PSL 6 matches if it doesn't get required approvals from the relevant authorities in the UAE in the next 24 hours.

"We are delighted with this development as the remaining hurdles in the staging of the remaining HBL PSL 6 matches in Abu Dhabi have been overcome and all systems are now

good to go," PCB Chief Executive Wasim Khan said.

"We are grateful to the UAE government, National Emergency Crisis and Disasters Management Authority, Emirates Cricket Board and Abu Dhabi Sports Council for their support and patronage in ensuring all final obstacles were removed, which has firmly put us in a position to complete our marquee event."

Following the suspension of the league, the PCB had scheduled the remaining matches from June 1 to 20. The board said it will now "hold an online meeting with the six franchise owners later in the day to update them about the progress made as well as to finalise all details."

"The PCB, in consultation with the team owners, will now work at pace to finalise all event-related arrangements, details of which will be shared in due course," Khan said. "The holding of the remaining matches in Abu Dhabi will allow our fans to once again follow and support their favourite players and teams through our high-quality broadcast coverage of one of the most competitive cricket leagues in the world."

## Indian Football Team Awaiting COVID-19 Test Results After Arrival In Doha

Press Trust of India

**DOHA:** The Indian football team players underwent COVID-19 tests on arrival and are waiting for results before starting their preparatory camp ahead of the joint Qualifiers for the 2022 World Cup and 2023 Asian Cup.

The 28-member squad and support staff landed here on Wednesday night from New Delhi.

"The 28 players and the support staff are in compulsory quarantine till they receive the test results of the conducted RT-PCR tests in Doha," the All India Football Federation said in a release. The squad will, thereafter, be allowed to kick-off their preparatory camp as part of their preparation for the matches."

The team, bolstered by the return of Sunil Chhetri, will have a preparatory camp inside a bio-bubble here before their first match on June 3 against hosts Qatar. The other two matches are against Bangladesh (June 7) and Afghanistan (June 15). The round of matches is being played in Doha in view of the COVID-19 pandemic situation which doesn't allow the original format of home and away matches.

The Indian team, fourth in Group E with three points, is already out of contention for a World Cup berth but it is still in the reckoning for the 2023 Asian Cup in China. The AIFF thanked Qatar Football Association (QFA) for allowing the team to arrive much before the matches and have a preparatory camp in Doha. QFA also used its good offices to allow the Indians start training without serving 10-day hard quarantine. "We are extremely grateful and thankful to the Qatar FA for the manner they went out of the way and helped us begin our camp in Qatar early," AIFF General Secretary Kushal Das said.

## Legendary Athlete Milkha Singh Tests Positive For COVID-19



Press Trust of India

**CHANDIGARH:** Legendary Indian sprinter Milkha Singh has tested positive for COVID-19 and is in isolation at his Chandigarh residence. The 91-year-old, popularly known as Flying Sikh, is asymptomatic and claims to be in "high spirits".

"A couple of our helpers earlier tested positive and so all the family members did the tests. Only I returned positive on Wednesday and I am surprised," Milkha told PTI.

"I am fine and there is no fever or cough. My doctor told me I will be alright in three-four days. I did jogging just yesterday. I am in high spirits," he added.

None of the other family members, including Milkha's wife Nirmal Kaur, a former India volleyball captain, returned a positive test.

"I have been telling people that doing physical exercise and remaining healthy is very important during this COVID times. I am 91 but I have been doing exercise regularly," Milkha said.

"I have been keeping indoors except for this morning jogging and exercise. Though I was surprised to test positive, I hope to get over it soon."

Milkha's son and ace golfer Jeev Milkha Singh is in Dubai and said he would be returning to the country this week itself.

"I will be flying back home on Saturday," said Jeev.

"I have also undergone COVID

test here, which is mandatory for travel and the report will come on Friday," he added.

Nirmal Kaur said that Milkha was checked by PGIMER doctors and they have given requisite medicines.

About her husband contracting the infection, she said, "a cook, who had been with the family for the last 50 years, reported high fever a few days ago."

"He used to mostly stay here, but occasionally he used to go to his village Kishangarh here. A few days ago he told our driver to check his temperature and he found him running a high fever."

"He had concealed from us that he had been running a fever for the past few days. He was sent home and tested positive," she said.

She said a couple of days before Milkha's COVID test was done, he had told her about feeling slight weakness.

"This was the first time in my life that he had complained of weakness and body ache," she said.

The legendary athlete is a four-time Asian Games gold medallist and 1958 Commonwealth Games champion but his greatest performance was the fourth place finish in the 400m final of the 1960 Rome Olympics.

His timing at the Italian capital remained the national record for 38 years till Paramjeet Singh broke it in 1998.

He also represented India in the 1956 and 1964 Olympics and was



## REMEMBERING THE QUAID AND THE BRAVEHEARTS

On the 31st anniversary of achieving Shahadat by Shaheed-e-Millat Mirwaiz Moulvi Muhammad Farooq (Alai Rehma) and other Shuhada: M Maqbool Shah, Ms Shameema Akhter, Ali M Khan, M Rafiq Mir, Aashiq Hussain Dar, M Shafi Shakhshaz, Ms Jala Begum, Ghulam Nabi Bhat, Jan M Raja, Showkat Ahmad Rather, Nazir Ahmad Baba, Ms Baby Jan, Mushtaq Hussain, M Lala Sheikh, Rafiq Ahmad Khan, Nazir Ahmad Hajam, Ghulam Rasool Rather, Ms Fatima Begum, Nisar Hussain Khan, Javed Ahmad Beigh, Latief Ahmad Sheikh, Bilal Ahmad Mir, Jan M Misger, Ms Sakeena Akhter, Me'raj-ud-Din, M Amin Mahajan, M Sultan Shah, Bashir Ahmad Bhat, Nazir Ahmad, M Yousuf Rather, Abdul Hameed, Aijaz Ahmad Rather, M Maqbool Kakroo, Shameem Ahmad Khan, Ms Shakeela Begum, Ali M Bhat, Farooq Ahmad Beigh, Ali M Kakroo, M Arif Qureshi, Nazir Ahmad Nowshehri, Ms Dilshada, Ishfaq Ahmad Rather, Hilal Ahmad Rather, M Shafi Mir, Rafiq Ahmad, Ghulam Nabi Magray, Hilal Ahmad Mir, Ghulam Rasool Beigh, Ghulam Qadir Bandari, Bilal Ahmad Beigh, who came under fire by the forces, at Hawal while participating in Mirwaiz's funeral procession, on May 21st, 1990, and in remembrance of all other martyrs, known and unknown, let's pledge today to carry forward their sacred mission of realizing the will and aspirations of the people of Jammu & Kashmir, and turn our collective dream into reality. In Sha Allah!

Awami Action Committee

## Plea in SC Seeks Direction To Ensure Proper Medical Treatment For Non-COVID Patients

Agenceis

A plea was Thursday filed in the Supreme Court seeking directions to the Centre, states and Union Territories to ensure that adequate medical treatment and facilities are being provided to non-COVID patients in hospitals amid the pandemic, including during the lockdown period.

The plea has claimed that non-COVID patients having ailments including heart diseases, HIV and hepatitis are struggling to get proper medical admission and treatment in government as well as private hospitals during the lockdown period.

The petition, filed by advocate G S Mani, has sought direction to the authorities to ensure that fundamental rights to life, liberty, health and equality of non-COVID patients guaranteed under the Constitution be enforced and protected effectively.

Non-COVID-19 patients are facing lot of difficulties, the plea said, adding, These patients need regular treatment and medical check up.

It said due to the ongoing wave of COVID-19 infection in the country, several states like Delhi, Kerala and others have announced complete or partial lockdown in the months of April and May this year.

Referring to the number of deaths due to coronavirus infection, the plea claimed that in several states more people have died

due to lack of proper arrangement of medical facilities and treatments in the hospitals.

Mani said he had sent a representation to the Health Ministry by way of e-mail on May 15 and through speed post on May 17 seeking adequate medical treatment facility for all non-COVID patients in private and government hospitals in the states.

The plea has also sought a direction to the authorities to consider his May 15 representation.

The petition has referred to media reports and claimed that non-COVID patients are not getting proper medical treatment and facilities in hospitals during the lockdown period.

In some private hospitals, online consultation is available whereas in government hospitals, there is no such facility available. There should be more government hospitals exclusively for non-COVID-19 patients, it said.

It said the apex court has said in catena of cases that right to life and right to public health is a fundamental right guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution of India.

The right to health includes affordable treatment. Therefore, it is the duty cast upon the states to make provisions and effective arrangement for affordable treatment. The right to public health is an integral element of Article 21 of the Constitution, it said.

## Third Wave Of Covid Possible If Vaccination Not Ramped Up: Scientist



Agenceis

**NEW DELHI:** If the vaccination drive against coronavirus is not ramped up and COVID-19 appropriate-behaviour is not maintained, there is a possibility of a third wave of the pandemic in 6-8 months, said M Vidyasagar, a scientist involved in the Sutra Model which uses mathematics to project the trajectory of COVID-19.

He, however, stressed the Sutra model has not predicted any third wave and it is working on it.

The IIT-Hyderabad professor cited a paper by Italian researchers on infected people with decreasing antibodies, which give some sort of immunity, in six months.

"If the antibodies are lost, then there is a chance of immunity going down. In this case, vaccination has to be ramped up and COVID-19 appropriate-behaviour must be practiced. If not then there is a possibility of a third wave in 6-8 months," Mr Vidyasagar said.

"We are also adding the aspects of

immunity and vaccination in our model for our future forecasts," he added.

According to a study by the San Raffaele hospital in Milan, antibodies against coronavirus remained in the blood of patients with COVID-19 for at least eight months after they were infected.

A recent sero-survey by the Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (IGIB) suggested that the neutralising antibodies declined significantly after five-six months, making people prone to reinfections.

The coronavirus cases in the country peaked in September 2020 and there was a nationwide decline of new cases starting in October.

"Using more stringent measures (more than 30 per cent inhibition of surrogate receptor-spike protein binding), the loss of neutralisation may be even higher. We speculate that this may be related to recurrence of outbreaks in March 2021, after the peak in September 2020," the IGIB paper said on the second wave that started raging from late

March and has claimed thousands of lives since then.

K VijayRaghavan, Principal Scientific Adviser, had said on May 5 that as the virus mutates further, a third wave of COVID infection is inevitable and it is necessary to be prepared for new waves. Two days later he said there may not be a third wave of coronavirus in the country, if strong measures are taken and effectively implemented at the state, district and city-level.

"If we take strong measures, the third wave may not happen in all places or indeed anywhere at all. It depends on much how effectively guidance is implemented at the local level in the states, districts and cities everywhere. The guidance about precautions, about surveillance, about containment, about treatment and about tests. This insidious asymptomatic transmission can be stopped if we follow the guidelines. This sounds difficult, it is difficult and we can and must do it," Mr VijayRaghavan had said in a press briefing.

## "Do Not Test Our Patience, Start Talks, Accept Demands": Farmers' Union

Agenceis

**NEW DELHI:** With spells of rain in the national capital adding to the misery of farmers camping on the borders of Delhi, the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) on Wednesday warned the central government to "not test their patience, initiate the dialogue and accept the demands".

Thousands of farmers, mostly from Punjab, Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh, have been camping at three Delhi border points - Singhu, Tikri and Ghazi- pur - for almost six months, demanding repeal of three farm laws and a legal guarantee for the minimum support Price (MSP) and other two issues.

"... More than 470 farmers have been martyred in the farmers' movement. Many agitators have had to leave their jobs, education and other work. The government's attitude meanwhile shows how inhuman and careless it is towards its own citizens, the "anna daatas". If the government cares about its farmers and wants their welfare, then it should initiate dialogue with the farmers and accept their demands," the SKM said in a statement, warning the government to "not test the patience of farmers".

So far, there have been 11 rounds of talks between the protesting unions and the government, but the deadlock has continued as both sides have stuck to their stand.

In January, the government had offered to suspend the farm laws for 12-18 months, which was

rejected by the farmer unions.

The Supreme Court stayed the implementation of the laws till further orders and set up a committee to resolve the impasse.

When this government, which "pretends" to do the welfare of farmers, takes "full credit" for increasing production or export in any crop or state, it should also take responsibility for every "human loss and other loss" taking place on the borders of Delhi, the SKM, an umbrella body of agitating farmer unions, said.

The spells of rainfall in Delhi on Wednesday under the impact of cyclone Tauktae, according to the protesting farmers' union, has caused a great deal of "disruption and losses" at the different agitating venues.

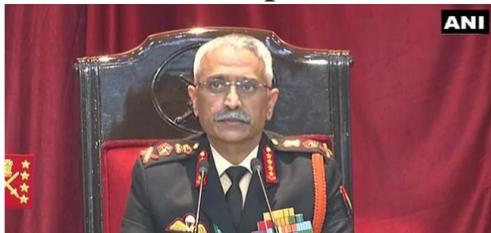
"It has been a chaotic situation with regard to food and accommodation, due to the rain. Roads and several parts of the protest sites have been filled up with rainwater," the union said.

"... For six months now, in all such circumstances, in the absence of any government facilities and support, the protesting farmers themselves are handling such situations," it claimed.

The centre says the new farm laws will free farmers from middlemen, giving them more options to sell their crops.

The protesting farmers, however, say the laws would pave the way for eliminating the safety cushion of MSP and do away with the "mandi" (wholesale market) system, leaving them at the mercy of big corporates.

## Army Chief Says India Keeping Eye On Chinese Military Drill Near Ladakh: Report



Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** The Indian Army is keeping a constant eye on activities by the Chinese military including a drill it is conducting in its training areas near the Ladakh region and there were no "violations" by either side since the implementation of the disengagement in Pangong lake areas, Chief of Army Staff Gen M M Naravane said on Wednesday.

Gen Naravane also expressed hope that both sides will be able to make forward movement in resolving issues in other areas.

The Chief of the Army Staff said the disengagement has been cordial so far, but added that Indian troops are maintaining an effective vigil to deal with any eventualities along the Line of Actual Control in eastern Ladakh.

Asked about a military drill by the Chinese Army in their depth areas, he said Indian troops are keeping a constant eye on it.

"We have seen movements in training areas. It is an annual exercise. They come for training. We also go to training areas. We have been keeping a constant eye on it. We have forces along the LAC and they are adequate to deal with any action or activity," Gen Naravane told the India Today channel.

He said there were no "transgressions and violations" since the disengagement process took place in February and both sides are observing it in letter and spirit.

"What is important is that we are talking. And what is important to know is that between two phases, there are periods where the trust has to be built up. I think the trust has (been) built, because of that trust, maybe we will be

able to make forward movement in other areas where issues are still to be resolved," he told CNN-News18.

The Chief of Army Staff said India will maintain its enhanced presence on the northern front till de-escalation is achieved.

India and China were locked in a military standoff at multiple friction points in eastern Ladakh since early May last year but they have completed the withdrawal of troops and weapons from the North and South banks of Pangong lake in February following a series of military and diplomatic talks.

The two sides are now engaged in talks to extend the disengagement process to the remaining friction points.

There was no visible forward movement in disengagement of troops in the remaining friction points as the Chinese side did not show flexibility in their approach on it at the 11th round of military talks with the Indian Army on April 9, reported news agency Press Trust of India.

About the coronavirus crisis, Gen Naravane said the Army is fully ready to extend all possible assistance in India's fight against the pandemic. "We are an Army of the people, for the people," he said.

"There is no difference in mobilising for the pandemic. This is because time to time we also assist in dealing with other natural calamities. We are quite well geared up. All three branches of armed forces have been working collectively," he said.

Gen Naravane said 90 per cent of the forces' personnel have been administered the second dose of coronavirus vaccine and soon it will touch 95 per cent.

## "Changing Strategies" Will Prevent 3rd Covid Wave: AIIMS Task Force Chief

Agenceis

**NEW DELHI:** Chairperson of the COVID Task Force for AIIMS, Dr Naveet Wig on Thursday said that the COVID-19 crisis is "a dynamic situation" and to prevent a third wave of the pandemic, there is a need to keep changing strategies.

Dr Wig told ANI in an interview said, "The COVID crisis is like a Test match, it is not a One-Day match. We have to keep changing our strategies all the time. It is such a dynamic situation that no one formula will take care of this."

"Public support is important. People have to understand this disease, how it happens. Until and unless people participate, we will not be able to prevent it," Dr Wig said.

Speaking about the recommendations of the National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for COVID-19 (NEG-VAC), the Chairman of the COVID Task Force for All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS) said that these keep changing as new data becomes available.

NEG-VAC on Wednesday recommended that the COVID vaccination should be deferred by three months after clinical recovery of the illness.

"The recommendation is good. Ideally, if a person has already been infected with COVID that means he has already been vaccinated once. And then he takes a vaccine shot after eight months or three weeks of getting infected, this will be his second shot," Dr Wig said.

He further said that wearing masks will prevent the spread of



the disease, which is transmitted through air.

"COVID appropriate behaviour is a must. We lacked COVID appropriate behaviour after the first wave. That behavioural change led to the second wave. We have to wear the mask all the time, whether we are vaccinated or not," he added.

The government today issued guidelines to stop the spread of Covid-19. According to the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India aerosols, one of the key transmission mode of the SARS-CoV-2, can travel in the air up to 10 meters.

Dr Wig also said that social vaccination is the most important concept. Dr Wig, over the COVID vaccination for the children, said, "The safety data for children is there for Pfizer. Some countries are going to vaccinate the children, but they are smaller countries. We cannot be lagging be-

hind for children protection."

"We do not have to let the third wave come in the way the second wave came in. We need to keep the positivity rate in districts less than 5 per cent and less than 1 per cent in the village," he said.

"As soon as the vaccination production ramps up, we will start vaccination on a priority basis. The schools are still closed in India," he added.

The Union Health Ministry had earlier cautioned about the third wave of Covid-19.

India reported 2,76,070 new Covid-19 cases and 3,874 deaths in the last 24 hours, according to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's data on Thursday. As many as 3,69,077 discharges have been made in the last 24 hours, which is more than the daily cases reported.

The cumulative caseload stands at 2,57,72,400, including 2,23,55,440 recoveries, 31,29,878 active cases and 2,87,122 deaths.

## Mamata Says Was Not Allowed To Speak in PM's Meeting On COVID Situation, Calls It Super-Flop



Press Trust of India

**KOLKATA:** Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday complained that state chief ministers were reduced to being puppets and not allowed to speak at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meeting on the COVID-19 situation with district magistrates and officials despite being invited.

Alleging that the Prime Ministers meeting was a "super flop", Banerjee said that she along with her counterparts from many states were not allowed to speak, which was akin to insulting them.

She also claimed that only CMs of the BJP-ruled states were allowed to speak at the meeting, while others were "reduced to puppets".

The Prime Ministers interaction was a planned event with district magistrates on the COVID-19 situation. However, several chief ministers, including those from Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Maharashtra, where these officers are posted, were also invited.

"This was a casual and super flop meeting. Only CMs of BJP-ruled states were allowed to speak and others were reduced to (being) puppets."

"We feel insulted and humiliated. This is an attempt to bulldoze the federal structure of the

country. PM Modi is so insecure that he did not listen to us," Banerjee told reporters at the state secretariat "Nabanna".

BJP leader Suwendu Adhikari counter-attacked his former mentor, tweeting today our respected CM has once again shown her total disinterest in administration. True to her style, she has politicised a meeting Honble PM held with district officials, where grassroots level practices to fight COVID-19 were being discussed.

Adhikari complained that while Banerjee had skipped several meetings with the PM, she now hijacks a PM-DM meet to say she was denied a chance to speak.

Banerjee however complained that the prime minister neither asked how West Bengal is handling the COVID situation and nor enquire about the situation stock of vaccines or oxygen.

"There was not a single question from the PM about the "black fungus", she said, adding that four such cases have been detected in the state.

Referring to the PM's claim that the COVID-19 caseload is reducing in the country, Banerjee asked, "If the total number of cases is declining, why are so many deaths due to the coronavirus infection being reported?"

### NEWS MAKERS

## No Money, No Documents, Rohingyas Battle Covid Symptoms With Home Remedies

Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** With no money for treatment and no documents that will enable them to get vaccinated or tested, they are the Rohingyas, the nowhere people fending for themselves as a continuing pandemic pushes them further into the shadows of a city they call home.

The helplessness in the face of COVID-19 plays out in southeast Delhi's Madanpur Khadar, one of the several camps in the city for Rohingya Muslims where the refugees battle it out on their own without access to testing centres, vaccines or doctors.

The government has eased testing and vaccine guidelines even for those who don't have the requisite documentation, but many refugees said it hasn't made a

tangible difference at the ground level.

The Madanpur Khadar camp is home to about 270 Rohingya Muslims, who fled their homes in Myanmar to escape persecution. Many of those living in the slum cluster said they have learnt to battle symptoms on their own - depending on home remedies such as saltwater gargles and withdrawing indoors into their cramped tenements to quarantine when they think it has gotten worse.

Among those showing symptoms is Amir, a young daily wageer who has been gargling with hot water four times a day to make his cough go away. It is helping somewhat but he doesn't know what he will do if the situation aggravates. He doesn't have an Aadhaar card or any other document, and neither do his neighbours.

"What can we do? We can't get tests done, we can't get vaccinated. For every-

thing you need government documents which we don't have," he said.

"There are around 20-25 people right now who are displaying Covid symptoms. We are treating ourselves at home. Going to the hospital is not even an option as we do not have the necessary documents," he said.

Last month, when the pandemic was at its peak, about 50-60 Rohingya refugees in the Madanpur Khadar camp displayed Covid symptoms. It has now come down to about 20-25, the residents said.

According to NGOs, around 40,000 Rohingyas are living in India. About 900 Rohingyas are living in Delhi in camps in Madanpur Khadar, Kalindi Kunj and Shaheen Bagh.

Naseer\* lost his wife six months ago. He thinks it was COVID-19 but can't be sure even though he somehow managed to take her to the hospital.

"My wife died after suffering from Covid like symptoms. I had taken my wife to the hospital but she passed away before she could get treated," he said, adding that an ID card issued to him by the UN helped him access a hospital. Many others are scared of doing so because they fear they will be deported if identified as refugees.

"People feel if they go to the hospital they will be identified as outsiders," said the father of two.

Naseer\*, who runs a small grocery shop in the neighbourhood, also said people get scared when they have symptoms.

"They quarantine themselves, drink hot water and add lime to it, eat onions. Many of them have breathing difficulties and fever and cold and cough. Many people don't even want to talk about it," he said.

While untreated COVID-19 poses a risk

not just for individuals but the community, it is not just about health for Rohingya Muslim refugees.

"Most of us work in the informal sector and have lost our jobs in this lockdown. The last one-and-a-half years have been tough. We have not been able to get employment and those who are working are also putting their lives at risk," Naseer\* said.

The majority of those in the Madanpur Khadar settlement and others work as daily wage and contract labourers, ragpickers and other odd jobs.

Both Naseer\* and Amir\* came to India in 2012 to look for a better life and to escape the brutalities faced by the Rohingyas in Myanmar's Rakhine state.

The Rohingyas Muslims are the most persecuted minority in the world, the UN has said.

According to NGOs, there are about

40,000 Rohingyas in India. Of these, about 900 live in Delhi in camps in Madanpur Khadar, Kalindi Kunj and Shaheen Bagh.

A representative of the Rohingya Human Rights Initiative said health facilities have always been a problem for the Rohingya refugees.

"Rohingyas are more exposed because of the congested areas they live in... it's not just about coronavirus but other diseases as well. Recently, several cases of diarrhoea were seen among children in the camp," he said.

"We have identified such cases where symptoms of coronavirus are being seen. But without the requisite documents, treatment has been an issue and getting them vaccinated is a very big concern," he said, asking not to be identified. He said no deaths due to the disease have been reported yet in Madanpur Khadar.