



05 STATE

SIX MINUTE WALK TEST, A RUDIMENTARY EXERCISE TO JUDGE IF ONE NEEDS MEDICAL HELP

Head of Medicine at Government Medical College & Hospital, Dr Vijay Kundal has said, the age old adage 'prevention is...

P7 THINK

WAIT FOR "BETTER" VACCINES?

It's been well documented that there's a significant level of vaccine hesitancy. This appears to be a particular issue among adults over 50 concerning the AstraZeneca vaccine, for which this group is now eligible...



03 CITY

SMC MAYOR SEEK'S REMOVAL OF JOINT COMMISSIONER PLANNING

In a letter to Commissioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) on Saturday, Mayor Srinagar city Junaid Azim Matto along with 61 Corporators...



Widom
Quote!

You can do
anything you set
your mind to.

—Benjamin Franklin

NEWS DIGEST

Soldier 'Strangles' Self At IAF Station

SRINAGAR: A soldier allegedly committed suicide by hanging himself at the Indian Air Force (IAF) station in Budgam district of central Kashmir. The soldier identified as Jai Singh from Kotli Kalan area of Haryana was found dead inside his room at the IAF station in the district in the early hours of Saturday, reports said. According to the reports, it is believed [More On P10](#)

KU Extends Admission Date Till May 31

SRINAGAR: The University of Kashmir on Saturday decided to extend the last date for admission to various under-graduate courses till May 31. According to officials, the KU has extended the last date for admission to 1st-2nd Semester Choice Based Credit System Scheme for BA/ B.Sc/ B.SCH/ B.Com/ BCA / BBA/ B.M.M.M.C/ OCMIL (General/ Honors) programme at Under-Graduate level (in respective colleges) upto and including [More On P10](#)

Teen Dies Of Heart Attack In Tral

SRINAGAR: A teenager died after suffering a massive heart attack in Tral area of south Kashmir's Pulwama district, reports said Saturday. 18-year-old Azhar Manzoor Mir suffered a massive heart attack during the intervening night of May 21-22 at his home in Lariyar village of Tral, reports said. The teenager was shifted by his family to the nearby hospital. However, the doctors there declared him brought dead.

Arms Found During CASO In Poonch

SRINAGAR: The state forces on Saturday recovered arms and ammunitions during a search operation in Qasba area along Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch district in Jammu division. Special operations group (SOG) of police and army launched a joint search operation in Qasba area along the LoC on Saturday afternoon, reports said. During the combing operation, the joint team busted a militant hideout and recovered one AK-56 rifle, one AK 56 Magazine with [More On P10](#)

Electric Shock Kills Man, Injures Another

SRINAGAR: A man was killed and another injured on Saturday in an incident of electrocution in Budgam district of central Kashmir. Farooq Ahmed of Zanigam and Ghulam Mohammad Najaf of Katiruna were critically injured after receiving electric shock at a joinery mill in Sonpah village of the district on Saturday morning, reports said. The injured duo, reports said, were removed by the villagers to the Sub-District Hospital [More On P10](#)

'Corona Curfew' Extended Till May 31 In J&K



People wait for their turn to receive vaccine jabs at Srinagar's SHMS hospital on Saturday. KO Photo, Abid Bhat

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir administration on

Saturday extended till May 31 the curfew imposed across the union territory to curb the spread of coronavirus.

The restrictions were scheduled to end on May 24. "Corona Curfew imposed in all 20 distts [More On P10](#)

48 More Deaths, 3408 New Cases In 24 Hours

Jammu and Kashmir reported on Saturday 48 more deaths due to coronavirus while 3,408 fresh cases of virus were also detected across the Union territory during the last 24 hours, raising the tally to 2, 67,313 since the outbreak of pandemic last year. The officials said that 30 more people succumbed to virus in Jammu division while 18 people also died at the various healthcare facilities in Kashmir Valley, taking the overall fatality count to 3513. Of the fresh cases, 1,251 were reported from the Jammu division and 2,157 from the Kashmir division, they said. Providing district wise details, the officials said that Srinagar reported 509, Baramulla 237, [More On P10](#)

214 Detained On 24th Day Of Lockdown

The police on Saturday detained at least 214 more people for breaching government imposed lockdown to combat the spread of coronavirus across Jammu and Kashmir. According to a police spokesperson, 214 people have been arrested, 102 FIRs registered and a fine of Rs1, 45,360 has been recovered from 941 people for violating the guidelines throughout Kashmir valley. Besides, a vehicle was seized and [More On P10](#)

Corona Under Control In J&K: WHO Officer Says Preventive Measures First Weapon To Stop Covid Spread

As coronavirus cases in Jammu and Kashmir have shown a sign of decline over a few days, a surveillance officer with the World Health Organization (WHO) on Saturday expressed optimism over the recovery rate of positive cases and the less fatality rate in the Union Territory and Kashmir compared to rest of the states. "This is the main [More On P10](#)

Sajjad Haider Quits As KEG President

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Sajjad Haider, Editor-in-Chief Kashmir Observer on Saturday announced his decision to resign from the post of President Kashmir Editors Guild (KEG).

Haider, while announcing his decision on his twitter handle said he has forwarded his resignation letter to KEG Secretary General.

Haider was elected President of KEG in September last year taking over from Fayaz Ahmad Kaloo, Editor-in-Chief Greater Kashmir, whose term had ended earlier.

"In the plagued fall of 2020, I was handed [More On P10](#)

'Turn Vaccination Into Mass Movement In Kashmir'

Agenceis

NEW DELHI: Union Minister Jitendra Singh on Saturday appealed to people to turn the COVID-19 vaccination drive into a mass movement in Kashmir and said everybody, rising above political and ideological differences, should come together to fight the pandemic. In an interaction with political leaders and public activists from Kashmir, he said a successful vaccination campaign in the Valley will send a positive message across the country.

Elected representatives, social activists, religious heads and senior leaders can play a



vital role in turning the vaccination drive launched by the Modi government against Covid into a mass movement, Singh, who is the minister of state for personnel, said.

"Rising above [More On P10](#)

Heart Patients Susceptible To Covid-19: Expert

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A senior cardiologist said on Saturday that the patients with heart problems and uncontrolled blood pressure are susceptible to infection and conversely Covid patients also develop heart problems.

"Heart disease is very common among severe Covid patients," said Dr Irfan Ahmad Bhat, Consultant Cardiologist Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar, while speaking about the impact of coronavirus infection on heart health.

He said patients with heart problems and uncontrolled blood pressure are susceptible

to infection and conversely Covid patients also develop heart problems.

The senior cardiologist also said that Covid patient having history of any heart problem like heart attack, cardiac stent or any other chronic heart problem shall continue to take their prescribed medicine at optimal time.

He also said that no change in medicine shall be made during Covid infection and advised heart patients to remain in touch with their personal and concerned doctors for suggestions in this regard.

He also asked Covid patients having heart issues not to pay heed to rumours [More On P10](#)

KISHTWAR CONSPIRACY CASE

NIA Charges 3 Hizb Men

JAMMU: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Saturday filed a charge sheet against three Hizbul Mujahideen militants in a 2019 case related to a conspiracy to revive militancy in Kishtwar district of Jammu and Kashmir, an official said.

The charge sheet against Jaffer Hussain of Hunjalla and Taraq Hussain Giri of Pochhal in Kishtwar and Tanveer Ahmad Malik of Tantna in Doda district was filed before a special court in Jammu, a spokesperson of the NIA said. [More On P10](#)

Heroics Tackling Hardships In Kashmir's Third Lockdown Year

Sameer Dar

Rashida Amin's unruffled morning rides are coming as a big relief to destitute class in Kashmir's third straight year of paralytic phase.

The woman in mid-twenties has adopted many households battling poverty in pandemic.

With public-donor support, she's currently saving situations from going south in many Kashmiri deprived families.

Rashida's silent service is coming at a time when Kashmir is facing third consecutive year of lockdown creating a distressing wave of destitution around,

especially for daily-wagers.

In absence of a substantial official relief package—as lately demanded by the battered business body of Kashmir—many welfare managers have come on the scene for the crisis management.

"Beyond what we get to hear on social media, situation is terrible on the ground," Rashid said.

"There's this old mother who lives alone in a shanty in Srinagar. She has no support left. And then there's this family of four sisters living without any earning hand. This third-year of lockdown has hit the poor families like anything."

Kashmir's 3-week lockdown



in 2021 has already incurred economic losses worth Rs 6000 Crore, says Ejaz Ayoub, a budding economist from Kashmir.

"Government bailout is Rs 55 Cr as tabulated," he adds. "This means Jammu and Kashmir is losing Rs 260 Cr every day in lockdown."

This official response, experts fear, will undo the last thirty years of economic resilience of the valley.

"At the end of the day it's more about human lives and livelihood," says Ather Khan, an economic scholar from Srinagar. "It's one thing to live and make uneasy peace with these lockdowns as part of the plagued routine, but entirely other matter to live its long-term consequences."

Seconding Ather, Rashida says that it took Kashmir years to fight and come out of the clamp-down routine of nineties.

"Take, for instance, the case of

orphans," she continues.

"We're yet to address that concern. In the name of management, we evaded our collective responsibility and diverted that crisis to orphanages than to develop a foster system and address that nascent situation in the bud itself."

Back in the day when the destitution reared its ugly head in the valley, Ghulam Mustafa of J&K Yateem Trust became one of the crisis-managers.

The 1972-established orphanage became a strife shelter overnight and gave succor to several families in Kashmir during nineties.

"We have been reliant completely on public donations to run our organization since then," says Ghulam Mustafa, the orphanage administrator.

"And years later, with the help of that community support, we've diversified our destitution plans."

The orphanage runs a program called "Wedding Assistance" in which they help orphans and destitute girls with a wedding kit comprising of ladies suits, footwear and cosmetics products worth Rs. 15,000.

In the times like these, the orphanage counts on its special programs like "Feeding the Needy".

Apart from [More On P10](#)



Dr. Khawar Khan
Achakzai

Registrar Internal Medicine,
GMC and associated hospitals

WHEN TO SUSPECT BLACK FUNGUS:

When you are a diabetic with poor control or have received immunosuppressants (eg. steroids) recently and develop any one of the following:

Unilateral, retro-orbital headache.

Facial pain

Facial numbness

Fever

Hyposmia (decreased smell)

Nasal congestion which progresses to black discharge

Swelling of eye (orbit)

Discolouration of skin of facial area

Double vision

Mucormycosis is one hell of a disease to treat. Even after a costly course (in terms of money and disability) it can lead to loss of vital functions like eye sight.

All this can be prevented by judicious use of corticosteroids and immaculate control of blood sugars, both requiring just a little more effort and patience by the Doctor and the patient.



Dr Aiyaz Akbar
Khawaja

Cardiac Intensivist,
Dammam, Saudi Arabia

It has been often seen healthcare workers wearing masks the wrong way. We should never use a surgical mask under N95. It should be used above N95 to prevent it from getting contaminated.

Actually they dont get any training prior to use of PPE which is the job of infectious control deptt, which perhaps doesn't exist in Kashmir.



Dr. Vandana Goel

New Recommendations of
NEGVAC accepted by Union
Ministry of Health

As per new recommendations of NEGVAC, COVID19 vaccination to be deferred by 3 months after recovery from the illness

If infected with COVID after 1st dose, 2nd dose to be deferred by 3 months after clinical recovery from COVID-19 illness

COVID-19 vaccination recommended for all Lactating Women

No Screening of vaccine recipients by Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) prior to COVID19 vaccination



To place an advertisement

CALL +91-194 2502327

Monday - Saturday (9am - 6pm)

No 5- Dal Lake Boulevard Srinagar, 190001, Kashmir

**KASHMIR
OBSERVER**

Sunday| 23-05-2021

Scholarships This Week

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

Scholarship Name 1: IIT Gandhinagar Early-Career Fellowship 2021
Description: Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar invites applications for IIT Gandhinagar Early-Career Fellowship 2021 from Doctoral degree holders. The Early-Career Fellowship Programme demands an outstanding academic track record with limited opportunities for the year 2021.
Eligibility: The fellowship is open for candidates who hold a doctoral degree. They must have submitted their doctoral thesis or are expected to submit the thesis in the next two to three months.

Prizes & Rewards: Fellowship 1,00,000 per month (INR 90,000 plus INR 10,000 HRA)
Last Date to Apply: 07-06-2021
Application mode: Via email only
Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/ECF2

Scholarship Name 2: Credit Suisse Scholarship Program 2021-22
Description: Buddy4Study invites applications from students enrolled in Engineering/MBA courses in selected institutions.



The scholarship aims to provide the necessary financial support which can help qualified candidates bridge the gap between the cost of the academic fees and their ability to pay.

Eligibility: Applicants must be enrolled in Engineering/MBA programs at one of the designated institutions (List available in the scholarship detail page).

They must have passed Class 12 or Graduation and scored at least 60% marks or above

Demonstrate significant financial need, defined as family income less than or equal to INR 5,00,000 per annum (subject to verification by Buddy4Study).

Prizes & Rewards: For MBA: Up to 80% of total academic fees or up to INR 200,000. For Engineering: Up to 80% of total academic fees or up to INR 100,000.
Last Date to Apply: 15-06-2021
Application mode: Online applications only
Short Url: www.b4s.in/

observer/CSE1

Scholarship Name 3: SERB National Post Doctoral Fellowship (N-PDF) 2021

Description: The Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) invites applications for the SERB National Post Doctoral Fellowship (N-PDF) 2021 from post-doctoral applicants. The fellowship is aimed to identify motivated young researchers and provide them with support for doing research in frontier areas of science and engineering.

Eligibility: The fellowship is open for Indian citizens who are below 35 years of age. They must have obtained a PhD/MD/MS degree from a recognized University.

Prizes & Rewards: Monthly stipend up to INR 55,000 and other benefits
Last Date to Apply: 02-06-2021
Application mode: Online applications only
Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/NPDF8

Deptt.of (AYUSH) District Anantnag. AYUSH

Immune Booster Medicine Distributed at village Anantnag from ISM Dispy. A.K.Pora Anantnag

On the directions of Director Indian Systems of Medicine (AYUSH) J&K & ADMO ISM Anantnag. FREE AYUSH Immune Booster Medicines were distributed at Village Hakura Anantnag & Door to Door and also importance of COVID SoPs and vaccination was explained in detail From Govt. ISM Dispensary A.K.Pora Anantnag.

mja



OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER FEROPORA BASIN IRRIGATION DIVISION FBI DIVISION TANGMARG.

Office Phone No.01954-254611

Email Address: fbdivisiontangmarg@gmail.com

E-TENDER NOTICE No.11 of 2021-22 FBI Division Tangmarg

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor UT of J&K e-tenders (Two cover System) on Item Rate Basis including the main tenance cost for a period of Three Years which includes 12 months of DL Pare invited from Reputed and resourceful contractors/ Firms/Companies/Joint Ventures of repute in PWD or Equivalent in CPWD/ Railways and other state Governments for the following works, which should be uploaded on the Procurement webportalhttp://jktenders.gov.in for the subjected work(s) referred below to be received by the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti FBI Division Tangmarg and as per the details mention dinghies-tender notification and to who mall the terms and condition so detailed-NIT/Tender Documents/ PWD Form No:- 25 double are accepted. The detailed tender document and Specifications etc. can be downloaded on the e-procurement portal http://jktenders.gov.in. The cost of tender documents (Non-refundable/Non-Transferable) should be in the shape of e-Challan or Treasury Challan/ Receipt in favour Executive Engineer Jal Shakti FBI Division Tangmarg .

S. No	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (in lacs)	Cost of TD (in)	Time of completion	Class of Contra ct
1.	Providing Laying fitting of pipe for improvements of water supply to unconnected areas and construction of one no. sluice chamber at service reservoir and revamping of 0.26 lacs gallian capacity SSF plant to various villages of water supply schemes Ganiwani Muchkhud under JJM Retrofitting	64.15 lacs	1600	30 days	AAY
2.	Providing Laying fitting of pipe for improvements of water supply to unconnected areas and construction of one no. collection of intake chamber and construction of spring protection works of to various villages of water supply schemes Baderkoot Damar under JJM Retrofitting	55.70 lacs	1600	30 days	AAY
3	Providing Laying fitting of pipeand construction of chain link fencing around structure and construction of 1 no. sluice chamber at service reservoir and providing iron grill fencing on top and sluice and filtration plant for Water Supply scheme Dara Kasi FHTC to various villages under JJM Retrofitting	53.50 lacs	1600	30 days	AAY

1.	Publishing date:	20-05-2021	05:00 PM
2.	Download date start:	20-05-2021	06:00 PM
3.	Bid Submission date start:	21-05-2021	10:00 AM
4.	Bid Submission date Ends:	31-05-2021	04:00 PM
5.	Bid opening date (Technical Cover)	01-06-2021	11:00 AM

Position of AAA. Accorded vide No.SE/Hyd/Spr of 03/2020-21, under endorsement No.SE/Hyd/Spr/DB/9759-61, Dated:-10-03-2021. (WSS Buderkote Damar) AAA. Accorded No:-SE/Hyd/Spr/01/DB/2020-21 of 10/03/2021. Issued under endorsement No.SE/Hyd/sopore/DB/9762-64, Dated:-10/03/2021. (WSS Darakasi) AAA. Accorded No:-SE/Hyd/sopore/DB/9765-67. Dated:- 10/03/2021. (WSS Ganiwani Mauchkhud) Position of Funds:- (Assured) Major Head of Account: Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) Status of Technical Sanction:- Accorde Status of Technical Sanction:- Accorde

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

1. Bids must be accompanied with cost of tender document non-refundable /non-transferable) to be deposited under M.H.0702 Rev Misc in the shape of Treasury challan /e-challan (mentioning therein NIT No. S.No of work and Adv. Cost of work) to be pledged in favour of the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti FBI Division Tangmarg and date on it must be prior to date of issuance of this tender notice, and Bid security declaration form duly Notarized/ self-attested instead of bid scarcity (EMD) as per finance department J&K Civil Secretariat. Jammu/ Srinagar circular issued vide No.A/ Misc(2018-111-995/). However, in case of compelling circumstances the same shall be obtained from the success for bidder by this department.
2. The tenderer should in his own interest inspect and examine the site. Its surroundings/topography, nature of ground, climatic conditions, accessibility or other relevant information to his own expenses and responsibility to satisfy himself before tendering for the advertised work. The bidder will have to execute each part of the work. i.e. Civil / Electro-Mechanical Contractor under the close supervision of the respective Engineer-in-Charge of Civil & Mechanical wings In-charge of the Scheme. If the contractor fails to start the work within 15 days of the issuance of the tender notification, whichever is earlier, the department shall allot the work to the other willing Lowest bidder like L2, L3, L4 and EMD Additional Security Performance (IF ANY under compelling circumstances) of the lowest bidder shall be forfeited, besides debarring the Contractor for a period of two years for participating in the e-Nit's issued by the kmr. PHE Department Srinagar.

CRITERIA FOR PARTICIPATION OF TENDERS:-

TECHNICAL
I. The contractor should possess the experience having successfully completed ed works during last five years ending 31/03/2020 which should be any one of the similar nature works:-
a. Similar works for:-
i. Civil Contractor means works like Rapid Sand filtration Plant or Slow Sand Filtration Plant, Cloriflocat or, PST, OHT or the RCC Service Reservoir or Overhead Tanks , Laying & fitting of Pipes & for
ii. Electro-Mechanical Contractors means works like:- Providing, fixing, testing and Commissioning of Electro-mechanical pumping equipment including Rising main. The completed work means successfully completed work in last five years ending on 31.03.2020.
iii. In case the bidder does not meet the requirements singly, he can adopt the option of joint venture or consortium as described in the tender document under JV clause.
a. One similar completed work costing not less than 80% of advertised cost during the last five years. Or
b. Two similar completed works costing not less than 50% of advertised cost each during the last five years. Or
c. Three similar completed works costing not less than the 40% of advertised cost during the last five years.

FINANCIAL CRITERIA:-

I. General Construction Experience: Annual Turnover : The applicants should have achieved minimum annual value of general construction work (as certified by Chartered Accountant and at least 50 (fifty) percent of which is from Engineering (Civil/Electrical/ Mechanical as relevant to the work being procured construction works) carried out in any of the year over a stated period (normally) five to seven years ending 31st March of previous year), calculated by applying an appropriate multiplier to the projected annual construction expenditure on the subject contract. The multiplier of 1.75 may be used.
Joint Ventures
Technical Criteria
i) Any member or members of Joint Ventures should have a satisfactory completed ed at least one work of similar nature working costing not less than 80% of advertised cost during the last 7 years ending on 31.03.2020.
ii) Two similar completed works costing not less than 50% of advertised cost each during the last five years.
iii) Three similar completed works costing not less than 40% of advertised cost during the last five years.
iv) Any member or members of the joint venture must have experience as required as per Para 2.1.
Financial Criteria
General Construction Experience: Annual Turnover : The applicants should have achieved minimum annual value of general construction work (as certified by Chartered Accountant and at least 50 (fifty) percent of which is from Engineering (Civil/Electrical/ Mechanical as relevant to the work being procured construction works) carried out in any of the year over a stated period (normally) five to seven years ending 31st March of previous year), calculated by applying an appropriate multiplier to the projected annual construction expenditure on the subject contract. The multiplier of 1.75 may be used.
All the members of joint ventures shall be jointly & severally responsible for all the acts done on behalf of joint venture & tender bids shall be jointly signed by the all members of the joint venture or the authorized representatives as to legally bind them jointly & severally. All tenders must be submitted with a copy of Joint Venture agreement duly registered by the Registrars/Sub Registrar/First Class Judicial Magistrate, whichever is applicable.
All above criteria must be satisfied by the joint venture to qualify for opening of their bid. There should not be any unsatisfactory report of the contractor from any source. For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor UT of Jammu & Kashmir

Sd/-

No:- FBID/CC/978-98

Dated:- 20-05-2021

DIPK-1877/21

Executive Engineer, (JSD) FBI Division Tangmarg

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-10/2021-22/LSD/SRINAGAR/JAMMU

DATED:- 21/05/2021

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 TD (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/beautification of park near masjid Usman at NSC 90 feet road by way of grill work, turfing and other allied works.	Rs.3.829 Lacs	Rs. 200/-	Bid Declaration Certificate	20 Days	31.05.2021 at 11.00AM	"DEE"	MH 3054 M&R (Srinagar)
2	Beautification/ Face liftings by way of repairs to grill work, turfing, construction ramp/gate, pointing on stone work and raising of existing grill fencing at various parks at charisharief (Park A , Park C, Satellite park and hilly pad park).	Rs.12.00 Lacs	Rs. 600/-	Bid Declaration Certificate	35 Days	31.05.2021 at 11.00AM	"BEE"" CEE & DEE"	MH 3054 M&R (Srinagar)
3	Face lifting by way of painting to grill work/meeting hall including allied works at S.K Mausoleum Hazratbal	Rs.1.893 Lacs	Rs. 200/-	Bid Declaration Certificate	10 Days	31.05.2021 at 11.00AM	"DEE"	MH 3054 M&R (Srinagar)
4	Face lifting of Sheikh hamza park (Makhdoom Sahib) by way of earth filling, providing/fixing of devri stones, restoration of irrigation and electric works.	Rs.2.677 Lacs	Rs. 200/-	Bid Declaration Certificate	15 Days	31.05.2021 at 11.00AM	"DEE"	MH 3054 M&R (Srinagar)
5.	Raising of central verge from Gole market to SMHS chowk (balance portion)	Rs.4.871 Lacs	Rs. 200/-	Bid Declaration Certificate	25 Days	31.05.2021 at 11.00AM	"DEE"	MH 3054 M&R (Srinagar)
6.	Repairs, facelifting/beautification of Nallahmar road central verge from Khanayar to Noor Bagh by way of washing, cleaning incld. removing of dust, oil etc. and painting of tree guards	Rs.4.00 Lacs	Rs. 200/-	Bid Declaration Certificate	25Days	31.05.2021 at 11.00AM	"DEE"	MH 3054 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 as per schedule of date given below:-

1.	Date of issue of Tender Notice	21.05.2021
2.	Period of downloading of bidding documents	21.05.2021 04.00 PM
3.	Bid submission Start Date	21.05.2021 from 04.00 PM
4.	Bid Submission End Date	31.05.2021 up to 10.30 AM
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 (LI) only within seven days after Financial evaluation.
6.	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	31.05.2021 at 11.00AM in the office of the Executive Engineer R&B Landscaping Division, Rajbagh, Srinagar

1. 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.
2. 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).
3. The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the office of Executive Engineer R&B Landscaping Division, Rajbagh, Srinagar (Tender receiving authority)
4. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of bids.
5. 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.
6. Failure of successful bidder to execute the agreement within 28 days after fixation of contract.
7. 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.
8. Additional performance security required as per NIT conditions shall be released after virtual completion of the work.
9. Earnest money in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG shall be released after DLP is over successfully.
10. Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.
8.1 Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website www.jktenders.gov.in to acquaint bid submission process.
8.2 To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get "Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)" as per Information Technology Act-2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved vendor.
8.3 The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital Signature. No financial bid will be accepted in physical form.
8.4 Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned in Para-1.
8.5 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.
10. The department will not be responsible for delay in online submission due to any reasons.
11. Scanned copy of cost of tender document in shape of e-challan or Treasury challan/receipt and Earnest Money/Bid Security 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 (LI) only within seven days after financial evaluation.
12. Bidders are advised not to make any change in BOQ (Bill of Quantities) contents. In no case they should attempt to create similar BOQ manually. The BOQ downloaded should be used for filling the item rate inclusive of all taxes and it should be saved with the same name as it contains.
13. 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.
14. Bidders are advised to use "My Documents" area in their user on R&B e-Tendering portal to store such documents as are required.
15. Instruction to Bidder (ITB)
16.1 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.
16.2 Valid PAN Card.,
No:- LD/ 624-32
Dated:- 21-05-2021.

DIPK-1891/21

Executive Engineer
R&B Landscaping Division,
Rajbagh, Srinagar

Ehsaas, VMS In Collaboration With SMC To Start Wellness Centre In Srinaga

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) is all set to start the COVID wellness centres in collaboration with two Non-Government Organisations (NGOs)—Ehsaas Trust International and Voluntary Medicare Society (VMS).

Sources privy to the development told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) three COVID wellness centres are coming up in Baba Demb, Bemina and at one more place in Srinagar.

The wellness centre at Baba Demb will be started till Monday, they said, adding that the centre will have 50 oxygen beds where only referrals from JLN will be accepted. The wellness centre will function as an adjacent facility for JLN hospital in Rainawari, they said.

Lateef Gabroo, member of the VMS, who also

helps people at individual level, said that three such centres will come up in Srinagar while one among them will be started from Monday at Baba Demb.

He said that Ehsaas Trust International has volunteered and agreed to provide assistance in terms of oxygen concentrators, oxygen cylinders along with paramedic professionals and doctors who will be available round-the-clock in service of Covid patients.

Gabroo added that the Voluntary Medicare Society (VMS), although working in the disability sector, has committed itself to provide relief in terms of ambulatory services including wheelchairs, stretchers and others besides volunteers including paramedics.

He informed that only moderate cases from JLN will be accommodated at Baba Demb wellness centre—(KNO)

Attendants Fight Over Oxygen Cylinder Distribution At SMHS

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Scuffle broke out between the attendants at Shri Maharaja Hari Singh (SMHS) hospital on Saturday when they were distributing the oxygen cylinders themselves in the absence of proper arrangements by the authorities.

Officials said that no security arrangements have been put in place for the distribution of oxygen cylinders among the attendants for their patients.

A video has gone viral on social media, in which the attendants could be seen fighting over the distribution of the oxygen cylinders.

Medical Superintendent SMHS Dr. Kanwaljeet Singh in a state-

ment said that some attendants attempted to snatch oxygen cylinders by illegally stopping the vehicle carrying bulk cylinders even before it had reached the store of the hospital.

“Other than Oxygen supply from the hospital Oxygen Generation plants, additional oxygen supply (wherever required) is made through bulk O2 cylinders to the patients as per prescription of the Doctor concerned. The Hospital also maintains buffer stock to meet any emergencies. SMHS Hospital administration has taken cognisance of the attempt at hoarding by some attendants. A police complaint has also been lodged in the matter,” he said.

LAWDA Demolishes Illegal Constructions In Its Jurisdiction



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Enforcement Wing of Lakes and Waterways Development Authority (LAWDA) Saturday demolished various illegal structures in LDA jurisdiction of Srinagar city.

During the drive, the Enforcement Wing demolished tin sheds at Babademb, single storied under construction house at Tang Bagh Nowpora, illegal encroachment in Pohlloo Brein, a newly raised hut in Dal area, and certain other reported encroachments/constructions alongside NFR Foreshore Road.

Meanwhile, the violators have been warned not to go for any illegal encroachment/construc-

tions in the garb of Covid-19 lockdown as the Enforcement wing shall continue its demolition drives within LDA jurisdiction and the illegally raised constructions shall be razed to ground.

Moreover, all the public residing within the LDA jurisdiction & in-lake are hereby once again directed not to go for any sort of illegal constructions/ encroachments.

Furthermore, all the Tipper/Load carried owners are directed not to carry/ ferry any construction material in the prohibited area of Dal/ Nigeen Lake without getting permission and in case anybody is found indulging in such activity the same shall be dealt as per law.

Army Personnel Commits Suicide In Srinagar

Srinagar CNS, May 22, : An army soldier has allegedly committed suicide by hanging himself to death in Srinagar-summer capital of J&K.

Sources told CNS that a soldier was seen hanging inside Air Force Station in Srinagar. The body was shifted for post mortem.

However the deceased soldier has been identified as Jai Singh son of Sher Singh hailing from Kotli Kalan area of Haryana.

Meanwhile police in this regard have registered a case and initiated proceedings and further details are awaited. (CNS)

SMC Mayor Seek's Removal Of Joint Commissioner Planning

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In a letter to Commissioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) on Saturday, Mayor Srinagar city Junaid Azim Matto along with 61 Corporators sought removal of Joint Commissioner (Planning) Ghulam Hassan Mir and his repatriation to Housing and Urban Development Department (HUDD) after Commissioner of the corporation formed a committee headed by the Joint Commissioner plan-

ning for illegal encroachments and unauthorised constructions in the city.

“The letter enclosed by a representation signed by 61 Corporators of SMC-constituting 3/4th majority, has sought enacting of Section 46 (2) and 50 (b) of J&K Municipal Corporation Act 2000, which deal with appointment of Joint Commissioners and functions of the commissioner respectively,” reads the letter.

“The approval of the Corporation for the appointment of Ghulam

Hassan Mir, Joint Commissioner (Planning) is hereby rejected by the Corporation under section 46 (2) of the J&K Municipal Corporation Act 2000” reads the letter,” the letter reads.

It further reads, “The Corporation has sought appointment of a new Joint Commissioner Planning and requested Commissioner SMC to immediately relieve the Ghulam Hassan of his charge as Joint Commissioner and forward this letter to Principal Secretary

HUDD for repatriation of the said officer in his parent department and the posting of new a new joint Commissioner (planning) to SMC.”

Considering the legality of the issue, the officer shouldn’t dispense any official duties, nor sign any official documents in the meantime till the Housing and Urban Development Department (HUDD) takes cognisance of the enactment of these statutory provisions, the letter added.

Srinagar Youth Completes 950 KMs Marathon Run In Seven Days

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Setting a new record, a 25-year-old, Uzair Fayaz Khan of Nowhatta Srinagar completed 940 kilometres long distance between Srinagar to Delhi on foot in a recorded 7 days time.

Khan, a student, pursuing B.A in Psychology at Amar Singh College had always been interested in running and taking part in marathons, since his school days.

Before taking this challenge of running from Srinagar to Delhi, Khan claimed to have undergone rigorous 7 months long training under the supervision of his coach Mushtaq Ahmad Bhat. He said that the motive of the run was to create anti-drug addiction awareness among youth.

Khan started his journey from Bakhshi Stadium Srinagar after being flagged off by DySP Traffic City Srinagar, GH. Hassan on April-2 and finished it at Raighat Delhi on April-8, 2021, where he was received by CRPF personnel, presenting him a bouquet.

He said that he has also participated in marathon runs from Srinagar to Sonamarg, Gulmarg and Pahalgam earlier.



He said that the run to Delhi was not an easy task as he faced many challenges including, climatic conditions, foot injuries and other difficulties on the way, but he kept on taking steps without any regrets or remorse to reach his goal.

Khan said that though he got little support from some quarters, most of the expenses he had to bear from his own pocket during this marathon.

After making a record, Khan applied for registration for International Book of Records, Indian Book of Records and Works Records India for what he has to pay a sum of Rs. 22K, which he can’t afford at this time for not having better financial

conditions at home.

‘I wish both the Government as well as private agencies support me so that I could take on new challenges and register for the Guinness Book of World Records also,’ said Khan.

He said that through this run he wanted to give a strong message to all those youth involved in drugs that ‘nothing is impossible’.

‘It is disheartening to see our youth falling prey to drug menace. I was carrying a small banner all along to create awareness on drug abuse. I wish our youth who have become addicts quit the wrong practice and get a new hope of living a better life again,’ added Khan.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR, SHER-I-KASHMIR INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES, SOURA OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, MECHANICAL II-EXTENSION NOTICE

Due to poor response the revised dates for e-NIT NO. 06 OF 2021-22 Dated.05.05.2021 for the work “Replacement/up-gradation of central Vacuum system of Main Hospital manifold and Medical gas system SKIMS, Soura.” are extended as under;

Last date of uploading:- upto 22.05.2021 (2.00 PM)
Last date of receipt of hard copies:- 24.05.2021 (4.00 PM)
Date of opening Cover-Ist:- 25.05.2021 (11.30 A.M. or next convenient date)
Date of opening Cover-2nd:- Shall be intimated separately.

No:-SIMS 139 EXN/Mech/546/20-390-95
Dated:- 19/05/2021.

Executive Engineer
Mechanical, SKIMS

Office of the Executive Engineer, Mechanical Division, J&K Lakes & Waterways Development Authority, Dockyard Complex Ishber Nishat Northern Foreshore Road Srinagar – 191121

Tel: 01942462881 email:xenmechlda@gmail.com website : www.jklda.org

Gist of Notice Inviting e-tender

NIT No: MD/LDA/TS /2021-22/09/e-tendering Dated:- 20.05.2021

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, UT of J&K, e-tenders in two (02) cover system are invited on Item rate basis from the Original Equipment Manufacturers or their Authorized Dealers with service center / Registered Mechanical contractors/ Mechanical workshop holders for the following work:-

Name of Work	Estimated Cost(In lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In rupees)	Validity (in months)	Position of funds
1 Annual Maintenance Contract/repairs including the scheduled servicing for two no. Crawl Cat Dredger (Pamposh and Hazratbal)	2 36.00	3 2000	4 12	5 Available

Administrative Approval : Accorded
Technical Sanction : Accorded

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

1.	Date of issue of Tender Notice	20.05.2021
2.	Period of downloading of the bidding document	From 21.05.2021 (1100 HRS) to 09.06.2021 (1600 HRS)
3.	Date, Time, and place of pre-bid meeting	27.05.2021 at 12.00 noon in the office of Executive Engineer, Mechanical Division, LDA, Dockyard Complex, Nishat Sgr.
4.	Bid Submission Start Date	From 28.05.2021 (10.00 HRS)
5.	Bid Submission End Date	09.06.2021 (1800 HRS)
6.	Cost of Bidding Document	Rs 2000/-
7.	Date and time for opening of the Technical Bids	10.06.2021 at 1400 HRS in the office of Executive Engineer, Mechanical Division, LDA, Dockyard Complex, Nishat Sgr.
8.	Date & Time of opening of the Financial Bids (online)	To be notified after technical bid evaluation is completed

DIPK-NB-860/21

No:-MD/LDA/ 558 - 68

Dated: 20.05.2020

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
Mechanical Division, J&K LDA, Sgr

DIAL-EMMA

- TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266686
- PCR: 0194-2452092,2455883
- PDD: 0194-2450213
- FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488,245222,2452155
- CAPD: 18001807011
- SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081
- Ambulance: Kashmir EMS Service: +91 94841 00200



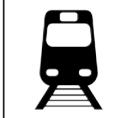
AIRPORTS

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 - (Open)
Srinagar- Leh- (Open)



HIJRI
CALENDAR
11 Shawal
1442

PRAYERS

FAJR 3: 46
ZUHR 12:27
ASR 5:24
Magrib 7:34
ISHA 9:10

This Day In History

- 334 BC - The Macedonian army of Alexander the Great defeats Darius III of Persia in the Battle of the Granicus
- 1659 - France, England & Netherlands sign "Hedges Concerto" treaty
- 1746 - Russia and Austria sign treaty of cooperation
- 1762 - Sweden and Prussia sign the Treaty of Hamburg, reaffirming the status quo that existed before the Seven Years War
- 1799 - Napoleon makes statement in support of re-establishing Jerusalem for Jews
- 1892 - Dr Washington Sheffield invents the toothpaste tube
- 1902 - US President Theodore Roosevelt signs a treaty with Mexico under which both countries agree to submit a long-standing dispute over interest payments to the Court of Arbitration at The Hague
- 1926 - Chiang Kai-shek replaces communists in Guomindang China
- 1939 - Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini sign "Pact of Steel" in Berlin, Germany
- 1941 - British troops attack Baghdad
- 1942 - Mexico declares war on Nazi-Germany & Japan
- 1947 - "Truman Doctrine" goes into effect, aiding Turkey and Greece
- 1947 - 1st US ballistic missile fired
- 1957 - South Africa's government approves race separation in universities
- 1967 - Egyptian president Nassar closes Straits of Tiran to Israel
- 1970 - France performs nuclear test at Mururoa atoll
- 1972 - Ceylon becomes Republic of Sri Lanka as its constitution is ratified
- 1973 - President Nixon confesses his role in Watergate cover-up
- 1976 - NASA launches space vehicle S-179
- 1979 - Canadians elect conservatives, Joseph Clark replaces Pierre Trudeau as the 16th Prime Minister of Canada
- 1981 - Soyuz 40 returns to Earth
- 1990 - Microsoft releases Windows 3.0
- 1990 - North & South Yemen merge to form Republic of Yemen
- 2004 - Manmohan Singh becomes the 13th Prime Minister of India.
- 2006 - Results from the Montenegrin independence referendum, 2006 are announced. 55.4% of voters vote to become independent from the Serbia and Montenegro Union.
- 2012 - 14 people die and 30 are injured in train collision in India
- Daniel Johns
- 2015 - Ireland becomes 1st country in the world to legalise same-sex marriage by popular vote
- 2015 -- Pakistan begin the first test-playing nation cricket tour of Zimbabwe since 2009

From KO Archives

Militant Escape Case

Police hunting for ex-MLA

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR - A National Conference leader and former legislator allegedly involved in facilitating a militant commander in crossing the international border to Pakistan, is absconding. The police have conducted raids at several places to seek the ex-MLA. Gul Rafiqi, who represented the Hom-Shalibug constituency, but have failed to trace him.

The raids were conducted at Rafiqi's residence as well as at the homes of some of his relatives, the KNS said.

Policemen in plain clothes scoured the LDA hostels in Jammu as well as Srinagar, but

failed to turn up any clues about the ex-legislators whereabouts. Rafiqi's mobile phone, too is not functioning for the past three days. According to sources Rafiqi may be trying to obtain anticipatory bail.

He has disappeared despite being informed that he should present himself before the police, which is now raiding his habitual haunts and using its network of informers to track him down.

A senior police officer told the KNS that a high level investigation was on in the matter of the escape of a divisional commander of the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen from the valley.

Three persons, including the Ex-MLA's then secretary, Farooq Ahmad Bhat, personal

Security Officer Kewal Singh and driver Shyam are already in custody. Rafiqi allegedly, helped the Hizb divisional commander, Mhhammad Amin Baba, escape from the Valley by taking him, to Amritsar in his own official vehicle accompanied by two personal security officers.

Baba, who had reportedly managed to get a passport on fictitious Srinagar address, was allegedly escorted to Wagah border on May 2 this year where from he crossed over to Pakistan

Sources said the case cae to light when the police were investigating a mine-blast in Anantnag and arrested a suspect Javid Ahmad. Hizb commander Baba was also a suspect and when the police questioned Javid about him they learnt that Baba had recently crossed over to Pakistan via Amritsar. When asked about the allegations against Rafiqi, National Conference President Omar Abdullah was quoted by news agencies as having said “if there is anything against him (Rafiqi), the law will take its course. We want an impartial probe in the matter.” He however said that the Mufti Saved government had done nothing when militants were arrested from a minister's house. “He still remains minister. Where is the justice,” he questioned.

(Kashmir Observer, 23 May, 2005)

Fighters Attack Jade Mining Town As Myanmar Sleepwalks Into Civil War

Agenceis

Fighters affiliated with one of Myanmar's key ethnic groups resisting the military coup in the East Asian nation have attacked army posts at the northwestern jade mining town of Hkamti, marking a major advance into new territory.

Kachin Independence Army (KIA) forces launched an assault on the military position in the Sagaing region early Saturday, as the ruling military junta struggles to contain popular opposition to its February 1 seizure of power, local media reports said.

Images published by the local Irrawaddy and Mizzima online news outlets showed columns of dark smoke rising from what they described as the scene of the attack by KIA fighters.

KIA spokesman Naw Bu said he was aware of the armed assault but could not share any details of the reported operation.

"The fighting is still ongoing. I can still hear the gunshots," Mizzima quoted one resident as saying, describing the scene of the attack at the site which is near a mining venture that involves the military-owned Myanma Economic Holdings Ltd.

Myanmar's military was said to be using warplanes to attack KIA forces at Hkamti, a town on the Chindwin river in a remote region rich in jade and gold that lies about 50 kilometres from the border with India.

Since the military coup, open skirmishes have resumed between the army and the KIA, which has been engaged in an armed struggle for greater autonomy for the Kachin people over the past six decades and has expressed support for anti-junta protesters.

Myanmar's armed forces have conducted numerous bombing attacks on KIA positions in recent

weeks and further battled with ethnic armies in the east and west of the country.

Myanmar's army last week also attacked fighters of the Chinland Defense Force (CDF) in the northwestern town of Mindat in what was described as "some of the heaviest" rounds of fighting with local armed groups opposing the military coup. Ten people have been killed in Chin over the past week.

Those fleeing hostilities say thousands of people left Mindat after the army attacked to uproot the CDF fighters.

Last Tuesday, the UN refugee agency mentioned "reports of civilians killed and injured and civilian property damaged or destroyed."

"Access by humanitarian partners to the people fleeing violence or those still in their homes is challenging due to insecurity," said the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

The displacement threatens to push more people over the nearby border with India, where more than 15,000 people had sought refuge since the February coup.

Residents of Mindat, near the Indian border, had also reported intense fighting in the area earlier in the week, forcing people to hide in jungles and remote villages as the military made advances into the town after days of fierce battles with local fighters.

More than 800 people have been killed by the military since protests broke out in Myanmar against the military coup, according to the Assistance Association of Political Prisoners (AAPP).

Nearly 4,000 people have also been detained since Myanmar's military overthrew the civilian government of de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi and began a brutal crackdown on protesters.

Nepal President Dissolves Parliament, Calls New Elections

Agenceis

Nepal's parliament has been dissolved for the second time in five months and new elections called for in November as the Himalayan country battled political turmoil alongside the coronavirus pandemic.

President Bidhya Devi Bhandari made the order on Saturday after declaring that neither Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli nor Sher Bahadur Deuba, leader of the opposition Nepali Congress, had a majority to form a new government.

"The president... has dissolved the current House of Representatives and fixed the first phase of general elections on November 12 and the second phase on November 19," his office said in a statement.

Political rivalries between the communist prime minister and his former Maoist allies hit a new peak as the country battles a severe coronavirus wave with acute shortages of oxygen and vaccines.

Authorities have been reporting about 200 deaths a day, but experts say there are a lot more and the United Nations has launched an emergency Covid-19 appeal saying that Nepal is at "breaking point".

Bhandari dissolved parliament after a new breakdown in talks.

Decision could be challenged in court

Oli was reappointed the prime minister only last week as no leader could muster a majority after the veteran communist lost a vote of confidence.

The 69-year-old had a month to win a new vote of confidence in parliament but the president called on other parties to try to form a government as Oli struggled to win support.

Bhandari, who hails from the ruling party and is considered close to Oli, has been criticised for agreeing so quickly to Oli's recommendation for a new election.

Chandrakanta Gyawali, a constitutional expert, said the president has "derailed from the spirit of the constitution" by giving in to Oli so easily.

"This decision could be challenged in the court again. The prime minister has repeatedly attacked the constitution," Gyawali said.

Five opposition leaders said in a joint statement the prime minister had pushed the country into a serious problem at a time when people were suffering and dying due to the coronavirus pandemic.

"When the country should have united to battle the pandemic, the dissolution of the parliament has only added to the problems and sufferings of the people," the statement said.

Prakash Sharan Mahat, a senior leader of the opposition Nepali Congress party said they will launch a political and legal fight against the move.

Hostilities

In December, Oli dismissed the legislature and called elections, accusing members of his Nepal Communist Party of blocking his moves.

After nearly two months of protests, the Supreme Court reinstated parliament, saying Oli's move was unconstitutional.

Oli became prime minister in 2018 and secured a two-thirds majority of parliament through a merger between his party, the CPN-UML, and a former rebel party, CPN (Maoist Centre).

Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal has turned against Oli again however, setting off the hostilities.

Shops, Cafes Reopen As Life Resumes In Ravaged Gaza Strip After Ceasefire



Agenceis

GAZA: Cafes reopened, fishermen set out to sea and shopkeepers dusted off shelves Saturday as Gazans slowly resumed their daily lives after a deadly 11-day conflict between Hamas and Israel.

Aid trickled into the Gaza Strip, the blockaded enclave controlled by the Islamist group Hamas, as the focus turned to rebuilding the devastated territory a day after a ceasefire took hold.

The Egypt-brokered truce halted Israeli air strikes on the crowded Palestinian territory and rockets fired by Palestinian armed groups at Israel since May 10.

Rescue workers searched for bodies or survivors in mounds of rubble after what Gazans referred to in the street as the latest "war" or "escalation" with the Jewish state.

In Gaza City's port, Rami Abu Amira and a dozen other fisherman prepared their nets before heading out to sea for the first time in two weeks.

"We need to eat," he said after the Gaza coastguard allowed fishing again, though adding he would stick close to the coastline to stay safe.

"We, fishermen, are scared the Israeli navy will shoot at us. It's up to everyone to decide whether to go or not."

'All lost'

The latest round of bombardment killed 248 people in Gaza, including 66 children, and wounded more than 1,900 since May 10, the Hamas-run health ministry says.

The United Nations says more than half of those killed, the over-

whelming majority in Israeli air strikes, were civilians.

Israel says it has killed "more than 200 terrorists", including 25 commanders.

During the same period, rockets fired by Palestinian armed groups killed 12 people in Israel including one child, a teenager, an Israeli soldier, one Indian and two Thai nationals, the police say. Some 357 people in Israel were injured.

On Friday evening in Gaza, Palestinian families had rushed to seaside cafes to breathe fresh air or smoke shisha.

In a clothes store near the ruins of a ravaged tower block in the upscale neighbourhood of Rimal in Gaza City, mannequins still wore the latest 2021 trends, but they were now caked in dust.

Bilal Mansur, 29, said all his merchandise had been ruined.

"There's dust everywhere, dust from the Israeli bombs clinging to the clothes. We won't be able to sell them," he said.

Nearby store-owner Wael Amin al-Sharafa said he had stocked up his shop with new clothes to sell during the usually busy season of Eid al-Fitr at the end of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan.

"But now it's all lost," he said. "Who will pay for all this? I have no idea."

'Two-state solution'

Convoys of lorries carrying aid began passing into Gaza Friday through the Kerem Shalom crossing after it was reopened by Israel, bringing much-needed medicine,

food and fuel.

The UN's Central Emergency Response Fund said it had released \$18.5 million for humanitarian efforts.

The latest round of Israeli bombardment forced 91,000 people to flee their homes in Gaza, the UN humanitarian agency says.

It has hit 1,447 homes, completely destroying 205 residential blocks or homes, as well as ravaged electricity and water supply, according to the Gaza authorities.

The UN says three main desalination plants providing drinking water for more than 400,000 people have stopped working.

Both sides were fast to claim victory, as Egyptian state media said two Egyptian security delegations had arrived to monitor the deal.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel's bombing campaign had been an "exceptional success".

Hamas' political chief Ismail Haniyeh said they had "dealt a painful and severe blow that will leave its deep marks" on Israel, and thanked Iran for "providing funds and weapons".

The international community welcomed the ceasefire.

US President Joe Biden pledged to help organise efforts to rebuild Gaza and said creating a Palestinian state alongside Israel is the "only answer" to the conflict.

"We still need a two-state solution," he said.

Peace talks have stalled since 2014 including over the key issues of the status of occupied east Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank.

Supermoon! Red blood Lunar Eclipse! It's All Happening At Once, But What Does That Mean?

Agenceis

The first lunar eclipse of 2021 is going to happen during the early hours of May 26. But this is going to be an especially super lunar event, as it will be a supermoon, a lunar eclipse and a red blood moon all at once.

So what does this all mean? What's a super moon?

A supermoon occurs when a full or new moon coincides with the Moon's closest approach to the Earth.

The Moon's orbit around Earth is not perfectly circular. This means the Moon's distance from Earth varies as it goes around the planet. The closest point in the orbit, called the perigee, is roughly 28,000 miles closer to Earth than the farthest point of the orbit. A full moon that happens near the perigee is called a supermoon.

So why is it super? The relatively close proximity of the Moon makes it seem a little bit bigger and brighter than usual, though the difference between a supermoon and a normal moon is usually hard to notice unless you're looking at two pictures side by side.

How does a lunar eclipse work?

A lunar eclipse happens when the Earth's shadow covers all or part of the Moon. This can only happen during a full moon, so first, it helps to understand what makes a full moon.

Like the Earth, half of the Moon is illuminated by the sun at any one time. A full moon happens when the Moon and the Sun are on opposite sides of the Earth. This allows you see the entire lit-up side, which looks like a round disc in the night sky.

If the Moon had a totally flat orbit, every full moon would be a lunar eclipse. But the Moon's orbit is tilted by about 5 degrees relative to Earth's orbit. So, most of the time a

full moon ends up a little above or below the shadow cast by the Earth.

But twice in each lunar orbit, the Moon is on the same horizontal plane as both the Earth and Sun. If this corresponds to a full moon, the Sun, the Earth and the Moon will form a straight line and the Moon will pass through the Earth's shadow. This results in a total lunar eclipse.

To see a lunar eclipse, you need to be on the night side of the Earth while the Moon passes through the shadow. The best place to see the eclipse on May 26, 2021, will be the middle of the Pacific Ocean, Australia, the East Coast of Asia and the West Coast of the Americas. It will be visible on the eastern half of the U.S., but only the very earliest stages before the Moon sets.

Why does the moon look red?

When the Moon is completely covered by Earth's shadow it will darken, but doesn't go completely black. Instead, it takes on a red colour, which is why total lunar eclipses are sometimes called red or blood moons.

Sunlight contains all colours of visible light. The particles of gas that make up Earth's atmosphere are more likely to scatter blue wavelengths of light while redder wavelengths pass through. This is called Rayleigh scattering, and it's why the sky is blue and sunrises and sunsets are often red.

In the case of a lunar eclipse, red light can pass through the Earth's atmosphere and is refracted – or bent – toward the Moon, while blue light is filtered out. This leaves the moon with a pale reddish hue during an eclipse.

Hopefully you will be able to go see this super lunar eclipse. When you do, now you will know exactly what makes for such a special sight. PTI

At White House, Life Back To Normal: Hugs Are In, Masks Are Out

Agenceis

WASHINGTON: A smiling crowd of unmasked people filling the largest room in the White House. A visiting head of state welcomed with pomp, circumstance and handshakes. A 94-year-old Medal of Honor recipient receiving a joyous hug from Vice President Kamala Harris.

The White House is springing back to life.

Thanks to growing availability of the coronavirus vaccine and a recent relaxation of federal guidance on masks and distancing, the Biden administration is embracing the look and feel of pre-pandemic days on Pennsylvania Avenue. More West Wing staffers are turning up there for work and more reporters will be doing so as well, as the White House spreads the message that a return to normal is possible with vaccinations.

There are lingering concerns about safety and mixed messaging – the same contradictions and confusions that are popping up across a nation that is gingerly re-opening. But the images of a reopened, relaxed White House stand in striking contrast to the days when it was the site of several Covid-19 outbreaks last year, a sign of just how far the pandemic has begun to recede in the United States.

"We're back," White House press secretary Jen Psaki declared at Friday's daily briefing. "I can confirm we're a warm and fuzzy crew and we like to hug around here."

The changes within the White House over the past week were swift and sweeping. Hugs were in, masks were (mostly) out. There was no need to stand six feet apart. And no one seemed to enjoy the shift more than Biden, the most back-slapping and tactile of politicians.

The president had been happy to announce the relaxed mask guidance when he appeared in the Rose Garden on May 13 without a mask, just hours after the CDC said those who are fully vaccinated don't need to wear masks in most settings.

That cheerfulness carried over this past week into a series of larger public events that would have been out of bounds earlier in Biden's presidency. For the second straight day, the White House on Friday opened the East Room – the executive mansion's largest room – to scores of outside guests. Smiling broadly, Biden awarded the Medal of Honor for the first time as commander in chief, giving it to 94-year-old retired Col. Ralph Puckett Jr. for acts of bravery during the Korean War some 70 years ago.

The White House timed Friday's ceremony to coincide with the visit of South Korea's president, Moon Jae-in, who joined Biden at the event before their policy meetings. Both world leaders repeatedly clasped Puckett's hands and crowded in for a photo with the war hero's extended family.

Iran's Khamenei Says Israel 'Forced To Accept Defeat'

Agenceis

Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei Friday said Israel was "forced to accept defeat" by Palestinian armed groups, after a ceasefire between the Jewish state and Hamas in Gaza.

"I thank dear and almighty God for the victory and honour bestowed upon Palestinian fighters," he said in a statement on his official website.

"The continuation of crimes and the ceasefire were both (part of Israel's) defeat. They were forced to accept defeat," he added, noting that Israel was "powerless against the unified rise of Palestine".

"The readiness of the Palestinian youth and the show of power" by armed groups in Gaza "will make Palestine more powerful by the day and the usurping enemy weaker and more despicable", he added.

The ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, the Islamist movement that controls the Gaza strip, and other armed groups in the enclave appeared to be holding Friday, after 11 days of fighting.

Israeli strikes on Gaza since May 10 have killed 243 Palestinians, in-



cluding 66 children, Gaza's health ministry says.

Rockets fired into Israel from Gaza have claimed 12 lives in the Jewish state, including one child.

Khamenei also called for legal measures against the Israeli government, including its prime minister.

"All the effective elements of this regime and the criminal (Benjamin) Netanyahu must be pursued by international and independent courts and be punished," he said.

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

soon after the country's 1979 revolution.

Hamas' political chief Ismail Haniyeh on Friday thanked Iran for "providing funds and weapons" to the movement.

Iran's foreign ministry spokesman had earlier today praised a "historic victory" and reaffirmed Tehran's support for the Palestinian cause.

"Congratulations to our Palestinian sisters and brothers for the historic victory. Your resistance forced the aggressor to retreat," Saeed Khatibzadeh wrote on Twitter.

"PROUD to support your just resistance," Khatibzadeh added.

NEWSMAKERS

It Was "War Crime": Gaza Media Building Owner Complains To World Court

NETHERLANDS: The owner of a Gaza building housing international media that was destroyed in an Israeli airstrike is lodging a complaint with the International Criminal Court, his lawyer said.

The complaint by Jawad Mehdi says that the attack on May 15 which flattened Jala Tower, housing the offices of US news agency Associated Press and Al Jazeera television, was a "war crime".

The filing, a copy of which was seen by AFP, comes after the chief prosecutor of the ICC said last week that "crimes" may have been committed during the recent violence between Israel and the Palestinians.

"The owner of this building, who is

a Palestinian, has mandated his lawyers to file a war crime complaint with the International Criminal Court," lawyer Gilles Devers said in a statement.

Devers told AFP outside the court, where around 10 pro-Palestinian protesters were gathered, that Israel could show "no military objective" for the attack.

"We hear a lot that this tower could have been destroyed because there was equipment or an armed resistance team. This is something that we totally deny after studying the case," Devers said.

"International law is that you can only harm civilian property if it is used for military purposes, and that was not the case. So we say it today in front this court and in this complaint."



Devers said the complaint would be formally sent to the court by email

later Friday. Israel claimed that Hamas military

DPC Kulgam Approves District Plan Of Rs 537.99 Cr

Observer News Service

KULGAM: A meeting of District Planning Committee (DPC) members was today held here at mini-secretariat Kulgam for approval of the district plan for the year 2021-22.

The meeting was attended by District Development Council Chairperson, Mohammad Afzal Parray, Vice Chairperson, Shazia Jan and other PRI members.

Besides ADC, ACD, ACR, CPO, Ex. Engineers and other concerned officers participated in the meeting.

At the outset of the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat highlighted the

tion and involvement of DDCs, BDCs and PRI members.

The DC also added that PRIs have an instrumental role in development and implementation of Developmental programmes.

Later Proposal for approval of District Plan for year 2021-22 was laid for approval and District Planning Committee approved the Plan of Rs. 537.99 crore for year 2021-22 which will set impetus to developmental scenario of the district.

On the occasion, the District Development Council Chairperson, Mohammad Afzal Parray extended his full support to district administration for the development of the district.



importance and significance of the District plan for the development of the district. He said that the plan has been formulated by active participa-

He also applauded and complimented district administration for their efforts and measures put in place to combat Covid-19 pandemic.

Congress Seeks More Wheat Procurement Centres In Jammu

Press Trust of India

JAMMU: The Congress on Saturday sought the intervention of Lt Governor Manoj Sinha in setting up more wheat procurement centres in Jammu.

In a letter addressed to the Lieutenant Governor, the Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee claimed farmers are being "cheated and looted" by middlemen in the absence of mandis.

"The government announced Rs 1,925 per quintal minimum support price (MSP) of wheat this year but the farmer is being forced to sell his wheat produce at Rs 1,500 per quintal in the absence of any procurement mandi in several districts like Rajouri," JKPCC chief spokesperson Ravinder Sharma said in the letter.

Last time, he said farmers were compelled to sell maize crop at Rs 1,100 per quintal against the MSP of Rs 1,800 per quintal.

"This is very unfortunate

and makes it totally irrelevant to fix MSP for crops when the government has failed to set up a single procurement centre in various districts of wheat producing Jammu province," the Congress leader said.

He alleged that farmers are being cheated and looted by the middlemen as they are forced to sell their produce at much cheaper rates.

"This is one of the main causes of the farmers' agitation against the new farm laws as it does not guarantee the return to the farmers at MSP and we are already seeing this kind of culture here," he claimed.

He said farmers have already suffered a huge loss due to heavy rains recently. "Therefore, I seek your immediate attention and action for the establishment of procurement centres at all important locations in each district so that farmers get the price of wheat fixed by the government," he said.



Healthcare workers carrying oxygen cylinders in the premises of SMHS hospital in Srinagar on Saturday. KO Photo Abid Bhat

Expert Suggests Six Minute Walk If Saturation Dips

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Head of Medicine at Government Medical College & Hospital, Dr Vijay Kundal has said, the age old adage 'prevention is better than cure' has the greatest relevance to Covid-19 infection as there is no better protection against it than to adopt Covid appropriate behaviour."

The appropriate behaviour, he explained, includes wearing a mask, frequent hand sanitisation and keeping social distance and avoiding crowded places.

The doctor reiterated the government's instructions of going out only if necessary, self hygiene, wearing a mask and avoiding crowds. He also requested the people to 'teach social distancing to others around'. Timely vaccination is another major defence against the virus, he added.

So what if one is already

infected, To this, the doctor said, 'Still there is no need to panic as most of the Covid cases fall under the mild category who recover easily. Such people develop symptoms like cough and cold'. They should immediately isolate themselves and eat healthy food, he advised.

Elaborating further, Dr Kundal said that Covid patients without any comorbidity recover easily in most of the cases. 'In any case', he reminds, 'if one's oxygen saturation level falls below 94 percent, the patient, whether comorbid or not, should immediately consult a doctor'.

The Head of Department warned against self medication, use of anticoagulants and steroids without a doctor's prescription and said the Steroids are 'two edged swords'. 'On one hand they help Covid patients, and on the other they may weaken one's immunity',

said Dr Kundal.

Dr Kundal suggested taking the Six Minute Walk Test, a rudimentary exercise to judge if one needs medical help or not. In the test, the subject walks for six minutes, and if his oxygen saturation level falls, either by three percent or below 94, it is time to consult a doctor. Such patients must lie in a prone position to restore oxygen saturation quickly, he advised.

In prone-position the patient is made to lie facing down, with arms bent comfortably at the elbow and positioned forward.

In any case, if Covid symptoms persist even after four to five days, one must immediately seek medical help. 'Please do not delay hospitalization. Many of Covid deaths are due to delay in reporting by the patients', informs Dr Kundal.

Adv Khan Directs Officials To Speed Up Execution Of Centrally Sponsored Schemes

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Baseer Ahmad Khan, Saturday, during a meeting, took stock of progress on various centrally sponsored schemes including RAPDRP, IPDS, DDUJJY and PMDP besides assessing the status of inspections, metering, transmission and power generation.

The meeting was attended by Chief Engineer KPDC and Chief Engineer KPTCL Kashmir besides Chief Engineer Projects and Procurement

Kashmir and other concerned officers.

Advisor Baseer Khan While reviewing physical and financial progress on CSSs, Advisor directed the concerned officers to remove all the bottlenecks and Right of way (RoW) issues so as to speed up the execution of these projects. He also asked the officers to prioritise works and formulate definite timelines for early completion of these projects. He asked the concerned officers to devise a system to continuously monitor and redress all pending

issues concerning speedy execution of these vital works.

Advisor was briefed about the present status of power supply and steps being taken to improve and augment the power scenario to ensure adequate power supply to the consumers.

Advisor directed the officers to complete the critical projects before the onset of winter particularly the receiving stations besides asking them to ensure pruning of branches to be done beforehand so as to have minimum interruptions.

LMD Books 63 Erring Traders

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Intensifying market inspections, the field executives of Legal Metrology Department (LMD) booked 63 erring traders and has also recovered a fine of Rs 1, 25,300 from them for violating Legal Metrology Laws across Kashmir in past 7- days.

During the market inspection, it was found that the drug stores were found offering for sale the Face-Masks and sanitizers which were without adequate labeling. Moreover, the department received a number of complaints of over-charging on edible oil.

In one instance, a consumer was charged Rs. 880/- for a

5 kg edible oil pack when MRP printed on the label of the pack was only Rs. 770/- The case was registered against the retailer and a penal sum of Rs. 5000/- was slapped on him for the over-charging. Under Legal Metrology Laws, it is an offence to charge more than MRP printed on the pre-packaged commodities.

It is worth-mentioning here that the Govt. is not fixing prices of edible-oils in the UT of J&K.

However, in case a trader charges more than MRP printed on the label of the product by the manufacturer, the department may be contacted on the toll-free No. 1800-180-7114 during office hours.

137 Establishments Sealed Across Kashmir

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The department of Food Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA) has realised a fine of Rs. 12.24 lac from erring shopkeepers, wholesalers and other dealers for various kinds of violations in Kashmir during the past 5 months.

FCS&CA, through its different enforcement wings carried out massive market checking across all 10 dis-

tricts and during the inspection found many dealers indulging in violations.

As many as 137 establishments were also sealed, while 40 reports were filed in different police stations against the erring shopkeepers.

During the current month up to May- 22, as many as 39 shopkeepers were penalised and a fine of Rs. 3.47 lac was recovered from them, while 28 establishments were sealed for violations during the month.

Recovery Rate Increasing, Positive Rate Diminishing In Baramulla: DC

Observer News Service

BARAMULLA: Briefing about the latest position of Covid-19 pandemic and the measures taken by the District Administration, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Baramulla, Bhupinder Kumar today informed that recovery rate of patients is continuously increasing whereas the positivity rate is drastically reduced from the past few days.

The DC said that this became possible by the active public cooperation who abided by the requisite SOPs and guidelines pertaining to the pandemic.

While expressing gratitude of the people, the DC hoped that the people will further cooperate with the administrative functionaries for 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.

Enlisting various initiatives, the DC said that in the recently established 62 bedded additional ward at GMC, ventilators are being used on case to case basis which is a positive development of its kind. He also added that 05 additional Covid-19 wellness centers were also established in addition to the already existing

centers so as to cope with the growing challenge.

The DC further said that 05 bedded Covid Care Centres (CCCs) are being established at the Panchayat level which apart from delivering medicare services, shall be used to disseminate necessary awareness among the masses. He said that 03 oxygen plants are currently operating in the district and efforts are afoot to augment its stock position.

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.

Regarding the developmental scenario, Kumar said that work on various developmental projects is going on without any kind of disturbance. He added that workers are following all the SOPs at the working sites so as to avert any kind of exigency.

Moreover, the DC also said that various welfare measures were taken and Rs 4.42 Cr was released among 42,200 registered building and construction workers as part of 1st instalment of Covid-19 relief announced by J&K administration.

NEWS MAKERS

Youth Found Dead In Qazigund

Observer News Service

KULGAM: A 25-year-old youth was found dead on Saturday under mysterious circumstances in Kewa village of Qazigund in South Kashmir's Kulgam district.

"Immediately after spotting the body, we informed the police," the locals said, adding that a team of police rushed to the area and the body was taken away.

Meanwhile, police identified the deceased as Huzaif Ahmad Khan, 25, son of Atta Mohammad Khan of Check-e-Wangund Qazigund.

Station House Officer (SHO) Qazigund Irshad Ahmad Reshi said that the death of the youth seems suspicious and inquest proceedings have been initiated under 174 CrPC.

He added that after completion of Medico-legal formalities the body was handed over to his legal heirs. (CNS)

Two Policemen Suspended After Video Of 'Interrogation' Goes Viral

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Police Saturday suspended two policemen and initiated an inquiry against SHO concerned after a video, purported to be of a police interrogation into murder of a man from Pattan area of north Kashmir in March this year, went viral on social media.

Police had arrested wife of the man and her alleged paramour in connection with the murder.

"A video purported to be of a police investigation / interrogation is doing rounds on social media,"

police said.

"The same (video) has been found to be pertaining to blind murder case of March 2021 of PS Pattan which was solved last month. Both accused shown in video had been arrested for the murder of the husband of the woman shown in the video," the police said.

Meanwhile senior police officials called the act of the video as highly unprofessional and unbecoming of a professional police.

In a statement police said that two officials have been suspended for the same and enquiry has been initiated against the concerned SHO also.

Two Covid Positive Patients Flee From Testing Centre in Poonch

Observer News Service

POONCH: Authorities on Saturday filed an FIR against two persons who allegedly abscond-

ed after testing positive for the covid-19 in Poonch.

In a letter to SHO Poonch, Naib Tehsildar Chadak stated that two persons aged 22 and 24 years respectively tested

positive at covid-19 centre Kalai Bridge.

The official said that the duo also misbehaved with the Covid testing team. (CNS)

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (R&B)

CONSTRUCTION DIVISION 2ND, SRINAGAR

FRESH NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

NIT No.25 of R&B/CDD/II/2278-88 of 2021-22 Dated: 22.05.2021 (E-tendering)

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, UT J&K, 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	Adv. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In Rupees)	Time of completion	M.H of Account	Class of Contractor
1	2	3	4	5	7	6
1.	Improvement/Upgrad of road from Qammerwari chowk to Parimpora b.w.o. P/L of 50mm thick bituminous Macadam incl.25mm thick semidense with 6mm thick seal coat in stretches(Machine mix to be laid with paver).	97.11 Incl. C/o Bitumen	1600/-	15 Days	C&T	AAY with HMPO/ HMPO/ AAY Class Civil having agreement deed with HMPO
2	Restoration of road surface from Hari Singh High street road incl Loop of Hanuman Mandir to Budshah flats b.w.o. P/L of 50mm thick bituminous Macadam incl. 25mm thick semidense with 6mm thick seal coat in Patches/stretches(Machine mix to be laid with paver)	72.60 Incl. C/o Bitumen	1600/-	15 Days	C&T	AAY with HMPO/ HMPO/ AAY Class Civil having agreement deed with HMPO
3	Improvement/Upgrad of road from Comrade inn junction to Al-farooq Masjid junction Rajbagh Srinagar b.w.o. P/L of 50mm thick bituminous Macadam incl.25mm thick semidense with 6mm thick seal coat in stretches(Machine mix to be laid with paver)	58.19 Incl. C/o Bitumen	1600/-	15 Days	C&T	AAY with HMPO/ HMPO/ AAY Class Civil having agreement deed with HMPO
4	Improvement of road from Kralangri to Nishat via Brein/Syed Rehman shah b.w.o. P/L of 50mm thick bituminous Macadam incl.25mm thick semidense with 6mm thick seal coat in stretches(Machine mix to be laid with paver).	48.58 Incl. C/o Bitumen	1100/-	15 Days	C&T	AAY with HMPO/ HMPO/ AAY Class Civil having agreement deed with HMPO
5	Improvement of road from Dalgate chowk to Nehru park (RD 0 to RD 500) b.w.o. P/L of 50mm thick bituminous Macadam incl.25mm thick semidense with 6mm thick seal coat in stretches(Machine mix to be laid with paver).	43.69 Incl. C/o Bitumen	1100/-	15 Days	C&T	AAY with HMPO/ HMPO/ AAY Class Civil having agreement deed with HMPO

Position of AAA: Accorded
Position of funds: Available

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

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	22.05.2021 from 10.00 AM.
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	22.05.2021 from 10.00 AM.
3	Bid submission Start Date	27.05.2021 upto 4.00 PM.
4	Bid Submission End Date	27.05.2021 upto 4.00 PM.
5	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	28.05.2021 at 11.00 AM in the office of Executive Engineer R&B Construction Division 2 nd , Srinagar
- Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of **Treasury Challan under M.H. 0059** in favour of **Executive Engineer R&B Construction Division No.2nd, Srinagar** (tender inviting authority) **(The Date of Treasury Challan should be between the date of start of bid and Bid Submission End date)** pledged to **Executive Engineer R&B Construction Division No.2nd, Srinagar** (tender receiving authority).
- All Bidders has to submit Bid Security Declaration Form instead of Earnest money as per the circular of Finance Department (Bid Security Declaration Form is as per Annexure "A" below)
- The 1st lowest Bidder has to produce an amount equal to 3% of contract as performance security in shape of CDR/FDR/BG within 02 Days before fixation of contract and shall be released after successful completion of work.
- The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The **bids of Responsive bidders** shall be opened online on same Web Site in the Office of **Executive Engineer R&B Construction Division 2nd, Srinagar** (tender receiving authority).
- The bids for the work shall remain **valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of Technical bids**

No. 2278-88

Sd/-

Executive Engineer

R&B Construction Division IInd

Srinagar

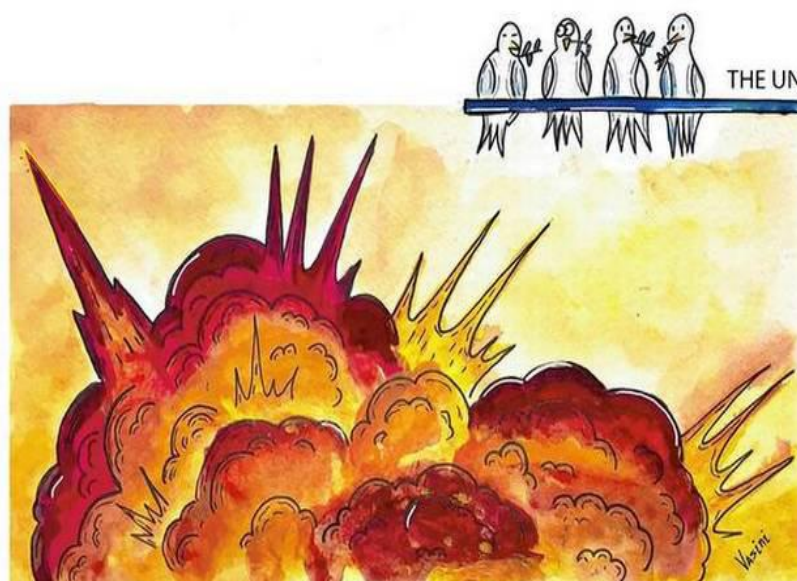
Dated: 22.05.2021

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Legal Counsel: Tasaduq Khwaja
Switchboard: (0194) 2106304
Editorial: (0194) 2502327
Email editorial: editor@kashmirobsrver.net

NO HOLDS BARRED



Israel's ability to bomb Gaza's "towers of truth" with impunity should not leave those who want justice for Palestine feeling hopeless. The growing pluralisation and democratisation of sources of information mean that Israel cannot win the battle it is waging on truth. At the end of the day, it can't silence all of us, all the time

Partial Re-Opening of Mughal Road: Right or Reward?

Tahir Qureshi

There are people who are taking the credit for the partial opening of the route without taking into account that this might be insensitive given how many people have lost their lives because of the closure of this route till now

Mughal road connects the twin districts of Poonch and Rajouri with the valley of Kashmir and reduces the distance between Shopian and Poonch from 588 km to 126 km. It is a historical route which was made functional for vehicular movement way back in 2009. It is about 84 kilometers from Buzilaz (Poonch) to Hirpora (Shopian). This route is known for its beautiful sights and scenes: lush meadows, gushing waterfalls, tossing and lurching trees and chirping birds, all persuade the tourists across the country to visit this area. It is surrounded by snow laden mountains which glitter like silver throughout the year and this sight adds the charm and miraculous beauty of the area. But unfortunately, this road witnesses heavy snowfall during the winters particularly at Pir Ki Gali which makes it non-functional for vehicular movement for a period of about six months (October to April) in a year. During these months, the route is covered with heavy snow and there is no feasibility of traffic movement. The government always pursues a casual approach to make it feasible for vehicular movements throughout the year. It is pertinent to mention here that in 2019, the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited had hired a Spanish Consultancy firm along with an Indian private consultant company to prepare a detailed report for the construction of a tunnel on Mughal road. It apparently seemed that the companies were compiling a detailed project report to estimate its approximate cost and once it was prepared, the work on the project could be started at any time. But this is very unfortunate for the people of Pir Panjal region that till date no further development on this project could be gauged.



The benefits of transforming this vital route into an all weather road are twofold: on the one hand this route helps the tourists to explore some beautiful picnic spots and it remains a sight of attraction for them. On the other hand, it provides a sigh of relief to the people of twin districts of Poonch and Rajouri as they have received access to better educational and medical facilities in Kashmir valley by using this route. There is no denial of the fact that these districts do not have a good educational and medical infrastructure and people of the area are in pursuit of availing better facilities in the following sectors. Since the functioning of this route, the student community of this region did benefit by pursuing higher education in the valley. The medical sector of these districts also presents a gloomy picture and the patients either approach Jammu or Srinagar for receiving some

better treatments. In the past there were numerous medical casualties from this area which were referred to SKIMS Soura, whence after receiving proper treatment their recovery was made possible.

This year, the needless closure of Mughal road has compounded the plight of common man amidst this pandemic, when the COVID patients need better medical facilities to recover. As usual this year too, the snow clearance process was initiated in the month of March and around 15th April the route was made functional but the government only permitted it for vehicular movement on 20th of May after protests by people. Due to this delay and negligence from the administration, numerous precious lives have been lost. Can the present divisional and district administration compensate the families of deceased who lost their beloved only due to the lack of proper

treatment in the hospitals of these districts and restrictions on shifting them to SKIMS in the valley? This question will frequently be asked by the families of those helpless and hapless departed souls who lost their earthly existence in fighting against COVID-19 and it happened only due to the heedlessness of administration.

On the other hand, ignorance and oblivion rule over the masses of these neglected districts as they are not aware of their fundamental rights in a democratic set up. Some political forces have turned the common man into such an ignorant and innocent creature that rationality and sanity is a distant dream for him/her. There are people who are taking the credit for the partial opening of the route without taking into account that this might be insensitive given how many people have lost their lives because of the closure of this route till now.

The prerequisites of any prosperous and developed nation are its citizens having rational and logical minds as they are the pillars on which the edifice of a strong nation is built. This 'credit bearer' section of society has turned the innocent people's intellect to a minimum rational thought process and pushed them to the slough of ignorance at such a level that they are unable to distinguish between their rights and rewards or boons by someone. Had they paid any heed to being sensitive, they would have never driven the narrative of making a Right seem like a favour.

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

The author can be reached at tahirqureshi00@gmail.com

On May 15, Israeli air strikes levelled the al-Jalaa tower, an 11-storey building that housed the offices of Al Jazeera and the Associated Press in the Gaza Strip. Just a few days earlier, the Israeli military had also bombed the al-Henday, al-Jawhara and al-Shorouk towers, which together housed more than a dozen local and international news agencies.

The towers targeted by Israel were among a handful of high rises that were built in the Gaza strip in the last 20 years to meet the local population's commercial, social and educational needs.

Before the attacks, these towers were some of the very few locations in the blockaded enclave that enjoyed relatively uninterrupted services, in particular, electricity sourced by their own generators. As a result, they attracted hundreds of families as residents, and were hosting not only numerous media offices but also several local businesses, law firms, medical labs and civil society organisations. Also serving as a cultural and social hub, they were central to the daily lives of many Gazan youths.

As a result of the bombings, Gaza lost a key piece of its social and, perhaps most crucially, media infrastructure. Israel gave the journalists working at the al-Jalaa tower just one hour to evacuate their offices, forcing them to abandon much of their archives and equipment to be destroyed alongside the building.

The bombing of the al-Jalaa tower drew criticism from international organisations, rights groups and several governments, including those of Israel's allies.

The Israeli military claimed that the tower housed Hamas military intelligence assets, and therefore constituted a legitimate target. However, as recently admitted by United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who routinely defends Israel's actions, Tel Aviv has so far released no evidence to support these allegations. The Associated Press strongly denied that Hamas was active in the building.

However, whether or not Hamas had offices in the building, the targeting with missiles of high-rise buildings located in a dense urban centre and populated by hundreds of civilians is an indefensible violation of international law. By striking these

vibrant towers, Israel once again made clear that it is determined to inflict maximum psychological damage on the strip's besieged population.

Moreover, by targeting the offices of local and international media organisations in Gaza, it announced to the world that it is now willing to do everything necessary, including using the full force of its military, to stop journalists from reporting on its crimes against the Palestinian people.

And Israel has much reason to try and silence free media.

In recent decades, the media has become an indispensable instrument for winning wars. Victory in modern conflict is as much dependent on controlling domestic and international public opinion as it is on defeating the enemy on the battlefield.

Indeed, fact-based, on-the-ground reporting that scrutinises narratives put forward by militaries and states has been decisive in the progression and conclusion of many recent conflicts.

During the 2004 battle for Fallujah between the US military and Iraqi insurgents, for example, media reports from the field proved crucial in exposing the devastation inflicted by US air strikes and ground operations on the civilian population of the city and ultimately caused the US military to withdraw.

"The [US] Marines in Fallujah weren't beaten by the terrorists and insurgents, who were being eliminated effectively and accurately. They were beaten by Al Jazeera," wrote retired American Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Peters in the battle's aftermath. Rather than admitting the media has the

ability to hold powerful militaries to account, Peters claimed that Al Jazeera and others "lied" about the situation on the ground to prevent a US victory. "The media is often referred to off-handedly as a strategic factor," he wrote, "but we still don't fully appreciate its fatal power."

As the US did then, Israel today is struggling to combat the growing spread of accurate news about its assaults on civilians and violations of international law.

Thanks to the efforts of journalists in Palestine and beyond, as well as millions of Palestinians speaking their truth on social media, the real story of Palestine is finally being heard across the world. As a result, not only is global public opinion shifting in favour of Palestinians, many international institutions and organisations that had long allowed Israel to control the narratives about the conflict are feeling obligated to speak up for Palestine.

On May 17, leading rights group Amnesty International condemned Israel's continuing assault on Gaza, saying that the Israeli military has "displayed a shocking disregard for the lives of Palestinian civilians by carrying out a number of airstrikes targeting residential buildings in some cases killing entire families – including children – and causing wanton destruction to civilian property, in attacks that may amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity".

Amnesty's damning statement came on the back of a report published by Human Rights Watch in April which asserted that Israel is perpetrating "crimes against humanity of apartheid and perse-

cution" in its treatment of Palestinians and the international community must therefore re-evaluate diplomatic relations with the state.

Today, Israel is not only trying to stop the spread of accurate information during its assault on Gaza by bombing press offices, but also through a campaign of disinformation.

For example, last week, a spokesperson for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu shared a video on Twitter which he claimed showed Hamas firing rockets at Israel "from populated areas". As the BBC stated, the clip was actually filmed in Syria in 2018 and had nothing to do with Gaza. Twitter later labelled the tweet as "manipulated media".

Beyond sharing demonstrably "fake news", the Israeli government is also trying to manipulate the international and domestic public opinion by persistently peddling the false narrative that Hamas is the aggressor in the conflict, that its military is doing everything it can to avoid civilian "casualties", that it is merely defending itself against "a terrorist organisation", and that the current escalation is not a direct result of its illegal occupation.

The fake videos and information disseminated by the Israeli government have already resulted in many Palestinians and Palestinian citizens of Israel being attacked by far-right Israeli mobs. These false narratives are also being used by pro-Israel governments across the world to avoid condemning the demonstrably illegal actions of their ally.

The international community must take immediate action to protect journalists in the occupied Palestinian Territories and Gaza. The important and perilous work journalists do in these conflict zones is the only way of exposing the brutality of Israel's ongoing assault on Gaza and its decades-old illegal occupation of Palestine.

But, at the same time, Israel's ability to bomb Gaza's "towers of truth" with impunity should not leave those who want justice for Palestine feeling hopeless. The growing pluralisation and democratisation of sources of information mean that Israel cannot win the battle it is waging on truth. At the end of the day, it can't silence all of us, all the time.

Al Jazeera

Wait for "Better" Vaccines?

I'm over 50 and hesitant about the AstraZeneca COVID vaccine/covishield. Should I wait for better vaccines?

Hassan Vally

There's really no logical reason for someone over 50 to wait for an alternative to the AstraZeneca vaccine, like Pfizer or Moderna. If you do choose to wait, there's no guarantee when any alternative might be available, and in the interim you risk leaving yourself vulnerable

It's been well documented that there's a significant level of vaccine hesitancy. This appears to be a particular issue among adults over 50 concerning the AstraZeneca vaccine, for which this group is now eligible.

Hesitancy over the AstraZeneca vaccine, likely to be stemming largely from the very small risk of blood clots, is leading some people to ask: can't I just wait and get the Pfizer vaccine later?

Despite the mixed messaging, you shouldn't wait for a Pfizer or Moderna vaccine later. There are a number of benefits to getting the AstraZeneca jab now.

Thinking about the blood clot risk

Thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome (TTS), an unusual blood clotting disorder, has been associated with the AstraZeneca vaccine.

It's important to emphasise it's not unreasonable to have concerns about the risk of a potentially serious side effect from the AstraZeneca vaccine, or any other vaccine. The challenge is in understanding the magnitude of this risk, putting this risk into perspective, and then weighing up the risks versus the benefits before making a decision.

The difficulty is your brain plays a variety of tricks on you when you try to make sense of risks like this. For example, we have a tendency to perceive the risks of very rare adverse outcomes (such as TTS) as being greater than they are.

We also tend to be more concerned about negative consequences that may arise as a result of our actions than our inactions. That is, we're generally more worried about a potential adverse outcome from taking a vaccine than any adverse outcome that may result from not taking it. This of course isn't logical, but is another one of the errors we make in processing risks.

In terms of assessing the risk of TTS associated with the AstraZeneca vaccine for over 50s, we've always known the risk is very low. This is about the same as your risk of serious injury from being struck by lightning in a year in Australia.

Importantly, as we've got better at detecting and treating this condition, the likelihood of severe outcomes from TTS have come down considerably. So the rare risk of serious illness from this syndrome looks to be even rarer than we first thought.

Weighing the risks against the benefits

The benefits of getting the AstraZeneca vaccine are considerable for over 50s, from both an individual and a community perspective.

When opting to get a vaccine, you're protecting yourself against the future risk of infection and possible severe illness. For over 50s who contract COVID the risk of severe illness and death is very real. We're also learning many people who get COVID-19 suffer with ongoing and sometimes debilitating symptoms, a phenomenon called "long COVID".

Another factor which may be driving hesitan-



It's important to emphasise it's not unreasonable to have concerns about the risk of a potentially serious side effect from the AstraZeneca vaccine, or any other vaccine

cy around the AstraZeneca vaccine is the perception the Pfizer vaccine works better. But the most recent data suggest any difference in the performance of these vaccines may be smaller than we originally believed.

Although phase 3 clinical trial data indicated the AstraZeneca vaccine had an efficacy of around 70%, new real-world data from the United Kingdom tells us it could be as much as 85%-90% effective in protecting against symptomatic COVID-19.

This is positive news and not far off the 95% figure for the Pfizer vaccine seen in clinical trials and in the real world.

And apart from effectively protecting against severe illness and death from the original strain, the AstraZeneca vaccine appears to work almost as well in protecting against more severe outcomes for variants of concern, such as the UK variant. Early signs also suggest the vaccine is working quite well to reduce transmission of the virus.

It's also important to understand — and this applies to all age groups — that we're getting vaccinated for the health of the community as a whole.

Although a great deal of the success or failure of the vaccination program has been framed in

terms of reaching herd immunity, we don't need to reach a certain threshold for the community to reap benefits. Every vaccine delivered makes a difference as the greater the proportion of the population vaccinated, the more difficult it is for the virus to spread.

As we've seen in Taiwan in recent weeks, being complacent about COVID is flirting with danger.

Get the jab

There's really no logical reason for someone over 50 to wait for an alternative to the AstraZeneca vaccine, like Pfizer or Moderna. If you do choose to wait, there's no guarantee when any alternative might be available, and in the interim you risk leaving yourself vulnerable.

By stepping up to get your vaccine as soon as you can, you protect yourself against severe COVID and make a significant contribution to putting this pandemic behind us.

By Arrangement with
The Conversation

Asha Iyer Kumar

Last week, I asked the children whom I coach a simple question. "What did you learn in the one year of pandemic?"

The answers I got were incredibly straight and similar. From learning to handle computers and getting used to the mask to acquiring better hygiene habits and keeping social distance, they were all operative replies. They were skills the new times had imposed on the children, and without demur they had all adapted to the changes.

However, those weren't the answers I was hoping to receive, for learning, in my view, is not only about what one does in their daily lives, but also how one handles the dynamic conditions of daily life. Education to me isn't about the functional changes that come over our life as a result of habitual action and practice. It is about how we evolve and become capable as individuals.

Disappointed with their initial response, I rephrased my question. "How has the year of the pandemic changed you as a person?"

It was a fresh trigger for them to start thinking. Some confessed that they hadn't thought about it at all and others uttered a few vague things. The truth was that the children had not been taken through the exercise of practical wisdom and understanding of how these difficult times could give them new lessons in life, and how it could make them more compliant with the dynamic nature of existence.

If in the long, insufferable year of corona, our children have only learned to use computers and remain sanitised, I sensed that there was something fundamentally wrong with the way we were defining education. And it's not a surprise. Education has always been a warped means to win accolades and establish financial security in life. While this is an inevitable aspect of everyday survival, to put all our energies into these worldly variables would be a



Education needs to go beyond giving subject proficiency

huge folly.

Why do schools, by and large, provide only outward efficiency to our children? If education does not help our children comprehend life as a whole through experience and observation by knowing its inconsistencies and by finding solutions to it, how effective is our teaching in preparing them for the future?

It is true that the primary responsibility of teachers is to equip our children to build a successful life by giving them subject proficiency, but somewhere in the process of doing it, pedagogy seems to have lost its true purpose. Education is increasingly becoming a means of scoring over the other, of gaining power and domination and of establishing supremacy. It has turned into an exercise of erecting a fancy edifice outside without laying a strong foundation inside.

We are concentrating more on creating artificial intelligence experts than building a free thinking, ethically strong and empathetic generation that can steer the world through tough times.

If children are not taught to integrate the heart and the mind, how will they grow into better human beings? If they are not given exercises that will help them discover their values and responsibilities, how will they learn to tackle unprecedented crises in their lives? How will they line up with the new challenges of a dynamic world?

This period of pandemic is an excellent opportunity for educators to give children the most potent doses of self-knowledge and observation. This is a window for teaching our young ones how to strengthen their relationship with people, things, ideas

and nature. These lessons cannot be inculcated without exposing them to the realities and total process of human existence.

Our educational system has been doing gross injustice to them by making them believe that learning STEM alone will guarantee success in life. It is time we tweaked our core objectives and curriculum to include lessons that will make our children sensitive to the deeper aspects of knowledge so that they come out of real-life crises without snapping.

Let there be active discussions in schools about what is happening around and let students be stimulated to think practically. Let them be encouraged to voice their thought and views openly. Let them be exposed in controlled ways to the hard realities of life and be armed to face the uncertain world. Our schools

must create safe spaces that provide them holistic life competency and not just incite fierce academic contests.

Asha Iyer Kumar is a Dubai-based author, Children's Life-Writing Coach, and founder of i Bloom, fze. She can be reached at ibloom@ashaiyerkumar.com

Khalaej Times

It is true that the primary responsibility of teachers is to equip our children to build a successful life by giving them subject proficiency, but somewhere in the process of doing it, pedagogy seems to have lost its true purpose. Education is increasingly becoming a means of scoring over the other, of gaining power and domination and of establishing supremacy

Pregnancy During Covid-19 Lockdown: How The Pandemic Has Affected New Mothers

Agencies

For the millions of women who celebrated their first Mother's Day in May 2021, their transition into motherhood occurred in the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Preparing for childbirth can be joyful and exciting, but COVID-19 restrictions disrupted many women's prenatal care and forced some mothers to deliver their infants, without partner or family support.

Others faced separation from their newborns immediately after birth.

Expectant parents also missed out on many celebrations and rituals that commemorate the transition into parenthood: baby showers, bris and christening ceremonies, neighbours dropping by with a meal, or grandparents travelling to meet the newest family member.

Over the past seven years, our lab has studied new parents, following couples from pregnancy across the first year postpartum.

COVID-19 lockdowns last spring stopped our in-person data collection when our campus closed.

But even as it stopped our usual research in its tracks, the pandemic created an opportunity to investigate a unique form of prenatal stress in real time.

Effects of prenatal stress can last throughout life. A tragic natural experiment helped spark study in the field: researchers call 'fetal origins of adult disease', which explores links between pregnancy stress and later health.

At the tail end of World War II, the Nazi army cut off food supplies to the Netherlands, plunging the country into famine during the winter of 1944-1945.

Babies in utero during what became known as the "Dutch Hunger Winter" showed lifelong differences in cardiometabolic health.

Because this was a clearly demarcated period of starvation, it even allowed researchers to investigate trimester-specific effects, finding that babies exposed to famine early in pregnancy showed outcomes different from those exposed late in pregnancy.

Scientists have linked other large-scale societal crises like the September 11 attacks, Hurricane Katrina and the 2005 earthquake in Chile with long-term health consequences for mother and child.

The COVID-19 pandemic shares many similarities with these events, including widespread loss of life.

But it's also unique.

Communities often unite to grieve and



rebuild after natural disasters.

The need to maintain social distance during the pandemic kept many people isolated from one another, especially many pregnant women, a high-risk population that may have elected to stick with stricter social distancing measures.

What happens when an expectant mother's in-person social network shrinks or disappears overnight? Social connection, mental health and COVID-19 Scientists know

social support buffers the risk for mental health problems in mothers.

So our lab wondered how the sudden isolation of lockdowns coupled with the economic and health worries of the pandemic might affect pregnant women.

We sought to answer this question by recruiting 760 expectant parents (641 pregnant women and 79 fathers or partners) between early April and July of 2020 to participate in our Coronavirus, Health, Isolation and Re-

silience in Pregnancy (CHIRP) study.

The week of April 7, 2020 coincidentally, the same week we launched our study represented the peak of 'sheltering in place' behavior in the US, with Americans spending 93% of their time at home.

We converted our usual in-lab battery of questionnaires into an online format and posted on social media and online parenting and pregnancy groups.

Our preliminary findings are currently undergoing peer review at an academic journal.

Only about 5% of the pregnant women who responded to our survey had a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 as of spring 2020, and a similar number 4.7% had experienced the death of someone close to them due to the pandemic.

However, 97% reported that their community had issued a stay-at-home or shelter-in-place order.

Moreover, 61% of women reported that the pandemic had had 'very' or 'somewhat' negative impacts on their social relationships.

A majority of women estimated that at the time of the survey they had much less contact than before the start of the pandemic with neighbours and community members, co-workers, close friends and family members.

Up To 300% More Antibodies When Second Dose Delayed, Says Study

Michelle Fay Cortez, Bloomberg

Faced with a limited supply of shots and anxious populations waiting their turn, more countries are turning to an initially controversial strategy that's now been vindicated by scientific studies: doubling or tripling the intervals between the first and second Covid vaccine dose.

A delay in getting the second shot not only allows the existing supply of shots to be more widely distributed, it boosts their protective power by giving

More Powerful

The research suggests that the first shot primes the immune system, allowing it to start making protective antibodies against the virus. The longer that response is allowed to mature, the better the reaction to the second booster shot that comes weeks or months later.

The benefits from longer dose intervals is being seen across all types of vaccines.

People over 80 given a powerful mRNA vaccine from Pfizer Inc. and BioNTech SE had an antibody re-



ing the immune system more time to respond to the first inoculation. Levels of antibodies produced to fight off the virus are 20% to 300% higher when the follow-up vaccine comes later, new research shows.

That's welcome news for places like Singapore, which is grappling with a rare, albeit small, rise in cases after strict mitigation measures contained the virus last year. The city-state is now extending dose intervals - previously three to four weeks - to six to eight weeks, in order to reach a goal of covering its entire adult population with at least one shot by the end of August. India, facing a catastrophic outbreak, is advising 12 to 16 weeks between shots.

Other nations in similar straits - with few vaccine doses and antsy populations - are likely to follow.

"If I could, I would push a button that says right now, this second, we give one dose to everybody we can reach," Gregory Poland, a virologist and director of the Mayo Clinic's Vaccine Research Group. "We'll get around to second doses later."

"In the midst of a world on fire, you put out as many fires as you can, as quickly as you can," Poland said.

The reassuring evidence on longer dosing intervals wasn't available when the vaccine rollout first started at the end of 2020. Then, countries limited their use to the highest-risk people and guaranteed a second shot was waiting for those segments. The U.K. was the first to abandon those constraints amid a massive outbreak in late 2020 - a move that was initially criticized but has now proved prescient.

sponse that was 3.5-fold higher if the second shot came after three months, rather than three weeks. Other studies concluded that delaying the final shot for nine to 15 weeks averted more hospitalizations, infections and deaths, while one from Canada suggested the biggest benefit came from a six-month delay.

There are drawbacks. The additional time between doses means it will take longer for countries to protect their populations. While one shot offers some level of benefit, people aren't considered fully immunized until several weeks after their second dose.

The interval is particularly dangerous when less potent vaccines are being used or more transmissible variants of the virus are circulating.

Some countries are pushing the boundaries. India's delay of three to four months between doses, among the longest in the world, means those scrambling to get vaccinated amid its current outbreak won't be fully protected until the summer or the fall.

While studies suggest the optimal spacing between AstraZeneca shots is 12 weeks, there is scant data on the impact of stretching that to 16 weeks. The British drugmaker's shot accounts for the majority of inoculations in India now.

The greater delay can also increase the logistical hurdles involved in getting millions of people to return to complete the series, especially if they feel they already have some coverage from the first shot. It's already difficult to get people in developing countries to return given transportation and communication challenges.

Office of the Principal

GOVERNMENT COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Institute of Advanced Studies in Education
CLUSTER UNIVERSITY, SRINAGAR

Maulana Azad Road Srinagar (J&K)

(NAAC RE-ACCREDITED GRADE "A" (CGPA 3.52)

Telephone No: - 2479807, Fax: 0194-2479807, Email: gcoe.sgr@gmail.com website : www.gcoekmr.org

Date Extension Notice for Admission to B.Ed Programme-2021.

With reference to Notice No. 049-BOPEE of 2021 dated: 18-05-2021 from the J&K Board Of Professional Entrance Examinations (BOPEE), it is for the information of all the selected candidates for B.Ed programme for the academic session 2021 that the last date for completion of admission has been extended upto 05-06-2021 (03:00 P.M) keeping in view the current pandemic situation of Covid-19. No further extension shall be granted thereafter. The left out interested candidates are hereby informed to complete the online admission formalities by or before last date; the details of which are already available on the institutional website: www.gcoekmr.org.

DIPK-1943/21

No: GCOE/IASE/21/179

Dated: 22.05.2021

Sd/-
Prof. (Dr.) Ruhi Jan Kanth
Principal

Government of Jammu and Kashmir

Department of Horticulture (Planning and Marketing) J&K Office of the Member Secretary Market Administrative Committee Mega Fruit & Vegetable Market Shopian.

E-Auction Notice AUC 05 of 2021-22 Dated 22-05-2021

For and on behalf of Administrative Committee Fruit and Vegetable Market Shopian, e-bids accompanied with DD for an amount of Rs.500/- (Rupees Five hundred) pledged to **Member Secretary MAC Fruit & Vegetable Market Shopian** as tender processing fee are invited from the interested parties/ persons for **Outsourcing of Gate entry fee contract in Fruit and Vegetable Market Shopian for the year 2021-22 (up to 31.03.2022)**

The minimum reserve bid is fixed at Rs.26,52,222.00 (Rupees Twenty-Six Lakh Fifty-Two Thousand Two Hundred Twenty-Two only) The tender documents can be downloaded from <http://jktenders.gov.in>.

Critical dates table.

1.	Publishing date	22-05-2021
2.	Document download/sale start date	22-05-2021
3.	Bid submission start date	22-05-2021
4.	Bid submission closing date	28-05-2021 up to 4:00 PM
5.	Bid opening date (online)	29-05-2021 up to 11:00 AM

The gate entry fee for each type of transport vehicle entering the F&V Market Shopian shall be as per the following schedule: -

TARIFF SCHEDULE

S.No.	Type of Vehicle/transport	Rate (in Rs.)
1.	14 Tyre/18 Tyre/20 Tyre Trolley/ 10 Tyre/ 12 Tyre	200.00
2.	Truck/Bus	100.00
3.	Tata Mobile/Sumo/Tractor/Matador/Jonga	30.00
4.	Auto/Load Carrier/ Triller Reda/Tonga/Horse Cart	10.00

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The successful tenderer shall have to enter into an agreement with the Member Secretary MAC Fruit Mandi Shopian. The other terms and conditions are as under: -

All bidders have to submit bid security declaration form instead of earnest money deposit (EMD) as per the circular of finance department. (Annexure A)

- The successful tenderer shall have to deposit an amount equal to 3% of contract as performance security in shape of CDR/FDR within (02) two days before fixation of contract and shall be released after successful completion of work.
- The Successful tenderer shall deposit the offered bid amount in the office of the MAC fruit Mandi Shopian in two equal installments 1st installment i.e. 50% of the offered bid amount at the time of allotment of contract and the 2nd installment i.e., remaining 50% of the offered bid shall be paid by successful bidder through a postdated payee account cheque with bank guarantee at the time of allotment of contract, payable after two months of the date of allotment of contract.
- The agreement shall be executed only after the successful bidder has deposited the bid amount in full.
- The possession of the Gates shall be given only after the execution of the agreement with Member Secretary MAC Fruit Mandi Shopian.
- In case the successful tenderer fails to deposit the bid amount within the stipulated time, the contract shall be cancelled and the Security deposit shall be forfeited and the contract shall be given to the 2nd highest bidder under rules.
- The offer should be quoted both in figures and words duly covered with transparent tape and without any cutting.
- The highest offers received is excluding of Income Tax/ GST etc. and the successful bidder has to pay the Income Tax/ GST and other taxes of his own.
- The successful tenderer shall not raise any additional structure in the Mandi premises for collection of gate entry fee and has to utilize the structure already existing in the premises for said purpose.
- The fee shall be charged every time the vehicle enters in the Mandi premises.
- The Market Administrative Committee (MAC) Fruit Mandi Shopian shall not be responsible and bound to provide any kind of relief/relaxation/compensation in the event of any adversity or unavoidable circumstances like lock down/ Haltal/ Bandh/less arrivals etc.
- The defaulters of the of the MAC Shopian are not eligible to submit tenders unless and until the previous outstanding if any, are not liquidated in full.

- The successful bidder has to charge the entry fee as per the rates approved by the Directorate of Horticulture (P&M). Any complaint with regard to overcharging of rates will be viewed seriously which may lead to the cancellation of the allotment and in that case the amount deposited shall be forfeited along with the earnest money.
- The contractor has to arrange the printing of entry fee receipts books, the format of which will be provided by MAC Shopian.
- The contractor has to deposit the entry fee receipts books with the office of MAC Shopian which will maintain its proper record.
- The receipts fee books shall be issued to the contractor on his demand and the counter folio/duplicate of the receipts books is to be deposited with MAC Shopian.
- The Government vehicle/Police & security vehicle or personal vehicles of MAC/ Horticulture (P&M) employees and vehicles carrying the construction material for Mandi developmental works are exempted from entry fee at all the entry gates.
- The Chairman/ Member Secretary MAC Fruit Mandi Shopian reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof.
- The allotted will strictly abide by the rules and regulations as provided under MAC rules 2020.
- In case of any dispute between the parties, the decision of the Director Horticulture Planning and Marketing shall be final and binding upon both the parties.
- In case the highest bid amount of two or more bidders is same, then such highest bidders may be asked to submit sealed revised offers but the revised quoted rate of bidders should not be lower than their respective original bids quoted already at the time of the submission of bid. The higher bidder shall be decided on the basis of revised offer. If the revised bid amount of two or more bidders received in revised offer is again found to be equal, then the highest bidder, among such bidder, shall be decided by draw of lots in the presence of next higher authority and the highest bidders those have quoted equal bids. In case all the highest bidders those have same bid amount, refuse to submit revised offers, or quoting lower revised bids than their respective original bid quoted already at the time of submission of his bid shall not be allowed to participate in the retendering process of the work.

Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process: -

- Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "downloads" option as well as from "bidder Manual kit" on website www.jktenders.gov.in 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 to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital signature. No bid will be accepted in physical form.
- Bid will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned in Para-1.
- The DSC and all other qualification documents shall be in the same name otherwise tender shall be rejected.
- Note: - 1. Scan all the documents on 100 dpi with color option with an optical scanner, pdfs created using cell phones will not be accepted.
- The department will not be responsible for delay in online submission due to any reason.
- Scanned copy of cost of tender documents in shape of demand draft in favour of Member Secretary MAC Shopian and earnest money/bid security in shape of CDR/FDR, if applicable pledged to Member Secretary MAC Shopian must be uploaded with documents of the bid.
- Bidders are advised not to make any change in bid offer contents. In no case they should attempt to create similar BOQ manually. The bid offer downloaded should be used for filling the item rate inclusive of all taxes and it should be saved with the same name as it contains.
- 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 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 e-tendering portal to store such documents as are required.

Ref.No:160/DDK/hpm/2021/625-27
DIPK-1929/21
Dated 19-05-2021

Sd/-
Member Secretary
Market Administrative Committee
(MAC) Shopian.

COVID-19: Canada Extends Flight Ban From India, Pakistan Until June 21



Press Trust of India

Canada has extended the ban on direct flights from India and Pakistan by one month until June 21 in a bid to arrest the spread of new variants of the COVID-19, according to an official announcement. The ban on flights from India and Pakistan was extended as the previous 30-day ban, first imposed on April 22, was set to expire on Saturday, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) News reported.

Cargo flights, however, will be permitted in order to maintain shipments of essential supplies, such as vaccines and personal protective equipment, it said on Friday. "The Minister of Transport is of the opinion that it is necessary for aviation safety and the protection of the public," according to a notice to airmen.

As the ban applies to direct flights from both countries, passengers can still fly to Canada from India or Pakistan by arriving via a third country. They will need to produce a negative result on a COVID-19 test taken at their last point of departure before being allowed to enter Canada, according to the report.

Transport Minister Omar Alghabra, at a government pandemic briefing, said that the restriction was put in place "based on public health advice to reduce the importation risk of COVID-19 and its variants."

"I can say that we've seen a significant reduction in the number of positive cases of COVID-19 arriving from international flights since this restriction was put in place," he said. Alghabra said the government would continue adapting border

restrictions as conditions change. Dr Howard Njoo, Canada's deputy chief public health officer, said that travel restrictions are important given that roughly 70 per cent of new coronavirus cases in Canada are variants of concern.

Last week, Canada's flag carrier Air Canada proactively extended the flight ban from India in anticipation of the government's announcement. Air Canada does not fly to Pakistan.

All travellers arriving in Canada by land or air have to show a negative COVID-19 test and quarantine for up to three days at an approved hotel while awaiting COVID-19 test results, and must test again eight days after arrival.

The B.1.617 variant, first identified in India, has been found in Canada as 279 air travellers tested positive for that variant between February 22 and May 6, the Public Health Agency of Canada said.

India has been severely affected by the unprecedented second wave of the coronavirus and hospitals in several states are reeling under the shortage of health workers, vaccines, oxygen, drugs and beds. The daily rise in coronavirus cases in India remained below 300,000 for the fifth consecutive day with 2,57,299 new cases recorded in a single day, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Saturday.

With a total of 2,57,299 fresh cases, India's total tally of COVID-19 cases climbed to 2,62,89,290. The death toll climbed to 2,95,525 with 4,194 fatalities.

HC Restrains WhatsApp, Telegram From Sharing E-Papers Of ToI, NBT

Agenceis

The Delhi High Court Friday passed an interim order restraining social networking platforms WhatsApp and Telegram and certain individuals from allegedly illegally circulating e-papers of Bennett, Coleman and Company Ltd on their respective platforms.

Justice Jayant Nath said prima facie the act of illegally circulating the e-papers of plaintiff on the defendants' platforms is violative of its copyright and ad-interim injunction is granted in the favour of Bennett, Coleman and Company Ltd.

The court also issued notices to WhatsApp and Telegram, which are instant messaging platforms on which photos, documents and videos are also shared, and certain individuals, who are administrators of various groups on the platforms.

The court asked them to respond to the suit and comply with the order.

The court, which listed the matter for further hearing on August 18, also issued notice to the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology for its response on the suit.

The counsel for the media house contended that e-papers of Times of India and Nav Bharat Times are being circulated on various WhatsApp groups and Telegram without any authority and this amounts to infringement of its copyright.

He said the issue cropped up since lockdown was imposed in 2020 to contain the spread of COVID-19 and individuals started downloading the e-papers and circulated it on other groups, which was not permissible.

The counsel said in June 2020, the media house came to know about illegal usage of its copyright on WhatsApp which was providing free usage of its e-papers and notice was issued to the platform but to no avail.

India's Covid Crisis Is A Warning For Other Low- And Middle-Income Countries: IMF

Agenceis

Observing that the ongoing "catastrophic" second wave of Covid-19 in India is a sign that the worst may be yet to come, the IMF has said. The organisation also said that the situation in India is a warning of the possible events in low- and middle-income nations that have seemingly escaped the pandemic till now.

A report co-authored by International Monetary Fund (IMF) economist Ruchir Agarwal and its Chief Economist Gita Gopinath on Friday said that under the "business-as-usual" scenario, the vaccine coverage in India is expected to remain under 35 per cent of the population by the end of 2021.

"The ongoing catastrophic second wave in India, following a terrible wave in Brazil, is a sign the worst may be yet to come in the developing world," it said.

While India's health system held up fairly well in the first wave, this time its health system is so overwhelmed that many people are dying because of a lack of medical supplies like oxygen, hospital beds, and medical care, the report said.

"India is a warning of possible events in other low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) that so far have seemingly escaped the pandemic, including in Africa," it said.

For India, the report said, current bilateral purchases of vaccine plus coverage from COVAX will cover about 25 per cent of its population by the first half of 2022.

To get to 60 per cent coverage, India will need to immediately place sufficient vaccine orders of about 1 billion doses through contracts that incentivise investment in additional capacity and augmentation of the supply chain.

"In this context, the authorities' recently announced financing of about USD 600 million to the Serum Institute of India and Bharat Biotech to boost production capacity in the near term is a welcome step," the



report said, adding that authorities estimate that two billion doses will be available by the end of 2021.

Efforts should be made to ensure that the projected production capacity will materialise without delay, including through securing the supply chain for raw materials — supported by international efforts to eliminate export restrictions on all critical inputs, it added.

In its report, the IMF said that an urgent focus should be to eliminate constraints on cross-border exports of critical raw materials and finished vaccines. Free cross-border flow of vaccine inputs and supplies is essential for the world to achieve its vaccination targets without delay.

Governments are taking steps to relax such constraints on raw materials, it said, citing the recent pledge by the US to facilitate greater access of critical raw material to Indian manufacturers after severe shortages emerged. However, there is scope for greater multilateral action on this front, as significant constraints still remain, it said.

The IMF report said India continues to face production bottlenecks, including due to ongoing shortages of critical raw materials, suggesting the need for further relaxation of de facto export restrictions under the US Defence Production Act.

Despite such near-term constraints, as of mid-May 2021, the

authorities estimate that over two billion doses will be available by the end of the year based on company-level supply projections publicly shared by officials.

"Therefore, while current pre-purchases of vaccines plus coverage from the COVAX AMC remains around 25 per cent, the authorities intend to meet the residual needs through the additional production," it said.

To reach a coverage of 60 per cent of the population, India will need to order roughly one billion doses of additional vaccines.

"Given the authorities are expected to comfortably use domestic resources for meeting these residual needs and are not seeking external financing for these purposes, we do not allocate additional funds for India in our budgeting exercise," the IMF said.

Indian is currently pursuing a strategy of procuring vaccines for those above 45 years of age by the Centre, while States procure vaccines for those aged 18-44.

Given the current vaccine pricing offered by domestic suppliers, and the estimated size of the younger population in India, the additional funding needs for the Centre for covering the 18-44 population is approximately 0.25 per cent of the GDP, suggesting that there is scope for the government to handle the entire procurement centrally, it said.

Make in India? Half of Manufacturing Jobs Lost In Give Years

Agenceis

While the employment scenario in the country has turned bleaker of late due to the pandemic after a brief spell of moderate recovery from the fathoms hit in May 2020, manufacturing, which has ostensibly received a lot of policy attention, has been losing out to other sectors and the most to agriculture as job creator over the past few years.

According to an analysis by the Centre for Economic Data and Analysis (CEDA) based on the CMIE monthly time-series of employment by industry, manufacturing employment in 2020-21 was nearly half of what it was five years ago.

The decline was particularly sharper in 2020-21 owing to the pandemic — on a year-on-year basis, the sector employed 32% fewer people in 2020-21 over 2019-20. Real estate & construction also saw big fall in its share in employment in 2020-21 (see chart) and a secular decline over the five-years to 2020-21.

While there has been a secular decline in manufacturing employment across all sub-sectors, except chemical industries, all sub-sectors registered a longer-term decline.

From employing 51 million people in 2016-17, employment in manufacturing, which accounts for 17% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP), declined by 46% to reach 27.3 million in 2020-21, reflecting the severity of the employment crisis caused by the pandemic.

Similarly, the real estate and construction sector, which employed 69 million people in 2016-17, employed just 53.7 million in 2020-21, down by a quarter. While the pandemic indeed accentuated the decline, the sector had even earlier been hit hard by inventory pile-up, delivery delays and developer delinquencies. The real estate sector had witnessed a sharp increase in employment growth in the 2004-2011 period, thanks to a boom.

According to the CEDA-CMIE study which covered agriculture, mines, manufacturing, real estate and construction, financial services, non-financial services, and public administrative services, sectors that account for 99% of total employment in the country, agriculture now employs more people than five years ago. The agriculture sector that employed 145.6 million people in 2016-17, employed 151.8 million in 2020-21, allowing its share in em-

ployment to grow from 36% to 40% during the period. Employment in agriculture has been on the rise over the last two years with year-on-year growth rates of 1.7% in 2019-20 and 4.1% in 2020-21, indicating a marginal shift away from manufacturing, non-financial services, mining and real estate sectors to the traditional resort for livelihood.

Among the service sectors, non-financial services, the largest component among service industries, the employment rose over the five-year horizon to 119.7 million to 127.7 million in 2020-21, but there was a sharp y-o-y decline in 2020-21, owing to the pandemic.

As reported by FE recently, like the one a year ago, the recent lockdown also has had an immediate, telling effect on the employment scenario in the country. The country's unemployment rate, that has remained elevated for a few weeks, soared to a near one-year-high of 14.45% in the week ended May 16. While an already-high urban joblessness has turned more acute, a near-100% week-on-week rise in rural unemployment pushed the overall joblessness rate to a level not witnessed since the week ended June 7 last year, when it stood at 17.51%.

Apple CEO Faces Tough Questions About Application Store Competition

Agenceis

SAN RAMON, Calif. (AP) — Apple CEO Tim Cook described the company's ironclad control over its mobile app store as the best way to serve and protect iPhone users, but he faced tough questions about competition issues from a judge Friday about allegations he oversees an illegal monopoly.

The rare courtroom appearance by one of the world's best-known executives came during the closing phase of a three-week trial revolving around an antitrust case brought by Epic Games, maker of the popular video game Fortnite.

Epic is trying to topple the so-called "walled garden" for iPhone and iPad apps that welcomes users and developers while locking out competition. Created by Apple co-founder Steve Jobs a year after the iPhone's 2007 debut, the App Store has become a key revenue source for Apple, helping power the company to a \$57 billion profit in its last fiscal year.

The trial focuses on Epic's contention that Apple has turned its store into a price-gouging vehicle that not only reaps a 15% to 30% commission from in-app transactions, but blocks apps from offering other payment

was buying everything Cook said on the stand.

After the lawyers were done with their questioning, U.S. District Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers asked why Apple can't allow rival stores to offer an in-app transaction option on iPhones, iPads and iPods that might charge lower commissions. That is something Epic is fighting to make it happen, partly because it has a still unprofitable store that imposes a 12% commission.

Gonzalez Rogers seemed particularly troubled by a survey indicating 39% of iPhone app developers aren't happy with the current distribution system. She also wondered about the fairness of a commission system requiring the makers of video games pay the bulk of the commissions, while digital services offered in other industries such as banking don't pay anything, even though they are using the technology that powers iPhones.

"The gaming industry seems to be generating a disproportionate amount of money relative to the (intellectual property) that you are giving them and everybody else? In a sense it's almost as if they are subsidizing everybody else," Gonzalez Rogers said.



alternatives. That ban extends to showing a link that would open a web page offering commission-free ways to pay for subscriptions, in-game items and the like.

Under friendly questioning from a company lawyer, Cook delivered polished remarks that sometimes sounded like a commercial for the iPhone and other Apple products.

But the normally unflappable CEO occasionally seemed flustered while being grilled by Epic lawyer Gary Bornstein. His unease was particularly evident when pressed about the level of profits in a store that Jobs initially thought would be lucky to break even. He seemed to stumble slightly again when Bornstein confronted him about a deal in China that could compromise user privacy, even as the company maintains that protecting its customers' personal information is a top priority.

Cook, though, never wavered during nearly four hours of testimony from his position that Apple's grip on the app store helps it keep things simple for a loyal customer base that buys iPhones knowing they getting "something that just works."

"They buy into an entire ecosystem when they buy an iPhone," said Cook, who wore a face shield, but no mask in an Oakland, California, courtroom that has limited access because of the pandemic.

It wasn't at all clear that the federal judge who will decide the case

Cook agreed about the subsidy, but insisted there is still a fair balance because video game makers are able to reach a wider audience of consumers who become players while visiting the store looking at other apps. He took issue with the notion that most app makers are unhappy with the store's current setup.

"We turn the place upside down for developers," Cook said.

Gonzalez Rogers also didn't seem to buy Apple's explanation for a move it made last year when it lowered its commission on in-app commissions to 15% on the first \$1 million in revenue. Although the price cut came after Epic filed its antitrust case in August, Apple said the discount was driven by desire to provide a helping hand during a pandemic-driven recession.

"At least what I've seen so far, that really wasn't the result of competition, (but) the pressure you were feeling," Gonzalez Rogers told Cook. Apple's app store practices are being examined by regulators and lawmakers in the U.S. and Europe while Epic pursues its case.

Gonzalez Rogers is expected to elaborate issues still weighing on her mind Monday when she plans to pose questions to lawyers on both sides while they make their final points before she takes the matter under submission. The judge said she hopes to release her decision before Aug. 13 in a written ruling that could reshape the technology landscape.

SHORT TAKES

Complied With New Intermediary Norms Ahead Of Time: Koo

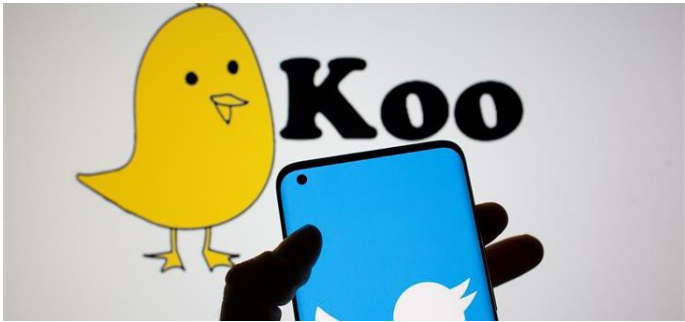
Agenceis

NEW DELHI: Homegrown microblogging platform Koo on Saturday said it has met the compliance requirements of the new guidelines for digital platforms ahead of the stipulated deadline later this month.

On February 25, the government had announced tighter regulations for social media firms like Facebook and Twitter, requiring them to remove any content flagged by authorities within 36 hours and setting up a complaint redressal mechanism with an officer being based in the country. The government had set 50 lakh registered users as the threshold for defining 'significant social media intermediary', which will have to adhere to additional obligations and compliance under the new IT rules that seek to crack down on misuse of social media platforms.

Announcing the guidelines in February, it had said the new rules take effect immediately, while significant social media providers (based on number of users) will get three months before they need to start complying.

In a statement on Saturday, Koo said its Privacy Policy, Terms of Use



and Community Guidelines reflect the requirements of the Rules as applicable to significant social media intermediaries. Koo has close to 6 million (60 lakh) users, making it a major social media intermediary under the new guidelines.

"In addition, Koo has implemented a due diligence and grievance redressal mechanism supported by an Indian resident Chief Compliance Officer, Nodal Officer and Grievance Officer," it added.

Aprameya Radhakrishna, co-founder and CEO of Koo, said the company is building an India-first product and that user safety and convenience

is of utmost importance.

"Complying with the new social media guidelines published by the Government of India within time clearly shows why it's important to have Indian social media players thriving in the country," he added.

Koo, founded by Radhakrishna and Mayank Bidawatka, was launched last year to allow users to express themselves and engage on the platform in Indian languages. It supports multiple languages including Hindi, Telugu and Bengali, among others.

The new rules—announced earlier this year—require 'significant social media intermediaries' to follow ad-

ditional due diligence, including the appointment of a chief compliance officer, nodal contact person and resident grievance officer. All three officials will have to reside in India. The players will have to publish a monthly compliance report and details of the contents removed proactively.

As per data cited by the government, India has 53 crore WhatsApp users, 44.8 crore YouTube users, 41 crore Facebook subscribers, 21 crore Instagram clients, while 1.75 crore account holders are on microblogging platform Twitter.

The new rules were introduced to make social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter and Instagram—which have seen a phenomenal surge in usage over the past few years in India—more accountable and responsible for the content hosted on their platform.

Social media companies will have to take down posts depicting nudity or morphed photos within 24 hours of receiving a complaint, and will be required to disclose the first originator of the mischievous information that undermines the sovereignty of India, security of the state, or public order when asked by the court or government. — PTI

4.5 Million Passengers Hit In Massive Cyber-Attack On Air India

Agenceis

In a massive data breach on national carrier Air India, details of around 4.5 million passengers have been compromised including passport and credit card information, Air India said in a statement late on Friday.

In a personal communication to those whose details were stolen, the airline said, "As part of our commitment, we would like to inform you that SITA PSS, our data processor of the passenger service system, recently notified Air India of a data security breach involving personal data of certain passengers, including yours." The identity of the affected passengers, the message said, was provided by the data processor to Air India on March 25 and April 5, 2021.

"We hereby address to you a personal communication of this data security incident. The breach involved some personal data reg-



istered between 26th August 2011 and 20th February 2021 with details that included name, date of birth, contact information, passport information, ticket information, frequent flyer data and also credit cards data," it said.

Air India's passenger service system provider SITA based out of Geneva in Switzerland faced a sophisticated cyber-attack in February leading to leak of personal data of a certain number of the national carrier's passengers.

Air India said it is in touch with various regulatory agencies in India and abroad, and has apprised them about the incident in accordance with its obligations.

The airline said it has taken the following steps after the data security incident: Secured the compromised servers, engaged external specialists of data security incidents, notified and is in talks with the credit card issuers and reset the passwords of Air India frequent flyer programmes.

IMA Demands Action Against Ramdev For Remarks About Allopathy; Patanjali Says Comments "False"

Press Trust of India

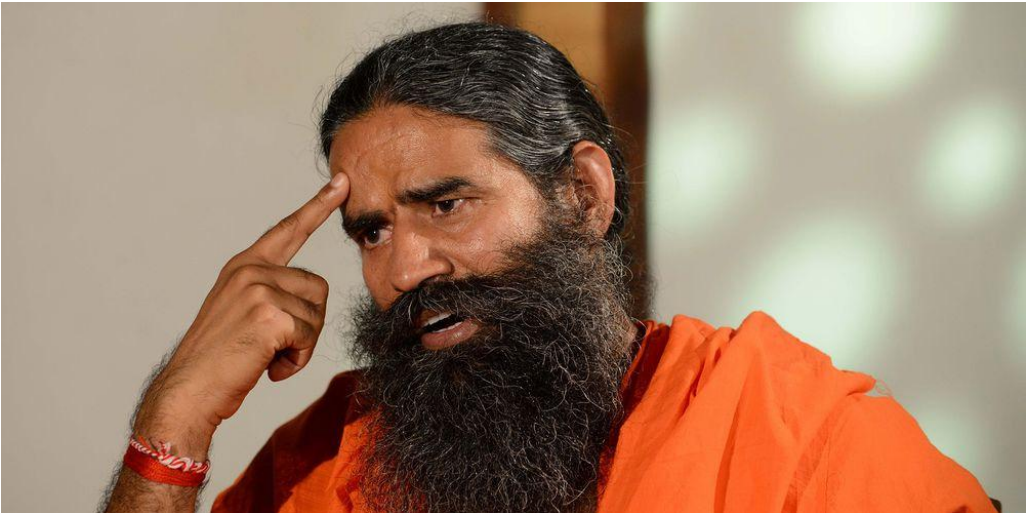
New Delhi: The Indian Medical Association (IMA) on Saturday demanded that the Centre should take strict action against yoga guru Ramdev for allegedly misleading people by making "unlearned" comments and describing modern medicine as "stupid science", remarks which were denied as "false" by the Haridwar-based Patanjali Yogpeeth Trust.

The Resident Doctors' Associations of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) and Safdarjung Hospital too condemned Ramdev's statement and demanded that "strictest steps" be taken against him.

Citing a video circulating on social media, the IMA said Ramdev has claimed that allopathy is a "stupid science" and medicines such as remdesivir, faviflu, and other drugs approved by the Drugs Controller General of India have failed to treat COVID-19 patients. The doctor's body also quoted Ramdev as saying that "lakhs of patients have died after taking allopathic medicines".

Ramdev should be prosecuted under the Epidemic Diseases Act as "untutored" statements are "a threat to the literate society of the country as well as to the poor people falling prey to him", the IMA said in a statement.

"The Union health minister, who himself is a practising modern medicine allopathic postgraduate and head of this (health) ministry, should either accept the challenge and accusation of this gentleman and dissolve the modern medical facility or boldly face and prosecute the person for his words of



arson on the sovereignty of the country and book him under the Epidemic Act to save millions of people from such unscientific utterances," the IMA said.

The IMA said it has also sent a legal notice to Ramdev seeking 'written apology' and 'recall of statements' by him.

Reacting to the controversy, Patanjali Yogpeeth Trust issued a statement, denying the comments, and said, "it is clarified that the truncated version of the video is totally out of context of what is sought to be conveyed by Swami jee."

Asserting that Ramdev has "utmost regards" for doctors and support staff who have been working day and night during such a challenging time of the pandemic, the statement signed by Trust General Secretary Acharya Balakrishna said, "Swami jee has no ill-will against the modern science and good practitioners of modern medicine. What is being attributed against him is false and nugatory."

IMA also alleged that Ramdev

was trying to take advantage of the situation and create a sense of fear and frustration among the people at large. He is doing this so that "he can sell his illegal and unapproved so-called medicines and make money at the cost of the public at large", the association said.

The IMA said Ramdev deserves to be prosecuted for "disobeying and causing danger" to the life of many by making them believe to not to take the advice of allopathy doctors.

"The IMA demands and resolves if the minister (Harsh Vardhan) is not taking suo moto action, we will be forced to resort to democratic means of struggle to propagate the truth to the common man and knock the doors of the judiciary to get due to justice, it said and added that taking people for ransom and winning business by defaming scientific medicine are unpardonable offenses.

In a statement, the RDA of AIIMS said it "vehemently

condemns" Ramdev's comments.

"On behalf of the medical fraternity, and all healthcare and frontline workers, we demand strongly that strictest steps be taken against his inappropriate conduct at the earliest to prevent unrest amongst doctors and anxiety amongst the affected patients and their family," it said.

Ramdev should be booked under relevant sections of the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1987 and we demand that he offers an unconditional apology to the scientific community failing which we will be forced to call for a public protest condemning the act, it added.

The RDA of Safdarjung Hospital said Ramdev's statement must be considered as hate speech" and requested the appropriate authorities to book him under relevant sections of the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1987.

"We demand unconditional public apology from Ramdev to allopathy and its practitioners," it said in a statement.

COVID-19: Education Ministry Calls Crucial Meet Tomorrow On Class 12 Boards, Entrance Exams

NEW DELHI: The Ministry of Education (MOE) has called a crucial meeting on Sunday to decide on pending Class 12 board exams and subsequent entrance examinations that were postponed due to the second wave of COVID-19, Union Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' said.

The high-level meeting will be chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. Union Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani as well as Minister for Information and Broadcasting Prakash Javadekar will be among those present. Education ministers and secretaries of all states and union territories have been asked to attend the meeting.

Pokhriyal also sought inputs from all the stakeholders students, parents, teachers and others through social media on Saturday.

"A high-level virtual meeting will be convened tomorrow (Sunday) with all states and union territories' education ministers, education secretaries and chairpersons of state examination boards and stakeholders to discuss the proposals for the conduct of exams for Class 12 and entrance examinations for professional courses," he said.

"I recently held a meeting with the state education secretaries in this regard. The consultative process will be further strengthened through the high-level meeting. This virtual meeting will take place at 11.30 am," he added.

In a letter to the states and UTs, the education minister has said that his ministry's Department of School Education and the CBSE were exploring options regarding the conduct of the examinations,

keeping in mind the safety and security of both students and teachers.

"The Department of Higher Education is also deliberating upon the finalisation of the dates of examinations for institutions of higher learning. COVID-19 pandemic has affected various areas including the education sector, particularly the board exams and entrance exams," the letter noted.

In view of the prevailing situation, almost all state education boards, the CBSE and the ICSE have postponed their Class 12 examinations. Similarly, the National Testing Agency (NTA) and other national exam conducting institutions have also postponed entrance exams for admissions to professional courses.

"As the conduct of Class 12 examinations impacts upon state board exams and other entrance exams across the country, and to reduce uncertainty among students, it is desirable that a considered decision based on inputs of different state governments and UT administrations is taken about Class 12 examinations in the interest of all the students across the country," the letter said.

According to CBSE sources, the possible options that can be explored are --conducting pen and paper mode exams for only major subjects, conducting all exams in two phases planned as per the COVID-19 situation in different states or districts, or cancelling the exams and announcing results as per an alternative assessment scheme.

A senior board official, however, said, "nothing has been finalised yet. A final call will only be taken by the Education Ministry after

considering suggestions from all stakeholders".

The CBSE had on April 14 announced the cancellation of Class 10 exams and postponed Class 12 exams due to the surge in COVID-19 cases. The decision was taken at a high-level meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The April and May edition of the engineering entrance exam JEE-Mains were also postponed.

The board exams, which are usually conducted in February-March every year, were scheduled to be held from May 4.

The CBSE had announced that a decision on the Class 12 board exams will be taken on or after June 1. A section of students and parents have been demanding that the Class 12 exams be cancelled in the wake of the pandemic situation.

The CBSE had earlier this month announced the marking policy for Class 10 board exams.

According to the policy, while 20 marks for each subject will be for internal assessment as every year, 80 marks will be calculated based on the students' performance in various tests or exams throughout the year.

Schools across the country were closed in March last year to contain the spread of COVID-19 ahead of a nationwide lockdown.

Several states started reopening the schools partially from October last year, but physical classes were again suspended because of the rise in coronavirus cases.

Last year, the board exams had to be postponed mid-way in March. They were later cancelled, and results were announced based on an alternative assessment scheme.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Corona Curfew

(districts) of J&K till 7 am on Monday, 24/5/21 is extended further till 7 am on Monday, 31/5/21. Curfew will be strict except for a few essential services. DCs (Deputy Commissioners) being given limited flexibility to ensure economic activities do not suffer," the Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) said in a tweet on its official handle.

Jammu and Kashmir on Friday recorded 3,848 fresh COVID-19 cases that took its tally to 2,63,905, while 43 more fatalities pushed the death toll to 3,465, officials said.

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

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

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

48 More Deaths

Budgam 273, Pulwama 175, Kupwara 202, Anantnag 224, Bandipora 112, Ganderbal 132, Kulgam 241, Shopian 52, Jammu 490, Udhampur 150, Rajouri 119, Doda 43, Kathua 138, Samba 82, Kishtwar 15, Poonch 59, Ramban 128 and Reasi 27 new cases of coronavirus.

Moreover, officials said, 4117 more COVID-19 patients have recovered—1623 from Jammu Division and 2494 from Kashmir valley. There are 49136 active positive cases in J&K— 20199 in Jammu division and 28937 in the Valley.

India Reports

Andhra Pradesh (910), Madhya Pradesh (720) Rajasthan (700), Karnataka (5,00), Haryana (250), Delhi (197), Punjab (95), Chhattisgarh (87), Bihar (56), Tamil Nadu (40), Kerala (36), Jharkhand (27), Odisha (15), Goa (12) and Chandigarh (8).

Mucormycosis is a serious but rare fungal infection caused by a group of molds called mucormycetes that has been developing in Covid-19 patients. The fungal disease is commonly being observed in patients who were given steroids for a long time, who have been hospitalised for a long time, were on oxygen support or ventilator, faced poor hospital hygiene or those who have been taking medication for other illnesses such as diabetes.

If not treated on time, the black fungus infection can turn fatal. The Covid medications can leave the body weak and low on immunity. They can also escalate the blood sugar levels in both diabetics and non-diabetic Covid-19 patients.

214 Detained

2 shopkeepers were also booked by police in Budgam for violating Covid-19 norms.

The police spokesperson further said that efforts have been enhanced to sensitise the masses about controlling the highly contagious Coronavirus.

"Police have also enhanced the efforts to implement the Covid-19 guidelines/SOPs/restrictions strictly throughout the valley and slew of measures including restrictions u/s 144 have been put into place to contain the spread

of Covid-19," he added.

Corona Under Control

indicator which shows the disease is under control", he said and further added that with the determination and cooperation of people, the impact of pandemic could be subdued to a large extent," Dr Ashiq Rashid Mir, Surveillance Medical Officer, WHO said Saturday.

He said in an encouraging sign, over 130,000 patients have recovered in Kashmir and another eighty thousand have recovered in Jammu.

While reiterating on adherence to universal Covid protocols everywhere and at all times, Dr Mir asked people to wear masks properly and asked not to touch them while they are wearing it. He also advised people to avoid removing mask with uncovered hands at the time of disposal and instead use clean sanitised hands.

"The exterior side of the masks may contain infection and touching it may pose a threat of infection", he warned.

The WHO surveillance officer also said that people should wash hands with soap for thirty seconds while returning home from work. He called these preventive measures as the first weapon against curtailing the spread of pandemic.

While expressing gratitude to the government, he said the central government made it possible to have vaccines abundantly available and free of cost for the people since the beginning.

He asked people to register for vaccination to get an appointment on a specific date for inoculation and get vaccinated on their turn as it is another effective weapon against the infection.

Sajjad Haider Quits

over the mantle of Kashmir Editors Guild (KEG). Playing a headman of news veterans was a feather in my cap. But at the same time, the crown came with its own heavy responsibilities", Haider wrote on his twitter handle.

One of the immediate undertakings, according to Sajjad Haider, was to "reactivate the guild and safeguard the faith in Kashmir Journalism – always subjected to scrutiny and slurs".

"I often sat with the like minded and tried to do the best for the profession in the challenging circumstances. The role eventually became a learning stint in my three-decade-long career", he wrote.

"Right from my rookie days during tumultuous nineties, to the editorship of 25-year-old Kashmir Observer, I have stayed true to the core principles of Journalism and zealously safeguarded my professional integrity. I have never sought concessions from anyone, least of all from the government", he added.

"But now since some members have high expectations from the KEG which under given circumstances I am unable to meet, I have decided to happily pass the baton to a better person", Haider wrote.

'Turn Vaccination

political and ideological differences, it is the responsibility of all of us to save the paradise of Kashmir by unitedly fighting the onslaught of Covid," he said.

Singh appreciated the manner in which the civil society in the Kashmir Valley was working in close unison with the local administration, a statement issued by the Personnel Ministry said.

The minister said he had advised all district

collectors of Kashmir to keep public representatives on board in the collective fight against the pandemic.

Singh reiterated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is taking personal interest in monitoring the situation across the country, including Kashmir.

"Whenever required, the prime minister reaches out to district administrations and also the medical fraternity, and ensures that every requirement is met without losing time," he added.

Unfortunately, the Kashmir Valley was confronted with the COVID-19 pandemic around the time of the Eid festival, spring season and ensuing Shri Amarant Yatra.

He hoped that with collective efforts and determined will, it will be possible to overcome this calamity and return to happier times.

The minister said he has instructed district collectors in Kashmir to rope in community leaders in organising people-friendly vaccination camps at the earliest and added that sufficient doses of vaccine will be made available soon.

Singh, who is the Lok Sabha member from Jammu and Kashmir's Udhampur constituency, informed that necessary instructions have been issued for establishing free tele-consultation facilities in a big way for rural areas and for patients in home isolation.

NGOs, youth groups and party functionaries can organise tele-consultation in community health centres or in panchayat bhavans by following all Covid protocols, he said, adding that professional guidance will also blunt the self-styled remedies being forwarded on social media platforms.

Responding to some of the issues flagged by leaders, Singh informed that from May 24, walk-in-interviews will start for recruitment of medical staff.

He also advised that in the meanwhile, post-graduate and final-year undergraduate medicine students and nursing staff may be engaged at government medical colleges and other associated hospitals to fight the problem of lack of human resource.

Singh also called for a short-term training programme for operation of ventilators, the statement said.

The minister said that he is regularly in touch with the administration in different districts as well as authorities of all government medical colleges in both the regions of Jammu and Kashmir, including the Sher-I-Kashmir Institute of Medical Science (SKIMS) in Soura.

Responding to the concerns about treatment of non-Covid critical patients, mainly cancer patients requiring chemo doses and dialysis for kidney patients, Singh said that efforts are being made to earmark beds for such patients at the Government Medical College in Srinagar and at SKIMS.

The participating leaders thanked the Union minister for sending Covid-related material to Kashmir and demanded more consignments for distribution in other districts, the statement said.

This week itself, Singh had flagged off separate consignments of Covid-related material for the Union Territory's two capital cities Jammu and Srinagar. These included separate kits containing face masks, sanitisers and other accessories.

Dr Rafi, Mohammed Anwar Khan, Darakhshan Andrabi, Altaf Thakur, Manzoor Bhat, Ghulam Ahmad Mir, Bilal Parry, Aarif

Raza, Ali Mohammed Mir and Ashok Bhat were among those who joined the video conference meeting with Singh on Covid preparedness and follow-up measures, the statement said. PTI

Heart Patients

regarding the ill effects of prescribed medicines during infection seriously.

While emphasizing on vaccine jabs for heart patients, Dr Bhat said that vaccination is very important for such patients who are taking blood thinner drugs like warfarin, aspirin or acitrom and there is no need to panic.

Urging people to protect themselves from catching infection, the senior cardiologist said that it has been observed that virus initially affected lungs then directly or indirectly affects heart.

Dr Bhat further said that internal stable disease of some patients gets unstable due to Covid infection which increases the chances of heart attack.

2 Cops Suspended

SHO concerned and the supervisory officer has been reprimanded", the spokesman added.

Ex-J&K Bank

and the objections raised by the prosecution, in the opinion of the court the accused-petitioner deserve concession of bail," the presiding officer of the court C. L. Bavoria said.

"However, in view of the objections of prosecution that the investigation has not completed and the presence of the accused is required by the investigating agency to question/examine the rest of files of ABATS/BATS seized in case FIR No. 10/2019, the accused/petitioner is admitted to interim bail in both the FIRs i.e. FIR Nos. 14/2020 & 01/2020 till 31.05.2021 on furnishing of bail bonds of Rs. 1.00 lakh in each of the FIRs and personal bonds of like amount with one surety."

The court also subjected the bail to certain conditions including that the former J&K bank chairman shall appear before the Investigation Officer during the interim bail in between 10.00 AM to 2.00 PM as and when called by the IO.

That he shall not directly or indirectly make any inducement, threat or promise to any person acquainted with the facts of the case or the case as to dissuade him to disclose such facts to the court or any other authority.

"The accused shall not leave the jurisdiction of court without prior permission and if the accused/petitioner fails to fulfill the conditions, the prosecution shall be at liberty to approach the court for cancellation of his bail," the court said and ordered that the application come up for further proceedings on May 31. (GNS)

NIA Charges

He said charges would be abated against three slain Hizbul militants -- Osama Bin Javed alias 'Osama', Haroon Abbas Wani and Zahid Hussain alias 'Zahid' -- for their involvement in various militancy-related incidents in the Doda-Kishtwar belt.

The trio were killed by government forces in separate encounters in 2019 and 2020.

"Hussain, Malik and Giri were providing logistics support and organising shelter for the Hizbul Mujahideen militants involved in the multiple militancy incidents, the spokesperson said.

He said a case was initially registered on March 8, 2019 at Police Station Kishtwar relating to the snatching of the service weapon of the escort in-charge of the then Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar.

NIA had re-registered the case on November 2, 2019 and taken over the investigation which has revealed that the instant case was one of the several militancy acts committed by Hizbul Mujahideen during the years 2018-2019 in Kishtwar district, the spokesperson said.

He said the objective of all these acts was to revive militancy in Kishtwar by looting arms and targeting prominent persons of a particular community to create fear among the members of that community.

Kishtwar district recorded the first militancy act in more than a decade on November 1, 2018 when senior BJP leader Anil Parihar and his brother Ajit Parihar were killed outside their house in Kishtwar town. It was followed by the killing of RSS functionary Chaderkant Sharma and his PSO inside the district hospital on April 9, 2019 and looting of services rifles of two policemen on separate occasions in 2019.

On September 28, 2019, state forces achieved a major breakthrough when they killed three militants, including Osama Bin Javed and his associate Zahid Hussain, in an encounter in Ramban.

Wani was killed in an encounter in the Gondana belt of Doda district on January 15 last year. PTI

Heroics Tackling

this diversified role of the orphanages, Kashmir's current Covid crisis is being managed by a collective consortium of welfare-minded individuals going out of their way to address hardships with their heroics.

"We're proud of our NGOs for running the oxygen and food initiatives at the moment, but more and more people should come forward to support our brethren in distress," Rashida says. "We've shown in past that we're together in crisis. We must show the same spirit when many families are finding it hard to manage meals and means."

Soldier 'Strangles'

that Singh committed suicide as he was found hung inside his room.

The body of the deceased was shifted to the hospital for post mortem.

Meanwhile, police have registered a case and initiated further proceedings in this regard.

KU Extends

May 31, 2021.

They said that the eligibility and all other conditions for admission can be ascertained from the already-issued detailed notification available on the University website www.kashmiruniversity.ac.in.

Arms Found During

30 rounds and two Chinese Pistols and a magazine.

Electric Shock

Beerwah for treatment. However, the doctors there declared Ahmed brought dead.

The condition of Najjar, who is being treated at the hospital, is said to be life threatening.

Chief Medical Officer confirmed the death of Farooq Ahmed saying another man is undergoing treatment.

148 Athletes Across Sports Get First Dose Of COVID Vaccine, 17 Fully Vaccinated



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: As many as 148 athletes across all sports, including those who have qualified for the upcoming Tokyo Games, have already received their first dose of COVID-19 vaccination, according to the Indian Olympic Association (IOA).

Out of these 148 athletes, 17 have got both the doses and 13 have received their first shot, IOA president Narinder Batra said.

These 148 include potential athletes who can make it to the Tokyo Olympics which is opening on July 23. Besides this, 13 Tokyo Paralympic-bound athletes have got their first vaccine shot while two have received both doses. The Tokyo Paralympics opens on August 24.

The total number of athletes (including para-athletes), who have got at least their first dose till May 20, is 163.

Giving the 'vaccination status of Tokyo-bound Indian athletes and officials in the long list as on May 20', Batra said 87 officials have got single dose of COVID-19 vaccine while 23 are fully vaccinated.

More than 90 Indian athletes across sports have so far qualified for the Tokyo Olympics which was postponed from last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Olympic-bound shooters who are currently training in Croatia will be vaccinated there as they are expected to directly fly to Tokyo from there, the NRI said.

Some of them have already got their first jabs in India before departing for Croatia and they will get their second dose in that country.

Fencer Bhavani Devi also got her first jab at her training base in Italy while weightlifter Mirabai Chanu is expected to get her shots in the United States.

Srinagar Youth Completes 950 KMs Srinagar-Delhi Run In 7 days



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Setting a new record, 25-year-old Uzair Fayaz Khan of Nowhatta, Srinagar completed 950 kilometres long distance between Srinagar to Delhi on foot in a record 7 days time.

Khan, a student, pursuing B.A in Psychology at Amar Singh College had always been interested in running and taking part in marathons, since his school days.

Before taking this challenge of running from Srinagar to Delhi, Khan claimed to have undergone rigorous 7 months long training under the supervision of his coach Mushtaq Ahmad Bhat. He said that the motive of the run was to create anti-drug addiction awareness among youth.

Khan started his journey from Bakhshi Stadium, Srinagar after being flagged off by DySP Traffic

City Srinagar, GH. Hassan on April 2 and finished it at Rajghat Delhi on April 8, 2021, where he was received by CRPF Jawans, who presented him a bouquet.

He said that he has also participated in marathon runs from Srinagar to Sonamarg, Gulmarg and Pahalgam earlier.

He said that the run to Delhi was not an easy task as he faced many challenges including, climatic conditions, foot injuries and other difficulties on the way, but he kept on taking steps without any regrets or remorse to reach his goal.

Khan said that though he got little support from some quarters, most of the expenses he had to bear from his own pocket during this marathon.

After making a record, Khan applied for registration for International Book of Records, Indian Book of Records and Works Re-

cords India for what he has to pay a sum of Rs. 22K, which he can't afford at this time for not having better financial conditions at home.

"I wish both the Government as well as private agencies support me so that I could take on new challenges and register for the Guinness Book of World Records also," said Khan.

He said that through this run he wanted to give a strong message to all those youth involved in drugs that "nothing is impossible".

"It is disheartening to see our youth falling prey to drug menace. I was carrying a small banner all along to create awareness on drug abuse. I wish our youth who have become addicts quit the wrong practice and get a new hope of living a better life again," added Khan.

Khan further expressed his gratitude to all who supported him during his run to Delhi.

Kayaking, Canoeing Training Facilities Added To Khelo India Centre In Srinagar

Press Trust of India

SRINAGAR: The Sports Ministry on Saturday decided to add training facilities for kayaking and canoeing at the Khelo India State Centre of Excellence (KISCE) here to promote the two watersports in Jammu and Kashmir.

The J&K Sports Council and the state government had made a request to include these two sporting disciplines.

The KISCE, which was launched in April after revamping facilities in the existing J&K Water Sports Academy, already has training facilities for rowing.

"The performance of athletes from the state in kayaking and canoeing have been impressive in international competitions such as the World Championships and the Asian Championship," Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju said in a release.

"It has been decided to equip the KISCE in Srinagar with training facilities for the two disciplines so that more sporting talent from the state have the opportunity to excel in the sport and represent India in world-class competition."

The Sports Authority of India (SAI) and the Sports Council of J&K will assess the requirements to implement training in the two disciplines, including coaching and equipment support to be added.

Speaking about the develop-



ment, Lieutenant Governor of J&K Manoj Sinha said, "We want to ensure maximum utilisation of the KISCE in Srinagar so that more athletes can be trained here."

"The addition of these two sporting disciplines will enable greater participation and also draw sporting talent from other states to train here. I am happy that the Sports Ministry and the state Government have worked together to make this possible."

The endeavour has been welcomed by senior athletes and sports administrators alike.

Speaking about the importance of this decision, Indian Kayaking and Canoeing Association secretary general Prashant Khushwaha said, "kayaking, canoeing and rowing together have a total of 63 medals in Olympics. If we can provide training to youngsters in these disciplines, India's medal haul in

Olympics can go up significantly. "The equipment of these sports are expensive and support through the Khelo India Scheme will be really beneficial. Kashmir is a strategic location for the academy since the weather matches with European countries where most competitions are held. This is a great step towards improving water sports in India."

International-level kayak from the state, Bilquis Mir said, "The decision to have the KISCE in Srinagar has historic significance. I have been attached to water sports for 21 years and it is for the first time that so much has been done to provide proper training facilities in the state."

"The launch of the KISCE and now the inclusion of kayaking and canoeing will enthuse young athletes of the sport and I am sure we will be able to attain a podium finish in the Olympics in the years to come."

Indian Football Team Begins Training In Doha After All Players Test COVID Negative

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: All the players and support staff of the Indian football team have tested negative for COVID-19 after arrival in Qatar and have also started training ahead of the joint Qualifiers for the 2022 World Cup and 2023 Asian Cup next month.

The team, which arrived in Doha on Wednesday evening, was under compulsory quarantine and waiting for the results of their RT-PCR tests before starting their preparatory camp.

"Yes, all the 28 players and support staff tested negative in the tests done after their arrival," All India Football Federation General Secretary Kushal Das told PTI.

The team, bolstered by the return of Sunil Chhetri, will have a preparatory camp inside a bio-bubble here before its first match on June 3 against hosts Qatar. The other two matches are against Bangladesh (June 7) and Afghanistan (June 15).

Through the good offices of Qatar Football Association, a 10-day hard quarantine was waived off for the Indians and

they began training as soon as they got the COVID-19 negative results.

"Gearing-up for the challenges ahead. The #BlueTigers had their training first training session in Doha, Qatar last night," the AIFF said in a tweet, along with pictures of training of players under head coach Igor Stimac.

The matches are being played in Doha in view of the COVID-19 pandemic 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 is still in the reckoning for the 2023 Asian Cup in China.

The Indian players were to have a national camp in Kolkata from May 2 onwards but the raging pandemic in the country led to its cancellation.

The players and the support had left the country on Wednesday after undergoing RT-PCR tests prior to flying off to Doha from New Delhi.

They had arrived in New Delhi on May 15 with mandatory negative RT-PCR test results.

After Fighting COVID-19, W Saha Aims Dig At IPL's Bubble Tightness

Press Trust of India

KOLKATA: Seasoned wicketkeeper-batsman Wriddhiman Saha has indicated that the bio-bubble for IPL-14 was not as foolproof as the one in UAE last year, becoming the first India player to publicly question, even if subtly, the tightness of the controlled environment.

The 36-year-old Saha was among the players who contracted the dreaded virus before the IPL stumbled to an abrupt halt midway into its 14th season after multiple COVID-19 cases were reported in its bio-bubble.

over a fortnight-long quarantine at a Delhi hotel to make himself available for selection for the upcoming England tour.

On the bio-bubble he added, "I don't know what would have happened, but definitely I feel it would have been better off in UAE this time as well. It's for the stakeholders to look into it."

Saha had tested positive for COVID-19 on May 4, the day the 2021 edition of the tournament was suspended indefinitely.

He said he has fully recovered now and he is not feeling any weakness.



During an interview with PTI, Saha spoke about the bio-bubble breach in India and said it would have been better if the IPL was held in UAE, like last year.

"It's the job of the stakeholders to assess it, but the only thing I would say is that there was not a single individual during our training in UAE (last year), not even a ground staff."

"Here there would be people, kids peeping from nearby walls. I don't want to comment much but we saw how the IPL went off smoothly in UAE in 2020 and then it started in India this year with cases on the rise," Saha said.

The Bengal veteran reached his home in Kolkata after completing

"I'm doing all normal activities, there's no fatigue, body ache or any weakness. But I will actually get to know how my body is coping when I get into actual match training mode."

Recalling his battle with the virus, he said: "I had a slight fever for the first couple of days, lost smell after five days but it returned within four days."

"It was about spending time with family, friends (virtually), catching up with some light-hearted movies and keeping myself in a good space. I was never mentally disturbed or down. I was just being normal."

"Currently, I'm doing some fitness routine at home but the actual fitness training will start after I join the team in Mumbai," he concluded.

PCB Plans June 5 Restart For PSL In Abu Dhabi

Press Trust of India

KARACHI: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is planning to start the PSL-6 in Abu Dhabi from June 5 and all the participating players will undergo a 10-day quarantine period before they start training.

The owner of Karachi Kings Salman Iqbal said the terms and conditions agreed between the PCB and the UAE authorities entail a mandatory 10-day quarantine period for players, officials and broadcasting crew members.

In between there will be regular Covid-19 tests during the quarantine period as well, Iqbal said.

A source in the PCB said plans were being made to fly the foreign and local players to Abu Dhabi by May 25 so that they can start their quarantine period and the tournament can begin from June 5.

The foreign and local players and officials will also have to undergo a three-day quarantine in Pakistan before boarding their chartered flights to Abu Dhabi.

The Board has also hired the ser-

vices of an international company, Restrata, to manage the COVID-19 bio-bubble in Abu Dhabi where the six teams will be put up at three different hotels.

The PCB has managed to get clearance from the authorities in the UAE to hold the remaining 20 matches of the PSL 6 in Abu Dhabi.

The confirmation to hold the matches came after days of suspense over whether the PCB would get clearance from the UAE government which has suspended all flights from Pakistan due to the current COVID-19 situation. A high powered delegation of the PCB has been in Abu Dhabi since last week to get the necessary clearances.

The PSL 6 was suspended on March 4 in Karachi after just 14 matches due to a rapid rise in COVID-19 cases among players and officials.

The Board had decided to hold the remaining matches in the UAE after the National Command and Operations Authority, which monitors the COVID-19 situation in Pakistan, had advised it against hosting the games again in Karachi.

PM Modi's Instruction Is To Provide Full Support To Athletes: Kiren Rijiju

Agenceis

NEW DELHI: Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju on Saturday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has instructed to provide full support to India's Tokyo Olympic-bound athletes as well as junior athletes.

The Tokyo Games are scheduled to be held from July 23 to August 8 this year after getting postponed in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Our athletes are happy and getting ready for Tokyo Olympics. Despite pandemic Govt is doing everything possible to support our athletes to make India proud. Hon'ble PM @narendramodi ji has given clear direction to provide full support to our elite as well as junior athletes," Rijiju tweeted.



Along with his tweet, Rijiju also posted a video in which top shuttler PV Sindhu, champion wrestler Bajrang Punia and Bhavani Devi, who created history by becoming the first Indian fencer to qualify for the Olympic Games, thanked the government for its Target Olympic Podium Scheme and the Sports Authority of India (SAI) for its support.

Football World Cup Every 2 Years? FIFA Expected To Make Big Changes



Agencies

GENEVA: World of football was put on notice by FIFA president Gianni Infantino on Friday to imagine and maybe expect big changes to its international competitions in the coming years.

FIFA agreed to study whether the men's and women's World Cups could be played every two years instead of four, with Infantino asking out loud if they could alternate with continental championships to fill the calendar with annual national-team tournaments.

Infantino positioned FIFA as the protector of football's worldwide family which is prepared to upend the traditional competition calendar and formats to seek more equality.

The chance for change is here because the FIFA-managed calendar of international competitions which mandates when clubs must release players for national-team duty expires in 2024.

FIFA is now ready to consult widely on redrafting the calendar, after turmoil caused by the coronavirus pandemic delayed the process last year.

"What kind of competitions do

we need for the world?" said Infantino, also asking whether the season needed fewer breaks for national-team games.

Earlier, a Saudi Arabian football official proposing a feasibility study into biennial World Cups echoed FIFA's own oft-repeated suggestion of "fewer but more meaningful games" to protect players' health.

A biennial World Cup was first suggested more than 20 years ago by FIFA's then-president Sepp Blatter though was not seriously investigated.

It has been revived in recent years by allies of Infantino, who has consistently proposed more and bigger tournaments. A review of women's and youth competitions was also agreed Friday.

UEFA's popular and lucrative Champions League could be affected by Infantino's pet project of a 24-team Club World Cup. It was set to launch next month in China until the pandemic forced a postponement.

A biennial World Cup would clearly harm UEFA's second-tier Nations League event, and likely take commercial value from the four-yearly European Championship.

SpiceJet Plane Carrying Indian Boxing Contingent Lands In Dubai Declaring Fuel Emergency, Probe Ordered

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: A SpiceJet plane ferrying ace pugilist Mary Kom and 30 other members of an Indian boxing contingent from Delhi was forced to hover for around 45 minutes and declared a fuel emergency before it landed safely at the Dubai airport on Saturday morning, sources said.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is investigating the entire incident, they said.

The sources said that due to COVID-19 restrictions, SpiceJet had got special permission from the UAE government to bring these boxers to Dubai for Asian Boxing Championship 2021 that will be held between May 24 and June 1.

However, the plane had to wait in the UAE airspace for around 45 minutes due to some confusion at the Dubai airport's air traffic control on whether the aircraft can be allowed to land or not and a fuel emergency was declared, they said.

The UAE, since April 25, has barred all travellers from India — except UAE nationals, diplomatic passport holders and official delegation letter holders — due to the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic that has hit



the country.

The flight SG142 carrying 31 boxers and six crew members departed from the Delhi airport at around 2.20 AM (Indian time) and landed at the Dubai airport at around 6.20 AM (Indian time) on Saturday morning.

Six-time world champion Mary Kom was among the boxers on board the aircraft.

On this matter, SpiceJet spokesperson said in a statement: "An Indian boxing contingent travelled on a SpiceJet flight from Delhi to Dubai today. The aircraft has reached Dubai safely and all passengers have

cleared the immigration. The flight and passengers carried proper documentation."

"It was a regular passenger flight under the air bubble agreement and the same aircraft is bringing passengers to India from Dubai on its return leg."

All scheduled international passenger flights have been suspended in India since March 23 last year. However, special international flights have been operating under Vande Bharat Mission since May 2020 and under air bubble arrangement formed with around 27 countries since July last year.

Air India: Hackers Stole Personal Data Of 4.5m People In Cyber Attack



Hackers have stolen data from about 4.5 million Air India passengers around the world in the latest breach reported by a major airline.

Names, credit card numbers and passport information were among the data stolen, Air India said in a statement released late Friday.

The state-owned giant said it was "securing the compromised servers" and using "external specialists" on data security as well as working with credit card companies.

"We deeply regret the inconvenience caused and appreciate continued support and trust of our passengers," the airline said.

Frequent breaches against airlines have been hit by data breaches in recent years.

British Airways was fined \$28 million last year by a British watchdog after details of 400,000 passengers were lost in a 2018 cyberattack.

Cathay Pacific was fined \$700,000 after details of more than nine million clients were lost in 2018.

And low-cost carrier EasyJet said last year that hackers had taken the email and travel details of about nine million customers.

Personal data registered 2011 and 2021 accessed

Air India announced in March that it had been informed in February by its data processing company, SITA PSS of a cyberattack.

The breach involved personal data registered between August 2011 and February 2021, the airline said.

SITA, which provides IT backup to much of the aviation industry, said at the time that it had been the target of a "highly sophisticated attack" that had affected a number of airlines. Air India is part of the Star Alliance coalition of airlines and SITA handles computer operations for its frequent flyer programme.

Other airlines in the alliance warned passengers in March of the cyberattack but most said only names and frequent flyer numbers had been accessed.

Over 8 Lakh Migrant Workers Left Delhi In First Four Weeks Of Lockdown: Report

Agenceis

NEW DELHI: Over eight lakh migrant workers left the national capital in the first four weeks of the lockdown imposed to contain the spread of the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a report from the Delhi Transport Department.

Between April 19 and May 14, a total of 8,07,032 migrant workers left Delhi for their home states in buses, out of which 3,79,604 left during the first week of the lockdown itself. The number started declining from thereon, 2,12,448 left in the second week, 1,22,490 in the third week and 92, 490 in the fourth week.

"The timely coordination with transport authorities of neighbouring states, especially Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand by the Government of NCT of Delhi has helped about eight lakhs migrant workers to reach their destination without any difficulty," read the report.

There were 21,879 interstate bus trips during the four weeks of

the lockdown, it added.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had first imposed a lockdown on April 19 which was later extended multiple times, lastly on May 16.

Learning from the past experience of the first surge of pandemic in March 2020 when the city experienced heavy movement of migrant workers to their native places, the state Transport Department this time had deputed an adequate number of buses to facilitate migrant workers to reach their destination.

"Transport department, Govt. of NCT of Delhi prepared a plan for deployment of 500 cluster buses on interstate routes under emergency. There was no complaint of overcharging as the interstate buses were owned and operated by state governments," the report said.

It also mentioned that "train travel" was a preferred mode by migrants in the current lockdown as trains were operational unlike the last year's coronavirus-induced lockdown in March.

Covid-19 Situation Stabilising With Positivity Rate, Daily Cases, Active Cases Reducing: Govt

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The Covid-19 positivity rate has declined from 24.83 per cent on May 10 to 12.45 per cent on May 22, the Union Health Ministry said on Saturday.

Addressing a press briefing, Niti Aayog member (health) VK Paul said that though there has been an overall decline in case burden but the positivity rate is still over 10 per cent in 382 districts.

The Covid-19 situation is stabilising with positivity rate, daily cases and active cases reducing, Paul said.

Eight states have more than 1 lakh active cases while 18 states have over 15 per cent positivity rate, joint secretary in the ministry Lav Agarwal said during the briefing.

On vaccine wastage, the ministry said Covishield wastage has reduced from 8 per cent on March 1 to 1 per cent now, while Covaxin wastage decreased from 17 per cent to 4 per cent in the same period.

Paul also said that children can spread the coronavirus but they al-



most always have mild infection and mortality is very, very low in them.

On the vaccine passport issue, Agarwal said there has been no consensus yet on the matter at the World Health Organisation level, but discussions are going on.

The daily rise in coronavirus cases in India remained below the 3 lakh-mark for the sixth consecutive day, with 2.57 lakh new cases recorded in a single day, Health

Ministry data showed.

With the fresh cases, India's tally of Covid-19 cases climbed to 2,62,89,290. The death toll due to the disease rose to 2,95,525 with 4,194 fresh fatalities, the data updated at 8 am showed.

The active cases further reduced to 29,23,400 comprising 11.12 per cent of the total infections, while the national Covid-19 recovery rate improved to 87.76 per cent. PTI

Will Have To Shut Vaccination Centres For 18-44 Age Group As Vaccine Stocks Are Over: Delhi CM

Agenceis

NEW DELHI: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday said Covid-19 vaccination centres for those in the 18-44 age group have to be closed due to lack of doses, and wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for immediate supply of jabs and increasing the quota of the city.

As the country is facing a shortage of vaccine, Kejriwal gave four suggestions to Modi, including procurement of vaccines from foreign manufacturers and inviting firms for production in India.

In an online press conference, Kejriwal said that from Sunday, all vaccination centres for youths in Delhi will be closed as stocks have run out.

Delhi requires 80 lakh doses a month to vaccinate people in three months. But it only received 16 lakh doses in May and the Centre has further decreased Delhi's quota in June to 8 lakh doses, Kejriwal said.

So far 50 lakh people have been vaccinated in Delhi. Further, 2.5 crore more doses are required to vaccinate all adults in Delhi, he said.

"With this speed of 8 lakh doses per month, it will take 30 months to vaccinate all the adults alone. By then, no one knows how many waves will arrive and how many deaths will occur," Kejriwal said, urging the prime minister to raise the quota and supply to the city immediately.

The chief minister extended four suggestions to the central government to enhance vaccine availability in the country.

The central government should within 24 hours direct all capable companies in the country to start manufacturing Covaxin as Bharat Biotech has agreed to share its for-



mula, he said.

Vaccines manufactured abroad should be used in India and the Centre needs to procure vaccines on the behalf of states as it will be more effective in bulk procurement, Kejriwal said.

Foreign companies should be allowed to manufacture vaccines in India and the Centre should try to get vaccines from such countries that have stocks of more doses than their need, he suggested.

Vaccination of maximum number of people in the shortest time is the only way to save Delhi and the country from the third wave of coronavirus, Kejriwal asserted.

"We are arranging beds, oxygen and medicines, but vaccine is the most effective weapon of protection against the fatal virus."

Shortage of vaccine is not just a matter of worry for the governments, common people are also scared due to this crisis, he claimed.

Shortage of vaccine has caused a very difficult situation in the country, Kejriwal said and narrated a call he had received from an elderly mother who requested vaccine for his son foregoing the job herself saying he needed it more than her because he had a job to take care of the family.

"I was deeply pained hearing this. There could be nothing more painful than this 'dharma-sankat' (dilemma) before a father, mother, brother or sister—whether to have the vaccine or give it up for a younger member in the family," he said.

Kejriwal said it was a matter of relief that the speed of coronavirus spread has significantly slowed down in Delhi but cautioned that it did not mean the threat was averted and emphasised on maintaining all the precautions.

In the past 24 hours, around 2,20,000 cases were reported and the positivity rate is 3.5 per cent, he said. PTI

Ramdev Bears No Ill-Will Against Modern Science, Says Patanjali After Allopathy Remarks Draw IMA's Ire

Agenceis

CHANDIGARH: Patanjali said on Saturday the remarks attributed to yoga guru Ramdev condemning modern medicine for being behind "lakhs of deaths in the country" was taken out of context—a statement that comes as the remarks drew doctors' ire.

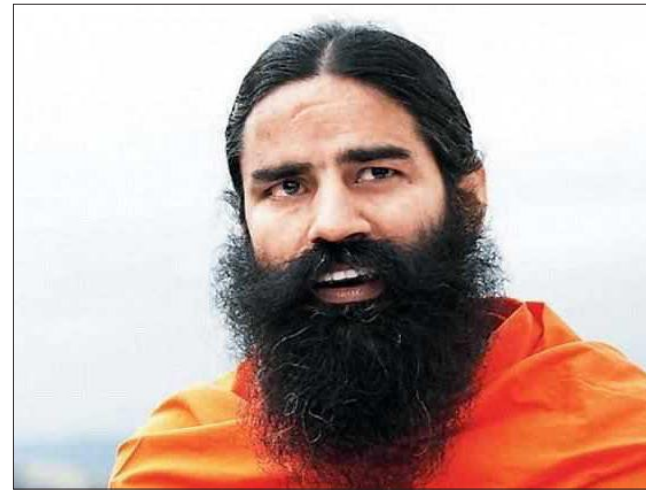
Ramdev had "utmost regards" (sic) for doctors and support staff who have been working day and night during such a challenging time of the pandemic, said the statement issued by the Haridwar-based Patanjali Yogpeeth Trust.

He was "reading out a forwarded WhatsApp message received by him and various other members who were participating in the event", it added.

the Drugs Controller General of India, have failed in treatment of COVID-19 patients.

"The Union health minister (Harsh Vardhan) who himself is a practicing modern medicine allopathic postgraduate and head of this (health) ministry, should either accept the challenge and accusation of this gentleman and dissolve the modern medical facility or boldly face and prosecute the person for his words of arson on the sovereignty of the country and book him under the Epidemic Act to save millions of people from such unscientific utterances," the IMA said.

It alleged that Ramdev is trying to take advantage of the situation and create a sense of fear and frustration among the people at large. He is doing this "so that he can



"Swami jee has no ill-will against the modern science and good practitioners of modern medicine. What is being attributed against him is false and nugatory," said the statement signed by Patanjali Yogpeeth Trust General Secretary Acharya Balakrishna.

The controversial remarks in question came from an undated video that showed Ramdev addressing an assembly. Ramdev can be heard saying clearly: "I am going to say something huge. It's possible I'd be criticised for this. Lakhs of people died because of allopathy. There were more deaths caused by allopathy than those caused by people not getting to hospitals or getting oxygen".

The remarks drew the ire of healthcare professionals across the country. The Indian Medical Association condemned the remarks as unscientific and asked the central government to take action against him.

Ramdev should be prosecuted under the Epidemic Diseases Act as "untutored" statements are "a threat to the literate society of the country as well as to the poor people falling prey to him", the apex doctors' body said in a statement.

IMA quoted Ramdev as saying in the video that "allopathy ek aisi stupid aur diwaliya science hai... (allopathy is such a stupid science)".

He also says that "lakhs of people have died after taking allopathic medicines", the association said, adding that Ramdev claimed Remdesivir, Faviflu, and all other drugs, which were approved by

sell his illegal and unapproved so-called medicines and make money at the cost of the public at large", the association said.

The IMA said Ramdev deserves to be prosecuted for disobeying and causing danger to the life of many by making them believe in "not to take the advice of allopathy" doctors.

"The IMA demands and resolves if the minister (Harsh Vardhan) is not taking suo moto action we will be forced to resort to democratic means of struggle to propagate the truth to the common man and knock the doors of the judiciary to get due to justice," it said.

Taking people for ransom and winning business by defaming scientific medicine are unpardonable offences, the IMA said.

Citing Ramdev's remarks, it said such "untutored and unlearned" statements are a threat to society.

Ramdev's Patanjali has been marketing its own herbal medicine called 'Coroni' against Covid-19. The medicine has been mired in controversy since the start, with IMA asking for a clarification from the Health Ministry in February this year over the company's alleged claims that the medicine has the World Health Organization's certification of effectiveness. WHO denied this, forcing the company to issue a clarification.

This came after a controversy last year forced the health ministry to say that the Patanjali Trust could only market the medicine 'Coroni' as one for immune-boosting and not for Covid therapy.

Govt Asks Social Media Platforms To Remove Content Mentioning 'Indian Variant' Of Coronavirus



NEW DELHI: The government has asked social media companies to immediately remove any content on their platform which mentions or refers to the term 'Indian variant' of coronavirus, in a bid to curb spread of misinformation around COVID-19. Digital platforms said they have received the latest advisory.

On Friday, the IT ministry wrote to all social media platforms emphasising that the World Health Organisation (WHO) has not associated the term "Indian Variant" with the B.1.617 variant of the coronavirus in any of its reports.

A notice issued in this regard by the IT ministry states that a "false statement" is being circulated online that implies that an 'Indian variant' of coronavirus is spreading across the countries.

The IT ministry said the matter has already been clarified by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on May 12, 2021 through a press statement.

The social media platforms have been asked to "remove all the content that names, refers to, or implies 'Indian variant' of coronavirus from your platform immediately".

Previously, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology had issued advisories regarding curbing of false news/misinformation concerning coronavirus on social media platforms. India is one of the biggest markets for digital platforms like Google, Facebook, and Twitter. As per data cited by the government, recently, the country has 53 crore WhatsApp users, 44.8 crore YouTube users, 41 crore Facebook users, while 21 crore use Instagram and 1.75 crore are on Twitter.

Earlier this year, the government had introduced guidelines to curb the misuse of social media platforms. — PTI

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