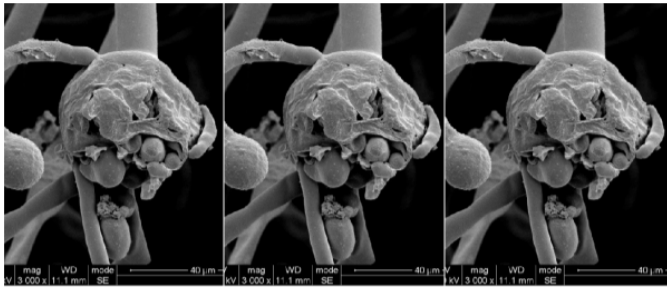


Govt Declares Black Fungus As Epidemic In J&K

Ajaz Ali

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Monday declared Mucormycosis or Black Fungus as an epidemic in the Union Territory and warned the medical staff of strict action for spreading any information or material of management of the disease without permission, in the public domain.

A notification in this regard was issued on Monday by Atal



Dulloo, Financial Commissioner, Health and Medical Education department under Section 2 of the

Epidemic Disease Act 1897, on the directions of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha. ● More On P10

J&K Logs 45 Deaths, 2237 New Cases

Firdaus Ali

SRINAGAR: Coronavirus cases in Jammu and Kashmir on Monday showed a significant decline as 2237 people tested positive for the virus, lowest in the last four weeks, even as the deadly infection claimed lives of 45 more people ● More On P10

Train Services Suspended Till May 31

Railway authorities on Monday extended till May 31 the suspension of train services from Banihal to Baramulla ● More On P10

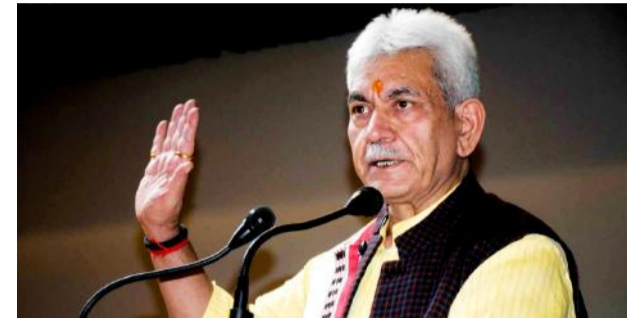
Ensure No One Goes Hungry in J&K: LG to Officers

'Welfare Schemes Benefitted 40 Lakh People In J&K'

Observer News Service

JAMMU: The administration said on Monday that it has extended relief to around 40 lakh beneficiaries across Jammu and Kashmir under the welfare schemes announced by Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha.

"It's a collective responsibility of the officers at various levels to ensure that no one goes hungry. You all must reach out to every citizen in need. Mid-day meal supplies, supplementary nutrition must continue for the beneficiaries. Take care of the families of daily wage earners, migrant labourers and



address the issues caused by the pandemic," Sinha said, as per an official spokesperson while chairing a review meeting to discuss the status of relief measures being extended to different sections of the society affected due to

Covid-19 pandemic.

Pertinently, the LG had recently announced a slew of measures to mitigate the sufferings of various vulnerable sections of the community due to Covid-19. The LG, he said, ● More On P10

Vaccination Drive For 18-45 Age Group To Start Today

A special vaccination drive to cover high-risk and vulnerable groups in the 18-45 age category would begin in Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday, initially from eight districts having a higher case count and COVID-19 positivity ratio, an official spokesman said. The drive would be extended to the rest of the 12 districts once the supply of vaccines increases, the spokesman said as chief secretary B V R Subrahmanyam finalized the rollout of the special vaccination drive at a high-level meeting here. The spokesman said the rollout would begin in ● More On P10

BJP Distributes 4500 Covid-19 Kits From Govt's 'Kitty'

Zaid Shabir

SRINAGAR: The Kashmir unit of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Monday stoked a controversy after distributing 4500 Covid care kits among the party's district leaders, claiming the kits have been purchased from the directorate of Indian Systems of Medicine (ISM).

According to reports, the senior leaders of BJP's Kashmir unit, including Altaf Thakur, Dr. Ali Mohammed and others on Saturday held an event at

party's Jawahar Nagar office in which youth presidents from other districts of the Valley also participated.

The event inaugurated by BJP youth wing leader Bilal Parrray, was aimed to distribute 4500 Covid care kits, consisting masks, medicines, oximeters and medicines "purchased from ISM" to the district presidents.

Senior BJP leader Altaf Thakur told Kashmir Observer that like last year, his party distributed ration, sanitizers and masks besides Ayush ● More On P10

DGP Asks Officers To Keep Social Media Under Lens

'Identify, Bring To Book All Mischief Mongers'



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Director General of Police (DGP) Dilbag Singh on Monday directed police officers to identify and to bring to book all the mischief mongers,

who are found using the social media for anti-national and anti-social activities.

Chairing a high level meeting at the Police headquarters here in which he took stock of the security situation and ● More On P10

Forest Dept's Eviction Drive Turns Violent In Shopian

5 Journalists, 13 Others Wounded During Clashes

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Five journalists were among 18 people injured on Monday during violent protests triggered by a drive by the forest department officials to evict nomads from a forest area in the upper reaches of Shopian district.

According to the reports, a team of forest department officials on Monday visited Zampathri forest area of the

district to evict the members of Gujar community who were staying in temporary sheds. However, the drive, reports said was met with stiff resistance by the Gujar nomads who maintained that they had erected temporary sheds for living and to graze their cattle.

The members of Gujar community also questioned the drive saying that no government official served them a notice in ● More On P10

Mehbooba Alleges Persecution

DP president Mehbooba Mufti on Monday accused the Jammu and Kashmir administration of persecuting members of the Gujar-Bakerwal communities by evicting them from forest areas. Her remarks came after reports ● More On P10

China Says CPEC Has No Bearing On It's Kashmir Policy

Press Trust Of India

BEIJING: China on Monday again defended its controversial USD 60 billion CPEC project with Pakistan, disregarding India's protests as it is being laid through Pakistan-controlled Kashmir, saying it is an economic initiative and

has not affected its principled stand on the Kashmir issue.

Leaders of China and Pakistan have praised the progress of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in recent days as the two close allies celebrated the establishment of 70 years of ● More On P10

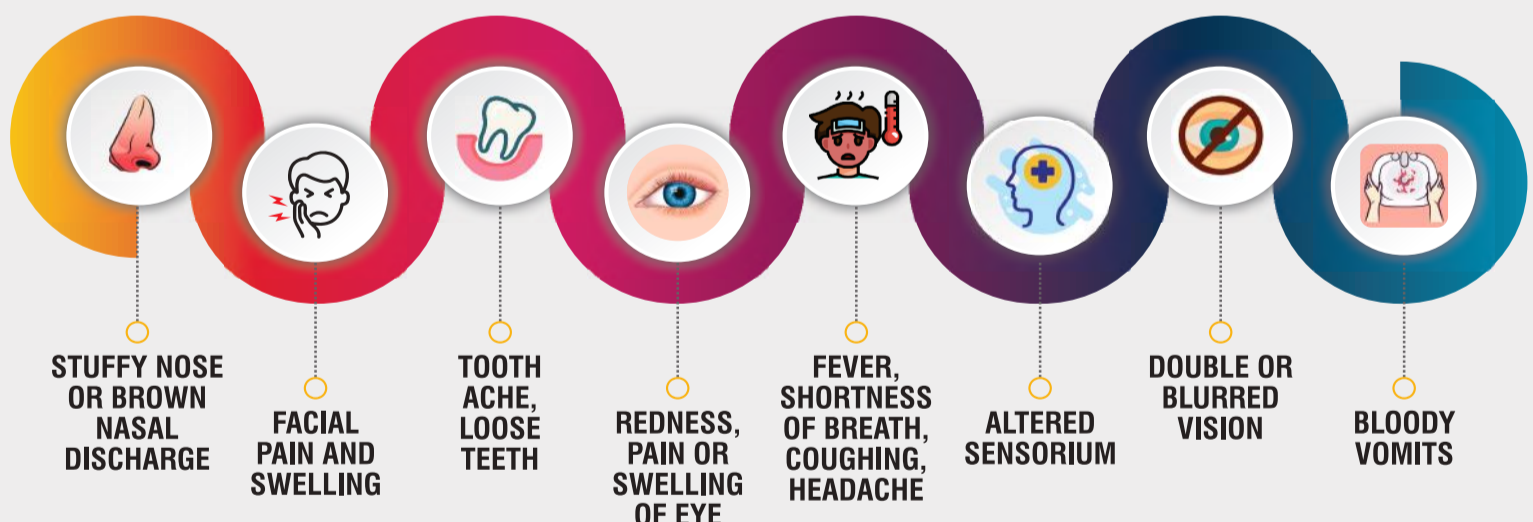


Shri Manoj Sinha
Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor

ADVISORY ON BLACK FUNGUS (MUCORMYCOSIS)

BLACK FUNGUS (MUCORMYCOSIS) IS A TYPE OF FUNGAL INFECTION, WHICH SPREADS RAPIDLY IN THE NOSE, SINUS, EYE AND BRAIN.

DO NOT NEGLECT IF YOU FIND THESE SYMPTOMS DURING/AFTER COVID



PEOPLE WHO ARE AT RISK

- ▶ WITH UNCONTROLLED DIABETES
- ▶ WITH CO-MORBIDITIES (POST TRANSPLANT/ MALIGNANCY)
- ▶ ON LONG STANDING OXYGEN THERAPY DURING COVID TREATMENT
- ▶ TREATED FOR COVID 19 WITH STEROIDS/IMMUNOMODULATORS

Dos

- Control hyperglycaemia
- Monitor blood glucose level post COVID-19 discharge in diabetic patients
- Use steroid judiciously
- Use clean, sterile water for humidifiers during oxygen therapy
- Use antibiotics/ anti fungal judiciously

Don'ts

- Do not miss warning signs & symptoms
- Don't consider all cases of blocked nose as cases of bacterial sinusitis, especially in the cases of immunosuppression and/or COVID-19 patients on immunomodulators
- Don't hesitate in seeking aggressive investigations as appropriate for detecting fungal etiology
- Don't lose crucial time to initiate treatment for mucormycosis

IT COULD BE DANGEROUS

If you have symptoms, seek medical advice immediately



FOR ANY SORT OF QUERY INCLUDING MEDICAL ADVICE CONTACT 24X7 DIVISIONAL CONTROL ROOM

Divisional Control Room-Kashmir:

0194-2440283/2430581/2452052/2457313/2457312

Divisional Control Room-Jammu:

0191-2549676/2520982/2674444/2674115/2674908



Issued in Public Interest by:
Health and Medical Education Department, J&K

FOR FREE AMBULANCE SERVICE PLEASE CALL TOLL FREE NO. 108

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



To place an advertisement

CALL +91-194 2502327

Monday - Saturday (9am - 6pm)

No 5- Dal Lake Boulevard Srinagar, 190001, Kashmir

Study Suggests No Association Between Milk And Increased Cholesterol Levels

Agencies

The findings of a recent study of 2 million people suggests that regular consumption of milk is not associated with increased levels of cholesterol. Further analysis of other large studies also found that those who regularly consumed milk had a 14 per cent lower risk of coronary heart disease.

A study published in the International Journal of Obesity looked at three large population studies and found that people who regularly drank high amounts of milk had lower levels of both good and bad cholesterol, although their BMI levels were higher than non-milk drinkers. The team of researchers took a genetic

approach to milk consumption by looking at a variation in the lactase gene associated with the digestion of milk sugars known as lactose.

The study identified that having the genetic variation where people can digest lactose was a good way for identifying people who consumed higher levels of milk.

Prof Vimal Karani, Professor of Nutri-genetics and Nutrigenomics at the University of Reading said: "We found that among participants with a genetic variation that we associated with higher milk intake, they had higher BMI, body fat, but importantly had lower levels of good and bad cholesterol. We also found that those with the genetic variation had a significantly lower risk of coronary heart disease. All of this suggests

that reducing the intake of milk might not be necessary for preventing cardiovascular diseases."

The new research was conducted following several contradictory studies that have previously investigated the causal link between higher dairy intake and cardiometabolic diseases such as obesity and diabetes. To account for inconsistencies in sampling size, ethnicity and other factors, the team conducted a meta-analysis of data in up to 1.9 million people and used the genetic approach to avoid confounding.

Even though the UK biobank data showed that those with the lactase genetic variation had 11% lower risk of type 2 diabetes, the study did not suggest that there is any strong evidence for a link between higher milk intake

and increased likelihood of diabetes or its related traits such as glucose and inflammatory biomarkers.

Professor Karani said, "The study certainly shows that milk consumption is not a significant issue for cardiovascular disease risk even though there was a small rise in BMI and body fat among milk drinkers. What we do note in the study is that it remains unclear whether it is the fat content in dairy products that is contributing to the lower cholesterol levels or it is due to an unknown 'milk factor'".

The team from the University of Reading, University of South Australia, Southern Australian Health and Medical Research Institute, University College London, and the University of Auckland worked together on the study.



'Weight-loss maintainers sit less than weight-stable people with obesity'

Agencies

According to the findings of a new study, people who are successful at weight-loss maintenance spend less time sitting during the week and weekends compared to weight-stable individuals with obesity.

Published online in Obesity, the Obesity Society's flagship journal, this is the first study to examine time spent in various sitting activities among weight-loss maintainers.

Prior findings from 2006 in the National Weight Control Registry indicated that weight-loss maintainers watched significantly less television than controls, but other sitting activities were not examined. In the current study, weight-loss maintainers did not significantly differ from controls in reported weekly sitting time spent watching television but did differ in time spent in non-work-related time using a computer or video game.

Differences between the current study and National Weight Control Registry findings could reflect changes over the past 15 years in

available electronic devices, including the rise in availability of computers and video games. Weight-loss maintainers and controls also did not appreciably differ in time spent sitting while reading or studying, traveling; or talking, texting and socializing. These could be considered more mentally active forms of sedentary behavior.

"The findings hopefully will prompt future weight maintenance intervention research testing the effects of and optimal approaches for reducing sedentary behavior, including non-work-related computer and video game usage. Future research should include objective measures of sedentary behavior and activity," said Suzanne Phelan, Department of Kinesiology and Public Health and The Center for Health Research, California Polytechnic State University, in San Luis Obispo. Phelan is the corresponding author of the study.

Participants in the study included 4,305 weight-loss maintainers from WW (formerly Weight Watchers) who had maintained >9.1 kg of weight loss (24.7 kg on average) for

3.3 years and had an average current BMI of 27.6 kg/m2. The group of weight-stable individuals with obesity had an average BMI of 38.9 kg/m2. To gather data, the Multicontext Sitting Time and Paffenbarger physical activity questionnaires were administered.

Results revealed that weight-loss maintainers versus weight-stable individuals with obesity spent three hours less per day sitting during the week (10.9 versus 13.9) and weekends (9.7 versus 12.6). Weight-loss maintainers compared with controls also spent one hour less per day in non-work-related sitting using a computer or playing a video game during the week (1.4 versus 2.3) and weekends (1.5 versus 2.5).

There were no meaningful differences between weight-loss maintainers and weight-stable individuals with obesity in the number of television sets and sedentary-promoting devices in the home (15.8 versus 14.8). Weight-loss maintainers expended significantly more calories per week in physical activity (1,835 versus 785).

Government Medical College Srinagar

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby notified for information of all those candidates who have/are applying for selection/engagement against the various categories of posts on contract basis for newly established 500 bedded COVID Hospital, Srinagar that they should remain in constant touch with our website www.gmcs.edu.in on daily basis for updates, as this office issues Notices/Notifications etc. related to selection process which at times get belatedly published in the print media notwithstanding the fact that we notify/upload the same on our website and send for publication in the newspapers simultaneously on the date of issue of such notices/notifications.

So this office does not undertake any responsibility for any delay caused in publication of Notices/ Notifications etc. in the Print Media (newspapers) as delay, if any, in such publication(s) is not within the control of this institution.

DIPK-1976/21
NO. GS/MC/21/Notice/sel/COVID-Hosp/913-920
DATED: 24-05-2021

Principal / Dean,
Govt Medical College, Srinagar.

'Sticky' speech, other evocative words may improve language

Agencies

During a study at the University of Miami, an associate professor in the College of Arts and Sciences Department of Psychology had previously found that children tend to learn words higher in iconicity earlier in development than they do words lower in iconicity.

Some words sound like what they mean. For example, "slurp" sounds like the noise we make when we drink from a cup, and "teeny" sounds like something that is very small. This resemblance between how a word sounds and what it means is known as iconicity. The study was published in the journal Cognitive Science.

Associate Professor Lynn Perry also found that adults tend to use more iconic words when they speak to children than when they speak to other adults.

"That got us curious about why," said Stephanie Custode, a doctoral student in psychology, who worked with Perry to answer questions posed by her prior work. "Does iconicity play a causal role in children's language development, helping them learn new words, eventually even those words that have non-iconic, or arbitrary, sound-meaning associations?"

For their new study, the researchers explored whether parents' who used iconic words as they played with novel objects with children between 1 and 2 helped them learn those objects' names. The objects were novel toys and foods that the researchers made and gave names to, like the word "blicket" to describe a clay toy with a made-up shape. They found that when parents named a novel object, their children were more likely to remember those novel names later if the parent also used highly iconic words in the same sentence. This was true both for parents speaking English and Spanish.

"Consider when a parent teaches their child about 'cats' by talking about how they 'meow,' or about a sweater by talking about how 'fuzzy' it is, or about 'honey' by talking about how sticky it is," Perry said. "The resemblance between the sound of a word like 'sticky' and the texture of the honey helps the child pay attention to that property. If the parent also says 'honey' while describing its stickiness, the child can form a stronger memory of that new word and its meaning, because they are paying attention to its important properties-its sticky texture in this case."

آداب جناب غلام رسول الائی صاحب

موت کے بارے میں اب تک بہت کچھ لکھا گیا ہے۔ اس ضمن میں اقوام عالم کے مفکر و دانشوروں اور قلم کاروں نے وقت و وقت پر اپنی اپنی رائے کا اظہار کیا۔ جہاں بہت سارے دانشوروں نے یہ بات برملا کی کہ موت انتہائی بے رحمی سے انسان پر برس پڑتی ہے۔ وہی کہتوں نے اس بات پر اتفاق کیا کہ اس کی گرفت میں آنے سے پہلے انسان کو کم سے کم ایک دن کی مہلت ملنی چاہئے۔ تاکہ وہ کچھ اہم ضروری کام پورا کر سکے۔ اس ضمن میں جہاں تک دنیا کے علمبرداروں نے دین اسلام سے وابستہ لوگوں کا تعلق ہے وہ داماد رسول جناب حضرت علی رضی اللہ عنہ کے اس بہترین قول پر لبیک کہتے ہوئے ہیں کہ موت ایک میٹھی نعمت ہے۔ دو تین سو سال پہلے شہر میں بھی کل تمام انسانی صفات سے بھرپور شخص جناب غلام رسول الائی صاحب نے اس میٹھی شربت کا مزہ چمک کر سیر آخرت کی طرف کوچ کیا۔ سورہ مدینہ کی انچھوٹ میں چند دن موت و زندگی کے درمیان گھمسان کی جنگ رہی۔ موت دیات کی یہ جنگ دیکھ کر انسان کو لگتا تھا کہ شاید زندگی یہ جنگ جیت جائے گی۔ مگر کاتب تقدیر کو کچھ اور منظور تھا اور اس کی منظوری کے سامنے زندگی نے موت کے آگے ہتھیار ڈال دیے۔ جنگ ہارنے کے بعد کاتب تقدیر کو علاقہ باغبان پورہ لال بازار پتھنجی تو وہاں ایک کزیمیل جواں کی موت پر صدمہ مانتے پتھنجی۔ مرد و زن کے ساتھ چھوٹے چھوٹے بچے بھی زار و قہار دور رہے تھے۔ یہاں ایک دانا کا قول یاد آیا۔ مگر جواں میں صبر بھی کرنا پڑا۔ جس میں مقررین نے مرحوم کے ان کارناموں کو سراہا جو اس نے فلاح مبینی خیمہ جلا اور خیمہ علی ہمایوں کا مشترکہ تعمیراتی اجلاس منعقد ہوا۔ جس میں مقررین نے مرحوم کے ان کارناموں کو سراہا جو اس نے لوگوں کی بہبود کی خاطر دینی اور سربلندی میں انجام دیے۔ آخر یہ مرحوم کے حق میں قرآن خوانی اور فاتحہ خوانی کی گئی۔

مشہور ناراکیں ادارہ حضرت ابوالفضل العباس فلاح کمپنی و حکیم علی ہمایوں ٹرسٹ، باغبان پورہ لال بازار سربلندی

Indian Institute of Carpet Technology Srinagar
Baghi-Ali-Mardhan-Khan, Nowshera, Srinagar
www.iictsrinagar.org Ph. No. 0194-2411143, 2428636

Expression of Interest

For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, proposals/offers are invited from qualified and experienced persons/researchers/firms for conducting necessary research for comprehensive documentation of items/crafts such as Namdha, Gabba, Shikara, Bat, Waguv, Crewel and ChainStitch to be registered under **Geographical Indication (GI) of Goods Act, 1999**.

The complete details of assignment and expected deliverables of services to be provided by the selected persons /firms have been mentioned in the Terms of Reference (TOR) which can be downloaded from www.iktenders.gov.in under the title **"Research and Documentation of Namdha, Gabba, Shikara, Bat, Waguv, Crewel and ChainStitch for their registration under Geographical Indication of Goods Act, 1999"**.

Interested eligible persons/researchers/firms may submit their proposals/ offers online as per the date and time given below:

1.	Date of Issue of EOI	22-05-2021
2.	EOI/Documents Download Start Date	22-05-2021
3.	Start date and time for uploading of Proposal/Offer	22-05-2021 at 4:00 p.m.
4.	Last date and time for uploading of Proposal/Offer	07-06-2021 at 4:00 p.m.
5.	Date and Time for Opening of Technical Bids	08-06-2021 at 11:00 a.m.
6.	Date and Time for Opening of Financial Bids	08-06-2021 at 12:30 p.m.
7.	No. of Covers/Pockets	Two (02) (Technical & Financial Bids)
8.	Address for Communication	Indian Institute of Carpet Technology (IICT), Srinagar. Baghi-Ali-Mardhan-Khan, Nowshera, Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir. Pin Code: 190011

**Sd/-
Director**

DIPK-NB-863/21

...COVID-19

Intensified Vaccination Drive To Start In Srinagar Today



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Mohammad Aijaz Asad Monday called for intensified vaccination drive for focused and target groups under the age group 18-45 years in the district from Tuesday to break the transmission chain and check the spread of infection.

The DC said this while chairing a meeting with all sectoral officers, senior Health Care functionaries BMO, ZMOs to

review the achievements made with regard to ongoing vaccination process in Srinagar, besides the mitigation measures undertaken to control the second wave of Covid-19.

Commissioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation, Athar Amir, Additional Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Incharge Covid Control War Room, Chief Planning Officer, Chief Medical Officer, SDM East & West, all Tehsildars and other concerned were present in the meeting.

During the meeting various aspects regarding vaccination were discussed threadbare.

It was given out that under vaccination drive from May 25 the target groups under 18-45 years of age, the high risk and vulnerable groups have been identified which include - shopkeepers /dhabawallas, hotel waiters & staff/thela wallas, services sector, Barbers, Bakers Meat, Poultry Vegetable sellers, Drivers/ Conductors, Lawyers, Journalists; faculty /staff/work-

ers of the Universities/Colleges; Government employees on COVID duty/or in active field offices Construction workers registered with Construction Workers Board; Tourism sector workers; people with disabilities, widows/single mothers, orphans, and persons with comorbid conditions.

The DC directed for setting up additional 50 vaccination centers and immunization teams

'Corona Curfew, Public Cooperation Helped Mitigate Covid'

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar Mohammed Aijaz Asad Monday said that corona curfew and public cooperation has yielded good results so far in containment and mitigation of Covid-19 virus in the district.

The DC said this while briefing the media about the containment and mitigation measures taken by the district administration.

He said all possible measures are being taken to break the chain of corona virus in the district. He said on the directions of Lieutenant Governor, Covid care centers are being established at all 21 Panchayats of the district to ensure Covid related patient care facilities at the door steps of the people living in rural areas.

He said in coming days we have to remain more vigilant to fight the war against Covid-19 and follow the Covid-19 SOPs in letter and spirit.

to expand coverage. He also stressed on maintaining and updating database of the vaccination being done on daily basis to ensure data is submitted well in time to concerned quarters.

The DC directed the officers of different Government departments to undertake the vaccination of their subordinate employees on Covid duty to safeguard their families.

OBIT

Fida Ali: An Affable Information Officer Passes Away

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A retired Deputy Director of the Jammu and Kashmir Department of Information and Public Relations, Fida Ahmad Fida (Shawl) passed away on Monday.

Director Information and Public Relations (DIPR), Rahul Pandey condoled the demise of Fida, who passed away today morning. In a condolence message, Rahul Pandey expressed deep sorrow and grief over the demise of Fida Ali and remembered him for his contribution to the department.

Friends and colleagues of Fida expressed condolences and termed Fida a down-to-earth and efficient colleague.

Noted author and historian Khalid Bashir Ahmad said that Fida was a decent colleague, knowledgeable person with pleasing manners who had a flair for poetry also. "Had come to know about his ailment from Imdad Saqi after I noticed him missing from the Facebook for a long time. Kept myself updated about his health through Imdad Sahib who once facilitated my brief conversation with him on phone while he was fighting the killer disease. His death has saddened and shocked me," Bashir wrote on facebook.

Veteran journalist Yousuf Jameel said that he was saddened and devastated with the demise of Fida.

Jameel, who has been a school friend of Fida said, "I was very close to him. His death is a personal loss. My heartfelt condolences to his daughters wife, Imdad Saqi Sb and Mohd Shafi Khan Sb. May Allah give him highest place in jannah."

Many others recalled the nobleness of Fida. Noted Kashmiri columnist ZG Muhammad said that Fida was a jolly person, gentle and sociable.

"For few years he was my colleague and during Darbar Move was my neighbour for two years...a pleasant looking gentleman. May his soul rest in peace."

Another noted journalist Mohammad Sayeed Malik said that he was shocked with the passing away of Fida.

"Fids Ali has been a long time friend and former colleague (while I headed the Information dept mid-1970s). Personally, he was warm hearted and of friendly disposition. Till a year or so back we were in contact. And now this sudden shocking news of his sad demise. May his soul rest in eternal peace. Condolences to the bereaved family. Fida Ali was one of the really cultured and civilised persons. Liked to do his job honestly. Our world is rendered poorer with his tragic departure."

A former bureaucrat Ferooz Lone recalled Fida as a decent, affable gentleman with great human qualities.

Another journalist Khursheed Wani remembered Fida as a known face.

He said Fida was always there in the official media events.

"Graceful and ready to engage. May Allah grant him highest place in Jannah."



SOCIAL DISTANCING GOES FOR a toss as people queue up outside a Jammu and Kashmir Bank branch in Hazratbal on Monday. KO Photo, Abid Bhat

LAWDA Installs CCTV Cameras To Curb Illegal Constructions

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Lakes and Waterways Authority (LAWDA) has installed CCTV cameras at various checkpoints to curb illegal ferrying of construction material, encroachment and to monitor de-weeding process in and around the iconic Dal Lake.

The Vice chairman LAWDA Dr. Bashir Ahmad Bhat said that they have completed the installation of 5- CCTV cameras at vital points and rest will be completed in the near future. He said the violators who take the advantage of current lockdown (Covid-19) and indulged in illegal constructions appropriate action will be initiated against the violators.



The VC also said that there is a need for adopting proper procedures for conservation and management of Dal and Nigeen Lakes. LAWDA has been mandated to take various measures in its jurisdiction to monitor the de-weeding operations of the Dal/Nageen lake and to have a check on illegal constructions. As a sequel to the same CCTV cameras are being installed at various

locations to have an extended monitoring system.

Besides, CCTV will also help to monitor manual de-weeding/ extraction of lilies and other activities being carried out in and around Lake in which hundreds of workers have been deployed for carrying out the work.

Besides proper control rooms are also being established to monitor and supervise the manual and mechanical de-weeding operations properly.

Meanwhile, the people living in LAWDA jurisdiction are asked not to indulge in any sort of illegal construction activities or illegal ferrying of construction material in the restricted areas without proper permission.

MS JVC Rebuts News Report

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Medical Superintendent Jehlum Valley College Hospital in Srinagar on Saturday rebutted the news report carried by the newspaper stating that ventilators were not available on Srinagar's JVC hospital.

"This is in response to the news published in the news paper that ventilators are not available in JVC Hospital Srinagar as per statement given by GM Shaheen President J&K Democratic Party," MS said in a statement.

The statement said that the statement issued by Shaheen is not based on facts as adequate number of ventilators are available in SKIMS Bemina for covid Patients.

Shaheen in a statement had said that Covid-19 vaccines are still not available to the common people while in a couple of hospitals, especially at JVC there are no ventilators available for the patients.

"I was shocked after receiving a call from the relative of a patient who said there is no ventilator available for the patient whose Oxygen level has dropped considerably," Shaheen had said.

NIT Srinagar Pays Tributes To Prof KL Chopra

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The National Institute of Technology Srinagar on Monday paid rich tributes to a distinguished physicist and administrator, Padma Shri Prof. Kasturi Lal Chopra, who died while battling Covid-19 on May 19.

The condolence meeting was organised by Dr. M A Shah and his students, Department of Physics, NIT Srinagar to pay the tributes to the legend Prof. KL Chopra and other academicians across the country who lost their battle against Covid-19 pandemic.

Special mention was made of AMU, DU, JMI and University of Kashmir, who lost Prof G M Bhat and Prof Fazili.

Director NIT Srinagar, Dr. Prof. Rakesh Sehgal said they lost a great person in the field of Physics and will be always remembered for his noted work.



"It is very sad and emotional to learn everyday about the deaths of academicians and our colleagues. They are national and international assets and indeed it is a great loss," he said.

Dr. Sehgal said it is collective responsibility to extend our support to administration during this time in whatever way it is possible. We are technical people and we can help the administration in many ways in tackling the crisis, he said.

Director NIT Srinagar prayed for peace for all those departed souls including academicians and outstanding scientists like Prof. Chopra who lost their lives during Covid19.

KU Organises One-Day Covid19 Vaccination Drive

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The University of Kashmir on Monday organised another special Covid19 vaccination drive for its employees.

At least 450 doses of Covishield vaccine were administered during the day-long drive, organised by the varsity's Health Centre in collaboration with the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine, Government Medical College Srinagar, Block Hazratbal.

In his message, KU Vice-Chancellor Prof Talat Ahmad said organising vaccination drives is important to help contain the spread of Covid19.

"Academic institutions should take a lead in holding such drives to send a message in the society about the importance of Covid vaccination," he said.

Registrar Dr Nisar Ahmad personally supervised the vaccination drive along with Dr Ashfaq Zarri, In-Charge Univer-

sity Health Centre, to ensure that it's held in line with the Covid19 SOPs.

"This is a second vaccination drive organised for our employees (both teaching and non-teaching) and their immediate family members, aged between 18 to 44 years. There was an overwhelming response to it," said Dr Zarri.

Dr Nisar and Dr Zarri thanked Director Health Services Kashmir Dr Mushtaq Ahmad, Block Medical Officer Hazratbal Dr Hashmat Sultan for their active support and cooperation for the day-long vaccination programme.

Dr Suraiyah Jan, Nodal Officer for Covid19 management at KU, and Dr Azhar Ahmad Wani from University Health Centre coordinated the drive while Dr Seema Ashraf led it from the office of BMO Hazratbal.

Pertinently, the first two-day vaccination drive, organised by the Health Centre, was held in the KU campus on April 6.

DIAL-EMMA

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

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

RAILWAYS

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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

This Day in History

- 1923 - Britain recognizes Transjordan with Abdullah as its leader
- 1938 - Spanish Civil War: The bombing of Alicante takes place, with 313 deaths.
- 1940- German troops conquer Boulogne
- 1941- 5,000 drown in a storm at Ganges Delta region in India
- 1943- Trident conference in Washington, D.C. (operation plan '43 against Japan)
- 1944-Partisan leader Tito escapes Germans surrounding Bosnia
- 1945- Arthur C Clark proposes relay satellites in geosynchronous orbit
- 1946- Jordan gains independence from Britain (National Day); Abdullah ibn Hussein becomes king of Jordan
- 1949- Chinese Red army occupies Shanghai
- 1953- 1st atomic cannon electronically fired, Frenchman Flat, Nevada
- 1961- NASA civilian pilot Joseph A Walker takes X-15 to 32,770 m
- 1963- Great Britain ends its amateur-professional classes in cricket
- 1979 - Israel begins to return Sinai to Egypt
- 1982 - Iranian troops reconquer Khorramshahr
- 1982 - STS-4 vehicle moves to launch pad
- 1983 - Fire in Nassermeer, Egypt, kills 357
- 1983 - France performs nuclear test
- 1985 - Cyclone ravages Bangladesh; 11,000 killed
- 1989 - Mikhail Gorbachev elected Executive President in the Soviet Union
- 1992 - Oscar Luigi Scalfaro elected President of Italy
- 1997 - A military coup in Sierra Leone replaces President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah with Major Johnny Paul Koromah.
- 2002 - A train crash in Tenga, Mozambique kills 197 people.
- 2002 - China Airlines Flight 611: A Boeing 747-200 breaks apart in mid-air and plunges into the Taiwan Strait killing 225 people
- 2003 - Néstor Kirchner becomes President of Argentina after defeating Carlos Menem. He is the first elected President since the economic crisis.

From KO Archives

Centre-JK Discuss Truce Plan

Delhi Asks J&K To Prepare Action Plan On CBM's

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR Centre today asked the Jammu and Kashmir Government to prepare a comprehensive time-bound action plan to implement the Confidence-Building Measures (CBM's) announced in India and Pakistan in the recent joint declaration and on the physical structures needed to implement them.

Meanwhile Centre and J&K government are actively considering a ceasefire with militants in the state. This was revealed by the union home secretary V K Duggal during a press conference here today.

Asked whether there would be a ceasefire between the security forces and the militants, he said; "That is the objective, and I have spoken to the state governor and the chief minister about this but it has to be a consultative process."

"The main important CBM is dialogue process. Any CBM which involves the movement of people, transport, goods and services and implementation of trade needs a dialogue process... When can we start and how can we start." Mr Duggal said.

He said the central government would provide all infrastructure support to the state administration for opening meeting points between the Kashmiris of India and Pakistan, increasing bus services across the border and facilitating trade through the new routes.

He said the other important component of the CBMs is the infrastructure needed to implement them.

"The slate government has been asked to prepare the report? What all it can handle and where it needs the support of the central government so that we can consider that," he added.

"PM Manmohan's intentions are very clear on this. We have specific instructions that these CBMs should be taken forward most-religiously and in a dedicated time-bound manner. Money and resources should not act as constraints in implementing these measures," he added.

On possible talks with separatist leaders. Duggal said Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was opposed to talks with Hurriyat Conference.

"The Prime Minister is most open to talks with anybody who has a concrete plan However, a mechanism has to be put in place for holding such talks, he told reporters. Duggal said important and positive steps were being taken in Kashmir-to restore normalcy. "The return Kashmiri Pandit migrants, and the Amarnath yatra are positive steps. I think Kashmir is on its way to peace.

(Kashmir Observer, 25 May, 2005)

Backed By Israeli Police, Jewish Settlers Enter Al-Aqsa Compound



Agencies

Dozens of Jewish settlers, flanked by heavily armed Israeli special forces, entered the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in occupied East Jerusalem in the early morning, further raising tensions hours after Palestinian worshippers were beaten and assaulted by Israeli police, according to the Islamic authority overseeing the site.

Citing witnesses, Palestinian news agency WAFA said Israeli police had earlier on Sunday assaulted Palestinian worshippers who were performing dawn prayers at the mosque and "excessively beat" them in order to make way for Israeli Jewish settlers to storm the compound – Islam's third-holiest site.

WAFA added that at least six Palestinians had been arrested, including Fadi Alyan, a guard at the Al-Aqsa Mosque who tried to film the incident, and Ali Wazouz, an employee of the Islamic Waqf Council, the religious body appointed by Jordan to oversee the Al-Aqsa compound.

Translation: Protected by the occupation forces, settlers storm the holy Aqsa Mosque.

Occupation forces remove young men from Al-Aqsa Mosque moments ago.

Israeli police also increased restrictions at the gates leading to Al-Aqsa, barring worshippers under the age of 45 from enter-

ing the mosque.

The ancient marble-and-stone compound – known to Muslims as al-Haram al-Sharif – houses Al-Aqsa Mosque and the 7th-century Dome of the Rock.

Hoda Abdel-Hamid, reporting from Damascus Gate in occupied East Jerusalem said the makeup of those visitors are usually Jewish settlers or Israelis that are "far-right leaning or ultra-nationalists".

"This comes at a time where the tensions are very high ... Those visitors go in surrounded under the protection of Israeli forces," Abdel-Hamid said, adding that some scuffles that broke out.

Those visitation rights were suspended from the holy month Ramadan because there were "a lot of tensions" in the compound, she said, but Sunday was the first day that they were reinstated.

Israeli crackdown

The incident comes as a fragile ceasefire holds in the besieged Gaza Strip, days after the end of a brutal 11-day Israeli bombing campaign that killed at least 248 people, including 66 children.

An Israeli police crackdown on worshippers at the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound during Ramadan and the threat of forced expulsions of Palestinians from their homes in occupied East Jerusalem had ignited protests across the occupied Palestinian territories, which were cracked down by Israeli police as well.



VACCINE EFFICACY WAS ESTIMATED for immunizations that are being rolled out on local and global scales.

Covid Shots Are All Highly Protective Against Death, Study Shows

Jason Gale, Bloomberg

Current Covid shots provide a high level of protection against hospitalization and death, according to a summary of the efficacy of eight vaccines that showed the Pfizer Inc.-BioNTech SE jab may better at stopping at least two worrisome coronavirus variants.

Efficacy against Covid-linked disease averaged about 85% after a full course, rising to almost 100% protection against severe disease, hospitalization or death, Julia Shapiro, Natalie Dean, Ira Longini and colleagues said in a paper released Friday before peer-review and publication. The University of Florida researchers compared data from journal articles and media reports for products that have gone through double-blind, placebo-controlled, late-stage vaccine trials, as well as observational studies.

"These estimates should be useful for constructing mathematical models for vaccination impact and for making policy decisions involving vaccination," they said. They plan to update their research, which received funding from the U.S. National Institutes of Health, as more information becomes available.

The unprecedented speed with which safe and effective

vaccines have been developed and rolled out across the world have enabled many economies to reopen, paving the way for a recovery from the worst pandemic in a century. Still, uncontrolled spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus risks spawning new variants that may undermine the potency of these immunizations.

Protection against any disease with infection for three so-called variants of concern averaged 86% for the B.1.1.7 strain

"Some of the estimates are based on rigorous, preplanned statistical analyses from double-blind, placebo-controlled trials, while others are extracted from observational studies with different levels of control," the researchers said.

Vaccine efficacy to prevent any Covid-caused disease after two doses is summarized below:

The researchers found vaccine efficacy against infectiousness was 54%, on average,

THESE ESTIMATES SHOULD BE USEFUL for constructing mathematical models for vaccination impact and for making policy decisions involving vaccination," they said. They plan to update their research, which received funding from the U.S. National Institutes of Health, as more information becomes available.

first detected in the U.K., 61% for the P.1 strain that drove an explosive outbreak in Brazil, and 56% for the B.1.351 strain discovered in South Africa, the University of Florida researchers said.

Vaccine efficacy was estimated for immunizations that are being rolled out on local and global scales, they said. These include the Pfizer, Moderna Inc., Johnson & Johnson, Novavax Inc., Sinovac Biotech Ltd., and Sinopharm Group Co. products.

indicating immunization reduces the direct transmission of SARS-CoV-2 to others by 54%. Data for four vaccines are summarized below.

Estimates for vaccine efficacy for three variants of concern are summarized below. The researchers found B.1.1.7 led to "somewhat reduced" efficacy compared with the "wild type" strain. In contrast, the P.1 and B.1.351 variants led to considerably lower vaccine efficacy, owing to mutations that affect immune function.

10% Of Population Must Be Vaccinated In Every Country By September: WHO Chief

Agence France-Presse

GENEVA: The World Health Organization (WHO) chief on Monday called for a huge global effort to ensure that 10 percent of the population in every country is vaccinated against COVID-19 by September.

World Health Organization director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus called for a "massive push to vaccinate at least 10 percent of the popula-



tion of every country by September", in a speech at the opening of the UN health agency's main annual assembly.

MASSIVE PUSH TO VACCINATE AT LEAST 10 PERCENT of the population of every country by September",

Bangladesh Drops 'Except Israel' From Passport, Maintains Travel Ban



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangladesh on Sunday made it clear that it has dropped the phrase "all countries except Israel" from passport to maintain international standards of the document and there was no change in its decades-long policy of travel ban to the Jewish state.

Bangladeshi passports earlier had a clause written on them that said "This Passport is valid for all countries of the world except Israel", but the government on Saturday decided to remove "except Israel" from the document making it valid for the entire world.

Israel welcomed Bangladesh's decision and called upon Dhaka to establish diplomatic ties with Tel Aviv for the benefit of the people of the two countries.

"Great news! #Bangladesh has removed the travel ban to Israel. This is a welcome step & I call on the Bangladeshi government to move forward and establish diplomatic ties with #Israel so both our peoples could benefit & prosper," Deputy Director General at Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs Gilad Cohen tweeted.

However, hours later Bangla-

desh Foreign Minister Dr A.K. Abdul Momen told the media in Dhaka that "the changes have been made to maintain global standards."

He said that it "does not mean that there has been a change in Bangladesh's position" regarding Israel.

Bangladesh's Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement that said the holders of Bangladeshi passports are still banned from travelling to Israel.

The country's position on Israel remained unchanged, the ministry said, reiterating Bangladesh's support for a two-state solution to the conflict between Israel and Palestine.

"The attention of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has recently been drawn to a tweet issued from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel that welcomes the removal of the ban on travel to Israel on E-passports issued by Bangladesh," the Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

The confusion appears to have emanated from the new booklets of E-passports, which do not contain the phrase "all countries except Israel," it added.

Italian Cable Car Plunges To The Ground, Killing At Least 14



A cable car taking visitors to a mountaintop view of some of northern Italy's most picturesque lakes plummeted to the ground Sunday and then tumbled down the slope, killing at least 14 people and sending two children to the hospital in serious condition, authorities said.

Stesa Mayor Marcella Severino said it appeared that a cable broke, sending the car careening until it hit a pylon and then fell to the ground. At that point, the car overturned two or three times before hitting some trees," she said. Some of those who died were thrown from the cabin.

Images from the site showed the crumpled car in a clearing of a thick patch of pine trees near the summit of the Mottarone peak overlooking Lake Maggiore.

It was a terrible, terrible scene," Severino told Italy's SkyTG24. She said that in addition to the two children, a third person was injured.

The plunge on the the Stresa-Mottarone line happened about 100 meters (yards) before the final pylon, in a spot where the cables were particularly high off the ground, said Walter Milan, spokesman for Italy's Alpine rescue service.

Milan noted that the cable line had been renovated in 2016 and had only recently reopened after coronavirus lockdowns in Italy curtailed travel and forced the suspension of many leisure activities. Milan suggested many families may have flocked to the mountain on a sunny Sunday after months of restrictions.

The line is popular with tourists and locals alike to scale Mottarone, which reaches a height of 1,491 meters (4,900 feet) and overlooks several picturesque lakes and the surrounding Alps of Italy's Piedmont region.

The mountain hosts a small amusement park, Alpyland, that has a children's rollercoaster, and the area also has mountain bike paths and hiking trails.

Premier Mario Draghi offered his condolences to the families of the victims with a particular thought about the seriously injured children and their families." It appeared to be Italy's worst cable car disaster since 1998 when a low-flying U.S. military jet cut through the cable of a ski lift in Cavalese, in the Dolomites, killing 20 people.

Italy's transport minister, Enrico Giovannini, was following the rescue effort, which involved deploying three helicopters to the mountainside.

While the cause hasn't been determined, it's the latest episode to raise questions about the quality of Italy's transport infrastructure. In 2018, the Morandi bridge in Genoa collapsed after years of neglect, killing 43 people. (AP)

NEWS MAKERS

"Charlie Bit My Finger" Video Sold For \$7,60,000 At NFT Auction

Agence France-Presse

SAN FRANCISCO: Another classic piece of internet culture has been auctioned off for a six-figure sum, the latest viral sensation from the 2000s to be eagerly snapped up by digital collectors of "non fungible tokens" or NFTs.

The home video "Charlie Bit My Finger" sold for almost \$761,000 on Sunday, the 14th anniversary of its debut.

In the 55-second YouTube clip from 2007, a British toddler named Harry holds his baby brother Charlie. But the adorable domestic scene takes a sudden turn when Harry puts his pointer finger into his brother's mouth, and to his surprise, Charlie clamps down, spawning the much-memed lines: "ouch, Charlie" and "Charlie, that really hurt".

With more than 883 million views,



it's one of YouTube's most popular videos, though it will soon be removed from the platform. The Davies-Carr family announced they would delete it following Sunday's auction, saying the highest bidder would become "the sole owner of this lovable piece of internet history", though of course it has been copied, shared and reposted numerous times across the web.

The auction drew offers from 11

accounts and sparked a bidding war between users "mememaster" and "3fmusic", the latter of which eventually won with a \$760,999 offer.

NFT collectibles, essentially digital assets with a certificate of authenticity created by the blockchain, have exploded in popularity over the past year.

While the idea of buying something endlessly reproducible may bewilder some, a manic appetite for NFTs has taken hold in markets all over the world as buyers vie for bragging rights to a certified original.

Early internet memorabilia, including memes, GIFs, photos and videos, have done particularly well.

In March, Twitter boss Jack Dorsey sold his first tweet, from 2006, which reads "just setting up my twttr," for \$2.9 million to a Malaysia-based businessman.

Dogs Can Be Trained To Detect 90% Covid Cases, Even Asymptomatic: Study

Agence France-Presse

PARIS, FRANCE: Dogs can be trained to detect more than 90 percent of Covid-19 infections even when patients are asymptomatic, according to research published Monday, which authors hope could help replace the need to quarantine new arrivals.

Using their remarkable sense of smell – which can pick up the equivalent of half a teaspoon of sugar in an olympic-sized swimming pool – dogs have already shown that they can sniff out maladies such as cancer, malaria and epilepsy.

Several previous studies have shown proof-of-concept that dogs can detect SARS-CoV-2. Researchers from the Lon-

don School of Tropical Medicine wanted to see if dogs could detect a distinctive odour given off from chemical compounds associated with someone who is Covid positive but doesn't show symptoms.

They gathered samples of clothing and face masks from people who had tested positive for mild or symptomatic SARS-CoV-2.

Samples of the socks of 200 Covid-19 cases were collected and arranged in lab tests for six dogs that had been trained to indicate either a presence or absence of the chemical compound.

The dogs needed to be trained not to identify "false positives" in a bid to hack their reward system and obtain treats even if there were no Covid-19 samples in a given test.



"This means that the dog fully understands and gets a reward for a correct negative as well as a correct positive," said Claire Guest, from the school's Faculty of Infectious and Tropical Diseases.

Overall, the dogs were successfully able to identify between 94 and 82 percent of SARS-CoV-2 samples. The researchers then modelled

how effectively these success rates, combined with traditional PCR tests, could help detect mild or asymptomatic Covid-19 cases.

They found that using dogs to screen arrivals at terminals such as airports could detect 91 percent of cases, resulting in a 2.24 times lower rate of transmission than with PCR tests alone.

- 'Important start' -

Authors of the research, which has yet to be peer-reviewed, said they hoped it could eventually replace the need for travellers to quarantine -- which necessarily disrupts every arrival even though the vast majority are not Covid positive.

"The key thing is that dogs are significantly quicker than other tests," said co-author James Logan.

Role Of DDC, Municipal Heads Imperative To Tackle Covid: Singh

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Union Minister Jitendra Singh on Monday said the role of District Development Council (DDC) and municipal council chiefs is imperative in tackling the COVID-19 pandemic in Jammu and Kashmir.

While interacting with DDC chairpersons and municipal council presidents of the union territory's Udhampur Lok Sabha constituency, the minister asked them to regularly monitor Covid-related facilities in their respective districts and areas.

He said that their role as elected representatives becomes imperative in tackling the pandemic in their respective constituencies, a statement issued by the personnel ministry said.

During the interaction, Singh said that elected DDC representatives, having legitimate authority, can play a pivotal role during the pandemic by using their resources and authority to live up to the expectations of the people.

He also impressed upon them to conduct regular meetings with deputy commissioners and district health officials to bring to their notice important requirements related to Covid management, be it ventilators or oxygen concentrators.

The Union minister of state for personnel, during the interaction, stressed on reviving free 'tele-consultation' facilities for rural and far-flung areas, for which guidelines already exist for empanelment of recognised doctors on a shift-wise basis.

This will reduce the burden of patients at district hospitals, he said.

While appreciating the efforts of frontline workers with regard to the vaccination drive in the union territory, Singh said on an average, according to recent statistics available, more than 62 per cent vaccination has been done in Jammu and Kashmir

which is much higher than the rest of the country.

He emphasised that DDC chairpersons can play an important role in the vaccination drive by establishing inoculation centres at the panchayat level to assist locally and administratively in it.

The elected representatives must involve themselves in Covid care centres established at the panchayat level to boost the healthcare system and confidence among patients admitted there, the statement said.

The minister said for the last many days, COVID-19 fatality and positivity has decreased considerably, which is a good sign, and added that this can boost the confidence of people with regard to healthcare facilities that have been revamped up across the union territory.

Responding to concerns raised by the DDC chairpersons about the treatment of non-Covid critical patients, mainly cancer patients requiring chemotherapy and kidney patients requiring dialysis, he said that efforts are being made to earmark beds for such patients at government medical colleges and other associated hospitals.

The DDC chairpersons and municipal council presidents, who participated in the interaction, thanked the Union minister for sending Covid-related material from his personal resources for the Udhampur Lok Sabha constituency and for establishing oxygen plants wherever required, the statement said.

They also thanked him for allocating Rs 2.5 crore from his MP fund for COVID-19 facilities in the constituency, it said.

The DDC chairpersons acknowledged that after the minister's intervention, there is now sufficient oxygen supply in hospitals and the COVID-19 beds have also been increased, the statement said.



FARMERS HARVESTING STRAWBERRY in the outskirts of capital city Srinagar on Monday.

...DOCTOR SPEAKS

'Teach Children Covid Appropriate Behaviour'

Get Kids Other Routine Vaccines

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Dr Sanjeev Kumar Digra, Professor Department of Pediatrics, SMGS Hospital Jammu has said that irrespective of the hyped third-wave of Covid-19, young children have always been at risk of communicating the infection.

Although, in earlier waves, the infection was observed to be asymptomatic and mild in nature, it could become more severe in future, he added.

"As more of the population is infected with the virus, young children become more vulnerable to catch its infection. Thus, the onus of protecting children from Covid-19 is upon adults. If they religiously follow Covid appropriate behaviour, they can make sure that the infection doesn't reach their kids at home" the doctor advised.

The doctor said the elders in the family need to act as role-model and teach children how to adopt Covid appropriate behaviour, wear masks and sanitise hands frequently. "Till the time trial of vaccine for kids is going on and kids are not vaccinated, Covid appropriate behaviour is the only defence" he said. However, he said that according to re-



cent guidelines, lactating mothers can also get vaccination.

The doctor also reminded parents to get children their routine vaccines in order to prevent other deadly diseases. "Vaccines help prevent numerous deadly diseases in children. If only they're protected from them all, can we expect our children to have strong immunity against Covid also", he said.

Giving tips to parents, the doctor advises them to take care of children's nutrition and hydration in addition to engaging in indoor physical activities to keep fit. He suggests that parents spend time with their young ones while limiting their on-screen time, ie. usage of phones, tablets and other multimedia gadgets.

"If there is a symptomatic Covid patient at home, make sure to isolate him/ her and not let children around. On the contrary,

if a child is Covid positive, the adults should make sure to wear double-masks when around the child, given that the child is not old enough to be kept in isolation", educates Dr Sanjeev. They also need to frequently sanitise surfaces and things around the child, he added.

Detailing Covid symptoms in children, Dr Sanjeev informs that they include fever, throat pain, cold, cough, dysentery. In the second wave, it has been observed that children also tend to develop rashes and redness in eyes, he said.

"If a child is suffering from high grade fever for four to five days, is not eating well, starts vomiting, not breathing naturally, has bluish discolouration of body parts, has sunken eyes or dry lips, and his/ her oxygen saturation level dips below 94, one must immediately consult a doctor telephonically, or through eSanjeevani telemedicine facility. All facilities are available for treatment of such children at Maternal & Child Care Hospital, Gandhi Nagar Jammu, informs Dr Sanjeev.

Expressing hope, Dr Sanjeev says, "If we sincerely adopt Covid appropriate behaviour, we might even be able to prevent the third wave at all".

VACCINES HELP PREVENT NUMEROUS DEADLY DISEASES in children. If only they're protected from them all, can we expect our children to have strong immunity against Covid also."

Covid Positivity Rate Declines In Ganderbal: DC

Observer News Service

GANDERBAL: The Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, Kritika Jyotsna during a press briefing Monday revealed that the Covid-19 positivity rate has declined from 11.4 percent to 8 percent in the district.

Giving details on the status of tests conducted across the district during this week, she said that over 9500 tests were conducted this week, and the trajectory of the positivity rate has shown decline in the district which is a positive development.

Elaborating on the status of Vaccination campaign in the district, the DC said that 99 percent of vaccination of people above 45 years of age is completed and ap-

COVID-19 positivity rate has declined from 11.4 percent to 8 percent in the district."

pealed the rest to get vaccinated at the earliest adding that sufficient doses of vaccination are available in the district.

Regarding Corona curfew, Jyotsna said that corona curfew stands extended till 31th May, 2021 and complemented the general public for adhering to Covid-19 SOPs and guidelines as ordered in the district and said that it has proved instrumental in bringing down the positivity rate in the district.

She also briefed on the screening and testing of persons coming

from Kargil at Sonamarg and said that one check post has been installed at Sonamarg and till date 1950 persons have been screened and 246 were tested for Covid out of which 4 tested positive and were sent for home isolation.

Regarding Micro Containment strategy, the DC said that 15 new Micro Containment Zones are added this week to break further spread of the virus thus taking Micro Containment Zones to 454 in the district.

She said that district administration is always available for the timely redressal of grievances of the people and sought cooperation from all sects of the society in the same way as they showed cooperation earlier to contain the pandemic effectively.

Kulgam Village Road In Dilapidated Condition, Locals Say Authorities In Deep Slumber

Observer News Service

KULGAM: Laroo — Manidgufan road in Kulgam district is in dilapidated condition for the past many years as locals allege that authorities have not macadamised the road since 5 years.

They said that the 15 Kilometres Laroo — Manidgufan connects over 60 villages with district headquarters.

"The road has been neglected by the authorities even though the locals have complained about it many times," the local residents said.

They said that despite connecting various important places like Bugam, Yaripora, and Manidgufan with rest of the district, authorities have not paid any attention to repair the road.

The locals claimed that they approached the concerned authorities several times with a plea to macadamise the road, "but all in vain as nothing have been done in this regard."

"We want to bring it to the notice of concerned authorities to improve the condition of the road at the earliest so that we don't have to suffer anymore," they said.

Anantnag Admin To Start Covid Vaccination For 18-45 Age Group From Today

Observer News Service

ANANTNAG: In pursuance to the Government guidelines, the District Administration Anantnag under leadership of Dr. Piyush Singla has started efforts to start the vaccination of people falling in 18-45 age group in a focussed and targeted manner.

In this connection, a meeting of officers of concerned departments was Monday held at Dak Bangalow Khanabal.

ACR, Syed Yasir informed the meeting that in view of the likely supply of vaccine in near future, the vaccination programme for 18-45 age group will be taken up in a systematic and phased manner to prioritize coverage of high-risk and vulnerable groups.

For the 18-45 age group, the higher risk and vulnerable groups have been identified which include, shopkeepers, dhabawallas, hoteliers waiters, service providers, people engaged in door-to-door work, drivers, conductors, journalists, faculty staff, workers of the universities/colleges, Government employees on COVID or in active field duty, construction workers registered with Construction Workers Board, tour-



ism sector workers, people with disabilities (PwD), widows, single mothers, orphans and persons with co-morbid conditions, the meeting was informed.

It was further given that to ensure smooth immunisation of prioritized groups, special vaccination centers will be opened in specific locations.

The officers of the concerned departments were instructed to prepare the data of the prospective beneficiaries so they are covered in shortest possible time.

Pertinently, the vaccination drive for this group will begin from 25th May in the UT and within the target groups the high-risk groups will be vaccinated on priority.

ACR, SYED YASIR INFORMED THE meeting that in view of the likely supply of vaccine in near future, the vaccination programme for 18-45 age group will be taken up in a systematic and phased manner to prioritize coverage of high-risk and vulnerable groups.

Hafeez Reviews Tourism Projects



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Secretary, Tourism & Culture, Sarmad Hafeez Monday reviewed the pace of work on various projects being undertaken by the Tourism Department at various tourist destinations.

The Tourism Secretary reviewed the pace of completion of multi layer parking at Hazratbal being developed at a cost of Rs. 21 crore. He directed the concerned executing agency for timely completion of the project. He also sought details of the

Convention Centre being developed at Gulmarg and directed pacing up of the project.

Sarmad also reviewed the progress of up gradation at Pahalgam Club and directed all the up gradation at the swimming pool and bowling alley.

The Tourism Secretary also sought the feedback about the Sewerage Treatment Plant at Manasbal. A team of officers and engineers had inspected the plant last week on the instructions of the Tourism Secretary.

Sarmad also directed early completion of the Light & Sound Show project at Hariparbat Fort and directed its early commissioning.

MD, JK Cable Car Corporation, Majid Khalil Drabu; Managing Director, JKTDC, Nisar Ahmad Wani; Director, Tourism, Kashmir, Dr. G N Ittoo and other senior officers were present in the meeting.

Admin Geared Up To Mitigate Covid Crisis In Kupwara: DC

Observer News Service

KUPWARA: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Imam Din Monday said that with the active cooperation of general public, Covid crisis is receding in the district day by day.

The DC said this while addressing media persons, here today.

He said that sampling has been intensified in the district to identify the positive cases and isolate them to safeguard the lives of other people.

Giving details, the DC said that the district had total positive cases of 10890, adding that 8849 recovery cases have been recorded in the district which commensurate to 81.2 percent. He said that the administration is geared up for mitigation of Covid crisis.

He further said that the positive rate of cases is declining day by day in the district and appealed the people to continue their support to the administration by following Covid guidelines in letter and spirit.

29 Employees Suspended In Shopian

Observer News Service

SHOPIAN: Director Agriculture Kashmir, Chowdhary Mohammad Iqbal on Monday conducted a surprise visit to different offices of the District Shopian including Seed Multiplication Farm Allowpora.

While inspecting different sections of the Farm, Director took cognizance of the discouraging conditions of the farm. All the delinquent staff was placed under suspension with immediate effect and enquiry to this effect was ordered, an official statement said.

Taking strict notice of the events, Director Agriculture Kashmir Chowdhary Mohammad Iqbal has directed all the concerned officers/officials working in the department to strictly adhere to the office timings and improve work culture, so that the farming community is served to the best of our capabilities and warned of strict action against erring employees in future, the statement added.

Police Arrest 184, Register 94 FIRs For Violation Of Covid SOPs

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir Police Monday said that during the last 24 hours, it arrested 184 persons, lodged 94 FIRs and also realized fine to the tune of 1,41,840/- from 910 people for violating the guidelines/rules throughout Kashmir valley.

Besides, 44 vehicles were also seized in Shopian for violating guidelines/restrictions, Police said in a statement.

"The special drive against the violators of Covid-19 guidelines/rules continued throughout all the districts of Kashmir Valley to ensure that people adhere to SOPs/ guidelines envisaged by government to curb COVID-19 pandemic."

VC SKUAST-K Chairs Scientific Advisory Committee Meetings Kargil

Observer News Service

KARGIL: The Scientific Advisory committee meetings of KVK Kargil-I and KVK Kargil-II (Zanskar) were held Monday at KVK Kargil-I Khurbathang.

The meetings were chaired by Vice Chancellor, SKUAST-K, Professor J.P. Sharma.

Vice chancellor interacted with the scientific staff of the Station and kvk in the evening. After a long discussion he assured for timely fulfilment of their demands.

During the day long programme various key issues were discussed. Worthy chairman stressed upon the identification of cluster villages based on microclimatic conditions & development of pocket wise technology bank for them. Emphasis

was laid on branding of local agricultural commodities to increase their market value & demand. Instead of adopting a unidimensional approach of increasing production to increase the farmers' income, a more comprehensive approach like value addition, food processing, strengthening market linkages etc. was emphasized upon.

He further advised about the formation of Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), creation of commodity based marketing organizations, development of Integrated Farming Systems (IFS), establishment of commodity based processing centres at the stations, multiplication of quality seed & planting material, vertical farming, container gardening etc.

KASHMIR
OBSERVER

Printed & Published by Sajjad Haider on behalf of the
Kashmir Observer LLP

Published from: # 5- Boulevard, Srinagar-190001

Printed at: KT Press Pvt. Ltd, Rangreth Ind Area, Srinagar.

RNI Registration No: 69503/98

Postal Registration No-L/159/KO/SK/2014-16

Editor-in-Chief : Sajjad Haider

Legal Counsel: Tasaduq Khwaja

Switchboard: (0194) 2106304

Editorial: (0194) 2502327

Email editorial: editor@kashmirobsrver.net

K O V I E W

Ray of hope

There has been some drop in the number of daily coronavirus cases in the country over the last few days. On Sunday India reported 240,842 new infections nationwide over 24 hours, the lowest daily number in more than a month, and 3,741 deaths. Already New Delhi has decided to start relaxing its strict coronavirus lockdown next week if its new cases continue to drop. In Jammu and Kashmir too, the fresh cases have witnessed a conspicuous drop. From upwards of 5000 until a week ago, the cases are down to 3,308 in the last 24 hours. The death toll, however, remains high with 51 new fatalities caused by Covid-19, and again a majority of them are from Jammu division.

The decline in cases in the country has followed the meteoric rise over the last three months, with daily caseload hovering around over four lakh. There is no easy explanation for the reduction in numbers. The ongoing lockdown is supposed to have played a role. At the same time, the use of masks and the physical distancing norms are not prevalent among the people to an extent where it could perceptibly affect the daily caseload.

Be that as it may, the decline in numbers is a positive development. There is hope now that the daily caseload will progressively reduce like last year. But the consequent improvement in the situation would mean little if there is no corresponding expansion in the vaccination. Government also needs to invest in a world class healthcare infrastructure to increase the capacity of the hospitals and the medical personnel to deal with the pandemic. There is also the need to continue to increase testing. And this has to be done alongside the measures to reopen the economy. Considering the terrible state of the economy, the state governments across India can hardly afford to extend the lockdown. The trick is to upgrade health-care, expedite vaccination, enforce strict adherence to SOPs in public and running an advertisement blitz to create more awareness about the contagion.

In J&K, the situation on the vaccination front is bleak. The administration has failed to step up the drive. In the last week, there was almost no vaccination in the valley for three days. More so, at a time when due to the virulence of the second wave, people are coming forward to get jabs. The vaccine hesitancy that had earlier held back the inoculation drive has now given way to a frantic race to get vaccinated. And understandably so. The inoculation is now the only credible defence against the contagion. And sooner the government vaccinates people against the infection, earlier we could return to a normal life.

O T H E R O P I N O N

Battling a New Epidemic

India's Covid-19 pandemic now appears to have an epidemic within it. The Union government told the Delhi High Court on Thursday that at least 7,251 people have mucormycosis. Typically, the number of people who get this disease over an entire year is a fraction of the current caseload across the country. The fungus that causes the disease is found in soil and decaying organic matter such as fruit and vegetables, and is as ubiquitous in the natural environment as the immunity to it among healthy people. But that has changed this year as Covid-19 swept the country, exposing endemic problems in how India and Indians approach health care. These are spread over a wide spectrum of issues involving hygiene, a lack of understanding of best practices, a tendency to self-medicate and even misinformation.

Doctors and the government experts say mucormycosis infections — also called black fungus cases — are occurring in people who have high blood sugar and have been given strong doses of steroids or immunosuppressants to calm an immune system kicked into overdrive by Covid-19. For more than 12 months now, medical practitioners have known how to choreograph an immune response so that a patient is not unnecessarily vulnerable while stopping immune cells known as cytokines from destroying tissues in the lungs and elsewhere. In multiple press conferences, the government's experts have urged doctors to not prescribe immune-suppressing steroids too early, and for more attention to be given to people with high blood sugar that makes them vulnerable to opportunistic pathogens. Those warnings now appear to have been inadequate.

Hindustan Times

Country's Medical
System Needs A Revamp

Credits: Reuters

Asad Mirza

India has fared poorly in its universal health coverage (UHC). This is the barometer by which every developed or developing country is judged as to how professionally, emphatically and proactively the respective governments provide medical care to its citizens

During the continuing Covid pandemic, one fraternity, which has been eulogised for its dedication and services in India, is the medical fraternity. Till date, as per the Indian Medical association (IMA), 1017 doctors have died during the current pandemic since last year. The actual numbers may be higher as the doctors' association only keeps a record of doctors registered with it. India has more than 12 lakh practicing doctors.

Though every Indian is appreciative of the doctors and para-medical staff for their commitment to their profession and their unparalleled services to the needy, yet the overall medical system in the country seems to have collapsed and this forces us to ponder and analyse the reasons for this and its plausible answers.

India's Health Budget

It may not be wrong to say that since independence though India's defence budget has grown at an annual average rate of 9%, with India being the 3rd largest military spender in the world in 2019, its spending on the health sector has been coming down.

It is a fact that the government's spending on the health sector in India has been stuck at around 1% of GDP for close to 15 years. In 2004, the Government of India made a commitment to raise public spending on health to at least 2-3% of GDP over the next five years. That did not happen. A similar commitment was reiterated in the 2017 National Health Policy, which commits to increasing public spending on health to 2.5% of GDP by 2025. Till now, we have not seen signs of any significant increase in health spending by the government.

The allocation for health in the Rs 20-lakh-crore (\$260 billion) stimulus package announced by the central government last year on May 12, amounts to only 0.008% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP).

The package in reality incentivises the private health sector, whose contribution has been negligible during the pandemic. It is reported that private hospitals handled less than 10% of the critical load of COVID-19 patients, besides charging an exorbitant price for treating COVID-19 patients.

Since Independence, though, successive governments built a robust system of a primary health centre in big villages and densely populated localities, supplemented with a District Hospital in every district of the country. However, over the years this system has been led to rot and collapse, due to the pressure from the business lobbies, which made entry into the health-care system of the country by 1990.

Basic infrastructure in the form of primary health care included maternal and child health care and family welfare services. Special-

ised health services were provided through government hospitals in the urban areas.

Though since 1951 the number of doctors in India has increased nine times. Yet, due to the population growth the average number of doctors per ten thousand population has increased only by three times.

In addition, India has fared poorly in its universal health coverage (UHC). This is the barometer by which every developed or developing country is judged as to how professionally, emphatically and proactively the respective governments provide medical care to its citizens. UHC is critical to ensure that all, especially the most vulnerable and marginalised groups, such as women, daily labourers, homeless and migrants are cared for and attended to medically at the least or negligible cost.

The United Nations has included achievement of UHC by 2030 in its Sustainable Development Goals and proclaimed December 12 as the International Universal Health Coverage Day.

The Planning Commission in 2010, guided by the high-level expert group on UHC for India, envisioned UHC as a means to ensure that all people and communities could access preventive, curative, rehabilitative and palliative health services of assured quality.

However, we can't say with confidence that India has been able to achieve any parameters of the UHC.

What ails our medical system?

Maybe, the current scenario of the poor medical system in the country has arisen due to the crass commercialisation of the health-care sector in India, from education to management.

First, medical education was made expensive and then the corruption seeped in. This assured seats at the medical colleges for the undergraduate courses and postgraduate courses being allotted to people with deep pockets through the discretionary management quota of the private medical institutes, which mushroomed throughout the country.

Though the medical student or future doctors seemed committed professionally to the ethics and professional standards of their profession, but in reality they too had to recoup the investment, once they became active professionally.

Secondly, the corporate hospitals, which lured doctors at big salaries, further muddied the waters. They were governed mostly with strict corporate policies of generating more business for the management, which was guided only by the profit generation of his enterprise.

Further, an impartial analysis will reveal that the generalists' bureaucrats, not the professional doctors, manage every sector connected with providing health care facilities in the country. In such a

scenario everything becomes expensive and a source of corruption.

India, which is known as the pharmacy of the developing nations, is famous for its counterfeit medicines also. Added to this is the fact that the people who manage Drug Pricing are not professionally qualified. This further leads to seeping corruption and inflating prices, which might be 400-500% of the actual production cost. Additionally generic drugs are not encouraged in the country, so ultimately a patient may have to shell out a bigger price for a product which might have cost a few rupees to manufacture.

The mushrooming of private speciality and multi-speciality hospitals across the country has also led to treatment getting costlier, as these hospitals are guided more by the profits than providing welfare or cure.

Way Forward

To provide universal medical aid to every citizen of the country at the lowest cost, we'll have to restructure the whole medical system of the country. First, we'll have to ensure that medical education is in the government's hands, not with private institutes. Secondly, after becoming a certified doctor, through statutory guidelines every doctor should be made to work at a primary healthcare centre, which will make him more aware of the people's troubles and also make him more empathic to his patients.

Thirdly, drug pricing should be through a fair and transparent mechanism and should be focussed at providing the drug at the least cost to the patients and to generate not unhealthy but reasonable profits for the manufacturer. Fourthly, there should be strict laws against pharmaceutical companies approaching individual doctors at hospitals to help promote their products. Lastly and most importantly, the government should ensure that the management and administration of hospitals is in government's hands and not the private sector, so as to ensure providing cost-effective medical facilities to every citizen of the country.

Overall, we may not be able to come out of this vicious cycle of corruption and nepotism, till the time we are able to give the reins of managing the country's healthcare system in the hands of the professionals instead of the bureaucrats.

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

Asad Mirza is a political commentator based in New Delhi. He was also associated with BBC Urdu Service and Khaleej Times of Dubai. He writes on Muslims, education, international affairs, interfaith and current affairs. Email: asad.mirza.nd@gmail.com

OBSERVER
MAIL

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

MAIL YOUR LETTERS

P.O. Box # 337, GPO, Srinagar-190 001
email: editpage.ko@gmail.com

Ramdev Should Withdraw His Remarks

Baba Ramdev has remarked 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 is irrespon-

sible. The Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan has written a letter to Ramdev and said that the statement disrespects the corona warriors and hurts the sentiments of the country. The statement on allopathy can break the morale of healthcare workers and

weaken our fight against COVID19. Allopathic medicines have saved the lives of crores of people and the comment that it is responsible for the death of lakhs is extremely unfortunate. The Indian Medical Association also condemned this statement. Baba

Ramdev should withdraw his remark and avoid creating controversy on baseless facts.

Amit Singh Kushwaha, Satna
amitsk68@gmail.com



Searching For Sanity

If our society is not sane — and I find myself pointing towards this thesis — another question follows: what might sanity look like in an insane world?

Samuel Alexander

According to The Parable of the Poisoned Well, there once lived a king who ruled over a great city. He was loved for his wisdom and feared for his power. At the heart of the city was a well, the waters of which were clean and pure and from where the king and all the inhabitants drank. But one evening an enemy entered the city and poisoned the well with a strange liquid. Henceforth, all who drank from it went mad.

All the people drank the water, but not the king, for he had been warned by a watchman who had observed the contamination. The people began to say, “The king is mad and has lost his reason. Look how strangely he behaves. We cannot be ruled by a madman, so he must be dethroned”.

The king sensed his subjects were preparing to rise against him and grew fearful of revolution. One evening he ordered a royal goblet to be filled from the well and drank from it deeply. The next day there was great rejoicing among the people, for their beloved king had finally regained his wisdom and sanity.

In his 1955 book The Sane Society, psychoanalyst Erich Fromm suggests nothing is more common than the assumption that we, people living in the advanced industrial economies, are eminently sane. Nevertheless, Australia’s Department of Health reports that almost half of Australians aged 16 to 85 will experience a mental disorder at some point in their lives.

According to Fromm, we are inclined to see incidents of mental illness as individual and isolated disturbances, while acknowledging — with some discomfort, perhaps — that so many of these incidents should occur in a culture that is supposedly sane. Fromm haunts our self-image even today, attempting to unsettle these assumptions of sanity:

Can we be so sure that we are not deceiving ourselves? Many an inmate of an insane asylum is convinced that everybody else is crazy, except himself.

In an age now widely described as the Anthropocene, the conventionally held distinction between sanity and insanity is at risk of collapsing ... and taking our civilisation with it.

The line shifts over time

At least since Michel Foucault’s Madness and Civilization (1961), it has been understood that the idea of (in)sanity is an evolving, socially constructed category. Not only does the medical validity of mental health diagnoses and treatments shift with the times, but what has been judged “sane” in one era has the potential to blur into what is not in another — and without announcement.

This can disguise the fact that social practices or patterns of thought that may once have been considered healthy may now be properly diagnosed as unhealthy. And while this can apply to individual cases, there is no reason to think it should not also apply more broadly to a society at large. A society might go insane without being aware of its own degeneration.

One does not need to be a conspiracy theorist to recognise, with Foucault, that power shapes knowledge. If profits and economic growth are the benchmarks of success in a society, it simply may not be profitable to expose a society as insane, and even members of an insane society may sooner choose wilful blindness than look too deeply into the subconscious of their own culture.

If our society is not sane — and I find myself pointing towards this thesis — an-

other question follows: what might sanity look like in an insane world?

I come to these questions without mental health training or expertise, but simply as an ordinary member of late-stage capitalist society, one suffering in his own way and trying to understand the mental health burdens that accompany our ecocidal and grossly inequitable mode of civilisation. I make no comment on the very real biophysical causes for mental illness, such as chemical imbalances or physical injury.

Instead, I reflect, at a “macro” level, on the sanity or insanity of the dominant culture and political economy in contemporary capitalist societies such as Australia, asking how the world “out there” can impact the inner dimension of our lives.

Following Fromm’s lead, I inquire not so much into individual pathology, but into what he calls “collective neuroses” and “the pathology of normalcy”. Of course, collective neuroses are not easily observed, for they are, by nature, the background fabric of existence and so easily missed.

Drinking the Kool-Aid

At first, I tried to distil a positive life lesson from the Parable of the Poisoned Well, but I quickly realised this was the wrong way to approach it.

There is arguably no moral guidance in the fable, only an amoral social insight. If there is a lesson, it is that sometimes it is easier or safer simply to conform to common assumptions or practices, no matter how dubious or absurd they are, to avoid being socially ostracised. If you do not go with the flow you may be deemed mad, so it may be better just to blend in and drink the Kool-Aid.

A second reading of the parable points to the relativity of notions of sanity, again suggesting that what’s sane or insane isn’t fixed, but is culturally dependent: a person is sane if they “function” well enough in the society, even if that society is sick.

It is this relativity of sanity that Fromm calls into question in The Sane Society. “The fact that millions of people share the same vices,” he wrote, “does not make these vices virtues, the fact that they share so many errors does not make the errors to be truths, and the fact that millions of people share the same forms of mental pathology does not make these people sane.”

He felt that society needed certain objective conditions to be sane, including environmental sustainability. If too many of humankind’s most basic needs were not being met despite unprecedented capacity, he felt it would be proper to declare a society sick, even if the behav-

our producing the sickness was widespread and validated by its own internal cultural logic.

What is “normal” behaviour today? The climate emergency points to our fatal addiction to fossil fuels. We know their combustion is killing the planet, but we can’t help ourselves. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was established in 1988 to advise us on the science of climate change, yet here we are, more than 30 years later, and carbon emissions continue to rise (excepting

“If there is a lesson, it is that sometimes it is easier or safer simply to conform to common assumptions or practices, no matter how dubious or absurd they are, to avoid being socially ostracised. If you do not go with the flow you may be deemed mad

only the years of financial crisis or pandemic). We emit 37 gigatons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere each year, in full knowledge of their impacts.

In 2019, fossil fuels supplied around 85 per cent of global primary energy demand. Driven by a fetish for economic growth, voters support politicians who bring lumps of coal into a parliament for a laugh and enthusiastically build new fossil fuel power stations. It is a tragedy disguised as a grim joke.

Scientists warn that current trajectories of climate heating are not compatible with civilisation as we know it, with potentially billions of lives at risk this century, both human and non-human. You know something is wrong when the Arctic is burning. And yet nothing is more “normal” than hopping into a fossil-fuelled car or consuming products shipped around the world to satisfy the carboniferous desires of affluent society.

We’re deforesting the planet and destroying topsoil to feed a population that is growing by over 200,000 people every day. The United Nations projects we’ll have reached almost ten billion people by mid-century.

This human dominance of the planet under global capitalism is contributing to a holocaust of biodiversity loss, with the World Wildlife Fund recently reporting that populations of vertebrate species have declined by 68 per cent since 1970. We are living through the sixth mass extinction, driven by human economic activity that is not just normal but encouraged, rewarded and widely admired.

Empire marches on like a snake eating its own tail, pursuing growth for growth’s sake — the ideology of a cancer cell.

Unmoored, lost at sea

A spiritual malaise seems to be spreading throughout advanced capitalist societies, as if the material rewards

and philosopher Lewis Mumford once opined, an inner dimension to our crises that must be resolved before the outer crises can be effectively met?

How easy it is to live life regurgitating the prewritten script of advanced industrial society: cogs in a vast machine, easily replaced. Perhaps we see our disenchantment reflected in the eyes of those tired, alienated commuters, a class into which it is so easy to fall simply by virtue of being subjects of the capitalist order. We all know that there is more to life than this.

We find ourselves living in an age where the old dogmas of growth, material affluence and technology are increasingly exposed as false idols. Like a fleet of ships that has been unmoored in a storm, our species is drifting in dangerous seas without a clear sense of direction.

Where are the new sources of meaning and guidance that all societies need to fight off the ennui? Pioneering sociologist Émile Durkheim used the term “anomie” to refer to a condition in which a culture’s traditional norms have broken down without new norms arising that can give sense to a changing world. Perhaps this is the term that best explains our existential condition today.

I am reminded of a poem by Michael Leunig:
*They took him on a stretcher
To the Home for the Appalled
Where he lay down in the corner
And be bawled and bawled and bawled.
‘There’s nothing wrong with me,’ he wailed,
When asked about his bawling.
‘It’s the world that needs attention;
It’s so utterly appalling.’*

What is a sane reaction to an insane society?

One could go on, but it would be perverse to do so. “Doom porn” is not my business or purpose. But there is a case for diagnosing our society as insane — not as rhetorical strategy, but in the pursuit of literal truth.

If an individual knowingly destroyed the conditions of his or her own existence, we’d question their sanity. If a mother only fed her children if she could make a profit, we’d doubt the soundness of her mind. If a father took all the household wealth and left the rest of the family in destitution while building bombs in the basement that could destroy the neighbourhood, we’d call him psychopathic.

And yet these are characteristics of our society as a whole. Fromm would not permit us to diagnose ourselves and our society as sane just because the actions that produce the features outlined above are considered “normal”. There is a pathology to our normalcy — my own regretably included — and this pathology is no

society”. And the British psychiatrist R. D. Laing said insanity was “a perfectly rational adjustment to an insane world”. I think I recall Star Trek’s Mr Spock saying something similar.

How can we not get depressed when reading the newspapers today or watching our politicians go about their business with such confident incompetence? How can we not grieve the wildlife and natural habitat being destroyed each moment? What parent can look to the future and not feel a foreboding dread at what world their children and grandchildren will inherit?

At the same time, and because of that dread, it is hard to maintain the emotional resources to care for strangers or “join a movement” when stress, agitation, worry and busyness clutter our mental lives. This can make society seem like a harsh place, lacking in generosity of spirit or compassion.

Whether it’s from watching white supremacists march or listening to climate deniers speak from platforms in parliament and mass media, a nausea sets in, a sickness not so much of the mind but of the soul.

This is an existential diagnosis, not a medical or psychiatric one. It would be wrong to make peace with this madness. The world we live in should not be treated as normal, and it should not be a sign of good health to become “well adjusted” to a society that is casually practising ecocide, celebrating narcissism, institutionalising racism and assessing the value of all things according to the cold logic of profit maximisation.

It is okay not to feel okay

We must not assume behaviour that makes an individual “functional” within a sick society is sufficient evidence of their sanity. In such a society, it is okay not to feel okay, to cry and feel grief, to feel dread and alienation. In our tears, let us find solidarity, for we are not alone.

Remember this when you wake up prematurely in the morning with an anxiety without object, or as you stare at the ceiling late at night as you try to fall asleep. You are not losing your mind. It is precisely because you have a grip on reality that reality seems so out of whack.

On my third reading of the Parable of the Poisoned Well, I noticed something I had missed — it was the watchman, the man who warned the king not to drink the poisoned water and remained sane in an insane society? Did that made him seem mad?

Wanting to quash the revolutionary sentiment, the king succumbed to public pressure and eventually drank from the well in order to fit in. But what about the watchman? Is it possible he never drank the poisoned water and remained sane in an insane society? Did that made him seem mad?

Perhaps my thoughts here are those of a watchman, someone who has tried not to drink the Kool-Aid, who has attempted to resist the pathology of normalcy.

Admittedly, I have questioned my own sanity at times — when, for example, I’ve found myself dancing in the middle of a busy intersection with Extinction Rebellion, risking arrest. What had driven me to act in a way that sees me surrounded by police with batons, guns and pepper spray? They sure looked mad.

Call me crazy, but I’ll finish with the words often attributed to Friedrich Nietzsche: “Those who were seen dancing were thought to be insane by those who could not hear the music”.

...
By arrangements with
the Conversatioin



WALKING DAILY may lead to a longer and healthier life

Agencies

Taking more steps per day, either all at once or in shorter spurts, may help you live longer, according to preliminary research.

The findings of the research were presented at the American Heart Association's Epidemiology, Prevention, Lifestyle & Cardiometabolic Health Conference 2021. The virtual meeting offered the latest science on population-based health and wellness and implications for lifestyle.

Walking is one of the safest and easiest ways to improve fitness and health including heart health. The American Heart Association's fitness guidelines for adults recommend at least 150 minutes per week of moderate or 75 minutes of vigorous physical activity, or a combination of both. Popular fitness apps and step counters make it easy to count steps, so researchers used a wearable step counting device to compare the effects of uninterrupted bouts of steps (10 minutes or longer) to occasional short spurts, such as climbing the stairs and general daily activities throughout the day.

"Technological advances made in recent decades have allowed researchers to measure short spurts of activity. Whereas, in the past we were limited to only measuring activities people could recall on a questionnaire," said lead study author Christopher C. Moore, M.S., a PhD student in epidemiology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. "With the help of wearable devices, more research is indicating that any type of movement is better than remaining sedentary."

From 2011-2015, 16,732 women wore a waist step counter that measured their daily steps and walking patterns for four to seven days. The women were all over age 60 (average age of 72; mostly non-Hispanic white women) and were participants in the Women's Health Study, a large, national study of heart disease, cancer and other long-term disease prevention.

The researchers divided the total number of steps for each study participant into two groups: 1) 10 minutes or longer bouts of

walking with few interruptions; and 2) short spurts of walking during regular daily activities such as housework, taking the stairs, or walking to or from a car. In follow-up, they tracked deaths from any cause for an average of six years, through December 31, 2019.

Researchers found:

- Overall, 804 deaths occurred during the entire study period of 2011-2019.
- Study participants who took more steps in short spurts lived longer, regardless of how many steps they had in longer, uninterrupted bouts. The benefits levelled off at about 4,500 steps per day in short spurts.
- Compared to no daily steps, each initial increase of 1,000 steps per day was associated with a 28% decrease in death during the follow-up period.
- A 32% decrease in death was noted in participants who took more than 2,000 steps daily in uninterrupted bouts.

A prior analysis of the same women reported that those who took 4,500 steps per day had a significantly lower risk of death compared to the least active women. "Our current results indicate that this finding holds even for women who did not engage in any uninterrupted bouts of walking. Taking 2,000 or more additional steps during bouts was associated with further benefits for longevity," Moore said.

"Older adults face many barriers to participating in structured exercise programs, so some may find it more convenient and enjoyable to increase everyday walking behaviours, like parking slightly further from their destination or doing some extra housework or yardwork," Moore said.

Since all study participants were older and mostly non-Hispanic white women, more research is needed to determine if the results apply to men, younger women and people from diverse racial and ethnic groups.



“Walking is one of the safest and easiest ways to improve fitness and health including heart health. The American Heart Association's fitness guidelines for adults recommend at least 150 minutes per week of moderate or 75 minutes of vigorous physical activity, or a combination of both.

New detector finds gamma rays from surprising cosmic sources

Agencies

Astrophysicist Cao Zhen opens a steel hatch on a windswept Tibetan Plateau and climbs down a ladder into inky darkness.

His flashlight picks out a boat floating on a pool of purified water above thousands of glittering orbs the size of beachballs.

He's inside a USD 175 million observatory that isn't technically complete but has already discovered something tantalizing: bursts of gamma rays from outer space that may someday help explain how matter is created and distributed across the universe.

The Large High Altitude Air Shower Observatory, the biggest device of its kind, has detected a dozen sources of ultra high-energy gamma rays, according to a study in the journal Nature, from what Cao calls many hot spots, in our Milky Way galaxy.

Gamma rays with such high energy have never been detected before, and the findings suggest

these rays can come not just from dying stars, but are also generated inside massive young stars.

These results are really stunning some of the most exciting I have ever seen, said Alan Watson, an astrophysicist working with the Pierre Auger Observatory in Argentina.

Cao's team traced 530 high-energy gamma rays to 12 sources including a massive cluster of young stars called the Cygnus Cocoon and the interstellar cloud called the Crab Nebula.

Gamma rays are a type of extreme radiation generated by the hottest and brightest explosions in the universe, like when a large star implodes.

Those implosions also create the matter that make up planets and everything that lives on them, including us. Of all the electromagnetic waves in the universe, gamma rays have the smallest wavelengths and the most energy.

They can release more energy in 10 seconds than our sun in 10 billion years.

The pool of purified water at LHAASO that Cao paddled across measures the subatomic shrapnel

as gamma rays.

Cosmic rays are like sparks from a massive stellar crucible each contains flecks of material from the forging process. Gamma rays are more like light from a glowing hearth. By studying both, the observatory can learn more about what generated them.

The Chinese observatory offers unprecedented sensitivity, said Avi Loeb, a Harvard University astrophysicist, that may, for example, help physicists tell whether if some rays come from inside our galaxy or farther away.

It's not yet complete, however. Cao said that by the end of June the instruments will be in place, including 5,195 electromagnetic detectors, 1,188 muon detectors, and 18 Cherenkov telescopes each the size of a shipping container that will study air showers in the sky.

The outcome really justifies the massive effort, Watson said of the new findings. This is just the tip of the iceberg.

Saudi Arabia Extends Validity Of Iqamas And Visas Of Expats Stranded Abroad



Agencies

By royal order, Saudi Arabia has extended the visas and iqamas (residence permits) of all those who have been stranded abroad amid travel restrictions.

The validity of these documents will be extended until June 2, 2021, the Saudi Press Agency reported citing a royal order.

"The extension issued by the Minister of Finance, falls within the ongoing efforts taken by the government of Saudi Arabia to deal with the impacts and fallouts of the global COVID-19 pandemic, in the context of the precautionary measures and preventive procedures that guarantee the safety of citizens as well as residents and contribute to mitigate the economic and financial effects of the pandemic," reported the SPA.

"The immigration authority confirmed that the extension will automatically take place, in collaboration with the National Information Center, with no need to report to the directorate of passports offices," the release added.

In February, Saudi Arabia suspended entry into the kingdom from 20 countries including India, which has been grappling with a deadly second wave of the pandemic. The countries included were India, Argentina, the United Arab Emirates, Germany, the United States of America, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Pakistan, Brazil, Portugal, United Kingdom, Turkey, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, France, Lebanon, Egypt, and Japan.

Earlier in May, Saudi Arabia eased its travel ban for vaccinated citizens.

Mobile Users May Soon Be Able To Switch From Postpaid To Prepaid And Vice Versa Using OTP

NEW DELHI: Mobile phone subscribers may soon be allowed to switch from a postpaid connection to prepaid and vice versa by using an OTP-based authentication and without a need to change SIM card, according to an official DoT note.



Industry Body Cellular Operators' Association of India (COAI) has proposed the mechanism to the Department of Telecom (DoT) and the department has asked telecom operators to carry out proof of concept (PoC) on the same.

The final decision on allowing the change in the account will depend on the outcome of PoC, according to the DoT note.

"The PoC for conversion from prepaid to postpaid and vice versa may be carried out by the telecom service providers as per the procedure...The decision regarding implementation of the procedure shall be taken after the assessment of the outcome of the PoC," DoT ADG Suresh Kumar said in the note issued on May 21.

The COAI, whose members include Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea, had requested the DoT on April 9 for permission to allow mobile customers to migrate from prepaid to postpaid and vice versa without undertaking fresh KYC procedure and by using OTP (one-time password) based authentication.

"OTP based authentication has become an acceptable norm in all sectors in the

recent past and most of the citizen centric services are being offered with OTP authentication. Contactless services in the present era are to be promoted for subscriber convenience and also for ease of doing business," the note said.

Under the proposed process, mobile subscribers willing to change their existing mobile connection from pre-paid to postpaid or vice versa will have to send a request to their service provider through SMS, IVRS, website or authorised app.

Upon receiving the request, the subscriber will get a message acknowledging the request for conversion of the mobile account along with a unique transaction ID and an OTP which will be valid for 10 minutes.

The successful verification of the OTP will be treated as consent of the subscriber and the telecom operator will inform him about the date and time from when the conversion will be considered effective.

"The disruption of services, if any, during the said conversion shall not exceed 30 minutes," the DoT note said.

At present, over 90 per cent of mobile subscribers are using prepaid service.-PTI



Tackle Economic Downturn With A Mix Of Fiscal And Monetary Policies: Report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

A Reserve Bank of India (RBI) study has advocated a mix of fiscal and monetary policies to mitigate economic downturn, saying demand side channel needs to be complemented with a conducive monetary transmission mechanism from the supply side.

Referring to the 2009 crisis, the study by Development Research Group (DRG) on 'Risk Premium Shocks and Business Cycle Outcomes in India', said that at the micro-level, the interest rate spread, attributed to risk premium on loans, increased in response to a rise in loan defaults during the post-2009 period.

Also, the credit growth was found to be negatively associated with the loan default rate, indicating that a shock to the

borrowing sectors has a significant negative impact on credit growth, it added.

On the policy interventions to deal with the crisis, the study said, "our policy experiments reveal that an expansionary policy mix of fiscal and monetary policies may perform better than the individual-level intervention of expansionary monetary or fiscal policy to mitigate the economic downturn as the demand side channel can be complemented with a conducive monetary transmission mechanism from the supply side".

DRG has been constituted as part of RBI's Department of Economic and Policy Research to undertake quick and effective policy-oriented research backed by strong analytical and empirical basis on subjects of current interest.

The study co-authored by Shesadri Banerjee, Jibin Jose, and Radheshyam Verma investigates the dynamic effects of financial shocks on the business cycle.

RBI has also published another DRG study titled, 'Threshold Level of Inflation - Concept and Measurement'. It is co-authored by Ravindra H Dholakia, Jai Chander, Ipsita Padhi and Bhanu Pratap.

The study examines the concept of threshold inflation and defines it as the long-run equilibrium rate of inflation that maximises the steady state growth within the relevant range of values, it said.

The empirical findings of the study broadly confirm higher threshold inflation and higher growth in emerging market economies than in advanced economies.

RDIF, Panacea Biotec Launch Production Of Sputnik V Vaccine In India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) and Indian drug firm Panacea Biotec on Monday announced the launch of the production of the Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine in India.

The first batch of the COVID-19 vaccine produced at Panacea Biotec's facilities at Baddi in Himachal Pradesh will be shipped to Russia's Gamaleya Center for quality control.

Full-scale production of the vaccine is expected to start this summer, RDIF and Panacea Biotec said in a joint statement.

As announced in April, RDIF and Panacea have agreed to produce 100 million doses per year of Sputnik V, it added.

"Launch of production in India in partnership with Panacea Biotec marks an important step



in helping the country fight the pandemic," RDIF chief executive Kirill Dmitriev said.

The production of Sputnik V supports efforts of India's authorities to leave behind the acute phase of coronavirus as soon as possible while the vaccine will also be exported at a later stage to help prevent the spread of the virus in other countries around the world, he added.

On the development, Panacea

Biotech MD Rajesh Jain said, "This marks a significant step as we initiate production of Sputnik V. Together with RDIF, we hope to help bring a sense of normalcy back to people across the country and around the world."

Sputnik V was registered in India under the emergency use authorisation procedure on April 12, 2021, and vaccination against coronavirus with the Russian vaccine started on May 14.

Bank Credit Grows By 6.02%; Deposits By 9.87%

Agencies

Bank credit grew by 6.02 per cent to Rs 108.69 lakh crore and deposits increased by 9.87 per cent to Rs 152.17 lakh crore in the fortnight ended May 7, 2021, RBI data showed.

In the fortnight ended May 8, 2020, bank advances stood at Rs 102.52 lakh crore and deposits at Rs 138.50 lakh crore, according to RBI's Scheduled Banks' Statement of Position in India as on May 07, 2021, released on Monday.

Bank credit had grown by



5.71 per cent and deposits by 10.28 per cent in the previous fortnight ended April 23, 2021.

In fiscal year 2020-21, bank credit had grown by 5.56 per cent and deposits by 11.4 per cent.

Law Ministry Tele-Consultation Service Now Addressing Queries Related To Pandemic, Lockdown

NEW DELHI: A Law Ministry tele-consultation service launched to help rural residents get pre-litigation legal advice from a panel of lawyers is now receiving calls from people seeking solutions to problems arising out of the coronavirus pandemic and the lockdown in various parts of the country.

People have been calling various local centres of the tele-law scheme seeking solutions to various issues such as police high-handedness in implementing Covid-appropriate behaviour and discrimination being faced by health workers and their families who are wrongly accused of being carriers of coronavirus.

When people call up the service's local centre, they are put through the panel of lawyers who

authorities to resolve his grievance.

There were many calls for violence against women due to confinement within their families, said an official of the Department of Justice.

Lockdown measures have also brought to the surface new concerns flagged by people.

According to the department, queries and concerns on "misuse" of police power and imposing fines on people for not wearing mask, powers of local task force constituted in village to restrain the movement of the citizens during lockdown, retrenchment of employees due to downsizing in the company amidst pandemic without due notice, property disputes and family feuds due to displacement and migration amongst siblings, information on applying for e-pass for inter- and intra-state movement are being raised.

Queries on the type of vaccination to use and vaccine hesitancy are also being asked by the rural population to the team of panel lawyers engaged under the 'Tele-Law: Reaching the Unreached Programme', department officials said.

Launched in 2017 by the Department of Justice in 1,800 Common Service Centres, tele-law service has been expanded to cover 50,000 Gram Panchayats across all states and union territories in the country, including all 117 Aspirational Districts.

Serving as a unique e-model to provide legal advice and consultation through tele or video conferencing facilities available in Common Service Centres situated at Gram Panchayats, the platform continues to experience a surge in beneficiaries seeking legal advice, even amidst the pandemic, the department said.

It facilitates free of cost advice to the persons entitled to free legal aid as provided under section 12 of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987. Others can avail the benefit at Rs 30 per consultation.

Since 2017 it has enabled advice to over eight lakh beneficiaries in the country on various matters that include property disputes, domestic violence, denial and information of various entitlements under central and state welfare schemes, matters related to filing of FIR, bail, banking recovery matters, cheque bounce cases and service matters.—PTI



answer their queries.

According to details provided by the Department of Justice in the Law Ministry, advocate Khawakupar Kongjoh, a panel lawyer with the tele-law service for Meghalaya, was asked by a beneficiary from Chockpot Bazar of South Garo Hills about the necessary measures required to put an end to discrimination and stigmatisation of health workers and their families as "corona carriers".

Similarly, advocate Suhaila Ali of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh was asked by a resident of Yangoora village in Ganderbal district on how to apply for concession to the electricity department as he has received a massive electricity bill and, having lost his job due to the pandemic, is not in a position to pay the amount.

A query on a government scheme to provide assistance to street vendors who have lost livelihood due to lockdown was raised before advocate Swati by a resident of Kabaria Tola, Namtara village in Bairaich district of Uttar Pradesh.

Advocate Manzoor Ahmed was consulted by a resident of a village in Baramulla about any government scholarship as the family is unable to pay the school tuition fees due to lockdown and how to approach the school au-

SHORT TAKES

Curfew Restrictions Impact Retail Sales; Health, Hygiene, Instant Food Products Pick Up

NEW DELHI: Retailers are having continued growth in health and hygiene category products as well as in food, personal care and home care items, but discretionary categories like beauty and cosmetics, fashion and apparels have been affected adversely during the second wave of the pandemic.

Now, there is a renewed focus on healthy alternatives such as ayurvedic toothpaste and juices, while instant foods and ready-to-eat snacking items with nutritional offerings are also seeing larger penetration.

Moreover, value packs are doing well this time as smaller packs of Rs 5 and Rs 10 have witnessed a rise of up to 20 per cent across categories like biscuits, ketchup and jams, while the large and premium packs have been affected as people are cautious about their disposable income.

Besides, some retailers are also facing the issue of excess stock-

ing in categories such as apparel, fashion and home care categories, as they had stocked up their inventory in March in anticipation of the upcoming season after having a good run rate in the January-March quarter.

"Spends have dropped in high price point and non-essential categories," METRO Cash & Carry India MD and CEO Arvind Mediratta told PTI.

Future Group, which operates big format stores such as Big Bazaar and has now shifted mostly to home delivery model, said sales in the non-essential category have gone down after the second wave restrictions.

"Of course, sales of the non-essential category have been hit as you are selling only food and other essentials. Because of that, categories such as fashion and home are impacted very high. We have stocks but suddenly sales have gone down. The summer sales, which we

were expecting in fashion, are now washed away," he added.

Daily essentials such as fresh vegetables, staples and pulses; dairy products like milk; ready-to-cook items such as dosa barter; packed foods such as noodles, pasta and pickles are selling well at Big Bazaar, he added.

While Mediratta also points out that the restriction on store timing in the second wave and lockdown has "impacted business and is becoming a logistical nightmare".

"By the time customers start walking in, it's time to shut the stores," he said.

The challenge has been on receiving stocks at stores, recording inventories and managing customer walk-ins within those restricted timing of 3-4 hours in most of the company's operating states, Mediratta added.

According to Big Bazaar, on the delivery side, it is not facing any challenges but there is still



a different set of rules city-wise and is creating confusion.

"We have ramped up our home deliveries but of course as a daily retailer, you have to keep figuring out the changes in the local lockdown and have to keep adapting to it. That is a challenge for us," said a Big Bazaar spokesperson.

But, since it has now shifted mostly to the home delivery

model, it has faced no problems in sales so far, he added.

METRO Cash & Carry is also witnessing a lot of online orders on its app, but timely delivery of orders to its kirana customers within these restricted periods was again a challenge, said Mediratta.

EY Partner and National Leader (Consumer Products and Retail) Pinakiranjana Mishra

said this time, retailers are far more ready than the earlier lockdown.

"Supply chain is not a big issue this time," he said. According to him, sales in some categories such as apparels would be a challenge.

When asked whether the big retail chains may face an issue of excess stocking due to increased inventory Mishra said, "It is possible that they have excess stocks and they would take more time to liquidate." Earlier this month, Avenue Supermarts Ltd, which owns and operates retail chain D-Mart, had said it having an "adverse and severe impact" on its revenues due to "significant disruptions" of its store operations from March 2021 onwards.

Besides, D-Mart may also have to face a challenge of "excess inventory" as with the receding threat of the pandemic and sales surge in the last two quarters, it

had optimistically made plans.

"We currently continue to receive a regular supply of goods from our suppliers. However, this time we may have a problem of excess inventory. An issue larger than the first wave," Avenue Supermarts had said in post-earnings statement on May 8.

The receding threat of the pandemic and consequent sales surge in the third quarter and most of fourth quarter, followed by the oncoming summer and back to school season, made us plan more optimistically.

"This could have a longer-term impact on our inventory to sales ratio as we could take comparatively longer time to liquidate the excess inventory," it had added.

This time, several state governments imposed lockdown-like restrictions in April and are now extending to the May-end in their efforts to check the spread of coronavirus. —PTI

Delhi Police Sends Notice To Twitter-India In Connection With 'COVID Toolkit' Probe

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The Delhi Police's Special Cell on Monday sent a notice to Twitter India in connection with the probe into a complaint about the alleged 'COVID toolkit', asking it to share information based on which it had classified a related tweet by BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra as "manipulated media", officials said.

Two police teams also descended on the microblogging site's offices in Lado Sarai in Delhi and in Gurgaon this evening.

"The Delhi police team went to the Twitter office to serve a notice to Twitter as a part of routine process. This was necessitated as we wanted to ascertain who is the right person to serve a notice, as replies by Twitter India MD have been very ambiguous," Delhi Police PRO Chinmoy Biswal said.

The BJP has accused the Congress of creating a 'toolkit' that seeks to tarnish the image of the country and Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the handling of the COVID pandemic. However, the Congress has denied the allegation and claimed that the BJP is propagating a fake 'toolkit' to defame it.

Last week, Twitter labelled as "manipulated media" a tweet by Patra on the alleged

'toolkit'. Twitter says it "may label Tweets that include media (videos, audio, and images) that have been deceptively altered or fabricated".

Biswal said the Delhi Police is inquiring into a complaint in the toolkit matter.

"It appears that Twitter has some information which is not known to us and on the basis of which they have classified it (Patra's tweet) as such. This information is relevant to the inquiry. The Special Cell, which is conducting the inquiry, wants to find out the truth. Twitter, which has claimed to know the underlying truth, should clarify," he said.

The police, however, refused to divulge the contents of the complaint or the identity of the complainant.

The notice sent earlier to Twitter India MD stated that "whereas a preliminary enquiry is being conducted pertaining to the 'Toolkit' which is allegedly released by the Indian National Congress and whereas during the course of the investigation, it has come to our knowledge that you are acquainted with the facts of the matter and are in possession of information with regard to the same."

The police in the notice requested Twitter India MD to be

present in the DCP office for the purpose of investigation with all the relevant documents on May 22 at 1 PM.

Twitter, however, did not wish to offer any comment.

The government had earlier asked Twitter to remove the 'manipulated media' tag as the matter is pending before law enforcement agency, and made it clear that the social media platform cannot pass judgment when the issue is under investigation.

BJP leaders, including Patra, have posted numerous tweets to attack the Congress over the purported 'toolkit'.

On May 19, the Congress lodged a police complaint seeking registration of cases against BJP chief J P Nadda, Union minister Smriti Irani, BJP general secretary B L Santosh and Patra over the alleged forgery of documents.

The Chhattisgarh unit of the Congress' students wing NSUI also lodged a complaint against Patra and former chief minister Raman Singh for allegedly "forging" the letterhead of the AICC Research Department and printing "false and fabricated" content on it.

On the basis of the complaint, a case has been filed against Patra and Singh at the Civil Lines police station in Raipur.

Navy Teams From INS Makar, INS Tarasa Carry Out Underwater Search For Bodies

Press Trust of India

MUMBAI: Navy ships INS Makar and INS Tarasa on Monday carried out diving operations 35 nautical miles from Mumbai coast to locate the bodies of missing personnel on board tugboat Varaprada, a week after it went adrift in the Arabian Sea during Cyclone Tauktae fury, an official said.

"The Specialist Clearance Diving Team of the Western Naval Command conducted the diving operations over the wreck of Tug Varaprada today. The diving was carried out from INS Makar and INS Tarasa at a depth of 32 metres in nil visibility conditions at a distance of 35 nautical miles from Mumbai harbour," a Navy spokesperson said.

Specialised surface supply diving equipment, underwater search equipment, hand held Sonar (sound navigation and ranging, a technique that uses sound propagation to navigate, communicate with or detect objects on or under the surface of water) and underwater lights were used during the dive operations, he said.

"No mortal remains were located underwater," the spokesperson said.

A Navy official earlier in the day said all the 274 personnel who were on board barge P305 that sank and tugboat Varaprada that went adrift during the cyclone fury have been



accounted for with the recovery of 16 bodies along Maharashtra and Gujarat coasts.

"A total of 274 crew were reported missing on May 17 (261 from Barge P305 and 13 from Tug Varaprada). While 186 survivors from P305 and two from Varaprada were picked up at sea, 70 mortal remains (bodies) were recovered at sea by ships of Indian Navy and Coast Guard," he said.

"Eight bodies have been recovered along the coast in Raigad district of Maharashtra and another eight bodies washed ashore the Gujarat coast near Valsad," he said.

Thus all the 274 crew (261 on board P305 and 13 on board Varaprada) have been

accounted for, he said. The final confirmation will be pending till the identification of all the bodies recovered is completed, he added.

Rescue personnel had recovered 70 bodies, believed to be of P305 personnel, in the sea till Sunday. With 16 bodies washing ashore, the death toll in the tragedy at sea could rise to 86, another official said. As of now, the official death toll stands at 70 pending identification of the bodies washed ashore.

INS Makar, a Navy survey catamaran equipped with side scan sonars, located the wreckage of P305 on Saturday in the vicinity of where it sank on May 17. The Navy had also

deployed specialised diving teams to boost the search and rescue (SAR) operations. The SAR operations haven't been called off yet, the spokesperson told PTI.

The relatives of the victims will try to identify the deceased with the help of the belongings found on their bodies, like clothes, identity cards, batch number or birth marks, previous injury marks or tattoos. In case the bodies are not identified, DNA tests would be conducted, another official said.

All the 440 persons on barges Gal Constructor and Support Station 3 (SS-3) and drillship Sagar Bhushan were brought ashore to safety recently.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Govt Declares

"All the Government and private health facilities, Medical Colleges are required to follow the guidelines for screening, diagnosis, management of Mucormycosis, issued by the MoHFW (GoI)/CMR/Government of Jammu and Kashmir as amended from time to time and make it mandatory for all these facilities to report suspected and confirmed cases to Health Department through District Level Chief Officers and Integrated Disease Surveillance Program (IDSP)," reads the notification.

"No person/institution or organization will spread any information or material for management of Mucormycosis without prior permission from Director Health Services, Jammu/Kashmir," it adds.

The notification further says that all persons, institutions and the organisations have been barred from using print, electronic or any other media for Mucormycosis without prior permission from the Director Health Service Jammu/Kashmir.

"In case of disobedience, the Direction Health Services, Jammu/Kashmir has been authorized to constitute a District Committee headed by Chief Medical Officer or the concerned District which will have specialist of internal Medicine, Ophthalmology, GNT and Epidemiologist as members to review any disobeying by the person/institution or organization," it says.

It further adds that the violators will be punished under Section 188 of Indian Penal Code.

On Saturday, J&K reported first death of patient with Mucormycosis at Government Medical College (GMC) Jammu prompting an alert by the health experts in Kashmir.

The "Covid-triggered" black fungus infection is rising in India. So far, over 7,000 people have been infected with the disease and over 200 have lost their lives.

J&K Logs 45 Deaths

across the Union Territory during the last 24 hours.

The officials said that Jammu division reported 29 of the fatalities while in Kashmir 16 people succumbed to the virus at the various healthcare facilities during the last 24 hours. With these deaths, the officials said, the fatality count since the outbreak of pandemic in J&K has reached 3609.

Among the victims from the Valley, officials said, included a 70-year-old woman from Kralpora, Budgam, who died five days after she was admitted to SKIMS Bemina. Besides, a 65-year-old man from Jawalpora Budgam died at the hospital, 14 days after remaining admitted there.

An 80-year-old woman from Hazratbal also died, two day after she was admitted to the hospital. A 52-year-old woman from Wanbal Budgam, officials said, also died at a healthcare facility, three weeks after she was admitted there.

They said a 60-year-old woman from Saida Pora Aihial died 18 days after she was admitted to District Hospital Pulwama. Also, a 60-year-old woman from Murran Hardpora died at the hospital on the same day of her admission, they said. A 52-year-old from Zadoora also died at the hospital on the same day of his admission to the facility, they said.

They said a 55-year-old woman from Gojwara here and another same aged woman from Nishat besides a 75-year-old woman from Talilbal died at JLNH hospital Rainawari.

A 76-year-old man from Humhama and a 57-year-old from Kunzer Tangmarg died at SMHS hospital, they said. One death was reported from GMC Anantnag, they added.

Meanwhile, the officials said that among the new 2237 fresh cases, 854 were confirmed from Jammu Division and 1383 from Kashmir Valley, taking the total count to 272858.

Giving district wise details, the officials said that Srinagar reported 309, Baramulla 103, Budgam 221, Pulwama 77, Kupwara 204, Anantnag 106, Bandipora 77, Ganderbal

91, Kulgam 169, Shopian 26, Jammu 441, Udhampur 55, Rajouri 66, Doda 43, Kathua 49, Samba 31, Kishtwar 47, Poonch 27, Ramban 47 and Reasi 48 new cases of coronavirus.

Also, officials said, 3999 more patients have recovered—1490 from Jammu Division and 2509 from the Valley. There are 45630 active positive cases—18738 in Jammu and 26892 in Kashmir. (With agency inputs)

Train Services

and vice versa. Official sources said that railway authorities have taken the decision on the request by the J&K administration and have subsequently in formed the field agencies about it.

On May 10, the authorities suspended the services in view of the covid-19 situation in Kashmir Valley and as per the guidelines and SOPs issued by the government.

The decision followed huge rush of passengers at stations amid continuing increase in the number Covid cases.

Vaccination Drive

Anantnag, Baramulla, Budgam and Srinagar districts of Kashmir, and Jammu, Kathua, Rajouri and Udhampur districts of Jammu. The spokesman said the target groups have been identified considering their risk assessment and vulnerability to the disease.

"It was directed that as a part of the special vaccination drive, additional dedicated vaccination centres are established for centralized and fast-tracked coverage of all identified beneficiaries after proper verification," the spokesman said.

He said the chief secretary directed the Law Department to organize two days' special vaccination drives at High Court complexes and district courts to vaccinate all lawyers.

The Information Department was directed to organize similar vaccination drives for journalists at twin Directorates of Jammu and Kashmir, while the Tourism Department was asked to hold such drives at district offices concerned to cover stakeholders associated with the tourism industry, the spokesman said.

He said the transport department was asked to hold the drives for truck, bus, taxi and autorickshaw drivers at respective regional and assistant regional transport offices, while the Higher Education Department will coordinate vaccination of teaching and non-teaching faculty at campuses.

Similarly, the spokesman said the departments of Labour and Housing and Urban Development were directed to organize centralized vaccination drives at suitable places to cover all construction workers, and shopkeepers, vendors and dhaba workers, respectively.

For the target group comprising government employees on Covid duty or in active field offices- viz employees of Public Health Engineering, Power Development Department; people with disabilities; widows or single mothers; orphans; and persons with comorbid conditions, the Deputy Commissioners concerned were directed to mobilize identified beneficiaries towards existing vaccination centres on priority, the spokesman said. (PTI)

Ensure No One

asked the officers to work with compassion and empathy and take all required steps to enable people to overcome their difficulties during this pandemic.

He said that the LG observed in the meeting that the pandemic has a broad range of impact on different aspects of people's lives.

"If required, specific interventions should be taken immediately to support the most vulnerable population, workers, women, children, small businesses, farmers, communities and senior citizens. Collaborative, consistent and continuous efforts are required to further strengthen the social protection," the LG said, as per official spokesperson.

While taking a comprehensive overview of the implementation of welfare schemes, the

LG, he said, was briefed that the relief has been extended to around 40 lakh beneficiaries under different components.

"It was informed that under Interest Subvention, about 3.50 lakh borrowers have received installments of 5% interest subvention worth Rs 200 crore," he said.

"On benefits extended to construction workers, the Lt Governor was informed that the first installment of more than Rs 34.50 crore has been provided to 3,49,303 active construction workers at the rate of Rs 1000 per beneficiary," he added.

The official spokesperson said that the meeting was told that Rs 5.6 crore have been provided for around 28 thousand Shikarawals/Ponywals/ Dandiwalas/Palkiwalas/Tourist guides at Rs 1000 per month per beneficiary as two months' relief. Of the total, 14,627 beneficiaries are from Kashmir division and 13,153 are from Jammu Division.

As a part of COVID mitigation measures, he said, Rs 55 crore have been provided to all District Development Commissioners at the rate of Rs 2.25 crore each and Rs 5 crore to each Divisional Commissioner of Jammu and Kashmir.

"The LG was informed during the meeting that Rs. 2000 was disbursed each to 9.5 lakh farmers under PM-KISAN Yojna involving a total amount of Rs. 190 crore," the official spokesperson said.

Further, he said that the Rural Development Department has provided employment to 26,673 households covering 35,484 individuals, involving Rs 8.21 crore under MGNREGA during April and May, 2021.

The official spokesperson said about 7.10 lakh pensioners have received their pension (through DBT mode) amounting to Rs. 71 crore under ISSS Pension for the month of April. Under the Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension scheme, he said, an amount to the tune of Rs. 25.68 crore for the month of March and April has been paid in favour of 1.28 lakh pensioners (through DBT)."

"Bank accounts of 83,617 beneficiaries of Ladli Beti scheme have been credited with an amount of Rs. 50.00 cores (through DBT). Another amount of Rs 25 crore is being credited to the individual bank accounts of the beneficiaries," he said.

"Besides, 1212 beneficiaries belonging to different districts of UT of J&K have been given an amount of Rs 4.836 crore as financial assistance to poor marriageable girls (through DBT) under State Marriage Assistance scheme during the current financial year," he added.

The meeting, he said, was also informed that the School Education Department is providing Dry Ration (Rice) to 8.46 lakh students under the Mid-Day Meal Scheme.

"Under Supplementary Nutrition Programme, a total of 7,89,586 beneficiaries including pregnant & lactating women, children under 6 years of age have been provided dry ration in the UT," he added.

He further quoted LG expressing gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for all the assistance to the Union Territory.

"He also asked the concerned officers to adopt various mitigation strategies in line with the dynamics of the situation at hand and ensure seamless extension of benefits to the citizens under various beneficiary oriented schemes," the official spokesperson said.

Arun Kumar Mehta, Financial Commissioner, Finance Department and concerned senior officers attended the meeting.

BJP Distributes

medicines that boost immunity among the people under home quarantine.

"We sent all these medicines to the people under home quarantine in villages and far flung areas where administration could not reach. Our youth wing has purchased these medicines from ISM. We received these medicines after paying in cash," he said.

However, refuting Thakur's claim that the

immune boosters have been purchased by the BJP's youth wing, Director ISM, Dr Mohan Singh told Kashmir Observer that on the directive of the government of India, these covid-19 kits have to be supplied free of cost to anyone.

"The 4500 Covid care kits that BJP distributed today were also provided to them by ISM for free," he said.

DGP Asks Officers

also reviewed response of police to the second Covid-19 wave, the DGP stressed the need of using all the technology and related tools to keep a check on the people who are misusing the social media, an official spokesperson said.

Singh, he said, directed that a mechanism must be put in place to identify and bring to book all the mischief mongers, who are found using the social media for "anti-national and anti-social activities".

"The DGP directed the officers to maintain close surveillance of such elements trying to disrupt the fast returning peaceful atmosphere and take all measures to neutralise such attempts," he added.

Special DG CID, R.R. Swain, ADGP Headquarters, PHQ, M.K Sinha, IGP Kashmir Vijay Kumar, IGP Headquarters PHQ, Garib Dass, DIG Central Kashmir Amit Kumar, DIG SKR, Abdul Jabbar, DIG NKR, Sujit Kumar, AIG (P&T) Rajinder Gupta and SSP Srinagar Sandeep Choudhary attended the meeting.

The police spokesperson said that while speaking on the occasion, the DGP directed the officers to augment the security grids to further improve safe and secure environment for the citizens.

Singh, he said, stressed that the action against the militants and their associates should continue and all the suspicious elements should be kept under check so as to "foil their ill designs" aimed at disrupting normal lives of the people.

Underlining the need for pro-active role of the law enforcing agencies, he said, the DGP directed police officers to put in place effective measures for maintaining peace and order in coordination other security forces.

"Singh said that JKP along with other security forces has ensured rule of law after facing tough challenges and have succeeded to maintaining sense of security among the people. He said that our efforts will continue to strengthen the peace in J&K," the police spokesperson said.

He said that the DGP directed the field officers to take effective steps against the drug peddlers so that the menace of drug abuse is eradicated.

While reviewing the Police response to the second Covid-19 wave, the DGP, he said, stressed for implementing the government directives, advisories, besides assisting the administration to contain the spread of COVID-19.

"He said that we are in the critical phase and every possible effort is required to come out of it," the police spokesperson said.

He said that the senior officers briefed the DGP about the measures put in place for maintaining peace and order and ensuring security of the people. The DGP, he said, was also apprised regarding police's different measures in response to the coronavirus.

Forest Dept's

advance asking them to evict the area.

They also alleged that the officials started beating men and women while carrying out the eviction drive, injuring three people including two women.

However, forest officials said that once the eviction drive was started, the people from the Gujar community assembled and made officials as well as journalists' hostage in a fenced area of PHE. Officials said that at least 10 forest employees and five journalists were injured during the resistance by the Gujar community.

The journalists who received minor injuries include Aijaz Ahmad Dar (Zee news), Irshad Ahmad (News18), Shahid Tak (ETV Bharat), Nazir Wani (Punjab Kesari) and Firdous Ahmad (News Nation).

District Forest Officer (DFO), Mohammad Ayoub said that the people from the Gujar community attacked them during a routine eviction drive.

He said that the community was already asked to prove their claim if land belonged to them, however, they failed and accordingly the drive was started.

Ayoub said that besides officials, the journalists who had come to cover the drive, were taken hostage and were rescued by the timely action of the police.

He said that they have sought an FIR against the community in this regard. (With agency inputs)

Mehbooba Alleges

claimed that an eviction drive by the forest department in the upper reaches of the Zampathri area of South Kashmir's Shopian district turned violent after resistance by the communities' members.

"A Gujar from Kellar in Shopian was beaten to pulp by the forest department. On one hand this administration makes tall claims about the implementation of Forest Rights Act while at the same time they continue to hound and persecute these communities, the PDP chief tweeted.

The former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister also posted on Twitter a video of a member of the community claiming he was beaten up by forest department personnel. (PTI)

China Says

their diplomatic relations.

India has protested to China over the CPEC, the flagship project of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), as it traverses through Pakistan-controlled Kashmir (PcK).

The massive infrastructure project connects China's Xinjiang province with Gwadar port in Pakistan's Balochistan province.

China has been defending the CPEC, saying it is an economic project not aimed at any third country.

Answering questions on the CPEC at a media briefing on Monday, Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said that "since its launch, the CPEC, as an important pilot project of the BRI, has made significant and positive progress in such areas as transportation infrastructure, energy, ports and industrial parks."

"At the same time, it is also actively reaching out to Afghanistan and other regional countries," he said in updated comments on Chinese Foreign Ministry website.

Asked how China sees regional prosperity being furthered by the CPEC in view of India's position that it passes through Indian territory illegally occupied by Pakistan, Zhao said the project has not affected China's principled position on Kashmir.

"As for whether the CPEC involves the Kashmir issue, China has made it clear on many occasions that the CPEC is an economic cooperation initiative, which is not targeted at any third party, has nothing to do with disputes over territorial sovereignty, and will not affect China's principled position on the Kashmir issue," he said.

On the CPEC's extension to Afghanistan, he said, "as for China's discussions with Afghanistan and other third parties on extending the CPEC, I can tell you that China, Pakistan and Afghanistan have been in communication through diplomatic and other channels".

"We have also noted that Afghanistan imports and exports relevant goods through Gwadar and Karachi ports. The three parties are discussing the extension of the highway and expressway in Pakistan to Afghanistan," he said.

In a message to his Pakistani counterpart Arif Alvi on Friday on the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the China-Pakistan diplomatic relations, President Xi Jinping said the CPEC has achieved remarkable results.

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan said at a high-level meeting in Islamabad that the CPEC will bring economic progress not only to Pakistan but the entire region.

Pandya Brothers Send New Batch Of Oxygen Concentrators To COVID Centres



Press Trust of India

MUMBAI: Indian cricket's Pandya brothers — Hardik and Krunal — are once again doing their bit to help those suffering from the COVID-19 pandemic, dispatching oxygen concentrators to the centres dealing with the crisis.

Elder brother Krunal, who has played ODIs and T20s for India, took to Twitter on Monday to share the information.

"This new batch of Oxygen Concentrators are being dispatched to Covid centres with prayers in our hearts for everyone's speedy recovery," tweeted Krunal, who also plays for Mumbai Indians in the Indian Premier League, along with a picture.

Hardik also took to social media and said that the battle against the pandemic can be won by working together.

"We're in the middle of a tough battle that we can win by working together," said Hardik.

Earlier this month, the swash-buckling all-rounder Hardik had announced that his entire family, including brother Krunal, would donate 200 oxygen concentrators to help the rural areas in the country's fight against the raging pandemic.

Currently, India is reeling under the second wave of the pandemic and according to the latest update from the health ministry, the country recorded 2,22,315 fresh cases infections and 4,454 fatalities.

COVID Positive Sprint Legend Milkha Singh Hospitalised, Condition Stable

Press Trust of India

CHANDIGARH: Legendary Indian sprinter Milkha Singh, who has tested positive for COVID-19, was on Monday hospitalised, with his son and ace golfer Jeev Milkha Singh saying that the move was a precautionary measure.

The 91-year-old Milkha had been in home isolation at his Chandigarh residence after he tested positive for the virus on Wednesday. He has now been admitted to Fortis hospital in Mohali.

Hospital sources said that Milkha's condition was "stable".

"He has been hospitalised. He was weak and not eating since yesterday, so we had to hospitalise him. Though his parameters seemed alright, we thought it is safer to have him admitted where he would be under supervision of senior doctors," Jeev told PTI.

"He is under good care of doctors there. He is a strong man, always positive and will recover soon," added the golfer, who reached here on Saturday from Dubai after his father tested positive.

Milkha had earlier said that a couple of house helps had been infected by the virus after which his family underwent tests.

"Only I returned positive on Wednesday and I am surprised,"



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

Earlier, Nirmal Kaur had said that PGIMER here had sent an attendant along with oxygen facilities to look after him at his home.

The legendary athlete is a four-time Asian Games gold-medallist and 1958 Commonwealth Games champion but his greatest performance was the fourth place finish in the 400m final of the 1960 Rome Olympics. His timing at the Italian capital remained the national record for 38 years till Parmjeet Singh broke it in 1998.

He also represented India in the 1956 and 1964 Olympics and was bestowed the Padma Shri in 1959.

Advisor Khan Hails Govt Move To Expand JK Water Sports Centre

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has approved addition of two more water sports disciplines of Kayaking and Canoeing at the Khelo India State Centre of Excellence (KISCE), Srinagar, which had earlier only facility for rowing.

According to a communiqué issued by J&K Sports Council in this regard, this significant move is aimed at to encourage and facilitate the outstanding athletes of Jammu and Kashmir in these disciplines.

Pertinently, the J&K Sports Council and the UT government had initiated the request for addition of these sporting disciplines in the Centre. The KISCE, which was launched in April 2021, after revamping facilities in the existing J&K Water Sports Academy.

Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Farooq Khan, while hailing the Central Government for the move,



said, "The addition of Kayaking and Canoeing disciplines shall pave way for more impressive performances in international competitions such as the World Championships and the Asian Championships. The KISCE Water Sports Centre shall help in tapping and nurturing of athletes in two new disciplines enabling them

to excel in the sport and represent India in world-class competition."

Farooq Khan expressed gratitude to Lieutenant Governor of J&K, Manoj Sinha, Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports, Kiren Rijju, for addition of these disciplines to the Khelo India State Centre of Excellence. He said that athletes are overwhelmed that they can get world class training in more disciplines under one roof.

Advisor said that with the addition of these two sporting disciplines there is scope for greater participation and this shall also draw sporting talent from all across the country. He praised the teams from UT administration and Ministry of Youth Affairs Government of India to make this possible.

Meanwhile, all the sports enthusiasts of J&K have termed this decision as a significant development as far as improving the sports infrastructure in J&K is concerned.

BCCI To Donate 2000 Oxygen Concentrators To Help India Fight COVID-19

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The Indian cricket board on Monday said it will distribute 2000 oxygen concentrators of 10 litres each to various medical organisations, ramping up the country's overwhelmed healthcare infrastructure in its fight against the raging COVID-19 pandemic.

The deadly second wave of the pandemic has caused an unprecedented health crisis with thousands losing their lives.

Last month, the national capital region emerged as the worst sufferer due to oxygen crisis, leading to fatalities in multiple hospitals.

"The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Monday announced that it will contribute 10-Litre 2000 Oxygen concentrators to boost India's efforts in overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic," the BCCI said in a release.

"The nation has been hit by an unprecedented second wave of the coronavirus with demands for medical equipment and life-saving oxygen witnessing a major spike," it added.

"Over the next few months, the Board will distribute the concentrators across India with the hope that critical medical aid and care will be provided to the needy patients and this initiative will reduce the havoc unleashed by the pandemic," it further stated.

During the first wave, the BCCI had contributed Rs 51 crore to the PM Cares fund last year.

"The BCCI acknowledges the stellar role the medical and healthcare



community has played and continues to play as we fight this long battle against the virus. They have truly been frontline warriors and have done whatever possible to shield us," BCCI president Sourav Ganguly said.

"The Board has always put health and safety at the top of the chart and remains committed to the cause. The oxygen concentrators will provide immediate relief to those affected and will help in their speedy recovery," the former India captain added.

Secretary Jay Shah, on his part, said that the BCCI's contribution could help bridge the gap between demand and supply of oxygen.

"The BCCI understands the desperate need for medical equipment in this hour of crisis and hopes this effort will help in narrowing the demand-supply gap that has generated across the country," Shah said.

"We have all gone through a lot but I am confident that we can stay

ahead of the curve now that the vaccination drive is underway. I urge everyone eligible to get vaccinated."

The price of a 10-litre oxygen concentrator is anything between Rs 60,000 to Rs 1 lakh and 2000 of them could cost the BCCI around Rs 12 crore.

"In times of crisis, the cricketing community has always come forward to lend support. It is heartening to see everyone coming together and doing their bit," treasurer Arun Dhumal said.

"The BCCI remains steadfast in its efforts towards social responsibility and will always be working closely with central and state governments to help them in their efforts to curb the spread of the virus.

"We believe these oxygen concentrators will boost healthcare infrastructure and be vital in providing critical oxygen when levels deplete rapidly," he added.

Railways To Suspend Murder-Accused Olympian Sushil Kumar



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The Northern Railway is set to suspend wrestler Sushil Kumar after he was arrested by the Delhi Police in a murder case, a spokesperson said on Monday.

A senior commercial manager with the Northern Railway, Olympic medallist Kumar was posted by the Delhi government as an Officer on Special Duty (OSD) at Chhatrasal Stadium for the development of sports at the school level.

On the run for nearly three weeks, Kumar was arrested a day ago for his alleged involvement in the death of a 23-year-old wrestler at Chhatrasal Stadium, along with co-accused Ajay from outer Delhi's Mundka area.

"The Railway Board has received a report on the case on Sunday from the Delhi government. He has FIRs registered against him and he will be suspended," Northern Railway CPRO Deepak Kumar told PTI.

Officials said that an official order suspending the wrestler will be issued in a couple of days.

A Year After Promise, BCCI Yet To Work Out Compensation Plan For Ranji Trophy Players

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The compensation promised to India's first-class players after the 2020 Ranji Trophy season stood cancelled amid the COVID-19 pandemic is yet to be disbursed as state units have still not sent in the requisite details, BCCI Treasurer Arun Dhumal told PTI on Monday.

In a recent article in the UK's 'Telegraph' newspaper, it came to light that the BCCI is yet to share the T20 World Cup runners-up prize money of USD 550,000 with the Indian women's team. The Board responded by promising to deliver this week.

The developments also brought into focus the inordinate delay in players' payments across the board, irrespective of gender.

The Ranji Trophy compensation package is another instance of delay and devising an acceptable formula for one and all isn't as easy and linear, Dhumal admitted.

"We have to discuss with states because they have to tell us who would have played, how many matches, who would have been in reserves. None of the states have sent any proposal for the compensation package," Dhumal said.

During this edition of Indian Premier League, there were 73 uncapped Indian domestic players across eight teams (including Basil Thampi and Deepak Hooda, who have been a part of the Indian team).

These players had contracts ranging from Rs 20 lakh to nearly Rs 10 crore (Krishnappa Gowtham).

However, there are around 700 others, who don't have IPL contracts and make anything between Rs 10 lakh to Rs 20 lakh in a full domestic season with maximum earnings coming from Ranji Trophy where they get a match fee of Rs 1.40 lakh.

"The treasurer is right. The BCCI president Sourav Ganguly has announced the compensation but how do you determine which are the players who would play 8



games, or 10 games in a season? The reserve players get half, so how do you compute that?"

"You can't just give a flat amount to every player. Giving a lump sum to states is an option but how do you monitor the states?" asked a former BCCI official and state unit veteran.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant closure of BCCI headquarters has led to delays but it's of little consolation to the domestic players as most of them are yet to receive the Gross Revenue Share (GRS) for the past few seasons.

BCCI has always allocated a share from its TV broadcast revenue to the domestic cricketers and it is normally paid in September after the annual accounts are settled.

According to Dhumal, the GRS of domestic cricketers has been kept pending since the 2016-17 season.

"We pay the GRS amounts after the accounts are settled. But I must tell you that since 2016-17, when the Committee of Administrators (CoA) was in operation, GRS has not been cleared."

However, Dhumal said that this year's Vijay Hazare and Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy payments

(Rs 35,000 per match) have been cleared.

"I can also confirm that payments for the Vijay Hazare and Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy have also been disbursed," Dhumal informed.

He then explained how the payments are disbursed.

"It's the state associations which raise the invoice of the match fees of their players as per the number of games they have played or been part of the series. Verification part of the data (matches played) is done by the states.

"The GST also needs to be computed. If the states delay in sending the invoices, that at times also leads to delay in payments. Some states, immediately after the end of the season, send us the invoice with all due diligence and their players immediately receive payments," said Dhumal.

The senior Indian players received their annual retainer fees after nearly one year, reason being the delay in signing the contracts.

"The delay in payment of central contracts was two fold. The offices were closed and also it took time during lockdown to get the players to sign the contract document," Dhumal said.

Probe Gambhir, Others Buying COVID Medicines In Bulk: Delhi Court

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The Delhi High court Monday directed the drug controller to inquire into the issue of politicians buying COVID-19 drugs in bulk amid shortages and observed that while BJP MP Gautam Gambhir must have been distributing the medicines to the best of his intention, the gesture unintentionally did a disservice.

The high court also directed the Drug Controller of Delhi government to conduct a similar inquiry into the allegations of procuring and hoarding medical oxygen made against AAP MLAs Priti Tomar and Praveen Kumar and file a status report.

A bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Jasmeet Singh said the Drug Controller shall examine how it is possible for someone to procure over 2,000 strips of a medicine, Fabiflu here, which is already in shortage and how the chemist was able to entertain such a prescription?

"Mr Gautam Gambhir must have done it with best of intentions. We are not doubting his intentions. He has been a national player of our country. Our question is whether it is a responsible behaviour when you the medicine is in short supply?"

"We are not doubting his intentions but the way he has gone about it, he has actually done a disservice, unintentionally may be. This was not the way that you buy from the market so many strips, certainly not?" the bench said.

The high court was hearing a PIL seeking lodging of an FIR on the allegations that politicians are able to procure in huge quantity and distribute COVID-19 medicines even as patients were running from pillar to post to get them.

An application was also filed in the pending petition making allegations MLAs Tomar and Kumar.

The bench perused the status report of Delhi Police which said that Gambhir had purchased 2,628 strips of Fabiflu, used for treating COVID-19 patients, on the prescription of Dr Manish of Sanjay Garg Hospital and while 2,343 strips were distributed to patients, remaining 285 strips were deposited with Delhi government's Director General of Health Services for distribution, in view of court's earlier order.

"The aspect which needs to be examined is how such a large quantity of Fabiflu was authorized to be purchased in retail as the medicine was in grave short supply at the relevant time. We can take judicial notice of this fact as we have been hearing this matter for a considerable time now?"

"It also needs examination as to how these medicines were distributed to several patients or attendants by Dr Manish of Sanjay Garg hospital?" the bench said, noting that the payment for the medicines was made through

cricketer-turned politician Gambhir's foundation.

The court noted that through the supporting documents have not been filed by the police, the concerned DCP stated they have collected them during the enquiry.

"We would like you (Drug Controller) to tell us what enquiry you have done. Here there is a very clear case made out. Tell us under what provisions action is required to be taken and against whom. All this has to be done by the Drug Controller and not by the Delhi Police, as per the Supreme Court's order?" the bench said.

It added once the allegations have come to the knowledge of the Drug Controller, it cannot shut its eyes and asked it to look into Gambhir's incident.

It said since the violation falls in the realm of drug controller, let the material collected be placed before the Drug Controller of Delhi which shall undertake the necessary enquiry and file a status report.

Noting the submissions of the counsel for the Drug Controller, the bench said it appeared the Drug Controller is presently not well versed with its statutory powers in relation to enquiry or investigation or prosecution of cases and directed the Law Department of Delhi government to ensure that necessary expertise is provided and listed the matter for further hearing on May 31.

Regarding other allegations raised by petitioner's counsel, the bench said they are unsubstantiated and it would not go into it otherwise it would amount to witch hunting.

The court had earlier said political leaders have no business to hoard stocks of COVID-19 medicines that are already in shortage and they are expected to surrender these drugs.

It had also expressed dissatisfaction over a "vague and white-washed enquiry" report filed by the Delhi Police over the allegations against politicians hoarding and distributing medicines in the national capital.

Petitioner Deepak Singh, the chairperson of Hrudaya Foundation and a national level shooter, has questioned how politicians are able to procure large stocks of the medicine without having the requisite permission under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, when the normal public was not getting it.

Advocate Virag Gupta, representing Singh, said strict action be taken against the politicians, who were allegedly indulging in black marketing, as they cannot procure it in the absence of a licence.

He claimed that photographs clearly show Gambhir was himself distributing medicines to people outside his office and not the doctor.

"Gambhir was neither a doctor nor a chemist or an authorized person to distribute medicines to patients," Gupta said.

Pakistan Should Not Ignore Mohammad Amir, Says Wasim Akram

Press Trust of India

KARACHI: Former Pakistan captain Wasim Akram has rapped the national team management and selectors for ignoring left-arm pace bowler Mohammad Amir when it comes to selection in the national side for the short formats.

The fast bowling great Akram, who is also a member of the Pakistan Cricket Board's Cricket Committee, said he was surprised that Amir has been ignored.

"I am very surprised because Amir is a very experienced bowler and one of the best in the world in T20 cricket. Personally I think he should be in Pakistan's World T20 squad," Akram told a TV channel.

Amir, who has quit Test cricket, plays for Karachi Kings in the Pakistan Super League where Wasim is head coach and director of the franchise.

Akram said that if Amir had decided to retire from Test cricket it was his own business and no one should take offense to that.

"Other players have done it but no one says anything about them. So why Amir? ...I think if he is available for other formats he should be playing for Pakistan."

Amir has not played for Pakistan since last year when he had a fall out with the Pakistan team head coach, Misbah-ul-Haq and bowling coach, Waqar Younis and has maintained that he will not play for the national team until they remain in charge.

Asked if he as a member of the cricket committee had brought up this issue with Misbah and Waqar during a recent virtual meeting of the



members, Akram said that the committee was only an advisory body.

Akram said fast bowlers hunt in packs and that is why the national team needed Amir.

"In World Cup events you need experienced bowlers who can also advise and guide the younger bowlers."

Akram said too much fuss was created over Amir's personal decisions in recent times.

"Other players also take time off for the birth of their child so what is the big deal?"

Akram also felt that the upcoming tour of England for a white ball series was the last chance for Misbah and Babar Azam to finalise their squad for the World T20 Cup in October.

"We need to have more impact players in the T20 squad, those who can play without fear of failure only then can we do well."

Wasim said that if the World Cup was moved to UAE in October it would benefit the Pakistan team which was used to playing there.

SC Seeks Centre's Response On Compensation To Covid Victims' Kin



Agenceis

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Monday sought response from the Centre on a plea seeking compensation of Rs 4 lakh to the families of those who have died from coronavirus.

A Vacation Bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan and M R Shah also asked the Centre to place before it the ICMR guidelines on issuance of death certificates for Covid-19 victims, saying there should be uniform policy for issuing such documents.

The apex court was hearing two separate pleas seeking

directions to the Centre and states to provide compensation of Rs 4 lakh to the families of coronavirus victims as provisioned under the Disaster Management Act of 2005, and a uniform policy for issuance of death certificates.

The Bench said unless there was a uniform policy for issuance of any official document or death certificate stating that the cause of death was Covid, the kin of the victims would not be able to claim benefits of any compensation scheme, if given.

The Bench posted the matter for June 11 and asked the Centre to file its reply by then. PTI

Muslim Meat Seller Assaulted In UP; Police File Counter Case Against Him

Agenceis

MORADABAD: A Muslim man was allegedly assaulted by a group of men led by a person calling himself a gau rakshak (cow vigilante).

The victim, identified as Mohammed Shakir, is in the business of transporting and selling meat.

The incident took place on Sunday afternoon in a village under the Katghar Police circle when Shakir was transporting meat.

Based on a complaint lodged by the victim's brother, police have registered a case against the men who led the assault.

However, the police have also filed a counter case against Mohammad Shakir under IPC sections relating to 'mischief by killing an animal', 'committing an act likely to spread infection', and 'violation of Covid lockdown guidelines'.

Shakir had been arrested but was not jailed as the sections invoked against him are 'bailable'.

On-Site Registration Allowed At Govt Vaccination Centres For 18-44 Age Group

On-site registration and appointment has now been enabled for the 18-44 years age group on the CoWIN platform for COVID-19 vaccination, the Union Health Ministry said on Monday.

However, this feature is being enabled only for government COVID-19 vaccination centres (CVCs) at present, it said. This feature will not be available for private CVCs and they will have to publish their vaccination schedules exclusively with slots for online appointments.

This feature will be used only upon decision of respective states and UT governments.

States and UT must decide on opening of on-site registrations/facilitated cohorts' registration and appointments for 18-44 years age group based on the local context just as an additional measure to minimise vaccine wastage and for facilitating vaccination of eligible beneficiaries in the age group of 18-44 years, the ministry said in its statement.

The coverage of vaccination was expanded to people in the age group of 18 to 44 years on May 1 with the implementation of the Liberalised Pricing and Accelerated National COVID-19 Vaccination Strategy.

The facility of only online appointment

mode initially to people in the age group of 18 to 44 years helped to avoid overcrowding at vaccination centres, the statement said.

Based on various representations given by states and inputs received by ministry for the vaccination of 18-44 years age group, the Union government has now decided to provide facility of on-site registration/facilitated cohort registration on CoWIN digital platform for 18-44 years age group, considering that in case of sessions exclusively organised with online slots, towards the end of the day, some doses may still be left unutilised in case the online appointee beneficiaries do

not turn up on day of vaccination.

In such cases, on-site registration of a few beneficiaries may be necessary to minimise the vaccine wastage, the statement said. Even though CoWIN provides for features such as registration of up to four beneficiaries with a mobile number, facilitated registration and appointments through applications, such as Arogya Setu and Umang and through the Common Service Centres and so forth, people requiring facilitated cohort's facility and those without access to internet or smart phones or mobile phones may still have limited access for vaccination.

"Therefore, the feature for on-site

registration and appointment is now being enabled for the 18-44 years age group on CoWIN. However, this feature is being enabled only for Government COVID Vaccination Centres (CVCs), at the present moment in time," the ministry said.

The Union Health Ministry has advised the states and UTs to issue clear instructions to all district immunisation officers to strictly adhere to decision of respective state and UT government regarding the extent and manner of using the on-site registration as appointment feature for 18 to 44 years age group, the statement said.

Good News For
**Malls, Hotels,
Hospitals
Commercial &
Private Builders**

World class
**ELEVATORS &
ESCALATORS**
in your own city

24x7
Sale & Services

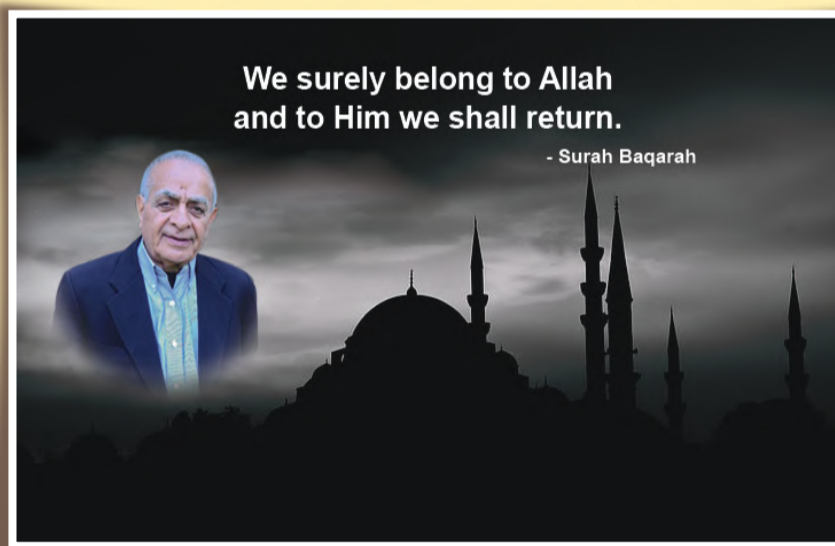
S.A POWER ENGINEERS

Address: Residency Road, Srinagar, 190001 | Phone No: 0194-2454126, 9906647945, 9419070802

STEP
Elevators & Escalators



**CAPSULE
ELEVATORS**



We surely belong to Allah
and to Him we shall return.

- Surah Baqarah

A. Majid Mir

(13th August 1927 - 18th May 2021)

Farewell to a Legend.

Kaka Majid in Kashmir's early years!

Who lived for friends,
A friend of friends.

To the family,
Someone to look up to.

To his Father,
An Enigmatic Son.

To his brothers,
Big brother to emulate.
Unrelenting & Unforgettable!

M. Ashraf Mir

A. Rashid Mir