



**P3 CITY**

### 'TRAINING OF TRAINERS' PROGRAMME INAUGURATED AT JLNH HOSPITAL

In a bid to prevent further spread of Covid-19 in rural areas of Jammu and Kashmir, the Financial Commissioner (FC), Health and Medical Education (H&ME) Department, Atal Dulloo today said that the govt...

**P6 THINK**

### POETS OF MISOGYNY ON KASHMIR'S SOCIAL MEDIA

Recently, a video posted by an Instagram user who styles himself as a content creator drew a lot of flak for his offensive and uninformed statements about working mothers. Much to the...



**P5 STATE**

### PERSONS WITH FIRST COVAXIN DOSE ASKED TO REGISTER FOR SECOND JAB

The government has asked the general public who have taken the first dose of Covaxin outside the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir and are due...



**Widom Quote!**  
The only thing worse than being blind is having sight but no vision.  
—Helen Keller



**Dr. Aiyaz Akbar Khawaja**  
Cardiac Intensivist  
Dammam, Saudi Arabia

It has been observed that many healthcare workers are not using the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) properly during the Covid-19 pandemic which can prove very dangerous for healthcare workers and their contacts. Many healthcare workers are seen wearing a surgical mask under the N95 mask, which renders the N95 mask useless.

Moreover, Basic Life Support (BLS) training is important for all healthcare workers which is supposed to be repeated yearly to maintain the skills needed to resuscitate a person who collapses suddenly, thus saving many lives. I hope most of our healthcare workers possess this valid certificate.

In a similar pattern, we need to introduce the Basic Infection Control Skills Licence Programme that is already in place in many countries. It is a one day course conducted by the Department of Infectious Disease Control to educate the healthcare workers on topics like: how to control and contain infectious diseases, donning and doffing of PPE, et cetera to save our healthcare workers, their families and the society. It's the need of hour, especially during this pandemic. Hope the concerned authorities will take the matter into consideration.

**Dr. Naveed Nazir Shah**  
Professor and Head Chest Medicine, GMC

Mucormycosis is not a new disease neither is contagious. We just need to avoid self medication like steroids, identify high risk patients and keep blood sugar under control.

**Dr. Shazia Shafi**  
Ophthalmologist

Excessive steam inhalation makes nasal mucosa weak. In extreme cases it can burn the mucosa also & enhance crusting, thus paving a way for fungal infections #Mucormycosis  
Do everything in moderation & if advised please.

## MHA Extends Covid-19 Guidelines Till June-End

### States, UTs Told To Focus On Local Curb Strategy

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI:** The Centre on Thursday directed states and union territories to continue the ongoing COVID-19 guidelines till June 30 and asked them to go for intensive and local containment measures in districts with a high number of cases to check the spread of the deadly disease.

In a fresh order, Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla said strict implementation of containment and other measures has led to a declining trend in the number of new and active cases, across states and union territories, barring some areas in the southern and



northeastern regions.

"I would like to highlight that in spite of the declining trend, the number of active cases presently is still very high. It is, therefore, important that containment

measures may continue to be implemented strictly.

"Any relaxation by states and UTs, may be considered at an appropriate time, in a graded manner, after assessing the

### J&K Logs 37 More Deaths, 2769 New Cases

Firdaus Ali

Jammu and Kashmir reported on Thursday 37 more deaths due to coronavirus while 2769 more people tested positive for the virus across the Union Territory during the last 24 hours. Among victims, [More On P10](#)

### Sehrai's Sons Tests Positive In Jail

The two sons of late Muhammad Ashraf Sehrai, who were booked under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) for allegedly raising 'anti-national slogans at the funeral of their father on [More On P10](#)

### Tele-Consultation Facilities For Patients Soon

Union minister Jitendra Singh on Thursday said tele-consultation facilities are being set up for COVID-19 patients in Jammu and Kashmir to reduce the burden at district hospitals. Interacting [More On P10](#)

## LG Suggests Four T Formula To Fight Pandemic

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said on Thursday that test, track, treat and transformation of health infrastructure was the key to fight the coronavirus pandemic.

The LG made these remarks while taking stock of prevailing on-ground coronavirus situation and containment efforts in the three districts of Rajouri, Poonch and Reasi, an official spokesperson said. The LG,



he said, sought a detailed status of Covid Containment efforts, vaccination, testing, distribution of Covid kits, establishment of Panchayat Covid Care centres, IEC activities, necessary life-saving [More On P10](#)

## BVR Shifted To New Delhi, Mehta Named New J&K CS

Sameer Dar

**SRINAGAR:** The government of India on Thursday named Arun Kumar Mehta as the new Chief Secretary of Jammu and Kashmir replacing B.V.R. Subrahmanyam, who has been appointed as Officer on Special Duty (OSD) in the Commerce Ministry.

In an order issued on Thursday, Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla stated that Mehta will

take over as Chief Secretary, J-K from the date Subrahmanyam relinquishes the charge, and until further orders.

"The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC), vide its order dated 27.05.2021, has approved the appointment of B.V.R. Subrahmanyam, IAS (CG: 1987), Chief Secretary, Jammu & Kashmir (J&K), as Officer on Special Duty (OSD) in the Department [More On P10](#)

## Pandemic Slowed Anti-Militancy Ops In Kashmir: DGP

Press Trust Of India

**SRINAGAR:** Jammu and Kashmir's Director General of Police (DGP) Dilbagh Singh on Thursday said that while the Covid pandemic has affected the fight against militancy in the valley, security forces are focussed and the operations against the ultras will be stepped up in the coming time.

Talking to reporters in south Kashmir's Kulgam district after touring many areas to review the security measures, the DGP said that during the review meetings, a special focus was laid on enhancing the anti-militancy operations across south Kashmir.



"We cannot deny that the Covid pandemic has affected anti-militancy operations to some extent because there is a need to take precautions. Many policemen and security forces [More On P10](#)

**HAJJ-2021**

## Number Of Pilgrims To Be Decided Within A Week: J&K Hajj Committee

Zaid Bin Shabir

**SRINAGAR:** The Hajj committee of India is likely to take the final call on the number of pilgrims to be allowed to Saudi Arabia for the annual pilgrimage as coronavirus continues to wreak havoc across the world, a senior J&K Hajj Committee official said Thursday.

"As of now, no communiqué has been forwarded by the Indian Hajj Committee about the number of pilgrims from Kashmir to be allowed to perform the holy pilgrimage this year. However, a decision in this regard is to be expected within a week," J&K Hajj Committee's Executive Officer Abdul Salam Mir told



Kashmir Observer Thursday. Mir said that around 8200 people have submitted applications with the J&K Hajj Committee to [More On P10](#)

## Girl Killed, Mother Injured In Shell Explosion

Ajaz Ali

**SRINAGAR:** A teenage girl was killed and her mother injured on Thursday when a shell exploded in their house in Handwara area of Kupwara district.

Sara Begum and her daughter Gulnaza Bano (19) were cleaning vegetables collected from a nearby forest area on Wednesday, at their home in Sherkot Taratpora village Handwara on Thursday afternoon when an explosion took place, officials said. Both the injured mother-daughter duo, officials said, were removed to the sub-district hospital Handwara for treatment. However, the teenage girl succumbed to her injuries, while her mother has [More On P10](#)

## UNGA President Pitches For Peaceful Solution To Kashmir

Press Trust Of India

**ISLAMABAD:** The peace, stability and prosperity in South Asia hinged on normalisation of relations between Pakistan and India, a top UN official said here on Thursday as he urged the two neighbours to work for a peaceful solution to the Kashmir issue.

UN General Assembly President Volkan Bozkir, a former Turkish diplomat and politician who is in Pakistan on an official visit, made the comments during a talk on the Importance of Multilateralism at the National Defence University here.

Bozkir said peace, stability and prosperity in South Asia hinged on normalisation of relations between Pakistan

and India, which was possible by the resolution of the Kashmir issue.

"I urge India and Pakistan to work for a peaceful solution to this problem," he said.

"I have always urged the parties to refrain from changing the status of the disputed territory," Bozkir said, apparently in a veiled reference to India's move to bifurcate Jammu and Kashmir into two union territories in August, 2019.

Bozkir, who arrived in Islamabad on Wednesday for an official visit at the invitation of Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, also held talks with him in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and among other matters discussed [More On P10](#)

**Health and Medical Education Department, J&K**

## Prone Process

(Lying with Stomach down)

**Shri Manoj Sinha**  
Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor

**Helpful in increasing Oxygen level in COVID-19 Patients**

**Stay Protected from COVID-19**

**Wear mask**

**Maintain 6 ft. (2 Gaj) Physical Distance**

**Frequently wash your hands with soap**

**Get tested if you have symptoms**

**Get vaccinated**

**What is COVID-19 Prone**

- Prone is the process of turning a patient from their back onto their abdomen (stomach) so that the individual is lying face down
- A medically accepted position to improve breathing and oxygenation
- Beneficial for COVID-19 patients with compromised breathing

**Importance of Prone Lying**

- Improves ventilation & makes breathing easy.
- Prone is required when SpO2 level decreases below 94.

**Positioning of Pillow**

- One pillow below the neck
- One or two pillows below the chest through upper thighs (Abdomen area should be free)
- Two Pillows below the shins

**For Self-Prone**

- You will need 4-5 Pillows
- Regular alterations in lying position
- Don't spend more than 30 minutes to 2 hours in each position
- One can be prone for up to 16 hours a day in multiple cycles, if it is comfortable for the patient.

- 30 minutes to 2 hours Lying on your belly
- 30 minutes to 2 hours Lying on right side
- 30 minutes to 2 hours sitting up
- 30 minutes to 2 hours Lying on left side
- Then back to first position Lying on your belly

**Avoid Prone in conditions like**

- Pregnancy
- Deep venous thrombosis (If treated in last 48 hours)
- Major Cardiac Conditions
- Unstable spine, femur or pelvic fractures
- Avoid prone for an hour after meals

**Timely PRONING could save many lives...**

- Regular Monitoring of SpO2 (Using pulse oximeter), Temperature, Blood pressure & blood sugar during home isolation.
- Missing out on oxygen Hypoxia (Compromised oxygen circulation) may lead to worsening of complications.

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

Jammu: 0191-2549676 / 2520982 / 2674444 / 2674115 / 2674908 | Kashmir: 0194-2440283 / 2430581 / 2452052 / 2457313 / 2457312

For any kind of Covid 19 query log on to [www.covidrelief.jk.gov.in](http://www.covidrelief.jk.gov.in)

@jkinformation @dipr-jk @diprjk



# 'Training of Trainers' Programme Inaugurated At JLNM Hospital

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** In a bid to prevent further spread of Covid-19 in rural areas of Jammu and Kashmir, the Financial Commissioner (FC), Health and Medical Education (H&ME) Department, Atal Dulloo today said that the govt has initiated a programme, 'Training for Master trainers' wherein frontline workers at block and village level shall be trained to conduct Covid-19 tests and besides raise awareness among masses about Covid Appropriate Behaviour (CAB).

The FC, H&ME said this during the inauguration of a training programme titled, 'Training of Trainers for Covid-19 Management and Possible 3rd Wave' at JLNM Hospital, here.

Among others, Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, P K Pole; Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar Aijaz Assad; Director, Health Services Kashmir, Mushtaq Ahmad Rather and other officers of the Health department.

Speaking on the occasion, Dulloo said that the current trend of Covid-19 cases show that the virus has spread in villages while



**6 SECOND COVID WAVE CREATED NEW challenges of oxygen demand regarding which various measures were taken including the establishment of oxygen plants in tertiary and district hospitals to meet the demand.**

earlier it was limited to cities and major towns and to overcome the challenge this training programme has been organised.

He said that under 'Training for Master trainers', frontline workers including Anganwadi workers, Asha Workers, ANM, Sarpanchs, Panchs, Lumberdars, Chowkidars and other concerned shall be provided training regarding conduct of Covid tests under the supervision of Medical Officers.

He also said that they shall cre-

ate awareness regarding CAB besides disposal of PPE, gloves and masks in a proper way among the rural people to curb the spread of contagious virus to rural areas.

Highlighting the importance of Covid Care Centres (CCCs), the FC H&ME said that these CCCs at Panchayat and block level; primary health centers and sub-centres will help to stop the referral of non-severe Covid patients to tertiary care hospitals which will eventually reduce pressure on such hospitals.

Meanwhile, the Div Com Kashmir said that at the beginning of the outbreak of Covid pandemic little information was available regarding the measures to contain its spread. However, Divisional administration gave first preference to ensure availability of N95 Masks, PPE kits for the physicians who were treating covid positive patients.

But, he said, the second wave created new challenges of oxygen demand regarding which various measures were taken including the establishment of oxygen plants in tertiary and district hospitals to meet the demand besides ensuring sufficient availability of oxygen cylinders.

He further said that in view of the possible emergence of third wave, the government has begun to take concrete measures starting from 'Training for Trainers' and establishment of functional CCCs at Panchayat level and block level. He said the training programme for master trainers shall continue till 1st June, and later the master trainers will provide training at district level to frontline workers till 10th June.

Speaking on the occasion, the Director, Health Services

Kashmir, said that the motto of the programme was to prepare manpower and train them to contain the possible third wave.

He said that the DHSK will involve medical experts of various fields including Pediatrics, Anaesthesia, Microbiology, Social Preventive Medicine to impart training to ASHAS, Anganwadi workers, ANM, and other people who would be associated with the Panchayat Covid Centers including Sarpanchs, Panchs and volunteers.

In consonance with the LGs directions of creating Covid bed facility in Panchayats, the Director said that the Directorate is on the mission mode to establish five beds in each Panchayat and thirty to forty beds at block level to ensure timely and quality treatment to Covid patients.

This endeavour will also facilitate those home isolated patients who do not have a proper isolation room with bed and attached washroom.

Later, he informed that there has been no shortage of oxygen, deficiency of medicine or any other issue in Kashmir province regarding the Covid patient treatment.

## DIAL-EMMA

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

## AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

## RAILWAYS



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

## HIGHWAY STATUS

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

## This Day in History

- 585 BC - Solar eclipse, as predicted by Greek philosopher Thales, while Lydians at war with the Medes leads to a truce. One of the cardinal dates from which other dates calculated.
- 640 - Severinus begins his reign as Catholic Pope (elected in 638)
- 1037 - Holy Roman Emperor Conrad II removes "Constitutio Feudis"
- 1156 - Battle at Brindisi: Norman-Sicilian King William beats Byzantine fleet under John Doukas and Alexios Bryennios
- 1349 - 60 Jews murdered in Breslau, Silesia
- 1358 - Daint-Leu at Oise begins French boer uprising
- 1431 - Joan of Arc is accused of relapsing into heresy by donning male clothing again, providing justification for her execution
- 1521 - Pope Leo X signs treaty with Holy Roman Emperor Charles V Charles V
- 1588 - Spanish Armada under the Duke of Medina-Sidonia departs Lisbon to invade England
- 1741 - Spain and Bavaria sign treaty
- 1863 - 1st black regiment (54 Mass) leaves Boston to fight in US Civil War
- 1871 - Paris communards revolt put down
- 1900 - Total solar eclipse occurs
- 1918 - Azerbaijan gains independence and declares itself a Democratic Republic
- 1926 - Military coup by General Manuel Gomes da Costa in Portugal
- 1948 - Israeli Air Force is officially founded shortly after the start of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War
- 1948 - Iraq captures Ge'ulim settlement
- 1964 - Jawaharlal Nehru cremated in New Delhi
- 1964 - Palestine National Congress forms the PLO in Jerusalem
- 1964 - Unmanned Apollo 2 Saturn test launched into Earth orbit
- 1965 - Fire & explosion at Dhori mine in Dhanbad India kills 400
- 1970 - The formerly united Free University of Brussels officially splits into two separate entities, the French-speaking Université Libre de Bruxelles and the Dutch-speaking Vrije Universiteit Brussel.
- 1970 - Arms Trial Begins: several men are charged in a Dublin court with conspiracy to illegally import arms for use by the Irish Republican Army (IRA)
- 1971 - USSR Mars 3 launched, 1st spacecraft to soft land on Mars
- 1975 - Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is established by the Treaty of Lagos
- 1987 - Monitor, Civil War warship, is discovered by a deep sea robot
- 1995 - Earthquake hits Russian town of Khabarovsk, killing 2,000 people
- 1998 - Nuclear testing: Pakistan responds to a series of Indian nuclear tests with five of its own, prompting the United States, Japan, and other nations to impose economic sanctions.
- 2002 - NATO declares Russia a limited partner in the Western alliance.
- 2004 - The Iraqi Governing Council chooses Ayad Allawi, a longtime anti-Saddam Hussein exile, to become Prime Minister of Iraq's interim government.
- 2008 - The first meeting of the Constituent Assembly of Nepal formally declares Nepal a republic, ending the 240-year reign of the Shah dynasty.
- 2014 - Abdel Fattah el-Sisi is elected President of Egypt.



HIJRI CALENDAR

16

SHAWWAL -UL- MUKARRAM

1442

## PRAYERS

FAJR 3:41  
ZUHR 12:28  
ASR 5:26  
MAGRIB 7:37  
ISHA 9:15

## DMO Srinagar Rebutts Reports About 'Illegal Mining In Dachigam'

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Refuting news captioned, 'Illegal miners create havoc in Dachigam', the District Mineral Office (DMO), Srinagar, Thursday rebutted their alleged association with the miners terming it as totally false and baseless.

In this regard, the department has conducted night raids during the intervening night of 24 and 25 May 2021 and 26 and 27 May, 2021, wherein four tippers found illegally transporting Minor Minerals (Nallah Boulder / Sand) were seized on the spot near Dachigam National Park, Harwan.

The said vehicles bearing registration number JK01AH 2711, JK01AH 4483, JK01J 1972 and JK01U 1181 were handed over to

the concerned police station for custody till the compounding of offence by the competent authority in accordance with the J&K Minor Mineral Concessions, Storage, Transportation of Minerals and Prevention of illegal Mining Rules.

Pertinently, the field officials of District Mineral Office, Srinagar are actively performing their duties for curbing any illegal mining and transportation of minerals. They also ensure regular night patrolling besides checking by the flying squad constituted for the purpose.

During the current financial year, 43 vehicles have been seized and a fine worth Rs. 5, 83,755 has been recovered as a compounding offence till 27 May 2021.



**A HEALTHCARE WORKER ADMINISTERS** covid vaccine to a Shikarawalla on the banks of Dal Lake on Thursday. KO Photo Abid Bhat

## KCCI Delegation Raises Various Issues In Meeting With DC Srinagar

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** A delegation of the members of the Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry led by Nasir Hamid Khan Thursday held an interaction with the Deputy Commissioner Srinagar Mohamad Aijaz regarding the problems being faced by the automobile dealers and hospitality sector.

Nasir Hamid Khan thanked Mohamad Aijaz for the organised manner in which the vaccinations were being done by the administration in Srinagar city. He hoped that the vaccination exercise would be over at an earliest so the economic activities resume fully.

He reiterated his earlier request for the automotive sector to be declared as a semi-essential category in view of it being a minimal contact business which would not risk spread of the Covid infection. The vehicles plying on the roads for essential services including those of Doctors were suffering damages for want of repairs and maintenance which could hamper critical activities.



**THE DC SAID THAT** the suggestions would be considered favourably and necessary directions would be issued shortly after taking stock of the Covid situation in Srinagar.

There was also the important issue of the livelihood of persons connected with this sector especially mechanics and tyre-shops workers. He requested the DDMA Chairman to consider categorisation of this sector as semi-essential and facilitate its gradual opening.

Aawan Ahmad Narwaroo representing the Kashmir Automobile

Chamber of Industries and Commerce stated that the Automobile Dealers were facing problems because of their inability to conduct the sales of their stocks which had resulted in the buildup of huge inventories of vehicles. He stated that although the activity was a minimal contact one because of all its activity being conducted online, there was no reason to disallow sales. The build up of unsold vehicles also resulted in huge capital blockade in view of the high value of the product and also caused avoidable losses to the revenues of the Government as taxation component on the automobiles was quite high.

Nasir Hamid Khan also raised the issue of allowance of home delivery for restaurant/café sector and also for favourable consideration of gradual opening up of the sector as the vaccination process was being done at a fast pace. Mohamed Aijaz stated that these suggestions would be considered favourably and necessary directions in this regard issued shortly after taking stock of the Covid situation in Srinagar.

## AAC Condolences Demise Of Mufti Shuja-ud-Din

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Jammu & Kashmir Awami Action Committee (AAC) Thursday expressed deep grief over the demise of Dr Mufti Shuja-ud-Din of Hyderpora, who passed away at his residence today after a brief illness.

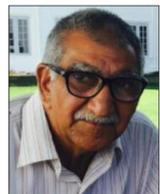
Dr Mufti Shuja-ud-Din's son Moyeen Shuja Mufti is the brother in law of Mirwaiz Umar Farooq. Mirwaiz Umar Farooq could not attend the Namaaz-e-Janaazah of the deceased due to his continued house arrest for the last around two years, AAC said in a statement.

While condoling the demise, the Awami Action Committee paid glowing tributes to Dr Mufti Shuja-ud-Din saying that the Mufti family's services to Millat-e-Kashmir is a glorious chapter

of the history of Kashmir.

AAC termed late Dr Mufti Shuja-ud-Din as a selfless, sincere, noble and humble personality saying his demise has created a big void that would be difficult to fill

AAC expressed condolence and solidarity with the Mirwaiz Family and Mufti family especially the deceased's sons Moyeen Shuja Mufti and No-maan Shuja Mufti, and prayed for Jannat-ul-Firdous to Dr Mufti Shuja-ud-Din and forbearance to the bereaved family to bear the irreparable loss.



## PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost my Passport bearing no: R7474955 somewhere. Now I am applying for the duplicate of the same if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the Passport Office Sriangar within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Umar Mahmood Sultanpuri.  
S/o mohd Amin sultanpuri  
R/O: 106 NEW COLONY SOPORE

**انتقال پر ملامت**

یہ خبر انتہائی افسوس کے ساتھ دی جاتی ہے کہ سابق ڈائریکٹر کابینہ ایڈمنسٹریٹو ایجنسی جی ایم ایف، سائنس نواب باغ، نوان پورہ لال بازار سرینگر گزشتہ شب 26 مئی 2012ء کو منقرض عدالت کے بعد ایس، ایم، ایچ، ایس اسپتال میں انتقال کر گئے۔ انا للہ وانا الیہ راجعون۔ مرحوم کی فاتحہ خوانی 30 مئی 2012ء بروز اتوار، صبح 7:30 بجے ان کے آبائی مقبرہ واقع حکیم محلہ نوان پورہ میں انجام دی جائے گی۔ کوڑو 1 اور حلالا کے پیش نظر گھر پر کوئی تشریح مجلس منعقد نہیں ہوگی۔ سوگواران: ڈاکٹر مقصود علی، حبیب علی چالاک، محمد حسین چالاک 9596103881

## DC Srinagar Reviews Pace Of Vaccination Process

Holds Meeting With Market Committees

**SRINAGAR:** The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Mohammad Aijaz Asad Thursday called for an intensified vaccination drive for target groups in the district to break the transmission chain and safeguard lives.

The DC said this while chairing a meeting of Tehsildars and representatives of various market associations of Srinagar with regard to ongoing vaccination process in the district.

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

The meeting discussed threadbare various aspects regarding vaccination of target groups.

The DC pushed for vigorous vaccina-

tion particularly of vulnerable groups including shopkeepers, street vendors, transporters and other persons dealing with public delivery system.

To ensure proper outreach and expanded vaccination coverage, the DC directed for establishing two separate vaccination centers at each designated sites for the age groups of 18-44 years and 45-60 years.

The DC urged upon the people associated with business, transport and other active fields to cooperate with the District Administration to make Covid drive successful. He further said that the vaccination is imperative to fight against the Coronavirus pandemic.

The Commissioner SMC also spoke on the occasion and assured all possible support for the successful vaccination process.

## Student's Body Recovered From Jehlum In Srinagar

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Body of a seventeen-year-old teenager who slipped into the Jehlum river in Srinagar was recovered by river police on Thursday at Guzarbal in Noor-bagh area of Srinagar city.

A Police official said that a youth identified as Momin Ahmad Dar, son of Ghulam Ahmad Dar, 11th standard student from Rampora Veer Chattabal, slipped into Jehlum river when he was crossing the foot bridge in the area on May 21.

The body of the youth was recovered by the River Police on Thursday morning at Guzarbal in Noorbagh.

He said that the body was handed over to police for necessary medico-legal formalities and accordingly will be handed over to his relatives for his burial.

## From KO Archives

### Forms For Hurriyat Today

**SRINAGAR** - The Centre today agreed to issue travel forms to Hurriyat Conference leaders belonging to the moderate faction to go to Pakistan controlled Kashmir by the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus on June two. "We will be issuing forms to them (Hurriyat leaders) Friday," Regional Passport Officer S I Sreeramulu said here.

Asked if the Centre had given clearance to issue of forms to the separatist leaders, Sreeramulu said "yes that is why we are issuing the forms to them." He had earlier said his office had run out of forms. Sreeramulu said one form would be given to each applicant but the number of persons to be allowed to travel on the said date had not been decided yet. He said the list of passengers to travel on the bus on June two was almost complete.

However, the passport officer said if the Centre issues Man order to specifically accommodate the Hurriyat leaders, he would oblige. The special buses plying on Srinagar-Muzaffarabad route have 19 seats and sources in the separatist camps indicated that the total number of leaders travelling to Pakistan would not exceed 15.

(Kashmir Observer, 28 May, 2005)

## Roche's Antibody Cocktail Launched In India At Rs 59,750/Dose



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Drug majors Roche India and Cipla on Monday announced launch of Roche's Antibody Cocktail in India priced at Rs 59,750 per dose for the treatment of mild to moderate COVID-19 in patients who are at high risk.

"The first batch of the Antibody Cocktail (Casirivimab and Imdevimab) is now available in India while a second batch will be made available by mid-June. In total they can potentially benefit 2,00,000 patients as each of the 1,00,000 packs that will be available in India offers treatment for two patients," Cipla and Roche said in a joint statement.

Cipla will distribute the product by leveraging its strong distribution strengths across the country, it added.

The price for each patient dose [a combined dose of 1,200 mg (600 mg of Casirivimab and 600 mg of Imdevimab)] will be Rs 59,750 inclusive of all taxes. The maximum retail price for the multi dose pack (each pack can treat two patients) is Rs 1,19,500 inclusive of all taxes.

As per the statement, the drug will be available through leading hospitals and COVID treatment centers. The Central Drugs Standards Control Organisation (CDSCO) had recently provided an emer-

gency use authorisation (EUA) for the Antibody Cocktail (Casirivimab and Imdevimab) in India. It has also received a EUA in the US and several EU countries.

We are optimistic that the availability of Antibody Cocktail (Casirivimab and Imdevimab) in India can help in minimising hospitalisation, ease the burden on healthcare systems and play a key role in treatment of high risk patients before their condition worsens, said V Simpson Emmanuel, Managing Director and CEO, Roche Pharma India.

Umang Vohra, MD and Global CEO Cipla said we look forward to leveraging our solid marketing and distribution strengths in India to provide broader, equitable access to this innovative treatment option in the country.

The antibody cocktail is to be administered for the treatment of mild to moderate COVID-19 in adults and pediatric patients (12 years of age or older, weighing at least 40 kg) who are confirmed to be infected with SARS-CoV2 and who are at high risk of developing severe COVID-19 disease and do not require oxygen.

Vohra said it has been shown to help these high-risk patients before their condition worsens, reducing the risk of hospitalisation and fatality by 70 per cent and shortening the duration of symptoms by four days.



BACHELET POINTED OUT THAT GOVERNMENTAL buildings, residential homes, international humanitarian organisations, medical facilities and media offices had been hit in the enclave of million people [Fabrice Coffrini /AFP]

## Israel's Gaza Strikes May Constitute 'War Crimes': UN's Bachelet

Agencies

The United Nations human rights chief Michelle Bachelet has said Israel's recent attacks on the besieged Gaza Strip that killed more than 200 Palestinians may constitute "war crimes" if they are shown to be disproportionate.

Bachelet's comments on Thursday came as she opened a special session of the UN Human Rights Council, called at the request of Pakistan - on behalf of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation - and Palestine.

The UN official said she had seen no evidence that civilian buildings in Gaza hit by Israeli fighter jets were being used for military purposes.

"If found disproportionate, such attacks might constitute war crimes," Bachelet told the 47-member Geneva forum. She also urged Hamas, which runs Gaza, to refrain from firing rockets indiscriminately on Israeli territory.

The 11-day offensive on the Gaza Strip, which began on May 10, killed at least 253 Palestinians, including 66 children, and wounded more than 1,900 people, according to the health ministry in Gaza.

At least 12 people, including three foreign workers and two children, were killed in Israel

territories and inside Israel.

Saleh Hijazi, Middle East and North Africa deputy regional director of Amnesty International, welcomed the draft resolution as a means to "establish an investigative mechanism that collects and preserves evidence that cooperates with the ongoing international criminal court investigation into the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories".

"It is important that these moves tackle arms transfers and lead to a comprehensive arms embargo on Israel and Palestinian armed groups," he told Al Jazeera, speaking from the occupied West Bank city of Ramallah.

"This is a real test, specifically for the European Union states, to walk the walk when they talk about accountability, to not make Israel an exception when it comes to human rights and respect for international law," he said.

**'Stop ethnic cleansing'**  
Of the various speakers to address the council's session was Muna El-Kurd, an activist and journalist from the occupied East Jerusalem neighbourhood Sheikh Jarrah, where a number of families are facing imminent forced displacement from their own homes.

"We don't want just your concern, we want you to stop this ethnic cleansing in Sheikh Jarrah and in Palestine," she said.

## India-Dominant Covid Variant Found In At Least 53 Territories: WHO

Agence France-Presse

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND: The coronavirus variant first detected in India has now been officially recorded in 53 territories, a World Health Organization report showed Wednesday.

Additionally, the WHO has received information from unofficial sources that the B.1.617 variant has been found in seven other territories, figures in the UN health agency's weekly epidemiological update showed, taking the total to 60.

The report said B.1.617 had shown increased transmissibility, while disease severity and risk of infection were under investigation.

Globally over the past week, the number of new cases and deaths continued to decrease, with around 4.1 million new cases and 84,000 new deaths reported -- a 14 percent and two



percent decrease respectively in many countries throughout the world," the document said.

The highest numbers of new cases in the past seven days were reported from India (1,846,055 -- down 23 percent); Brazil (451,424 -- up three percent); Argentina (213,046 -- up 41 percent), the United States (188,410 -- down 20 percent), and Colombia (107,590 -- down seven percent).

**Variant detection**  
The update gave information on the four mutations classed as variants of concern: those first reported in Britain (B.1.1.7), South Africa (B.1.351), Brazil (P.1) and India (B.1.617).

When counting up the total number of territories reporting each variant, the WHO added together those from which it had official and unofficial information.

## Joe Biden Orders Intelligence Report On Covid Origins Within 90 Days



Agence France-Presse

WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden on Wednesday ordered US intelligence agencies to report to him in the next three months on whether the Covid-19 virus first emerged in China from an animal source or from a laboratory accident.

Agencies should "redouble their efforts to collect and analyze information that could bring us closer to a definitive conclusion, and to report back to me in 90 days," Biden said in a statement released by the White House.

According to Biden, agencies are currently split over the two possible sources for the virus that swept the planet over the past year, killing more than 3.4 million people -- a figure experts say is undoubtedly an underestimate.

Biden's order signals an escalation in mounting controversy over how the virus first emerged -- through animal contact at a market in Wuhan, China, or through release of the coronavirus from a highly secure research laboratory in the same city.

The answer has immense implications both for China, which says it is not responsible for the pandemic, and for US politics, where the lab theory has been used by Republicans to attack Beijing.

Biden said that in March he asked for a report on the origins of the virus, including "whether it emerged from human contact with an infected animal or from a laboratory accident."

"As of today, the US intelligence community has 'coalesced around two likely scenarios' but has not reached a definitive conclusion on this question," he said.

## China Slams Biden's Push For Covid Origin, Says USA's 'Dark History' Known

Agence France-Presse

BEIJING: China hit out at the "dark history" of the US intelligence community Thursday, after President Joe Biden ordered a probe into the Covid-19 origins as the lab-leak theory rebounds and strains relations between the two countries.

President Biden on Wednesday ordered US intelligence agencies to report to him in the next three months on whether the Covid-19 virus first emerged in China from an animal source or from a laboratory accident.

The lab-leak theory, initially dismissed as "highly unlikely" by a delayed World Health Organization mission to China, has resurfaced in recent days, driven by Washington.

China wholly rejects the theory the virus may have emerged from a virology lab in Wuhan and has instead accused the US of peddling conspiracies and politicising the pandemic to divert attention from the high death rates there.

Rejecting the need for a new investigation into the pandemic, a ministry of foreign affairs spokesman on Thursday said the Biden administration's "motive and purposes are clear".

"The dark history of the US intelligence community has long been known to the world," Zhao Lijian added, referring to the US unfounded allegations of weapons of mass destruction which justified its invasion of Iraq.

According to Biden, intelligence agencies are currently split over the two possible sources for the virus that swept the planet over the past year, killing more than 3.4 million people -- a figure experts say is un-



doubtedly an underestimate.

Biden's order signals an escalation in mounting controversy over how the virus first emerged -- through animal contact at a market in Wuhan, China, or through release of the coronavirus from a highly secure research laboratory in the same city.

The idea is gaining increasing traction in the United States, where it was initially fueled by Trump and his aides and dismissed by many at the time as a political stunt.

Citing a US intelligence report, The Wall Street Journal reported Sunday that a trio from the Wuhan Institute of Virology were hospitalised with a seasonal illness in November 2019, a month before Beijing disclosed the existence of a mysterious pneumonia outbreak.

The natural origin hypothesis -- backed as the most likely by the WHO expert team who visited China -- holds that the virus emerged in bats then passed to humans, likely via an intermediary species.

This theory was widely accepted at the start of the pandemic, but as time has worn on, scientists have not found a virus in either bats or another animal that matches the genetic signature of SARS-CoV-2.

### NEWS MAKERS

## Macron Recognises French 'Responsibility' In Rwanda Genocide

Agencies

French President Emmanuel Macron, in a visit to Rwanda, has said France recognised its "responsibility" in the 1994 Rwandan genocide, asking for forgiveness for his country's role but without offering an official apology.

His comments on Thursday came during a solemn speech at the Kigali Genocide Memorial, where 250,000 victims of the mass killings are buried.

Some 800,000 ethnic Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed by Hutu militias in 100 days of blood-letting that began in April 1994. The genocide ended in July 1994 when the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), led by current President Kagame, swept in from Uganda and seized control of the country.

Macron said France did not listen to those who warned it about the



impending massacre in Rwanda and stood de facto by a "genocidal regime".

"Standing here today, with humility and respect, by your side, I have come to recognise our responsibilities," he said, adding, however, that France "was not an accomplice" to the genocide.

Macron said France had a duty to admit the "suffering it inflicted on the Rwandan people by too long valuing silence over the examination of the truth".

He added that only those who had survived the horrors "can maybe forgive; give us the gift of forgiveness".

For his part, Kagame hailed Macron's speech.

"His words were something more valuable than an apology. They were the truth," he told a joint press conference after the two leaders met in Kigali.

While Macron's comments went further than his predecessors, many in Rwanda were hoping for a full apology.

Ibuka, the country's main genocide survivor group, said it was disappointed did not "present a clear apology". Egide Nkuranga, president of the association, said Macron did not "ask forgiveness", but he "really tried to explain the genocide, how it happened, what they didn't do, their responsibilities... It's very important, it shows that he understands us."

Macron's visit follows the release in March of a report by a French inquiry panel that said a colonial attitude had blinded French officials and the government bore a "serious and

overwhelming" responsibility for not foreseeing the slaughter. However, the report absolved France of direct complicity in the killings.

Kagame, who has previously said France participated in the genocide, said last week that the report "meant a lot" to people in his country.

Rwandans could "maybe not forget, but forgive", France for its role, said Kagame, a Tutsi and the main power in Rwandan politics since his rebel army ended the killings by death squads loyal to the Hutu-led government.

Macron agreed in April to open the Rwanda archives of former President Francois Mitterrand, who was in charge during the genocide. Shortly afterwards, Rwanda released its own report that found France was aware a genocide was being prepared and bore responsibility for enabling it, continuing in its unwavering support for Rwanda's then-President, Juvenal Habyarimana.

## Turkish Mobster's Videos Targeting Top Politicians Draw Millions Of Views

ISTANBUL: When Sedit Peker, a convicted Turkish mob boss, began posting videos on social media earlier this month in which he made uncorroborated claims of corruption, murder and drug running against top politicians, millions of Turks tuned in to watch.

Among them was Can Gumusbas, a digital marketing specialist who has been following the Peker videos on his laptop at home.

The 27-year-old believes prosecutors should open an investigation into the claims.

"If nothing is done, the idea of Turkey being a democratic state of law will become nonsensical," he said.

Alara, a public relations specialist who declined to give her last name, has also been glued to her



computer screen.

Like many viewers, she questioned the veracity of Peker's allegations, but said one reason for people's fascination was that the videos bypassed traditional media in Turkey, much of which is controlled by the state.

"It reflects the times that we are in, because you have a mafia boss who is live-streaming ... and he can talk about various things, his own topics without any filters,"

Alara, also 27, told Reuters.

The seven videos Peker has posted so far have been viewed more than 56 million times on YouTube.

Some Turks see them as an embarrassment for President Tayyip Erdogan's government, which has ruled Turkey for nearly two decades and vaunted its success in breaking ties between the state and mafia.

Opposition parties have called for the resignation of Interior Minister Suleyman Soyulu, the main target of Peker's rambling monologues, in which he speaks from behind a desk in a mixture of street jargon and political rhetoric.

"You cannot handle this by going on screens and blathering," said IYI Party leader Meral Ak-sener. -REUTERS

## Recovery Rate Improves To 67.59 Percent In Budgam

Observer News Service

**BUDGAM:** The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam Shahbaz Ahmed Mirza Thursday said that a total of 11,132 positive cases were reported in the district so far, among whom 7590 patients have recovered.

He said the recovery rate has improved to 67.59 percent and within the next few days it will be much better.

Mirza said that presently the positivity rate is declining and getting better each passing day. Regarding bed occupancy, he said, earlier it was 18.8 percent, now it is 16.93 percent which is a good sign towards betterment. He informed that the Positive

rate beyond red zones has been recorded above 58 percent adding that the administration is keeping close watch on it as aggressive testing is going on in full swing.

Regarding establishment of Covid Care Centers at Panchayat level, the DC said that they are on job to provide all logistics including beds and other equipment and the same will be established shortly.

Giving details regarding the vaccination, he said the same is going on for the above 45 years age group and for the 18 to 44 age group till yesterday 1500 beneficiaries were vaccinated and more are expected to get vaccinated as more vaccination centers have been established.

## 50 Bedded Covid Care Facility Inaugurated At SDH Nagam

Observer News Service

**BUDGAM:** The Deputy Commissioner Budgam Shahbaz Ahmed Thursday inaugurated level II 50 bedded Covid care facility with a dedicated ward for children at SDH Nagam, Chadoora.



Covid patients in the hospital, materialised due to strict imposition of lockdown measures.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC said that apart from 50 bedded capacity the hospital had a 30 bed paediatric ward facility kept ready amid apprehension of 3rd wave or children may get infected. The DC on the occasion hailed the sincere efforts of NGO K4 who had provided 18 oxygen concentrators for the paediatric ward. He said that presently they have less occupancy of

He said with this facility the hospital is in a position to tackle any kind of emergency amid covid-19 infection adding that they can take care of at least 100 patients in one go. He said efforts are on to provide more facilities in added bed capacities. The DC on the occasion was accompanied by SDM Chadoora, BMO Chadoora besides others concerned officers.

## Woman Dies In Rajouri Road Accident

Observer News Service

**RAJOURI:** A woman died and her husband-son duo sustained injuries after a cab they were travelling in met with an accident in Thanamandi area in Rajouri district Thursday morning.

A police official said that a Santro Car bearing Registration number JK-02AD 1786 on way from Mangota to Thanamandi met with an accident near Shahdara Morh Gazzali Market in Thanamandi resulting in instant death

of an on-board traveler identified as Shamim Akhter (30).

In the incident, husband of the deceased woman Makhan Shah (35) son of Ghulam Rasool Shah and her 6-year-old son Makh-toum Shah also sustained injuries.

The injured father-son duo was immediately evacuated to Primary Health Centre Thanamandi, where their condition is said to be stable. Meanwhile a police said that a case is under relevant sections of law have been registered to ascertain the cause of accident.

## Persons With First Covaxin Dose Asked To Register For Second Jab

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The government has asked the general public who have taken the first dose of Covaxin outside the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir and are due for 2nd dose, to register themselves for the same at their respective Deputy Chief Medical

Officer's office within next three days. According to a handout issued here on Thursday by the Directorate General of Family Welfare, MCH and Immunisation in this regard, such persons have been asked to come along with their first provisional certificate (downloaded) of their vaccination done outside the UT.

## DHSK Condolences Demise Of Dr Nazir Hakeem

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Director Health Services Kashmir, Dr Mushtaq Ahmad Rather on Thursday condoled the demise of Dr Nazir Hakeem, retired Deputy Director Health Services Kashmir who passed away at his residence at Wanpoh Anantnag.

Dr Nazir passed away at his residence after a brief illness. The director in his message expressed shock

over his death and prayed for the departed soul. He on behalf of the health department expressed condolence with the bereaved family.

In his condolence message termed his death a big tragedy and an irreparable loss to whole society in general and the medical fraternity in particular.

Dr Nazir has served the health department with distinction at multiple levels and has retired as Deputy Director Health Services Kashmir.



LOCALS AND RELATIVES PERFORM THE LAST RITES of a non-local who died of Covid-19 in Srinagar on Thursday. KO Photo By Abid Bhat

## No Trade Off Between Development And Political Aspirations Of People: NC

Holds Virtual CWC Meet, Passes Series Of Resolutions

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference leaders Thursday, during a working committee meeting, reiterated that the path of progress and peace in Jammu and Kashmir cannot be achieved until GOI addresses the political and developmental aspirations of the people of J&K. The leaders said that there can be no trade off between the development and political aspirations of the people of J&K. On the occasion, the party WC members unanimously adopted the following resolutions:

They were interacting with Party President Dr Farooq Abdullah on Thursday who presided over a virtual meeting of the party's central working committee, where party affairs, Covid situation and future course of action dominated the interaction, a National Conference Party statement said. During the course of the working committee meeting, the working committee members discussed party affairs and also deliberated on the prevailing political situation in Jammu and Kashmir.

The members sought restoration of Articles 370, 35-A. The resolution noted that the idea of ushering peace and prosperity in Jammu and Kashmir is elusive until Articles 370, 35-A aren't restored as the articles bore great psychological and symbolic significance for the people of Jammu and Kashmir; more to the point the articles also display India's asymmetric federalism, which grants differential rights to certain federal sub units, often in recognition to their distinctive identity and historical background. The early restoration of Articles will not only save the people, particularly the youth from going on the terminal path of disillusionment but will also restore a sense of entitlement to them.

The members present in the meeting reflected on the far-reaching political, economic consequences confronted by the people of JK in the shape of skidding the economy and held a meeting with public representatives, delegations, other stakeholders and officers of district administration to review Covid mitigation measures in place in the region. During the meeting, Advisor assessed the status of medical infrastructure and facilities, vaccination and functioning of tele-medication. He had threadbare discussion with all the participants who put forth their feedback and suggestions regarding the issues of concern in the wake of Covid pandemic. Advisor said that the main objective of his visit was to



people, he called for financial incentivization and an inclusive Covid sustenance and revival policy.

Party Vice President Omar Abdullah, apart from raising other issues, expressed sympathy with the families whose loved ones were devoured in the current Covid pandemic.

While interacting, the members raised the issue of development deficit, administrative inertia, brutality against tribal community and infringement of their forest rights, widespread unemployment, plight of traders, horticulturalists and marginal artisans and hawkers, impressing upon the incumbent JK government to govern the people by the principles and rules laid in the constitution of the country. The meeting expressed concern over the unabated rise in the unemployed educated, and Skilled youth of Jammu and Kashmir, saying never has the youth of J&K felt so disempowered, dejected and discarded as it is at present. The resolution demanded taking of immediate steps to give a sense of belonging to the local youth to help them achieve their full potential and through them enable Jammu and Kashmir a rightful place in the union of states within the country.

It also rued widespread unaccountability on ground in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh attributing it to the unconnected and airdropped bureaucrats, unconscious and unacquainted to local topography and developmental needs of people.

Besides MPs Muhammad Akbar Lone and Hasnain Masoodi, 56 working committee members attended the virtual meeting.

**THE MEMBERS SOUGHT RESTORATION OF ARTICLES 370, 35-A.** The resolution noted that the idea of ushering peace and prosperity in Jammu and Kashmir is elusive until Articles 370, 35-A aren't restored as the articles bore great psychological and symbolic significance for the people of Jammu and Kashmir

## Admin Providing All Medical Facilities To Covid Patients In Shopain: DC

Observer News Service

**SHOPIAN:** The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopain, Sachin Kumar Vaishya Thursday stated that the District Administration is providing all kinds of medical facilities to the people affected by Coronavirus.

The DC said this during a media briefing adding that the government is leaving no stone unturned to help people by providing them the required medical facility to overcome this deadly virus, besides there are sufficient quantities of medicines available in DHS, PHCs and other health institutions of the district.

He said all possible measures are being taken by District Administration to curb Covid-19 cases and eradicate this menace and in this regard various teams headed by Tehsildars, BDOs etc. have been directed to keenly monitor the villages and report immediately if any kind of symptom is seen among anyone anywhere to get them treated well on time at the nearest PHC or Sub Centres.

The DC said that in order to tackle the challenges mounted by Covid-19 pandemic effectively, the District Administration has given key emphasis on scaling up of testing and vaccination of people to get rid of this menace.

He said that there is no case of mucormycosis in the district



so far and advised the people to follow the SOPs and other guidelines strictly to keep themselves safe from the virus.

Vaishya said that the District Administration is trying its best to inoculate maximum people under accelerated special vaccination drive for 3rd phase of above 18 years of age group. He said that a door to door survey in this regard is going on a war footing basis so that no one is left out without vaccination in the district to save precious lives.

He appealed to the people to make use of Helpline numbers for any kind of assistance regarding Covid-19 and added that laxity of any kind can be harmful.

He said Covid positive rate is decreasing on a daily basis and the situation is improving and is under control, but he also cautioned that despite the decreasing trend in positive cases in the district, the people should remain alert and conscious and take necessary precautions to combat Coronavirus.

## Covid Positivity Rate Declines To 6.7 Percent In Bandipora



Observer News Service

**BANDIPORA:** The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Dr Owais Ahmad Thursday conducted an extensive tour of the district and inspected various health care centres and newly established Covid Care Centres (CCCs) besides reviewing the covid containment measures in the district.

The DC visited Nadihal several PHCs, NTPHCs and Covid Care Centres and was accompanied by Senior Superintendent of Police Mohammad Zahid, Chief Medical Officer, Nodal Officer Dr Murtaza and other senior officers of the district during the tour.

The DC expressed satisfaction over the arrangements put in place to fight the Covid-19 pandemic. He said on the directions of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, a 5 bedded Covid Care Centre is being established in every Panchayat with one bed fully oxygen support to meet the local needs so that burden on district and other hospitals is eased.

Later while briefing media about the covid status in the district, Dr Owais said that the positivity rate has declined from 10 percent in the first week of May to 6.7 percent today.

Giving details, he said there are 8131 total cases reported so far with 958 active positive cases as on date, while only 98 positive patients are under hospital isolation. He said there is 87.18 percent recovery rate in the district and 84 deaths have been reported in the district owing to

covid including 22 deaths during the 2nd wave.

Regarding the status of tests conducted across the district, the DC said that over 38528 tests were conducted this month, 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 about 75 percent of vaccination of people above 45 years of age is completed and appealed the rest to get vaccinated at the earliest adding that sufficient doses of vaccination are available in the district. He said 89646 doses of vaccination have been given so far.

Dr Owais said there are adequate arrangements put in place with regard to the healthcare services to tackle the pandemic. He said there are 1100 isolation beds available with 130 beds fully oxygen supported and seven ventilators that has grossly reduced our referrals to tertiary care hospitals in Srinagar.

Regarding Micro Containment strategy, the DC said that there are 22 Micro Containment Zones in the district and extensive testing campaigns have been launched in these areas besides vaccination.

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

## COVID-19: Govt Says Collective Fight Yielding Encouraging Results

Observer News Service

**ANANTNAG:** Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Baseer Ahmad Khan, Thursday said the fight against COVID-19 has to be a collective and coordinated effort from administration and general public. This coordination has already started showing results on ground, however, he sought further cooperation from all stakeholders at all levels in order to tackle the pandemic effectively. "The efforts of the government need to be complemented with the cooperation from all stakeholders like Traders, Hoteliers, trans-

porters, civil society members and religious leaders", the Advisor remarked.

Emphasising the role of religious heads and PRLs in Corona mitigation efforts, Khan said they have a big responsibility of disseminating factual information regarding SOPs, vaccination and related measures among the people. He added that the masses should be educated properly regarding various aspects of the pandemic and right information is the key to the fight against this deadly disease. Khan visited Bijbehara town of Anantnag district

and held a meeting with public representatives, delegations, other stakeholders and officers of district administration to review Covid mitigation measures in place in the region.

During the meeting, Advisor assessed the status of medical infrastructure and facilities, vaccination and functioning of tele-medication. He had threadbare discussion with all the participants who put forth their feedback and suggestions regarding the issues of concern in the wake of Covid pandemic. Advisor said that the main objective of his visit was to

have first hand interaction with all stakeholders besides getting feedback about arrangements and welfare measures being made by the local administration during this second wave of COVID. He reviewed the directions given during the last meeting held at the district head quarters and was informed that there has been a lot of progress on all fronts in the mitigation efforts.

Advisor informed that there is no shortage of oxygen, vaccines, drugs or other medical infrastructure and people should not pay any heed to the misinformation.

Jammu & Kashmir

## Haj Committee Under Department of Haj & Auqaf, Govt. Of Jammu & Kashmir

### Online Health Verification For Intending Haj Pilgrims Of Haj - 2021

It is for the information of all intending pilgrims of Haj 2021 that Online Health Verification Process has started for Haj 2021. The Pilgrims need to visit the official website of Haj Committee of India [www.hajcommittee.gov.in](http://www.hajcommittee.gov.in) and to submit the information regarding Corona Vaccine taken by them, besides uploading the Covid Vaccination certificate of same. However, it is further clarified that as per latest guidelines from Saudi Ministry of Health / HCOL, the age group allowed to perform the Haj - 2021 is from 18 - 60 years only.

Sd/-  
Executive Officer  
J&K Haj Committee.

No: Haj/2020/293

Dated: 27/05/2020

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KASHMIR  
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K O V I E W

## Vaccination is the key

**O**n Tuesday, the fresh caseload in India declined to 2,08,921 which is slightly higher than around 190,000 on Monday, but overall, there has been a drastic reduction in the cases. This was hardly expected given the meteoric rise in the infections over the last three months. But at the same time, the number of fatalities has been more or less the same. 4,157 deaths were recorded on Tuesday. The states with highest number of deaths are Maharashtra with 1137 cases, Karnataka with 588 and Tamil Nadu with 468. But the decrease in the overall caseload is something to cheer about. The infections have reduced sharply in New Delhi which until two weeks ago was a site of an unmitigated mayhem with skyrocketing cases overwhelming the healthcare facilities. Delhi's Covid positivity rate has dipped below 2 percent, lowest in nearly two months. On Wednesday, Delhi recorded 1,491 new Covid-19 cases in a span of 24 hours, the lowest since 27 March, while 130 fatalities were reported. The fall in the count of daily coronavirus cases and the shrinking positivity rate in the national capital can be attributed to the implementation of lockdown to combat the virus.

So, does this mean, the deadly second coronavirus wave in India has peaked? Not necessarily. While overall infections have markedly gone down, and the cases in the places like Delhi and Mumbai are tapering off, some states like Tamil Nadu, for example, as in much of the north east are still witnessing an upward trend. The situation in Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal remains unclear. In Jammu and Kashmir too, though the cases are gradually dwindling, the fatalities have remained steady at around 50 a day, more of them in Jammu, despite the region recording half the cases in the Kashmir Valley.

Going by the trajectory of the first wave, the second has started ebbing faster. The first wave tapered off over a period of six months from September to February. One reason for this, experts have contended, is that the virus may have already infected a critical mass of people, initiating a herd immunity.

Be that as it may, the decreasing trend of the infections is a good news. The government should build upon it by speeding up the vaccination, something it has so far been woefully unable to do. One such stark example is the recent disappearance of vaccination in Kashmir Valley. For the situation to return to normal, creating conditions for reopening of the economy, the union government has to complement the declining cases with mass vaccination.

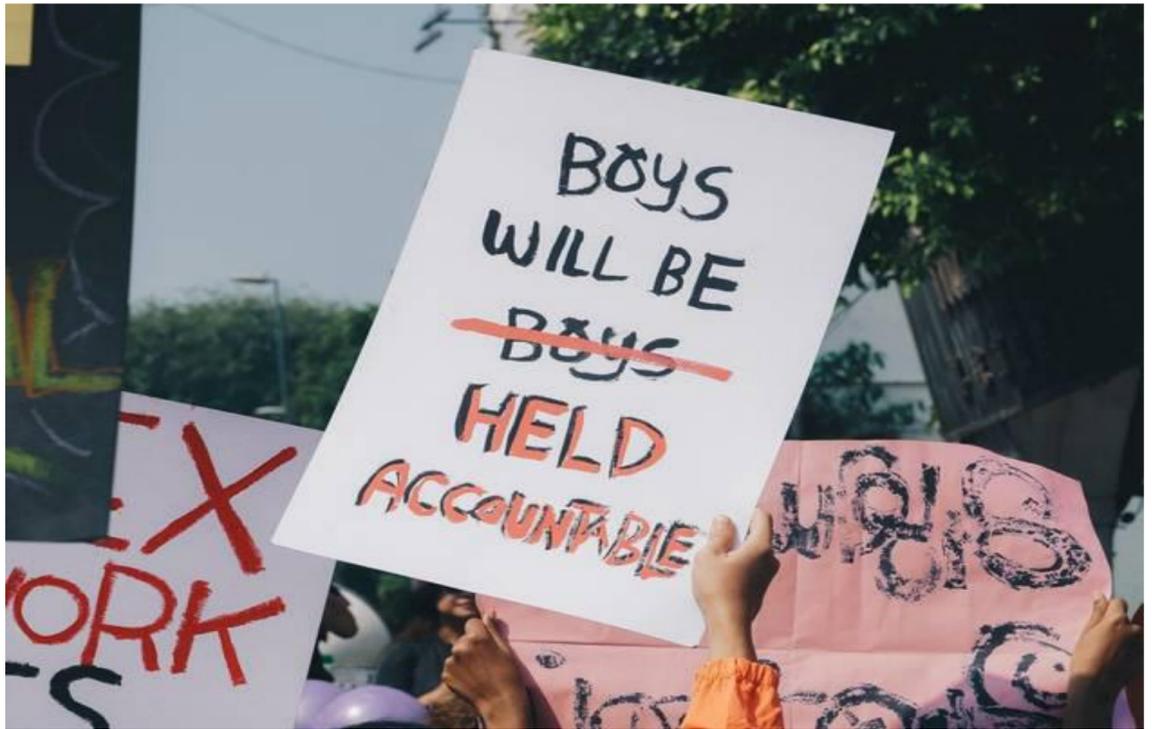
O T H E R O P I N I O N

## New Target

**I**n a rather dubious directive, the Centre had ordered the popular social media platform to get rid of the label, 'manipulated media', that had been applied to some posts shared by senior functionaries of the party and the government. The instruction has been followed — quite predictably — by a raid on Twitter's offices. Hearteningly, Twitter has stood its ground so far, refusing to yield to this naked aggression on the part of the government. Any media content — including videos, audio, visuals — that is deemed to have been fabricated is red-flagged as 'manipulated media' by Twitter. Such a censorious certification is issued only after the application of due process like technological verification as well as human review. In this particular instance, the BJP disseminated a 'toolkit' prepared by the Congress on Twitter, alleging that the intention of its principal political rival was to malign the Narendra Modi dispensation, prompting the Congress to retaliate by stating that the content shared by the BJP leaders is fabricated. It demanded corrective action against the mischief-mongers. The fact that Twitter issued such a label can only be attributed to serious anomalies in the BJP's 'repackaging' of the toolkit.

The charge against Twitter — the Centre has described the labelling as "prejudged" and "prejudiced" — is all the more curious because the government's directive does not exactly stand on firm legal ground. As a private entity, Twitter is entitled to apply its own standards to judge problematic content. Significantly, the Information Technology Act, while allowing the government to regulate content, does not empower it to demand the removal of labels. The legal deficiencies in the government's arsenal are only one part of the problem. The cynical agenda against the company bares the BJP's desperation to control a narrative that seems to be going out of control. The growing anger against the government for its repeated failures to manage a health crisis must be adding to the BJP's paranoia. There is, however, a lesson in this for social media platforms too. A cooler, non-partisan relationship — rather than snugly, warm ties — with the powers that be can provide indemnity against a witch hunt.

Telegraph India



Haris Rashid and Tania Saeed

**R**ecently, a video posted by an Instagram user who styles himself as a content creator drew a lot of flak for his offensive and uninformed statements about working mothers. Much to the surprise of those who thrive on such diabolical tirades against women, this was not their time. Social media users in Kashmir from across the gender spectrum jumped in to categorically and unanimously challenge the premise of the video's harmful ideas about working mothers. Of all the engagement that the video drew, most was dismissive of the Instagram user as well as his content.

It is unfortunate that one has to engage with what is not an "opinion" but an outburst. Nonetheless, we need to jump in to set the record straight.

First a summary of the narration in the video (now taken down): It starts with the man (narrator) in the video proclaiming, "I'm a sad mother". It is followed with a complaint in a condescending tone that her child has turned out to be disobedient despite feeding and nurturing her/him, cleaning her/his shit and educating her/him. The narrator then questions the mother: "What else do you expect? Where were you?" He goes on answering the questions himself in a taunting tone, "You were out, busy, earning." Then hurls a lot of allegations of serious nature: "And your kids, they were just making wonderful relationships with the four walls of the house and yeah, of course, the caretaker who was molesting them that you have no idea about. The teacher you thought was helping them was actually molesting them too." It is followed by complaints that the narrator has against the mother that she never provided her/him the "platform to share things" with her and failed to connect and interact with them because that would demand her to be "physically, mentally, emotionally available". It is again followed by questions: "Who asked you to earn? Who asked you to become independent when your husband is working?" Then there is preaching that motherhood is "a huge project of 20 years" which needs a 20-year investment and only after "then it will come back to you". Again there is a question: "When you don't invest anything, giving just the financial support, then what do you expect your son or daughter to turn into?" Finally, the narrator asks for a favour from the whole women community: "If you are a woman and you wanna be independent, and you wanna earn and you wanna job and you wanna become a mother, please do me a favour- Don't become a mother because you are spoiling a life. Please just don't get married. Be independent, do whatever the hell you want to do but don't become a mother." In the end, there is a disclaimer: "this video is not for the ladies who are divorced or separated, widows, the only earning hand in the family. This video is just for those women who are just deliberately messing it up."

Unfortunately, this narrative about working women's motherhood is not unfamiliar but it is very dated and uncanny in Kashmir, given that Kashmiris haven't been so regressive towards the idea of working women even with it being patriarchal in a lot of ways. It was in 1792 that Mary Wollstonecraft wrote the earliest rebuttal to these arguments in the form of a book "A Vindication of the Rights of Women". In modern parlance, such regressive thinking is known as misogyny, which is unacceptable, and hence the video was accordingly denounced by many men and women alike.

The narrator in the video blames earning/working mothers for disobedience of children. He goes a step further to hold these busy mothers responsible for child sexual abuses allegedly perpetrated by caretakers and teachers. No one is gainsaying child sexual abuses but are mothers really responsible for the abuses committed by an abuser? Women are often victim blamed for getting molested and raped and now they are blamed for the molestation of their children too. The narrator seems to have no complaint against the abusers per se. They are absolved of their crimes, declaring it to be the duty of a mother to prevent these abuses. Further, suggesting mothers always stay with their children in order to shield them

**Are there independent men? No. That's because no role fractures a man's personhood and rightly so. A man can be a son, father and a successful working professional, all at once. Why is the personhood of a woman dismembered as soon as she takes on more than one role? Ironically, with all the glorification of motherhood, a stay-at-home mom is never called independent and is never credited with doing anything noteworthy**

from abuse is illogical. The father is practically missing (a Freudian clue for those who'd like to indulge further) as though he has no responsibility towards the child.

The narrator is also of the opinion that motherhood is a huge project of 20 years that needs 20 years of investment. Sure, raising a child is a huge responsibility but this is not restricted to the mother or even the father alone. Parenthood coupled up with a conducive atmosphere for growth is required to raise kids the right way. To thrust this responsibility on mothers alone is unfair and illogical. And if it is indeed a project of 20 years, what does a mother do afterwards? If you are only reducing her to being a mother, does that mean she is allowed to have no other identity?

The source of all these problems, as identified by the narrator, is the independent mother - quite a word! Are there independent men? No. That's because no role fractures a man's personhood and rightly so. A man can be a son, father and a successful working professional, all at once. Why is the personhood of a woman dismembered as soon as she takes on more than one role? Ironically,

**It's a double-edged sword for women everywhere. When she doesn't wish to have a job in the traditional sense of the word, she's deemed less ambitious and lazy. She isn't credited for years and years of labour for raising a child right. On the other hand, when a woman has a professional**

life, even then she's guilt tripped into being a bad mother. It isn't surprising then that a lot of social media users commented with stories of how their working mothers have left no stone unturned to raise them right.

In times when we need to balance roles, we're here still trying to prove the merit of working women who are mothers. There's nothing "progressive" about these views. This is basic, decent and just behaviour. There's nothing 21st century about it. These values were identified by Prophet pbuh in his times as well. He (may peace be upon him) was best to his wives. Surely, he wouldn't have been best with conditions. He (saw) was unconditionally and irrevocably good. Learn to imitate this Prophetic masculinity which was considerate, kind, sober, strong and just - all at once.

Additionally, the use of the word "investment" about motherhood by the narrator is problematic. The investment would mean that the parents expect a benefit in the future from their children. It is this investment thinking that today children are forced to adopt a way of life and make a career of their parents' choosing. Parenthood or motherhood cannot be reduced as a simple investment. Rather, it is based on certain sentiments, morals, beliefs and values that are accompanied by certain obligations and rights.

Further, by mansplaining motherhood to women, the narrator has created a false and dangerous binary where women are asked to choose between motherhood and independence. Restricting women to procreation and motherhood would give rise to a host of other problems. Like Mary Wollstonecraft, while pleading for the public employment of women, points out, "women might certainly study the art of healing, and be physicians as well as nurses and midwives" and "they might also study politics and business." Only then would women not "marry for support", which would mean that would put their rational faculties to use in making their own decisions for themselves and not need forced obedience to the men in their lives". She goes on to ask, "How many women thus waste life away, who might have supported themselves by their own industry? Would men but generously snap our chains, and be content with rational fellowship, instead of slavish obedience, they would find us more observant daughters, more affectionate sisters, more faithful wives, more reasonable mothers-in a word, better citizens."

Unfortunately, even after receiving a lot of backlash, the Instagram user has continued with creating sexist content. If the person in question

really wishes to be a content creator and be taken seriously, he needs to know that such outbursts are short lived. It is only contribution towards betterment that lasts, everything else is a momentary and transient nothing. One is never remembered for shaming others. What is memorable is uplifting each other constructively.

Lastly, a man should be the last person to lecture women on motherhood. As Rachel Green, the famous character from the wildly popular series F.R.I.E.N.D.S says, "No Uterus, No opinion."

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

The author is a student at Ashoka University



# Study finds memory details fade over time with only main gist preserved

Agencies

In order to find out as to what information is retained in memory over time, and which parts get lost - a team of researchers demonstrated that our memories become less vibrant and detailed over time, with only the central gist eventually preserved.

Moreover, this 'gistification' of our memories is boosted when we frequently recall our recent experiences.

The new study, led by the Universities of Glasgow and Birmingham researchers, was published in Nature Communications.

The work could have implications in a number of areas, including the nature of memories in post-traumatic stress disorder, the repeated questioning of eye-witness testimonies and even in best practice for exam studying.

While memories are not exact carbon copies of the past - remembering is under-

stood to be a highly reconstructive process - experts have suggested that the contents of memory could change each time we bring it back to mind.

However, exactly how our memories differ from the original experiences, and how they are transformed over time, has until now proven difficult to measure in laboratory settings.

For this study, the researchers developed a simple computerised task that measures how fast people can recover certain characteristics of visual memories when prompted to do so. Participants learned word-image pairs and were later required to recollect different elements of the image when cued with the word. For example, participants were asked to indicate, as fast as possible, if the image was coloured or greyscale (a perceptual detail), or whether it showed an animate or inanimate object (a semantic element).

These tests, probing the quality of the

visual memories, happened immediately after learning and also after a two-day delay. Reaction time patterns showed that participants were faster to recollect meaningful, semantic elements than the surface, perceptual ones.

Julia Lifanov, the lead author of the study from the University of Birmingham, said: "Many memory theories assume that over time, and as people re-tell their stories, they tend to forget the surface details but retain the meaningful, semantic content of an event."

"Imagine reminiscing about a pre-COVID dinner with a friend - you realize that you cannot recall the table decor but know exactly what you ordered; or you remember the conversation with the bartender, but not the colour of his shirt. Memory experts call this phenomenon 'semanticization'," Lifanov added.

Prof Maria Wimber, the senior author on the study from the University of

Glasgow, said: "The pattern towards recollection of meaningful semantic elements we demonstrate in this study indicates that memories are biased towards meaningful content in the first place - and we have shown in previous studies that this bias is clearly reflected in brain signals too."

"Our memories change with time and use and that is a good and adaptive thing. We want our memories to retain the information that is most likely to be useful in the future when we encounter similar situations," Wimber added.

The researchers found that the bias towards semantic memory content becomes significantly stronger with the passage of time, and with repeated remembering. When participants came back to the lab two days later, they were much slower at answering the perceptual-detailed questions, but they show relatively preserved memory for the semantic content of the images. However, the shift from detail-rich to

more concept-based memories was far less pronounced in a group of subjects who repeatedly viewed the images, rather than being asked to actively bringing them back to mind.

The study has implications for probing the nature of memories in health and disease. It provides a tool to study maladaptive changes, for example in post-traumatic stress disorder where patients often suffer from intrusive, traumatic memories, and tend to over-generalize these experiences to novel situations. The findings are also highly relevant for understanding how eyewitness memories may be biased by frequent interviews and repeatedly recalling the same event.

The findings also demonstrate that testing yourself prior to an exam (for example, by using flashcards) will make the meaningful information stick for longer, especially when followed by periods of rest and sleep.

## Study examines how pandemic-related changes affect college students' motivation

Agencies

When the worsening COVID-19 pandemic prompted colleges to shut their campuses and shift to remote learning in spring 2020, concerns arose that many underrepresented students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics disciplines would be demotivated and drop out in even greater numbers.

However, a study of 182 undergraduate students in a biology course at one university found little evidence to support that belief. Instead, across all demographic groups, the impact varied: Some students were more motivated, some were less so, and some saw no changes in their level of interest in the subject matter, researchers at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign found.

"There's resilience and a lack of resilience across all groups," said educational psychology professor Jennifer Cromley, the first author of the study, which was co-written by graduate student Andrea Kunze.

Published in the Journal of Microbiology and Biology Education, the findings are a caution against making stereotypical assumptions about individuals' commitment and persistence based on their demographic characteristics such as socioeconomic status or being a first-generation student, according to the researchers.

"We shouldn't assume that they're going to be resilient or not resilient. We should check in with them and see how they're doing. Stereotyping people as downtrodden or resilient doesn't reflect the realities of the situation," Cromley said.

The students were participants in an introductory biology course that was traditionally taught with in-person lectures but changed to



online instruction during the final eight weeks of the Spring 2020 semester. When face-to-face instruction was suspended to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 on campus, most students moved back home.

At the time, the researchers had a semester-long study of changes in motivation among the biology students in progress. When instruction went online, they shifted their focus to examine how the motivation of at-risk students - specifically, women, students from underrepresented minority and ethnic groups, and first-generation students - was affected.

Students who agreed to participate in the study were surveyed monthly from January to April, repeatedly completing the same two of 10 possible questionnaires that examined various factors associated with motivation according to several theories.

For example, some of the questionnaires asked about students' goals, such as whether their aim was to thoroughly understand the concepts being taught or to just avoid performing worse than their classmates or failing. Other surveys explored whether the students believed they could master the material in the course or if they considered themselves good at biology.

Some surveys asked students whether they intended to remain in a STEM major and whether they believed the effort required would be worth it in the end. While 42%

of the students indicated they were completely committed to remaining in STEM when surveyed in January, the researchers found that this declined as the semester progressed.

By April, changes in each of the motivational variables indicated more students were at risk of dropping out. However, the team found no significant differences between demographic groups, Cromley said.

Because the students experienced numerous changes concurrently - such as concerns about health, their finances and living at home with their families and away from social and academic supports they had on campus - changes in their motivation could not be ascribed to remote learning alone, Cromley said.

While the researchers had hypothesized that students' interest in the material would decline during the semester, they found that some students' interest increased instead. Media stories about scientists' efforts to decipher COVID-19 and develop effective vaccines promoted a greater appreciation for the utility and societal value of science for some students, Kunze said.

This effect was particularly significant among some first-generation students, who represented 24 per cent of those surveyed, according to the study.

One of these students, who also was from an underrepresented minority or ethnic group, wrote that she was motivated every day to achieve her dreams of becoming a doctor "and helping to end disparities within the healthcare system."

Despite predictions that underrepresented students' achievement and persistence would be adversely affected by the challenges associated with remote learning, some "students weren't just giving up. Some were inspired and still trying," Kunze said.

## Now password-protect Google page that reflects your searches

Agencies

In a bid to help protect browsing history and search activities of its users from others to see, Google will now let them password-protect the page that shows their searches.

Whenever people use a Google device or product (Android smartphone or Chrome browser), their activity history is stored and is available for them to review via 'My Activity' feature.

Now, "if you turn on extra verification, Google will make sure it's really you before you can see or delete your full history on My Activ-



ity," the company said in an update.

"This can help keep your history safer on shared devices. This setting only applies to My Activity. Your history may still appear in other Google products," the com-

pany added.

To strengthen your privacy on shared devices, you can choose to require an extra verification step to view your full history on My Activity.

To activate the verification, go to activity.google.com and click the Manage My Activity verification link.

According to Android Police, once turned on, "the feature will ask you to verify your identity before showing your history".

"What this actually does is simply take you to the regular Google sign-in page, allowing you to either enter your password or connect using your Android device if you've set that up," the report mentioned.

### Government of Jammu & Kashmir Office of the Divisional Forest Officer Planning and Publicity Division.

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

e-NIT NO: - 03 OF 2021-22 DATED: -25/05/2021

For and on behalf of the Hon'ble Lt. Governor Jammu & Kashmir, e-tenders are invited from approved and eligible contractors registered with Union Territory of J&K/Central Govt. Organizations for the following works:-

S. NO	NAME OF WORK	ADV. COST (Rs. In lacs)	Earnest Money	CLASS OF CONTRACTOR	Cost of Tender Document	TIME OF COMPLETION
1.	Providing and fixing of Barbed Wire Fencing in 4 strands (3000 Rft) with Wooden (Robinia) Fence Posts at AkhalKulgam Comppt.30/N(District Kulgam) Spl. Forest DivisionKulgam.	2.06	Bid Security Declaration	"DEE"	Rs.300/=	60 Calendar Days

The e-NIT Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, bills of quantities, (B.O.Q) set of Terms & Conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental Website:-<https://jktenders.gov.in>.

Scheme: State Sector (CAPEX Budget)

Position of Funds: - Partly Available

Position of AA/TS: - Accorded

Receiving/ Opening Authority:..Tender Opening Committee

Publishing Date:-	27-05-2021
Download Start Date:	27-05-2021 from 10:00 AM
Bid submission Start Date:	27-05-2021 from 10:00 AM
Bid submission End Date:	14-06-2021 upto 06:00 PM
Date of Opening of Technical Bid through online:	15-06-2021 at 02:00 PM (In the office of the DFO Planning & Publicity Division, at Forest Complex, Sheikh Bagh, Srinagar).
Date of opening of Financial Bid	To be opened online after evaluation of technical bids received

- The bids shall be deposited in electronic format on the website: - <https://jktenders.gov.in>
- The date for opening of Technical & Financial bids online shall be opened as per time schedule mentioned above.
- Bids uploaded must accompany Govt. Treasury Receipt (cost of tender document) in shape of Treasury Challan for the amount shown against the work above to be deposited in Govt. Treasury under Account Head 0406- Forest in favour of DFO Planning & Publicity Division, Forest Complex, at Sheikh Bagh Srinagar. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 90 days from the date of opening of bids.
- In pursuance to Circular No. A/Misc(2018)-III-895/J Dated:- 22-12-2020 issued by Finance Department of J&K, there is no requirement of submission of Bid Security/ Earnest Money Deposit (EMD). However, every bidder has to furnish an undertaken/ declaration accepting that if it withdraws or modifies its bids during the period of bid validity or if it fails to sign the contract or fails to submit an amount equal to 3% of contract as performance security within 07 days of opening of price bid, if they are awarded the contract, they will be suspended from participating in any tender process in future till 31st March, 2023. Aforementioned undertaken/ declaration needs to be furnished as per format in Annexure-"A" duly Notarised and same must be uploaded.
- Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website [jktenders.gov.in](https://jktenders.gov.in)
- To participate in bidding process bidders have to get Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) as per Information Technology Act Bidders can get Digital Certificate form approved vendor.
- The bidders have to submit their Technical & financial bids online in electronic format with digital signature. No Technical or financial bid will be accepted in physical/hard form.
- Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned above.
- Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copies of all necessary documents i.e Valid Registration Card issued by PWD/CPWD duly renewed for the current year 2021-22, PAN, Valid GST Registration, Govt. Treasury receipt/Challan (cost of Tender Document).
- The successful bidder has to produce Valid Labour Registration Certificate issued by Labour Department after issuance of award of contract.
- The Department will not be responsible for any delay in online submission of the bid due to any reason (technical or otherwise).
- The Department shall not be held responsible for selection criteria/policy matter being adopted by the Directorate of Information regarding publishing the NIT, in any of the newspaper under circulation.
- The successful bidder have to produce hard copies of original CDR/FDR and Govt. Treasury receipt after opening Technical/ Financial bid.
- The tender accepting Authority however reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason thereof.
- If any Tenderer faces any difficulty in uploading the Tender, he can contact the Office of the DFO Planning & Publicity Division, Forest Complex, at Sheikh Bagh Srinagar during office hours as he can be facilitated.
- All other terms and conditions shall remain same as per detailed tender document.

For further details, terms and conditions log on [www.jktenders.gov.in](https://www.jktenders.gov.in)

No.-DFO/P&P/173/E-Tender/CAPEX/188-93

Dated: -25/05/2021

Divisional Forest Officer,  
Planning & Publicity Division,  
Srinagar.

DIPK-2096/21

## THE J&K BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS (BOPEE)

Tele/Fax: 0194-2433590, 2437647 (Srinagar); 0191-2479371, 2470102 (Jammu)  
Website: [www.jkbopee.gov.in](http://www.jkbopee.gov.in) E-mail: [coejakbopee@gmail.com](mailto:coejakbopee@gmail.com)/[helpdeskjakbopee@gmail.com](mailto:helpdeskjakbopee@gmail.com)

Subject: Admission Notification for conduct of Common Entrance Test for (10s Based) Paramedical Diploma (FMPHWMMPHW) Courses-2021. uploading of their deficient documents, thereof.

References: (i) Notification No.054-BOPEE of 2021 Dated 15-04-2021

(ii) Notice No.046-BOPEE of 2021 Dated 05-05-2021

Notice No. 050-BOPEE of 2021  
Dated: 25-05-2021

The J&K BOPEE vide Notification No. 054-BOPEE of 2021 Dated 15-04-2021 invited Online Application Forms from the eligible candidates belonging to UT of J&K/Ladakh for admission to (10th Based) Paramedical Diploma (FMPHWMMPHW) Courses-2021 in various Govt./Private institutions of UT of J&K/Ladakh. The Board, after the expiry of the last date for filling up of Online Application Forms, observed that the some of these Online Forms are deficient for want of some prerequisite documents which are either not uploaded or wrongly uploaded by the applicants.

In view of the prevalent COVID-19 situation and in order to prepare and notify the Provisional Merit list without any further delay, the Board has decided to give an opportunity to all such applicants listed in Annexure '2' to this Notice to upload their deficient documents by or before 06-06-2021 positively failing which such applicants shall be treated as not eligible, for inclusion in the Provisional Merit List and further counseling rounds for allotment of seats and no claim of such applicants, whatsoever reason(s), shall be entertained later on by the Board under any circumstances.

Note:

- Any Applicant who has not been able to obtain his/her Domicile Certificate from the Issuing Authority till date due to various reasons, can upload an undertaking (on plain paper) certifying that he/she will produce the Domicile certificate at the time of counselling/Admission, otherwise he/she shall not be allowed to participate in the counseling or take admission in any college.
- No documents shall be accepted through any email or WhatsApp
- The Annexure "A" to this Notice shall be available only on the BOPEE website [www.jkbopee.gov.in](http://www.jkbopee.gov.in)
- All the applicants are advised to remain in touch with the J&K BOPEE website daily for all updates.

DIPK-NB-919/21

No. BoPEE/Exam-LL/2020  
Dated: 25-05-2021

(Dr. Sunil Gupta)  
Controller of Examinations  
J&K BOPEE

## Google To Comply With India's IT Rules: Sundar Pichai



Google's team in India is rigorously engaged to comply with the new IT rules that came into effect on Wednesday, said CEO Sundar Pichai. "You know we comply with local laws and we will approach it with the same framework," Pichai said.

He said the company has a policy to engage and explain the significance of "information and promotion of free flow of information", but added that Google also respects legislative processes in democratic nations.

He also noted that the issue of regulation of technology companies by countries globally is evolving. "We fully expect governments, rightfully, to both scrutinize and adopt regulatory frameworks, whether it's Europe copyright directive or India with information regulation," he said.

The new IT rules for social media companies, which came into effect from Wednesday, are aimed at making digital platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram and Google—which have seen a phenomenal surge in usage over the past few years in India—more accountable and responsible for the content hosted on their platform.

The new rules, which were announced on February 25, require large social media players to follow additional due diligence, including the appointment of a chief compliance officer, nodal contact person and resident grievance officer.

"Significant social media intermediaries"—defined as those with over 50 lakh registered users—were given three months' time to comply with the additional requirements. Non-compliance with rules, will result in these social media companies losing their intermediary status that provides them exemptions and certain immunity from liabilities for any third-party information and data hosted by them. In other words, they could be liable for action.

Google has previously stated that it has consistently invested in significant product changes, resources, and personnel to ensure that it is combating illegal content in an effective and fair way, and complies with local laws in the jurisdictions it operates in.

The new rules also require these platforms to remove any content flagged by authorities within 36 hours, and take down posts depicting nudity or morphed photos within 24 hours of receiving a complaint.

The new guidelines mandate setting up a robust complaint redressal mechanism with an officer being based in the country, and significant social media companies will have to publish a monthly compliance report disclosing details of complaints received and action taken, as well as details of contents removed proactively. (With PTI inputs)

## Twitter Wrangles With Indian Govt Over Staff Safety, Free Speech

Agencies



Twitter Inc (TWTR.N) said on Thursday it was worried about the safety of its staff in India, days after police visited one of its offices as part of a probe related to the firm's tagging of some ruling party posts as manipulated.

Leaders of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party recently shared portions of a document on Twitter they said was created by the main opposition Congress party highlighting government failures during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Congress complained to Twitter saying the document was fake, after which Twitter marked some of the posts as "manipulated media". The Delhi Police, which is directly controlled by Modi's government, on Monday visited a Twitter office to serve notice to the firm's country head of a probe into the tagging of tweets, read more

"Right now, we are concerned by recent events regarding our employees in India and the potential threat to freedom of expression for the people we serve," a Twitter spokeswoman said in a statement.

"We, alongside many in civil society in India and around the world, have concerns with regards

to the use of intimidation tactics by the police in response to enforcement of our global Terms of Service," the spokeswoman added.

The social media giant's statements drew strong criticism from the Delhi Police, which said the firm was refusing to cooperate with law enforcement.

"Twitter Inc's latest statements are devised to seek dubious sympathy when they themselves not only refuse to comply with the law of the land but also claim to be possession of material evidence but refuse to share it with legal authority duly recognised," the police said in a statement.

"Twitter India's convoluted stance is similar to a deer caught in the headlights."

India's technology ministry also slammed the U.S. tech firm. "The only instance of scuttling free speech on Twitter is Twitter itself and its opaque policies, as a result of which people's accounts are suspended and tweets deleted arbitrarily without recourse," the ministry said in a statement.

## 'COVID-19 Pandemic Obstructed Growth Of The Valley Farmers'



KO NEWS DESK

**SRINAGAR:** Director Agriculture Production & Farmer's Welfare Department, Chowdhary Mohammad Iqbal today held an interactive meeting with members of J&K Advisory Board for Development of Kisans (JKABDK) to work out a professional marketing platform for the cash crops grown in Kashmir valley.

The meeting was attended by Managing Director JK Horticulture Produce & Marketing Corporation (JKHPMC), Er. Shafat Sultan; Secretary JKABDK, Abdul Hamid Wani, Joint Directors Agriculture Department, Chief Agriculture Officers, members of JKABDK and other concerned.

At the outset of this meeting, Secretary JKABDK, Abdul Hamid Wani gave the brief introduction about the importance of the Board.

While interacting with the Board Members, Director Agriculture stated that the government aspires to see the farmers prosperous and self-reliant as the farmers are the main stakeholders in contributing to the GDP of the region and the government is committed to double farmers' income by 2022.

He observed that the COVID-19 Pandemic has obstructed the growth of the Valley farmers

**THE MEETING WAS** attended by Managing Director JK Horticulture Produce & Marketing Corporation (JKHPMC), Er. Shafat Sultan; Secretary JKABDK, Abdul Hamid Wani, Joint Directors Agriculture Department, Chief Agriculture Officers, members of JKABDK and other concerned.

as marketing of their produce has been affected.

He said his office and JKHPMC jointly placed an innovative marketing platform for these crops especially F&V Produce, which helped these growers to sell their produce on competitive and reasonable prices during the current covid19 restrictions.

He informed that both the Department of Agriculture Kashmir and JKHPMC have started a marketing campaign of this season's crash crops especially for the vegetables and fruits by working out reasonable rates with the growers for which several refrigerated vans have been pressed into services to carry the fresh vegetables and fruits of growers directly to the end-users.

He added that the move will

help the growers/sellers to fetch them remunerative prices and these fixed rates shall also act as a deterrent for having a good market competition.

Chowdhary informed that in order to make this market platform more vibrant and user friendly, the joint meeting was conducted by the Department of Agriculture Kashmir and MD JKHPMC with the nominated Board Members to seek their suggestions based on their field exposure in agriculture and in allied sectors.

The interaction would help in suggestions, recommendations from farmers' representatives and from the field officers and district heads of Agriculture Department & JKHPMC for better produce marketing, he added.

Speaking on the occasion, MD JKHPMC Shafat Sultan emphasized that it has become necessary to do away with the traditional policies and practices in agriculture sector, and the farmers have to adapt now comprehensive reforms, best practices and modern technology available in agriculture and allied sectors.

He informed that JKHPMC is already in the process to develop a professional market for the growers to defeat the middlemen culture.

## IT Rules: Digital News Websites, OTT Platforms To Submit Compliance Report In 15 Days

Agencies

After issuing a missive for social media intermediaries in India, the Centre has now asked digital media publishers, including OTT and digital news platforms, to furnish details within 15 days on their compliance with the new guidelines on digital media ethics that were issued in February.

The Information Technology (Guidelines for Intermediaries and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 prescribed, for the first time, how digital news organisations, social media platforms and OTT streaming services will be regulated by the government. The IB ministry said that the new Code of Ethics and the IT rules will be appli-



cable to online news and digital media entities, OTT platforms and digital media.

It changes the way OTT platforms function in India with the inclusion of a Code of Ethics and a three-stair mechanism for OTT platforms. It also mandates a grievance redressal mechanism for OTT platforms

and digital portals. OTT platforms will have to have a self-regulating body, headed by a retired Supreme Court or High Court judge or an eminent person in this category.

The Code of Ethics will be applicable to online news and digital media entities, OTT platforms and digital media.

The new guidelines state that content involving nudity and morphed pictures of women will have to be removed in 24 hours of a complaint being raised. Further, publishers of news on digital media are required to observe Norms of Journalistic Conduct of the Press Council of India and the Programme Code under the Cable Television Networks Regulation Act.

## Health Crisis Can Be More Pervasive, Debilitating For Economy: RBI

Compared to financial crises, a health crisis can be more pervasive, persistent and debilitating in its impact on the real economy, as per the RBI annual report for 2020-21.

"Letting down the guard is perilous; it is best to prepare for future waves," the report said.

It added that private investment is the missing piece in the story of the Indian economy in 2020-21; reviving it awaits an environment in which "animal spirits" are rekindled and entrepreneurial energies are released so that backward and forward linkages and multipliers prepare the ground for a durable investment-driven recovery.

The report said 2020-21 will go down in history as the year of the Covid-19 pandemic break in the life and ethos of humanity.

"It altered economic activity, finance and, more generally, life and livelihoods in a drastic and deep way that may take several years to heal. The pandemic also exposed the fragility of health care infrastructure and the inadequacy of health spending over the years. The year 2020 will also be notable for unprecedented policy responses which, although not coordinated, turned out to be synchronised globally," the report said.

The report said the extent of misery and the loss of human lives has left indelible fissures and several lessons for the future: eternal vigilance in terms of pandemic preparedness - it is not going away for some time; priority for upscaling health spending and health infrastructure; faster rollout of vaccines and vaccination while building up stocks; investing in research and devel-



opment as vaccine developers/producers are challenged by new variants of the virus; prudent and preemptive pandemic protocols, including local lockdowns, restrictions on mobility and other COVID-appropriate behaviour.

Besides the toll on life and living, the year 2020 was ravaged by output and employment losses unprecedented in history, globally and in India. The pandemic also turned out to be highly inequitable - it is estimated that around 95 million additional people around the world have been forced into extreme poverty during the year, with 80 million more undernourished, mostly in low-income countries.

The report said just a year ago when the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared Covid-19 a pandemic and India imposed a strict lockdown in March, a deep despondency and risk psychosis became pervasive.

Since then, lives have been lost, surviving life has been disrupted and lifestyles have been fundamentally altered. In India, some areas of activity, especially contact intensive ones, have been deeply scarred while others such as agriculture and allied activities, information technology, highway infrastructure, tractor sales, railway freight, electricity demand and domestic trade have shown a rare resilience, it added. IANS

## Twitter Trying To Dictate Terms, Undermine India's Legal System: IT Ministry



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The Centre on Thursday hit back hard at Twitter's latest statement raising concerns over the 'potential threat' to freedom of speech, saying that the US-based microblogging platform is trying to dictate its terms in India, and also wants to undermine the country's legal system.

Maintaining that India has a glorious tradition of free speech and democratic practices dating back centuries, the Ministry of Electronics and IT said in a statement that protecting free speech in India is not the prerogative of a private, for-profit and foreign entity like Twitter, but it is the commitment of the world's largest democracy.

"Twitter's statement is an attempt to dictate its terms to the world's largest democracy. Through its actions and deliberate defiance, Twitter seeks to undermine India's legal system," the ministry statement said.

The ministry also said that Twitter refuses to comply with those very regulations in the intermediary guidelines on the basis of which it is claiming a safe harbour protection from any criminal liability in India.

Referring to the statement, wherein Twitter stressed on the need of a collaborative approach and a collective responsibility of elected officials, industry and civil society to safeguard the interests of the public, the IT Ministry said: "It is time Twitter disabuses itself of this grandiosity and comply with the laws of India."

It further assured that representatives of social media companies, including Twitter, "are and will always remain safe in India and there is no threat to their personal safety and security".

### SHORT TAKES

## Leverage Edu launches India's Largest Study Abroad Scholarship Worth 5 crore

**SRINAGAR:** Leverage Edu announced today the launch of India's Largest Study Abroad Scholarship for Indian students who are planning to study overseas for the upcoming academic intakes. As part of the initiative, students can apply by submitting an application that asks them why they deserve the scholarship. This democratizes access to students in any corner of India, to get waivers on their tuition fees, living expenses, win laptops, waiver on costs to cover excursions, and a lot more at-campus stuff - which would get them closer to their dream of being a global citizen in a borderless world. The scholarship of Rs 5 crore is expected to benefit hundreds of students.

"As a student-first platform, it is our religion to enable students' dreams in every possible way. Over time, we have worked on widening out access to the right career advice, which would help every student punch above their weight. Understanding that outcomes here are linked to 'what a student does post university', we have used our pedagogy to work with students on first doing what they are uniquely best at, and then linking it to post graduation jobs. Our matching algorithms, virtual fair platform, and multiple other features are all built with the same vision of making the student win," said Akshay Chaturvedi, Founder & CEO, Leverage Edu said.

The scholarship has a rolling application and the winners will be announced every fortnight. When asked about how students would be judged for the scholarship, Akshay commented, "We are looking for really driven students who believe in their hearts that the opportunity to go abroad can level up their lives and consequently of their families. They would be judged on merit of their answers and profile; winners will be chosen by a jury of academia and senior professionals that we've put together".

The scholarship is open for all students applying through the Leverage Edu platform. Further information can be accessed at <https://leverageedu.com/scholarships>.

## Vijay Mallya Loses Appeal In UK Court For More Funds To Cover Indian Legal Fees

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Vijay Mallya, on Wednesday, lost an appeal to gain further access to court-held funds to cover his costs for legal proceedings in India, as a High Court judge in London concluded that the 65-year-old businessman had failed to provide sufficient evidence in support of the over 750,000 pounds being sought.

During a remote hearing of the Chancery Division, Justice Robert Miles handed down his judgment in favour of a consortium of Indian banks led by the State Bank of India (SBI).

He also directed Mallya to cover 95 per cent of the costs of the appeal as the banks had been "very substantially successful" and the "overall winners" in fighting the



case to prevent further sanctions from the court-held funds.

The amount being sought was substantial, being over 550,000 pounds in respect of incurred costs and well over 200,000 pounds in respect of the future," said Justice Miles.

"There was no breakdown of the incurred costs between the various sets of proceedings, there was no attempt to justify the incurred

costs by reference to steps already taken; no invoices, bills of costs, descriptive schedules or other evidence was provided in support of the amount of costs being sought, he said, adding that the proceedings in India appear to be stagnant.

The latest appeal follows Deputy Insolvency and Companies Court Judge Nigel Barnett's February order that gave Mallya permission to use around 1.1 million pounds from the Court Funds Office (CFO) towards his living expenses and to meet legal expenses only related to the ongoing bankruptcy proceedings in the UK the next hearing for which is scheduled for July 26.

The expenditure incurred from the CFO could face further scrutiny at a later date on the conclusion of that petition, lodged by the banks in

pursuit of a judgment debt which stands at over 1 billion pounds.

Wednesday's ruling followed an appeal hearing on Tuesday during which the businessman's lawyers made representations to meet the costs of three-pronged proceedings in the Indian courts, related to unpaid loans to the now-defunct Kingfisher Airlines.

Mallya's barrister, Philip Marshall, repeated previous assertions that the COVID-19 pandemic had caused very, very substantial disruption to the Indian legal system and that the lawyers in India had effectively downed tools until their costs were cleared.

"The lawyers do need to be paid and therefore these are necessary expenses towards proceedings with a very reasonable prospect of success," said Marshall.

# Top Commander Reviews Readiness In Ladakh

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI:** Vice Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen C P Mohanty on Thursday carried out a comprehensive review of India's military preparedness in eastern Ladakh on the first day of his three-day visit to the region where Indian and Chinese troops have been locked in a bitter standoff for over a year.

Both sides are currently engaged in talks to take forward a disengagement process in areas such as Hot Springs, Gogra and Depsang, after completing the withdrawal of troops and weapons from the North and South banks of Pangong lake in February.

The army said Lt Gen PGK Menon, the commander of the Leh-based Fire and Fury Corps, briefed the Vice Chief of Army on the overall security scenario in the strategically sensitive sector.

Lt Gen Menon has been leading the Indian Army delegation at the last several rounds of talks with the Chinese military.



"Lieutenant General C P Mohanty #VCOAS arrived at #Leh today on a three day visit to Fire & Fury Corps. He was briefed by GOC Fire & Fury Corps on the operational situation & preparedness in the Corps Zone," the army tweeted.

The 14 Corps, popularly known as Fire and Fury Corps, is responsible for guarding the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China in the Ladakh region.

Last month, Army Chief Gen MM Naravane visited several high-altitude forward areas in eastern Ladakh.

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

military and diplomatic talks.

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

Following the talks, the Indian Army said both sides held a detailed deliberation on disengagement in remaining areas and agreed to jointly maintain stability on the ground, avoid any new incidents and resolve the outstanding issues in an "expeditious manner".

Earlier this month, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said the relationship between India and China is at a crossroads and its direction depends on whether the neighbouring country adheres to various agreements on maintaining peace and tranquillity along the border.

Lt Gen Mohanty also presented oxygen concentrators gifted by Army Wives Welfare Association to the Fire and Fury Corps.

## Govt Issues Guidelines On Vaccinating Elderly, Differently-Abled Near Home

Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** The Centre Thursday issued guidelines for vaccination near home, making it easier for the elderly and the differently-abled to get inoculated against coronavirus close to the places of their residence.

In the 'Near to Home COVID Vaccination Centres (NHCVC)' guidelines, the Health Ministry said individuals above 60 with no vaccination or just the first dose, and those below 60 but having disability due to physical or medical conditions will be eligible for vaccination at such centres.

The ministry said the National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for COVID-19 (NEGVAC) has recommended the proposal by a Technical Expert Committee of the Union Ministry on the guidelines for NHCVC for elderly and differently-abled citizens.

These recommendations have also been accepted by the Union Ministry of Health.

"The NHCVC for elderly and differently-abled citizens would follow a community-based, flexible and people-centric approach, bringing the COVID Vaccination centres nearer to

homes," the ministry said.

The Technical Expert Committee's recommendations are aimed at ensuring vaccination of senior citizens and differently-abled population having limited mobility due to their physical condition, the ministry said.

It said the recommendations are in response to the need to increase access by bringing vaccination services closer to the community while maintaining all necessary precautions and safety measures in accordance with the operational guidelines and advisories issued from time to time.

According to the guidelines, which has been communicated to all the states and UTs by the health ministry, a community-based approach has to be followed where sessions can be conducted at non-health facility based settings nearer to home, e.g. in a community centre, RWA centre/office, panchayat ghar, school buildings, old age homes etc.

Based on the cohort of eligible population, District Task Force (DTF)/Urban Task Force (UTF) will decide the location of NHCVC to maximize the reach of services to the target population, reduce vaccine wastage

along with causing minimal impact on the existing health services, the guidelines state.

According to the guidelines, the NHCVC will be linked to an existing CVC for vaccination purpose; the CVC in-charge will be responsible to provide vaccine, logistics and human resources.

The site for NHCVC will be pre-identified in collaboration with community groups and RWAs.

Such sites could be at Panchayat Bhawan, Sub-Health Centres and Health and Wellness Centres with availability of adequate space, community halls; RWA premises, polling booths, schools etc, the ministry said.

These sites should have a vaccination room and a waiting area with appropriate access for the target group, for example ramp for wheelchair access and observation room to ensure waiting for 30 minutes post vaccination as per MoHFW operational guidelines, the statement said.

Once identified and verified for meeting CVC criteria, all such sites will be registered on the CoWIN portal as NHCVC.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

### MHA Extends

local situation, requirements and resources," Bhalla said in his order issued to chief secretaries of the states and union territories.

He said the guidelines issued on April 29 for the month of May will continue till June 30.

According to the guidelines, the home ministry told the states to take necessary action to ensure sufficient oxygen-supported beds, ICU beds, ventilators, ambulances including creation of makeshift hospitals, oxygen, as needed, besides sufficient quarantine facilities.

The home ministry, however, did not mention anything about the imposition of lockdown anywhere in the country in the fresh guidelines issued in view of the pandemic.

The fresh guidelines for COVID-19 management came amid some decline in the daily count of the coronavirus cases and improvements in the situation of the availability of the beds, ICU and oxygen in some parts of the country like Delhi.

India's COVID-19 infection tally climbed to 2,73,69,093 as 2,11,298 more people tested positive for the disease in a day, while the country's recovery went up to 90 per cent, according to the Union health ministry on Thursday.

The death toll due to the disease rose to 3,15,235 with 3,847 fresh fatalities being reported in a span of 24 hours, the data updated at 8 am showed.

### SKIMS Store

the fire had broken out in a store of Ward Number 3P. However the tenders reached on time and doused off the flames.

A hospital official said that all of the patients are safe and none of them had to be evacuated. However there has been damage to some furniture kept inside the room, he added.

Meanwhile, the hospital administration in a statement issued on Thursday night said that a team has been constituted to ascertain the facts behind the minor fire incident.

"No major damage was done, every service was restored immediately. Everybody including the staff and patients are safe," the handout reads.

### J&K Logs 37

officials said 24 were residents of different parts of Jammu division and 13 others from the Valley. With these fatalities, the overall death count in J&K since the outbreak of pandemic last year has reached 3739.

The victims from the Valley included a 65-year-old man from Magarmal Bagh here, who died at Chest Diseases hospital, 17 days after he was admitted there, officials said. Also, a 68-year-old woman from Dalgate died at the CD hospital, one of the exclusive facilities for the management of the Covid-19 patients, five days after she was admitted there.

The other victims from this capital city included a 75-year-old man from Hawal who died at JLNH hospital Rainawari and a 70-year-old woman from Batamalo, who died six days after she was admitted to SMHS hospital, officials said.

A 68-year-old retired doctor from Baghat also succumbed to SKIMS Bemina, 25 days after he was admitted there.

At the same hospital, a 73-year-old woman from Ompora Budgam died of coronavirus, a day after she was admitted there. Besides her, officials said, a 65-year-old woman from Kunzer, Tangmarg died at SMHS hospital, 12 days after she was admitted there, they said.

At GMC Anantnag, officials said that a 60-year-old woman from Badragund and a 65-year-old woman from Kund Kulgam died 10 and 13 days after they were admitted there for treatment.

Also, two deaths were reported at GMC Baramulla with victims aged 60 and 68 years, officials said.

Among others the victims from Jammu include a 65-year-old man from Kishtwar, an 80-year-old woman from Talab Tillo Jammu, a 73-year-old woman from New Rehari Jammu, a 40-year-old man from Kheri Bishnah, a 90-year-old man Miran Sahib and a 50-year-old man from Bilaspur Chattisgarh at present Trikuta Nagar Jammu, they said. A 76-year-old

woman from RS Pura Jammu died at a hospital in Amritsar, they added.

About the new cases of infection, officials said 964 were reported from Jammu division and 1805 from Kashmir Valley, taking the overall tally to 281628.

Giving district wise details, the officials said that Srinagar reported 377, Baramulla 260, Budgam 195, Pulwama 196, Kupwara 217, Anantnag 205, Bandipora 78, Ganderbal 96, Kulgam 146, Shopian 35, Jammu 384, Udhampur 63, Rajouri 95, Doda 88, Kathua 50, Samba 35, Kishtwar 22, Poonch 47, Ramban 78 and Reasi 102 new cases of coronavirus.

The officials also stated that till now four mucormycosis (black fungus) cases have been confirmed in the J&K. (With GNS inputs)

### Sehrai's Sons

6 May 2021 have tested positive for COVID-19 in Kupwara jail, news reports said.

According to family sources both Mujahid Sehrai and Rashid Ashraf have tested positive for Coronavirus two days back.

Quoting official sources, reports said that the two sons of late Sehrai are being treated as per the law and the guidelines of the government.

The report said that both the sons of late Sehrai have been quarantined at DPL Kupwara.

The Tehreek-i-Hurriyat Chairman, Sehrai, died on 5 May in a Jammu hospital during his imprisonment under Public Safety Act (PSA) in Ko Bhalwal jail. His body was brought to his native village in north Kashmir's Kupwara district, where he was buried on 6 May.

His two sons - Mujahid Sehrai and Rashid Sehrai, were arrested from their residence at Bulbulbagh area of Barzulla in Srinagar on 15th May for allegedly raising "pro-freedom and provocative slogans" at the funeral of their father.

### Tel-Consultation

with representatives and prominent leaders from Jammu and Kashmir's Udhampur constituency, he said that all the COVID-19 arrangements, be it the oxygen supply in hospitals or availability of ventilators, were up to date and the administration has been asked to ensure that the patients do not suffer.

"Oxygen plants have been installed in time in almost all the districts of the constituency and in all the districts COVID-related material is being distributed by karyakartas (workers)," said Singh, the Minister of State for Personnel and a Lok Sabha member from Udhampur.

He further informed all the stakeholders that in view of the threat of the spread of COVID-19 to villages in the constituency, 'tele-consultation' facilities are being set up for which guidelines already exist for the empanelment of recognised doctors, a statement issued by the Personnel Ministry said.

This will reduce the burden of patients at district hospitals through an indiscriminate referral system, he said.

Singh informed that more than 66 per cent vaccination has been done in the union territory according to the statistics available, which is more than the national average and is an encouraging sign that people across the UTs do not hesitate now to get vaccinated, it said.

On the current COVID positivity and fatality rate across Jammu and Kashmir, the minister said that from the last many days, COVID-19 fatality and positivity has decreased considerably, which is a good sign during the pandemic and can boost the confidence of people vis-à-vis healthcare facilities that have been revamped up across the union territory.

Singh also discussed the plan to observe the completion of seven years of the Modi government on May 30 with community 'seva'/service programmes in the wake of the pandemic, the statement said.

It was informed that from May 28 onwards, booth-level programmes, including blood donation camps, will be held across the constituency, it said.

On May 30, 'seva' or community service programmes will be held at different panchayat locations across the six districts of the constituency, the statement said.

The programmes will include distribution of COVID-related material like face masks, sanitiser, food ration as well as oximeters, it said.

The stakeholders during the meeting

thanked the Union minister for sending COVID relief material to the Udhampur Lok Sabha constituency and for establishing oxygen plants, wherever required, the statement said.

During the interaction, Singh also noted that despite the challenges put forth by the COVID-19 pandemic, the development works did not stop even in the far-flung areas of the constituency, which reflects the commitment to carry on development activity under all circumstances, it said.

### LG Suggests

equipment like availability of oxygen supported beds, ventilators, oxygen capacity & supply etc.

"Test, track, treat and transformation of health infrastructure are the four keys to fight COVID pandemic. We need to put in our best efforts to contain the spread of Corona virus," Sinha said, as per the official spokesperson.

The LG, he said, emphasized on the availability of requisite medicare facilities for the border dwellers and directed the concerned DCs, CMOs, Police Administration to put dedicated efforts to strengthen health centres in the border areas.

During his visits to GMC Rajouri and District Hospital Reasi, Sinha took a round of various sections of the Hospitals, wherein he interacted with doctors, paramedical staff and enquired about the healthcare facilities and infrastructure available there, the official spokesperson said, adding that the LG appreciated the frontline health workers for dedicatedly serving the people during Covid pandemic.

"I appreciate doctors, nurses for their tireless efforts. People will always remember how our healthcare workers made them feel in the crisis & how they worked selflessly to save lives," the LG said, as per the official spokesperson. "Doctors' and Paramedical staff's undaunted spirit to go beyond the call of duty is changing lives, setting an example for humanity and creating a stronger society," he added.

According to the official spokesperson the LG called for strengthening human resources of the hospitals and Covid Care Centres and also asked the officials to prepare for future challenges. He further called for augmenting healthcare infrastructure at grassroots level.

"The most important gift that doctors and paramedical staff can offer to the people is their presence and attention in the COVID wards of hospitals and Primary Health Centres in rural areas," the official spokesperson quoted Sinha as saying.

He said that the LG also passed various directions to the concerned officers for effectively tackling the spread of Covid pandemic. He directed for micro containment zones in the towns to isolate pockets with high positivity rate.

"While taking the district-wise status of availability of medical oxygen, the Lt Governor was informed that new oxygen generation plants would become operational soon, thus augmenting the oxygen availability in the districts, adding 4250 LPM Oxygen capacity at Poonch; 3250 LPM at Rajouri and 1000 LPM in Reasi," he said.

"Regarding the demand and supply of oxygen to patients in GMC Rajouri, it was informed that 1000 LPM PSA Oxygen Generation Plant (OGP) is functioning efficiently. One 1000 LPM capacity is also sanctioned, besides three 750 LPM plants would be made functional in the coming days," he added.

The official spokesperson further said that Poonch DC and SP who were present in the meeting at Rajouri, briefed the LG about Covid situation and work going on to set up Panchayat Covid Care Centres.

"It was informed that the civil works for three Oxygen Plants of 750 LPM capacity have been completed, and one more 1000 LPM Oxygen Generation Plant at DH Poonch stands sanctioned. Further, Oxygen Plans of 200 LPM, 300 LPM and 500 LPM shall be installed at Mandi in the coming time," he said.

He further said that in Reasi, one 1000 LPM capacity Oxygen Generation Plant is functioning at DH Reasi, whereas another of the same capacity is sanctioned for CHC Katra.

"The Lt Governor directed the Hospital Administration and DC Rajouri to increase the bed capacity of newly created 9 bedded ICU facility to 25 bedded capacity, besides

early completion of the installation of 750 LPM Oxygen Generation Plants by deploying multiple teams working in three shifts," the official spokesperson said.

During his visits, the Lt Governor was accompanied by BVR Subrahmanyam, Chief Secretary; Nitishwar Kumar, Principal Secretary to Lt Governor; Mukesh Singh, ADGP, Jammu; Ms. Sheetal Nanda, Secretary to the Government, Social Welfare Department; Dr. Raghav Langer, Divisional Commissioner, Jammu; Dr. Renu Sharma Director Health Services Jammu, and other senior officers.

### BVR Shifted To

of Commerce, Government of India. The ACC has also approved his appointment as Secretary, Department of Commerce, upon the superannuation of the present incumbent on 30.06.2021," reads the order.

Pursuant to the order, the order said that it has been decided with the approval of the Competent Authority that Arun Kumar Mehta, IAS (AGMUT: 1988) will take over as Chief Secretary, J&K from the date that B.V.R. Subrahmanyam relinquishes the charge, and until further orders.

"Orders to this effect may be issued by the Government of Jammu & Kashmir," the order added.

Subrahmanyam, a 1987-batch IAS officer of Chhattisgarh cadre, had taken over as the Chief Secretary of Jammu and Kashmir in June 2018, and during his tenure J&K's special status was scrapped in 2019.

### Pandemic Slowed

personnel who were on deployment duty have tested positive for the virus. Then the police personnel are on lockdown duty for implementing the restrictions.

"So, it has affected (the operations), but it does not mean that we are leaving that area and focusing on the other. The operations are going on and we will step up the operations so that this runs parallel," the DPG said.

Singh said local militant recruitment in the Kashmir valley has gone down and the police wants the youth who have picked up arms to return to the mainstream.

"Police have been working hard to prevent misguided youth from joining the militancy. In Kulgam, a group of youth, who were about to join militancy, were brought back and united with their families. Similarly, in other districts of South Kashmir, many such groups were prevented from joining the wrong path," he said.

The DGP said unfortunately, the recruitment was on because "Pakistan-based agencies want the recruitment to continue".

"Their job is to give more oxygen to outfits like Jaish-e-Muhammad, Lashkar-e-Toiba and Al-Badr. They want to make them stronger. However, the recruitment is less as compared to previous years," he said.

Asked about the number of militants active in South Kashmir, Singh said while the number keeps on fluctuating, it has come down compared to previous years.

"At present, the number is around 100 plus and I hope it will come down further," he said.

Meanwhile, a police spokesman said Singh visited the twin South Kashmir districts of Anantnag and Kulgam where he chaired security review meetings with jurisdictional officers and took stock of the situation.

He also inaugurated 13 different facilities for police officers and personnel in Kulgam.

In his address, the DGP stressed upon officers to be vigilant and asked them not to give any breathing space to the enemies of peace who were looking to create disturbance.

Singh said the peaceful atmosphere in Jammu and Kashmir has been achieved after a lot of hard work and sacrifices by the police and security forces and added that more efforts are required to consolidate the peace in the union territory.

The DGP complimented the police personnel for handling different challenges successfully and urged them to continue work with the same dedication in the future.

Singh said the police along with other agencies have succeeded in creating a sense of security and he impressed upon the officers to work with full professionalism, sincerity and

in a dedicated manner for the welfare of the people while taking due care of their security.

He advised the police to continue their fight against drugs and book all those involved in this menace as it has emerged a major threat in recent times.

### Number Of Pilgrims

undertake this year's Hajj pilgrimage.

"We have made vaccination mandatory for all those who would be scheduled to perform Hajj this year and no one will be allowed to proceed for the pilgrimage without submitting a government issued vaccination certificate," Salam said.

He further said that the intending pilgrims should submit information regarding coronavirus vaccine on the official website of Hajj Committee of India at www.hajjcommittee.gov.in.

Quoting the report forwarded by the Health Minister of Saudi Arabia and a letter from the Hajj Committee of India, the Executive Officer said that pilgrims need to get two doses of vaccine before departing for the annual pilgrimage.

Pertinently, Saudi has recently laid out new guidelines for the people intending to take Hajj pilgrimage. According to Saudi government, people under the age of 18 and above 60 years won't be eligible to undergo pilgrimage. Besides it, a negative PCR test conducted 40 hours before dispatching to the area of pilgrimage in Saudi-approved laboratories is another condition announced by Riyadh. Also, the new rules say that Hajj pilgrimage should be done by following strict health protocols and guidelines.

The Saudi authorities have also said that the pilgrims shouldn't have a history of sickness or hospitalization prior 6 months from the date of travel.

Last year, only 10,000 residents of Saudi were allowed to take part in the annual pilgrimage compared to 2.5 million Muslims from

around the world a year earlier.

### UNGA President

the issue of Kashmir.

Bozkir "reiterated that @UN position on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute is governed by the UN Charter and relevant #UNSC resolutions..., the Foreign Office tweeted.

Ties between India and Pakistan nose-dived after a militant attack on the Pathankot Air Force base in 2016 by militants. Subsequent attacks, including one on Indian Army camp in Uri, further deteriorated the relationship.

The relationship dipped further after India's war planes carried airstrikes at a Jaish-e-Mohammed training camp inside Pakistan on February 26, 2019 in response to the Pulwama suicide attack in which 40 CRPF jawans were killed in the same month.

The relations deteriorated after India announced withdrawing special powers of Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcation of the state into two union territories in August, 2019.

Bozkir is the first Turkish national to preside over the UN General Assembly. He also visited Pakistan in August 2020 before taking up the position of President of the UN General Assembly.

During his address, Bozkir also said that the UN's inaction on the issue of Palestine is hurting its credibility.

"Inaction on the issue of Palestine, which is a grave matter, is damaging the credibility of the United Nations and the Security Council," Bozkir said, adding that it is hoped that the Security Council will also hear a unanimous vote on this important and necessary issue.

He also spoke about the COVID-19 pandemic and said that the coronavirus vaccine is equally needed by rich and poor countries, adding that governments' efforts are yielding results.

### Girl Killed

been referred to Srinagar hospital for specialised treatment.

Police suspect that the explosion was caused by a shell kept by the mother-daughter duo in a bag while collecting wild vegetables from the forest.

"A case under relevant sections of law has been registered in the concerned police station and investigation initiated," a police spokesperson said, while urging the villagers to cooperate with the police for investigation.

## HC To Hear Plea To Restrain 'Media Trial' Of Wrestler Sushil Kumar



Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** A plea to restrain the media from 'sensationalising' the trial of wrestler and Olympic medallist Sushil Kumar in connection with the death of a 23-year old man, and seeking rules for reporting criminal cases, was mentioned on Thursday before the Delhi High Court which agreed to hear it on May 28.

The petition was mentioned before a bench of Chief Justice D N Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh which allowed it to be listed for hearing on Friday.

The plea has been moved by a law student alleging that Kumar's career and reputation has been damaged by the media's reporting of the case against him in connection with the Chhatrasal Stadium brawl that led to the death of the 23-year-old wrestler.

On May 23, a Delhi court sent Kumar to 6-day police custody for interrogation in connection with the killing of a fellow wrestler, saying the allegations against him are serious in nature and that no one is above the law.

Kumar and his associates allegedly assaulted wrestler Sagar Dhankar (23) and two of his friends, Sonu and Amit Kumar,

at the Chhatrasal Stadium here on the intervening night of May 4 and 5. Sagar succumbed to the injuries later.

Kumar was arrested along with co-accused Ajay from outer Delhi's Mundka on May 23. The two-time Olympic medallist was on the run for nearly three weeks.

Allowing the police to interrogate Kumar for six days, the magistrate had said, "No one is above law and law treats everyone equally. Our Constitution guarantees the right to life and liberty to all persons subject to exceptions. The allegations against the accused persons are grave in nature."

The Delhi Police has lodged an FIR in the case under sections 302 (murder), 308 (culpable homicide), 365 (kidnapping), 325 (causing grievous hurt), 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), 341 (wrongful restraint) and 506 (criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

The FIR was also registered under sections 188 (disobedience to order by public servant), 269 (negligent act likely to spread infection of disease), 120B (criminal conspiracy) and 34 (common intention) of the IPC and various sections of the Arms Act.

## Tokyo-Bound Indian Contingent Will Be Vaccinated Before Departure: IOA



Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** Indian Olympic Association (IOA) on Thursday said all the Tokyo Games-bound athletes and officials have got their first COVID-19 vaccine and they will get their second doses before their departure from the country for the multi-sporting spectacle.

IOA's statement came a day after it had sought details from the national federations about the vaccinated athletes and officials, who are set to travel to Tokyo Olympics which opens on July 23.

"The IOA is ... ensuring that all the participants through the IOA for the Tokyo Olympics including athletes, technical officials and delegate members will follow all pre-cautions and will be vaccinated before leaving for Japan," the IOA said.

"... presently each of the above (athletes, technical officials and

delegate members) has had the first vaccination and 2nd will happen as per vaccination protocols," IOA President Narinder Batra and Secretary General Rajiv Mehta said in the statement.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has not made vaccination mandatory for participation in the Games but its president Thomas Bach had said he believes more than 80 per cent of people inside the Athletes' Village will be vaccinated.

More than 90 Indian athletes across sports have so far qualified for the postponed Tokyo Olympics.

On Saturday, the IOA had said that 131 athletes, including the Olympic-bound, have already received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccination while 17 have got both the doses.

The IOA said it will do everything possible to ensure that all the members of the Indian contingent follow the necessary steps provid-

ed in the playbook (issued by the IOC and the organising committee) before boarding their respective flights for Tokyo.

"The safety of everyone involved at the Tokyo Olympics is IOA's highest priority... pledge to follow all necessary precautions and guidelines.

"We at IOA do not want to leave any stone unturned and are here to support the IOC and the Tokyo 2020 Organising Committee in every possible manner and aspect."

The IOA also lauded the IOC and the Tokyo Games Organising Committee for "carrying out fabulous work to ensure that the Olympic Games are held in a completely safe and secure environment for the betterment of the athletes as well as the public of Japan". The IOA thanked the government for its support in securing vaccinations for each of the contingent members and representatives from India.

## Australia Head Coach Justin Langer Under Pressure To Change Coaching Style

Press Trust of India

**SYDNEY:** Australia head coach Justin Langer must change his coaching style if he wants to continue in his role, an end-of-season review of cricket Down Under has warned.

A source-based report in the 'Sydney Morning Herald' said, the 50-year-old was given a "strong and straightforward" feedback—taken from 40 players and support staff—about his coaching style as part of the team's regular end-of-season reviews.

Earlier this year, after an under-strength India came back from behind to hammer Australia 2-1 in their own den, some players had expressed dissatisfaction over Langer's management style because of his intensity and mood swings.

similar benefit in the team's preparation for the upcoming T20 World Cup and home Ashes," he added.

The report stated that leadership consultant Tim Ford, who oversaw the reintegration of Steve Smith and David Warner to the team two years ago after the ball-tampering bans, also conducted a second review process.

"Ford interviewed players virtually towards the end of the home season, with their responses to be kept anonymous."

"...in a wide-ranging review, which checked on player welfare at the end of a difficult season, he asked for their thoughts on the team's values and what needed updating since they last underwent the process with him two years ago."



Langer was appointed as the head coach on a four-year contract in 2018 after Darren Lehmann had stepped down in the wake of the ball-tampering scandal.

The players also expressed discontentment towards team manager Gavin Dovey.

Langer's response to the feedback across the rest of the year will decide whether he will be handed a new contract.

"This is effectively identical to the process undertaken before the last World Cup and the 2019 Ashes where the team performed strongly," CA's national teams boss Ben Oliver said in a statement to the publication.

"It's part of our ongoing commitment to on-and off-field improvement and we expect it will have a

He will hand over the findings of the report to team leaders Tim Paine, Pat Cummins and Aaron Finch next week.

"Langer will also receive the feedback from Ford's report though the comments were not as hard as the player review from the end of the season," the media report stated.

Assistant coach Andrew McDonald received good reviews with players, saying he was more approachable.

"In contrast to reports from the dressing room during the Australian summer, players spoke glowingly in public of the mood and team environment under McDonald, whom members of the Test side had gravitated towards due to his more approachable manner."

## Second-Best Foreign Coaches Will Make Us Second Best: Pullela Gopichand

Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** Pullela Gopichand says a good mix of foreign and Indian coaches is important for the development of the system but strongly believes that "second best" overseas recruits will only produce the second best players.

Speaking at the virtual inauguration of the High-Performance Coach Education Programme, the national badminton coach highlighted the role of coaches in Indian sports.

"Foreign coaches are very important for our development. It's very important that we always have a healthy mix of foreign coaches.

"In sports, where we don't have expertise it is good sometimes to have full foreign support teams in the beginning, but if for successive teams, we are having only foreign coaches then we are not doing justice to our system," Gopichand said.

The former shuttler feels the basic coaching structure should be led by Indians.

"Our coaching system can have foreign coaches as consultants but the basic structure has to be led by Indian coaches.

"It's very important that we learn from them. And we've to gradually wean away from them because they will always be making us the second best, and not the best," Gopichand said.

The Dronacharya Award feels there is a need for programs that turn former players into coaches.

"We'll never be able to get the best foreign coaches, we will always get only the second best, and probably the heart of an Indian coach



who's really wanting India to win will be definitely more than the coach who wants the next contract.

"So, sports where we have consistently done well, and that we have produced players, it's important to make programs which change players into coaches."

India is an athlete centric system and this needs to change according to Gopichand, who called for more power being given to coaches.

"From the perspective of a coach, who is not recognised, who has to work under associations, under administrators and also sometimes under an athlete's pressure, because once the athlete becomes bigger than the coach, then everybody starts listening to the athlete.

"It's time we need to kind of reverse that model and make it a coach-led model. For this we need more power being given to the coaches. Accountable, responsible power so that they perform and produce more and more results."

## It Felt Like I Beat The Virus: Shiva Thapa Talks About His 5th Asian Medal

Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** Shiva Thapa still can't quite believe that securing a fifth successive medal at the prestigious Asian Boxing Championships is "some sort of an unparalleled achievement".

All he felt after being assured of it was a "sense of triumph over that wretched coronavirus."

The 27-year-old became the most successful Indian male boxer in the history of the tournament by advancing to the semifinals of the ongoing edition in Dubai. His first was a gold in 2013, followed by a bronze in 2015, a silver in 2017 and another bronze in 2019.

"Wow! I didn't really know that it would mean so much statistically," the seasoned boxer told PTI from Dubai as he geared up for the 64kg category semifinal clash against defending champion Bakhodur Usmonov of Tajikistan on Friday.

"I never thought I would be the first to do something like this. It is a good record to have against your name. Also makes me realise how time has flown. Is it that long since I first competed at Asian championship?" he wondered.

So which among the five is his favourite?

"Every medal has its own story, there can't be favourites. Through these medals, I have been part of different teams, worked with different coaches. I am the constant along with a handful of people who have stood by me through everything," he said.

And when asked about the story of this medal, he said, "The pan-



dem. This whole situation that the world is in. To be able to compete and win medals in such a time. Psychologically, it felt as if I have beaten the virus for once."

He can't be faulted to have felt that. Last year, at the Cologne World Cup in Germany, Thapa was forced to withdraw midway into the tournament and placed in quarantine after a support staff member tested positive for COVID-19 and he was deemed a close contact. Those were "difficult" days for him.

"This Asian medal was like an assertion that we won't give up. That's what it meant to me this time. It is quite overwhelming actually," said the Assamese boxer, one of the just six world championship medallists from the country.

The only other pugilist with five Asian championship medals is Kazakh legend Vassiliy Levit, an Olympic silver-medallist and two-time world bronze-winner.

But even he does not have five on the trot like Thapa at the continental meet. Women's legends M C Mary

Kom (7) and L Sarita Devi (8) have more Asian medals than Thapa with the latter having the distinction of claiming six successive, five of them gold, at the peak of her prowess.

"To be anywhere close to these women's achievements is in itself humbling. I am honoured, they are remarkable athletes," he said.

Thapa has endured a couple of topsy-turvy years.

A two-time Olympian, he will not be there at the upcoming Tokyo Games after Manish Kaushik secured the 63kg category quota. He is disappointed about it but also able to see the brighter side of circumstances.

"Perhaps it's a sign that I have to keep going, try harder, that's what an athlete is supposed to do. We can't give up. Obviously nothing compares to the Olympics, it is the biggest but you have to give your best in the opportunities you get, I am trying to do that," he said.

"You keep giving your best and eventually the results come. Every moment is a blessing, I live by that," he asserted.

## Real Madrid Say Zidane Stepping Down As Team's Coach

Agencies

**MADRID:** Zinedine Zidane is stepping down as Real Madrid coach, again.

The club said Thursday the Frenchman is leaving his job, a few days after a season in which Madrid failed to win a title for the first time in more than a decade.

The club said Zidane decided to bring an end to his current spell as Madrid's coach.

"We must now respect his decision and express our gratitude for his professionalism, dedication and passion over the years and what he means to Real Madrid," the club said in a statement.

Zidane had a contract through June 2022.

"Zidane is one of Real Madrid's great icons and his legacy extends beyond what he has achieved as a coach and player at our club," Madrid said.

"He is aware that he has a place in the hearts of the Real Madrid fans and that he will always have a home at Real Madrid."

Zidane left the club for the first time



after leading Madrid to one of its most successful runs from 2016-2018, with three consecutive Champions League titles. In his two years and five months in charge, Madrid won a total of nine trophies, including two Club World Cups, two UEFA Super Cups, one Spanish league and one Spanish Super Cup.

He only won the league title once and a Spanish Super Cup in his second stint.

He quit the first time less than a week after leading the team to its third straight Champions League title, saying it was time for a change and that he didn't see it clearly that the club would keep winning with him in charge.

Zidane had been dismissing talks about his future recently, saying that he would discuss it with the club. He said he believed that Madrid could do well without him as coach.

Zidane's second stint as coach began in March 2019, less than a year after he left for the first time. The team was in crisis after a disastrous season that included losses to rival Barcelona and elimination to Ajax in the round of 16 of the Champions League.

But his second run ended with Madrid enduring its least successful season since 2009-10, which was the last time it didn't win a title.

Madrid fought for the Spanish league title until the final round but finished two points behind city rival Atletico Madrid, failing to defend its title and lift back-to-back league trophies for the first time since 2007-08.

In the Champions League, Zidane led the team to the semifinals, eventually eliminated by Chelsea. In the Copa del Rey, Madrid lost to third-division club Alcoyano in the round of 32.

Zidane had to deal with a series of setbacks in his squad because of injuries. It was without captain Sergio Ramos for nearly the entire second half of the season, and he also couldn't count much on Eden Hazard. Other key players who were not available for extended periods included Dani Carvajal, Lucas Vazquez and Marco Asensio.

Zidane struggled to put together a consistent starting lineup, and he often tried to switch schemes between matches. A move to a 3-5-2 formation worked well in some games but failed miserably in others, giving him little confidence to set up his teams.

## Rashford Suffers Racist Abuse On Social Media After EL Final Loss

Agencies

**GDANSK:** Manchester United forward Marcus Rashford said Thursday he faced "at least 70 racial slurs" on social media after his team's loss on penalties to Villarreal in the Europa League final.

Villarreal won its first major trophy 11-10 on penalties after a 1-1 draw following extra time in Wednesday's final.

"At least 70 racial slurs on my social accounts counted so far," Rashford wrote on Twitter less than 90 minutes after the game finished.

"For those working to make me feel any worse than I already do, good luck trying."

Rashford added he was outraged that he was sent a mountain of monkey emojis in a message from a person using a profile which identified them as a teacher.

In January, police in Britain in-



vestigated abuse on social media aimed at a number of United players. Rashford and two teammates said they had been targeted.

"Yes I'm a black man and I live every day proud that I am, he wrote at the time.

"No one, or no one comment, is going to make me feel any different. So sorry if you were looking for a strong reaction, you're just simply

not going to get it here."

English soccer clubs and players boycotted social media for four days in April and May to protest against racist abuse and push for more action from the companies which run the platforms. Figures from other sports including Formula One champion Lewis Hamilton and the International Tennis Federation also joined the boycott.

## Concerned About Employees in India: Twitter



### Agenceis

With WhatsApp suing the Indian government over the new IT rules for social media platforms, Twitter on Thursday requested the IT Ministry to consider a minimum of three-month extension in order for the company to implement the new intermediary guidelines.

Twitter, which witnessed a police raid on its offices in Delhi and Gurugram early this week related to the alleged Congress toolkit controversy, said that it reaffirms that Twitter continues to accept grievances from users and law enforcement via its existing grievance redressal channel available under the new IT Rules.

Stressing that it will strive to comply with applicable law in India, a Twitter spokesperson said in a statement that right now, "we are concerned by recent events regarding our employees in India and the potential threat to freedom of expression for the people we serve."

"We, alongside many in civil society in India and around the world, have concerns with regards to the use of intimidation tactics by the police in response to enforcement of our global Terms of Service, as well as with core elements of the new IT Rules," Twitter said in its first reaction after the police raids on its offices.

On Monday, Delhi Police visited Twitter India's local offices in the National Capital Region after Twitter had marked one of the tweets of BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra as "manipulated media".

Twitter's presumptive judgement has triggered widespread outrage among Indian users across the country.

The company spokesperson said that it plans to advocate for changes to elements of these regulations that inhibit free, open public conversation.

"We will continue our constructive dialogue with the Indian government and believe it is critical to adopt a collaborative approach. It is the collective responsibility of elected officials, industry, and civil society to safeguard the interests of the public," the spokesperson said.

The new rules notified in the gazette of India on February 25 under the Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code Rules, 2021, came into effect from May 26.

WhatsApp has moved the Delhi High Court against the new IT rules for intermediaries, saying

these would violate privacy.

Electronics and IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad has said the government is committed to the right to privacy, but simultaneously it also has to maintain law and order and ensure national security.

The Union Ministry of Electronics and IT has written to the social media platforms, directing them to respond on their compliance to the new digital rules as soon as possible.

Facebook has said that the company aims to comply with the provisions of the new intermediary guidelines and is working towards it.

Twitter said in its fresh statement that it is particularly concerned about the requirement to make an individual (the compliance officer) criminally liable for content on the platform, the requirements for proactive monitoring, and the blanket authority to seek information about our customers.

"This represents dangerous overreach that is inconsistent with open, democratic principles," the company argued.

"We urge the Ministry of Electronics and IT to publish these Standard Operating Protocols on procedural aspects of compliance for public consultation. We would request the Ministry to consider a minimum of 3 months extension in order for Twitter to implement the Rules".

Twitter was recently served with a non-compliance notice and have withheld a portion of the content identified in the blocking order under its 'Country Withheld Content' policy.

"The content identified was originally reported to us in the blocking orders issued since February 2021. We maintain that the content reported in the original order constitutes protected, legitimate free speech, under Indian and international law, and we have formally communicated this to the government," the company informed.

Twitter said that it has not taken any action on verified accounts that consist of news media entities, journalists, activists and politicians.

"The escalated content constitutes legitimate free speech. Yet, due to the law's limited scope under Section 69A which gives limited room to an intermediary to defend the content, we have been compelled to withhold in response to a non-compliance notice. Not doing so poses penal consequences with many risks for Twitter employees," the company noted.

## Second Covid Wave On "Downswing", Steady Decline In New Cases: Centre



### Agenceis

**NEW DELHI:** A steady decline in new COVID-19 cases has been recorded in India for the last 20 days, with 24 states witnessing a dip in active cases since the last week, the Union health ministry said today.

It also noted that the country is on a downswing of the second wave of COVID-19.

"We are on a downswing of the second wave of COVID-19 and believe that it will be sustained even

when restrictions are significantly relaxed," the ministry said.

"A steady decline in new COVID-19 cases has been recorded in India for the last 20 days. Twenty-four states have also reported decline in active COVID-19 cases since the last week," it said.

The ministry also said that while COVID-19 testing has increased manifold, a steady decline in weekly COVID-19 positivity rate has been seen since the last three weeks.

On possible adverse effects of tak-

ing the second dose of a different Covid vaccine, it said, "If second dose of a different Covid vaccine is taken, any significant adverse effect is unlikely, but we need more scrutiny and understanding in this regard."

The Centre also termed a recent report by the New York Times (NYT) on the estimated COVID-19 death count in India as "completely baseless and false".

"The NYT report is not backed by any evidence and based on distorted estimates," it added.

## Fancy Covid Masks Not Good, Says Plea. Court Seeks Delhi Government Stand

### Agenceis

**NEW DELHI:** A plea claiming sale of sub-standard masks for protection against COVID-19 infection was heard on Thursday by the Delhi High Court. The court sought the Delhi government's stand on whether facial covers were being manufactured and sold according to rules. The plea sought the setting up of a regulatory body for determining the standards for manufacture and sale of masks, used for protection against COVID-19 infection, in the national capital.

It also urged the court to direct the Delhi government to enforce the rules and regulations regarding the manufacture and sale of the masks. The plea, which was listed before a bench of Chief Justice DN Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh, was opposed by Delhi government's standing counsel Santosh K Tripathi. He told the court that the standards for manufacture and sale of masks have already been laid down by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS).

The petitioner, an activist, contended that there was non-compli-



ance of the rules and regulations. After hearing both sides, the court sought the Delhi government's stand on the limited aspect of implementation of the rules, regulations and standards in connection with manufacture and sale of masks.

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The court also asked the petitioner to point out the specific instances where there have been

non-adherence to the regulations and standards. With the direction, the bench listed the matter for hearing on June 4.

The petitioner, Jai Dhar Gupta, has claimed that since the outbreak of COVID-19, wearing fashionable masks matching a person's attire has become a trend. However, most of these masks are single layered and offer negligible protection against COVID-19 infection.

## If Laws Can Be Made Amid Covid, Why Can't They Be Repealed: Farm Leader

### Agenceis

**GHAZIABAD:** If laws can be made amid the Covid pandemic, why cannot they be repealed, BKU leader Rakesh Tikait said on Wednesday, underlining that farmers camping at Delhi border points will leave after the three contentious Central agri laws are withdrawn.

His remark came on a day when farmers protesting against the legislations at the Tikri, Ghazipur and Singhu border points observed "black day" to mark six months of their stir.

"The movement will continue for a long time," the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) leader said while addressing hundreds of protesters at Ghazipur on the Delhi-Uttar Pradesh border.

The call to observe "black day" was given by the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM), an umbrella organisation of protesting farmer unions, which is spearheading the stir against the laws that were enacted in September last year.

Hundreds of farmers, mainly from Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, are encamped at the three Delhi border points since November last year. Besides demanding that the legislations be repealed, they have also sought a new law guaranteeing minimum support price (MSP) for crops.

The protestors claim that the laws will hurt their livelihoods and leave them at the mercy of corporations. However, the government, which has officially held multiple rounds of dialogues with the protestors, has maintained that the laws are pro-farmer.



at the UP Gate on the Delhi-Meerut Expressway as part of the "black day" demonstrations and burnt an effigy symbolising the Centre, amid heavy police deployment. This led to a brief scuffle between the two sides in which the BKU claimed one farmer got "a little burnt" when security officials tried to "snatch away" the effigy.

"The movement will continue for a long time. If laws can be made during the Covid pandemic, then why cannot they be repealed during the pandemic," Tikait, the BKU national spokesperson, said.

"The government has been trying to crush the movement and will do so in the future also. But the farmer is not going to leave Delhi borders. The farmer can return home only on the same condition -- repeal all three new laws and make a new law guaranteeing MSP for crops," he was quoted as saying in a BKU statement.

The influential farmer leader from western Uttar Pradesh also said that he does not know what

will be the fate of the movement but knows for sure that "if the movement fails, then the government will do as it pleases".

"If the movement is successful, the future generations of farmers will get its benefit," remarked Tikait, who is credited with reviving the protests after it lost its sheen post the January 26 violence in Delhi.

During his address to supporters, Tikait, sporting a black turban, also hit out at the government over the handling of the Covid pandemic, citing black marketing of resources and shortage of health care facilities for the public hit by the deadly virus.

"There was an attempt to loot the country in the name of the illness," he alleged.

He reiterated that the BKU will "not allow business over hunger in the country".

For this, Tikait called on the supporters to continue their protest peacefully and with patience.

He also cautioned them to "guard the movement" the way crops are guarded.

## Soon, Your Vehicle May Pass Without Paying Toll If Queue Longer Than 100 Metres



### Agenceis

**NEW DELHI:** Soon, yellow lines at toll plazas will ensure that the waiting queue of vehicles is not more than 100 metres at any given point of time and if the queue is beyond the stipulated distance, then vehicles at the front can pass without paying the toll.

These guidelines have been issued by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) as it seeks to minimise waiting time at toll plazas and ensure service time of not more than 10 seconds per vehicle even during peak hours.

Noting that although at most of the toll plazas, there is no waiting time after the mandatory 100 per cent FASTag, the highway authority said, "even then if there is a queue of waiting vehicles of more than 100 metres due to some reason, the vehicles will be allowed to pass without paying toll till the queue comes within 100 metres from the toll booth".

For this purpose, a yellow line at a distance of 100 metres from the toll booth will be marked in each toll lane, the highway authority said, adding that this is to inculcate a further sense of accountability in toll plaza operators.

The highway authority said these guidelines are aimed at ensuring "minimal waiting time at the toll plazas".

According to the highway authority, since it has successfully transitioned to 100 per cent cashless tolling from mid of February 2021, the overall FASTag penetration in NHAI toll plazas has reached 96 per cent and many of them have 99 per cent penetration.

"Keeping in view the growing Electronic Toll Collection (ETC) penetration in the country, it has been emphasised to have a new design and construct the upcoming toll plazas as per traffic projections for the next 10 years to have an efficient toll collection system," it said.

## Rahul Gandhi Urges PM To Withdraw Policies Of Lakshadweep

### Agenceis

**NEW DELHI:** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi urging him to ensure that the "anti-people policies" announced by Lakshadweep administrator Praful Khoda Patel are withdrawn.

Patel, who was appointed as the Administrator of Lakshadweep in December 2020, is facing opposition over policies introduced by him from the people of the union territory and politicians, both from within Lakshadweep and the neighbouring state of Kerala.

In the letter to the Prime Minister, Gandhi said the administrator has unilaterally proposed sweeping changes without duly consulting elected representatives or the public, and the people are protesting against the arbitrary actions.

"Lakshadweep's pristine natural beauty and its unique confluence of cultures have drawn people for generations. The custodians of its heritage seek to safeguard the archipelago for posterity. However, their future is threatened by the anti-people policies announced by the administrator of Lakshadweep Praful Khoda Patel. The administrator has unilaterally proposed sweeping changes without duly consulting elected representatives or the public. The people of Lakshadweep are protesting against these arbitrary actions," he said.

The Congress leader said Patel's attempt to undermine the ecological sanctity of the island is evident in the draft Lakshadweep Development Authority Regulation issued recently.

"The provisions undermine safeguards pertaining to land ownership, dilute environmental regulations for certain activities and severely limit legal recourse available to affected persons. Livelihood security and sustainable development are being sacrificed for short-term commercial gains," he noted.

Gandhi further said that the provision in the draft Panchayat Regulation that disqualifies members with more than two children is blatantly anti-democratic, and said the proposed changes to regulations by Patel like Prevention of Anti-Social Activities Regulation, the Lakshadweep Animals Preservation Regulation and lifting of restrictions on the sale of alcohol are a "deliberate assault on the cultural and religious fabric of the local community".

"The attempt to cut ties with Beypore port strikes at the close historical and cultural ties with Kerala," he said and added that despite the pandemic, the administration demolished structures used by the fisherfolk, fired contractual workers in various government departments, and relaxed quarantine norms that led to a lethal spike in Covid cases.

"Under the guise of development and maintaining law and order in a low crime union territory, the draconian regulations penalise dissent and undermine grassroots democracy," Gandhi said.

"I request you to intervene in this matter and ensure that the above-mentioned orders are withdrawn. The people of Lakshadweep deserve a developmental vision that respects their way of life and reflects their aspirations," he added. (ANI)

## Los Angeles Mayor Is Joe Biden's Choice For India Envoy: Reports

### Agenceis

**WASHINGTON:** President Joe Biden is expected to nominate Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, a trusted political ally, as America's next ambassador to India, according to media reports.

Biden is expected to announce the names of political ambassadors, including for India, as soon as next week, according to a report in Axios. President Biden, a Democrat, is also expected to announce Nicholas Burns as the ambassador to China and Rahm Emanuel and Tom Nides as ambassadors to Japan and Israel respectively, the report in the American news website said on Wednesday.

Garcetti, 50, who served as the co-chair of Biden's presidential campaign, was initially considered for the Cabinet. Garcetti is the 42nd Mayor of Los Angeles, the second-largest city in the United States, after New York City. The important position of US envoy to India has been lying vacant since January 20.

In the absence of a full-time ambassador, Daniel Smith, the director of the Foreign Service Institute, who recently served as acting Secretary of State and Acting Deputy Secretary of



State, has been sent to New Delhi to serve as Charge d'Affaires, ad interim.

However, the White House declined to comment on the nomination of Burns or Garcetti, saying "no one is final until they're announced," an AP news report said.

According to the Axios report, the White House is still finishing the vetting process for potential ambassadors, including Garcetti, following which, Biden is expected to formally send more than a dozen names to the Senate to begin the confirmation process for his first batch of political ambassadors, which also include appointments for France, Italy and Canada.

The president began reviewing names of potential ambassadors in March, and officials are putting a premium on diversity in assembling the first batch that he'll send to the Senate, the report said.

## Facebook To No Longer Remove Claims That COVID-19 Was Lab Made

Facebook will no longer remove claims posted on its platforms that Covid-19 is either man-made or lab manufactured, as US President Joe Biden has called upon intelligence agencies to probe the so-called "lab-leak hypothesis".

The social network had earlier banned such claims as part of its Covid-19 misinformation policy. A Facebook spokesperson said on Wednesday that the origin language had been removed from that policy, due to the renewed debate about the virus' origin.

"In light of ongoing investigations into the origin of Covid-19 and in consultation with public health experts, we will no longer remove the claim that Covid-19 is man-made from our apps," the spokesperson told Politico.

"asked the Intelligence Community to redouble their efforts to collect and analyze information that could bring us closer to a definitive conclusion, and to report back to me in 90 days".

"As part of that report, I have asked for areas of further inquiry that may be required, including specific questions for China. I have also asked that this effort include work by our National Labs and other agencies of our government to augment the Intelligence Community's efforts," the US President added.

The intelligence community believes that two scenarios are possible: The virus started spreading when a human contacted an infected animal, or that the spread was the result of a lab accident.



"We're continuing to work with health experts to keep pace with the evolving nature of the pandemic and regularly update our policies as new facts and trends emerge," the spokesperson added. Biden said in a statement that on Covid-19 origin, he has now

The US, Biden said, will also keep working with like-minded partners around the world to press China to participate in a full, transparent, evidence-based international investigation and to provide access to all relevant data and evidence.