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P3 CITY

CITY SUICIDE SHOCK: MAN JUMPS INTO JHELM, WOMAN STOPPED

Much to the shock of the pedestrians, a youth after alighting from a cycle, jumped into the river Jehlum at Cement Bridge here in Qamarwari area of Srinagar city. Eyewitnesses said that a youth

P6 THINK

GERMAN REPORT RAISES THE SPECTRE OF POLITICAL ISLAMISM

In the backdrop of the increasing Islamophobia across the world, Germany's leading political party seems to have taken a right step towards analysing the problem and its offshoots. The ruling Christian



P5 STATE

LANDMARK INITIATIVES TAKEN TO TACKLE PANDEMIC: ADV KHAN

Advisor to Lieutenant Governor Baseer Khan Monday visited Sumbal Sub-Division in Bandipora district to take stock of covid mitigation efforts....



Markets Reopen In J&K As Unlock Process Begins



Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: After a month-long lockdown imposed due to a surge in COVID-19 cases, markets

reopened in Jammu and Kashmir on Monday as the process of partial unlock started in the Union Territory, officials said. According to new

guidelines imposed by authorities on Sunday, shops have been allowed to open on alternate days. The public transport was allowed to

J&K Sees 1525 New Cases, 37 Corona Deaths

Continuing to show a considerable decline in the last few days, Jammu and Kashmir reported on Monday 1525 new coronavirus cases while 37 more people succumbed to the

Vaccine Deadline Set For Secretariat Employees

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Monday directed Administrative Secretaries to ensure all the employees working in the civil secretariat are vaccinated by June 10. In an order issued by General

Train Service Suspended Till June 9

The authorities on Monday extended the suspension of train services between Baramulla and Banihal section till June 09 in view of the Covid-19 situation. In an order, the

LG Calls For An End To Adhocism 'We Have Transformed Healthcare Infrastructure In The Last 10 Months'



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Calling for an end to adhocism, the Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Monday asked officers to determine the need and action required for the welfare of common man. Chairing a high-level meeting with Administrative Secretaries of the Union Territory at the Civil Secretariat here on Saturday, Sinha urged the officials

to improve the speed and quality of decision-making without fear and favour, an official spokesperson said. Sinha, he said, stressed that every department of administration must be responsive and accountable for citizen-centric governance. "Administrative Secretaries must interact with the public on a daily basis and redress their grievances with empathy. Officers should put an end to adhocism, determine the

THE OFFICERS HAVE DONE A GREAT JOB in handling the pandemic and simultaneously pushing the developmental work. Moving forward, scheduling due dates and deliverables is compulsory for every project."

More On P10

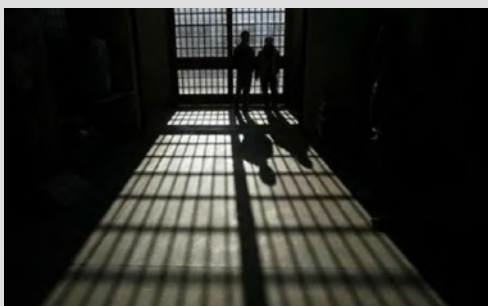
Admin Puts Ball In People's Court

A day after administration announced to ease coronavirus induced lockdown in Kashmir valley, the divisional administration on Monday asked people to maintain Covid appropriate behaviour and get vaccinated in order to avoid lockdown again. Telling the unlocking as a tough decision taken for people, the Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Pandurang K Pole said Monday that the people must cooperate, maintain appropriate Covid behaviour religiously to contain spread of virus. According to an official spokesperson Pole made these remarks while chairing a meeting attended by Deputy Commissioners of Srinagar, Anantnag, Baramulla and Budgam, Commissioner SMC, Director Health Services Kashmir, Director Tourism, Director SWD, JD Information, CMOs and other senior officers from the

HC Quashes 9th Class Student's PSA Order

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir High Court on Monday quashed detention orders under Public Safety Act against two persons and ordered their release from preventive custody "forthwith". "As per the dossier supplied by the police, the detenu-petitioner is 9th standard student after passing the exam and was shopkeeper by profession," a bench of Justice Ali Mohammad Magrey said while quashing the detention order of Rameez



Ahmad Malla son of Abdul Majeed Malla of Wattergam Rafiabab. He was booked under PSA on 14 February last year by District Magistrate, Baramulla. As per police, in May 2019 Rameez had developed contacts with

one foreign militant alias Maz Bahi of Hizbul Majahideen and started providing all sorts of assistance to the him including food and shelter in other houses of area. "(He) got motivated by militant to work as OGW

IAF Fights Forest Blaze In Udhampur

Press Trust Of India

UDHAMPUR: The Indian Air Force (IAF) on Monday joined a fire fighting operation to control a massive forest fire in Ghordi block in Udhampur district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said. The fire in Daya Dhar forest started on Sunday and engulfed a vast area, damaging hundreds of trees, the officials said. The forest protection

force, along with fire department and emergency services personnel, police and civilian volunteers from nearby villages are making efforts to put off the blaze in the forest, home to various species of the wild animals and birds. The IAF deployed its choppers with a bucket carrying thousands of litres of water early Monday morning to help douse the fire, responding

Two IEDs Recovered In South Kashmir: Police

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Police on Monday claimed to have averted major tragedies by detecting two improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in Pulwama district of south Kashmir.

Police and army's 55RR and the personnel of CRPF 185 battalion on a specific information carried out a search operation and recovered an IED planted by militants alongside a link road leading from Railway-Dogripura to village



Dr. Tariq Trambo
MD Critical Care

Gradual opening of businesses may not lead to rise in Covid cases despite of our concern. Cars on road don't spread virus. Assembling in closed spaces like offices & marriage parties will surely do. Eating together in closed spaces is indeed a super spreader event. Ban parties.

Don't kill yourselves for the sake of Gushtaba



Dr. Muzaffar Maqbool
Researcher and Associate Professor, Internal Medicine, GMC

Boulevard thronged by hundreds of people with nearly 80% of people without masks to turn Srinagar back from orange to red. My concern is that 100% ICU beds still occupied with patients panting for breath, struggling to stay alive wishing to go back to their devastated families.



Dr. Parul M Sharma
Eye Surgeon

For people asking why steep surge & now decline? My thought: Surge coz strain was super contagious & people were freely moving. Fast drop coz people saw the mayhem, stayed back home n got infected only if someone in close proximity was positive. Rest got saved. What do u think? 1/ People become complacent again, start moving freely, go easy on mask... virus mutates, another strain... Boom, back to square one. PROPER Mask and NO Public Gathering should be made compulsory across India, otherwise we will be in a loop & this time health workers will simply collapse



Dr. Parvaiz Koul
Internist/ Pulmonologist/ Researcher

One important fact about all vaccines is proper preservation. Millions are being spent by public health authorities on it. Ensure that vaccines administered to you/ your kids are preserved by proper cold chain maintenance and not pilfered out. Else you won't get what you wanted. I am privy to the fact that uninterrupted electricity bills of cold chain points in the public sector run into millions. This is extremely important. Proper electricity, vaccine carriers, etc... please ensure that you are getting a vaccine not just ineffective watery fluid.

Haji 2021: Tour Operators Fear Rs 30 Crore Losses, 2500 Lay-Offs

Zaid Bin Shabir

SRINAGAR: The tour operators offering Hajji and Umrah services to pilgrims in Kashmir are staring at an estimated loss of Rs 30 crore besides over two thousand lay-offs as coronavirus pandemic continues to cast shadow over the conduct of annual holy pilgrimage to Mecca for the second consecutive year.

"Usually these one or two months before the Hajji pilgrimage, our companies used to make enough money to last for a year. But since 2020, we have earned



nothing." Umer Nazir, the CEO of Labaika Hajji and Umrah Services told Kashmir Observer on Monday.

"If things continue the

same way, many staffers would be laid-off," he added. As soon as the Hajji Committee of India informed the private Hajji and

Umrah companies to prepare for this year's Hajji pilgrimage, many faces flared-up with exhilaration but that too added to their woes.

"In Kashmir, around 8000 pilgrims have registered themselves for this year's pilgrimage, but unfortunately none of them are registered through private agencies. Undoubtedly, this year too our business/s is going to suffer losses," Nazir said.

J&K Association of Hajji and Umrah Companies (JKAHUC), an association representing around 200 major Hajji & Umrah

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KASHMIR
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Tuesday| 01-06-2021

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR
J&K SERVICES SELECTION BOARD

Hema Complex, Sector -3, Channi Himmat, Jammu

www.jkssb.nic.in

Subject: - Tentative Calendar of CBT/Skill Test / Written Examinations scheduled to be held by J&K Services Selection Board for posts of various Department advertised vide Advertisement Notification Nos 04, 05, 06, 07 of 2020 and 01 and 02 of 2021.

NOTIFICATION

A tentative calendar was notified vide no SSB/Secy/Sel/2021/2019-227 dated 10-01-2021 for the information of all concerned. However, due to sudden surge of COVID-9 cases in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, all the scheduled examination were to be postponed Accordingly, the aforementioned tentative calendar may be treated as WITHDRAWN.

Further it is hereby notified for the information of candidates that tentative schedule of CBT/Skill Test / Written Examinations to be held by J&K Services Selection Board for posts of various Department advertised vide Advertisement Notification Nos 04, 05, 06, 07 of 2020 and 01 and 02 of 2021 shall be held as per the tentative Calendar given in Annexure "A" to this notification.

The Calendar of examination is tentative and subject to the guidelines of the UT Government which shall be in vogue at the relevant point of time or any other instruction that may be issued relating to COVID-19 pandemic.

The Board shall review the situation with regard to conduct of examination and finalisation of dates in due course, keeping in view the relevant guidelines.

By Order.

Secretary,
J&K Services Selection Board
Jammu

No. SSB/Secy/Exams/2021/4004-12

Dated: 28/05/2021

Annexure "A"

Dated: 28/05/2021

Tentative Calendar to Notification No SSB/Secy/Exams/2021/4004-12
Tentative Calendar of CBT/Skill Test / Written Examinations scheduled to be held by J&K Services Selection Board for posts of various Department advertised vide Advertisement Notification Nos 04, 05, 06, 07 of 2020 and 01 and 02 of 2021

S.No	Advt No	Department	Name of the post	Cadre of the post	Total posts	Tentative Date of Skill Test/ CBT/ OMR Examination
1	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Junior Staff Nurse/Junior Grade Nurse	Div.Jammu	350	15th July onwards till 31st August 2021
2	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Junior Staff Nurse/Junior Grade Nurse	Div.Kashmir	146	
3	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Tutor/Clinical Instructor / Public Health Tutor	Div.Kashmir	6	
4	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Junior Grade Nurse	Kathua	1	
5	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Junior Grade Nurse	Ganderbal	1	
6	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.Nurse	Jammu	24	
7	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.Nurse	Kathua	4	
8	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.Nurse	Udhampur	9	
9	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.Nurse	Reasi	7	
10	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.Nurse	Doda	3	
11	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.Nurse	Kishtwar	1	
12	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.Nurse	Ramban	11	
13	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.Nurse	Samba	5	
14	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.Nurse	Rajouri	2	
15	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.Nurse	Poonch	2	
16	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr. Nurse	Ganderbal	7	
17	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Junior Staff Nurse	Div.Jammu	3	
18	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Speech Therapist	Div.Kashmir	1	15th July onwards till 31st August 2021
19	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Junior Laboratory Technician	Div.Kashmir	1	15th July onwards till 31st August 2021
20	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Laboratory Technologist	Div.Kashmir	2	
21	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Laboratory Technician	Div.Jammu	10	
22	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Laboratory Technician	Div.Kashmir	1	
23	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Laboratory Assistant	Div.Kashmir	14	
24	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Injector	Div.Jammu	2	
25	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr. Lab Assistant	Ganderbal	4	
26	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr. Lab Assistant	Pulwama	1	
27	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr. Lab Assistant	Kulgam	3	
28	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr. Lab Assistant	Shopian	2	
29	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr. Lab Assistant	Baramulla	7	
30	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr. Lab Assistant	Bandipora	1	
31	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Senior Laboratory Assistant	Div.Jammu	10	
32	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr. Lab Assistant	Budgam	6	15th July onwards till 31st August 2021
33	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.Lab Tech.	Udhampur	2	
34	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.Lab Tech.	Ramban	2	
35	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.Lab Tech.	Jammu	3	
36	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Receptionist	Div.Jammu	3	
37	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Receptionist	Div.Kashmir	2	15th July onwards till 31st August 2021
38	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr. Theatre Assistants	Ganderbal	2	
39	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.Theatre Technician/OT Tech.	Jammu	3	
40	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.Theatre Technician/OT Tech.	Udhampur	3	
41	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.Theatre Technician/OT Tech.	Reasi	2	
42	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.Theatre Technician/OT Tech.	Ramban	2	15th July onwards till 31st August 2021
43	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.Theatre Technician/OT Tech.	Samba	1	
44	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Junior Theatre Assistant	Div.Jammu	5	
45	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Junior Theatre Assistant	Div.Kashmir	43	
46	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Junior Pharmacist/Medical Assistant	Div.Jammu	32	
47	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Junior Pharmacist /Medical Assistant	Div.Kashmir	30	15th July onwards till 31st August 2021
48	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	C.S.S.D. Assistant	Div.Kashmir	1	
49	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Theatre Assistant	Udhampur	1	
50	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Theatre Assistant	Ganderbal	1	
51	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Theatre Assistant	Baramulla	2	
52	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.Pharmacist	Jammu	11	
53	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.Pharmacist	Kathua	2	
54	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.Pharmacist	Udhampur	1	
55	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.Pharmacist	Reasi	1	
56	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.Pharmacist	Doda	1	
57	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.Pharmacist	Rajouri	2	
58	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.Pharmacist	Poonch	1	
59	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Anaesthesia Asstt.	Div.Jammu	1	15th July onwards till 31st August 2021
60	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	FMPHW/ANM	Div.Jammu	8	
61	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	ANM / Dai	Div.Kashmir	19	
62	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Basic Health Worker	Div.Kashmir	1	
63	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Female MPH/W	Jammu	8	
64	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Female MPH/W	Samba	1	
65	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Female MPH/W	Kathua	5	
66	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Female MPH/W	Udhampur	2	
67	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Female MPH/W	Ramban	1	
68	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Female MPH/W	Poonch	8	
69	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Female MPH/W	Srinagar	15	
70	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Female MPH/W	Ganderbal	2	
71	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Female MPH/W	Pulwama	9	
72	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Female MPH/W	Anantnag	4	15th July onwards till 31st August 2021
73	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Female MPH/W	Kulgam	10	
74	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Female MPH/W	Kupwara	6	
75	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Female MPH/W	Shopian	2	
76	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Female MPH/W	Budgam	9	
77	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Female MPH/W	Baramulla	5	
78	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	MMPHW	Jammu	2	
79	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	FMPHW	Jammu	5	
80	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	FMPHW	Reasi	4	
81	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	MMPHW	Reasi	3	
82	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	FMPHW	Samba	1	
83	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Junior Physiotherapist	Div.Jammu	3	15th July onwards till 31st August 2021
84	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Carpenter	Div.Jammu	3	15th July onwards till 31st August 2021
85	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Tailor	Div.Jammu	2	
86	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Liftman/Lift operator	Div.Jammu	4	
87	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Junior Plumber	Div.Jammu	5	
88	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Junior Electrician	Div.Jammu	10	
89	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Gas Pipe Line operator	Div.Jammu	5	
90	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Carpenter	Div.Kashmir	3	
91	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Xerox Assistant	Div.Kashmir	1	
92	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Tailor	Div.Kashmir	1	
93	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Lift man	Div.Kashmir	1	
94	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Junior Plumber	Div.Kashmir	3	
95	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Junior Electrician	Div.Kashmir	2	
96	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Gas Pipe Line Operator	Div.Kashmir	2	
97	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Welder/Filter	Div.Kashmir	1	15th July onwards till 31st August 2021
98	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Tin Smithy	Div.Kashmir	1	
99	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Mistry	Div.Kashmir	1	
100	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Junior Mechanic Technician	Div.Kashmir	1	
101	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Helper to Central Heating Operator	Div.Jammu	2	
102	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Junior Mechanic	Div.Jammu	2	
103	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Fitter	Div.Jammu	1	
104	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Projectionist	Jammu	1	
105	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Projectionist	Poonch	1	
106	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Telephone operator	Div.Jammu	1	
107	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Electrician	Jammu	2	

108	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Electrician	Kathua	3	15th July onwards till 31st August 2021	
109	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Electrician	Reasi	1		
110	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Electrician	Samba	1		
111	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Junior Store Keeper	Div.Jammu	10		
112	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Extension Educator	Div.Jammu	5		
113	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Extension Educator	Div.Kashmir	4	15th July onwards till 31st August 2021	
114	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Health Educator	Div.Kashmir	10		
115	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Telephone Operator	Div.Jammu	1		
116	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	E.C.G Technician	Div.Jammu	10		
117	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr. X-Ray Technician	Ganderbal	2		
118	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.X-Ray Tech.	Jammu	2	15th July onwards till 31st August 2021	
119	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.X-Ray Tech.	Udhampur	2		
120	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.X-Ray Tech.	Reasi	1		
121	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.X-Ray Tech.	Ramban	2		
122	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	X-Ray Assistant	Div.Jammu	1		
123	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Dark Room Assistant	Div.Kashmir	3		
124	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	X-Ray Assistant	Div.Jammu	21		
125	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	X-Ray Assistant	Div.Kashmir	14		
126	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	X- Ray Technician/Radiology Technologist/Junior Radiology Technician/Radiology Technician/CT Scan Technician	Div.Jammu	7		
127	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Artist	Div.Jammu	1		15th July onwards till 31st August 2021
128	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Artist	Div.Kashmir	2		
129	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.Dental Tech.	Jammu	4	15th July onwards till 31st August 2021	
130	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.Dental Tech.	Udhampur	1		
131	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.Dental Tech.	Reasi	1		
132	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.Dental Tech.	Doda	1		
133	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.Dental Tech.	Ramban	1		
134	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.Dental Tech.	Samba	3		
135	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.Dental Tech.	Rajouri	1		
136	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.Dental Tech.	Poonch	1	15th July onwards till 31st August 2021	
137	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.Opth.Tech.	Jammu	4		
138	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.Opth.Tech.	Kathua	1		
139	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.Opth.Tech.	Doda	1		
140	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.Opth.Tech.	Kishtwar	1		
141	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.Opth.Tech.	Samba	3		
142	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Jr.Opth.Tech.	Rajouri	1		
143	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Junior Occupational Therapist	Div.Jammu	4		15th July onwards till 31st August 2021
144	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Junior Occupational Therapist	Div.Kashmir	3		
145	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Anaesthesia Assistant / Anaesthesia Technician	Div.Kashmir	36	15th July onwards till 31st August 2021	
146	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Social Worker/Medical Social Worker	Div.Kashmir	8	15th July onwards till 31st August 2021	
147	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Library Asstt	Div.Jammu	1	15th July onwards till 31st August 2021	
148	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Junior Health Inspector.(Computer)	Jammu	3	15th July onwards till 31st August 2021	
149	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Junior Health Inspector.(Computer)	Reasi	1		
150	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Junior Health Inspector.(Computer)	Rajouri	1		
151	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Junior Health Inspector.(Computer)	Anantnag	2		
152	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Junior Health Inspector.(Computer)	Kulgam	1		
153	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Junior Health Inspector.(Computer)	Kupwara	1		
154	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Junior Health Inspector.(Computer)	Baramulla	1		
155	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Dhobi	Jammu	3		
156	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Dhobi	Kathua	2		
157	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Dhobi	Udhampur	2		
158	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Dhobi	Doda	3	3rd, 4th week of August, 2021	
159	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Dhobi	Kishtwar	1		
160	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Dhobi	Ramban	1		
161	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Dhobi	Samba	1		
162	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Dhobi	Rajouri	2		
163	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Dhobi	Poonch	1		
164	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Dhobi	Div.Kashmir	2		
165	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Barber	Div.Jammu	2		
166	05 of 2020	Public Works(R&B) Department	Junior Engineer(Civil)	UT	144		3rd, 4th week of August, 2021
167	01 of 2021	Jal Shakti	Junior Engineer (Civil)	UT	65		
168	05 of 2020	Public Works(R&B) Department	Junior Engineer(Mechanical)	UT	30	3rd, 4th week of August, 2021	
169	05 of 2020	Public Works(R&B) Department	Foreman Grade I (Mechanical)	Div.Jammu	2		
170	07 of 2020	Agriculture Production & Farmer's Welfare	Foreman/Senior Mechanic	Div.Kashmir	1		
171	07 of 2020	Agriculture Production & Farmer's	Foreman/Technician	Div.Kashmir	1		
		Welfare				3rd, 4th week of August, 2021	
172	01 of 2021	Jal Shakti	Driller	Kathua	1		
173	01 of 2021	Jal Shakti	Driller	Udhampur	1		
174	01 of 2021	Jal Shakti	Draftsman (Civil)	Div.Kashmir	72		
175	01 of 2021	Jal Shakti	Draftsman(Civil)	Div. Jammu	50		
176	05 of 2020	Public Works(R&B) Department	Draftsman(Civil)	UT	34		
177	04 of 2020	Culture	Junior Librarian	Div.Kashmir	24		
178	04 of 2020	Culture	Junior Librarian	Div.Jammu	24		
179	04 of 2020	Culture	Librarian	Div.Kashmir	4		
180	07 of 2020	Skill Development	Librarian	Div. Jammu	2		
181	04 of 2020	Culture	Cataloguer	UT	1	3rd, 4th week of August, 2021	
182	04 of 2020	Culture	Librarian	Div.Jammu	1		
183	01 of 2021	Horticulture	Librarian	Div. Kashmir	1		
184	01 of 2021	Information	Photo Librarian	Div. Jammu	1		
185	05 of 2020	Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs	Librarian	UT	1		
186	07 of 2020	Skill Development	Assistant Librarian	Div Kashmir	1	3rd, 4th week of August, 2021	
187	07 of 2020	Skill Development	Librarian	Div Kashmir	1		
188	06 of 2020	Higher Education	Library Assistant	Div.Kashmir	27		
189	06 of 2020	Higher Education	Library Assistant	Div.Jammu	15		
190	04 of 2020	Culture	Library Assistant	Div.Kashmir	1		
191	04 of 2020	Finance	Library Assistant	UT	1		
192	07 of 2020	Skill Development	Library Assistant	Div Kashmir	1		
193	07 of 2020	Skill Development	Library Assistant	Div Jammu	1		
194	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Library Assistant	Div.Jammu	3		
195	02 of 2021	Health & Medical Education	Library Assistant	Div.Kashmir	1		
196	01 of 2021	Jal Shakti	Junior Assistant	Div. Jammu	100	1st, 2nd week of September, 2021	
197	05 of 2020	Public Works(R&B) Department	Junior Assistant	Div.Kashmir	89		
198	05 of 2020	Public Works(R&B) Department	Junior Assistant	Div.Jammu	63		
199	01 of 2021	Jal Shakti	Junior Assistant	Div. Kashmir	60		
200	01 of 2021	Jal Shakti	Junior Assistant	Div.Kashmir	54		
201	01 of 2021	Jal Shakti	Junior Assistant	Div.Jammu	51		
202	02 of 2021	General Administration Deptt.	Junior Assistant	UT	35		
203	02 of 2021	Revenue	Jr.Assistant	Baramulla	31		
204	06 of 2020	Higher Education	Junior Assistant	Div.Kashmir	28		
205	06 of 2020	Higher Education	Junior Assistant	Div.Jammu	27		
206	01 of 2021	Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs	Junior Assistant	UT	26	1st, 2nd week of September, 2021	
207	04 of 2020	Finance	Junior Assistant	Div.Jammu	25		
208	02 of 2021	Revenue	Jr.Assistant	Doda	25		
209	02 of 2021	Revenue	Jr.Assistant	Udhampur	25		
210	02 of 2021	Revenue	Jr.Assistant	Kishtwar	24		
211	02 of 2021	Revenue	Jr.Assistant	Anantnag	23		
212	02 of 2021	Revenue	Jr.Assistant	Ramban	21		



A SHOPKEEPER CLEANS HIS SHOP as markers opened partially across Kashmir on Monday after a month-long lockdown. KO Phot Abid Bhat

CITY SUICIDE SHOCK

Man Jumps Into Jhelum, Woman Stopped

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Much to the shock of the pedestrians, a youth after alighting from a cycle, jumped into the river Jhelum at Cement Bridge here in Qamarwari area of Srinagar city. Eyewitnesses said that a youth was riding on a cycle when he suddenly stopped on the Cement Bridge, alighted from it and jumped into the river.

People gathered on the bridge shortly after the incident. Police rushed to spot while some locals unsuccessfully tried to retrieve the body. A police official said they are trying to identify him from the



cycle he has left behind till body is fished out from the river.

Meanwhile, police foiled a suicide bid on Budshah Bridge in Srinagar Monday afternoon. The woman whose identity has been concealed is a resident of Budshah Nagar Natipora. She appeared on the Budshah Bridge and tried to

jump into the river Jhelum. "However, the alert policemen on the spot stopped her and bundled her into a police vehicle," eyewitnesses said.

A police official said that the lady has been pacified and is being counselled while reasons behind taking the extreme step are being investigated.

On Saturday, Shoaib Bashir, son of an ReT teacher Bashir Ahmad Mir, a resident of Avil-Noorabad in DH Pora area of Kulgam district committed suicide. Before committing suicide, Shoaib had recorded a video blaming the withholding of his father's salary by the government for his desperate situation.

Unlock...

‘Neglecting Covid SOPs Means Incurring Heavier Losses’

DC Sgr For Strict Adherence To Covid SOPs

SRINAGAR: Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Mohammed Aijaz Asad has called for strict adherence to the Covid-19 SOPs despite declaring Srinagar as Orange Zone to contain the spread of Covid-19 infection in the district.

The Deputy Commissioner said this in a media briefing here on Monday.

He said the district Administration is working very hard in fighting Covid-19 pandemic and people of the district have extended



their cooperation due to which visible decline has been witnessed during the past few days.

The DC said ease in restrictions from Monday does not mean to violate Covid-19 SOPs but we have to follow Covid Appropriate Behaviour with more responsibility to make entry into the Green Zone. He said

it is a minimal Unlock and as many as 96 Containment Zones shall continue to be under Corona Lockdown in Srinagar.

The DC said any laxness on Covid SOPs means incurring heavier losses.

The DC urged the left out population of Srinagar to get vaccinated as soon as possible to break the chain of corona virus.

With regard to opening of markets, the DC said with decline in covid positivity rate guidelines have been issued as per the directions of the State Executive Council and people particularly all business establishments/operators must follow the same to contain the spread of Covid-19 infection.

GHSS Gund Hassi Bhat Celebrates ‘World No Tobacco Day’

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Government higher Secondary School Gund Hassi Bhat, on Monday organised a programme to celebrate the “World No Tobacco Day”.

“The school organised an online awareness programme on the theme ‘COMMIT TO QUIT’ in which all the staff members of the institution participated along with a number of students,” a school statement said.



Director School Education Kashmir Dr Tassaduq Hussain Mir, and other senior officials of the directorate were present on the occasion.

Dr. Dilshada Tabassum, Dr. Sheezan Rasool and Dr. Jahan-gir Khan spoke about the impact of tobacco on the human respiratory system.

Dr Suraiya Ameen Basu, Vice Principal of the institution presented the keynote address.

Principal of the school Shabir Ahmad presented the vote of thanks.

NC Rues Unavailability Of Basic Civic Amenities In Batamaloo

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir National Conference on Monday asserted that sloppy disposition of divisional administration has left people yearning for basic facilities saying that administration has miserably failed to ensure basic facilities to people.

Party central Secretary and Former MLA Batamaloo Irfan Shah while making stopovers at various places in Batamaloo constituency interacted with the people, who apprised him about various issues concerning them. Shah, who toured Mujgund, Batamaloo, Qamarwari localities was appraised by the local residents about the slack attitude of the incumbent administration in mitigating their problems particularly crumbling road surfaces and on availability of water and electricity.

“There is no accountability on ground; the fate of the vital projects which were initiated during the NC led government has been put into a limbo. The incumbent administration, unaware of the development needs of the city has let people fend for themselves. People particularly those at the base of the socio-economic pyramid are at the receiving end

due to Covid induced problems. What is compounding the issues is the absence of any inclusive Covid sustenance relief to affected. Batamaloo constituency, despite housing all vital government installations and being a business hub, has unfortunately been left untended all these years.”

He said the district administration and concerned agencies have miserably failed to upkeep the community halls, parks and other vital infrastructure of public importance in the area. Shortage of ration, and other essentials is severely being felt across in urban, semi urban and rural areas.

“The lanes, bylanes are dotted with potholes and the black topping on almost all interior routes has worn out, making it unfit for smooth public commute. Wherever I went, I was appraised by people that nobody from administration is taking first hand appraisal of their developmental concerns,” Shah said.

He requested the administration to ensure all effective civic amenities to people in Batamaloo, Mujugund, Qamarwari areas. He also impressed upon the administration to augment road infrastructure in the constituency.

Commit To Quit: NIT Srinagar Observes World No Tobacco Day



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar on Monday observed World No Tobacco Day and during the event both faculty and staff members took a pledge not to consume tobacco and its products and encourage others for the same.

Addressing the virtual ceremony, Director NIT Srinagar, Prof. Dr. Rakesh Sehgal said smoking harms almost every part of the body and increases risk of many diseases and infections.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has designated 31 May as 'World No Tobacco Day' and this year's theme was 'Commit to Quit', which assumes significant importance in the present times of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Our youth should stay away from consuming or using tobacco products and discourage others as well. It exposes the human body to various infections and each year thousands of people lose their lives, he said.

Prof. Sehgal said there is a need to raise awareness among the people at a larger level to protect their lives. We have to conduct special counselling sessions for such youth in our localities who are consuming tobacco and its other various products.

“We have to play a vital role

in our society to help people in getting rid from this menace and have to start this campaign from our families, friends and then take it out for the sake of larger society,” he said.

He said the main objective behind this day is to spread awareness about the perils of consuming tobacco and its various products.

The pledge ceremony was administered by Registrar NIT Srinagar Prof. Kaiser Bukhari. During the event all faculty and staff members took pledge to quit tobacco and motivate their families. It also included keeping the office campus tobacco free and also motivating colleagues for the same.

The English version of pledge was read by Deputy Registrar (Administration) Faisal Irshad Ganai, while the Hindi translation of the same was read by Dr. Harveer Singh Pali, Assistant Professor, Mechanical Engineering Department, NIT Srinagar.

During the ceremony, the staff and faculty members raised their hands to express their commitment they will never smoke or consume any type of tobacco products in their lives and would motivate and encourage their families also for the same.

The event was moderated and hosted by Deputy Registrar (Administration) Faisal Irshad Ganai.

“OUR YOUTH SHOULD STAY AWAY FROM consuming or using tobacco products and discourage others as well. It exposes the human body to various infections and each year thousands of people lose their lives, he said.

DIAL-EMMA



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

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311



RAILWAYS



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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

This Day in History

- 1922- Over 50,000 Fascists gather for a meeting in Bologna where Mussolini warns that he will lead a full-scale revolt against a government favoring 'anti-Fascist reaction'
- 1927- Peace Bridge between US & Canada opens
- 1941- British troops occupy Bagdad, Iraq
- 1943- Germany shoots down a civilian flight from Lisbon to London, all die
- 1947- Photosensitive glass developed
- 1948- Israel & Arabs agree to a cease fire
- 1949- 1st magazine on microfilm offered to subscribers (Newsweek)
- 1949-Microfilm copies of "Newsweek" magazine 1st offered
- 1970- Soyuz 9 launched into Earth orbit for 18 days
- 1972 - Iraq nationalizes Iraq Petroleum Company's (IPC) concession owned by British Petroleum,
- 1974 - Arab oil ministers decide to end most restrictions on exports of oil to the United States but continue embargo against the Netherlands, Portugal, South Africa, and Rhodesia
- 1976 - Great Britain and Iceland end the "cod war"
- 1978 - The first international applications under the Patent Cooperation Treaty are filed
- 1993 Connie Chung joins Dan Rather as anchors of CBS Evening News
- 1993 - Guatemala president Jorge Serrano overthrown by army
- 1998 - European Central Bank is founded in Brussels to define and execute the European Union's monetary policy
- 2000 - The Patent Law Treaty (PLT) is signed.
- 2009 - Air France Flight 447 crashes into the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Brazil on a flight from Rio de Janeiro to Paris. All 228 passengers and crew were killed.
- 2016 - Switzerland's Gotthard Base Tunnel is completed - world's longest at 57km and most expensive tunnel costing €11bn
- 2017 - US President Donald Trump announces the US is withdrawing from the Paris Climate Agreement.
- 2018 - Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy forced out of office by a no-confidence vote in parliament, filed by Socialist leader Pedro Sánchez

From KO Archives

Faith Moves Mountains, Stops Rain In Kashmir

F Ahmad

SRINAGAR - Jabbar Mir 56, has walked barefoot with a pitcher full of water to the shrine of saint Sheikh Hamza Mukhdoom in Srinagar. It's an age old custom that he is sure will pull his village out of a "do or die situation".

Mir, a resident of Ganderbal, 22 km from Srinagar, has climbed the Koh-e-Maran hillock in the middle of the city with hundreds of villagers, all travelling on foot and carrying water Filled earthen pitchers from various parts of the Kashmir valley.

They are seeking saint Mukhdoom's blessings so that the intermittent rains lashing the valley stop and the bright sunny days return.

"It's a do or die situation for us. Our paddy nurseries are turning yellow because of the cold and rain. Unless we have bright, warm sunshine there would be hardly any paddy saplings left to be transplanted into the rice fields," Mir said.

According to a local tradition, water collected from parts of the valley and brought here in earthen pitchers by barefooted devotees is poured into the large pond outside the saint's shrine so that saint Mukhdoom is pleased and blesses the people.

However, the devotees must walk all the distance from their homes to the shrine.

"This is a practice that the people have resorted to whenever excessive rains, floods and other natural calamities have visited Kashmir."

Asked if it works, Ghulam Nabi. 48 gives a stare.

"It is a heretic's question. The custom always works. It is my experience of over four decades that whenever Kashmiris visit the shrine, their prayers are answered," says Nabi, who has come from Anantnag district. 54 kin away.

Nabi's 20-year-old son is an epileptic whose seizures have become frequent in recent days.

"I won't say a doctor is not needed to cure my son. But finally it is somewhere else that the outcome of our efforts is decided. Whether a doctor succeeds or not in curing my son would be decided at the sheikh's shrine," Nabi says.

Mukhdoom who lived in the 15th century, is also revered as the saint who was instrumental in ending the "tyrannical" rule of local king Yusuf Shah Chak.

Mukhdoom is believed to have written to Mughal king Akbar about the oppression of the people under Chak. This led to the invasion of Kashmir by the Mughals and the end of Chak's reign.

Visiting shrines and seeking the blessings of dead saints is an old practice in Kashmir.

A little away from saint Mukhdoom's shrine is the temple of Hindu deity ShariKa Devi.

Before the migration of Kashmiri pandits following the insurgency in the valley, Muslims and Hindus could be seen buying flowers from the same vendors for their saints.

There are very few visitors to the temple these days, yet a semblance of the eclectic Kashmiri culture is recreated "when the lone priest at the temple rings the bells - the' sound blends perfectly with the voice of the muezzin calling the faithful to prayer at Mukhdom's shrine.

At Least 200 Children Abducted In Nigeria



Agencies

Gunmen kidnapped scores of children from an Islamic seminary in central Nigeria, officials said, the latest in a string of such incidents plaguing the populous African nation.

Some 200 children were at the school in Niger state on Sunday during the attack, the local government tweeted, adding "an unconfirmed number" were taken. The abduction came a day after 14 students from a university in north-western Nigeria were freed after 40 days in captivity.

Niger state police spokesman Wasiu Abiodun said the attackers arrived on motorbikes in Tegna town and started shooting indiscriminately, killing one resident and injuring another, before kidnapping the children from the Salihu Tanko Islamic school.

One of the school's officials, who asked not to be named, said the attackers initially took more than 100 children "but later sent back those they considered too small for them, those between four and 12 years old".

The state government, in a series of tweets, said the attackers had released 11 of the pupils who were "too small and couldn't walk" very far.

In a later Twitter thread, the state added the governor Sani Bello had directed "security agencies to bring back [the] children as soon as possible."

'Bandits'

Armed gangs are terrorizing inhabitants in northwest and central Nigeria by looting villages, stealing cattle, and taking people hostage.

Such seizures have become a frequent way for criminals to

collect ransoms. Since December 2020, before the attack on Sunday, 730 children and students had been kidnapped.

On April 20, gunmen known locally as "bandits" stormed Greenfield University in north-western Nigeria and kidnapped around 20 students, killing a member of the school's staff in the process.

Five students were executed a few days later to force families and the government to pay a ransom.

Fourteen were released on Saturday. Local press said that the families had paid a ransom totaling \$440,000 for their release.

'Kidnappings must stop'

Africa's most populous country has been plagued by kidnappings for years, with criminals largely targeting the wealthy and prominent.

But more recently, the pool of victims has expanded with the poor now also taken for ransom.

Earlier this month, hundreds of protesters partially blocked a motorway into the capital Abuja after a spate of kidnappings in the area. Marching along the highway, a dozen young men chanted: "We won't accept this, kidnapping must stop!"

The criminal gangs maintain camps in the Rugu forest which straddles northern and central Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna and Niger states.

Their motives have been financial with no ideological leanings, but there is growing concern they are being infiltrated by jihadists from the northeast waging a 12-year-old insurrection to establish an Islamic state.

The kidnappings in the north-west are also complicating challenges facing Buhari's security forces, battling a more than decade-long northeast Islamist insurgency.



BY GLOBAL STANDARDS, Singapore's overall Covid outbreak has been mild. (File)

Singapore To Vaccinate Schoolchildren Against COVID-19: PM

Agence France-Presse

SINGAPORE: Singapore will start vaccinating schoolchildren against the coronavirus soon, the prime minister said Monday, after officials warned that new strains were affecting youngsters more.

The city-state recently tightened curbs following a slight uptick in cases, after months of reporting barely any local transmissions.

This included closing schools amid signs that new variants, such as the one first detected in India, were affecting children in greater numbers.

In a televised speech, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong announced school students aged 12 and over will be the next

IN THIS LATEST outbreak, we have seen more cases of children getting infected, in schools and tuition centres,"

group to be inoculated.

Health regulators approved the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine for 12 to 15-year-olds this month. It was previously only allowed for those aged 16 and above.

"In this latest outbreak, we have seen more cases of children getting infected, in schools and tuition centres," Lee said.

"The children were not seriously ill, but parents are naturally worried. Therefore, we will take advantage of the June holidays to vaccinate students."

The city's more than 400,000

students can start booking vaccinations from Tuesday, with the first slots available Thursday, officials said.

After schoolchildren, officials will inoculate adults 39 years and younger -- the final group that needs to be vaccinated in the prosperous city-state of 5.7 million.

Lee also said Singapore looked on track to be able to ease its latest restrictions after June 13, as planned, as local transmissions steadily fall. The curbs include a two-person limit on gatherings and ban on dine-ins.

By global standards, Singapore's overall outbreak has been mild -- officials have reported just over 62,000 cases so far and 33 deaths since the start of the pandemic.

Find Covid-19 Origin Or Face "Covid-26 And Covid-32", Warn US Experts

John Tozzi, Bloomberg

The world needs the cooperation of the Chinese government to trace the origins of Covid-19 and prevent future pandemic threats, two leading U.S. disease experts said Sunday.

Information to support the theory that the SARS-CoV-2 virus may have escaped from a lab in Wuhan, China, has increased, said Scott Gottlieb, a commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration in the Trump administration who now sits on the board of Pfizer Inc.

China hasn't provided evidence to disprove that theory, while the search for signs that the virus emerged from wildlife hasn't yielded results, Gottlieb said on CBS News's "Face the Nation."

Not knowing how the pandemic started puts the world at risk of future outbreaks, Peter Hotez, co-director of the Texas Children's Hospital Center for Vaccine Development, said in a separate TV appearance.

"There's going to be Covid-26 and Covid-32 unless we fully understand the origins of Covid-19," Hotez said on NBC's "Meet the press."

Almost a year and half after the new pathogen was first detected spreading in a seafood



market in Wuhan, China, the precise origins of the virus remain obscure. Scientists have hypothesized that it most likely spread from wild animals to humans. The idea that the virus may have accidentally escaped from a research lab, long promoted by some Republicans, has gotten renewed attention from the Biden administration.

In a surprise statement on Wednesday, President Joe Biden called for a renewed investigation into the virus's emergence. U.S. intelligence agencies had conflicting assessments of whether it was more likely the virus crossed the species barrier from a natural reservoir or leaked from the Wuhan Institute of Virology, Biden said. He ordered the agencies to "redouble their efforts" and report to him again in 90 days.

Debate over the virus's origin was fueled anew by a Wall Street Journal report on May 23 that three researchers from China's Wuhan Institute of Virology be-

came sick enough in November 2019 that they sought hospital care for "symptoms consistent with both Covid-19 and common seasonal illness."

Scientists should be allowed to conduct a long-term investigation in China and take blood samples from humans and animals, Hotez said. The U.S. should pressure China, including with the threat of sanctions, to allow for an inquiry.

"We need a team of scientists, epidemiologists, virologists, bat ecologists in Hubei province for a six-month, year-long period," Hotez said.

Chinese officials have disputed the Wuhan lab theory. Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian on Thursday dismissed Biden's inquiry as an attempt to engage in "stigmatization, political manipulation and blame-shifting."

A World Health Organization report released in March didn't fully uncover the virus's origin but called a lab leak unlikely. The global health body called for more investigation at that time.

"As far as WHO is concerned, all hypotheses remain on the table," Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a statement when the March report was released.

Rohingyas Stage Protest Against Living Conditions On Bangladesh Island

Agence France-Presse

DHAKA: Several thousand Rohingyas staged "unruly" protests Monday against living conditions on a cyclone-prone island off Bangladesh where they were moved from vast camps on the mainland, police said.

Since December, Bangladesh has shifted 18,000 out of a planned 100,000 refugees to the low-lying silt island of Bhashan Char from the Cox's Bazar region, where some 850,000 people live in squalid and cramped conditions.

Most of them had fled a brutal military offensive in neighbouring Myanmar in 2017 that United Nations (UN) investigators concluded was executed with "genocidal intent".

Monday's protest involved up to 4,000 people, police said, and coincided with an inspection visit by officials from the refugee agency, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

"The Rohingyas, who are there, became unruly the moment the UNHCR representatives landed (on the island) by helicopter today," local police



chief Alamgir Hossain told AFP. "They broke the glass on warehouses by throwing rocks. They came at the police... Their demand is they don't want to live here."

One Rohingya man confirmed to AFP that bricks were thrown and that police prevented them from entering a building where the UNHCR officials were present.

After the first transfer on December 4 to the flood-prone island in the Bay of Bengal, several Rohingyas told AFP that they were beaten and intimidated into agreeing to be relocated.

The claims have been echoed by rights groups.

The Bangladesh government has rejected the allegations, saying the island was safe and its facilities far better than those in the Cox's Bazar camps.

The UN said it has not been involved in the process.

Pakistani Journalist Hamid Mir 'Taken Off Air' After Military Outburst



Radio Mashaal

Hamid Mir, Pakistan's most prominent TV presenter, says he has been banned from his primetime nightly talk show after he made an emotional speech critical of the military.

The veteran journalist broke news of the ban on Twitter on May 31, two days after he criticized the country's military and its intelligence agencies for attacking journalists and curbing press freedoms after a prominent journalist, Asad Ali Toor, was beaten inside his home last week.

"Nothing new for me. I was banned twice in the past. Lost jobs twice. Survived assassination attempts but cannot stop raising voice for the rights given in the constitution. This time I'm ready for any consequences and ready to go at any extent because they are threatening my family," he said in a tweet.

The independent media has suffered a spate of blows in Pakistan.

Several veteran reporters in the country have left journal-

ism after being threatened. The private Geo TV was forced off the air, and authorities have disrupted the distribution of Dawn, Pakistan's oldest English-language newspaper. Leading columnists have complained that stories deemed critical of the army are being rejected by outlets under pressure from the military.

Toor says he was home in Islamabad last week when three people broke into his apartment, gagged him, tied his hands and feet, and beat him with a pistol.

Federal Information Minister Chaudhry Fawad Hussain has ordered an inquiry into the incident.

In April in Islamabad, a gunman shot and wounded Absar Alam, another prominent media voice known for his critical views of the government and the military's meddling in politics.

Criticism of the army has long been seen as a red line for the media, with journalists and bloggers complaining of intimidation tactics including kidnappings, beatings, and even killings if they cross that line.

NOTHING NEW FOR ME. I WAS BANNED twice in the past. Lost jobs twice. Survived assassination attempts but cannot stop raising voice for the rights given in the constitution. This time I'm ready for any consequences and ready to go at any extent because they are threatening my family,"

NEWS MAKERS

Who Is Naftali Bennett, Israel's Potential Prime Minister?

Agencies

Naftali Bennett has moved a step closer to replacing Israel's veteran prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Bennett is a multi-millionaire former tech entrepreneur who made a name in politics with right-wing, religious-nationalist rhetoric.

The 49-year-old, who has made pitches to far-right voters throughout his career, leads the Yamina party, which has called for Israel to annex parts of the occupied West Bank.

A firebrand politician who has not shied away from controversy, Bennett is ultra-liberal on the economy and takes an aggressive line against Iran.

He shares this ideology with Netanyahu and has served in several of the Likud leader's governments. In recent years, however, the two have



become increasingly opposed.

On Sunday, Bennett said he would join a governing coalition that could end Netanyahu's 12-year rule.

He agreed to join centrist Yair Lapid in a coalition to remove the prime minister. Lapid has offered to share power, letting Bennett serve the first term rotating as prime minister.

A former special forces commando, Bennett is the son of US-born parents and lives with his wife Galit and four children in the central city of Raanana.

He entered politics after selling his tech start-up for \$145m in 2005, and the next year became chief of staff to Netanyahu, who was then in opposition.

After leaving Netanyahu's office, Bennett in 2010 became head of the Yesha Council, which lobbies for Jewish settlers in the occupied West Bank.

He then took politics by storm in 2012 when he took charge of the far-right Jewish Home party, which was facing annihilation.

He increased its parliamentary presence fourfold, while making headlines with a series of incendiary comments about the Palestinians.

In 2013, he said Palestinian "terrorists should be killed, not released".

He has courted controversy on several occasions, once stating that the West Bank is not under occupation because "there was never a Pal-

estinian state here", and that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict could not be resolved but must be endured.

Beyond holding the defence portfolio, Bennett has served as Netanyahu's economy minister and education minister.

He re-branded Jewish Home as Yamina (Rightward) in 2018, and was part of Netanyahu's coalition which collapsed the same year.

But he was not asked to join a Netanyahu-led unity government in May last year -- a move seen as an expression of the prime minister's personal contempt towards him, despite their shared ideology.

In opposition and with the coronavirus pandemic raging in 2020, Bennett dampened his right-wing rhetoric to focus on the health crisis, moving to broaden his appeal by releasing plans to contain the virus and aid the economy.

'Tarzan' Actor Joe Lara Among 7 Killed As Plane Crashes Into Lake

WASHINGTON: Joe Lara - the star of the famous adventure movie 'Tarzan: The Epic Adventures' has passed away in a plane crash.

The 58-year-old was with his wife and a few others when the private jet crashed into Tennessee lake this weekend.

TMZ reported that the private jet, said to be a Cessna 501 took off on Saturday (local time) from Smyrna Airport, just outside of Nashville, and was reportedly headed toward Palm Beach, but somehow plunged into Percy Priest Lake not too long after takeoff.

After the accident, fire and other rescue crews were dispatched to the scene but, after an all-night operation,



authorities told TMZ that the passengers were killed in the accident.

Their families were notified soon after and as per TMZ, an investigation is underway to determine the cause behind the crash.

There was a total of seven people who were killed in the ac-

cident, TMZ has learnt. Lara was with his spouse Gwen Lara who was a Christian diet guru. Others were reported to be locals.

Lara is infamous for starring as Tarzan for a total of 22 episodes where he played the king of the jungle between 1996 and 2000. He also starred in a TV movie that came out years prior called 'Tarzan in Manhattan'.

He also had done other action-fantasy roles in movies such as 'Steel Frontier', 'Sunset Heat', 'Gunsmoke: The Last Apache', 'American Cyborg: Steel Warrior', 'The Magnificent Seven', 'Baywatch' and 'Tropical Heat', and more.

Lara and Gwen have left behind three children, as per TMZ. **ANI**

Two Booked For Dowry Death In Rajouri

Press Trust of India

JAMMU: Two persons were arrested and booked for dowry death after a young woman consumed a poisonous substance and died at a hospital in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir, police said on Monday. During the intervening night of May 29-30, it was reported that one married lady of village Chowakian of Darhal tehsil has consumed some poisonous substance and passed away in Government Medical College (GMC) Rajouri, the police said in a statement.

It said an FIR under IPC section 304B (dowry death) was

registered and investigation was immediately initiated.

Acting swiftly, two of the identified accused have been arrested in the matter. Further investigation is presently going on, the police said.

Officials said police arrested the husband and father-in-law of the deceased Sobia Kousar (20) after her brother lodged a complaint with the police.

Meanwhile, Renu Devi (20) allegedly committed suicide by hanging at the house of her in-laws at Chalyar-Chenani in Udhampur district on Sunday, police said.

Police have registered a case and started an investigation, the officials said.

Covid Awareness Rally For Medical Officers Held In Kupwara



Observer News Service

KUPWARA: Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Imam Din Monday presided over a day long Covid Training programme of Medical officers at ANMT School, here.

The training was organised by District Health Society Kupwara under the title "Covid-19 Management and Possible 3rd Wave". Chief Medical Officer Kupwara, Abdul Gani Dar was also present at the occasion.

On the occasion, it was informed that the training is aimed to prepare the Medical Officers as Master Trainees who will further deliver the training to the field functionaries including ANM, ASHAs and other medical staff so that they perform their duty in a professional manner during this Covid pandemic.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner said that the training programme will enable the field staff to deal with the Covid situation at Panchayat level in a proper way.

The Deputy Commissioner appealed the people to come forward and vaccinate themselves at their nearest Covid Vaccination Centre to keep the Covid-19 pandemic at bay. He also appealed the people not to pay heed to the rumour about the vaccine being spread on social media which is false and baseless.

Meanwhile, leaflets about Covid Management were distributed among the participants.

The training programme was attended by a team of experts from Directorate of Health Services Kashmir; Medical officers and other concerned.

Later, the Deputy Commissioner flagged off a Covid Awareness rally, here at TRC Kupwara which was conducted by a Kupwara based NGO Kafil Foundation. The rally was aimed to spread awareness about the Covid management and adherence to appropriate behavior among the masses. The rally saw participation of students, Ex-servicemen, volunteers of SDRF and other concerned.

Covid-19 Crisis Receding In Kupwara: DC

Observer News Service

KUPWARA: Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Imam Din today said that the Covid-19 crisis is receding day by day in the district drastically with massive recovery of positive cases.

The Deputy Commissioner was addressing media persons here at Kupwara to provide status about the Covid containment measures and management.

The Deputy Commissioner said that the district has recorded 12040

Covid positive cases and a good recovery rate of 83.32% has been registered. He said 1866 Covid positive cases are active in the district.

The Deputy Commissioner said that the sampling is being geared up again to identify the trend of cases and Covid Care Centres have been established across the district to isolate the positive cases at panchayat level also.

The Deputy Commissioner appealed the people to strictly follow Covid appropriate behaviour to break the Covid chain.

Landmark Initiatives Taken To Tackle Pandemic: Adv Khan

Observer News Service

BANDIPORA: Advisor to Lieutenant Governor Baseer Khan Monday visited Sumbal Sub-Division in Bandipora district to take stock of covid mitigation efforts and held a meeting with public representatives, delegations, other stakeholders and officers of district administration to review Covid mitigation measures in place in the District.

Chairman District Development Council Abdul Gani Bhat, Deputy Commissioner Dr Owais Ahmad, SSP Bandipora Mohammad Zahid, DDC members, ADDC Afsar Ali Khan, Joint Director Planning Imtiyaz Ahmad, SDM Sumbal and other senior officers of the district were present on the occasion.

During the visit, Advisor assessed the status of medical infrastructure and facilities, vaccination and functioning of newly established COVID Care Centres in every Panchayat.

Advisor visited Covid Care Centre at Dangerpora Sumbal and took stock of the arrangements put in place at the centre. He said the 5-bedded CCCs have been established on the directions of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha in each Panchayat with an aim to strengthen the health infrastructure in rural areas amid the 2nd wave of covid19 pandemic.

He said one among the 5-beds is fully oxygen supported for immediate patient care at village level. During the visit to Dangerpora CCC, Advisor expressed satisfaction over the functioning of these centres and appreciated the role of field level covid warriors in tackling the pandemic.

Advisor said there are several households who have no option for isolation of covid positive patients in their own residence and hence these centres will be beneficial for such patients and will help in reducing pressure on mainstream healthcare institutions at block, Sub-District or District level health institutions.

Later Advisor Khan also interacted with Religious leaders, Traders, Transporters and other delegations who apprised the Advisor about the issues being faced by them during the ongoing pandemic. Advisor gave patient hearing



ADVISOR KHAN urged the people to follow the SOPs and guidelines in letter and spirit to save lives by breaking the chain of the virus. He said with the ease in restrictions, people need to be more cautious and follow the SOPs strictly.

to the delegations and assured them positive consideration to their grievances.

Advisor Khan urged the people to follow the SOPs and guidelines in letter and spirit to save lives by breaking the chain of the virus. He said with the ease in restrictions, people need to be more cautious and follow the SOPs strictly.

He sought cooperation from the religious heads, PRI members, transporters, business community and civil society members to use their influence to motivate people to follow guidelines so that the lives are saved. He said with the cooperation of the people, the LG led government has been able to fight the covid19 pandemic effectively and has reached to the stage to relax the restrictions. He hoped that the people will not lower the guard and continue to take precautions to defeat the 2nd wave of the pandemic.

Advisor later undertook a detailed review of the Corona mitigation efforts being taken

by the district wherein a detailed PPT was presented by DC Bandipora detailing there-in various COVID containment measures taken by the district administration.

While appreciating the efforts of district administration, the Advisor emphasized on the officers to further take all necessary measures for effective containment of COVID-19 in the district and asked to intensify the vaccination process in the district.

Advisor directed the officers to ensure 100 percent vaccination coverage to the target groups where chances of virus exposure are more. He said the Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha is personally monitoring the covid mitigation efforts across the UT and has taken several landmark initiatives to tackle the pandemic including establishment of special hospitals in Jammu and Srinagar, construction of oxygen plants in various districts in record time and establishment of 5-bedded Covid Care Centres.

Stressing on the importance of vaccination, Advisor said the supply side has been streamlined and directed the authorities for aggressively pursuing the vaccination programme to inoculate maximum eligible population. He said the targeted vaccination drive for high risk and vulnerable groups will further bring down the infections in high contact/exposure areas.

Misinformation On Social Media Creating Fear About Vaccination: Official

SRINAGAR: "We are fighting war against Covid-19 but some people are spreading misinformation to create fear among people regarding vaccination", said Raheela, Audio Visual Officer, Directorate of Family Welfare, MCH & Immunization, J&K.

She said that misinformation is usually the handiwork of persons with vested interest to meet their own ends.

Raheela while dispelling misinformation said that vaccination has saved Covid-19 patients from complications and severity.

She said that in the initial phase of vaccination there was hesitancy among the people but towards the end of April they were keen to get inoculated.

While talking about the



milestone achieved by Family Welfare, MCH & Immunization department, she said that the number of persons vaccinated in the age group of 45 years and above is much higher in Jammu & Kashmir as compared to national average.

She said both Covaxin and Covishield vaccines are safe which has been approved by World Health Organization and other authorities. These Covid vaccines have been scientifically

prepared and approved as safe and giving protection against infection. She said that hardly any person has reported any problem due to the vaccine.

Raheela also said that it is extremely rare to find a fully vaccinated person dying because of covid infection. However, if any person who had been administered both vaccine shots got infected, that patient recovered immediately at home without hospitalization, she added.

She said that doctors also recommend covid vaccination for some patients ahead of any requirement of surgery. Meanwhile, she requested every person to come forward and get vaccinated to help win war against this pandemic.

Over 20L Golden Cards Issued Under PMJAY In Jammu Region

Press Trust of India

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir health department till now has issued over 20.24 lakh "golden cards" under the Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY-Sehat scheme in the Jammu division to provide a yearly health insurance cover of up to Rs 5 lakh, an official said on Monday.

The Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojna (AB-PMJAY), a universal health insurance scheme, was launched on December 1, 2018, to provide coverage to about 3.17 lakh below poverty line (BPL) families in the Jammu division.

With a view to provide universal health coverage, the AB-PMJAY-Sehat scheme was conceived and rolled out in the union territory in convergence with the AB-PMJAY scheme from December 26 last year, Financial Commissioner for Health and Medical Education Atal Dulloo said.

"Till date, 20.46 lakh golden cards have been issued. At least one member of 6.68 lakh families has been issued golden card in the Jammu region," he said.

It provides health insurance cover of up to Rs 5 lakh per family per year on floater basis to

7.14 lakh additional families of the Jammu division, Dulloo said.

Thus, about 10.31 lakh families in the division are currently availing benefits under the scheme, he said.

As many as 92 hospitals have been empanelled by the government under the scheme, Dulloo said.

As a part of Ayushman Bharat programme, 599 health and wellness centres (HWCs) have been set up in the Jammu division to provide comprehensive primary health care, including universal screening of common non-communicable diseases like cancer and diabetes, he said.

Dulloo said that about 39,000 patients have been provided 108 ambulances services since the launch of the scheme and these patients included 5,498 people who were infected with Covid.

As 102-108 ambulance services were made functional since March 2020, 226 ambulances -- 42 Advanced Life Support, 33 Basic Life Support and 151 others -- have been networked into it for providing round the clock transportation facility to patients requiring immediate medical care in the Jammu division, Dulloo said.

This service has also been utilised during Covid pandemic period.

TILL DATE, 20.46 LAKH GOLDEN CARDS have been issued. At least one member of 6.68 lakh families has been issued golden card in the Jammu region," he said.

Vaccination For 18-44 Age Group Begins In Ganderbal

Observer News Service

GANDERBAL: Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, Kritika Jyotsna today briefed media about the Covid management and mitigation measures put in place by the district for combating the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic.

Giving details, the DC said that in ¾ of panchayats of the district the 5 bedded Covid Care Centre facility is established equipped with all requisite equipment and medical facilities and in remaining panchayats, the facility would be established by tomorrow as procurement of required equipments is already initiated.

While congratulating general public of Ganderbal for achieving the 100 percent vaccination target of all above 45 age group with at least the first dose of Covid-19 inoculation, she said that though 100 percent target is achieved but there might be some people above 45 years of age who may not have received first dose as population is moving phenomena and appealed them to get vaccinated at nearest site.

While elaborating on the importance of Isolation Facility in panchayats, the DC said that the people who are symptomatic and lack isolation facility at their homes they can be shifted and taken care in these centres to curb the spread of virus. She appealed people who have Covid related symptoms to visit these isolation centres to get medical advice to save themselves and family as well.

The DC informed that Vaccination drive for 18-44 years



of age has begun today in the district on priority group basis and on priority, the shopkeepers including essential and non-essential shall be vaccinated first.

She said Four vaccination sites (BHSS Ganderbal, PHC Lar, PHC Wakura and SDH Kangan) are established within the district and urged the shopkeepers to visit these centers along with their staff to get vaccinated at the earliest.

While elaborating on the easing of Corona restrictions in the district, Jyotsna said order has been issued in this regard besides roster regarding the opening of essential and non-essential shops is also issued and urged upon the people to follow the roster in letter and spirit.

She maintained that though restrictions are eased but easing of Covid restrictions does not mean that pandemic is over adding that people should strictly follow the SOPs and stick to the precautionary measures and guidelines which is a best way to protect themselves from Covid infection.

Former Secretary JKAACL Dies Of Covid

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Ramesh Mehta, former Secretary Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL) passed away Monday at Naraina Hospital Katra.

Family sources said, he was suffering from COVID infection. He was 74. He is survived by his Wife, Son, and Daughter.

Born in 1947, Ramesh Mehta was a Writer, Artist, and Critic of national repute. During 2003 to 2006 he served as Secretary Cultural Academy. He joined Academy in 1973 as Editor Hindi where he contributed immensely to the promotion of Hindi, Dogri and other languages and their Literature.

For his outstanding contributions, Mehta was the recipient of Lifetime Achievement Award at the Authors Guild of India in 1984.

He was a renowned Hindi poet and scholar. His Artwork also got ap-



preciations from within Jammu and Kashmir and across India.

He has also worked for highlighting Jammu's heritage to other parts of the world through his writings.

Employees of Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages expressed shock over sad demise of Sh Mehta and remembered his contributions for the upliftment of Art, Culture and Languages of Jammu and Kashmir.

...DOCTOR SPEAKS

Unlock: Time To Implement Lessons Learnt During Lockdowns

JAMMU: Registrar Medicine, GMC Jammu, Dr Somnath Verma has requested the public to not forget Covid appropriate behavior during the subsequent 'Unlock' of the markets and other economic activities.

"It is natural that more people would come out in public in the upcoming days, and it calls for strict observance of Covid appropriate behaviour on each individual level", said the Registrar.

Dr Verma said, "It is time we implemented the lessons learnt during the two major lockdowns implemented over the past one year. If only we continue observing Covid appropriate behaviour, then only we can expect to take up the challenge and stop the supposedly third

wave of the pandemic'.

"The second wave has taught us that each subsequent wave is more infectious and transmissible than its predecessor. We are yet to vaccinate a number of people and till the time the target is achieved, we must observe Covid appropriate behaviour", he continued.

Suggesting that a lot needs to be done with respect to Covid mitigation measures, Dr Verma said, "So far, the Covid positivity rate is near about 10 percent nationwide. Unless the rate is reduced further to 5 percent, there is no reason to become carefree".

Dr Verma also requested eligible members of the public to get vaccinated according to available

time slots. He says, "As we vaccinate more and more members of the public, we can expect the herd immunity to rise".

Sharing his personal experience as a frontline worker against Covid, Dr Verma told that "Most of our frontline colleagues got infected with the virus at some point over the past year. It is only due to the vaccine that we were able to prevent fatalities and effortlessly recover from the infection".

It is pertinent to mention that all Covid-related queries and doubts can be cleared on helpline number 0191 2571616. Public can also call the Divisional Control Room at 0191-2520982, 2549676, 2674444, 2674115, 2674908.

J&K Govt Signs MoU With Go-Airlines For Transportation Of Perishable Fruits

SRINAGAR: In a significant decision, the Jammu and Kashmir Horticulture Department, today signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with airline carrier Go-Airlines for transportation of perishable horticulture and agricultural produce to various destinations across the country.

The MoU was signed in presence of Principal Secretary Agriculture and Farmers Welfare and Horticulture departments, Navin Kumar Choudhary at Civil Secretariat here today.

Speaking on the occasion, the Principal Secretary said that this significant step will empower the fruit growers of Jammu and Kashmir and will increase their income as well as boost the rural economy. He added that it will also address the transportation hiccups for the horticulture

produce especially the highly perishable items like Cherry, Plum, Apricots etc.

Navin Choudhary further added that the government is also considering to provide some sort of financial support to fruit growers who will utilise this facility for transportation of horticulture and agricultural yield to outside J&K as well as the facility of refrigerated vans for which the decision could be taken by the government in couple of days.

Under this MoU, the airline will charge Rs. 24, Rs. 34, Rs. 47, Rs. 48 and Rs.50 for transportation of perishable fruit produce from Jammu and Srinagar to Delhi, Mumbai/Pune, Chennai, Kolkata and Bengaluru respectively.

The growers can directly approach the airline and transport their produce on the said rates.

KASHMIR OBSERVER

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K O V I E W

Lost livelihoods

J&K administration has placed five districts in the 'red category' as part of its classification for Covid containment in the union territory whereby the districts were categorized as red, orange and green zones. The districts in red category are Pulwama and Anantnag in south Kashmir, Baramulla and Kupwara in north and Budgam in central Kashmir. The categorisation followed a detailed review of the current Covid situation by the Jammu and Kashmir State Executive Committee (SEC) on Saturday. The committee took on board the spread of the infection, trend in new cases, particularly the test positivity rate, the risk perception of the health department viz-a-viz each district and the need to further control the spread of COVID-19. The categorizations would be followed for the purpose of implementation of permitted activities in the respective districts.

After a month-long lockdown, the people are looking towards the government to unlock parts of the economy. The curfew-like situation has once again battered the businesses and left thousands of people jobless, more so, the people from the marginalized sections of the society. With fresh infections dropping markedly over the last week, the administration can take steps to incrementally open up the economy and let people work. But while doing so, its focus should be the daily wage workers who have suffered the most and they are spread across the professions and occupations. The worst victims of the pandemic and the lockdown include the lowly workers associated with tourism. Or for that matter the drivers and conductors of the passenger vehicles. They have been hit hard over the last two years, so much so that some of them have resorted to begging to feed their families.

So, while deciding the future course of action, the administration should take steps to ease the terrible plight of the poorest section of the society. The lockdown should be relaxed in a way that paves the way for the daily wage workers to earn their livelihood. Any further delay in doing so will worsen their plight.

At the same time, the government needs to focus on expediting vaccination to reign in the pandemic. Sadly, fewer vaccines are available in Kashmir now. A large section of the population that has got its first dose is struggling to get the second, among them the elderly people. Locking people and businesses down without simultaneously speeding up the vaccination will not make much of a difference to the current state of affairs. On the contrary, the lockdown would kill livelihoods and be a cure worse than the disease.

O T H E R O P I N O N

Revisiting America

External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar's visit to the US last week, the first by an Indian cabinet minister since the inauguration of Joe Biden as the president in January, was comprehensive in its outreach and expansive in its scope. Barring President Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris, Jaishankar met most key actors in the Administration who have a say in the US engagement with India. They included the Secretary of State, Antony Blinken; Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin; the presidential envoy on climate change, John Kerry; US Trade Representative Katherine Tai; and Director, National Intelligence, Avril Haines. Jaishankar also met with members of the US Congress and business associations.

If the Biden Administration moved quickly to advance the bilateral relationship that saw steady progress under his three predecessors, Donald Trump, Barack Obama and George W Bush, Delhi's challenge in coping with the second wave of the pandemic has generated a surge of bipartisan support for India across the US. It was certainly not Jaishankar's job to negotiate commercial vaccine contracts. His mission was to mobilise political and policy support in Washington for increased vaccine availability in India. Reports from Washington describe Jaishankar's conversations on this issue in Washington as positive. While raw material supplies from the US for vaccine production in India are improving, many technical issues will have to be resolved in the talks between regulatory authorities in both countries on the procurement of US vaccines.

Besides the urgent priorities on the pandemic front, Jaishankar's main objective was to flesh out an ambitious agenda for the bilateral relationship in the next few years. There is no doubt that the Quad — or the Quadrilateral Framework involving Australia and Japan along with India and the US — has become an important new element of the deepening ties between Delhi and Washington. Jaishankar reaffirmed India's strong political commitment to the Quad that emerged out of bilateral defence cooperation and is now poised to shape the Indo-Pacific regional security order.

The Indian Express

German Report Raises the Spectre of Political Islamism

Asad Mirza

The strategy's attempt to brand vocal Islam as political Islamism is just another effort by western analysts to give one more nomenclature to the questioning or assertive Islam, which asks why the same set of facilities or services are not provided to the minority communities in county's where they are given shelter

In the backdrop of the increasing Islamophobia across the world, Germany's leading political party seems to have taken a right step towards analysing the problem and its offshoots. The ruling Christian Democratic Union (CDU), having occupied the chancellor's office for 57 of the 72 years of the Federal Republic of Germany's existence, and part of the largest parliamentary group in the German Bundestag, and its Bavarian sister party, the Christian Social Union (CSU), has approved a wide-ranging strategy paper to contain the spread of political Islam in Germany.

The strategy paper, "Preserving Free Society, Promoting Social Cohesion, Fighting Political Islamism," asserts that a growing number of areas in Germany, where Sharia law overrides German law, are in danger of becoming "parallel societies."

The paper also warns that certain foreign governments control many mosques and Islamic associations in Germany, which threaten Germany's liberal democratic order.

The authors of the paper argue that a recent wave of "jihadist" attacks in Germany and elsewhere in Europe require urgent measures to stop the "poison" of extremist ideology from gaining further ground on the continent.

The New Strategy

The paper, which wholeheartedly commends law-abiding Muslims who respect Germany's democratic order, argues that the debate about Islamism in Germany is often reduced to violence and terror, but that it is necessary to focus more on ideology.

The proposals include improving research and analysis of political Islam in Europe and the methods by which it spreads; banning the foreign funding of mosques; and reducing the number of foreign imams active in Germany.

Arguably the most important proposal involves reversing the German government's long-standing policy of supporting extremist groups in Germany, which, under the guise of promoting dialogue, has legitimised those groups and fuelled the spread of political Islam in Germany.

The paper says, "Focusing only on the violent part of Islamism, Islamist terrorism, does not do justice to the overall problem. Islamism — like other extremists — has an ideological basis and the aim must be to explore this ideological underground."

Action Plan

The strategy paper offers a Five-Point Action Plan aimed at understanding and fighting political Islam:

First, it calls for supporting basic research on political Islamism in Germany and Europe. This includes: establishing academic chairs to focus on Islamism and its structures, implementing a scientific study to better understand the extent to which political Islamism is influencing children, young people and adolescents.

Secondly, it urges terminating state cooperation and contractual relationships with organisations of political Islamism.

Thirdly, it calls for training imams in Germany. The proposal calls for providing academic and spiritual training for imams in Germany, while maintaining religious freedom and the separation of state and religious communities.



Feature Image Details: Photo: DPA

Fourthly, the paper calls for increased transparency of membership structures and financing flows, including donations, subsidies, contracts and collaborations, to the federal tax office by the mosques functioning in Germany.

Finally, it calls for Preventing radicalisation, through improved cooperation between federal, state and local governments and civil society. Through investigating the risk of radicalisation processes in the penal system in Germany; and expanding information and awareness programs for specialists from the areas of police, justice, school and education, social work, youth welfare and refugee aid, among others.

Mouhanad Khorchide, a Lebanese-Austrian Islamic theologian and sociologist who is a professor of Islamic pedagogy at the University of Münster in Germany, speaking to Soeren Kern of the New York-based Gatestone Institute said that the policy paper reflects a growing awareness of the problem of political Islam in Germany.

However, renowned Frankfurt-based Islamic scholar Susanne Schröter expressed scepticism about the new strategy, while speaking to Ms Kern. She said that secular states have a fundamental challenge when dealing with Islam, which is political by nature due to its law, Sharia.

Strategy's Flaws

The strategy has been greeted with a mix of approval, cynicism and scepticism. Some critics describe it as an electoral gimmick, federal elections are scheduled for September 22 in Germany. CDU's strategy is aimed at countering the increasing influence of the Alternativa for Germany (AfD) party, which has long called for a crackdown on political Islam.

According to a report published by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees in June 2009, of the roughly 4 million Muslims living in Germany, most are Sunnis and Alevites from Turkey and Syria, of the migrant groups Turkish (3.2%) and those from South Asia (2.7%) are the biggest groups. The strategy seems to be a step in the right direction, to address an issue faced by many western nations i.e. of increasing Islamophobia and the role of Muslims in the western societies.

But to qualify as an effective tool every strategy needs to balance views and actions from both sides, particularly in the context of sociological and societal issues.

The strategy's attempt to brand vocal Islam as political Islamism is just another effort by western analysts to give one more nomenclature to the questioning or assertive Islam, which asks why the same set of facilities or

services are not provided to the minority communities in county's where they are given shelter.

If they protest against disrespectful depiction of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH), the most central and revered person in Islam, then they are termed Islamist extremists. Here we forget that the Right to expression gives the right to both parties, not just one.

Further, there is a need to understand that there is no such thing as political Islam or political Islamism. Yes, Islam provides guidelines to govern but then they are applicable in those countries where there is an Islamic form of government. Islam never asks you to agitate for changing the rules of the country which gives you shelter.

Further, there is no basis to conclude that Islamic groups strive to establish Sharia-abiding societies in western countries. Yes, every walk of life of a Muslim is governed by Sharia rules but it is not binding on you to follow each and every rule.

Further, the report asserts that asking for Halal food is being fundamentalist, forgetting that every religion or society has their own dietary laws and demanding or arranging them is not unconstitutional. Can Germany ask its Jewish citizens not to demand Kosher food?

However, the effort is appreciative in the sense that it calls for further research on the issue and engaging with the community more. For its Imam's training programme it can learn from the 'Imam as a Chaplain' programme of the British government. It can also try to learn from the mistakes of the British government's CONTEST strategy and its Prevent programme. Lastly, it would be in a much better space if it would be willing to engage with the liberal and broadminded Islamic religious leaders belonging to the Deobandi school of Islam.

A large percentage of Turkish and Pakistanis, are influenced by the principles and ideology of the Deobandi Islam. But the policy makers refuse to engage with the influential leaders and religious scholars, as they have no connect with them and also prefer not to have any input from the community leaders working at the grassroots level.

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

Asad Mirza is a political commentator based in New Delhi, and is currently giving finishing touch to his latest book on 'Influence of Deobandi Islam'. Email: asad.mirza.nd@gmail.com



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Arrogance towards Ecology

This is my response to Mr. Raja Muzaffar's article titled "Hundreds of Green Trees Felled for a Nonexistent Hospital"

I read Mr. Muzaffar's article, and as expected from a climate change champion, he has done a great job highlighting the issues that the Reshipora residents face. What happened in our village was a display of authoritarianism, incompetence, and

sheer disregard for ecological health.

Even though none of the locals were consulted when officials decided to cut thousands of trees, the residents complied and agreed to construct a 500 bedded DRDO supported Covid-19 hospital. The situation demanded so.

A district hospital was promised to us decades ago, and now this unexplained decision of shifting the hospi-

tal has angered the locals.

We are not convinced with the botched-up explanation of poor soil health as no such report has been made public. The officials' actions amount to criminal negligence as trees were felled before doing the warranted soil test. We have a bigger question: until the administration decides to construct a hospital, what will the indigenous population

do whose livelihood depended on this piece of land. Their interaction with the 71.1 Kanals was beyond feeding cattle. They liked to relax, pray, play, walk, breathe, and eat at Nambal — as we call it — which, unfortunately, has been reduced to a Great Indian Desert.

*Munawar
munawar131@gmail.com*

All You Want to Know About Black Fungus



Dr M Ashraf Ganie

Self-medication with steroids especially among those who are home isolated must be discouraged. To revise the dose and duration of steroids among hospitalized patients by the attending doctor is indispensable. Agencies should ensure an adequate stock of Liposomal Amphotericin B, the primary drug to treat mucormycosis, in the market

What is Mucormycosis? MUCORMYCOIS is a fungal opportunistic infection caused by ubiquitous filamentous fungi belonging to the Mucoraceae family of the order Mucorales, subphylum Mucormycotina. The most frequently isolated species is Rhizopus oryzae followed by Rhizopus microsporus and Absidia corymbifera. Black fungi per se are biologically a different category of fungi having melanin in the cell wall. However, mucormycosis is informally referred to as black fungus.

Where Mucormycosis Comes From?

The organism is quite ubiquitous. It is present in the air, leaves and piles of compost, soil and rotting wood. Infections may result from ingestion of contaminated food, inhalation of spores into the nares or lungs or inoculation into disrupted skin or wounds. In developed countries, mucormycosis occurs primarily in severely immunocompromised hosts. In contrast, in developing countries like ours, most cases of mucormycosis occur in poorly controlled diabetics. All-cause mortality rates for mucormycosis range from 40% to 80% with varying rates depending on underlying conditions and sites of infection.

Overall Disease Burden

The Leading International Fungal Education (LIFE) portal has estimated the burden of serious fungal infections globally. According to their estimate, the annual prevalence of mucormycosis might be around 10,000 cases in the world barring India. After the inclusion of Indian data, the estimate of mucormycosis rose to 910,000 cases globally. So mucormycosis is already far more common in India compared to other countries.

Risk Factors for Mucormycosis

The major risk factors for these invasive fungal infections include Uncontrolled diabetes mellitus, particularly with ketoacidosis Injudicious use of corticosteroids Organ or bone marrow transplantation Neutropenia and malignant haematological disorders. Injection drug use Trauma/burns Malnutrition

Why Mucormycosis is Showing a Surge in COVID-19 Patients?

The widespread reports of mucor-



mycosis in the country suggest that it is not coming from a single contaminated source and does not have a single explanation. It is an evolving condition that will unfold in the coming days. The proposed reasons may be highlighted as under:

Indiscriminate use of steroids without a proper rationale is probably the principal reason behind this increased risk of mucormycosis.

Prevalence of DM and DKA in COVID-19 are higher compared to the national prevalence of type 2 DM and DKA in the general population.

Alteration of iron metabolism occurs in severe COVID-19. Severe COVID-19 is a hyper-ferritinemic state and high ferritin levels lead to excess intracellular iron that generates reactive oxygen species resulting in tissue damage.

The resultant tissue damage due to hypoxemia and cytokine storm also leads to the release of free iron into the circulation. Iron overload and excess free iron seen in acidemic states are one of the key and unique risk factors for Mucormycosis.

Another possible explanation for the association between COVID-19 and MCR is the "endothelialitis" observed in severe COVID-19. Endothelial adhesion and penetration is critical early steps in Mucormycosis.

The other plausible reasons could be poor maintenance of oxygen humidifiers, improper use of broad-spectrum antibiotics & other immunosuppressant drugs like tocilizumab.

It is not illogical to think that the

practice of 'gobar snan' could be a potential cause of this deadly fungal infection, but this practice of exposure to cow dung is an isolated practice, so it is not wise enough to attribute it to the recent surge.

Global Scenario of CAM

Isolated cases of CAM have been reported from USA, Brazil and UK. Diabetes mellitus was again the most common predisposing condition in these patients. However, India is presenting a different and unprecedented picture in terms of CAM. Several states in India are experiencing an unexpected surge in cases of mucormycosis in people diagnosed with COVID-19. Gujarat has so far reported the highest number of mucormycosis cases, the other states/cities following are Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Jaipur, Maharashtra and Uttarakhand. The UT of Jammu and Kashmir has not reported any case of black fungus so far. A high index of suspicion is needed to pick up these cases early.

When to Suspect Mucormycosis in COVID-19 Patients

Patients with COVID-19 illness in acute, recovering or post-discharge phase with following symptoms/signs should be suspected of having mucormycosis:

Nasal blockage or congestion, bloody or brown/black nasal discharge Facial pain, numbness or swelling Persistent headache, orbital pain Toothache, loosening of maxillary teeth, jaw involvement

Double/blurred vision with pain, skin lesion and eschar (necrotic lesion) Persistent fever, cough, chest pain, bloody sputum or worsening of respiratory symptoms

How to Prevent CAM

Important preventive steps to be followed, especially in diabetic patients with COVID-19:

- Reasonable glycemic control
- Timely treatment of DKA
- Rational use of steroids - correct timing, correct dose and duration
- Use clean, sterile water for humidifiers during oxygen therapy

How to Manage Mucormycosis?

Suspected case should undergo appropriate radio-imaging study like MRI of paranasal sinuses with brain contrast study for Rhino-orbito-cerebral (ROCM) and plain CT thorax for pulmonary Mucormycosis. Involvement of multi-disciplinary team is suggested - Physician, Endocrinologist, ENT/Eye specialist, Pulmonologist and last but not the least a Gastroenterologist. GI manifestations though not much, but these patients may need percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG) to provide a means of feeding when nasopharyngeal region is severely affected. Suspected and confirmed mucormycosis are emergencies and require rapid action. Surgical debridement Plus Immediate treatment initiation of medical treatment with Liposomal amphotericin B is recommended.

Mucormycosis is not a new disease and has resurged in Covid subjects owing to multiple factors including hyperglycaemia, steroid use etc. Jammu and Kashmir has reported only few cases of black fungus among COVID-19 patients so far. Although healthcare workers should look for early symptoms of this infection in order to initiate timely management but they should not instil undue fear and anxiety among the public. Self-medication with steroids especially among those who are home isolated must be discouraged. To revise the dose and duration of steroids among hospitalised patients by the attending doctor is indispensable. Agencies should ensure an adequate stock of Liposomal Amphotericin B, the primary drug, in the market to treat mucormycosis.

Dr Mohammad Ashraf Ganie is DM/MD/PhD guide at SKIMS Srinagar and AIIMS New Delhi. He is also Editor of Diabetes and Obesity Journal.

Commit to Quit Coronavirus pandemic is the best time to quit smoking and to lead a healthy life

Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat

COVID 19 pandemic has been a disaster indeed, but for me it came as a blessing. I quit smoking fearing that COVID 19 would prove to be extremely dangerous for my health and life.

Change in 1 month to 2 years

Within one month of quitting smoking, the cravings become easier to manage, and the risk for hearing loss and vision damage decrease. The teeth become whiter and the skin starts to heal from premature aging and wrinkling. The risk of heart attack & stroke also diminishes. One can easily walk up the stairs as the lungs repair themselves. One of the first things to heal in the body is cilia, tiny, finger-like projections in the respiratory tract. Healthy cilia help a person to fight off colds, viruses and infections, so one might notice he isn't getting sick as often. This will be helpful to fight even COVID 19 infection as well.

After a year the risk of coronary heart disease drops down drastically and the lung function almost reaches near-normal levels in case of people with mild to moderate COPD. DNA damage stops and some of the damage to the DNA even

begins to heal.

During the first year of quitting smoking, the risk of diabetes also decreases. For women, estrogen levels gradually return to normal, and men have lower chances of erectile dysfunction. By the end of the first year, most people also find that they heal from wounds and illnesses faster due to normal white blood cell counts and improved blood flow. People who quit smoking successfully for two years, the chances of being a lifelong non-smoker increases. According to the School of Dental Medicine Boston University, 80% of people who have quit smoking for 2 years never return to smoking again. After five years of quitting the risk of stroke is the same as a non-smokers.

Commit to Quit

May 31st has been designated as the World No Tobacco Day. This year's theme was 'Commit to Quit', which assumes a significant importance because of COVID 19 pandemic. As already mentioned above, there is a relation between smoking and COVID 19. Some studies done last year in China and Europe suggested a lower prevalence of COVID 19 infection among smokers and protective effects of smoking against the effects of COVID 19. However, further research and analysis showed serious and severe flaws in those studies. Further studies done on this issue showed that many smokers after getting infected with COVID 19 infection face lots of medical challenges which includes depletion in oxygen level in the body.

The Coronavirus predominantly affects the lungs and smoking also attacks lungs and that is why there is a higher

incidence of severe lung complications among smokers following COVID 19 in comparison with non-smokers. The World Health Organisation has already released a scientific paper some months back which makes it clear that smokers are at a higher risk of developing severe infection or even death from COVID 19.

There are approximately 120 million smokers in India. According to the WHO, 12% smokers are found in India alone. More than 10 million die each year due to consumption of tobacco in India (smoking, chewing etc). According to a 2002 WHO estimate, 25% of adult males in India smoke. Among adult females, the figure is much lower at between 13-15%.

Conclusion

To quit smoking is very difficult, but millions of people do it successfully across the world. During the ongoing COVID 19 pandemic I have observed that many people have quit smoking and I am one of the live examples. Every summer I go hiking with friends. In the past, it was difficult for me to hike high altitude mountains in view of developing breathlessness. I would still manage it, but after I quit smoking last year in March, my experience during trekking was amazing last summer (July-August). This summer again I am sure it would be a better experience inshallah.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), over 70% of the 1.3 billion tobacco users worldwide lack access to the tools they need to quit successfully. This gap in access to cessation services is only further exacerbated in the last year as the health workforce has been mobilized to handle the coronavirus pandemic. According to the Indian Heart Association (IHA), India accounts for 83% of the world's heart disease burden, despite having less than 20% of the world's population. The IHA has identified reduction in smoking as a significant target of cardiovascular health prevention efforts.

Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat is an Acumen Fellow. He is Founder & Chairman Jammu & Kashmir RTI Movement

I have been a long time smoker. Although I was not a chain-smoker, while writing I would definitely smoke 4 to 5 cigarettes. I tried a lot to get rid of smoking but I always failed. COVID 19 pandemic has been a disaster indeed, but for me it came as a blessing. I quit smoking fearing that COVID 19 would prove to be extremely dangerous for my health and life. I had developed symptoms similar to COVID 19 last year. I was in Delhi in connection with some conference last year in March. I returned back to Srinagar on March 14th. This was the time when COVID 19 cases were swelling up in the national capital. After my return, I had a throat infection, chills and body ache. I was worried. My friends and relatives told me it was a normal seasonal flu common in the spring season. I took it seriously and isolated myself for almost two weeks. This was the time I quit smoking and till date I have never touched it again.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) Director General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus recently said that smokers have up to a 50 per cent higher risk of developing severe disease and death from COVID 19. He suggested that quitting smoking was the best thing people could do to lower their risk from getting infected with coronavirus.

"We urge all countries to play their part by joining the WHO campaign and creating tobacco-free environments that give people the information, support and tools they need to quit and quit for good" WHO director said in his official statement.

Changes after quitting smoking

Quitting smoking requires great willpower but is not impossible at all, especially at a time when everyone is scared of getting infected with coronavirus. Some gossip circulating, perhaps by smokers themselves, is that those who are chain smokers or even moderate smokers don't get affected with COVID 19. This misinformation can be detrimental and may stop many from taking the leap to quit the devil for good.

Infact, one doesn't have to wait a year to start to see the benefits of leaving smoking. It is within minutes, hours and

days of quitting, the benefits start stacking up. After quitting smoking, the entire body goes through drastic changes. There are many scientific studies which have proved this. Almost immediately, the lungs of the smoker begin to heal. The lung function improves dramatically. A recent research report published in a respiratory medicine journal found that people with mild to moderate chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) achieve normalization of lung function decline within a year of quitting. Even for those with severe COPD, the rate of decline came down 50% after one year of not smoking.

Those who need more motivation to quit smoking besides the obvious reasons of saving money, getting rid of that smoker's cough and not smelling like smoke, here's what happens when you quit smoking.

Changes within 24 to 72 hours

Smoking causes the blood vessels to constrict, and within 24 hours of stubbing out that last butt, the constriction starts to loosen up. The blood pressure, pulse rate and body temperature start to return to normal levels. Carbon monoxide levels also drop, and your blood oxygen levels begin to get back to normal, too. The hypertensive patients who are smokers benefit a lot as the risk of heart attack begins to drop. Food starts to taste better as your taste buds and smell receptors heal. Damaged nerve cells also start to heal, but the addiction cycle kicks in hard. This is generally the hardest time for cravings, but those cravings start to decrease as nicotine receptors in your brain start to change. Within a month, nicotine receptors drop to a normal level.

Gender stereotypes shape youth’s future regarding political participation

Agencies

A team of researchers at the University of Bologna found that gender roles absorbed at an early age seem to have shaped today's youth regarding their involvement in politics, in line with traditional stereotypes. The study was conducted amongst adolescents and young adults aged between 15 and 30 in Italy, within the Horizon 2020 project: 'CATCH-EyoU. Processes in Youth's Construction of Active EU Citizenship'.

In their research article, published in the peer-reviewed, open-access scientific journal Social Psychological Bulletin, the research team reported that it is young males that would more often engage directly with politics, like enrolling in a political party, acting to influence government policy, contacting a politician or taking part in a protest. On the other hand, young females would rather opt for civic activities, such as volunteering, charities, religious-based initiatives, boycotting etc. Interestingly, previous research has attributed the higher level of political participation amongst males to women generally having lower incomes and access to education and the fact they are generally busier with housework and caring for the family. However, by controlling for educational and socioeconomic background, the new study concludes the reason behind the gender gaps is rather the roles the society has been instilling in the survey's participants from an early age.

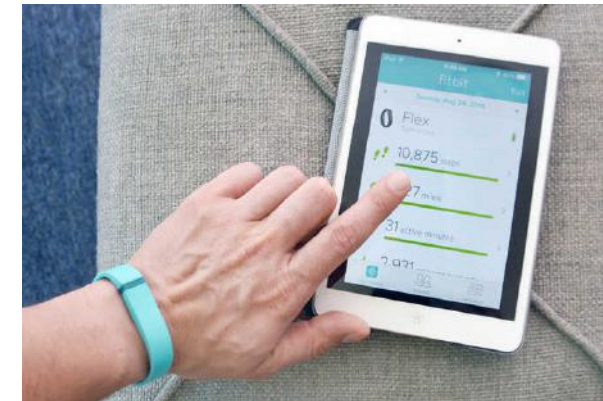
The researchers explain that, culturally, traits like autonomy, leadership, self-affirmation and dominance are seen as manlike, and as such, they are taught to boys through all possible channels, including family, school, peers and the media. As a result, later on, these boys are likely to feel more confident in expressing their political views and taking actions to defend them. "The findings suggest that reducing the gender gap in political participation requires to give girls from an early age the opportunity to exercise leadership, experience a sense of agency and gain a critical awareness of the constraints and barriers they face as women to overcome them. Educational programs on gender equality, Youth Participatory Action Research, and girls' empowerment projects may serve to this scope," comment the authors of the study.

Nevertheless, gender gaps in voter turnout are effectively non-existing, according to the study. This has been true for the last European parliamentary elections, national parliamentary elections, and local elections. In fact, in Italy, gender gaps in voter turnout have been negligible ever since women were allowed to vote. However, the reasons why women and men vote might be quite different, speculate the researchers. While men might have the desire to cast their votes simply because it's a logical part of their political behaviour, in women, it might rather be a case of exercising the stereotypical role of a woman, associated with stronger feelings for civic duty, conscientiousness and proneness to abiding by the rules.

"Studying youth engagement is highly informative because participation at a young age is conducive to future engagement in one's life course," says the team in conclusion. "Future research should further examine the evolution of gender differences over time, their causes and effects among younger generations, as well as their impact on political equality." The researchers further said, "While the current era of the #metoo movement suggests that gender dynamics may be undergoing new and promising social changes toward greater female involvement, the existing data on the persistence of gender gaps in participation among youth—also confirmed by our results—poses important questions on the factors that determine differential preferences for specific typologies of actions by men and women."



Fitbit app to let you know if you snore loudly



Agencies

The latest version of activity trackers and wearables maker Fitbit's app will help detect nighttime snoring and noise along with various other sleep features. With Fitbit 3.42 rolling out via the Play Store, Google's acquired health app is preparing for the trackers to be used to help determine why you might not be sleeping well or feeling unrested in the morning. With "Snore & Noise Detect" enabled, Fitbit will turn its micro-

phone on when it detects that the users have fallen asleep, then begin listening to the ambient noise including your potential snoring, 9To5Google reported. Disregarding any detected snores, Fitbit will also be able to tell how loud the ambient noise is in the bedroom, on a scale of "very quiet" to "very loud". Fitbit is also working on another sleep-related feature, entitled "Your sleep animal". Unlike snore detection, things seem to still be very early in development as most of the relevant text is currently a placeholder, the report said. The company recently announced that it is finally rolling out support for two-factor authentication (2FA). Fitbit users on Android and iOS are beginning to see a "Increase your security" prompt that explains how "two-factor authentication gives you an extra layer of protection". Fitbit's 2FA system sees codes sent to the user's phone via SMS. It's not the most secure method, given carrier spoofing, but better than nothing at this point.

Scientists discover solution to measure harmful plastic particles in human sewage

Agencies

In order to determine how best to measure hidden and potentially dangerous plastics in human sewage, during a recent study, scientists conducted research on wastewater. The study was published in the journal Analytical and Bioanalytical Chemistry. As the way microplastics are measured and counted varies from place to place, there is no agreed understanding of the weight of the problem. Until scientists can agree on one way of measuring them, life on land and sea will continue to ingest who knows how much plastic, affecting health for generations. A new study, by the University of Portsmouth, has examined one method, using a chemical solution called 'Fenton reagent' to remove organic matter from sewage. It found it has significant advantages in processing times and costs over other currently available methods of testing. Project Lead Dr Fay Couceiro, Senior Research Fellow in Biogeochemistry at the University of Portsmouth, said, "Multiple digestions with Fenton reagent involves mixing the sewage with hydrogen peroxide and iron sulphide multiple times to breakdown the organic matter. When followed by density separation, where you float off the plastics from everything else, it provides a cleaner sample so the size and type of microplastic can be determined with much less interference."

Professor Steve Fletcher, Director of the University's Revolution Plastics initiative, said, "Having some idea of the amount of microplastics in the environment is key to understanding and stopping the potential harmful impacts that this new category of emerging pollutants could have on life on earth. The need for protocols that are robust, simple and reliable together with their standardisation are of crucial importance in the fight against plastic pollution."

The study targeted the detection of microplastics in the sub-hundred-micron size range, which often gets missed because of their tiny size, yet they have potentially higher health risks associated with them. This size of the particle also has limited data available from previous wastewater research. To show the value of this method, samples of raw sewage, final effluent and sludge were mixed with two different

sizes and types of microplastics. The multiple digestion with Fenton reagent method showed good recovery of the added microplastics. Considering the various stages required for the separation of microplastics, time is a limiting factor in sample processing. The multiple digestion using Fenton reagent is an inexpensive and time-efficient procedure compared to other currently available methods when analysing large numbers of samples.

Dr Couceiro said, "The Fenton reagent method used in this study has huge potential for bringing about a much-needed standardisation of the measuring of microplastics. Without being able to compare and contrast concentrations of microplastics, our ability to make significant strides forward in limiting



Multiple digestions with Fenton reagent involves mixing the sewage with hydrogen peroxide and iron sulphide multiple times to breakdown the organic matter. When followed by density separation, where you float off the plastics from everything else, it provides a cleaner sample so the size and type of microplastic can be determined with much less interference

pollution will be restricted. We would welcome further research that could investigate other types of plastics and the recovering of even smaller plastic particles."

Indian Systems of Medicine & Homeopathic Department of (AYUSH) District Anantnag. AYUSH Immune Booster Medicine Distributed at Village Pachward from AYUSH Health & wellness Center Batkoot Anantnag UT.



On 31/05/2021 Following the protocol of Ayush department Ministry of Ayush GOI and the order of Director ISM J&K Dr Mohan Singh just and by the guidelines of ADMO MADAM Dr. Nuzhat Bashir & District Nodal officer Ayush Dr.Mir Javaid Hussain sahib an awareness programme and distribution of immune booster medicines was organized at at Village Pachward from AYUSH Health & wellness Center Batkoot Anantnag about 407 beneficiaries received immunity boosting drugs also were briefed about importance of Ayush immunity boosters in enhancement of human immunity to combat Covid 19 panoramic along other importance preventive measures.

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OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, CONSTRUCTION DIVISION
UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR
NAAC Accredited Grade "A+" | HAZRATBAL, SRINAGAR-190006

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

For and on behalf of the University e-tenders (in Single Cover System) are invited on item rate basis from approved and eligible Electrical Contractors registered with J&K State Govt., PD/ PW Departments, Railways and other State/ Central Governments for the following work:-

S. No	Name of Work	Estimated Cost of the work (In Lacs)	Cost of tender document (In Rs.) In shape of E-Challan	Time allowed for completion of the work	Time and Date for Submission of E-Tender	Time and Date of Opening of Bid	Class of Contract
1.	Re-Electrification of Classrooms and Conference Hall in the Department of Earth Science at main Campus.	2.30	Rs.100/-	01-Month	28-05-2021 To 07-06-2021 (6.00PM)	08-06-2021 (11.00AM)	"AAY"
2.	Electrical Wiring and allied works for Servo Stabilizers in the Department of Arabic at Main Campus.	0.88	Rs.100/-	20-Days	28-05-2021 To 07-06-2021 (6.00PM)	08-06-2021 (11.00AM)	"AAY"

The bid forms and other details can be downloaded from the website www.kashmiruniversity.net / www.jktenders.gov.in

No: Gen-31/21

Sd/- Executive Engineer

از نیابت قلم آباد
مضمون کاغذات درخواست منجانب ازاد حسین ڈار ولد عبدال الغفار ڈار ساکنہ پرونگروماور بمراء عطا یگی بیکوار ڈار ایراسٹرٹیکٹ تحت 294 SRO

اشتہار بمراء آگاہی ہر خاص وعام

معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں درخواست سائل دفتر ہذا میں زیر کارروئی ہے اس سلسلے میں پٹواری حالت سے رپورٹ بشمول ریکارڈ طلب کیا گیا ہے جس سے عیاں ہے کہ سائل موضع پرونگروماور میں رہائش پذیر ہے سٹرٹیکٹ ایجرا کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ یوم اندر دفتر ہذا میں پیش کرے معیا وگرنے بعد کو کئی بھی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا نائب تحصیلدار sult

از نیابت قلم آباد
مضمون کاغذات درخواست منجانب فرقان عاشق ڈار ولد عاشق احمد دار ساکنہ پرونگروماور بمراء عطا یگی بیکوار ڈار ایراسٹرٹیکٹ تحت 294 SRO

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CONDOLANCES

With utmost grief and sorrow, Turey News agency Shopian offers heart felt condolences to the bereaved family of senior journalist Gulzar Bhat of Shopian whose father Muhammad Yousuf Bhat, an editor of weekly urdu Awami Moazin breath his last on wee hours of Sunday at SKIMS Soura.

Turey News agency is with the bereaved family in these tough times and they also prayed for the departed soul.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost the RC of my motorcycle bearing Regd No: JK22A 1404 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 office of the ARTO Shopian within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Ayaz Ahamd Malik
S/O Mohd Ashraf Malik
R/O Saidapora Bala Shopian

ast

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER BUDGAM KASHMIR

NOTICE

Where a application for transfer of ownership has been recieved from one. Shri : Ali Mohd Najar S/o: Late Ghulam Hassan Najar R/o: Chana Mohallah Budgam (Transferor) of LMV Alto 800. Vehicle bearing registration number JK04C - 6163. Chasis number 473837 Engine no. 5257507 Model 2014, in favour of Shri.. Towfeeq Hussain Malik S/o. Ghulam Hussain Malik R/o Wakherwan Pulwama (Tranferree) as well as HPA cancellation with M/S J & K Bank B/U Budgam also required. Now therefore it is notified for the information of the general public that objections if any to the proposed transfer of ownership shall be filed in writing in the office of the Assistant Regional Transport office ARTO Budgam within a period of 12 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper No. ARTO/ BUDGAM.605 Dated 31/05/2021 Assistant Regional Transport officer Budgam Kashmir

ber JK04C - 6163. Chasis number 473837 Engine no. 5257507 Model 2014, in favour of Shri.. Towfeeq Hussain Malik S/o. Ghulam Hussain Malik R/o Wakherwan Pulwama (Tranferree) as well as HPA cancellation with M/S J & K Bank B/U Budgam also required. Now therefore it is notified for the information of the general public that objections if any to the proposed transfer of ownership shall be filed in writing in the office of the Assistant Regional Transport office ARTO Budgam within a period of 12 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper No. ARTO/ BUDGAM.605 Dated 31/05/2021 Assistant Regional Transport officer Budgam Kashmir

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Centre Yet To Make A 'Final Call' On Second Wave's Impact On Economy: FM

Agencies

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has said the Centre is continuing to assess the impact of the second wave on the Indian economy and will adopt a wait and watch mode before rolling out



any stimulus package. "We are continuing the process of assessing, but it is going to be drastically different from one week to the other. Every week, the inputs are going to be fairly different," she said in an interview to TOI.

In response to the criticism that a large stimulus is not being unveiled by the government, she said one must give time for the proposals announced in the Union Budget earlier this year to "go down to the people." "The budget, which is designed for a Covid-affected economy, will have to go down to the people. We are not even taking that on board, and we have started talking about where is the big deal stimulus? The budget itself is designed keeping necessity (for a stimulus)," she said, hinting that the rumoured stimulus package might take more time before it is announced.

"Many of the schemes which were announced during Atmanirbhar Bharat are still being used... So, there are quite a few Atma Nirbhar announcements which are active. Setting up wellness centres in rural areas, agricultural infrastructure and so on. Last year, we increased the budget

for MGNREGA when there was demand. If necessary, I will give more but there is not that much demand, meaning the kind of increase that we saw last year is not there. Post-corona, when labour is returning, it is negotiating based on the skills acquired. So, there are things happening and that is why I said that we have not made a final call on what is the impact of the second wave yet on the economy," the finance minister explained.

For sectors such as tourism and hospitality, which have been hit particularly hard, she said she had tried her best in the pre-Budget time. "We had extensive consultations but couldn't bring a formulation which could work. In fact even during the final days we met hoteliers but we couldn't arrive at a formulation. However, we did open up the ECLGS for smaller hoteliers. I fully recognise that hotels, tourism, hospitality and all the contact-based industries have suffered," Sitharaman said.

The finance minister also said that no amount of preparation would have prepared the country for the devastating second wave. "But the speed with which it spread and the intensity with which it spread, all within a matter of 10-15 days, no amount of preparation could have been adequate. I am not saying this because I am in government and therefore I want to defend it. I am not giving a "Bachao", I am not giving a saving statement. States, Centre, private hospitals, medical fraternity, who would have imagined the extent (and) intensity with which it came and the speed with which it spread? Since October, money has been given for oxygen in hospitals and for beds and other infrastructure. Work is going on," she said.

Government Extends Monthly GST Return Filing Deadline To June 26

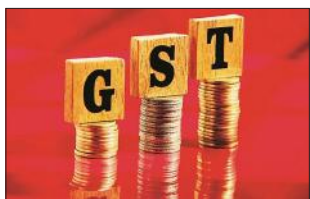
The government on Monday said the deadline for filing monthly GST sales returns for May has been extended by 15 days till June 26.

The GST Council, chaired by the Union Finance Minister and comprising state counterparts, on May 28 had decided to extend certain compliance relaxations on account of COVID-19.

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) in a series of tweets listed out the various relaxations extended by the Council.

The due date for furnishing details of outward supplies in Form GSTR-1 for the month of May 2021 is extended by 15 days. The extended due date is June 26, CBIC said.

Businesses file GSTR-1, giving details of supplies made during the month, by the 11th day of the subsequent month. For payment of Goods and Services Tax (GST), Form GSTR-3B is filed by businesses in a staggered manner be-



tween 20th-24th day of the succeeding month.

The GST Council also approved extending by three months till July 31 the due date for filing annual returns for fiscal 2020-21 by composition dealers.

"Due date for furnishing annual return in Form GSTR-4 for FY 2020-21 to be extended to July 31, 2021," CBIC said, adding relevant notifications to give effect to these relaxations would be issued in due course.

Also, taxpayers who are registered under the Companies Act have been permitted to furnish GST returns by using Electronic Verification Code (EVC) instead of Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) till August 31, 2021. -PTI

Kumar Advocates Establishment Of Organic Markets In All Districts Of Kashmir



KO NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR:- Principal Secretary Agriculture Production and Farmer's Welfare Department, Navin Kumar Choudhary, today inaugurated an organic vegetable sale outlet at Lalmandi Srinagar.

Vice Chancellor, SKUAST-K, Professor J. P. Sharma, was also present on the occasion.

Principal Secretary visited different stalls of organic vegetables and other produce from the allied sectors. He interacted with the farmers from different districts of the valley and had feedback regarding their success stories.

Navin Choudhary, while addressing on the occasion, emphasised collective approach of SKUAST, department of Agriculture, JKHPMC and allied de-

partments to achieve the goal of doubling farmers' income by 2022. He highlighted the importance of a multi-dimensional and vibrant marketing strategy so that the farmers could get remunerative returns for their labour and efforts. He added that such organic markets should be opened at all districts and promoted in an accessible manner.

Vice Chancellor SKUAST-K said the University will provide all the essential support to the line departments in every effort they are making for prosperity of the farming community. He said the SKUAST is working in close coordination with the department of Agriculture and allied departments.

Earlier, Director Agriculture, Kashmir, Choudhary Mohammad Iqbal, gave a detailed presenta-

tion on various activities being carried out by the department towards promotion of organic cultivation in the valley.

Meanwhile, various progressive farmers were awarded with the certificate of appreciation for their outstanding performance in the field of organic agriculture.

Later, MD JKHPMC presented a three pronged strategy adopted by the Corporation for overall welfare of the farming community.

The program was also attended by Director Horticulture, Kashmir, Aijaz Ahmad Bhat, Director Sericulture, Kashmir, Manzoor Ahmad Qudri, Joint Directors of Agriculture Department, Chief Agriculture Officers, senior officers of the department and progressive Organic Vegetable Growers of valley.

VICE CHANCELLOR SKUAST-K SAID THE UNIVERSITY WILL provide all the essential support to the line departments in every effort they are making for prosperity of the farming community. He said the SKUAST is working in close coordination with the department of Agriculture and allied departments.

Business Confidence In India Plunges Due To Second Wave: FICCI Survey

Agencies

The overall business confidence in India has plunged due to the devastating effect of the second wave of COVID-19 in the country. As a result, the overall Business Confidence Index nosedived and stood at 51.5 in the current round after reporting a decadal high value of 74.2 in the previous survey round, according to the latest round of FICCI's Business Confidence Survey.

Worsening current conditions, muted expectations about the near-term prospects on the back of a sweeping second wave of coronavirus infections pulled down the overall index value by over 20 points vis-a-vis the previous survey was.

At the same time, the Overall Business Confidence Index was higher than the value of 42.9 (which was the lowest since the financial crisis) registered a year back.

About 70 per cent participants reported weak demand conditions as a bothering factor in the current survey as compared to 56 per cent stating the same in the previous round. The corresponding number a last year was 77 per cent. Furthermore, participants in the survey cited increasing raw material costs as a major bothersome factor for the fourth consecutive survey



round. About 65 per cent of them stated higher raw material costs as a constraining factor in the present survey as compared to 59 per cent stating likewise in the previous round.

"With household income being severely impacted and past savings already drawn down during the first wave of infections, demand conditions are expected to remain weak for longer this time around. Since a much larger proportion of the population has been impacted in the current wave, there has been permanent impairment to income for many households who have faced job losses or have lost bread earners to COVID-19. Measures to support demand revival will be crucial for the economy to recover from the latest pandemic induced shock. Moreover, pace of vaccination must be significantly increased for achieving faster normalisation," FICCI said.

On the fiscal side, "companies unanimously felt the need for another

fiscal package", focusing majorly on addressing the demand side, it added.

Demand boosting measures such as direct income support to rural as well as urban poor, income tax reductions for the middle class, and temporary reductions in indirect taxes must be urgently considered, the survey suggested.

Further, it said that only 19 per cent of respondents were optimistic about better hiring prospects over the next two quarters.

Export prospects are also worsened noticeably in the current round with only 27 per cent of respondents indicating higher outbounds shipments.

Participants said that only a massive vaccination drive could decouple India's economy from another pandemic-induced shock.

In addition, it said, the government must provide employment-based incentives to employers to avert any job losses and this could include temporary fiscal support towards payments of salary for employees in the MSME (Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises) sector and/or exempt employers' contribution to PF and ESI for the current fiscal year.

The survey was conducted during April-May and gauges the expectations of the respondents for April to September.

Fuel Prices At Record High After 16Th Hike In A Month

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Diesel price on Monday went past the Rs 98-a-litre mark in a few places of Rajasthan as a relentless increase in fuel prices took rates to record-high levels. Petrol price was increased by 29 paise per litre and diesel by 26 paise a litre, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers.

The increase - 16th this month - pushed petrol and diesel prices to a fresh all-time high across the country.

Sri Ganganagar district of Rajasthan saw petrol price climb to Rs 105.24 a litre and diesel to Rs 98.08 per litre.

Fuel prices differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes such as VAT and freight charges. Rajasthan levies the highest value-added tax (VAT) on petrol in the country, followed by Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.

In Delhi, petrol comes for Rs 94.23 per litre and diesel is priced at Rs 85.15 a litre.

The price of petrol, which had already crossed the Rs



100-mark in several cities in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, breached the psychological barrier in Mumbai on Saturday.

Petrol now costs Rs 100.47 a litre in Mumbai and diesel comes for Rs 92.45 per litre.

The increase in Monday is the 16th increase in prices since May 4, when state-owned oil firms ended an 18-day hiatus in rate revision they observed during assembly elections in states like West Bengal.

In 16 increases, petrol price has risen by Rs 3.83 per litre and diesel by Rs 4.42.

Oil companies revise rates of petrol and diesel daily based on the average price of benchmark fuel in the international market in the preceding 15-days, and foreign exchange rates.

Food, Fertiliser Bills Push Govt Subsidy Up Three Times In FY21

Agencies

The Union government overshot its expenditure on subsidies in 2020-21 by 11 per cent despite paying less on account of petroleum and fertiliser subsidies. In 2019-20, it had managed to keep its



subsidy at 98 per cent of the revised estimates for the year.

The increase in total subsidy outgo was primarily because it paid more on account of food subsidy which overshot the estimates by 24 per cent or Rs 1 trillion. The government spent Rs 5.3 trillion in food subsidies during the pandemic hit last year which was more than fivefold increase over 2019-20 when it spent Rs 1.08 trillion on this account.

According to figures released by the Controller General of Accounts on Monday, among all the major subsidies, it was petroleum subsidy at Rs 36,178.43 crore, which was the lowest at 93 per cent of the revised estimates presented in the General Budget in February 2021. This implies that petroleum subsidy on cooking fuel LPG and kerosene was less than what was estimated despite the Atmanirbhar package, which gave beneficiaries three free cylinders under Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana. In the current year, the government anticipates no spending on kerosene subsidy since consumers have moved to LPG-based cooking. Those who

have LPG connections do not get any subsidised kerosene under the government policy.

By contrast, food subsidy overshot FY2021 revised estimate by a highest 24.3 per cent because of payment of dues to Food Corporation of India during the year. The government had earlier planned to pay them in the current 2021-22. "This suggests a cushion of Rs. 1.0 trillion in FY2022 within the budgeted level of expenditure, which will help to absorb the already announced costs related to free foodgrain and fertiliser subsidy, as well as the expected enhancement in the MGNREGA allocation that may be needed following the second Covid surge," said Aditi Nayar, chief economist, ICRA.

According to a CARE Ratings analysis, there has been a sharp increase in the spending towards subsidies aggregating Rs 4.6 trillion in the quarter ending March 2021 as against the previous quarter when it was Rs 0.7 trillion. "Total subsidies for the full year have almost tripled during FY21 compared with the previous year owing to payment of dues to FCI towards foodgrains which was announced in Budget 2021-22 and higher payment towards fertiliser subsidies," said the analysis.

Both the nutrient based fertiliser subsidy and urea subsidy, were, however, lower at 96 per cent and 95 per cent of the revised estimates during 2020-21. The government, therefore, managed to save Rs 6,026 crore during the year in fertiliser subsidy. Both these subsidies were 58 per cent higher in 2020-21 than what was paid in 2019-20. The increase was because of high fertiliser prices.

SHORT TAKES

Regulate Unorganised Tobacco Trade

NEW DELHI: Consumer Online Foundation (COF), Patient Safety & Access Initiative of India Foundation (PSAIIIF), The AWARE CONSUMER (TAC) and Healthy You Foundation in association with PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI), on the occasion of 'World No Tobacco Day' organised a webinar on Monday to deliberate on protecting the consumers who are getting victimised under the influence of NGOs of western countries and consuming spurious and inferior quality tobacco products.

The webinar also discussed the amendments proposed in the COTPA law by the Ministry of Health of Family Welfare and its impact on consumers and livelihoods of retailers who are reeling under the attack of the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The illustrious panel comprising

consumer policy experts, scientists, healthcare professionals, farmer leaders, academicians, and people representatives among others unanimously recommended regulation on the unorganised tobacco trade in India and called for equitable taxation policies across all types of tobacco products to ensure quality products are available to consumers.

It also suggested a symmetrical increase in taxes across all types of untaxed tobacco products which are widely available in the form of chewing tobacco, gutkha, pan masala variants, zarda etc and affecting the health of the consumers. These products are consumed by the poorer section in India due to their affordability and accessibility in the absence of any regulations and taxation.

Failure to bring them under the ambit of a uniform tax structure defeats the purpose of a tobacco

control programme. Bringing in appropriate regulations and ensuring that all tobacco products will equitably not only reduce its consumption or ensure superior quality product is offered to consumers but will also fetch additional revenues to the government.

India consumes 596 million kgs of tobacco of which only about 52 million kgs i.e., 9 per cent is consumed in the form of duty paid cigarettes while the rest 91 per cent of the tobacco consumption is in various other forms like bidi, khaini, gutka, chewing tobacco, illegal cigarettes, zarda, snuff, cheroot, etc. Also, internationally 90 per cent of tobacco consumption is in the form of cigarettes with India accounting for less than 2 per cent of global cigarette consumption. Our country accounts for 84 per cent of the world's tobacco consumption in a



smokeless form.

Stressing on the need to avoid the adoption of any coercive tobacco control measures, under the influence of vested interests, to force stop consumers from consuming tobacco products, the expert panel observed that measures proposed under the COTPA Amendment Bill 2020 may not induce any significant change in tobacco consumption behavior of people.

Instead, consumers will feel that they will start consuming more tobacco as they will be forced to

buy full packs or switch over to other forms of tobacco like smokeless products which are of inferior quality. Noting that the unemployment rate in the country has already gone up to 14.7 per cent as per the latest data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) for the week ended May 23, the panel further opined that such draconian measures will only benefit e-commerce and modern retail outlets at the cost of small retailers who are already under duress due to COVID induced lockdown in dif-

ferent parts of the country.

Advocating the rights of the consumers, Prof Bejon Kumar Misra, Founder Director, PSAIIIF and Founder Trustee, COF said, "Eventually, it is the aware consumer who will decide what to consume and what not to consume. Till such time there is demand for tobacco products, the government has no right to deny customers the product as otherwise, they will find illegal ways to source the product. So, the government should focus on ensuring the availability of the right quality product to customers in an authentic manner."

Given India's tobacco consumption pattern, which is predominant in the form of chewing tobacco, the government should give priority to regulating the unbranded and illegal tobacco products. The thrust of its awareness programme should be in the villages and tier-3 towns instead of big cities where consumers are already aware," he added.

Citing PRAHAR's recent research

to understand the likely impact of the proposed COTPA Amendment Bill 2020 on consumers and retailers, Mr Abhay Raj Mishra, President, PRAHAR (Public Response Against Helplessness and Action for Redressal) stated, "The amendments under the COTPA law will increase tobacco consumption amongst the consumers instead of curbing it. The online survey involving 1,968 respondents across the country revealed that 87 per cent of the participants are of the view that the proposal to stop the sale of loose cigarettes is self-defeating. It observed that 57 per cent of consumers buy loose cigarettes to control smoking and the ban will force them to buy full packs making cigarettes readily available in the hands of consumers leading to increased smoking. A total of 55 per cent of the respondents felt that they will not be able to make an informed choice with regard to tobacco products through in-store branding and will end up buying a low-quality product." -IANS

CS Asks Officials To Bring Positivity Rate Below 2%

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Calling the district administrations to remain focused on working towards bringing the positivity rate below 2% by the second half of the month, the Jammu and Kashmir Chief Secretary Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta on Monday laid emphasis on optimal utilization of panchayat-level COVID care centres to provide timely medical care to patients in rural areas.

Chairing a maiden meeting with Divisional Commissioners of Jammu, Kashmir, Inspector Generals of Police, Deputy Inspector Generals of Police, Deputy Commissioners and District SPs, the Chief Secretary took stock of progress achieved with regard to COVID mitigation, implementation of district

development plans, completion of works identified under 'Back to Village' programme and redressal of public grievances, an official spokesperson said.

Mehta, he said, reviewed the progress achieved in containing the spread of COVID infections in Jammu and Kashmir and asked the district administrations to remain focused on working towards bringing the positivity rate below 2% by the second half of the month.

"He laid emphasis on optimal utilization of panchayat-level COVID care centres to provide timely medical care to patients in rural areas," the official spokesperson said.

"The Deputy Commissioners were asked to immediately submit the lists of beneficiaries to be given financial relief under

the new scheme Saksham which envisages extension of pension/scholarship benefits to the families that lost their breadwinners to COVID," he added.

He further said that the Chief Secretary laid down the priorities of the government and said that the outcome of various welfare measures, schemes and programmes must be a reflection of local needs and demands. He added that a robust monitoring mechanism will be followed to measure the progress.

"Regarding district development plans, the districts were asked to submit the documents immediately so that approval is granted latest by 10th June for early implementation and completion of proposed works," the official spokesperson said.

He said that Mehta also

directed to expedite completion of works identified under 'Back to Village' programme, and asked the concerned to display village wise lists of newly created assets at prominent places for general awareness of the residents of the area with a view of promoting public ownership of the infrastructure.

As per the official spokesperson, the Chief Secretary also said that the administration must remain sensitive to the issues of general public and proactively engage with them at regular intervals.

"The people-first approach of the UT administration must be reflected by the greater involvement of masses in the project identification and grievance redressal processes," Mehta said, as per the official spokesperson.

COVID VACCINATION

Govt Refutes Media Reports On CoWIN Booking Woes As 'Baseless And Incorrect'

Press trust of India

New Delhi: The Union Health Ministry on Monday refuted as "baseless and incorrect" some media reports suggesting that even a successful booking on the CoWIN platform for a vaccination slot does not assure one of a COVID-19 jab.

The CoWIN platform facilitates registration, scheduling of appointments, vaccination and certification of beneficiary. Availability of slots on CoWIN portal is based on the vaccination schedule published by the District Immunization Officer (DIO)/Session site in-charge which in turn depends upon availability of vaccines, the ministry said in a statement.

"There have been some media reports suggesting that even a successful booking on the CoWIN platform for a vaccination slot does not assure

one of a Covid-19 vaccine jab. These reports are baseless and incorrect, not supported by full information on the matter," the ministry said.

It was noticed that in some cases the DIOs were publishing a session and then in case vaccines were in short supply, they used to cancel such sessions or return the beneficiaries.

"This definitely caused inconvenience to such beneficiaries who booked their appointments for such vaccination centres/sessions. To remove this problem, CoWIN has now provided the feature for rescheduling of vaccination sessions so that the DIO does not have to cancel the sessions," the statement said.

Provision has also been made that pre-booked appointments for a session, also get rescheduled when a session is rescheduled.

In such cases now the

beneficiary shall not have taken a fresh appointment. The beneficiaries shall also receive an SMS informing them about rescheduling of their session.

The system still provides the option of rescheduling/cancellation of an appointment to the beneficiaries, the ministry said.

States and union territories have been advised that they should publish vaccination slots based on the availability of vaccines, the statement said.

The Union Government has also instructed all states and UTs to give preference to beneficiaries with online appointments than to on-site registrations.

The Government of India has been supporting the efforts of states and UTs towards vaccinating all people aged 18 years and above with priority being given to the healthcare and frontline workers, the statement said.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Markets Reopen

ply at 50 per cent of the seating capacity in the Orange category districts, it remained shut in the Red category districts.

With the grim Covid pandemic situation appearing to be on the ebb in the last two weeks in the Union Territory, the administration on Sunday began the process of easing out the lockdown, limiting the corona curfew to nights and weekends only.

The ease-out process was launched amid the ease positivity rate falling to 6.2 per cent from 13 and the daily COVID-19 sliding down to an all-time high of 5,500 to 2,200 in the past two weeks.

While deciding to relax the corona curfew, the Jammu and Kashmir 'State' Executive Committee (JKSEC), however, opted to keep all educational institutions, including the private coaching centres, closed till June 15.

It also opted to keep all cinema halls, multiplexes, clubs, gyms, spas and paid parks closed till further orders.

Half of the 10 districts in Kashmir valley -- Pulwama, Anantnag, Baramulla, Budgam and Kupwara -- have been classified as Red, while the other half -- Srinagar, Shopian, Ganderbal, Kulgam and Bandipora -- belong to the Orange category.

Meanwhile, policemen in Jammu were seen making rounds of the partially opened markets and asking people to follow Covid-appropriate behaviour strictly, especially maintaining social distance and wearing of face masks.

"We are not out of COVID-19 as yet. Please keep in mind your safety and the safety of others by following the guidelines properly, a policeman, using the public address system fitted in his patrolling vehicle, said while moving through Shalimar market in Jammu city.

The commuters, however, faced difficulties due to the absence of public transport as only State Road Transport Corporation (SRTC) vehicles and three-wheelers were seen playing on different routes.

The private transporters went on an indefinite strike on April 21 after the government came out with COVID-19 guidelines which among other things allowed operations of public transport at 50 per cent of the authorised seating capacity in Jammu and Kashmir.

"We have been demanding a hike in passenger fare to facilitate smooth operations by the economically-hit industry but the government paid no heed. We are meeting again tomorrow (Tuesday) to make a decision, All J-K Transport Welfare Association chairman T S Wazir said.

Appealing to the government to take the demands of the private transporters into consideration, he said it is not feasible for them to ply their vehicles as the fuel prices are skyrocketing and the transporters have already suffered huge losses since the outbreak of the pandemic.

According to the new guidelines, the complete corona night curfew will remain imposed from 8 pm to 7 am, while there will be a weekend curfew from 8 pm Friday till 7 am Monday.

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

The curfew, which was first imposed till May 3, was then extended after assessing the situation across the Union Territory.

J&K Sees 1525

infection across the Union Territory during the last 24 hours.

Officials said 20 more people died of Covid-19 in Jammu division while 17 others succumbed at the various healthcare facilities in the Valley thus taking the total number of fatalities since the outbreak of pandemic in J&K last year to 3907.

Among others, the officials said the victims from Jammu division included a 66-year-old man from Bajalta, a 64-year-old man from Raipur Bantalab, a 75-year-old man from Shastri Nagar, an 88-year-old man from Shakti Nagar, an 80-year-old man and a 75-year-old woman from Sarwal, an 84-year-old Talab Tillo Nagar, a 78-year-old from Rehari Colony and an 85-year-old man from RS Pura Jammu.

An 80-year-old man from Samboora in Pulwama and a 71-year-old man from Wasoora Anantnag were among the victims from the Valley.

Regarding the fresh cases, the officials said that 1000 were reported from Kashmir Valley and the remaining 525 from Jammu division, taking the total number of people infected by the virus in J&K to 290465.

Giving district-wise details, the officials

said that Srinagar reported 253, Baramulla 102, Budgam 121, Pulwama 77, Kupwara 181, Anantnag 88, Bandipora 35, Ganderbal 46, Kulgam 65, Shopian 32, Jammu 278, Udhampur 25, Rajouri 40, Doda 64, Kathua 13, Samba 6, Kishtwar 14, Poonch 29, Ramban 36 and Reasi 20 fresh cases of Covid-19.

Moreover, officials said, 4070 more COVID-19 patients have recovered—1801 from Jammu Division and 2269 from Kashmir.

Vaccine Deadline

Administrative Department (GAD), the Administrative Secretaries have been asked to ensure vaccination of employees above the age of 45 years in response to the circular issued in April this year.

"Since, vaccination against the COVID-19 disease is now available for the age group of 18 years and above, it is imperative that entire staff working in the Civil Secretariat, Jammu/ Srinagar gets vaccinated immediately," reads the order issued by Commissioner Secretary GAD Manoj Kumar Dwivedi.

"Accordingly, it is impressed upon all Administrative Secretaries to ensure vaccination of all the employees working in their Administrative Departments by 10th of June, 2021 and submit a report in this regard on 11th of June, 2021 to the General Administration

Department."

Train Service

authorities said that the cancellation of train service between Baramulla and Banihal has been extended till June 09.

"The UT of Jammu and Kashmir has extended the cancellation of train service in J&K from Baramulla to Banihal section and vice-versa up to 09-06-2021. All concerned note and act accordingly," reads the order.

Admin Puts Ball

Health and concerned departments. The meeting among others was also attended by heads of various tour, travel, traders, transporters and tourism bodies besides representatives from other related associations.

The Div Com, as per official spokesperson said that despite the positivity rate in most of the districts of Kashmir still above 5 percent, the government unlocked the corona curfew in a phased manner for relief to the people hit during the lockdown period.

"The Div Com appealed to people in general and shopkeepers, public transporters and traders to ensure adherence to Covid SOPs in letter and spirit," he said.

"He emphasized that shopkeepers should avoid unnecessary rush at their shops and public transporters should carry only 50 percent passengers and follow the laid down guidelines religiously to ensure containment of virus," he added.

The official spokesperson further said that the Div Com further stressed on carrying out aggressive vaccination of eligible persons of targeted population and ensure 100 percent coverage of all priority groups including, shopkeepers, drivers, conductors, journalists, employees, persons with disabilities and other targeted groups at the earliest. Pole, he said, also directed concerned to set up vaccination booths and operate mobile vaccination centers to ensure all people associated with trade, travel and associated sectors are vaccinated as soon as possible.

"He appealed to heads of these associations to go for mass vaccination against Covid-19 virus, their employees and family members to ensure breaking of chain of transmission in the community," he said.

Quoting Pole, the official spokesperson said that unlocking restrictions shall give respite to small traders, Mohallah shopkeepers, street vendors, small eatable vendors who have been severely hit during the lockdown period, however, those traders and shopkeepers who have better financial conditions should avoid opening their shops during this period.

He further said that the Div Com rebuffed the news spread against vaccines as fake and urged people not to pay heed to any such negative information.

"He said that vaccines are safe and have high protection against the virus and getting vaccinated has become a social obligation to ensure our own safety as well as safeguarding others," the official spokesperson said.

The Div Com, he said, at the outset, took stock of district wise progress of the vaccination process from concerned DCs and instructed them to intensify the campaign to ensure 100 percent coverage of all eligible persons.

LG Calls For

need and action required for the welfare of the common man," the LG said, as per the official spokesperson.

He said that the LG reiterated that an accountable, transparent and responsive administration is the cornerstone of any good governance structure and asked the officers to remain connected with people so that maximum benefits of pro-people initiatives taken by the government percolate to the common man on the ground.

"Common people should feel the difference and I urge upon all of you to have a friendly and pro-people attitude so as to resolve their issues and grievances by strengthening grievance redressal mechanism where higher officers acknowledge and take timely objective actions on the public grievances emanating through any channel," he said, as per official spokesperson.

The LG, he said, also underlined the importance of completion of various developmental projects taken up in the region and maintained that a focused approach should be employed so that all these projects are finished within specified timelines.

"The officers have done a great job in handling the pandemic and simultaneously pushing the developmental work. Moving forward, scheduling due dates and deliverables is compulsory for every project," Sinha said, as per official spokesperson. The LG, he said, also called upon the officers to follow strict timelines in all projects and fix responsibilities for any unwarranted delays in the developmental projects in the UT, with alacrity.

The official spokesperson further said that the LG commended the efforts of Health & Medical Education and other concerned departments in managing COVID-19 pandemic in the UT and observed that J&K has handled the pandemic efficiently and effectively.

"The Lt Governor noted that the Covid related challenges are not over. Even though we have transformed healthcare infrastructure in the last 10 months, it is imperative to continue real-time, personalized communication with the public while enabling greater efficiency and better coordination amongst concerned departments," he said.

Meanwhile, the LG, he said, also appreciated the work of outgoing Chief Secretary, BVR Subrahmanyam for his contribution towards the development of J&K.

"Mr. Subrahmanyam has a high administrative acumen and he has raised the bar of administration with his dedication, honesty and commitment," Sinha said, as per official spokesperson.

Addressing the meeting, Chief Secretary Dr Arun Kumar Mehta highlighted the importance of managing COVID-19 pandemic on priority and at the same time taking forward the developmental agenda.

According to the official spokesperson, Mehta asked the officers to work out on the plan to reduce Covid positivity rate in the districts with proper implementation of Covid protocol and restrictions. He also stressed that the UT plan and district plans should be approved by 10th of June, and asked the Secretaries to speed up the work on various JKIDFC projects," he added.

"Since we have shifted to e-office, let us all speed up the process to clear files with a clear objective of maximum governance," Mehta said, as per official spokesperson.

He further said that Mehta expressed his gratitude to the outgoing Chief Secretary for his invaluable support during his tenure.

"The outgoing Chief Secretary, BVR Subrahmanyam thanked the Lt Governor and other officers, and said that it was an honor to work with such a team of brilliant officers," the official spokesperson added.

IAF Fights

known immediately but it is believed that the blaze started after the dry grass caught fire due to rising mercury.

"The exact damage caused to the green gold and the wildlife would be known only after the fire is controlled completely, a forest official said.

District Development Council (DDC) member, Ghordi, Rakesh Chander Sharma said 80 per cent of the fire was controlled and joint efforts are on to douse the flames.

"The fire has engulfed a vast forest area and the damage to wildlife is enormous. We have an endangered species of peacocks and other wild animals including leopards, deer, bears and wild pigs," Sharma, a BJP leader, said.

He said an IAF chopper joined the fire fighting operation around 7 am and had made many

sorties to douse the fire.

Sharma said the fire threatened several villages, including Gorla, Jilad and Kasoori, but hailed the local volunteers who started the fire fighting operation soon after the blaze was noticed in the forest.

Two IEDs Recovered

Panzgam, a police spokespersons said Monday. He said that IED was concealed in a container of approximately 10 litre capacity.

"The IED was subsequently got defused on the spot and thus a major tragedy was averted," he said, adding that a case FIR number 90/2021 under relevant sections of law has been registered in Police Station Awantipora and investigation initiated.

In a similar operation based on a specific credible input, the police spokesperson said that police, army's 42RR and CRPF 180 battalion conducted a search operation near Simoah Nallah of Tral.

"During the search operation, a plastic container of approximately 50-60 litre capacity containing IED material was recovered after digging at the suspected spot," he said.

He said that the explosive materials recovered from the container included Gun Powder (Ammonium powder) approximately 40-50Kg, 2 Electric Detonators, Cordex wire approximately 04mtrs and Electric Command wire approximately 100mtrs.

"By recovering such a huge quantity of explosive materials, another major tragedy was averted by police/security forces. Regarding the said incident case FIR number 59/2021 under relevant sections of law has been registered in Police Station Tral and investigation taken up," the police spokesperson added.

IAF Fights Forest

to the call of Udhampur Deputy Commissioner Indu Kanwal Chib.

The officials said the cause of the fire was not

HC Quashes 9th Class

of Hizbul Mujhideen. (He) was instrumental in strengthening militancy network in the area of Rafiabad. For his involvement in the activities, the (he) was apprehended on 07.11.2019 in connection with case FIR No.161/2019 under Sections 18, 39 of ULA(P) Act and 7/25 Arms Act registered in Police Station, Dangi-wacha," the dossier said as observed by the court.

"The detenu (Rameez) has been detained under preventive detention for his alleged involvement in subversive activities which led to the registration of FIR No.161/2019 under Sections 18, 39 of ULA(P) Act and 7/25 Arms Act. In the aforesaid FIR, (he) was released on bail by the competent court of jurisdiction on 26th of February, 2019, but instead of releasing he was detained under Public Safety Act, interestingly, did not bring the factum of detenu having been released on bail in FIR No.161/2019, to the notice of detaining authority," the court said, adding, "It is because of this omission on the part of Senior Superintendent of Police, the detaining authority has categorically stated in the grounds of the detention that the detenu was under judicial remand and that there was every likelihood of his being admitted to bail."

The District Magistrate in its order, the court said, has also noted that "there was well-founded apprehension based on report received from field information that the detenu (Rameez), if released on bail, would again indulge in subversive activities."

"...it is clear that either there is lapse on the part of police to provide all relevant material to the detaining authority or there is lack of application of mind on the part of detaining authority. The fact, however, remains that at the time of passing of the detention order, the detaining authority was not aware whether the detenu was in police/judicial custody or he stood released on bail," the court said, holding the "non-application of mind" by the district magistrate as "fatal" and "sufficient to vitiate the order of detention."

Subsequently, the court quashed the detention order and ordered Rameez's release from the preventive detention forthwith.

The court also quashed detention order of another detainee, Manzoor Ahmed Khan alias Mana Khan, son of Ama Khan of Chill Tehsil Khansahib Budgam. He was detained under the PSA by virtue of an order on 29 August 2020 passed by District Magistrate, Budgam.

"The detenu (Manzoor) was not supplied the materials relied upon by the detaining authority. The detenu was provided material in the shape of grounds of detention with no other material / documents, as referred to in the order of detention. On these counts alone, the

detention of the detenu is vitiated, the detenu having been prevented from making an effective and purposeful representation against the order of detention," the court said and ordered his release from preventive custody forthwith. (GNS)

Haji 2021: Tour Operators

companies, projects a loss of around 2500 jobs and approximately 30 crores losses in the revenue if the Covid coerces companies to maintain a jammed wheel this year.

On April 6, 2021, the Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umrah announced new guidelines for this year's pilgrimage. As per the guidelines the total number of pilgrims for this year's Hajj was capped down to 60,000 out of which 15,000 are domestic pilgrims while the world quota is set-up at 45,000.

Umer, like many of his counterparts, is lobbying the J&K administration to offer support to the Hajj and Umrah service providers saying that these potential crises bring real and profound miseries to hundreds of employees and their families.

"There are chances that India may get a quota for around 3000 pilgrims for this year's Hajj and out of that Kashmir may hardly get 600-800 seats and all of them will be travelling through Government quota." He said, adding "If rumours are to be believed then Indian Hajj Committee has decided to cancel 2021 quota of private Hajj and Umrah agencies."

Abdul Salaam, Executive Officer J&K Hajj Committee said that they haven't received any information from the Hajj Committee of India regarding the number of pilgrims from Kashmir that will be allowed to perform this year's pilgrimage.

"The selection process will commence as soon as we receive any communicate from the Central Hajj Committee," Salaam told Kashmir Observer.

On May 28, a JKAHUC delegation met Lieutenant Governor's advisor, Baseer Ahmed Khan and informed him about their "augmenting miseries", including the huge financial losses and layoffs. In the same meeting, the advisor had assured these distressed agents with a relief package, that would not only help them to restart their businesses but will also help them to evade laying-off their staff.

Talking to Kashmir Observer Mohammad Saleem Jabbar, Media Secretary JKAHUC said, "Since the early outbreak of Covid-19 followed by the subsequent lockdowns, the 200 companies registered under JKAHUC have suffered a massive loss. This has forced many companies to sack their employees as it was impossible for them to pay salaries,"

During their meet with LG's advisor, Jabbar said the delegation informed him about the vicious uncertainty for their companies' future and the blow to the general business activity caused by the incessant lockdowns.

"The delegation has requested the administration to provide soft loans to the Hajj and Umrah companies for a term of 5-10 years, rather than providing the relief packages which the administration is presently discussing," Jabbar said

"These soft-loans are the only pavement towards a position where we can evade laying-off our staff and will also help us to revive our businesses," he added.

Amid the lockdown, unlike other states of India, the J&K administration hasn't made any request to the landlords for waiving off the monthly rents of their tenants in wake of the present crisis and the brunt of which is being suffered by these companies.

"During the 2020 lockdown, many state governments made a request to the landlords for waiving-off rents but unfortunately our administration hasn't made any such request to the landlords. If the J&K administration comes up with something like that, it will help us to restart our jammed business," Jabbar said.

Behind each one of these members of the industry is a personal story of financial losses, dreams dashed, families uprooted and, in some cases many are about to shut-down their companies.

"These crises were surely unprecedented but the lamentation that followed are shocking. The situation is such that there is no information either from the State Hajj committee or the Central Haj Committee, whatever piece of information we are receiving it's just through some contacts," says the CEO of Labaika Hajj and Umrah services

"It is just a shocker to daily receive rumours that the private industry for Hajj and Umrah services may not be given quota for next 5 years as the Saudi authorities are believed to follow the same strict Hajj SOPs for next few years," he adds.



“IT WAS AN INTERESTING ONE. IT IS NOT SOMETHING that you could plan for. We were sort of informed right through. We had some pretty good people around us, the BCCI and IPL teams,” said Jamieson in a media interaction on Sunday.

Australia's IPL Contingent Reunite With Families After Completing Quarantine

Press Trust of India

SYDNEY: Amid hugs, tears of joy and relief, Australia's jumbo IPL contingent comprising players, support staff and commentators on Monday reunited with their family members after serving a 14-day hotel quarantine here.

The 38-member Australians landed in the country two weeks ago after a stopover in Maldives due to travel ban from COVID-ravaged India.

The highlight of the day was premier fast bowler Pat Cummins exiting the hotel and reuniting with his pregnant partner Becky Boston, a video of which was uploaded on Twitter by well-known Australian sports journalist Chloe-Amanda Bailey. "Video of the day! After eight

of September.

The BCCI paid for the charter flights and accommodation of the Australians in the Maldives and Sydney, and Hockley thanked the Indian board for the manner in which it helped them after the abrupt suspension of the IPL owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Fast bowler Moises Henriques was photographed leaving the Marriott hotel in Sydney.

Pacer Jason Behrendorff, who played for Chennai Super Kings in the IPL, was among those to exit quarantine.

"It was nice to know that we were getting home that's for sure," Behrendorff said.

"It's always tough being stuck somewhere and knowing that we're able to get home was a re-



weeks away for the IPL, Pat Cummins finally leaves hotel quarantine and reunites with his pregnant partner Becky. All the feels!" Bailey tweeted alongside the video.

Besides Cummins, batting maestro Steve Smith, big-hitting all-rounder Glenn Maxwell and the swashbuckling opener Dave Warner were among those who finally embraced their loved ones after nearly eight weeks away from home.

Most of them had not seen their families since heading into the Indian Premier League in early April. They were flown home via a charter flight after the IPL was postponed owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The lucrative league will now resume in the UAE in the middle

lief and now we're out of quarantine I can't wait to get home and see my family," he added.

Maxwell was seen hugging Australian teammate Marcus Stoinis after the end of their two-week quarantine.

Many of the Australian players will not be at home for long as they have been included in a 23-man squad to tour the West Indies and Bangladesh in July and August.

Five T20Is in Bangladesh were added to Australia's upcoming touring plans as part of a jam-packed schedule that will now include 13 games in under a month.

The Australians will play the five games in Bangladesh immediately after their white-ball tour of the Caribbean and could complete them in under 10 days.

'Deliver Completed Projects To Public': Advisor Khan Tells Sports Departments



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Advisor to LG, Farooq Khan chaired a sports meet on Monday and emphasised on the concerned departments to deliver all completed sports projects to public. He also asked the departments to ensure every allied facility is made available at all the sports amenities constructed by them so that competitive national events are conducted in them.

The meeting was attended by Principal Secretary Youth Services & Sports, Alok Kumar; Director General, Youth Services & Sports (YS&S), Dr. Saleem ur Rehman; Secretary JK Sports Council (JKSC), Nuzhat Gul; OSD to Advisor, Mohammad Ashraf Hakak; Engineers of the executing agencies and other officers of the sports departments.

Advisor Khan directed both the JK Sports Council and YS&S department to create the facilities that are of specifications of international standard. He asked them to approve each of such facilities created by the administrative bodies like FIFA, FIH, etc.

Advisor Khan further directed the authorities to upgrade all the facilities so that reputed sports events of nation could be conducted there. He impressed upon them to ensure having separate washrooms, fencing, parking, drinking water, watch and ward and other facilities available at each sports stadium for their proper upkeep and maintenance.

The Advisor asked the DG YS&S to identify the coaching staff to

cater to the outdoor and indoor sports stadia constructed across different districts of J&K. He further directed them to look into deputation of managerial staff to different sports facilities for managing the activities like booking, registration of players and proper utilisation of these facilities in each district.

Moreover, Advisor Khan asked them to make available the services of Physiotherapists and other turf maintenance curators at these state of art facilities for their optimum use and care. He asked them to create boarding & lodging facilities in each district for the players so that they don't have to travel much for participating in the games held there.

The Advisor further directed the authorities to identify a patch of land in consultation with divisional administration for creating mega sports complex here in Kashmir Valley on the analogy of Khel Gaon Nagrota, Jammu. He directed the executing agencies to adhere to deadlines fixed for each project and asked the officers to monitor the deadlines regularly.

He asked the departments to see for inclusion of penalty clause in their tenders against the delinquents so that there is no delay in completion of projects. He asked them to showcase which works have been done and which are pending instead of mere percentage in their progress reports.

The Advisor reviewed the progress and status of all the ongoing mega sports projects of J&K, sports projects taken up under PMDP,

maintenance of sports infrastructure created to be completed in future. He asked them to clear the past liabilities where work has been completed satisfactorily and accelerate the pace on other ongoing works without compromising on the quality of work.

The Advisor also reviewed the sports calendar for the current year and asked the departments to organise sports events throughout whole J&K. He asked them to hold events of different games in each district so that players from different games avail opportunity close to their homes.

The Principal Secretary asked both the heads of sporting departments to take up all the matters of any deadlock or severe obstacles with him so that a feasible solution is found for them. He asked them that there would be no dearth of funds or lack of administrative support for raising sports infrastructure in J&K as it has equal relevance as that of other curricular activities.

The heads of both the sports bodies apprised the Advisor about the kind of sports infrastructure raised at different places. In addition to that the status of mega-sports projects and PMDP projects was also discussed in detail.

The departments assured the Advisor that all the projects would be completed and dedicated to public till October this year. It was said that once completed these projects would remarkably change the sports arena of J&K and would help in producing world class players from here.

RCB's Kyle Jamieson Recalls 'Interesting Experience' Of Abruptly Leaving IPL

Press Trust of India

LONDON: New Zealand pacer Kyle Jamieson says leaving the IPL amid the raging pandemic in India was an "interesting" experience but he remained confident that the "good people" around him would ensure a safe passage to England for his first UK tour.

Jamieson, along with New Zealand captain Kane Williamson, chose to fly to Maldives from Delhi before they were to take a flight to the UK as they felt unsafe in India's national capital, then the hotspot of COVID-19 in the country.

"It was an interesting one. It is not something that you could plan for. We were sort of informed right through. We had some pretty good people around us, the BCCI and IPL teams," said Jamieson in a media interaction on Sunday.

The lanky pacer plays for RCB in the IPL. The tournament was suspended after multiple cases of COVID-19 were found in its bio-bubble.

"We just had to do the right thing by ourselves. Obviously the situation in India was pretty dire and we were mindful of that what is going outside our bubble. Once it (the virus) got inside it was the right decision to postpone it.

"We just had to keep trusting in those people and control we can control and we had some pretty good people around us to help us get to England."

Jamieson is excited about his maiden UK tour which begins with the first Test against England at Lord's before culminating with



the World Test Championship final against India, which is scheduled to be held from June 18-22.

Asked if it is hard not to have one eye on the WTC final before the two Tests against England, Jamieson said: "Not really at all. If you look too far ahead you can get caught in the bounce a little bit."

"It is my first trip to England. I am playing cricket for first time at Lord's. If I get distracted by something in two three weeks time then I would end up not being in great shape."

"I am just trying to be as mindful as I can around this Test and enjoy. Who knows if it ever happens again for me. So just focusing on this Test and Edgbaston and then the final (against India). It is not going to go away or come any closer so I will take care of this one first."

The IPL will resume in September in the UAE. Asked if he would be available for that, Jamieson added: "To be fair I have no idea really. That news came out couple of days ago, we have not had any conversation about it. Our mind is on the Test against England and the final against India. Don't want to look too far ahead."

Women's Boxing Coach Ali Qamar Says, Could've Been Better If COVID Didn't Disrupt Training



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: It was a 10 on 10 for Indian women boxers as far as clinching medals at the Asian Championship was concerned but national head coach Mohammed Ali Qamar believes the gold count could have been higher than one if their training had not been disrupted by COVID-19.

The Indian women's boxing team will be returning with one gold, three silver and six bronze medals from the event in Dubai, ensuring that all 10 weight categories featured an Indian medalist.

Seven of these medals were secured on the day of draws itself thanks to the small size of competition.

"I am very satisfied with the performance overall. Yes, we could have got more gold medals but given that we hardly got to train before the championships, I cannot complain," Ali Qamar told PTL.

"All the silver-winners lost very close bouts and gave it their best. As a coach there is nothing more I can ask for," he added.

Ali Qamar was referring to the 2-3 losses endured by the Olympic-bound M C Mary Kom (51kg), tournament debutants Lalbuatsaihi (64kg) and Anupama (81+kg). All three of them fought draining contests and fell short only marginally.

Olympic-bound defending champion Pooja Rani (75kg) was the lone Indian to clinch a gold.

Interestingly the championship bout was her first and only outing of the competition as she got a bye into the semifinals and a walkover into the finals.

The tournament proper might not have been all that taxing but women boxers had a tough time preparing for the event, which was to be held in India originally but shifted to Dubai because of the escalating COVID-19 crisis here.

Their national camp in Delhi's Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium was halted after several COVID cases came to light.

Those infected included Ali Qamar and women's boxing's High Performance Director Rafaele Bergamasco.

Training was subsequently organised in Pune's Army Sports Institute a couple of weeks before the team's departure for Dubai and only a handful of Olympic-bound boxers, including Mary Kom, turned up for it.

"Mary had a very good tournament overall. She lost in the final but in my view the final round had been won by her but that's sport, you can't do much. With limited training, her performance is really praiseworthy," said Ali Qamar, who also became a 3 star coach by completing his course during the tournament.

T20 WC In India, FTP Cycle Set To Be Discussed In ICC Board Meet

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The BCCI will ask for one month's extension to decide on hosting the T20 World Cup in India amid the looming COVID-19 threat when the all-powerful ICC Board holds a virtual meeting on Tuesday to discuss a host of other issues as well.

While earlier, it was decided that BCCI president Sourav Ganguly will attend the meet in person, it is learnt that now he will be present virtually and will only leave for the UAE on Wednesday to have discussions on the organisation of IPL with Emirates Cricket Board.

There are no concrete outcomes expected at the meeting and after July 1, the BCCI will hold another SGM. The ICC is likely to make a formal announcement of its final decision during its annual conference that starts on July 18.

While the remainder of the IPL has been shifted to the United Arab Emirates between September 15 to October 15, the Indian cricket board doesn't want to let go the opportunity of hosting the global T20 event, which also has Emirates as back-up hosts.

"The COVID-19 cases are reducing but obviously it is still not a situation where we can firmly commit to hosting the World T20. Ganguly and secretary Jay Shah are right in asking for one



month's time to decide," a senior BCCI source privy to developments told PTL on conditions of anonymity.

"Obviously, they will also get a feedback from the government whether it would be prudent to host it in India."

"The second aspect is that you never know when the cases rise again. Right now, the lockdown in various parts of the country is yielding some good results but as we had seen the sudden surge during IPL, the situation remains fluid," he said.

However, one thing is clear that even if BCCI manages to host the tournament between the third week of October and second week of November, there is no question of nine cities being allotted games.

"If BCCI manages to host the tournament in October-November which is currently a 50-50 probability, it could well mean single city three venues in

Mumbai along with Pune and Ahmedabad as venue for the final.

"This curtails travel. But Pakistan team playing in Maharashtra and Gujarat also needs to be factored in," the source said.

Tax issues

The other issue that BCCI is facing currently is tax waiver that ICC gets for its global events. It is understood that while BCCI is in discussion with the top government functionaries, there are no easy solutions.

If BCCI can't arrange the tax waiver from the government, it will have to forego ICC revenue to the tune of USD 125 million (INR 905 crore approx).

"In this post pandemic world and a hostile economic climate which is pretty hostile, the Indian government providing a tax relief close to Rs 1000 crore for a cricket event seems like wishful thinking," the source said.

"But then if BCCI can pull it off, good for them. In any case, we are not likely to give up on our hosting rights even if it is held in the UAE," the BCCI source added.

FTP Cycle 2023-31

The Futures Tours & Programme Cycle for the next eight years between 2023 to 2031 will also be discussed with provision for the flagship ICC events apart from the bilateral series.

"Obviously due to the pandemic, ev-

ery cricket board has lost money and the bilateral events are the way forward to recover the costs. In any case, currently rested ICC CEO Manu Sawhney's proposal of a marquee ICC event every year was red flagged by the 'Big Three' much earlier.

"They need to look after the financial health of their boards," the official further added.

Also the future of the World Test Championship will also be discussed after a much curtailed first edition due to the pandemic.

ICC chairman Greg Barclay, a few months back, had expressed his apprehensions about the future of the tournament but a lot of people believe that its prospects can't be judged in a year where there was a global crisis.

Global Strategy going forward

The ICC will also discuss a strategy for the global growth of the game with special emphasis on women's cricket.

India's participation in the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games has given ICC a big boost along with BCCI's in-principle approval to take part in the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

The ICC board wants to spread the game equally in 104 countries.

"Women's game is the next big thing and T20 is a tool to popularise women's game globally," the board source said.

NEWS MAKERS

Zidane Says Madrid Failed To Support Him In Explosive Open Letter

Agencies

MADRID: Zinedine Zidane left Real Madrid because he didn't feel he had the support or respect he deserved from the club, the coach said in an open letter to fans on Monday.

In his first public comments since quitting last week, Zidane said the club didn't fully value his work and hinted it leaked information to the media to undermine him. The Frenchman said he wished his relationship with president Florentino Pérez had been different in recent months.

Zidane left a year before the end of his contract in his second stint with the Spanish club. The stint began in March 2019 and

ended with Madrid finishing the season without a title for the first time since 2009-10.

It was a completely different farewell from when he left the first time after leading Madrid to one of its most successful runs from 2016-18, when the club won three consecutive Champions League titles. He went out on top then, saying the club needed someone fresh at the helm to keep winning.

"Things are different now," Zidane said in a long letter published by the Spanish sports daily As. "I'm leaving because I feel the club no longer gives me the confidence that I need, it does not offer me the support to build something in the medium or long term."

The 48-year-old Zidane, who won nine titles in his first stint with Madrid and two in his second, said he deserved more recognition from the club for his work. He said "what we achieved together has to be respected."

"I know football and I know the demands of a club like Madrid. I know that when you don't win you have to go," he said. "But this time something very important has been forgotten, everything that I have built on a daily basis has been forgotten, what I have contributed in the relationship with the players and with the 150 people who work at the club."

Zidane said "in a way he felt reproached" by the club for



trying to work on those relationships.

"I was born a winner and I

was here to win trophies, but beyond this there are human beings, emotions, life... And

I feel that these things have not been valued, that it wasn't understood that those things are also important for a great club," he said.

Zidane said he will always be grateful to Pérez for bringing him to Madrid and fighting

these messages that were intentionally leaked to the media created negative interference within the team."

Madrid said after Zidane's departure on Thursday that it respected his decision and expressed its "gratitude for his

“I WAS BORN A WINNER AND I WAS HERE to win trophies, but beyond this there are human beings, emotions, life... And I feel that these things have not been valued, that it wasn't understood that those things are also important for a great club," he said.

for him, but he wished his relationship with the president and the club was different in recent months. He said he deserved to be treated better.

He said it "hurt a lot" to constantly read in the media that he was in danger of being fired. "It hurt me and it hurt the squad," he said, "because

professionalism, dedication and passion over the years and what he means to Real Madrid."

The club has yet to announce a replacement for Zidane, with Antonio Conte, Mauricio Pochettino, Xabi Alonso and Raúl González among the possible candidates for the job.

SC To Examine Sedition Law In Context Of Press Freedom



Agenceis

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Monday said it will examine the interpretation of sedition law, particularly in the light of media rights and free speech, as it gave protection to Telugu news channels—TV5 and ABN Andhrajyothi—from any coercive action in a case lodged against them under the colonial-era provision.

The two channels were booked by Andhra Pradesh police for alleged sedition in showing 'offensive' speeches of YSR Congress rebel MP K Raghu Rama Krishna Raju. A bench of Justices DY Chandrachud, L N Rao and S Ravindra Bhat said, "We are of the view that provisions of 124A (sedition) and 153 (promoting enmity between classes) of the IPC require interpretation, particularly on the issue of the rights of press and free speech".

It restrained the Andhra Pradesh police from taking any coercive action against the channels and their employees or staffers in connection with the FIR.

The bench also sought the response of the state government within four weeks on the pleas of the channels which are charged for various offences including the harsh penal offence of sedition.

Both the media houses have recently moved the top court seeking quashing of an FIR registered against it in a sedition case in Andhra Pradesh, with one house claiming the attempt is to "create a chilling effect" for news channels in the state so that they are wary of hosting any content which is critical of the government.

Shreya Broadcasting Pvt Ltd, which owns TV5 news channel with bureaux in Hyderabad, Vishakhapatnam and Vijayawada, has alleged in its petition that the state "intends to silence" its critiques and the media by filing a "vague FIR" and abusing the process of law.

The FIR against the TV channel has connection with the sedition case lodged against Raju, who has already been arrested by the Andhra Pradesh police.

The channels have claimed that the FIR has been lodged against it for

airing programmes involving Raju who has been critical of the state government led by his own party.

The channels have sought the apex court's direction to restrain the authorities in Andhra Pradesh from taking any coercive action against the management and employees of the news channel in pursuance of the case lodged against them.

The Crime Investigation Department (CID), which has arrested Raju in the case, has also named two media houses and others as accused. In its plea filed in the apex court through advocate Vipin Nair, Shreya Broadcasting Pvt Ltd has said that freedom of speech of media is of great importance and the FIR clearly intends to breach the same by "chilling the media houses into submission".

On May 21, in a relief to the MP granted him bail in a sedition case registered in Andhra Pradesh saying that considering the medical report received from Army hospital, the possibility of his "ill-treatment" in custody cannot be ruled out.

The FIR has been lodged for the alleged offences under sections 124A (sedition), 153A (promoting enmity between different groups), 505 (statements conducing public mischief) read with 120B (conspiracy) of Indian Penal Code.

The CID had also alleged that the MP particularly targeted two communities and tried to stoke hatred against them by trying to portray that the government has been favouring the two.

The past few years have seen a rise in sedition charges being invoked by law enforcement agencies.

In January, Congress Member of Parliament Shashi Tharoor, veteran journalist Rajdeep Sardesai, Congress mouthpiece National Herald's senior consulting editor Mrinal Pande, Qaumi Awaz editor Zafar Agha, The Caravan magazine's editors Paresh Nath, Anant Nath, and Vinod K. Jose were among those who faced sedition charges for sharing an unverified news article during the farmers' tractor rally in Delhi on January 26.

The Supreme Court had stayed their arrest later. — Agencies

Will Provide 10 Crore Covishield Doses In June: Serum Institute To Centre

Agenceis

NEW DELHI: Serum Institute of India (SII) has informed the government that it will be able to manufacture and supply nine to 10 crore doses of Covishield in June, official sources said on Sunday amid complaint by states about the shortage of anti-coronavirus vaccine jabs.

In a recent letter to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, SII said its employees have been working round the clock in spite of various challenges because of the pandemic.

"We are pleased to inform that in the month of June we will be able to manufacture and supply nine to 10 crore doses of our Covishield vaccine to the country as compared to our production capacity of 6.5 crore doses in May," Prakash Kumar Singh, the Director of Government and Regulatory Affairs at SII, said in the letter.

Mr Singh also thanked Mr Shah for his "valuable guidance and continuous support" at various stages of their endeavour to make India "aatmanirbhar" (self-sufficient) in COVID-19 vaccines and making it available for the people



of the country.

"Serum Institute of India has always been sincerely concerned about the protection of the citizens of our country and world at large from COVID-19. Under the leadership of our CEO, Adar C Poonawalla, our team have been working relentlessly shoulder to shoulder with our government to fight the COVID-19 pandemic," he said in the letter.

"We assure you that with the support of the Government of India and under your kind guidance, we are trying our best by utilizing all of our resources to increase our production capacity of Covishield

in the coming month also."

In early May, SII had communicated to the Centre that production of Covishield would be ramped up to 6.5 crore in June, seven crore in July and 10 crore each in August and September.

India is currently using made-in-India vaccines -- Covishield manufactured by SII and Covaxin of Bharat Biotech -- in its COVID-19 immunisation programme.

The Russian Sputnik V is the third vaccine to get approval from the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) for emergency use and is being used in a few private hospitals.

Bengal CS Defies Centre's Order, Retires; Mamata Appoints Him Spl Advisor

Agenceis

KOLKATA: Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday said she was appointing West Bengal's Chief Secretary Alapan Bandyopadhyay as an Adviser for three years effective from Tuesday, after allowing the bureaucrat who was ordered by the Central government to report to Delhi, to retire.

The Centre has asked him to join North Block on Tuesday but it cannot force an officer to join it without the permission of the state administration, Banerjee told a press conference.

"The CS got a letter from the Centre asking him to join North Block by tomorrow. This is not a reply to my letter but to the CS. I have not received any reply from it to the letter which I had sent earlier today," she said.

The Central government's decision is unilateral and unconstitutional, the chief minister claimed.

"We are not relieving him. He has superannuated today, but he will act as the chief advisor to the CM for the next three years," Banerjee said.



nerjee said.

Earlier in the day, Banerjee wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, requesting him to withdraw the Centre's order recalling the chief secretary, asserting that her government "cannot release, and is not releasing" the top bureaucrat.

The Centre, in a surprise move, had on May 28 night sought Ban-

dopadhyay's services and asked the state government to immediately release the top bureaucrat.

Bandyopadhyay, a 1987-batch IAS officer of West Bengal cadre, was scheduled to retire on Monday after completion of 60 years of age. However, he was granted a three-month extension following a nod from the Centre to work on Covid management. PTI

Govt To Take Decision Within 2 Days On Class 12 Board Exams: Attorney General Tells SC

Agenceis

The government will take a final decision within the next two days on whether to conduct Class 12 board exams amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the Supreme Court was informed on Monday.

Attorney General K.K. Venugopal told this to a bench of Justices A.M. Khanwilkar and Dinesh Maheshwari which said if the Centre decides to depart from the last year's policy, wherein the remaining board exams were cancelled due to the pandemic, then it must give tangible reasons for it.

"No issue. You take the decision. You are entitled to it. If you are departing from the policy of last year, then you must give tangible reasons for it," the bench told Venugopal.

Observing that the last year's decision was taken after deliberations, the apex court said, "If you are departing from that policy, please give us good reasons so that we can examine it."

The bench was hearing a plea seeking directions to cancel the class 12 exams of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and Council for the Indian School Certificate Examination (CISCE) amid the pandemic situation.

The apex court on June 26, 2020 had approved the schemes of the CBSE and CISCE for cancellations of remaining board examinations scheduled from July 1 to 15 last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic and also approved their formula for assessment of examinees.

During the hearing conducted through video-conferencing on Monday, the Attorney General told the bench: "The government will take a final decision within the next two days. We are hoping that your lordships will give us time till Thursday [June 3] so that we can come back with the final decision."

Venugopal said that last year,



board exams for some papers were over before the COVID-19 induced national lockdown was imposed in March 2020.

"We don't want to go into the nitty-gritty at this stage. You take the decision. Hope has been expressed by the petitioner that policy adopted last year can be adopted this year too. If you are departing from that, you must have tangible reasons for it," the bench observed.

"To this," Venugopal said, "We will keep this in mind what you [bench] have said."

The bench said: "We have no difficulty. You take the decision on what should be appropriate given the situation we are in."

During the hearing, petitioner Mamta Sharma raised the issue of difficulty which students, who wish to study abroad after class 12, might face in case the results are delayed.

Let them take the decision. Depending on that, we will see. We will consider this on Thursday when the in-principle decision is placed before us, the bench said.

List on Thursday (June 3) as requested by the attorney general as the competent authority is exam-

ining all the aspects of the matter and is likely to take in-principle decision which will be placed before the court, the bench said.

On May 28, the apex court had said it would hear on May 31 the petition which has also sought directions to devise an "objective methodology" to declare the result of class 12 within a specific time frame.

The top court had permitted the petitioner to serve advance copy of the plea on the standing counsel for the respondents, central agency, CBSE, ICSE, and also on the office of the Attorney General.

The petition has arrayed the Centre, the CBSE and the CISCE as respondents in the matter.

The CBSE had on April 14 announced cancellation of class 10 exams and postponement of class 12 exams in view of the surge in coronavirus cases.

The ministry of education had recently sought detailed suggestions from the states and Union Territories till May 25 on the proposals discussed in a high-level meeting held on the issue.

The CBSE had proposed conducting the exams between July

15-August 26 and the result to be declared in September.

The board had also proposed two options: conducting regular exams for 19 major subjects at notified centres or conducting shorter duration exams at respective schools where students are enrolled.

The plea filed in the apex court has contended that due to the unprecedented health emergency and surge in COVID-19 cases in the country, it is not possible to conduct the examination and any further delay would cause irreparable loss to the future of students.

In view of the unprecedented health emergency and rising number of COVID-19 cases in the country, the conduct of examination (either offline/online/blended) in upcoming weeks is not possible and delay in examination will cause irreparable loss to the students as time is the essence in taking admission in higher education courses in foreign universities, the plea said.

It has also sought setting aside of the notifications, issued last months by the CBSE and the CISCE, only in respect of the clauses dealing with postponement of class 12 examinations.

The petition said it is the utmost duty of the state to take care of the health and safety of students and at the same time, not to hamper their higher education and career prospects.

It said the COVID-19 situation is more severe in comparison to last year and the respondents should adopt the same criteria of assessing the grading/marks of class 12 students as done last year.

It said that the apex court may exercise its plenary power under Article 142 of the Constitution to direct the respondents to implement the same methodology as being adopted for class 10 to declare the result and cancel the class 12 exam.

Delhi's COVID-19 Positivity Rate Drops Below One Per Cent

Agenceis

Delhi, on Monday, reported 648 fresh COVID-19 cases, the lowest in two and a half months, and 86 more deaths, while the positivity rate fell below one per cent, the first time since March 19.

This is the second day that the daily deaths in the city remained below 100. The number of active cases in the national capital is 11,040, according to a health bulletin. On Sunday, Delhi had recorded 946 COVID-19 cases and 78 deaths and the positivity rate stood at 1.25 per cent.

Kerala Assembly Passes Resolution Seeking Recall Of Lakshadweep Administrator

Agenceis

Thiruvananthapuram: The Kerala Assembly on Monday unanimously adopted a resolution seeking Lakshadweep Administrator Praful Khoda Patel's recall, becoming the first state in the country to express solidarity with the islands, where regulations over beef and liquor, among others, have sparked a row.

Voicing concern, the House adopted the first Assembly resolution moved by the ruling Communist Party of India (Marxist) in its successive term on the issue, with the Opposition Congress bloc backing the government.

The members sought the recall of Patel and requested the immediate intervention of the Centre to protect the lives and livelihood of the citizens.

The hard-hitting resolution alleged attempts were being made to impose "safron agendas" and "corporate interests" by destroying the unique way of life of Lakshadweep people.

The BJP slammed the resolution adopted by the Assembly against the central government-appointed administrator and said the House had no authority to do so.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and NCP supremo Sharad Pawar had earlier written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, requesting his intervention in the matter, while criticising Patel's administrative measures.

An archipelago located in the Arabian Sea, Lakshadweep is witnessing protests by local people for some days over the recent actions and the administrative reforms.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan moved the government resolution, the first in the 15th state Assembly, reminiscing the historic and cultural bond between Kerala and Lakshadweep and criticised the Centre for allegedly trying to destroy the natural democracy there.

Stating that the future of Lakshadweep is a matter of concern, he said any attempt to undermine its unique culture and indigenous lifestyle is unacceptable.

Anyone who upholds Constitutional values should register a strong disagreement against the actions of the administrator of Lakshadweep, Vijayan urged.

Setting aside their political differences, members of the ruling CPI (M)-led Left Democratic Front and the Congress-headed United Democratic Front unanimously backed the resolution, except some amendments suggested by the latter.

The implementation of the "safron agenda", rolled out in the name of reforms, began with painting coconut trees with the colour and has now grown to destroying the traditional habitat, life and natural relationships of the island dwellers, the resolution alleged.

Steps have been taken to implement the Goondas Act in the islands, where the crime rate is exceptionally low, it said, adding such measures were in anticipation of any protests and to silence voice of dissent.

"A dictatorial system of governance is being developed through these measures," it said.

Claiming that authorities also aimed at destroying the traditional livelihood of fishing, it said sheds where the fishermen's boats and nets are kept have been "rampantly destroyed".

Through the attempt to exclude beef, which is part of the natural diet of the people of the territory, the Sangh Parivar agenda of banning cow slaughter was being implemented through the back door, it alleged.

Thus, the administrator has now

taken the lead in 'annihilating' the indigenous life and culture of the people of a territory inch by inch, the brief resolution further charged.

Criticising the Centre's act of giving the administrator special powers to intervene into the affairs of various government departments, the chief minister said it amounted to undermining the island's natural democracy by deploying officials of their choice.

Steps are being taken to abolish all existing democratic systems in the UT and impose bureaucratic domination there.

The move to bar those with more than two children from contesting in panchayat elections is unheard of in the country, he said, adding that with its implementation, the vast majority of the islanders would lose their democratic rights.

"The recent developments in Lakshadweep should be seen as a practical laboratory of the Sangh Parivar agenda. They are attempting to change the culture, language, lifestyle and food habits of people of the country in tune with their ideology," Vijayan alleged.

They are also taking steps to disrupt the livelihood of the people and give a red carpet welcome to the corporates, he charged.

Strong resistance should be raised against this bid to enslave people of a territory to "corporate interests and Hindutva politics", he added.

Stating that the Centre has the responsibility to ensure that the unique characteristics of the union territory and the native people are well-preserved, the Left veteran said the administrator, who posed a challenge to this, should be stripped of his responsibilities.

Leader of the Opposition VD Satheesan backed the resolution and said the agenda, being implemented by Patel under the garb of reforms, should be thrown into the Arabian Sea.

The Congress and Indian Union Muslim League (IUMU) urged the government to directly criticise the BJP-NDA government at the Centre in the resolution.

Meanwhile, BJP state chief K Surendran slammed the resolution adopted by the House against the Central government appointed administrator and said it had no authority to do so.

Terming the government action to come up with the resolution as "ridiculous", he said the House was being misused for political purposes.

It was not right to use the floor of the House for political gains, Surendran said, adding that if the people of Lakshadweep had any complaint, they could approach either the union government or the court.

The BJP has no member in the present state assembly.

Patel has come under intense criticism, as the administration's move to allow sale of liquor in the islands dominated by Muslims and enforcing cow slaughter ban have met with strong criticism from political parties including the Congress, CPI (M), and the NCP.

The under fire administration has rejected the allegations and has said it was laying the foundation for the future of islands in a planned way and to develop it on the lines of Maldives in two decades.

Lakshadweep District Collector S Asker Ali had last week said those who are having vested interests and those involved in illegal business were carrying out propaganda against the administration. — PTI

Actor Juhi Chawla Files Case Against 5G Networks In Delhi High Court

Agenceis

NEW DELHI: Actor-environmentalist Juhi Chawla Monday approached the Delhi High Court against the setting up of 5G wireless networks in the country, raising issues related to the radiation impact on citizens, animals, flora and fauna.

Justice C Hari Shankar, before whom the matter came up for hearing, transferred the suit to another bench for hearing on June 2.

Juhi Chawla said if the telecommunications industry's plans for 5G come to fruition, no person, no animal, no bird, no insect and no plant on Earth will be able to avoid exposure, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, to levels of RF radiation that are 10x to 100x times greater than what exists today.

These 5G plans threaten to provoke serious, irreversible effects on humans and permanent damage to all of the Earth's ecosystems, she said.



The suit, filed through advocate Deepak Khosla, sought a direction to the authorities to certify to the public at large, that 5G technology

is safe to humankind, man, woman, adult, child, infant, animals, and every type of living organism, flora, and fauna.