



P3 CITY

DC SGR CALLS FOR INTENSIFIED VACCINATION DRIVE FOR PRIORITY GROUPS

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Mohammad Aijaz Asad Wednesday called for an intensified vaccination drive of all vulnerable and target groups to break the transmission chain of

P6 THINK

THE UNCERTAIN ECONOMIC STORY

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Annual Report, released last week, has a detailed assessment on the state of the economy. The report (expectedly) lauds both the fiscal and monetary policy response to the pandemic's...



P5 STATE

AFTER CBSE, CISCE CANCELS CLASS 12 BOARD EXAMS IN VIEW OF PANDEMIC

The CISCE on Tuesday decided to cancel Class 12 board examinations this year in view of the COVID-19 situation, according to its secretary Gerry Arathoon....

FINAL EXAM

Widom Quote!

Giving up is the only sure way to fail.
—Gena Showalter



Dr Salim Khan
Professor and HOD
Community Medicine, GMC

COVID Vaccination doesn't affect fertility of men/boys or women/girls. Similar rumours were spread about polio vaccines decades back. Now polio is eradicated because no one heeded to rumours then. Please don't listen to rumours about COVID Vaccination. Get a jab and be safe

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

When 20% of your Covid-19 RT PCR samples from a single lab still come positive, you cannot relax and lower your guard. Prevent 3rd wave by being rationale, in the interest of humanity.

Dr. Gowhar Nabi
Medical Officer DH Pulwama

Covid Vaccines are effective against all its variants. So all are requested to come at your turn and get Vaccinated. It is 100% safe.

Govt To Act Tough Against SOP Violators

Penalise People Disregarding Covid-19 Appropriate Behaviour: CS Tells Officers

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Terming timely testing, tracking, treatment and isolation as the way forward to defeat the coronavirus pandemic, the Jammu and Kashmir administration on Wednesday asked officials to penalise people disregarding the Covid-19 guidelines and jeopardizing public health. Chairing a meeting to review Covid containment measures including the progress of vaccination drives, Chief Secretary, Arun Kumar Mehta reiterated the 'zero-tolerance' policy of the government towards Covid inappropriate behavior and asked the department to promote its awareness among general masses through wider IEC



Cops stop a motorcyclist during corona imposed curfew in Srinagar : KO File Photo Abid Bhat

activities including advertisements and radio talk shows. "People flaunting such an inappropriate behaviour in disregard to the laid down SOPs should be penalized for jeopardizing public health," Mehta said, as per an official spokesperson. **More On P10**

24 Corona Deaths, 1718 New Cases

Coronavirus claimed the lives of 24 more people in Jammu and Kashmir while 1718 fresh cases of infection were reported across the Union Territory during the last 24 hours. Officials said 17 more people from the Valley succumbed to virus at the various healthcare facilities while seven people died of coronavirus in Jammu division thus taking the overall fatality count since the outbreak of pandemic last year in J&K to 3963. **More On P10**

Army Chief Reviews Situation In Kashmir

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Complimenting troops for battling the dual challenges of Pakistan abetted militancy and the global pandemic, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General MM Naravane on Wednesday asked soldiers to be prepared to meet emerging

security challenges effectively.

Naravane's two day visit to Kashmir comes at a time when the cease-fire understanding between India and Pakistan along the Line of Control (LoC) completed 100 days on Saturday. On arrival **More On P10**

Gen Naravane Calls On LG

A Army Chief General MM Naravane and Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Wednesday discussed recent internal security developments and the prevailing security **More On P10**

Committed To Sustain Normalcy: Lt Gen Joshi

The security situation in Jammu and Kashmir has by and large been peaceful and the Army is committed to ensure that the civil **More On P10**

India's Reaction 'Saddens' UNGA President

Regrettable Bozkir's Kashmir Remarks Taken Out Of Context: Spokesperson

Press Trust Of India

United Nations: Days after India termed comments by UN General Assembly President Volkan Bozkir in Pakistan on Jammu and Kashmir as "misleading and prejudiced", a spokesperson for the head of the 193-member UN body



said it is regrettable that his remarks were taken out of context.

Bozkir had visited Bangladesh and Pakistan late last month and at a press conference in Islamabad with Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi had said it was "Pakistan's duty to bring the issue of the Jammu and Kashmir more strongly to the UN. In a reaction, **More On P10**

Govt Asks Officials To Meet Public, Hear Grievances

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Wednesday directed its senior officers to fix time slots for hearing public grievances in person or through phone or video-conferencing.

In an order, Manoj Kumar Dwivedi, Commissioner Secretary of the General Administration Department, said that due to the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic, government's interaction with the public got affected as there was limited mobility. "In order to facilitate the redressal of these issues/grievances, it has been decided that all Administrative Secretaries shall **More On P10**

Magisterial Probe Ordered Into Shopian Encounter

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The district administration in south Kashmir's Shopian on Wednesday ordered a magisterial inquiry into last month's encounter in which three militants were killed.

The additional district magistrate Shopian, who is also the inquiry officer, issued an order on Saturday asking people to share information about the encounter in Kanigam area of Shopian on May 5-6 in which three militants were killed. Danish Mir, **More On P10**



Rambagh Payeen Mehjoor Nagar, Bund Road Near Airtel Tower

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M.phil Clinical Psychology (Govt. Medical College Srinagar)

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Personality assessment, Neuropsychological assessment, Diagnostic Psychometry, Intelligence Testing,

Therapeutic interventions including:

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Dialectical Behavioral Therapy, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Psychodynamic Psychotherapy, Couple/Marital therapy, Sex Therapy

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Such as Diabetes, Stroke, Cardiovascular diseases, Skin diseases, Urino-genital diseases etc.

TIMING

Monday to Saturday 4.30 pm onwards

Sunday Full day

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LIVE



"IN CONVERSATION" with

DR. PARVAIZ KOUL

Senior Pulmonologist
Ex Head of Internal and Pulmonary Medicine SKIMS, Soura

TOPIC : COVID-19 VACCINATION 101

THURSDAY, JUNE 3 08:30 PM

Weight stigma is a burden around the world; and has negative consequences everywhere

Press Trust Of India

Lazy. Unmotivated. No self-discipline. No willpower. These are just a few of the widespread stereotypes ingrained in American society about people who have a higher body weight or larger body size. Known as weight stigma, these attitudes result in many Americans being blamed, teased, bullied, mistreated and discriminated against. There is nowhere to hide from societal weight stigma. Decades of research confirm the presence of weight stigma in workplaces, schools, health care settings, public accommodations and the mass media, as well as in close interpersonal relationships with friends and families. It's everywhere. I'm a psychologist and researcher at the Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity at the University of Connecticut. For 20 years my team has studied weight stigma. We've examined the origins and prevalence of weight stigma, its presence across different societal settings, the harm it causes for people's health and strategies to tackle this problem. We conducted a recent international study that clearly shows that weight stigma is widespread, damaging and difficult to eradicate. This societal devaluation is a real and legitimate experience for people across different countries, languages and cultures.

A persistent American bias

Among US adults, weight stigma is a common experience, with as many as 40% reporting past experiences of weight-based teasing, unfair treatment and discrimination. These experiences are most prevalent for people with high body mass indexes or those with obesity and for women. For youth, body weight is one of the most prevalent reasons for teasing and bullying.

The fact that more than 40% of Americans have obesity has not softened public attitudes toward people in this group. Although societal attitudes toward other stigmatized groups have become less prejudiced in recent decades, there has been little change in weight bias. In some cases it's worsening. Prevailing views that people are personally responsible for their weight, despite ample scientific evidence of the complex and multifactorial causes of obesity, are one reason why weight stigma persists. This mindset is difficult to change given American culture's celebration of thinness, negative media portrayals of people with larger bodies and a thriving diet industry. These factors reinforce the faulty premise that body weight is infinitely malleable, as does a lack of legislation to protect people from weight discrimination. Contrary to public perceptions, weight stigma does not motivate people to lose weight. Instead it worsens health and reduces quality of life. The harmful impacts of weight stigma can be real and long-lasting. They range from emotional distress – depressive symptoms, anxiety, low self-esteem – to disordered eating, unhealthy eating behaviors, lower physical activity, weight gain, increased physiological stress and avoiding health care.

A shared struggle

Weight stigma is not unique to America. It exists around the world. However, few studies have directly compared people's experiences of weight stigma in different countries. In our recent study, we compared experiences of weight stigma in six nations: Australia, Canada, France, Germany, the U.K. and the U.S. These countries share similar societal values that reinforce personal blame for body weight, and do little to challenge weight-based shaming and mistreatment.



The participants were 13,996 adults (around 2,000 people per country) who were actively trying to manage their weight. The biases people encountered because of their higher weight or larger body size turned out to be remarkably consistent across the six countries, with more than half of study participants – 58% on average – experiencing weight stigma. The most common interpersonal sources of weight stigma were family members (76%-87%), classmates (72%-76%) and doctors (58%-73%). These experiences were most frequent and distressing during childhood and adolescence. Many incorporated these stigmatizing experiences into how they felt about themselves. In this process of "weight bias internalization," people apply negative societal stereotypes to themselves. They blame themselves for their weight and judge themselves as inferior and deserving of societal stigma.

We knew from our earlier research that weight bias internalization has harmful health implications, and this was true here as well. Across the six countries, the more that people internalized weight bias, the more they gained weight in the prior year, used food to cope with stress, avoided going to the gym, had an unhealthy body image and reported higher stress. These findings persisted regardless of people's body size or their previous experiences of stigma. Moreover, in all six countries people with greater internalized weight bias reported worse health-related quality of life and health care experiences. They avoided getting health care, had less frequent checkups and reported more substandard health care compared to people who had less internalization. The unique multinational perspective of our study reveals that weight stigma is commonly experienced, often internalized and related to

poor health and health care among people who are trying to manage their weight. In this sense, confronting weight stigma appears to be a collective struggle, but it's one that people are likely grappling with on their own.

Reasons for optimism

While there is a long road ahead to eliminate weight stigma, shifts in societal attitudes are taking place. In recent years, the harms of "fat shaming" have received increased public attention, and so has the body positivity movement. Both are helping to elevate calls for efforts to stop unfair treatment based on weight. There is also growing recognition in the medical community that action is needed. In 2020, more than 100 medical and scientific organizations across nine countries signed a joint international consensus statement and pledge to bring attention to weight stigma and its harmful impact. These medical experts aim to shift the narrative of blame and help address weight stigma in media, public attitudes and health care. Our research shows broad and substantial public support for policies to tackle weight discrimination. In a series of national studies, we found that more than 70% of Americans support adding body weight as a protected category, alongside categories like race and age, to existing state civil rights laws. They also support new legislation to make it illegal for employers to discriminate against employees based on weight. This would legitimize weight stigma as both a social injustice and a public health issue. I believe broad and collective action is needed to address this problem, both in and outside the US. While this may sound challenging, fundamentally it is actually quite simple: it's about respect, dignity and equal treatment for people of all body weights and sizes.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO DEAR



Adeb Raja

Wish you many many happy returns of the day. May Almighty fill your life with tones of Joy and Happiness

FROM
 Aba ji, Mumy Ji, Raani Maasi, Choti Rani, Dady Jan, Jajee, Baba Jani, Pyari Mamma, Arees Baya, Toiba Behna, Moheeb Baya and Hamza Jan....

info

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR UT Indian Systems of Medicine & Homeopathic. Department of (AYUSH) District Anantnag.

AYUSH Immune Booster Medicine Distributed at Village Rampora Mattan from Govt. ISM Dispensary Rampora Anantnag UT.



On 02/06/2021 Following the Protocol of AYUSH Department Ministry of AYUSH Govt. of India and the Orders 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 Javid Hussain sahib an awareness programme and distribution of immune booster medicines was organized at Village Rampora Anantnag from Govt. ISM Dispensary Rampora Anantnag 315 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.

MJA

PUBLIC NOTICE

I Riyaz Ahamd Mir Want to change the name of my daughter in school records as Kaneez Fatima Instead of Midhat Zehra. Anybody having any objection in this regard he /she may file his/her objection in the office of the Principal Green View Public School Magam within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Riyaz Ahamd Mir
 F/o Kaneez Fatima R/O Magam

bmj

PUBLIC NOTICE

I am applying for the issuance of Pesticides License for my business unit under Name and Style Teli Pesticides Tulram Imamsahib Shopian. If anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Plant Protection Officer Lalmandi Srinagar within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Waseem Ahamd Teli
 S/O Ali Mohd Teli
 R/O Tulram Imamsahib Shopian

ast

Sad Demise



With profound grief and sorrow, we inform that the said demise of Ghulam Mohammad Shiekh S/O Mohammad Qasim Shiekh R/O Zaidar Mohalla saida Kadal Srinagar, who left for heavenly abode on 1st June, 2021 after a brief illness. The congregational Fateh khawani will be held on 4th June, 2021 (Friday) at their ancestral graveyard Hassan abad Saida Kadal, Srinagar at 6:00 AM after that condolence meeting will be held at their home zaidar Mohalla Saida kadal under COVID 19 SOP guidelines.

BEREAVED FAMILY
 Contact number
 9469066453, 9796311945

info.

E-mail:- techrpbul786@gmail.com | Phone:- 01933-295302
 Government of Jammu & Kashmir (UT)

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER R&B DIVISION PULWAMA.

TENDER NOTICE
 E-NIT No :- 33/EEP/RNB/of 2021-22/1945-55
 Dated: 01/06/2021

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K UT term e-tenders (In Single Cover system) are invited on Item Rate Basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K State Govt. CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Government for the following work:-

S.No	Name of Work	Adv. Cost in (Rs.Lacs.)	Cost of T/D (Rs.)	Time of Completion in working days	Class of Contract	Major Head of Accounts	Administrative Accord Approval No:
1	Restoration of road surface of Lassidaban Keller road by way of RBM filling.	1.50	200/-	10 Working days	DEE	3054-M&R	Sanctioned vide Chief Engineer R&B Kashmir's No: 5448-49 Dated 20.05.2021
2	Repair/ Renovation of room for Presidents office at MC Pampore.	5.72	300/-	10 Working days	DEE	HUD	MCP/2020-21/562-65 Dt: 31.05.2021

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

1.	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	01/06/2021
2.	Period of downloading of bidding documents	From 01/06/2021 10:00 A.M.
3.	Bid submission Start Date	01/06/2021 from 10.00 AM
4.	Bid Submission End Date	11/06/2021 upto 4.00 P.M.
5.	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	12/06/2021 at 11.00 A.M in the Office of the Executive Engineer R&B Division Pulwama
6.	Submission of Performance Security (PS)	Within 3 days of receipt of LOA. (The First lowest bidder has to provide 3% of Contract Value Cost as Performance Security instead of EMD within 3 days after opening of Financial Bid)

1. Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of Treasury Challan/Receipt (Debited to M.H.0059 PWD) and Bid securing declaration instead of EMD as per format Appendix-1 below on Letter Head of Contractor/Agency/Firm in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Pulwama showing clearly the name of work along with NIT No. & S.No. failing which the tender will be rejected outrightly.

2. The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the office of Executive Engineer R&B Division Pulwama

3. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of bids.

All other terms and conditions shall be available in website www.jktenders.gov.in

Head Draftsman Technical Officer
DIPK-2360/21

Executive Engineer, R&B Division Pulwama

از نیابت چندوسه

مضمون کاغذات درخواست متناہب عرفان حمید و عصمت حمید و مہک حمید اولاد ان عبدالمجید انگر سائنس چندوسه بمراد عطا گی

تحت SRO 294

اشتبہار بمراد آگاہی ہر خاص و عام

محاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدور میں درخواست سائل دفتر میں زیر کارڈی ہے اس سلسلے میں پڑاری ملتق سے رپورٹ بشمول ریکارڈ طلب کیا گیا ہے جس سے عیاں ہے کہ سائل موش چندوسه میں رہائش پذیر ہے اور ہانگر ذات سے تعلق رکھتے ہے کہ سائل بذیل فرقہ پر مشتمل ہے

مزدوری	50 سال	سربرہ کہہ
کھریلے کام	47 سال	منظیف نیکم
زیر تعلیم	22 سال	سہیہ حمید
زیر تعلیم	19 سال	نورفان حمید
زیر تعلیم	18 سال	عصمت حمید
زیر تعلیم	15 سال	منک حمید
زیر تعلیم	13 سال	سایتی حمید

اس کے علاوہ کوئی افراد کہہ نہیں ہے سائل کے کہہ کی باہرہ آمدنی 14000 ہے سرٹیفیکٹ اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ ہی م اندر دفتر بنا میں پیش کرنے معیار کرنے بعد کوئی بھی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

نائب تحصیلدار ajj

از تحصیل کوئی یا اجلاس تحصیلدار کوئی

مضمون: مضمون درخواست متناہب عابد فاروق ولد مرحوم فاروق احمد اون ساکت واکب تحصیل کوئی بمراد عطا گی ڈیپنٹ سرٹیفیکٹ

اشتبہار بمراد آگاہی ہر خاص و عام

محاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدور میں سائل نے ایک درخواست بمراد عطا گی ڈیپنٹ سرٹیفیکٹ پیش کی ہے۔ جو کہ دفتر میں زیر کارڈی ہے اور اجراء کرنے مطلب ہے اس ضمن میں پڑاری ملتق سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئی ہے جس سے عیاں ہے کہ فاروق احمد اون جو مورخہ 06-05-2022 کو فوت ہو چکا ہے سائل کہہ بذیل فرقہ پر مشتمل ہے

مزدوری	56 سال	زیمینداری
کھریلے کام	35 سال	امداد دہم
زیر تعلیم	31 سال	ثاری شہو
زیر تعلیم	29 سال	فر فاروق

اس کے علاوہ کوئی بھی افراد نہیں بتایا گیا ہے سرٹیفیکٹ ذر بخت اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص یا اجلاس کو کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ ہی م اندر پیش کریں۔ معیار کرنے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

تحصیلدار کوئی ajj



DC Sgr Calls For Intensified Vaccination Drive For Priority Groups

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Mohammad Aijaz Asad Wednesday called for an intensified vaccination drive of all vulnerable and target groups to break the transmission chain of infection in the district.

The DC said this while chairing a meeting of Zonal Medical Officers, Tehsildars to review progress of ongoing vaccination and the roadmap for scaling up the percentage of the vaccination in Srinagar to protect and safeguard precious

human lives.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Khurshid Ahmad, SDM East Owais Mushtaq, SDM West, Akshay Labro, Chief Medical Officer, Dr Jameel, Incharge Covid Control, Masarat Hashim and other concerned were present in the meeting.

The Deputy Commissioner reviewed the current vaccination status and directed the concerned to cover all left out population of target groups as soon as possible.

He said vaccination is imperative to fight against the



Coronavirus pandemic and pushed for vigorous vaccination

tion in district particularly of vulnerable groups including shopkeepers, street vendors, transporters and other people directly involved in public delivery system.

The DC urged all the officers to ensure cent percent vaccination target is achieved within their respective jurisdictions.

He also directed for conducting RAT tests at all Panchayat level Covid Care Centers across the district.

The DC said containment zones shall be de-notified only after considering vaccination percentage.

He also called for preparing micro management plans of all areas to ensure proper outreach and expanded vaccination coverage in the district.

The DC further directed for establishing additional vaccination sites at specific locations so that maximum target population is benefitted. He also asked the concerned to expedite the anti Covid-19 vaccination process by mobilising Asha workers, Anganwadi workers, BLOs as well as PRI members and religious heads across the district to scale up the vaccination drive.

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)



HIJRI CALENDAR

22

SHAWWAL -UL- MUKARRAM

1442

This Day in History

- 1934 - Dr Frederick Banting co-discoverer of insulin, is knighted
- 1935 - French liner SS Normandie sets Atlantic crossing record of four days, three hours and 14 minutes on her maiden voyage
- 1940 - Last British/French troop leave Dunkirk
- 1943 - United Nations Relief & Rehabilitation Administration forms
- 1944 - Nazis pull out of Rome
- 1946 - International Military Tribunal opens in Tokyo against 28 Japanese war criminals
- 1947 - British Viceroy of India Lord Mountbatten visits Pakistan
- 1948 - Hale telescope dedicated at Palomar Observatory
- 1950 - French expedition reaches top of Himalayan peak of Annapurna in Nepal
- 1959 - Singapore adopts constitution
- 1965 - Gemini 4 launched; 2nd US 2-man flight (McDivitt & White)
- 1966 - Gemini 9 launched; 7th US 2-man flight (Stafford & Cernan)
- Event of Interest
- 1971 - Test Cricket debut of Imran Khan, v Englandl at Edgbaston (5, 0-36, 0-19)
- 1974 - Yitzhak Rabin forms a new Israeli government
- 1977 - Belgium government of Tindemans forms
- 1977 - US & Cuba talk about diplomatic relations
- 1980 - Crew of Soyuz 36 returns to Earth aboard Soyuz 35
- 1986 - Battles in Beirut; 53 killed
- 1989 - Beginning of the Tiananmen Square Massacre as Chinese troops open fire on democracy supporters in Beijing
- 1992 - World's largest environmental summit opens in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 2001 - Iraq announces that it will halt crude oil exports in response to the UN's resolution that extends the oil-for-food program by only 1 month, instead of the normal 6-month period
- 2006 - The union of Serbia and Montenegro comes to an end with Montenegro's formal declaration of independence
- 2013 - 20 people, including 10 children, are killed by a suicide bombing in Kabul, Afghanistan
- 2013 - US extends sanctions against Iran through its automotive industry and currency
- 2013 - 119 people are killed in a poultry farm fire in Jilin Province, China
- 2014 - Hashim Amla becomes the first non-white captain of the South African national cricket team
- Event of Interest
- 2014 - President Obama announces his plan for a \$1 billion fund to increase deployment of US troops to Europe
- 2015 - 200 people are killed by an explosion at a gasoline station in Accra, Ghana

PRAYERS

FAJR 3:38

ZUHR 12:28

ASR 5:27

MAGRIB 7:40

ISHA 9:19



KO Photo by Abid Bhat

POLICEMEN OF NEHRU PARK POLICE STATION on Wednesday distributed face masks among people at Dalgate crossing and sensitised people on Covid SOP's.

J&K Police Distributes Face Masks In Srinagar, Holds Covid Awareness Programmes

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Police Tuesday held a Covid awareness programme in capital city Srinagar and also distributed face masks among the general public.

A Covid awareness program was organised by Police Station Nigeen at Auqaf Market Hazratbal & Fisherman colony Dhobighat areas of Hazratbal.

SP Hazratbal, SDPO Zakoora & SHO PS Nigeen were present on the occasion. Besides, Tehsildar North,

Civil Society members, Masjid Committee members, Civil defence personal & members of different NGO's also attended the function.

In Dalgate personnel of the police distributed the masks on Boulevard and also sanitised the people about the covid SOP's.

In Budgam, Police held meetings with Nambardars and Chowkidars at Police Station Khansahib and Police Post Narbal to aware them about Covid-19 containment measures and other Govt SOP's. The

participants were also advised to motivate people in their respective villages to go for vaccination at an earliest.

During the programmes, the people were sensitised about the pandemic and were requested to adopt Covid appropriate behaviour. The participants were requested to wear masks, use sanitizers and keep their surroundings clean. They were requested to adhere to the SOPs and cooperate with police in enforcing the directions.

SPECIALISED BONE & JOINT HOSPITAL...

CEO ERA Asks Officers To Work In Double Shifts For Timely Completion

SRINAGAR: Chief Executive Officer, J&K Economic Reconstruction Agency (ERA), Jhelum Tawi Flood Recovery Project (JTFRP), Dr. Syed Abid Rasheed Shah, Wednesday inspected progress on construction of 120 bedded Specialized Orthopaedic Unit (additional hospital block) at Bone and Joint Hospital, Barzulla.

Pertinently, the prestigious project has been taken up under the component "Critical Infrastructure" of JTFRP funded by the World Bank.

While inspecting the ongoing works, Dr. Abid directed the concerned officers to work in double shifts with full focus on quality parameters of the project ensuring timely completion. He asked the executing agency to ensure completion of the works on ground floor of the building before June end.

Dr. Abid, while enquiring about the technical specifications of the building, directed the concerned engineers that the technical and quality parameters should be checked on regular basis for effective implementation. He also directed the executing agency to initiate the process for procuring necessary medical infrastructure for the hospital which is part of the composite tender given to NPCC Limited. He asked the of-



icers to constitute a committee of specialized doctors for vetting technical specifications and other requirements for procurement of medical equipments and other related items.

CEO was informed that the building will be G+4 structure with 120 beds capacity as well as technically advanced modular Operation theatres, pre-operative and post-operative units which will considerably augment the infrastructure of the valley's largest centre for the orthopaedic care.

Pertinent to mention that JTFRP, which is part of PM's development package, has received major fillip in implementation in the last one year which has been recognized in various tripartite review meetings between the World Bank, the Department of Economic Affairs and the government of J&K.

Mirwaiz Yousuf Shah's Bayan-ul-Furqaan Now Available On Audio Streaming Sites

Another Great Day For Kashmiri Language: AMK

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Mirwaiz Foundation Tuesday said that it is pleased to inform that the Kashmiri translation and commentary of Holy Quran "Bayan-ul-Furqaan" by Mufassir-e-Quran Mirwaiz Yousuf Shah (RA) in audio format is now available on all major audio streaming sites.

The sites include Youtube Music, Spotify, Apple Music, Amazon Music, Jio Savaan among others.

A Mirwaiz Foundation statement said that the step has been taken to facilitate easy access to listen to Kashmiri translation of the Holy Quran, for Kashmiris living in and outside Kashmir.

"The audio commentary for the same has been done by Mirwaiz Mohammed Ahmed Sahab."

Meanwhile, Adbee Markaz Kamraz Jammu and Kashmir expressed happiness and said that it is happy to note that Kashmiri translation and commentary of Holy Quran "Bayan-ul-Furqaan" by Marhoom Mirwaiz Yousuf Shah (Reh) has been released in Audio format on all Major audio streaming sites

"Adbee Markaz Kamraz feels that it is another great day for Kashmiri language lovers and speakers and such a sacred gift has once again emphasised the importance of mother language and this is going to go a long way in enhancing the prestige of Kashmiri language."

Non-covid LD Hospital Continues To Function Normally: Dr Rizvi

OPD Providing Tele-consultation To Pregnant Women

SRINAGAR: Lal Did Hospital in uptown Srinagar continues to function normally even as the second wave of coronavirus has engulfed the valley.

Lal Ded is a non-covid Seven Hundred bed hospital which provides medical service to pregnant Ladies.

"We are receiving eighty to one hundred patients on a daily basis even during the prevailing pandemic," said Gynecologist, Dr Syeda Masooma Rizvi.

She said that pregnant women shall adopt a proper strategy to keep themselves safe from infection. Even if a pregnant woman catches a virus, she needs not to fear, Dr Rizvi said, "Out of all the infected pregnant ladies, 80 percent of pregnant women were asymptomatic while 18 percent developed mild symptoms."

She further added that only 2% pregnant ladies were severely affected after catching infection who needed hospitalisation for treatment.



Dr Rizvi emphasised on timely identification of infection for treatment and appealed expecting mothers not to hide infection because such behaviour would put lives of other people in danger.

"During pregnancy, Covid infected women shall isolate herself in both symptomatic or asymptomatic situations," Dr Rizvi said. She advised their families to passionately help them during the difficult period at home.

Regarding medical examination and requirement of investigations during pregnancy, Dr Rizvi said that such women shall seek

advice from doctors through Tele consultancy and informed that under e-Sanjeevni OPD, different Gynaecologists of Lal Ded Hospital are providing consultancy to expecting ladies from 10am to 4pm every day on telephone.

Regarding vaccination for pregnant ladies, she said that the Government of India has not given permission for such women till now. The recommendations are very strong for vaccination, once the Government gives formal permission, then they can go for it, she added.

She further requested that a healthy attendant should accompany a patient to avoid crowding in hospitals and help in containment of virus.

OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL GOVERNMENT MEDICAL COLLEGE, ANANTNAG, J&K

(Camp Office :MMAB District Hospital, Anantnag)
Phone No.01932-227624 e-mail:gmcanantnag2018@gmail.com

No: GMCA/Estt./2021- 6801-08

Dated: 01 /06/2021

ORDER

It is hereby notified for the information of all the applicants who had applied online for (05) posts of Data Entry Operators and (04) posts of Helpers advertised vide Notification No. 12 of GMCA of 2021 Dated 18.05.2021 that the said advertisement/ notification for engagement for COVID-19 under Emergency Response & Health System Preparedness Package (ECRP) is cancelled/ withdrawn ab-initio.

Sd/-

(Prof. Shoukat A Jeelani)
Principal/Dean
Govt. Medical College Anantnag.

DIPK-2366/21

SAD DEMISE



With profound grief and sorrow we inform the sad demise of Haji Ghulam Mohammad dar

S/O. Mohammad dar
R/O. Kursoo padshahu bagh

Who passed away on 1st June 2021 .May Almighty Allah bless him with the Highest place in Jannah .(Aameen)

Congregational fateh khawani will be held on 3rd June 2021 at 3pm at their ancestral graveyard

No condolence meeting will be held at home in wake of Covid -19 pandemic

Bereaved: Ab. Rehman Dar, Mohammed Ashraf dar and Fayaz Ahmed dar (sons)

From KO Archives

Kashmir Situation Improving: Centre

NEW DELHI - The security situation in Jammu and Kashmir continued to improve during the last one year, while the northeast is still a "cause of concern" for the Centre.

In its annual report, the Home Ministry says "the levels of violence and tension in the state of Jammu and Kashmir have been perceptibly lower during 2004 and the trend continued in January and February 2005". This, the report says, is evident from the "exceptionally high" flow of more than 3.5 lakh tourists to the valley and nearly 4 lakh pilgrims, who undertook the Amarnath yatra.

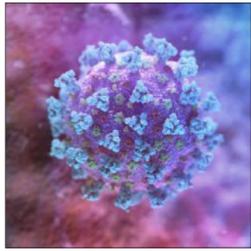
Another indicator of return of "normalcy" in the state is the hectic political activities witnessed last year as also the slide in the killing of civilians and security personnel. While 70 civilians were killed in 2004 compared to 79 a year earlier, the number of security force personnel killed in the year was 281 as against 314 in the previous year.

This trend continued in January this year too with incidents of violence coming down from 213 to 144. compared to the same period last year. The annual report noted with a sense of satisfaction that operations in the last few months have "achieved notable success," to neutralise many... militants from all major outfits.

The cost of combating terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir to the central exchequer from 1989-90 to 2003-04 was a little over Rs. 3100 crore which included assistance to Kashmir migrants to the tune of Rs. 650 crore and another Rs. 513 crores for welfare works in the state.

(Kashmir Observer, 03 June, 2005)

New Study Reveals Global "Hot Spots" Where New Coronaviruses May Emerge



WASHINGTON: Global land-use changes including forest fragmentation, agricultural expansion and concentrated livestock production are creating "hot spots" favourable for bats that carry coronaviruses and where conditions are ripe for the diseases to jump from bats to humans, finds a new study.

The findings were published by researchers at the University of California, Berkeley, the Politecnico di Milano (Polytechnic University of Milan) and the Massey University of New Zealand.

While the exact origins of the SARS-CoV-2 virus remain unclear, scientists believe that the disease likely emerged when a virus that infects horseshoe bats was able to jump to humans, either directly through wildlife-to-human contact, or indirectly by first infecting an intermediate animal host, such as the pangolin, sometimes known as the scaly anteater.

Horseshoe bats are known to carry a variety of coronaviruses, including strains that are genetically similar to ones that cause COVID-19 and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS).

The new study used remote sensing to analyze land-use patterns throughout the horseshoe

bat's range, which extends from Western Europe through Southeast Asia.

By identifying areas of forest fragmentation, human settlement and agricultural and livestock production, and comparing these to known horseshoe bat habitats, they identified potential hot spots where habitat is favourable for these bat species, and where these so-called zoonotic viruses could potentially jump from bats to humans.

The analysis also identified locations that could become easily become hot spots with changes in land use.

"Land use changes can have an important impact on human health, both because we are modifying the environment, but also because they can increase our exposure to zoonotic disease," said study co-author Paolo D'Odorico, a professor of environmental science, policy and management at UC Berkeley.

"Every formal land-use change should be evaluated not only for the environmental and social impacts on resources such as carbon stocks, microclimate and water availability but also for the potential chain reactions that could impact human health," Paolo added.

Most of the current hot spots are clustered in China, where a growing demand for meat products has driven the expansion of large-scale, industrial livestock farming. Concentrated livestock production is particularly concerning because the practice brings together large populations of genetically similar, often immune-suppressed animals that are highly vulnerable to disease outbreaks, the researchers said. (ANI)



THE FALL IN EMPLOYMENT AND hours worked has translated into a rise in poverty. (Representational)

Pandemic Plunges 100 Million More Workers Into Poverty: UN

Agence France-Presse

GENEVA: The pandemic has pushed over 100 million more workers into poverty, the UN said Wednesday, after working hours plummeted and access to good quality jobs evaporated.

In a report, the UN's International Labour Organization (ILO) cautioned that the labour market crisis created by the pandemic was far from over, with employment not expected to bounce back to pre-pandemic levels until 2023 at the earliest.

The ILO's annual World Employment and Social Outlook report indicated that the planet would be 75 million jobs short at the end of this year compared to if the pandemic had not occurred.

And it would still count 23 million fewer jobs by the end of next year. Covid-19 "has not just been a public health crisis, it's also been an employment and human crisis," ILO chief Guy Ryder told reporters.

"Without a deliberate effort to accelerate the creation

of decent jobs, and support the most vulnerable members of society and the recovery of the hardest-hit economic sectors, the lingering effects of the pandemic could be with us for years in the form of lost human and economic potential, and higher poverty and inequality."

Working hours slashed
The report showed that global unemployment was expected to stand at 205 million people in 2022 -- far higher than the 187 million in 2019.

But the situation is worse than official unemployment figures indicate.

Many people have held onto their jobs but have seen their working hours cut dramatically. In 2020, 8.8 percent of global working hours were lost compared to the fourth quarter of 2019 -- the equivalent of 255 million full-time jobs.

While the situation has improved, global working hours have far from bounced back, and the world will still be short the equivalent of 100 million full-time jobs by the end of this

year, the report found.

"This shortfall in employment and working hours comes on top of persistently high pre-crisis levels of unemployment, labour under-utilisation and poor working conditions," the ILO said.

And while global employment is expected to recover more quickly in the second half of 2021 -- provided the overall pandemic situation does not worsen -- the ILO warned that the recovery would be highly uneven.

This, it said, was due to inequitable access to Covid-19 vaccines. So far, more than 75 percent of all the jobs have gone to just 10 countries.

'Working poverty'
The limited capacity of most developing and emerging economies to support strong fiscal stimulus measures will also take its toll, the ILO said, warning that the quality of newly created jobs will likely deteriorate in those countries.

The fall in employment and hours worked has meanwhile translated into a sharp drop in labour income and a rise in poverty.

Israel Will Ask US For \$1Bn To 'Replenish' Iron Dome

Agencies

Israel's defence chief Benny Gantz will travel to Washington, DC, on Thursday to request a \$1bn replenishment of the close United States ally's Iron Dome air defence system, US Senator Lindsey Graham and Israeli officials have said.



Graham said he expects the US will quickly authorise the request in the wake of an 11-day escalation between Israel and Hamas, in which Israeli officials said the Iron Dome intercepted hundreds of rockets fired from the Gaza Strip.

"There will be a \$1bn request coming to the Pentagon this week from the [Israeli] defence minister to replenish the Iron Dome and a few other things, to upgrade the system," Graham told reporters during a visit to Jerusalem on Tuesday.

Israeli air strikes killed 253 Palestinians during the 11 days of fighting, including 66 children.

Two children were among 12 people killed in Israel by rockets fired by Hamas and other armed groups from Gaza during the same period.

'Wide and deep support'
The request comes amid growing criticism of American arms sales to Israel, as well as the \$3.8bn in mostly unconditional aid the US gives to Israel every year.

Progressive legislators in both the US House of Representatives and the Senate are currently at-

tempting to block a \$735m arms deal with Israel, which the White House approved shortly before the fighting began on May 10.

Nevertheless, support for Israel remains strong among the majority of US legislators, and efforts to curtail it are all but assured to fail.

Speaking on Tuesday, Graham noted support extends across party lines.

"There's been a big dustup over the last engagement between Hamas and the State of Israel in the United States, but I'm here to tell you that there's a wide and deep support for Israel among the Democratic Party," Graham, a Republican, said.

A senior Republican on the Senate Appropriations Committee, Graham met with both Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defence Minister Benny Gantz during his trip to Israel. The committee oversees spending including foreign military aid.

Israel's defence ministry, for its part, said Gantz would meet US defence secretary Lloyd Austin and White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan on Thursday for a discussion on issues including Iran and military aid.

US Supreme Court Declines To Hear Johnson & Johnson Appeal Over \$2 Billion Baby Powder Judgement

Washington: The US Supreme Court on Tuesday declined to hear Johnson & Johnson's bid to overturn a \$2.12 billion damages award to women who blamed their ovarian cancer on asbestos in the company's baby powder and other talc products.

The justices turned away a J&J appeal and left in place a Missouri state court ruling in litigation brought by 22 women whose claims were heard together in one trial.

The Missouri Court of Appeals, an intermediate state appellate court, last year ruled against J&J's bid to throw out the compensatory and punitive damages awarded to the plaintiffs but reduced the total to \$2.12 billion from the \$4.69 billion originally decided by a jury.

J&J, which will make a payment of \$2.5 billion this month including accrued interest, said in a statement that



there are unresolved legal issues that will continue to be litigated. It previously has said it faces more than 19,000 similar claims.

"The matters that were before the court are related to legal procedure, and not safety. Decades of independent scientific evaluations confirm Johnson's Baby Powder is safe, does not contain asbestos, and does not cause cancer," the company said.

J&J shares were down about 1.2% at \$167.23.

J&J has argued that a decision by a Missouri circuit court judge to consolidate disparate baby powder-related claims from the plaintiffs -- including 17 women from outside the state -- for a trial before a single jury violated the New Brunswick, New Jersey-based company's due process rights under the US Constitution. J&J also has argued that the size of the jury's damages award violated its due process rights.

The Missouri Supreme Court, the state's highest court, in November declined to hear J&J's appeal of the Missouri Court of Appeals ruling, prompting the company to appeal to the US Supreme Court.

"This was a victory not just for the amazing women and their families who were privileged to represent, but a victory for justice," said Mark Lanier, a lawyer for the plaintiffs. --Reuters

Israel Sees Probable Link Between Pfizer Shots, Heart Inflammation Cases

JERUSALEM: Israel's Health Ministry said on Tuesday it found the small number of heart inflammation cases observed mainly in young men who received Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine in Israel were likely linked to their vaccination.

Pfizer has said it has not observed a higher rate of the condition, known as myocarditis, than would normally be expected in the general population.

In Israel, 275 cases of myocarditis were reported between December 2020 and May 2021 among more than 5 million vaccinated people, the ministry said in disclosing the findings of a study it commissioned to examine the matter.

Most patients who experienced heart inflammation spent no more than four days in hospital and 95% of the cases were classified as mild, according to the study, which the ministry said was conducted by three teams of experts.

The study found "there is a probable link between receiving the second dose (of Pfizer) vaccine and the appearance of myocarditis among men aged 16 to 30," it said in a statement.

According to the findings, such a link was observed more among men aged 16 to 19 than in other age groups.

Pfizer said in a statement that it is aware of the Israeli observations of myocarditis, noting that no causal link to its vaccine has been established.

Adverse events are thoroughly reviewed and Pfizer meets regularly with the Vaccine Safety Department of the Israeli Ministry of Health to review data, it said.

A U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advisory group last month recommended further study of the possibility of a link between myocarditis and mRNA vaccines, which include those from Pfizer and Moderna Inc.

CDC monitoring systems had not found more cases than would be expected in the popu-



MOST PATIENTS who experienced heart inflammation spent no more than four days in hospital and 95% of the cases were classified as mild, according to the study, which the ministry said was conducted by three teams of experts.

lation, but the advisory group said in a statement that members felt healthcare providers should be made aware of reports of a "potential adverse event."

The Israeli ministry released the statement, which contained no recommendations, ahead of a widely expected decision on whether to begin vaccinating youngsters aged 12 to 15 in Israel.

It said a team examining that issue would make its recommendation to the ministry's director-general, but gave no date.

Israeli media reports said a decision on including the 12-15 age group in the country's vaccination programme could come as early as Sunday.

Israel has been a world leader in its vaccination rollout. With COVID-19 infections down to just a handful a day and total active cases at just 340 across the country, the economy has fully opened, though restrictions remain on incoming tourism.

Some 55% of Israel's population has already been vaccinated. As of Tuesday, restrictions on social distancing and the need for special green vaccination passes to enter certain restaurants and venues were scrapped. --Reuters

Iran Navy Ship Sinks After Fire In Gulf Of Oman, Crew Safe



Agencies

An Iranian naval vessel sank in the Gulf of Oman Wednesday after efforts to put out a fire failed, but the crew safely disembarked, the navy said.

The fleet replenishment tanker Kharg had caught fire on Tuesday near the port of Jask on the Gulf of Oman.

The fire broke out in "one of the systems" of the vessel, a navy statement said without elaborating.

Firefighting efforts continued "for 20 hours" before the ship went down, it said.

"Considering the spread of the fire, the mission to save the Kharg failed, and it sank in waters off Jask."

It added that the vessel had left for a "training mission" in international waters days ago.

Last year, an Iranian warship was hit by friendly fire during a naval exercise off Jask, killing the 19 sailors onboard.

The port lies close to the Strait of Hormuz, the strategic chokepoint at the head of the Gulf through which a fifth of world oil output passes.

Jask is also important to Iran's economy as the site where the government plans to build the country's second-largest oil export terminal.

A 1,000-kilometre pipeline from Bushehr province on the Gulf to Jask was put into service just days ago, the government said.

It will provide a new bypass route for oil exports avoiding the Strait of Hormuz.

In recent months, there have also been reported attacks on Iranian shipping linked to its arch foe Israel.

In April, Iran said its freighter Saviz was hit by an "explosion" in the Red Sea, after media reports said Israel had struck the ship.

NEWS MAKERS

Finland Prime Minister To Pay Back Breakfast Expenses After Uproar



HELSINKI: Finnish Prime Minister Sanna Marin is pledging to pay back thousands of euros in meal expenses in a bid to contain the fallout from revelations about her family's taxpayer-subsidised breakfasts.

The 35-year-old leader made clear on Tuesday she would no longer claim such expenses after pledging over the weekend to pay back over 14,000 euros (\$17,000) she has received in reimbursements for breakfast and cold meals at her residence since taking office a year and a half ago.

"Because there are open questions regarding the meal allowance, I will pay the related costs myself," she said on Twitter on Saturday, adding that she will make sure the issue is looked into and guidance updated if necessary. On Tuesday she added that "I don't intend to use the meal allowance in future, even if it is ruled to be in line with the regulations," in an interview with broadcaster MTV3.

She called for officials to swiftly determine whether the allowance is legal and whether the repayments should be taxed, and said: "I have other work duties to get on with than spending days on end looking into things like my family's food." Marin found herself in hot water a week ago when the tabloid Italehti reported that she has been claiming back about 300 euros (\$365) per month for her family's breakfasts while living at her official residence, Kesaranta. (Agencies)

A Third Child? No Thanks, Say Young Chinese

Agence France-Presse

BEIJING: China wants its women to have more children but for many young people, the government's big promises of support mean little because of soaring living costs and changing mindsets about families.

On Monday, the world's most populous nation further relaxed its strict family planning controls, allowing couples to have three children after just 12 million Chinese were born last year -- a record low.

But high costs, limited space and social norms shaped by decades of limits on family size will impede efforts to boost China's 1.41 billion population, experts warn.

"A lot of the women around me are quite repulsed by the idea of having children," 22-year-old masters student Yan Jiaqi told AFP in Beijing.

"So don't even talk about having three," she said.



In 2016, China relaxed its "one-child policy" -- one of the world's strictest family planning regulations -- allowing couples to have two children as concerns mounted over an ageing workforce and economic stagnation.

The latest easing is part of an increasingly desperate effort to stir a demographic boom before China's remarkable growth story is bogged down by the healthcare and pension bills for hundreds of millions of elderly.

For the country's Communist leadership to be successful, it will

have to persuade people like Yang Shengyi, a 29-year-old father of two, to have one more child.

As he visited a Beijing toy store with his family, Yang said two young sons were already more than enough in the competitive squeeze of China's capital.

"We don't have that much money and there's not enough space at home, so I don't think there's any reason to have a third child," he told AFP.

"When our second child was born, there was suddenly only half of everything, and where we could originally give each child 100 percent we can now only give 50 percent."

Paying for the past
For others, the thought of having any children at all or even marriage is off the table, as urban life takes its toll -- long working hours, expensive housing, and a punishing ladder into decent education.

Bangladeshi Woman Cuts Off Attacker's Penis In Spain



Police in Spain arrested a Bangladeshi woman in her thirties for allegedly cutting off her boss's genitals with a knife, which she said she had done as he was attempting to rape her, reported Daily Mail.

She told officers she was trying to defend herself against sexual assault at a bar in Sant Andreu de la Barca around midnight on Tuesday.

The sliced man was rushed to the hospital for an emergency operation to reattach his penis.

The woman is currently being held at a police station following her arrest. Officers have initiated an investigation into her statements that she was acting in self-defense but have not eliminated the prospect of arresting the bar owner once he is conscious enough to be questioned.

According to police sources, the woman had told them she had been being harassed for months and was forced to have sex with her boss several times before she assaulted him with the knife during his latest alleged rape attempt. A representative for the regional Mossos d'Esquadra police force confirmed on Tuesday that the woman was arrested for the crime of wounding in the early hours of the morning after she contacted police to explain what happened.

The man's nationality has not been revealed yet, but he is believed to be from Bangladesh or Pakistan. (Agencies)

Adv Khan Assesses Medical Infrastructure, Arrangements At Covid Centres In Baramulla



Observer News Service

BARAMULLA: Advisor to Lieutenant Governor Baseer Ahmad Khan Wednesday visited Tangmarg area of Baramulla district where he took stock of COVID-19 mitigation measures.

During his visit, he inspected recently established COVID Care Centres at Panchayat level in order to assess the status of medical infrastructure and arrangements in these centres wherein he directed to ensure that all the necessary medicare facilities are provided in a hassle free manner. He said that 5-bedded CCCs have been established on the directions of Lieutenant Governor in every Panchayat with an aim to strengthen the health infrastructure in rural areas amid the 2nd wave of COVID-19 pandemic.

The Advisor, later, met various stakeholders comprising of PRIs,

transporters, traders, religious heads among other prominent representatives of the society, to discuss various means and measures for effective Covid control at grassroots level.

On the occasion, the concerned stakeholders apprised the Advisor about the issues being faced by them during the ongoing pandemic. The Advisor gave a patient hearing and assured them to redress the genuine grievances in a time bound manner.

While interacting with the Hoteliers of Gulmarg represented by the President Hoteliers association, the Advisor emphasised on following the Covid-19 protocol and the SOPs in letter and spirit.

The Advisor announced that a fully functional oxygen plant shall be started in Tangmarg very soon which will help in combating the challenge of the Covid crisis.

Overnight Change In Education Policy Bizarre, Detrimental To Students' Future: JKEC

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Education Chamber (JKEC), an amalgam of all leading private school associations from both Kashmir and Jammu divisions, Wednesday termed the "unilateral" government order to restrict the timing of online classes as bizarre, devoid of any logic, and detrimental for the future of students.

The Chamber, in a statement, raised many questions on how an education policy was changed within 24 hours. "No education policy is changed in 24 hours. It concerns future of society and every policy is framed in the backdrop of an Evidence Based Approach," said a spokesperson of Chamber. "But we doubt they studied any model or consulted any expert, educationist or academician. There is no clarity on what basis they have framed this policy."

The Chamber said that the concerned department has neither studied how world over online classes are managed and neither have they watched ground situation



here. "On one hand the classes have been limited but on the other hand education department has not reduced the syllabus. So limited classes in such a situation means limited learning for students. It is deprivation of quality education to students here particularly when we compare it to All India level," said a spokesperson of the Chamber. "In other states the students would complete full syllabus and our students will have to be content with learning few chapters only."

"Now if they have to force schools to work according to the new plan, then reduce the syllabus and screen time will be automatically reduced," he further added.

The Chamber also questioned the way this policy

was framed and announced. "The education department announced that they brought on board all stakeholders, but private schools being a major stakeholder was never even consulted once. We want to know which stakeholder did they talk to and who were the experts for this policy," said the spokesperson. "All school bodies are part of the Chamber and till date no one from Chamber was consulted. The government has again treated this sensitive policy through administrative angle only."

The Chamber suggested the government to address the issues of the education sector in toto rather than in piecemeal. "Teachers are in stress, schools are closing down, students have issues, the entire sector is on the verge of closure. Let the government take all stakeholders on board and resolve the major issues facing the education sector. That will benefit students, parents, teachers and schools," he said. "As of now, these devoid-of-logic policies seem to be an exercise to manage public perception and not helping students."

NO EDUCATION POLICY IS CHANGED IN 24 hours. It concerns future of society and every policy is framed in the backdrop of an Evidence Based Approach."

SLEC Approves Rs 75Cr Annual Plan For Integrated Development Of Horticulture



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Navin chairs SLEC meeting of MIDH: Approves annual action plan worth Rs 75.73 cr

Principal Secretary, Horticulture, Agriculture Production and Farmers' Welfare Department, Navin Kumar Choudhary, Wednesday while chairing State Level Executive Committee (SLEC) meeting of Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) approved an annual action plan worth Rs. 75.73 crore for the financial year 2021-22 for Jammu and Kashmir.

He emphasised upon the officers to ensure that all the earmarked funds are judiciously utilised to the fullest in a time bound manner.

Pertinently, the mission is a centrally sponsored scheme for overall development of horticulture funded by Government of India in the ratio of 90:10. Its objective is to encourage aggregation of farmers into FPO/FIG's, enhance productivity and skill

development besides creation of employment opportunities. This mission included components like establishment of new gardens, organic farming, creation of water resources, import of plant material, centre of excellence for Horticulture, post-harvest management, HR management, food processing etc.

SLEC also accorded approval to several project based activities like establishment of CA store units, Food Processing Units of private entrepreneurs under MIDH.

Navin Choudhary asked the Mission Director, MIDH to get certification of the cost of these projects, wherever required from the concerned government organisation.

Chairman SLEC asked the Director Agriculture Kashmir for making irrigation infrastructure established for Saffron areas functional for which funds have been earmarked. He also directed SKUAST-Jammu to expedite establishment of Centre of Excellence at Udhewalla, Jammu.

..COVID-19 Recovery Rate Rises Above 70 Percent In Anantnag

Comprehensive Measures Started To Bring Down Positivity Rate

Observer News Service

ANANTNAG: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag, Dr. Piyush Singla Wednesday said that there has been a reduction of 7 percent positivity rate during the last 15 days and it has come down from 14.2 percent to about 7.2 percent during this period with the positive cases coming in two digit numbers for last 2 days.

He said this while briefing about the Covid-19 situation in the district through a video message from DC Office Anantnag.

The DC informed the recovery rate has improved by a margin of about 9 percent from 61 to 70.8 percent during these two weeks hoping it would get better in the days to come.

Though the gross indicators have been favourable for last few days but the ongoing unlock phase is very critical and people should not lower the guard against the pandemic and stick to COVID-19 guidelines remarked the DC.

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) said that the District has started comprehensive measures to further bring down the positivity rate to below 5 percent in the next 10 days.

He said this while chairing a high level meeting of officers of district administration, health, police and other departments besides stakeholders viz ULB members, representatives of transport and trade associa-



tions, imams & religious leaders, aqaf presidents and civil society members at Dak Bangalow Khanabal here.

Addressing the meeting, the DC said that a robust mechanism has been put in place wherein mobile health teams will regularly test people at high exposure areas like markets, Mandis, entry and exit points of main towns, banks etc. The timely identification and isolation of positive persons in high contact places will curtail the spread of infection and bring down the positivity rate, he remarked.

Dr. Singla called for strict adherence to Covid Appropriate Behaviour (CAB) during unlock period and directed the SDMs to enforce Covid SOPs

and Guidelines in letter and spirit within their jurisdictions. Maximum exhibition of responsible behaviour on part of all citizens will bear its fruits in near future and greater normalcy and economic activity will be restored, he added.

He impressed upon the stakeholders to ensure that all the members of their associations get vaccinated at an earliest adding the vaccinated ones should continue to adhere to Covid SOPs and also get tested periodically.

The DC said the Pandemic is not over yet and hence during this period the SOPs and Vaccinations become even more important for the unlock process go smoothly.

IUST Organises Webinar On Social Media Audit

Observer News Service

AWANTIPORA: Department of Journalism and Mass Communication (DJMC), Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) Wednesday organised an online workshop for its students and scholars on Social Audit; Tools and Strategies to Monitor Social Media and Online Content. The objective of the workshop was to make the students/scholars understand what fake news is, and how to debunk fake news, fake photos, fake videos or fake posts and source check.

The workshop was an initiative under Google News Initiative India Training Network led by DataLeads to support journalists, fact-checkers and media educators across India in their fight against misinformation, a university statement said.

The resource person for the workshop was Archana Kumari, a Google Certified Trainer and faculty member at the Central University of Jammu. Quoting Bill Kovach and Rosenstiel, Ms. Kumari said journalism is not just about writing but about getting it right and having a system in place to fact-test information as one discovers it.

Besides informing the participants about various online tools available to verify the information that appear on social media, she also shared examples of misinformation with the participants. The topics covered during the workshop included



Social Media Monitoring, Monitoring Facebook/Twitter/YouTube and Verifying Websites.

She stressed that people need to be aware of Me-first syndrome, wherein people want to be the first one to share a big news in his/her group believing that the news needs immediate sharing. "And the only golden rule to fight misinformation is to be careful and Verify, Verify and Verify."

She added that the journalists should always use their wisdom, common sense and knowledge to check and verify the facts. "And the knowledge of various fact-checking tools can bring additional advantage," she said.

Introducing the theme of the workshop, Dr. Ruheela Hassan, Incharge Head, DJMC, IUST, said even though misinformation cannot be completely eliminated, media can play a very important role in disseminating the accurate information. She added that such trainings will be greatly helpful for trainee journalists to use the media for mitigating the impact of rumours, misinformation and false information.

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Gbl Admin Establishes 15 Vaccination Sites For 18-44 Year-Olds

Observer News Service

GANDERBAL: The Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, Kritika Jyotsna Wednesday briefed the media regarding the current Covid scenario in the district at Conference Hall, Mini Secretariat.

To ensure completion of vaccination for 18-44 years of age at an earliest and keeping in view the demand for establishment of more session sites, the DC said that more 10 sites are activated at different locations in the district which include District Hospital, PHC Sonamarg, PHC Kachan, PHC Tulumulla, PHC Shuhama, NTPHC Gutlibag, PHC Kulan, PHC Batwina, PHC Ganawan and PHC Manigam thus

taking total number of vaccination sites to 15 in the district.

Giving details on establishment of 5 bedded Isolation Facility in each panchayat, Jyotsna said that in all 126 panchayats of the district the facility is fully established with all required facilities including Covid Management Kit, basic medicines and other essential instruments for better management of Covid patients. RAT testing facility is also available at these centres, she added.

The DC said that the people who are symptomatic and lack isolation facilities at their homes can be shifted and taken care of at these centres to curb the spread of virus.

MD RLM Asks Officers To Provide Successful Business Models For Emulating SHG's

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Mission Director, Jammu & Kashmir Rural Livelihoods Mission (RLM), Dr Syed Sehrish Asgar, Wednesday impressed upon the officials of Pulwama and Shopian districts that they should come up with few successful business models implemented elsewhere to maximise the profits of these SHGs. She asked them to look for their sustainability and assist them in upgrading them to enhance their earnings.

The MD also encouraged the officers to create strategy for increasing the profits of these SHGs besides giving them a marketing policy to propagate their sales manifold.

She was holding a review meeting to review the progress of mission in district Pulwama and Shopian.

Dr Sehrish emphasised on the officials to improve the convergence under various livelihoods

programme with other line departments for enhancing the livelihoods of the SHG women. She further directed them to organise special drives for the SHG women for availing the Aadhaar cards and ensure that the individual bank accounts are opened for all the women SHG members. She also stressed that the Block Programme Managers must ensure that the current fiscal targets are achieved, nevertheless adopting strictly the COVID -19 appropriate behaviour and corresponding SOPs.

Dr Sehrish advised the officials to further strengthen the credit linkage as per the RBI guidelines and promote group enterprises for enhanced livelihoods both in Farm and Non-Farm livelihoods activities. She said the JKRLM is committed for bringing changes in the economic stability in rural areas and praised the perseverance of women that also in the prevailing difficult circumstances.

All Above 45 Year-Olds Vaccinated In Shopian: CMO

Observer News Service

SHOPIAN: The Chief Medical Officer, Shopian, Dr. Arshad Hussain Tak Wednesday said that to ramp up the vaccination process to break the chain of virus transmission, cent percent target of vaccination of above 45 years of age group has been completed in the district.

He said that in the 2nd phase, 22 percent of the vaccination process has been achieved till date and the

process is going on and shall be completed within the shortest possible time. He also said that our teams including Dy.CMO, BMOs and other health workers have been geared up and are jointly working day night to complete the 2nd dose of vaccination process in the district.

The CMO stated that soon after the announcement of the above 18 years of age group, health functionaries will be pressed into service for the vaccination process to save precious lives.

Tipplers Throng Wine Shops Across Jammu

Press Trust of India

JAMMU: Wine shops opened across Jammu region on Wednesday after over a month-long closure owing to Covid induced lockdown, drawing heavy rush of tipplers who were seen standing in long queues, officials said.

Policemen have been deployed outside wine shops to maintain order and ensure adherence of Covid-19 guidelines but at many places there were complaints of flouting of social distancing norms by the waiting customers, they said.

The liquor shops were closed in the last week of April following imposition of coronavirus curfew after a successful e-auction which fetched Rs 140 crore for one year to the government.

The e-auction replaced the traditional practice of renewal of license, leaving majority of 228 liquor traders without a job. However, the setting up of



new wine shops in residential areas led to protests by local residents against the excise department, with protesters seeking intervention of Lt Governor Manoj Sinha to shift out the establishments from their areas.

As the shops opened Wednesday morning, people turned up in good numbers and were seen waiting in long queues to buy liquor.

Police had a tough time

for liquor, to follow the government guidelines and norms.

The process of unlocking began in Jammu and Kashmir on Monday after a prolonged Covid curfew with partial reopening of shops.

The private transporters also resumed their operations from Wednesday after remaining off the roads for the past 42 days in protest against the government decision to cap the seating capacity at 50 per cent in passenger vehicles without hiking the fare.

The transporters said they have resumed the operations after government allowed them to operate with 100 per cent capacity in some areas.

They went on an indefinite strike on April 21 after the government came out with new Covid guidelines, demanding a 50 per cent hike in passenger fare to facilitate smooth operations with 50 per cent passengers on board.

Kulgam Traders Asked To Adhere To Roster For Opening Of Shops

Observer News Service

KULGAM: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam Dr. Bilal Mohi Ud-Din Bhat Wednesday chaired a meeting of Traders association Kulgam at the mini-secretariat.

The meeting was convened after partial unlocking was ordered in the district and was attended by ADC, ACR, DSP-HQ, besides the President of traders association along with other members.

During the meeting, the trade association members were apprised about their role in ensuring adherence to SOPs and guidelines in markets to stop the spread of virus.

The DC also instructed them to adhere to the roster of opening of shops/business establishments issued by administration strictly to ensure decline in unnecessary rush in markets.

KASHMIR
OBSERVER

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K O V I E W

Epidemic of suicides

There have been many cases of suicides and suicide attempts in Kashmir over the last few weeks. One of them, Shoaib Bashir, the son of a school teacher, made a video before the suicide, blamed for his extreme step the denial of salary to his father Bashir Ahmad Mir over the past two and a half years. Bashir was apparently pushed over the edge by his failure to pay the fees for his Masters course in psychology. His father Mir's salary had been withheld since March 2019 by the authorities who cited an adverse police verification report. It has now turned out that the said report has nothing adverse against Mir. The report has concluded that "he is presently silent and busy with his job".

The suicides have caused deep unease among the people in the Valley. The Jammu and Kashmir High Court Bar Association (JKHBA) has expressed concern about the disturbing trend. The Association has appealed to the people in general and charity institutions in particular to take care of the distressed families.

The major cause of suicide attempts is financial stress in the families caused by the turmoil of the last two years and also by the successive lockdowns, two of them the result of the Covid-19 pandemic. This has wrought havoc with the economy, leaving thousands of people jobless or with a drastically reduced income. This, in turn, has driven people to desperation, and caused psychological problems.

Though the local economy had started looking up during the winter with tourist arrivals picking up between November to March, and the markets were re-opening to a growing consumer rush, the virulent second Covid-19 nipped it in the bud. And with a fresh lockdown being slapped since April, the situation has gone downhill. A strict curfew has once again disrupted everything and battered the economy. And once again a large number of people have lost jobs. 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 the hardest over the last two years, so much so that some of them have resorted to begging to feed their families.

With the fresh infections going down, the government is taking steps to reopen the economy. Already, the economy is being partially reopened in the districts categorized as orange and green. As already urged in this space, the administration should do everything to ease the terrible plight of the poorest section of the society while deciding the future course of action. 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 and could lead to more suicides.

OTHER OPINION

The Uncertain Economic Story

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Annual Report, released last week, has a detailed assessment on the state of the economy. The report (expectedly) lauds both the fiscal and monetary policy response to the pandemic's economic impact. However, it does well to reiterate some basic principles of economic policy as far as dealing with a pandemic is concerned. It rightfully notes that "compared to financial crises, a health crisis can be more pervasive, persistent and debilitating in its impact on the real economy" and "letting down the guard is perilous; it is best to prepare for future waves". This has both a short-term and medium-term message for policy-makers.

India paid heavily for letting down vigilance in the month of March when economic activity was finally beginning to gain momentum — as was a second wave. Any signs of revival in the infection curve must be nipped in the bud from now on.

Given the fact that the economy has been battered by two waves of the pandemic, it will be overly optimistic to assume that it will return to normal quickly. The policy hubris around a V-shaped recovery ought to be discarded. The report notes how "private investment is the missing piece in the story of the Indian economy in 2020-21" and "reviving it awaits an environment in which 'animal spirits' are rekindled and entrepreneurial energies are released", clearly pointing towards a persistence of weak demand in the economy. RBI's report is categorical that the second-wave's economic impact being confined to the first quarter of 2021-22 is the "most optimistic scenario".

These observations should provide clear guidance for economic policy.

Hindustan Times



False Thaw

India's idea of a Kashmir solution is now more about addressing it internally than externally with Pakistan

RIYAZ WANI

This realization has forced Islamabad to seek the minimal concession possible to resume the dialogue: if we go by the recent statements of the senior Pakistani leaders, they only want India to restore Kashmir's statehood and offer assurances that it won't alter the region's demography. But as things stand, New Delhi won't even do that

Army chief General M M Naravane in an interview to the PTI on Sunday acknowledged, "a feeling of peace security" following the ceasefire agreement between India and Pakistan in February which except for one violation has since been holding. The LoC truce, he added, was "the first step towards a long road of normalisation of ties between the two countries". At the same time, General Naravane wanted Islamabad to do more: "consistency in the reduction in infiltration attempts and terrorist incidents in Jammu and Kashmir will go a long way in assuring India of Pakistani intent to foster good neighbourly relations".

As this statement makes clear, one thing that India is clear about in its dealings with Pakistan is the demand for an end to the latter's support to militancy in the Valley. But thereafter, things become complex. As for talks about Kashmir, India would rather seek to discuss the status of the part of the former state under Pakistan's control, claiming it as its own territory. But even if the two countries get to the point of discussing the resolution of the festering issue, India wants a solution that doesn't depart from the status quo. This position is unlikely to change, even in the long term. And there is little in the existing geopolitics or in the hands of Pakistan that could force New Delhi to concede on this, or at least soften its stance.

As for the situation in Kashmir, it has been forcibly calmed to a point where New Delhi now faces little local challenge to its rule. Militancy has more or less been reigned in: the armed forces have killed a majority of militants in Shopian, Pulwama and Kulgam, the places in South Kashmir that have emerged as new militant strongholds in recent years. Similarly, the separatist politics seems to have vanished into thin air. It seems unlikely that this politics will resume in the near to medium

term. Or maybe never in the form it had existed until the repeal of Article 370.

Similarly, as for Pakistan, Kashmir remains central to its engagement with India. This is also supposed to be so during its current detente with New Delhi. Pakistan would apparently want New Delhi to reverse the withdrawal of Article 370 that granted J&K its autonomous status. Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan reiterated this during a live questions and answers session with the people. But India is in no mood to do that nor is Pakistan in a position to force it to do so. Ironically, the restoration of Article 370 is supposed to be a jumping off point for the two countries to institute a formal dialogue to discuss their issues.

This realization has forced Islamabad to seek the minimal concession possible to resume the dialogue: if we go by the recent statements of the senior Pakistani leaders, they only want India to restore Kashmir's statehood and offer assurances that it won't alter the region's demography. But as things stand, New Delhi won't even do that. Or at least it is in no hurry to do this. If anything, this only goes on to show that India feels little pressure to relent. Nor does it want to push the current engagement with Islamabad beyond a point.

There are reasons for it. Today the old equations between New Delhi and Islamabad and also between Kashmiri separatists and New Delhi no longer hold. Following the withdrawal of Article 370, Hurriyat has been obliterated from the scene. Pakistan is no longer bolstered by the strategic depth of Afghanistan or leveraged by an all-encompassing militant struggle in Kashmir. This has brought in a considerable inequality between the parties which no amount of rhetoric in Kashmir and Islamabad can hide. And this inequality - accentuated further by economically stronger India - is likely to leave a deep imprint on the content of a fu-

ture dialogue. And of course, on the outcome of it too, if it is sustainably held. It will be an outcome that will not be completely in line with the expectations of the weaker parties. Or else, the logjam that has persisted for the past seven decades will linger on.

Former Pakistan president Musharraf was the first to recognize the new reality. His four point proposals on Kashmir envisaged a solution that would be a drastic climbdown from Islamabad's traditional stand on J&K. This solution was about some minor political and administrative adjustments, more phrasological than substantive in their nature. With moderate Hurriyat playing along, these proposals almost got the two countries to agree to a radical new solution for Kashmir, if the lawyers' agitation in Pakistan hadn't forced the sudden exit of Musharraf, this solution would potentially have resolved Kashmir.

The situation has since moved on. India's idea of a Kashmir solution is now more about addressing it internally than externally. As is apparent from the erasure of Kashmir's autonomy, the effort is to address the problem by changing the facts on the ground than resolve it bilaterally with Pakistan. Four point proposals that once seemed to have the potential to resolve Kashmir will need to be adapted to the new reality, should the two countries choose to go back to them as a framework for settlement. But again, to come to that point won't be easy. This would first need a realization that Kashmir is an issue that needs to be resolved, something that New Delhi is now loath to even acknowledge.

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

The author is the Political Editor of Kashmir Observer



OBSERVER MAIL

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Encourage Students to Read Books at an Early Age

Reading books not only enhances one's knowledge, but also broadens one's outlook. He emerges from the realm of narrow-mindedness and embraces humanistic ideas. Large libraries have been built in our society. Libraries are no less than a boon for those who love to read books.

In today's age, writers are writing books on new topics that not only enhance our knowledge but also provide the right direction to life so that the mind can be free from subject disorders. Libraries cater to the common man's desire for knowledge.

Parents should inculcate the habit of reading books to young children and students by the teachers in

the school so that their knowledge can continuously increase. From the smallest to the largest book always increases our knowledge. The only requirement is when and how to acquire this knowledge. Books give us information about the past like wars of the past, wars, kings and emperors, martyrs, sacrifices of patriots etc. Books tell us things we don't know about.

Political books play an important role in getting information related to politics. Literary books inculcate in man such knowledge which makes him aware of good thinking, good looks, peers of time and cultural aspects. Apart from these, books also impart knowledge of many other sub-

jects to us. Good books have always played a constructive role in our lives. We should encourage children, students, youth and people of all ages to read books so that a better society can be built and the evils spreading in the society can be curbed.

Books have a very important place in our lives. But in today's age the tendency to read books has decreased a lot. Probably a factor as to why they're doing so poorly. Students find it more important to use the phone in their free time than to read, but the knowledge we need to get from books cannot be obtained from any other source.

While the knowledge of books can make a human being a good, smooth,

fit and courageous human being, if they are misused, they can also give the opposite form to a human being. Therefore, good teachers can be used for good and proper knowledge. Not every knowledge can be qualified at every age so the acquisition of knowledge is fine with age.

Books play a vital role in shaping our character. We should make friends with them, because a true friend is the right guide in life and books give the right direction to our life. Reading books is not a useless thing but we get a lot of information from them.

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The art of calming down

For some, it may have been that second month of quarantine while we were stress-washing a freshly delivered jar of peanut butter.

Lisa Firestone

Mindfulness allows us to see our thoughts and feelings like ships passing on the horizon. We can watch each silhouette sail by, but we don't need to hop aboard and get carried away. So many of our thoughts and feelings overpower us and take the wheel when it comes to our behaviour

We all have those moments when we come unglued. We've probably had a few more of those than usual this past year. This time period has tested us in entirely new ways, and more likely than not, we can all recount a recent example of flipping our lid.

For some, it may have been that second month of quarantine while we were stress-washing a freshly delivered jar of peanut butter. For others, it may have followed a critical comment from our partner or a stubborn fit from our kids. The point is, we all get activated, and we can't necessarily control the flood of emotion that overcomes us. What we can control is our response to it.

Calming down is an exercise in patience and self-compassion. It is a skill we can hone by understanding what's going on in our brains when we feel overwhelmed and by taking action to help ourselves get our cerebral cortex and the higher functions of our brain back online. When a person flips their lid, their emotions are firing out of control; they may even feel as if they're in a state of fight, flight, or freeze. They've lost connection to their prefrontal cortex, the part of the brain that typically, in essence, helps them stay attuned, flexible, balanced, and regulated emotionally. When triggered in moments of stress, the emotional centre of the brain, the limbic system, perceives a threat and overrides the prefrontal cortex. When this occurs, people lose the balance and regulation that helps them stay calm, flexible, and attuned.

Think of that split second when you slammed the door on your partner, snapped at your kid, burnt out in a meeting, or panicked at a parade of thoughts marching into your head as you tried to fall asleep. These can all be examples of "flipped lid" moments. Making ourselves aware of what's going on in our brains can help us hit the brakes and calm down, rather than reacting in ways that hurt us or we later regret.

The best thing to do in these heightened moments of stress is to pause and do something rhythmic and predictable like going for a walk or breathing. When we breathe in, we are going to breathe out. When we put one foot down, we pick up the other.

The breathing practice of 4-7-8 is one very simple exercise we can try. The idea is to breathe in through our nose for four seconds, hold the breath for seven seconds, and breath out through our mouths for eight seconds. Doing this five times in a row helps calm the nervous system.

When we get activated by intense emotions in a given moment, our reactions are sometimes out of sync with what's actually going on in the present. We react in a big way, but later, when those prefrontal cortex functions are back in place, we regret how we reacted and often hold a



more balanced perspective. We may have insight into how we took our partner's words out of context in an argument. We may realise that our kid was feeling overwhelmed when they acted unreasonably, and our response to them arose from our own feelings of inadequacy or frustration. We may start to see how a persistent feeling of being behind or "not good enough" at work finally got to us. And we may definitely realise how our overactive minds can transform into our biggest critics the minute we have time to sit and think.

In truth, many of our heightened emotional reactions are triggered or intensified by an old feeling or implicit memory and not simply the events we're facing in the moment. A specific word our partner uses to describe us can tap into an old feeling of insecurity and set off an ocean of self-criticism. A certain tone in our child's whine can trigger memories of painful moments in our own childhood or a feeling we struggle to handle ourselves.

Because these momentary reactions are like rivers running into old reserves of untapped emotion, we can use what Dr Daniel Siegel calls "Mind-sight" to step back and create a barrier between what we're experiencing and how we react. Mind-sight describes our "capacity to label, analyse and clarify our internal emotional world and how it responds to the world around us." We can cultivate this capacity by using mindfulness skills.

Mindfulness allows us to see our thoughts and feelings like ships passing on the horizon. We can watch each silhouette sail by, but we don't need to hop aboard and get carried away. So many of our

thoughts and feelings overpower us and take the wheel when it comes to our behaviour. By using techniques like meditation and simple breathing exercises, we can notice these thoughts and feelings with compassion and curiosity, but we can bring our attention back to our breath, which helps us to not over-identify with these thoughts or assign them too much meaning.

Every wave of emotion rises and falls. If we can help guide ourselves through these instances of intensity, we can return to a calmer state. The trick is to give ourselves permission to pause. If we can recognise two things — first, that our brains are overwhelmed and not functioning at their strongest capacity to regulate, and second, that our reaction probably has to do with a deeper wound or vulnerability within us — we can meet our uncomfortable emotions with patience, compassion, and perspective.

Giving ourselves this time and space to calm down is a productive action. It helps us reconnect to those wonderful functions of our prefrontal cortex. It helps improve our communication with our partner and model resilience for our children. It allows us to be curious about why we feel the intense ways we do at times, unlocking memories from our history that impacted us in ways of which we might not otherwise be aware. Finally, it allows us to act with integrity and care in how we treat others and how we treat ourselves.

Khaleej Times

Trials of Menopause

Leslie Rasmussen

You've probably never turned on the nightly news and heard the anchors talking about menopause or gone to a charity event where all the women were discussing who was still getting their period.

That's because menopause is something women go through mostly alone. And as our bodies and our hormones are unique to us, we don't all share the same experience when we're going through it. While some women experience nothing other than their period ending, other women experience the full monty of side effects, including hot flashes, weight gain and hormone swings.

Even knowing about the possible side effects, menopause was something I looked forward to. If my youth was going to go into retirement, not getting my period was a pretty good part of the severance package. Since there's no way to know for sure when you'll start menopause, most doctors make an educated guess based on when your mother or grandmother went through it. My mother had a hysterectomy in her 40s, and there was a rumor in my family that my grandmother went through it in her 60s, but I was hoping that was apocryphal. I decided arbitrarily that at the age of 47, my period would be over. Unfortunately, my body wasn't on the same page.

When I turned 48, almost all my friends, even ones younger, had gone through menopause. They no longer had to worry about bringing feminine products on vacation — things that still took up room in my suitcase where I could have brought something more important like a fourth bathing suit.

Before you go through menopause, you go through perimenopause. It's that in-between time when you truly don't know what your body is doing. Before perimenopause, there are distinct signs that your period is coming. The slight cramping you start to feel lets you know that you have two more weeks to feel good before you want to sell your kids to the circus. During perimenopause, though, nothing you feel is a guarantee that you're getting your period. Many times, I'd get cramps, feel lousy, start crying when my favorite show was canceled, only to find my period didn't arrive for two more months. Every year on my birthday, I would



think: This has to be the year when my period will stop, but every year I was wrong. When I turned 50, my period still hadn't disappeared, but the very next day, hot flashes and night sweats invaded my life. Happy birthday to me!

I would've felt sorry for my husband, but I was annoyed that he wasn't having the same symptoms. All night, I'd roll over and throw the covers off both of us, then throw them back on when I started freezing. With each twist and turn, I woke him up. After a while, he couldn't see straight at work, and he kindly bought me a fan for my side of the bed.

When I was 51 and my youngest child left for college, I was sure my body would get the memo that I was in a new

As much as I'm grateful for my sons and impressed by almost everything they do, I'd always put their needs first and mine on the back burner. But by the time I went through menopause, they were independent, which gave me the time to get to know myself again. I have more energy, I'm smarter and wiser and I know what I want, and I have the time to go after it

stage of life. I was now mothering long distance; I didn't need my reproductive organs anymore. I didn't want to get rid of them, I just wanted them to go dormant. And no more miracle babies; I'd sent two of those off to college. I'd done my time making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and signing school emergency forms.

When I was 52, at my annual gynecologist appointment, she asked me when my last period was, and I was embarrassed to say two weeks ago. Her response was that I was lucky. Lucky? I couldn't think of one reason I was lucky, but she had many of them. She said if a woman was still getting her period it meant her estrogen levels hadn't dropped, so her heart would be

healthier, her weight easier to control, and she would feel younger. If never getting my period again meant I would be a wrinkled mess with a heart condition, I'd take it. OK, maybe I wouldn't, I'm a little vain — but you get the point.

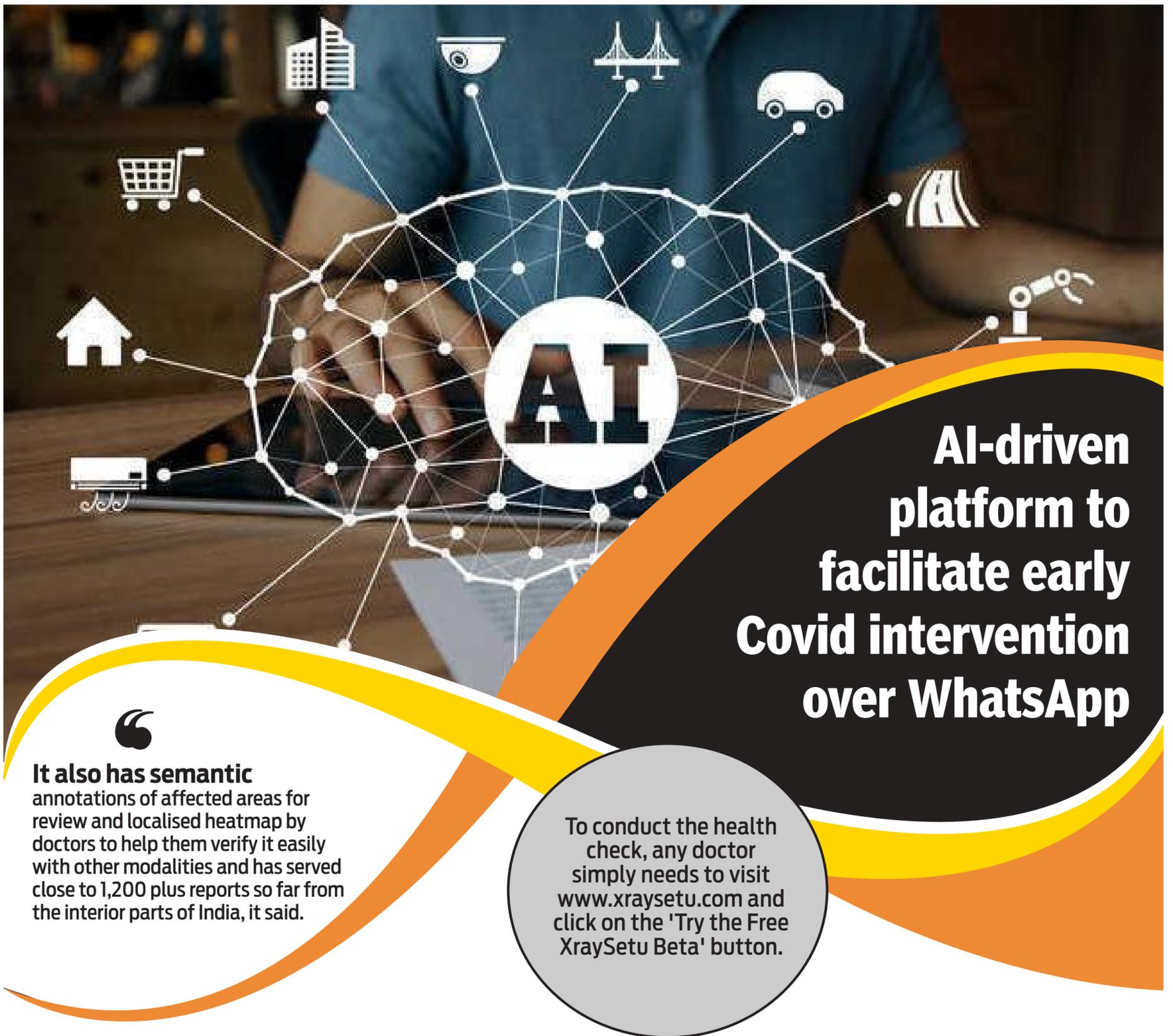
When I was 53 and working on my debut novel, "After Happily Ever After," I realized I'd gone three months without a period. Then it was four, then five, then six months. I was hesitant to be excited, yet I was. This was finally it! I bought a bottle of Champagne and celebrated, and the next morning, I got my period, and I had to pour out the rest of the bottle. Well, actually I didn't. Who would waste Dom Perignon?

Mother Nature teased me for a few more years, and then finally at 55, I was busy finishing that novel, when I realized I hadn't gotten my period in eight months. I knew my older sister had gone 10 months before starting back up again, so this time I wasn't going to be fooled. Month after month, I waited, and when I went back to the gynecologist five months later and she asked when my last period was, I enthusiastically exclaimed that it was a year and a month ago. I was free!

When you're a teenager and you get your period the first time, you're told that you're now a woman. Nobody is a woman because they can bear children; you're a woman because that's who you are. Menopause is not only just another one of life's many transitions, but also a rebirth. As much as I'm grateful for my sons and impressed by almost everything they do, I'd always put their needs first and mine on the back burner. But by the time I went through menopause, they were independent, which gave me the time to get to know myself again. I have more energy, I'm smarter and wiser and I know what I want, and I have the time to go after it.

I wish I knew all this when I was younger, but I believe society is slowly changing. After all, we have our first woman vice president in her 50s, and no one's calling her old. We need to tell our daughters that whether you go through it in your early 40s, or later 50s, you still have many more years ahead of you to be productive and contribute to the world around you. Embrace this end of an era, celebrate and be joyful, and pack that fourth swimsuit.

Huffpost



AI-driven platform to facilitate early Covid intervention over WhatsApp

It also has semantic annotations of affected areas for review and localised heatmap by doctors to help them verify it easily with other modalities and has served close to 1,200 plus reports so far from the interior parts of India, it said.

To conduct the health check, any doctor simply needs to visit www.xraysetu.com and click on the 'Try the Free XraySetu Beta' button.

Press Trust Of India

A Bengaluru-based startup has developed an Artificial Intelligence (AI)-driven platform to identify Covid positive patients even from low-resolution chest X-ray images sent over WhatsApp, the Department of Science and Technology said on Wednesday. Xray Setu is quick and easy to use and can facilitate detection in rural areas. The specially designed platform also helps in early intervention through rapid screening of COVID-19 with chest X-ray interpretation for doctors who have access to X-ray machines, it said. "ARTPARK (AI & Robotics Technology Park), a not-for-profit foundation established by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, with support from the Department of Science and Technology (DST), in collaboration with Bengaluru-based HealthTech startup Niramai and the IISc, has developed XraySetu specifically designed to identify Covid positive patients even from low-resolution chest X-Ray images sent over Whatsapp," the DST said.

It also has semantic annotations of affected areas for review and localised heatmap by doctors to help them verify it easily with other modalities and has served close to 1,200 plus reports so far from the interior parts of India, it said.

To conduct the health check, any doctor simply needs to visit www.xraysetu.com and click on the 'Try the Free XraySetu Beta' button.

The platform will then redirect the person to another page, where in he or she can choose to engage with the WhatsApp-based chatbot via web or smartphone applica-



tion. The doctor can also simply send a WhatsApp message to the phone number +91 8046163838 to start the XraySetu service.

"Then they just need to click the picture of the patient's X-ray and obtain the two-page automated diagnostics with annotated images in a few minutes. While extending the probability of the COVID-19 contraction, the report also highlights a localised heatmap for a quick perusal of the doctor," the DST said.

Tested and validated with over 1,25,000 X-ray images from the National Institute of Health, UK, as well as over 1,000 plus Indian COVID-19 patients, XraySetu, has shown excellent performance with sensitivity: 98.86 per cent, and specificity: 74.74 per cent.

Besides COVID-19, the platform can also detect 14 additional lung-related ailments, including tuberculosis and pneumonia, alongside others. It can further be used for both analog and digital X-rays and has been successfully piloted by more than 300 doctors in rural areas over the last 10 months, the department said.



ARTPARK (AI & Robotics Technology Park), a not-for-profit foundation established by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, with support from the Department of Science and Technology (DST), in collaboration with Bengaluru-based HealthTech startup Niramai and the IISc, has developed XraySetu specifically designed to identify Covid positive patients even from low-resolution chest X-Ray images sent over Whatsapp

Covid 2.0 Caused Rs 15 Lakh Cr Loss To Retail, Wholesale Trade: CAIT



NEW DELHI: The second wave of Covid-19, subsequently followed lockdowns in various states, has caused a mammoth business loss of around Rs 15 lakh crore to India's domestic trade over the last 60 days, the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) said on Wednesday.

CAIT, which represents traders across India, said this is prompting small businesses to consider job cuts and cut back on other overheads. It estimated that traders could look at an estimated 30 per cent job cuts if restrictions continue and no financial assistance is provided to them.

"For the first time, traders across the country are contemplating to reduce the number of employees as they have been forced to cut down establishment expenses and overheads due to non-affordability of the recurring monthly expenses. If it happens, it will increase the unemployment figures, particularly when the retail trade in India has been described as the only source of disguised employment and the only sector which provides exponential streams for self-employment in India," a CAIT statement said.

There are an estimated 8 crore small businesses engaged in trading activities in India, as per estimates by CAIT, providing direct employment to nearly 40 crore people.

India's second and more severe wave has once again led to a prolonged closure of busy markets, malls and wholesale

markets. Trade, barring that of essential goods, has come to a standstill.

States such as Maharashtra have begun a partial opening up of markets, but majority of non-essential trade remains shut in other parts of the country. Traders in Maharashtra reported the highest loss in business as the state moved towards implementing curbs much ahead of others.

"Based on the estimated feedback gathered from CAIT and leading trade associations in majority of states, the loss of internal trade and commerce due to Covid-19's second wave for the country stands at about 15 lakh crore, which is quite a huge and substantial loss as the total value of the domestic trade in the Country is estimated at Rs 115 lakh crore per annum," CAIT President B.C. Bhartiya said in the statement.

Bhartiya said that out of the total business loss of about Rs 15 lakh crore, retail format has lost Rs 9 lakh crore while the wholesale trade suffered a loss of about 6 lakh crore.

"It is estimated that Maharashtra suffered a business loss of about Rs 1.50 lakh crore, Delhi, a loss of about Rs 40,000 crore, Gujarat about Rs 75,000 crore, Uttar Pradesh about Rs 85,000 crore, Madhya Pradesh about Rs 45,000 crore, Rajasthan about Rs 35,000 crore, Chhattisgarh about Rs 27,000 crore, Karnataka about Rs 70,000 crore, Tamil Nadu about Rs 80,000 crore and likewise the other States have incurred substantial business loss during past two months," the CAIT statement read.

"We are not asking for any loan waiver but the support policies from both central and state government, temporary relaxations in statutory compliances, and ease of restoring business," CAIT General Secretary Praveen Khandelwal said.--IANS

FICCI Suggests Graded Approach To Unlock Economic Activities

NEW DELHI: With the number of coronavirus infections declining in the country, industry chamber FICCI has suggested the government to follow a graded approach in unlocking economic activities.



It said any unit that is able to create an isolation bubble should be allowed to operate at all times even if it does not qualify as essential.

The chamber said the ferocity of the second wave highlighted that waiting too long to impose restrictions can result in a surge of cases thus putting immense strain on medical infrastructure.

Learning from the first and second coronavirus waves, "FICCI suggests a graded approach to permissible economic activity which balances lives and livelihoods", it said in a letter to Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal.

It said that there should be surveillance testing on a con-

tinuous basis, even if number of cases come down sharply.

For example, at points of entry (airport, railway station), people should be randomly tested, FICCI added.

It added that units which have vaccinated at least 60 per cent of the workforce with a single dose can be exempted from restrictions.

"High touch point non-essential sectors like leisure activities, retail, etc, will only be permitted in a minimal risk situation (level 1) i.e. total positivity rate below 2.5 per cent. This restriction will prevail until a significant part of the population has been vaccinated with at least one dose," the chamber said.--PTI

Provide Successful Business Models For SHGs To Emulate: Dr Sehrish

Asks The Officers To Create Marketing Strategy As Well



KO NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR: Mission Director, Jammu & Kashmir Rural Livelihoods Mission (RLM), Dr Syed Sehrish Asgar, on Wednesday held a review meeting to review the progress of mission in district Pulwama and Shopian.

The meeting was attended by Mr. Sajid Yahya Naqash, Additional Mission Director- Kashmir, District Programme Manager, Block Programme Manager and MIS Assistants of blocks Pulwama, Shopian, Tral, Pampore, and other officials from the Mission.

While addressing the officials, Dr Sehrish impressed upon the officials that they should come up with few successful business models implemented elsewhere to maximize the profits of these SHGs. She asked them to look for their sustainability and assist them in upgrading them to enhance their earnings.

The MD also encouraged the officers to create strategy for increasing the profits of these SHGs besides giving them a marketing policy to propagate their

sales manifold. The MD said that JKRLM (Umeed) scheme has given a significant platform to the SHGs members to increase their self-sufficiency. The women have not only come out of poverty but also has brought social change within their own families. The Umeed scheme is extensively based on capacity building and strengthening of community based institutions by federating women at different levels.

Dr Sehrish emphasized on the officials to improve the convergence under various livelihoods programme with other line departments for enhancing the livelihoods of the SHG women. She further directed them to organize special drives for the SHG women for availing the Aadhaar cards and ensure that the individual bank accounts are opened for all the women SHG members. She also stressed that the Block Programme Managers must ensure that the current fiscal targets are achieved, nevertheless adopting strictly the COVID -19 appropriate behavior and corre-

sponding SOPs.

Dr Sehrish advised the officials to further strengthen the credit linkage as per the RBI guidelines and promote group enterprises for enhanced livelihoods both in Farm and Non-Farm livelihoods activities. She said the JKRLM is committed for bringing changes in the economic stability in rural areas and praised the perseverance of women that also in the prevailing difficult circumstances.

While updating the block progress the officials apprised the MD that 17667 rural women have been federated into 2116 SHGs and 188 Village Organizations; whereas an amount of Rs 728.90 lakhs has been provided to the SHGs as capitalization from the Mission. In addition, the SHGs have been credit linked with the banks to the tune of Rs 1182.00 lakhs. The SHG members have invested the amount in different livelihoods like dairy farms, fish ponds, bee keeping, poultry units etc. Besides under convergence various livelihood initiatives have been taken with line departments.

India, UK Eye Interim Pact To Help Clinch Major Trade Deal In A Decade

Bloomberg

India and the U.K. are intensifying talks to remove non-tariff barriers and foster greater market access as they work to stitch together the South Asian nation's first major free trade pact in a decade.

The two countries have zeroed in on a list of achievable items that would help the U.K. showcase the benefits of leaving the European Union while also allowing India to forge new bilateral ties after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government pulled out of a multilateral Asia trade pact in 2019, according to people with the knowledge of the matter in the capital, New Delhi.

They expect to finalize an interim agreement by the end of the year that would give British medical devices and agricultural products such as apples, quinces and pears access to Indian markets, while widening the scope of employment in the U.K. for Indian seafarers and nurses, the people said, asking not to be identified as the matter is still under discussion.

Under pressure from exporters,



India has been in talks over early harvest deals with the U.K., U.S. and the EU -- some of its major trading partners -- but until now, only Britain has shown interest. And unlike many of India's other trade talks which have lingered for years without an outcome, there is a strong chance of a deal with the U.K. given the needs of both the sides, the people said, noting these negotiations have progressed much faster than others.

A spokesperson at the British High Commission in New Delhi didn't immediately respond to an e-mail and a text message. Call and text messages sent to the

spokesman at India's trade ministry remained unanswered.

The initial deal would form part of the broader free trade agreement which would slash tariffs on a range of items, facilitate investments and give access to services and goods in a bid to increase bilateral trade. The U.K. and India want to double trade between their two countries by 2030, up from over \$15.4 billion in 2019-20.

This would be the first major free trade agreement for India since 2011 when it signed a comprehensive deal with Malaysia, though a minor FTA was inked with Mauritius in February.

Turning Inwards

Despite championing free trade in global forums, the Modi government has been turning inwards over the last few years, first announcing review of all the existing free trade agreements over concerns that they led to more imports than exports, and then raising tariffs to support domestic industries. Soon after being elected for second term with a thumping majority, the Modi government opted out of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.

Seafood Exports From India See All-Round Dip In 2020-21

Agencies

KOCHI: Covid appears to have taken a heavy toll in the seafood exports from the country as these saw an all-round drop in quantity, value and in US dollar terms during 2020-21, as compared to 2019-20.

According to the figures released by the Marine Products Exports Development Authority (MPEDA) on Wednesday, the drop in quantity was 10.88 per cent as 11,49,341 tonnes was exported in the last fiscal as compared to 12,89,651 tonnes during 2019-20.

Likewise in value terms, the drop was 6.31 per cent, at Rs 43,717 crore as against Rs 46,662 crore during 2019-20.

In US dollar terms, the drop was 10.81 per cent, from \$6,678 million to \$5,956 million.

The US and China are the major importers of Indian seafood, and frozen shrimp continues to be the major export item followed by frozen fish.

MPEDA Chairman K.S. Srinivas said the pandemic drastically affected seafood exports during the first half of the year, but it revived well in the last quarter of 2020-21.

"The aquaculture sector performed better during the period by contributing 67.99 per cent of exported items in dollar terms and 46.45 per cent in quantity, which is 4.41 per cent and 2.48 per cent higher, respectively when compared to 2019-20," he said.



Frozen shrimp contributed 51.36 per cent in quantity and 74.31 per cent of the total dollar earnings. The US remained its largest importer (2,72,041 MT), followed by China (1,01,846 MT), the EU (70,133 MT), Japan (40,502 MT), Southeast Asia (38,389 MT), and the Middle East (29,108 MT).

However, shrimp exports declined by 9.47 per cent in dollar value and 9.50 per cent in quantity. The overall shrimp export was 5,90,275 MT worth \$4,426.19 million.

"Shipments of chilled items and live items, which were negatively affected due to the reduced air cargo connectivity in the pandemic situation, fell by 16.89 per cent and 39.91 per cent in volume, respectively," added Srinivas.

The US, with imports of 2,91,948 MT, continued to be the major importer of Indian seafood with a share of 41.15 per cent in dollar terms.

Frozen shrimp remained the principal item exported to the US while exports of Vannamei shrimp showed an uptick of 6.75 per cent in quantity. However, its import of Black Tiger shrimps decreased by 70.96 per cent and 65.24 per cent in quantity and dollar terms, respectively.

We Are Not Social Media, New IT Rules Not Applicable: Google Tells HC



Agencies

Google has bowled its efforts to crackdown on tech giants on the internet. While appealing another case, Google moved the Delhi High Court on Wednesday seeking protection from being declared as a 'social media intermediary.' "We are a search engine and not a social media intermediary," Google's lawyer told the court.

Google's interjection assumes significance against the backdrop of the central government's crackdown on social media giants under the IT Rules 2021 which came into force last week. The rules seek to enforce many stringent measures on social media intermediaries if they are to retain their 'intermediary' status (and not be held responsible for any material that is posted by users on their platform), including steps like tracing messages to find who first sent it, as well as posting nodal officers who

will enforce orders from the government to remove posts it finds objectionable.

It was argued that the IT Rules 2021 define social media intermediaries as platforms that enable online interactions, or allow for creation and uploading of content. While Google was a search engine aggregator and hence an intermediary, it was not a social media intermediary that would come under the purview of the 2021 IT rules, the US company claimed in court.

The court has issued notice to the Centre to respond to the petition.

Google's plea came while it was challenging a Delhi court's order from April which termed it a 'social media' intermediary in a case filed by a girl who said that her private pictures were taken from her social media accounts on Facebook and Instagram and posted on a porn website without her consent. The court ordered Google to remove the post, and other similar flagged posts globally within 24 hours.

Google's lawyer said while it had no issues in removing a certain post, it has problems with the nature of the court order which billed it a 'social media intermediary' as well as the order to remove posts globally. "Some content may be offensive to Indian law but not offensive outside India, so a blanket order to remove the content globally can't be issued," he said.

SHORT TAKES

Mukesh Ambani Says Reliance Now Has Strong Balance Sheet To Support Growth

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI: After record fund raising, Reliance Industries Ltd now has a strong balance sheet with high liquidity that will support growth plans for its three hyper-growth engines, Jio, Retail and Oil-to-Chemicals, according to the firm's Chairman and Managing Director Mukesh Ambani.



In the company's latest annual report released on Wednesday, he said the company sold minority stakes in Jio Platforms -- the unit that houses its telecom and digital business -- and retail arm for almost Rs 2 lakh crore and raised another Rs 53,124 crore through rights issue.

"We now have a strong balance sheet with high liquidity that

will support growth plans for our three hyper-growth engines -- Jio, Retail and O2C," he said.

During 2020-21, Reliance completed India's largest ever rights issue of Rs 53,124 crore (oversubscribed by 1.59 times), which was also the largest in the world by a non-financial institution in the last 10 years.

"During the year, Jio Platforms and Reliance Retail raised Rs 1,52,056 crore and Rs 47,265

crore, respectively, from strategic and financial investors, including Facebook and Google," he said.

"BP invested Rs 7,629 crore for a 49 per cent stake in our fuel retailing business." These funds helped Reliance reach net zero-debt target ahead of schedule.

"Strong operating cash flow and largest ever capital raise further strengthened our balance sheet, enabling us to de-leverage and meet our net-debt zero commitment ahead of stated timeline," he said, adding that during the year, Reliance made pre-payment of USD 7.8 billion of long-term foreign currency debt, with requisite approvals from RBI.

This is the highest ever pre-payment of debt undertaken by any corporate borrower in India.

Free Beer Is Latest Vaccine Incentive For Biden 'Month Of Action'

By Associated Press

WASHINGTON: Free beer is the latest White House-backed incentive for Americans to get vaccinated for COVID-19, as President Joe Biden is announcing a "month of action" Wednesday to get more shots into arms before the July 4 holiday.

Speaking from the White House, Biden is set to update the nation on the vaccination rollout and his plans to get 70% of adults partially vaccinated by Independence Day -- essential to his goal of returning the nation to a pre-pandemic sense of normalcy this summer. The latest vaccine sweetener, provided by Anheuser-Busch, builds on other



incentives like cash giveaways, sports tickets or paid leave, to keep up the pace of Americans getting shots.

The White House said Biden's "month of action" will continue to use public and private-sector partnerships to encourage Americans to roll

up their sleeves, drawing in businesses, social media influencers, colleges, celebrities and community organizations to help spread the word about the benefits of vaccination and to encourage them to get shots.

To date 62.8% of the adult US population have received

at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine and 133.6 million are fully vaccinated. The rate of new vaccinations has slowed again to an average below 600,000 per day, down from more than 800,000 per day when incentives like lotteries were announced, and down from a peak of nearly 2 million per day in early April when demand for shots was much higher.

Anheuser-Busch announced Wednesday morning that it would "buy Americans 21+ a round of beer" once Biden's 70% goal is met through a promotional giveaway on its website that will provide \$5 credits to the first 200,000 people to respond when the nation reaches the vaccine threshold.



Helping Hands: A police officer putting a mask on a pedestrian's face in Dalgate area of the City on Wednesday

IRC Accelerates Relief Distribution

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In its efforts to reach out to the marginal sections of the society, the Indian Red Cross Society (IRC) J&K Wednesday provided Hygiene Kits to the under privileged females of Haft Chinar, Solina and Allochi Bagh areas. The females were also educated about personal hygiene.

Meanwhile, to further accelerate its efforts to reach out to the downtrodden sections of the society and help them face the effects of Covid-19, the IRC shall distribute four lac masks in Jammu & Kashmir.

In this connection, Wednesday four District Red Cross Committees (DRCCs) i.e., Kupwara, Bandipora, Shopian and Pulwama were handed over ten thousand masks each district. The District Red Cross committees have been directed to distribute the masks free of cost

to people. They were also provided 150 Hygiene Kits each District for distribution among poor women of the district.

The Indian Red Cross Society has also procured food material, which shall be distributed among the poor and needy families of Jammu & Kashmir regions.

In order to augment the Oxygen supply to Covid patients the IRCs shall be providing 100 Oxygen Concentrators within a day or two after finalizing the modalities about its distribution.

While handing over the relief material to district Red Cross Committees, Honorary General Secretary, IRCs Jammu & Kashmir Kifayat Hussain Rizvi emphasized the need to involve the Red Cross volunteers in the distribution of material. He further asked the regional as well as District Committees to reach out to downtrodden people of far flung areas as directed by the President of IRCs J&K unit.

11 Brick Kilns Sealed In Kulgam

Observer News Service

KULGAM: In a major crackdown on erring brick kilns, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat Wednesday sealed four brick kilns during his visit to Hablish and Devsar areas of the district. The brick kilns were sealed after they were found operating without licenses. The DC during the visit was accompanied by ACR, Mir Imtiaz-ul-Aziz and other officers.

Later, acting upon the directions of Deputy Commissioner, a joint squad comprising Revenue, FCS&CA enforcement and Police officials visited several other brick kilns to monitor implementation of rates fixed by district administration recently. The visiting team sealed 7 more brick kilns in Devsar and Hablish area who were found operating without licenses and indulged in overcharging.

Meanwhile, the DC has directed the joint squad to continue the drive against the illegal brick kilns and seal ones involved in overcharging and operating without licenses.

Budgam Admin Launches Online Healthcare Platform For Covid Patients

Observer News Service

BUDGAM: The District Administration, Budgam Wednesday launched an online healthcare platform for Covid-19 patients in home isolation.

The move by Covid Care Budgam (www.covidcarebudgam.in) aims at bridging the gap between people, Doctors and health systems, thus enabling everyone especially Positive patients under Home/Administrative isolation to communicate with doctors through virtual channels, thus helping to reduce case fatality.

Union Cabinet Approves Model Tenancy Act MTA Will Facilitate Unlocking Of Vacant Houses

Observer News Service

New Delhi: The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the Model Tenancy Act for circulation to all States / Union Territories for adaptation by way of enacting fresh legislation or amending existing rental laws suitably.

"It will help overhaul the legal framework with respect to rental housing across the country, which would help spur its overall growth," a communique said.

The Model Tenancy Act aims at creating a vibrant, sustainable and inclusive



rental housing market in the country. It will enable creation of adequate rental housing stock for all the income groups thereby addressing the issue of homelessness, the statement said.

"Model Tenancy Act will enable institutionalisation of rental housing by gradually

shifting it towards the formal market. The Model Tenancy Act will facilitate unlocking of vacant houses for rental housing purposes. It is expected to give a fillip to private participation in rental housing as a business model for addressing the huge housing shortage."

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Govt To Act

The CS, he said, also emphasized timely testing, tracking, treatment and isolation as the way forward.

Financial Commissioner Health & Medical Education, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Mission Director National Health Mission (NHM), Director SKIMS, Principals GMC Srinagar and Jammu, and Directors Health Services Jammu and Kashmir participated in the meeting.

Reviewing the stock position of vaccines, the CS, as per the official spokesperson directed achieving universal vaccination of 45 and above age category by the end of June.

"He directed the Health & Medical Education Department to prioritize and saturate the targeted groups of vulnerable population in 18-45 age category; and organize systematic vaccination drives for prompt vaccination of the remaining segment on arrival of the next consignment of vaccines," he said.

In the meeting, the official spokesperson said, the department was asked to strengthen the panchayat-level COVID care centres as grid of COVID related services by facilitating COVID testing therein and lifting at least 10 samples per day towards early detection of COVID cases and subsequent establishment of micro-containment zones in cases of high positivity rate.

He further said that Mehta complimented the efforts of the Health & Medical Education Department, divisional and district administrations in mitigating the COVID-19 pandemic.

24 Corona Deaths

Regarding the 1718 fresh cases, 1133 were confirmed by officials from Kashmir valley and the remaining 585 were detected across the Jammu division, taking the number of people infected by the virus to 294078.

Giving district wise details, the officials said that Srinagar reported 320, Baramulla 102, Budgam 137, Pulwama 158, Kupwara 90, Anantnag 103, Bandipora 62, Ganderbal 53, Kulgam 81, Shopian 27, Jammu 169, Udhampur 57, Rajouri 75, Doda 52, Kathua 25, Samba 41, Kishtwar 33, Poonch 62, Ramban 49 and Reasi 22 new cases of coronavirus.

Also, officials said, 3391 more patients have recovered, 1327 from Jammu Division and 2064 from Kashmir valley.

Meanwhile, officials said two new confirmed cases of mucormycosis (black fungus) have been reported today, bringing the cumulative number of confirmed cases to 12 in J&K.

BJP Leader Shot

per party spokesperson was a councillor from Tral Bala-C and was visiting his friend at Tral Payeen where suspected militants fired upon him.

"He was party's district secretary for Pulwama. He was staying with his friend and a neighbour where he was shot dead by militants," BJP spokesperson Altaf Thakur told Kashmir Observer.

He further said that these "barbaric" attacks won't stop BJP leaders from serving the people. "Attacking unarmed people is no bravery and that police must track down the culprits and punish them accordingly," he said.

J&K Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha also condemned the killing of BJP leader and expressed condolences with the bereaved family "Saddened to hear about the terror attack on the Councillor Shri Rakesh Pandita at Tral,

Pulwama. I strongly condemn the attack. My condolences to bereaved family in this time of grief," the office of LG Tweeted.

"Militants will never succeed in their nefarious designs, and those responsible for such heinous acts shall be brought to justice," reads another Tweet.

Meanwhile, a gun-battle broke out between a surrendered militant and police inside a camp in Pulwama district after the militant snatched a rifle from a policeman and opened fire at him, PTI reported.

Quoting officials, the report said that the militant, identified as Mohammad Amin Malik, allegedly snatched the rifle of constable Amjid Khan and opened fire at him inside the camp of special operations group (SOG) in the Tral area of the south Kashmir district.

The militant then hid himself inside the camp along with the snatched rifle, the officials said. The officials said Khan was evacuated in an injured condition to a hospital in Srinagar.

State forces tried to persuade the militant to surrender and even called his parents to make him lay down the arms, the officials said, adding that Khan however refused the offer and started firing towards the positions of the government forces, who retaliated.

Earlier, Malik, a resident of Nagbal in the Tral area, had surrendered before security forces on May 30 along with a 12 bore rifle, the officials said.

Over 33 Lakh

adverse events following immunization," the State Surveillance Officer, Kashmir Dr Talat Jabeen said on Saturday.

Jabeen, a prominent epidemiologist divulged these details while refuting the media post by doctors association of Kashmir (DAK) president that the persons who are allergic to any ingredient of covid-19 vaccine must not receive the jab.

"The Covid-19 vaccine is completely safe and not a single death was found causally associated with Covid vaccination. We must hesitate in forwarding such types of messages on social media /print media & as well as electronic media," she said.

She further said that the vaccination is safe and efficacious, and under present circumstances is the main weapon to combat the dreadful virus. She also requested people to adhere to the Covid appropriate behaviour to remain safe in this dreadful pandemic.

Quoting figures from the fact sheet of the Covishield vaccine issued by the Serum Institute of India, Dr Jabeen said that the vaccine ingredients are L-Histidine hydrochloride monohydrate, Magnesium chloride hexahydrate, Polysorbate 80, Ethanol, sucrose, sodium chloride, Disodium edetate dehydrate(EDTA), besides water for injection.

"Further from the fact sheet of vaccine from Bharat Biotech vaccine (COVAXIN) its ingredients are; aluminum hydroxide gel, imidazoquinoline, 2-Phenoxyetanol and phosphate buffer saline. These ingredients are often used in many other vaccines which are given in routine immunization of children and adults," she said.

As per an official spokesperson, the doctor's fraternity in Kashmir division also debunked this news and stated that currently the vaccination is the most potent tool to fight against this virus.

8 Youth Slapped

slogans following which police filed a case

FIR No. 181/21 under IPC Sections of 188 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant), 147 (Punishment for rioting) besides stringent 13 ULA (P) Act at the Police Station Kupwara.

According to the reports, police identified eight youth who allegedly resorted to sloganeering. Out of eight, four have been arrested by police under Section 13 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, which prescribes up to seven years imprisonment for "advocating, abetting, advising or inciting the commission of any unlawful activity".

The arrested youth have been identified as Qaiser Ahmad Mir, Bilal Ahmad Mir, Zahoor Ahmad Dar and Aijaz Ahmad Ganai, all residents of Bumhama, news agency GNS reported quoting officials.

Four others named in the FIR have been identified as Aabid Hussain Mir, Abass Ahmad Mir, Firdous Ahmad Bhat and Fayaz Ahmad Dar.

Army Chief Reviews

at Srinagar, the Army Chief, accompanied by Lt Gen YK Joshi, the Northern Army Commander and Lt Gen DP Pandey, Chinar Corps Commander visited units and formations in the hinterland where he was briefed by the local Commanders on the existing security situation, an army spokesperson said.

The COAS, he said, was also briefed about the measures being taken to identify and target the over ground workers' (OGWs) network involved in "radicalisation" and recruitment of youth into militant ranks.

"Efforts to prevent local recruitment and facilitate surrender of local militants were also discussed," he added.

While interacting with troops, the COAS, as per the army spokesperson, expressed his appreciation to the jawans and commanders who are relentlessly battling the dual challenges of Pakistan abetted militancy and the global pandemic.

"He further reinforced the need to be prepared to meet emerging security challenges effectively," he said.

The army spokesperson further added that later the COAS was briefed by the Chinar Corps Commander on the overall situation pertaining to the LoC and the hinterland.

"The Army Chief complimented the excellent synergy exhibited by all sections of the Civil administration, Jammu and Kashmir Police, Central Armed Police Forces and other Security agencies in projecting a 'Whole of Government' approach that has resulted in improvement in the security situation conducive for fostering a new era of development in the UT," the army spokesperson said.

In the evening, he said, Gen Naravane called on Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor Manoj Sinha at Raj Bhawan and discussed the emerging challenges and road map for long term peace in J&K.

"The LG appreciated the role played by the Indian Army in restoring and preserving peace in the UT and providing aid to the civil authorities against the COVID 19 pandemic," he added.

Gen Naravane

scenario in the Union Territory. Chief of the Army Staff, Gen Naravane accompanied by Lt Gen YK Joshi, Northern Army Commander and Lt Gen DP Pandey, General Officer Commanding (GoC) 15 Corps MET the LG here at the Raj Bhawan, an official spokesperson said

Wednesday.

The LG and the Army Chief, he said, discussed recent internal security developments and the prevailing security scenario in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

"Discussions were also held on several internal and external security-related issues and their effective management," he said.

Sinha, he said, stressed on the high importance of maintaining close synergy between the Army and other Security Forces to meet the security challenges.

"The Lt Governor lauded the Army's role in ensuring a safe and secure environment for the people of J&K, besides extending necessary support and complementing Government's efforts in controlling the spread of Coronavirus," the official spokesperson added.

Committed To Sustain

administration operates in a fear-free environment, Northern Army commander Lieutenant General Y K Joshi has said.

Lt Gen Joshi, said synergised, ethical and precision operations by security forces have dealt a severe blow to the "tanzeems" (militant groups), the militant network operating in the union territory and their leadership, both local and foreign.

"The security situation in Jammu and Kashmir has by and large been peaceful, barring a few incidents, where militants in order to vent their frustration have targeted soft and vulnerable parts of the citizenry," the commander told PTI in an interview.

"The 'tanzeems' have been left rudderless without effective leadership and there is a dearth of arms, ammunition and other warlike stores, especially automatic weapons," he said.

The result is, militants are resorting to low-scale standoff attacks and avoiding direct gunbattles, Lt Gen Joshi said.

Militants "are avoiding a pitched battle when contact is established with security forces", he said.

Lt Gen Joshi said that recruitment of local youths by militant groups has more or less been restricted and is in only three districts of south Kashmir.

"There has been a perceptible difference within the Kashmir Valley where North Kashmir has started to savour the benefits of peace," he said.

Another initiative of security forces, which has begun to yield results is the surrender of local militants, indicative that there is a drastic loss of traction amongst the youth who are being forced to take up arms, the commander said.

"We are committed to sustain normalcy and peace in Jammu and Kashmir, allowing the civil administration to operate in a 'fear-free' environment," he said.

Lt Gen Joshi also said that the intensity of counter-militancy operations will persist during the coming months. (PTI)

India's Reaction

the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) had said Bozgir's remarks are unacceptable and his reference to the Indian Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir is unwarranted.

When an incumbent President of the UN General Assembly makes misleading and prejudiced remarks, he does great disservice to the office he occupies. The President of the UN General Assembly's behaviour is truly

regrettable and surely diminishes his standing on the global platform, MEA Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi had said last week in response to a media query on the issue.

In a press briefing at the UN Headquarters Tuesday, Deputy Spokesperson for the President of the General Assembly Amy Quattrill said that during his visit to Pakistan, Bozgir had said that peace, stability, and prosperity in the South Asian region hinges on normalisation of relations between Pakistan and India and that this normalisation is in turn subject to the two countries finding a resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir issue.

She said during his joint press engagement with the Foreign Minister of Pakistan, the "President had also recalled India and Pakistan's Simla Agreement of 1972, which states that the final status of Jammu and Kashmir is to be settled by peaceful means, in accordance with the UN Charter.

Against this background, the President was saddened to see a press statement from the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, which portrays his remarks on Jammu and Kashmir from a selective perspective, while they are consistent with the longstanding UN position regarding this issue.

It is regrettable that the President's remarks were taken out of context, Quattrill said.

"The President continues to support dialogue and diplomacy and encourage both Pakistan and India to resolve the Jammu and Kashmir issue through peaceful means, she said.

Expressing strong opposition to the unwarranted references made with respect to the Indian Union Territory of J-K by Bozgir in Pakistan, Bagchi had said his remarks that Pakistan is 'duty bound' to raise this issue in the UN more strongly are unacceptable. Nor indeed is there any basis for comparison to other global situations.

Bozgir had visited Pakistan on May 26-27 at the invitation of Qureshi.

Govt Asks Officials

be available for attending public grievances on daily basis (except on days of tour) between 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. in person or on notified telephone numbers or on video conferencing facility for redressal of public grievances," the order said.

The schedules, telephone numbers and web links will be widely publicised, it added.

Magisterial Probe

Mohammad Umer Bhat, both residents of Khajapora and Zaid Bashir Reshi of Reban, as per police, were killed in the encounter with a joint team of state forces in the Kanigam area of the district. Police had also said that another militant, Tausif Ahmad had laid down his arms before the joint forces after being persuaded to surrender.

"Whereas, such an incident took place at Kanigam, Shopian Tehsil Barbugh (Imamshahib) district Shopian on 05 May, 2021. If any person wants to share information regarding this incident, he/she can visit this office personally during office hours by or before 10 June, 2021," reads the order.

"It is notified to the general public that as per the standing orders of the government, a magisterial inquiry of every militancy operation is required to be conducted," it adds.

Just Compensation Won't Do': Calls Grow For Central Contracts In Domestic Cricket



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: As the BCCI works out a compensation package and a formula to distribute it for the COVID-19 hit domestic cricketers, voices demanding central contracts for such players are getting louder with seasoned names like Jaydev Unadkat, Sheldon Jackson and Harpreet Singh Bhatia leading the chorus.

Last month, former India player and domestic veteran Rohan Gavaskar had also called for state associations to introduce contracts for players over and above their match fees, just like it is for the national team.

Majority of domestic players don't get to play IPL, don't have job security and rely heavily on match fees, which took a beating last season with Ranji Trophy being cancelled due to the pandemic.

Saurashtra captain and India player Jaydev Unadkat doesn't need the security of a contract but he feels it should be introduced for the top 30 cricketers of the state.

"Talks over central contracts were happening even before the pandemic. Even cricketers at the age group level should be compensated for the lack of cricket, it will keep them motivated and then hand contracts to senior players."

"You can't give contracts to all but you can pick top-30 players for contracts. A pool of 30 players sounds feasible to me," Unadkat, who led Saurashtra to their maiden Ranji Title in 2020, told PTI.

If it is a full season, a domestic player earns Rs 15-16 lakh which was not the case last season with the Ranji Trophy being cancelled for the first time in 87 years.

Chhattisgarh captain Harpreet Singh Bhatia is among the bunch of domestic cricketers who have gone to play club cricket in the UK amid the pandemic. He has been playing for Barnsley Woolley Min-

ers since 2017.

"I played all of 10 white ball games in the last season. It wasn't enough clearly. I had to come to the UK to make extra money. Since I don't have a job back in India, I come to England anyway to supplement my income."

"If I had a central contract back home, it wouldn't be a compulsion for me to play in the UK. The BCCI has been supportive in the past and I expect it will support us in these tough times with a good compensation package and hopefully contracts from the state associations," Bhatia told PTI.

His wife was supposed to join him in England but couldn't with India on the red list for travel. Bhatia will be in the UK till September.

"We must formulate a policy remembering that majority of the players don't play IPL and don't have jobs. And what happens when I get an injury and I am unable to play a full season? That is where contracts become even more important."

"I somehow can't think of a season without red ball cricket. It is the toughest form of cricket for us and a chunk of our match fees also comes from that," he added.

BCCI treasurer Arun Dhumal has already said the Board is working out a compensation package in consultation with the state associations. However, the issue wasn't discussed in the SGM on May 29.

The season is tentatively scheduled to begin in September subject to the COVID situation in India.

"The SGM notice stated there will be a discussion on cricket in India and that also includes domestic cricket but only IPL and T20 World Cup were discussed. We don't have any problems in introducing central contracts but there needs to be clarity from the BCCI on what plans they have for the domestic season," a state unit official said.

"...look, in the past we have landed in places three days prior even in a proper schedule and have had a hell of a series and hell of competition, so it is all in the head," Kohli said in the pre-departure press conference.

Virat insisted that it was also about the mindset.

"...it is not the first time we are playing in England, we all know what the conditions are like," he said.

"And even if you used to the conditions, if you don't enter

Advisor Khan Discusses Plans To Develop Sports Facilities In Shahr-I-Khaas



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Farooq Khan on Wednesday discussed the modalities for developing sports facilities in Shahr-i-Khaas area of Srinagar. He remarked that the youth of the city deserve better facilities to hone their skills in different sports disciplines.

The meeting was attended by Director General, Youth Services & Sports, Dr Saleem ur Rehman, Secretary Sports Council, Nuzhat Gul, among other officers from Revenue Department and the Wakf Board.

On the occasion the Advisor implied that the youth of Shahr-i-Khaas have immense potential that

needed to be honed and chiselled well. He declared that they deserve better facilities and opportunities to showcase it.

Advisor Khan further remarked that the youth of this area are naturally talented and only requires handholding to improve on their sporting skills. He said that if provided with requisite infrastructure they would be better equipped than their counterparts elsewhere.

He stressed that they should be provided with all facilities that would fulfil their sports playing requirements for times to come.

Khan directed both the Sports promoting bodies to explore all the possibilities of raising sports infra-

structure in this suburb. He exhorted upon them to create best facilities for the youth there. He asked them to look into the games like football, hockey etc that are popular among the youth of this area.

The Advisor urged upon them to create a sports complex for Shahr-i-Khaas that has amenities for playing several games. He asked them to create these facilities somewhere in the interiors of Srinagar City which will be easily accessible to all sports lovers.

The heads of both the bodies assured the Advisor that they would look for the feasible spot in collaboration with civil society and district administration and would raise the necessary infrastructure.

Virat Kohli Plays Down India's Lack Of Preparation Time Before WTC Final

Press Trust of India

MUMBAI: India captain Virat Kohli is not too concerned about the limited preparation time that his team will get for the World Test Championship final against New Zealand as he believes that it has the requisite understanding of conditions from its past experience of playing in England.

India take on New Zealand in the marquee game at Southampton from June 18. Currently, New Zealand are engaged in a two-Test series against England, while India would be in quarantine after landing there, including three days of hotel quarantine.

"...look, in the past we have landed in places three days prior even in a proper schedule and have had a hell of a series and hell of competition, so it is all in the head," Kohli said in the pre-departure press conference.

Virat insisted that it was also about the mindset.

"...it is not the first time we are playing in England, we all know what the conditions are like," he said.

"And even if you used to the conditions, if you don't enter

the field in the right frame of mind, you are going to nick that first ball or you are going to find it tough to pick wickets," added the superstar.

According to Kohli, his side would not have any issues even if it gets just four practice sessions.

"...we don't have any issues even with four practice sessions heading into the game, because we are absolutely sure of what we can do as a team and we all have played in England."

"Whether it is with the Indian team or India A as well, for the likes of (Mohammed) Siraj... so we are not bothered by that at all and we just want to get there and make the most of the opportunity at hand," he added.

Kohli

echoed coach Ravi Shastri's thoughts about the World Test Championship final holding a lot of value.

"All of us take a lot of pride in playing Test cricket, and the way, we have progressed as a side is an example of what Test cricket means to us. So, for all of us as a unit, those who have been part of the Test side for many years, this is like an accumulation of all the hard work," he said.



Ravi Shastri Demands Best Of Three Tests To Decide WTC Final Winner



Press Trust of India

MUMBAI: India head coach Ravi Shastri on Wednesday said the World Test Championship final should be a best-of-three affair in the long run and not a one off match like his side is set to play against New Zealand in the inaugural edition.

India leave for UK in the wee hours of Thursday to play the WTC final against New Zealand in Southampton from June 18 and five games against England starting August 4.

"I think ideally, in the long run, if they want to pursue with this Test championship, best of three final would be ideal. A three match series as a culmination of two and a half years of cricket," Shastri said in the pre-departure press conference.

"But they need to finish off the Future Tours Program (FTP) and

then start all over again. So one off is one off, guys have earned their stripes, and this is not a team that is suddenly blossomed overnight."

India fly to UK after a 14-day quarantine while New Zealand are already getting valuable practice with the two-match series underway against England.

Shastri said the WTC final is a massive game.

"See, it is the first time that you have a Test Championship final. When you look at the magnitude of the game that's going to be played, I think this is the biggest, if not the biggest ever, because it's the toughest form of the game."

"It's a format that tests you. It's not happened over three days or three months, it's happened over two years, where teams have played each other around the world, and earned their stripes to play the finals so it's one heck of an event."

Australia Cricketers To Take Part In COVID-19 Fundraiser For India

Press Trust of India

SYDNEY: Top Australian cricketers including star pacer Pat Cummins will participate in a 12-hour gaming live stream on Thursday to raise money for UNICEF Australia's India Covid Appeal.

The brainchild of pacer Josh Lalor, the initiative will let fans watch the likes of Cummins, spinner Nathan Lyon, all-rounder and the pace duo of Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood on a live stream when they talk about cricket and showcase their gaming skills in a bid to raise AUD 1,00,000.

The fundraiser will begin at 1:30 pm IST and will also see participation from all-rounder Moises Henriques, women cricketer Alyssa Healy and South African Rilee Rossouw among others.

"Being a cricketer from Australia, we have a unique relationship with Indian people," Lalor told cricket.com.au.

"It's a beautiful part of the world, they're absolutely cricket mad and they bend over backwards to make every cricketer feel welcomed and

accommodated.

"If we're able to raise any money at all to help what's going on in India, that'll go a long way," he added.

Cricketer Australia's new CEO, Nick Hockley and Todd Greenberg, the CEO of the Australian Cricketers' Association will also make an appearance.

"I thought it'd be great for those guys (Hockley and Greenberg) to sit back and talk cricket with the public in a way they're not used to. It'll be a great opportunity for them to portray a slightly different message to the cricketing public," Lalor said.

The live-stream will be available on Lalor's Twitch page.

Australian Cricket has so far raised more than AUD 2,80,000 as part of UNICEF Australia's India Covid-19 Crisis Appeal.

India is currently reeling under a devastating second wave of Covid-19 pandemic. On Wednesday, the country reported 1,32,788 new infections and 3,207 deaths.

The Indian Premier League was also forced to be suspended mid-season last month after multiple cases of Covid-19 were found in its bio-bubble.

Clean Sweeps Against NZ, India Best Way To Prepare For Ashes, Says Joe Root



Press Trust of India

LONDON: England skipper Joe Root says a clean sweep against the top two sides in Test cricket – India and New Zealand – will be the best preparation for the iconic Ashes series against arch rivals Australia later this year.

Before heading to Australia for the Ashes in the winter, England play seven Tests at home against New Zealand and India this summer.

They will take on the Blackcaps for a two-match red-ball series, starting Wednesday and then clash with India in a five-Tests series across August and September.

"There are going to be constant conversations about Australia throughout this whole summer, there is no getting away from that," Root told reporters on Tuesday ahead of the series-opener.

"We have said for a long time now that we are planning towards that series and as an English fan, an English player, it is

such an iconic series.

"It is of utmost importance, absolutely. But the way we are best going to prepare ourselves is by performing well in these seven Tests, by winning seven Test matches against the best two sides in the world," he added.

New Zealand and India are slated to take on each other in the inaugural World Test Championship final scheduled to be held in Southampton from June 18-22.

Although planning to regain the Ashes will remain in the back of the mind, Root said the full focus will be to have successful summer.

"Planning for Australia is something in the background, it's something we are very aware of and consistently talk about. But that won't be in our thoughts when we are out there this summer."

"You couldn't be asking for two better opponents right now – to take on the best is what sport is all about and every Test means a hell of a lot to our players and to me. These Tests are our full focus."

India Football Team Face Daunting Task In WC Qualifier Match Against Qatar

Press Trust of India

DOHA: Their preparation was far from ideal but India would take inspiration from the draw against Asian champions Qatar in 2019 when they face the same opponents in the second-leg match of the joint World Cup and Asian Cup qualifiers, here on Thursday.

India had held mighty Qatar 0-0 in September 2019 here, a result considered as one of the best for the side in recent times.

But India are playing their home match here as the Qatari capital was chosen as the centralised venue for all the remaining Group E matches after the qualifiers were halted last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

India's performance, however, has gone south since then while Qatar, the group toppers, have come into Thursday match on a high.

They beat Luxembourg (1-0) and Azerbaijan (2-1) and played out a 1-1 draw against Ireland in the international friendly matches in March.

India are coming into this match after a demoralising 0-6 drubbing against the UAE in an international friendly in March.

On top of that, India's preparation has been hit hard as they had to cancel a national camp scheduled in early May in Kolkata. The team reached here



on May 19 only to find that the players would not get the facilities they would have wanted.

Stimac himself had expressed the frustration, saying that it was "not an ideal preparation" for the World Cup qualifiers.

On the positive side, Stimac will have the chance to field a full strength Indian team after a long time with all the core players available for selection and without injury concern.

That 2019 match against Qatar did not have talisman Sunil Chhetri due to a viral fever and his return will surely boost the confidence of the young Indian side.

Chhetri also missed the two international friendlies

in March, including the one against UAE, as he was recovering from COVID-19 infection.

But there will be gulf is class between the two sides. Qatar are ranked 58th in the FIFA chart against India's 105th.

"Qatar are one of the top teams in Asia. They have had some decent results against top European and South American teams in the recent past," Chhetri said.

"The last time we took a point against them makes us confident as a team. We understand that they will come out all guns blazing at us, and we need to stick together as a team."

In that drawn game in 2019 also, Qatar dominated through-

out with waves of attacks on the Indian citadel. It was to the credit of goalkeeper Gurpreet Singh Sandhu and Sandesh Jhingan-led defence that stood tall to deny the Qataris a win.

Currently fourth in Group E with three points from five matches, India are already out of reckoning for a World Cup berth but still in contention for the 2023 Asian Cup.

Qatar have won five out of their six matches in these qualifiers.

Boasting of a lethal attacking line-up with top striker Almoez Ali and Hasan Al-Haydos leading the pack, Qatar would be looking at nothing less than a convincing win.

PCB Pushes PSL Final To June 24, Pakistan Team's Departure To England Delayed



Agencies

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan cricket team's departure to England has been pushed back by two days after the Pakistan Super League final was rescheduled for June 24 in Abu Dhabi.

The PSL was earlier scheduled to end on June 20 and the national team was due to leave for England on June 23 to play three ODIs and three Twenty20s.

However, with the PSL final pushed back by four days, the national team will leave for England on June 25. The first ODI is scheduled for July 8 in Cardiff.

Abu Dhabi will host the remaining 20 games of the PSL after Pakistan's premier domestic twenty20 league was postponed in March when several players and support staff tested positive for COVID-19.

The Pakistan Cricket Board hopes the PSL will resume from June 7, provided it gets permission from the United Arab Emirates government on Wednesday for its production crew members to start working at Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi on June 5. Players and team officials from six franchises arrived in Abu Dhabi last week on chartered flights from Pakistan. Their seven-day isolation ends Wednesday afternoon after which the PCB said players will start training in Abu Dhabi.

Why Announce When You Don't Have Vaccines, Asks Delhi High Court



Agenceis

NEW DELHI: The younger generation which has lost so many lives to COVID-19 should have been vaccinated first as it is the nation's future but the jabs were prioritised for the elderly who have lived their lives, the Delhi High Court observed on Tuesday.

The court made it clear however that it was not at all saying the lives of older people are not important as the emotional support which the elderly persons provide to a family cannot be discounted. Justice Sanghi, speaking for himself, said that in the second wave of COVID-19, it was the younger generation that was more affected and they are not getting vaccines and added "I don't understand this vaccination policy at all".

"I can speak for myself... You have announced the vaccination policy for 18 to 44 years old persons now but you don't have vaccines. Then why you have to announce and make a declaration when you don't have the vaccines? We have to invest in the future and we are sidelining them," Justice Sanghi said.

"We have to secure our future for that we need to vaccinate our

younger generation and here we are giving priority to 60 plus who have lived their lives. It is the younger lot which is the future, we are on our way out," he added.

The judge pointed out that so many young people have lost their lives to COVID-19.

He added that in this time of crisis, if a choice has to be made, "we have to choose the younger one" because an 80-year-old person has lived his life and he will not take the country forward.

"Ideally, we should be able to save everyone but if we have to choose, we have to save younger people," the judge said.

When the Centre's counsel said only God can help us now, the judge said this is the area where even God cannot help us if we do not act ourselves, noting the facts and figures.

"Why are you feeling shy? It is the duty of the government to lay down the way forward. Other countries have done it. In Italy, they said sorry for old people we do not have beds," Justice Sanghi said.

The court's observations came while hearing pleas relating to the management of the COVID-19 crisis in Delhi, including shortage of medicine to treat black fungus patients.

After CBSE, CISCE Cancels Class 12 Board Exams In View Of Pandemic

Agenceis

NEW DELHI: The CISCE on Tuesday decided to cancel Class 12 board examinations this year in view of the COVID-19 situation, according to its secretary Gerry Arathoon. "The exams have been cancelled. The alternative assessment criteria will be announced soon," Mr Arathoon told PTI. The decision by the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) came after the central government announced cancelling the CBSE Class 12 board exams following a high-level meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

It was decided that the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) will take steps to compile the results of Class 12 students as per a well-defined objective criteria in a time-bound manner.

In an official order issued on Tuesday night, the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations said, "In view of the present situation of the Covid-19 Pandemic in the country, the CISCE has decided to cancel the ISC



(Class 12) year 2021 examination. The safety, health and wellbeing of our students, teaching faculty and all stakeholders is our topmost priority and of paramount interest."

"The results will be processed on a mechanism which will also include the internal examinations conducted by the schools. The schools will be informed in due course of time, of this mechanism," it added.

After the declaration of the Class 12 results, if some candi-

dates are not satisfied with the marks awarded to them, the CISCE will give an option to such candidates to write the exams at a later date, when the situation is conducive to conduct the same.

The CISCE had last week asked its affiliated schools to submit data, including average of marks obtained by Class 12 students in Class 11 and during this session. The board had postponed Class 12 exams which were scheduled from May 4 in light of the devastating second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

IN VIEW OF THE PRESENT SITUATION of the Covid-19 Pandemic in the country, the CISCE has decided to cancel the ISC (Class 12) year 2021 examination. The safety, health and wellbeing of our students, teaching faculty and all stakeholders is our topmost priority and of paramount interest."

Class 12 Boards: Challenge To Decide Fair Evaluation Criteria, Must Be Done Soon, Say Experts

Agenceis

NEW DELHI: Education experts and stakeholders believe the bigger challenge before the CBSE now is coming up with fair evaluation criteria for class 12 students whose exams have been cancelled and demanded that the policy is notified soon.

The experts hailed the decision to cancel the board exams which were earlier postponed given the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic.

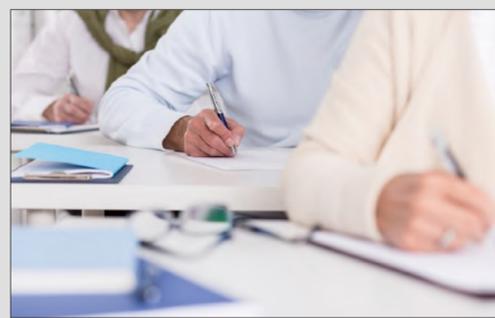
Given the current situation, it is the right decision to cancel the CBSE Board exams. There is no way we could have held exams without compromising the safety of children. While we welcome the decision, we hope the modalities would be worked out quickly in consultation with stakeholders, they said.

"Since class marks are important factor that affects students' career, we expect CBSE to ensure students don't get affected with the methodology of awarding marks," said Praveen Raju, Co-Chair, FICCI ARISE, a collegium of stakeholders aimed at promoting quality education.

In a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday, it was decided that the CBSE will take steps to compile the results of class 12 students as per well-defined objective criteria in a time-bound manner.

"The next step is equally critical and crucial in terms of deciding the process and criteria based on which the children's performance will be gauged. This should be done keeping in mind that many of them make that extra effort during the last mile and hence, should be given due advantage," said Charu Wah, Principal, Nirmal Bhartiya School.

According to Vishnu Karthik, CEO, The Heritage Schools, the decision on cancellation of board exams has provided some clarity



and assuaged stress levels among students and parents but the challenge now is for the CBSE to arrive at alternative criteria to determine grade 12 marks.

"Any delay or any confusion on the new grading criteria will lead to more confusion and stress among students. Clear directions should also be provided to Indian universities to modify their admissions criteria so meritocracy and fairness are not compromised," he said.

Shishir Jaipuria, Chairman of Seth Anandram Jaipuria Group of Educational Institutions believes deserving students must be allocated grades or marks corresponding to their yearly performance.

"It's a challenge that will require a great deal of meticulous thinking for arriving at a just criterion for academic assessment. I'm sure the schools and boards will rise to the challenge and deliver what's best for the students," he said.

Rajiv Bansal, Director-Operations - Global Indian International School (GIS), said admission in undergraduate courses, across India and internationally, are dependent on class 12 results, therefore, the sooner these details are announced, the better it would be for the students, their parents, and

the entire academic community.

Pallavi Upadhyaya, Principal, DPS-RNE Ghaziabad said schools further await the mode of result tabulation and assessment guidelines by the CBSE for fair scores as Class 12th remains a crucial exam in a student's lifetime.

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

Amid continuing demands for cancellation of exams by a large section of students and parents, the ministry had called a high-level meeting last Sunday to deliberate on the issue which was also attended by state education ministers and education secretaries.

The CBSE had proposed two options -- conducting regular exams for only major subjects at notified centres or holding shorter-duration exams at the school where a student is enrolled.

The majority of states opted for the second option which included conducting 90 minutes exams for major subjects at students' home schools. Few states also insisted on vaccinating students before going ahead with the exams. PTI

Over 8,700 People Died On Railway Tracks During Lockdown Year 2020, Many Of Them Migrants, Reveals RTI Reply

Agenceis

Over 8,700 people were mowed down on railway tracks in 2020 even though passenger train services were severely curtailed due to the nationwide coronavirus lockdown, with officials saying many of the victims were migrant workers.

The Railway Board shared the data on such deaths for the period between January and December 2020 in its reply to a question by Madhya Pradesh-based activist Chandra Shekhar Gaur under the Right to Information Act.

"Based on the information received from the State Police, 805 people suffered injuries and 8,733 people died on the railway track between January 2020 and December 2020," the Railway Board has said.

Officials separately said that many of those dead were migrant workers who chose to walk home along the tracks because train routes are considered shorter than roads or highways.

They said these workers also chose the tracks as this way they could evade police for violating lockdown norms, and also had the belief they would not get lost midway.

"They also assumed that no trains would be running because of the lockdown," one of the officials said.

While the fatalities during 2020 were fewer compared to four years immediately before that, the numbers are still significant given the fact that the passenger services were restricted after the coronavirus lockdown was announced on March 25.

Only freight trains were in operation during the lockdown and before the railways started Shramik Special trains from May 1 to ferry migrant workers home.

The passenger services have

been reopening in phases, and by December, around 1,100 special trains were in operation along with 110 regular passenger trains.

The services have now been restored to 70 per cent of the pre-Covid period. While many fatalities on tracks last year could not be registered for some reason or the other, the deaths of 16 migrant workers after being run over by a freight train in Maharashtra's Aurangabad last May rattled many as they were killed while resting on the tracks thinking no train would be coming due to the Covid suspension.

According to Railways figures, compiled from state governments, 56,271 people died and 5,938 were injured in such incidents between 2016 and 2019, registering an increasing trend, with 2017 being an exception.

As many 14,032 people died in such accidents in 2016, 12,838 in 2017, 14,197 in 2018 and 15,204 in 2019, the figures showed.

However, the Railways do not consider these deaths "railway accidents".

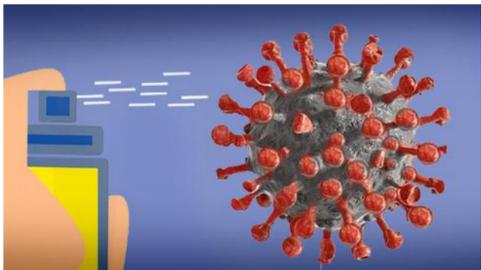
Railway's death statistics are maintained in three forms --consequential accidents, trespassing and untoward incidents.

These deaths come under the category of "untoward incidents" or "trespassing", and are investigated by state police and the victims are also compensated by state governments concerned.

The Railways has carried out massive campaigns to reduce such deaths and also paid ex gratia to the kin of the victim on sympathetic grounds in some cases.

The measures taken by the Railways include elimination of unmanned-level crossings over the broad gauge network, signal modernisation, the use of modern machines in maintenance, among others.

Make Your Village 'Corona Free', Win Rs 50 Lakh: Maharashtra Govt



Agenceis

The Maharashtra government, on Wednesday, announced a "corona free village" contest with an aim to encourage steps to curb the spread of COVID-19 in rural areas of the state.

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray recently lauded efforts made by some villages to stem the spread of the viral infection and announced the 'My Village Corona Free' initiative.

The "corona free village" contest is part of the initiative announced by the chief minister, state Rural Development Minister Hasan Mushrif said in a statement.

Prizes will be given to three village panchayats doing good work in COVID-19 management in each revenue division.

The first prize will be of Rs 50 lakh, second of Rs 25 lakh and third of Rs 15 lakh, the minister said.

There are six revenue divisions

in the state, hence there will be a total of 18 prizes. The total prize money is Rs 5.4 crore, he said.

The villages which win the contest will also get an additional amount equivalent to the prize money as encouragement, and it will be utilised for development works in those villages, the minister said.

The participating villages will be judged on 22 criteria, he said, adding that a committee will be set up to judge the villages.

Thackeray, in a virtual address on Sunday, lauded Raturaj Deshmukh (21), the youngest sarpanch in Maharashtra, and his task force to keep their Ghatne village in Solapur district free of coronavirus.

On Tuesday, Maharashtra recorded 14,123 new COVID-19 cases, taking the infection tally to 57,61,015, while 477 fresh deaths and another 377 deaths previously unreported pushed the fatality count to 96,198, as per official data.

"Worried About Asia": UN Body On Covid Variant First Detected In India

UNITED NATIONS: The highly infectious COVID-19 variant first detected in India "threatens" to rapidly spread in the sub-region, including among refugees, the UN refugee agency has said as it warned of vaccine shortages in the Asia-Pacific region, including for asylum-seekers.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) spokesperson Andrej Mahecic, at a press briefing in Geneva on Tuesday, said that the fragile health systems in many countries in the Asia and Pacific region have struggled to cope with the recent surge of coronavirus cases.

"We are particularly worried about the situation in the Asia and Pacific region, which in the past two months has experienced the largest increase in the number of cases globally," he said.

Over this period, there have been some 38 million recorded COVID-19 cases and more than half a million deaths, the UNHCR spokesperson said.

The lack of hospital beds, oxygen supplies, limited Intensive Care Unit (ICU) capacities, and scarce health facilities and services have worsened outcomes for those infected with COVID-19, particularly in India and Nepal. The highly infectious

variant of the virus which first emerged in India threatens to rapidly spread in the sub-region, including among refugee populations," Andrej Mahecic said.

The B.1.617 COVID-19 variant, first detected in India, is divided in three lineages -- B.1.617.1, B.1.617.2 and B.1.617.3.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has said that only B.1.617.2 is now a "variant of concern," observing that lower rates of transmission have been observed for the other two lineages, making them no longer variants of concern.

The B.1.617.2 is now labelled variant Delta and has been reported in 62 countries as of June 1.

With COVID-19 raging in many parts of the world, the UNHCR warned of shortages of vaccines in the Asia-Pacific region, including for refugees and asylum-seekers.

UNHCR spokesperson Andrej Mahecic said: "We urge immediate and stronger support for the COVAX initiative, a worldwide effort aimed at achieving equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines.

"This is critical to save lives and curb the impact of the virus, particularly in developing nations. These countries host the

vast majority of more than 80 million forcibly displaced people in the world. Yet so far, they have benefited from only a fraction of the world's COVID-19 vaccines."

The UNHCR stressed that no one can be left behind in the global effort against the coronavirus.

"The pandemic will be defeated only when vaccinations become available everywhere on an equitable basis," the agency said.

It said that the current delays in vaccine shipments, brought about by limited supplies to COVAX, mean that some of the world's most vulnerable people remain susceptible to the virus.

"The UNHCR is adding its voice to the calls for countries with surplus doses to donate to COVAX, and for manufacturers to boost supplies to the COVAX facility," Andrej Mahecic said.

The UN refugee agency said that refugees remain especially vulnerable to the spread of COVID-19 as overcrowded settings, coupled with limited water and sanitation facilities, can contribute to increased infection rates and an exponential spread of the virus.

It said that in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar, where almost 900,000 Rohingya

refugees are living in the single largest and most densely populated cluster of refugee camps in the world, the number of cases has increased considerably in the last two months. As of May 31, there have been over 1,188 cases among the refugees, with more than half of these cases recorded in May alone.

There is also a "worrying increase" in the number of COVID-19 cases among refugees and asylum-seekers in Nepal, Iran, Pakistan, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

Some refugees, including in Nepal, have already received their first vaccine dose with COVAX-provided supplies while among the Rohingya refugees in the camps in Bangladesh, not a single vaccine has been administered yet, given the scarcity of supplies in the country, the UN refugee agency added.

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"The lack of hospital beds, oxygen supplies, limited Intensive Care Unit (ICU) capacities, and scarce health facilities and services have worsened outcomes for those infected with COVID-19, particularly in India and Nepal. The highly infectious variant of the virus which first emerged in India threatens to rapidly spread in the sub-region, including among refugee populations," Andrej Mahecic said.

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Juhi Chawla Approaches Court To Stop 5G Services In India. What It Said



Agenceis

NEW DELHI: The Delhi High Court today questioned actor-environmentalist Juhi Chawla for directly filing a suit against setting up of 5G wireless networks in the country without giving any representation to the government on her concerns related to the technology.

Justice JR Midha said the plaintiffs, Juhi Chawla and two others, were required to first approach the government for their rights and if denied, they should come to the court.

The court after hearing the argu-

ments of various parties reserved its order on the suit.

Juhi Chawla's plea claimed that 5G wireless technology plans threaten to provoke serious, irreversible effects on humans and permanent damage to the Earth's ecosystems.

The suit, filed by Juhi Chawla, Veeresh Malik and Teena Vachani, claims that if the telecom industry's plans for 5G becomes a reality, "no person, animal, bird, insect and 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."