

Market Checking Intensified In Srinagar Ahead of Diwali

Observer News Service

Srinagar: On the directions of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Mohammad Aijaz Asad, the team of Food Safety Department Srinagar ahead of Diwali, conducted special drives in various markets of Srinagar City on the eve of to check the hygiene practices adopted and quality of food items by the Food Business Establishments.

The market checking drive was conducted under the supervision of Assistant Commissioner Food Safety (Designated Officer under FSSAI Srinagar), Yameen ul Nabi in various City markets and inspected

various food business units including sweets shops, Khoya sellers and dairy products.

During the market checking, the Food Safety teams took samples of various food items being sold in the market and also asked Food Business Operators to maintain hygiene, provide safe and quality food items to consumers.

Speaking in this regard, the Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar has asked the Food Safety Department and other Market Checking teams to continue the drive in City markets to ensure that all essential commodities are sold at Government approved rates as per the Food Safety Standards and Quality.

ACB Organizes Day-Long Vigilance Awareness Program

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Anti corruption Bureau (ACB) in collaboration with Sri Pratap College today organized a day long Vigilance Awareness Program in the college auditorium on the theme "Say No to Corruption, Commit to the Nation".

In his inaugural address, Principal of the college, Prof (Dr.) Ghulam Jeelani Qurashi while welcoming all the dignitaries from ACB, laid emphasis on taking initiatives on building nation on the lines of transparency and corruption free management at various levels of the society.



People running helter-skelter for protection from rains as brief showers lashed parts of Srinagar on Thursday afternoon. KO Photo, Abid Bhat

Pedestrian Bridges In Srinagar's Habba Kadal To Be A Reality Soon

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The long-awaited transformation of the historic Habba Kadal area of Srinagar is about to become a reality, with officials indicating that the ambitious project is slated for completion in the coming months.

Locals are excited as new pedestrian bridges are set to grace the heart of downtown, which will enhance connectivity and infuse a touch of modernity into this cherished historical area.

An official said the work on the project is under progress. "Officials overseeing the project are working tirelessly to ensure that it reaches its completion within the set timeframe," he said.

Residents of Habba Kadal expressed contentment over the development, saying they are eagerly anticipating the rejuvenation of their area.

"This is a momentous occasion for us. The long-overdue revitalization of Habba Kadal, coupled with the introduction of modern pedestrian bridges, is set to enhance the

beauty of downtown," said Asif Ahmad, a local shop owner.

Zubair, another resident, highlighted the significance of the project. "This exciting endeavor encompasses the renovation of existing infrastructure, the creation of new spaces, and the preservation of historical landmarks deeply woven into the cultural fabric of Srinagar," he said, adding the introduction of state-of-the-art pedestrian bridges and the meticulous preservation of the area's heritage mark a positive turning point in the history of Habba Kadal.

Jammu & Kashmir Bank Ltd.
Technology & Development,
Ground Floor, Air India Building
Residency Road, Srinagar 190001

On-line Request for Proposal (e-RFP) for Supply, Installation and Maintenance of Video Wall Display System

RFP Notice along with Complete RFP document outlining the minimum requirements can be downloaded from and Bids can be submitted on the Banks' e-Tendering Portal <https://jkbank.abcpocure.com> w.e.f. November 03, 2023, 16.00 Hrs. Tender Document can also be downloaded from Bank's Official Website www.jkbank.com. Last date for submission of Bids is November 24, 2023, 17.00 Hrs.

e-RFP Ref No. JKB/CHQ/T&D/Video-Wall-Display/2023-863 Dated: 01-11-2023

Registered office : Corporate Headquarters, M.A. Road, Srinagar 190001, Kashmir, India
CIN: L6510JK1938SGC000048; T: +91 (0)194 2481 930-35; F: +91 (0)194 248 1928; E: info@jkbmail.com; W: www.jkbank.com

Eidgah Residents Demand Repair Of Dilapidated Road

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The residents of Noor Shah Colony in Saidpora area in Eidgah, Srinagar have voiced serious concern over the dilapidated road and urged the authorities to repair the same before the onset of winter. "The situation in Noor Shah Colony has escalated in recent months, with increasing frustration due to the lack of attention from authorities," said the locals.

They complained that the poorly-

Our daily lives have been severely affected by the dilapidated road conditions, as it's not only inconvenient but also dangerous, especially during inclement weather

ly-maintained roads have become a serious cause of concern for the residents who rely on these routes for their daily commuting and transportation of goods.

"Our daily lives have been severely affected by the dilapidated road conditions, as it's not only inconvenient but also dangerous, especially during inclement weather," said Haris, a local resident said, urging the administration to repair the road on fast track before the winter and snowfall.

CANCELLATION/DIVERSION & PARTIAL CANCELLATION OF TRAINS

In order to undertake the Pre-Non Interlocking/Non-Interlocking work at Pathankot Yard of Jalandhar City-Jammu Tawi Section, Northern Railway will take suitable Traffic & Power Blocks upto 07.11.2023. During this period following trains will temporarily be affected as under:-

CANCELLATION OF TRAINS		
Train No. & Train Name	Date(s) of Cancellation (from originating station)	
04611/04612 Amritsar-Pathankot-Amritsar Special	07.11.2023	
14633/14634 Amritsar-Pathankot-Amritsar Express	07.11.2023	

DIVERSION OF TRAINS		
Train No. & Name	Diverted via	Date (from the Originating Station)
19223 Ahmedabad Jn.-Jammu Tawi Express	Pathankot Cantt.-Bharoli Jn.-Jammu Tawi	Upto 06.11.2023
19224 Jammu Tawi-Ahmedabad Jn. Express	Bharoli Jn.-Pathankot Cantt.-Jalandhar City	03.11.2023 to 07.11.2023
18309 Sambalpur Jn.-Jammu Tawi Express	Bharoli Jn.-Pathankot Cantt.-Jammu Tawi	04.11.2023
18101 Tatanagar Jn.-Jammu Tawi Express	Bharoli Jn.-Pathankot Cantt.-Jammu Tawi	05.11.2023
19415 Ahmedabad Jn.-Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra Express	Bharoli Jn.-Pathankot Cantt.-Jammu Tawi	05.11.2023
19416 Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra-Ahmedabad Jn. Express	Bharoli Jn.-Pathankot Cantt.-Amritsar	07.11.2023

PARTIAL CANCELLATION OF TRAINS		
Train No. & Train Name	Short Terminate at/ Originate from	Date (s) (from originating station)
04397/04398 Amritsar-Pathankot-Amritsar Special	at/from Bharoli Jn.	03.11 to 07.11.2023
06951/06952 Pathankot-MCTM-Pathankot Special	at/from Bharoli Jn.	03.11 to 07.11.2023
06933 Amritsar-Pathankot Special	at Bharoli Jn.	03.11 to 07.11.2023
06949/06950 Jalandhar City-Pathankot-Jalandhar City Special	at/from Pathankot Cantt.	03.11 to 07.11.2023
06935 Verka Jn.-Pathankot Special	at Bharoli Jn.	03.11 to 06.11.2023
06936 Pathankot-Verka Jn. Special	from Bharoli Jn.	03.11 to 07.11.2023
06938 Pathankot-Amritsar Special	from Bharoli Jn.	03.11 to 06.11.2023

For any kind of information, passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTES App.

Visit RailMadad website www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in Download RailMadad app.

RailMadad Helpline No. 139

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Office Of The Block Medical Officer Sopore, J&K

Office: Sub District Hospital Sopore. Pin: 193201
Telephone: 01954220800; e-mail: bmsopore111@gmail.com

E-Tender Notice For Supply Of Medicines And Consumables Items for SDH Sopore.

E-Tender reference No: 02-SDH SPR of 2023, Dated: 03-11-2023

On behalf of Lieutenant Governor of Jammu & Kashmir Union Territory Term E-Tenders are invited for and on behalf of Governor of Jammu & Kashmir Union Territory through Block Medical Officer SDH Sopore for supply of Medicines And Consumables Items, as per the Annexure "A" to this tender notice from manufacturers/firms/companies/authorized dealers for Sub District Hospital Sopore on urgent basis. The tender document can be downloaded from the website www.jktenders.gov.in w.e.f. 03-11-2023 to 14-11-2023.

The tender details and schedules as per following

Item Description	Tender Fee	EMD
Supply of Medicines And Consumables Items to Sub District Hospital Sopore Baramulla	Rs.1000	20,000/-

Date & Time of release of bid	03-11-2023(10:00AM)
Last date for entertaining any clarification/representation	14-11-2023(10:00AM)
Online bid submission start date	03-11-2023(10:00AM)
Last date for submission of online bids	14-11-2023(10:00AM)
Opening of Technical bids	15-11-2023(11:30AM)

- Any query to clear can be done through email id on bamsopore@gmail.com.
- The competent authority reserves the right to accept or reject the tenders received or cancel the whole tendering process without assigning any reason thereof.
- The items which shall be available with JKMSCL shall not be procured through this tender.

Sd/-
Block Medical Officer
Sub District Hospital Sopore

DIPK-11474/23
dated: 02-11-2023

HELP

- 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
- Ambulance: Kashmir EMS Service: +91 94841 00200

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311 ✈

RAILWAYS

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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

HIJRI CALENDAR
18 Rabi-ul-Sani
1445

PRAYERS

FAJR	5:27
ZUHR	12:14
ASR	3:59
Magrib	5:40
ISHA	7:01

This Day In History

- 644 - Umar ibn al-Khattab, second Muslim caliph, is killed by a Persian slave in Medina
- 1493 - Christopher Columbus discovers island of Dominica
- 1861 - Battle of Port Royal, fought in Port Royal Sound, South Carolina begins, Union victory (US Civil War)
- 1862 - Battle until the 5th November between gunboats at Bayou Teche, a waterway in Louisiana
- 1863 - Battle of Grand Coteau in Southwestern Louisiana in the American Civil War
- 1928 - Turkey switches from Arabic to Roman alphabet
- 1931 - First commercially produced synthetic rubber manufactured
- 1936 - President Franklin D. Roosevelt wins a second term in office, defeating Republican candidate Alf Landon in the most lopsided election in American history in terms of electoral vote
- 1944 - Pro-German government of Hungary flees
- 1946 - Emperor Hirohito proclaims a new Japanese constitution
- 1952 - Egypt protests German retribution payments to Israel
- 1954 - Nobel for physics awarded to Max Born & Walter Bothe
- 1955 - First virus crystallized (announced)
- 1957 - USSR launches Sputnik 2 with a dog (Laika), 1st animal in orbit
- 1958 - USSR performs nuclear test
- 1961 - UN General Assembly unanimously elects U Thant as acting
- 1967 - Vietnam War: The Battle of Dak To begins, becoming one of the bloodiest battles of the war
- 1970 - US President Richard Nixon promises gradual troop removal of Vietnam
- 1970 - Marxist Salvador Allende inaugurated as President of Chile
- 1978 - USSR & Vietnam sign peace & friendship treaty
- 1984 - 3,000 die in 3 day anti-Sikh riot in India
- 1984 - Body of assassinated Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi cremated

From KO Archives

DTH TV Okayed

Agencies

NEW DELHI: The Union cabinet today gave its nod for allowing direct-to-home (DTH) television services, which would revolutionize broadcasting in the country. The decision came three days after an eight-member Group of Ministers (GoM) headed by Home Minister L K Advani prepared a unanimous, report favouring DTH, official sources said.

The KU-band DTH service offers greater and direct connectivity to the viewer providing over 100 channels through a small dish antenna doing away with intermediaries like cable operators. It has enormous penetration power to cover far flung and remote areas.

Promising enhanced picture quality, it also has the scope for interactive TV services like movie on demand and possibility of introducing value-added services like internet access, e-mail, home-shopping, banking and tele-education.

The GoM was formed nearly two years ago to go into the controversial DTH issue and place its recommendations to the Union Cabinet when Pramod Mahajan was the Information and Broadcasting Minister.

Besides Advani, others in the group are Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha, Defence Minister George Fernandes, Information and Broadcasting Minister Shushma Swaraaj, Information Technology Minister Mahajan, Communications Minister Ram Vilas Paswan, Minister Vasundra Raje and Law Minister Arun Jaitley.

(Kashmir Observer, November 03, 2000)

KASHMIR OBSERVERTM

Friday | 03-11-2023

Eco-Friendly Mobility

The launch of 100 electric buses by the Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, marks a big move towards transforming the transportation in the valley. This initiative will contribute to eco-friendly mobility and also to a cleaner and more sustainable future.

Srinagar in recent years has long grappled with the dual challenges of rising car ownership and worsening traffic congestion. The proliferation of cars and inadequate public transport infrastructure has given rise to gridlocks on its narrow roads. The data on car ownership in Jammu and Kashmir issued last year, found that Jammu and Kashmir is one of the regions in India with a substantially higher ownership of cars. Others are Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Goa, including the union territory of Ladakh and a few other North Eastern states. While surprising, the data offers valuable insights into the complex relationship between prosperity, transportation, and environmental concerns. The rise in car ownership in the region has contributed to the growing problem of traffic congestion and air pollution.

What is more, according to a 2016 study, Srinagar was declared the 10th most-polluted city in the world by the World Health Organization. Similarly, a 2018 study titled "Winter Burst of Pristine Kashmir Valley Air" jointly conducted by a team of scientists from the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology and the University of Kashmir, showed that pollution in Srinagar hits dangerous levels during winter months as the air carries five times more tiny particulate matter 2.5 than the permissible limit.

So the introduction of electric buses represents a step towards cleaner and more sustainable mobility. The Srinagar Electric Bus Project not only aims to address traffic congestion but also aligns with the broader goal of carbon neutrality. The buses, equipped with features like universal access, onboard vehicle tracking systems, and CCTV cameras, are not only environmentally friendly but also technologically advanced. They provide a dedicated mobile app for passengers to book tickets, fostering convenience and enhancing the overall commuting experience. But the biggest benefit is for the environment. By prioritizing eco-friendly mobility solutions, the region can alleviate the burden of traffic congestion and safeguard its environment. By replacing traditional, fossil fuel-powered buses with electric counterparts, this initiative will significantly reduce harmful emissions, such as carbon dioxide and particulate matter, which have been a growing concern for the city and the wider valley.

But for these buses to ply smoothly across the city, it is important that not only the road length is increased but that the roads are also widened. It is obvious that the city's road length is not commensurate with the exponential growth in traffic volume.

OTHER OPINION

Digital Addiction

Mohammad Hanief

While a smartphone, tablet, or computer can be a hugely productive tool, compulsive use of these devices can interfere with work, school, and relationships. When you spend more time on social media or playing games than you do interacting with real people, or you can't stop yourself from repeatedly checking texts, emails, or apps—even when it has negative consequences in your life—it may be time to reassess your technology use.

Smartphone addiction, sometimes colloquially known as "nomophobia" (fear of being without a mobile phone), is often fueled by an internet overuse problem or internet addiction disorder. After all, it's rarely the phone or tablet itself that creates the compulsion, but rather the games, apps, and online worlds it connects us to.

Addiction to social networking, dating apps, texting, and messaging can extend to the point where virtual, online friends become more important than real-life relationships. We've all seen the couples sitting together in a restaurant ignoring each other and engaging with their smartphones instead. While the internet can be a great place to meet new people, reconnect with old friends, or even start romantic relationships, online relationships are not a healthy substitute for real-life interactions. Online friendships can be appealing as they tend to exist in a bubble, not subject to the same demands or stresses as messy, real-world relationships. Compulsive use of dating apps can change your focus to short-term hookups instead of developing long-term relationships.

Compulsive web surfing, watching videos, playing games, or checking news feeds can lead to lower productivity at work or school and isolate you for hours at a time. Compulsive use of the internet and smartphone apps can cause you to neglect other aspects of your life, from real-world relationships to hobbies and social pursuits.

Online compulsions, such as gaming, gambling, stock trading, online shopping, or bidding on auction sites like eBay can often lead to financial and job-related problems. While gambling addiction has been a well-documented problem for years, the availability of internet gambling has made gambling far more accessible. Compulsive stock trading or online shopping can be just as financially and socially damaging. eBay addicts may wake up at strange hours in order to be online for the last remaining minutes of an auction. You may purchase things you don't need and can't afford just to experience the excitement of placing the winning bid.

Behind The Global Economic Uncertainty

When the growth narrative of the world's largest economy, with its mature institutions and diversified productive base, can change so easily, it is no wonder that uncertainty in the rest of the world is even more pronounced.

Mohamed A El-Erian

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As economic-policy tools become more subordinate to political and geopolitical considerations, the already weak outlook for global growth may well deteriorate

Our insufficient actions today ensure that we will face more complicated economic and political obstacles down the line.

Businesses, governments, and investors were already navigating a foggy global landscape before the tragic events unfolding in the Middle East. But the horrible conflict between Hamas and Israel, which has already led to enormous suffering and claimed the lives of thousands of civilians, including so many children, has introduced a new layer of uncertainty for the global economy, the subject of this commentary. Even in the highly unlikely event that the geopolitical situation improves rapidly in the region and beyond, a deep sense of uncertainty will remain, driven by five economic and financial factors.

First, the global economy's major growth engines are currently under strain. With Europe teetering on the brink of recession and China stalling, the US economy has emerged as the main driver of global growth. This became particularly evident in the third quarter of 2023, with the US's growth estimates impressing once again. But even America's growth outlook is uncertain. Over the past 15 months, the consensus of analysts about the US economy's direction has oscillated wildly between four scenarios: soft landing, hard landing, crash landing, and no landing. Although the prevailing view now is that the US is headed for a soft landing, forecasts may well shift toward a hard one over the coming weeks.

When the growth narrative of the world's largest economy, with its mature institutions and diversified productive base, can change so easily, it is no wonder that uncertainty in the rest of the world is even more pronounced. Instead of resembling a normal bell-shaped distribution of potential outcomes with a single peak and slender tails, the global outlook looks like a multimodal distribution with fat tails on either end, suggesting a higher likelihood of extreme events.

On the positive side, as Gordon Brown, Michael Spence, Reid Lidow, and I argue in our new book *Permacrisis*, advances in generative artificial intelligence, life sciences, and clean energy have the potential to enhance productivity and boost potential GDP growth significantly. On the other end of the distribution, there is the risk that a set of vicious cycles will aggravate cascading effects.

Second, the journey toward this uncertain future is fraught with peril. The most immediate risk is the recent spike in global borrowing costs as markets adapt to the likelihood that the US Federal Reserve and other major central banks, having hiked interest rates aggressively—albeit belatedly—to counter inflation trends they initially misdiagnosed, will maintain elevated rates for an extended period.

Third, the persistence of this interest-rate outlook increases the risk

of recessions and financial-market turbulence. We saw early signs of this in March when balance-sheet mismanagement and slippages in bank supervision led to the failure of some regional US banks.

Fourth, the global economy and key financial markets like the one for benchmark US government bonds now lack key top-down anchors such as growth momentum, confidence in policymaking signals, and stabilising financial flows.

As economic-policy tools become more subordinate to political and geopolitical considerations,

losses. Without these economic, policy, and technical anchors, the global economy and capital markets resemble boats in a rough and unpredictable sea. That brings us to the fifth driver of global uncertainty: the inadequate response to long-term crises like climate change and widening economic inequality. The longer we wait to tackle these problems, the greater the eventual costs will be. Our insufficient actions today ensure that we will face more complicated economic and political obstacles down the line.



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the already weak outlook for global growth may well deteriorate. Monetary policy faces a credibility threat and genuine structural uncertainties about the equilibrium level of interest rates and the delayed effects of a remarkably concentrated rate-hiking cycle. Moreover, shrinking central-bank balance sheets and the absence of an effective policy framework compound the challenge of determining the right inflation targets in a world economy characterised by an insufficiently flexible supply side.

Amid growing deficits and rising interest payments, there is also the question of who will absorb the significant surge in government debt issuance. For more than a decade, the Fed has been the most reliable buyer of US government bonds, owing to its seemingly limitless money-printing capabilities and minimal price sensitivity. But, having been forced by inflation and other excesses to shift from quantitative easing to quantitative tightening, the Fed is now a reliable net seller. International buyers also appear more cautious, partly owing to geopolitical tensions. Moreover, many domestic institutional investors, such as pension funds and insurance companies, have already accumulated significant bond holdings, incurring substantial mark-to-market

As we write in *Permacrisis*, today's world has been shaped by three ongoing failures: the repeated inability to achieve consistent and inclusive growth that also respects our planet; recurrent domestic-policy errors; and the constant lack of effective global policy coordination at a time when shared challenges demand collective action. Together, these failures have had profound economic, financial, institutional, sociopolitical, and geopolitical ramifications.

That is the bad news. The good news is that we have the capacity to solve these problems and turn today's vicious cycles into virtuous ones. But to implement the major shifts required to achieve this goal, we need visionary political leadership at the national level and increased global awareness of our shared challenges. Absent such leadership, we risk leaving our children and grandchildren a world plagued by economic and financial instability, domestic political unrest, and geopolitical turmoil.

Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer. The article was originally published by Financial Express



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Work Life Imbalance

Infosys co-founder Narayana Murthy's recent suggestion for "70-hours-work-a-week" among Indian youngsters will no doubt boost productivity, but it will certainly affect the balance of work-life approach, which is equally important. Unsurprisingly Mr. Murthy's comments have evoked a nationwide controversy, with many have

criticised his idea. In fact, a Bengaluru-based Cardiologist wrote in his X (formerly Twitter) account saying, "such an inhumane working hours can create a whole generation with a host of heart-related comorbidities." The Cardiologist's comment gains prominence, as WHO says that India accounts for at least one-fifth of the 17.9 million cardiovascular disease-

related deaths globally, especially in the younger generation. Currently, India's labour codes mandate that workers put in 8-hours of work a day, capping the weekly work hours at 48. Despite this, global data shows that India ranks fifth in the world among countries with long working hours. Research has revealed that productivity falls sharply after 50 hours per

week, and drops off a cliff after 55 hours. Rather than extended working hours, a streamlined approach with set working hours will work for large enterprises that have plentiful resources.

Ranganathan Sivakumar

Mindful Fridays

Pain, Suffering, And
The Choice We Make

Wasim Kakroo

Pain and suffering are two terms often used interchangeably, but they represent distinct concepts. Pain is a natural part of the human experience, while suffering, on the other hand, is a response to pain that is shaped by our thoughts, attitudes, and beliefs. Understanding the difference between the two is crucial for leading a more fulfilling life. In this article, I will discuss about the nature of pain and suffering, and how various psychological factors contribute to the experience of suffering.

THE NATURE OF PAIN

Pain is an elemental facet of the human condition, an inescapable and universal experience that traverses the boundaries of culture, age, and social status. It encompasses both physical and emotional dimensions, both of which are integral to our existence.

Physical pain manifests in various forms, be it the sharp agony of a sudden injury, the persistent discomfort of illness, or the unforeseen jolt of an accident. It is a language spoken by the human body, conveying vital messages that demand attention. Physical pain serves as a fundamental safeguard, a warning system designed to protect us. Without it, we would inadvertently subject ourselves to grave harm, unable to perceive the dangers that lurk in our environment.

Emotional pain, in contrast, emanates from the intricacies of our inner world. It arises in response to events like loss, rejection, or disappointment. Emotional pain acts as a profound teacher, guiding us through the intricate landscapes of our emotions and relationships. It facilitates growth, fosters resilience, and teaches us empathy and understanding. It enables us to connect with others on a deep, empathetic level, as shared emotional pain is a powerful bond that transcends words.

THE 'WHY ME?' SYNDROME

The "why me?" mentality

is a deeply human response to pain and adversity. When faced with suffering, it's natural to question why we are the ones who must endure such challenges. This internal inquiry often emerges from a place of frustration, confusion, or even despair. We seek to find meaning in our pain and to understand why it has befallen us. However, dwelling on "why me" can have detrimental consequences.

This mentality frequently leads to a sense of victimization. By fixating on the idea that we are singled out for suffering, we unintentionally paint ourselves as helpless recipients of life's injustices. This victimization can foster self-pity, powerlessness, and a defeatist attitude, making it difficult to overcome the pain and move forward.

It is essential to recognize that pain doesn't discriminate; it touches everyone's life in one form or another, regardless of their background or circumstances. This realization is a powerful step towards acceptance. Instead of dwelling on the question "why me," we can adopt a more constructive perspective by acknowledging pain as an intrinsic part of the human experience. By doing so, we open the door to growth and resilience. We can learn valuable lessons from pain, develop strength and empathy, and ultimately transform pain into an opportunity for personal evolution. Embracing this mindset allows us to transcend the victim role and take control of our responses to life's challenges, ultimately reducing the suffering they may bring.

THE TRAP OF COMPLAINING AND BLAMING

Complaining and blaming are two common reactions to pain. While venting and assigning blame can provide momentary relief, they often lead to a cycle of suffering. Complaining about pain can reinforce negative emotions and keep us focused on our suffering. Blaming others or external circumstances can lead to feelings of powerlessness, as we place the responsibility for our pain outside of



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preventing us from finding solutions or personal growth.

THE VICTIM MENTALITY

The victim mentality, a pervasive psychological pattern, significantly contributes to prolonged suffering in individuals facing pain or adversity. It is marked by a belief that external circumstances have complete control over one's life, leaving them helpless and at the mercy of forces beyond their influence. While real victimization does exist, adopting this mindset in response to life's challenges exacerbates suffering. Rather than taking proactive steps to improve their situation, those with a victim mentality tend to dwell in self-pity, reinforcing their sense of helplessness.

Overcoming the victim mentality is a crucial step towards reducing suffering in the face of pain. It involves shifting from a passive, victimized stance to an empowered one. This transformation enables individuals to recognize their agency in effecting change, make choices, and take action to address their challenges. By breaking free from the victim mentality, people can emerge from adversity with resilience and an increased capacity to navigate

life's inevitable difficulties.

PERFECTIONISM: THE PURSUIT OF AN ELUSIVE IDEAL

Perfectionism is a double-edged sword that can significantly intensify suffering. Individuals who strive for perfection in every aspect of their lives often set unrealistic, unattainable standards for themselves. When reality inevitably falls short of these lofty expectations, they experience profound disappointment, leading to intense suffering. The perfectionist mindset equates any deviation from their ideal as a personal failure, which can erode self-esteem and mental well-being.

Embracing imperfection is a crucial antidote to this self-imposed suffering. Recognizing that no one, including themselves, is flawless allows individuals to free themselves from the relentless pursuit of an unattainable standard. By accepting their imperfections and understanding that mistakes are opportunities for growth, perfectionists can alleviate the emotional burden of constant self-criticism. Embracing imperfection not only leads to greater self-compassion but also allows individuals to approach life's

challenges with a more balanced and healthier perspective, ultimately reducing the suffering associated with the unattainable pursuit of perfection.

THE FIXED MINDSET

Carol Dweck, a renowned psychologist, introduced the concept of a fixed mindset versus a growth mindset. Those with a fixed mindset tend to believe that their abilities and traits are innate and unchangeable. When faced with pain, they may interpret it as a reflection of their inherent limitations, leading to suffering. On the other hand, those with a growth mindset see challenges as opportunities for learning and growth. They understand that they can develop and improve over time. Shifting from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset can greatly reduce the suffering caused by the belief that pain is an insurmountable obstacle.

SUFFERING IS OPTIONAL: CHOOSING A DIFFERENT PATH

The difference between pain and suffering is fundamentally rooted in our mindset and how we choose to respond to life's challenges. Pain is inevitable; it is a natural and necessary part of the human experience. Suffering, on the other hand, is optional. It is a product of our thoughts, attitudes, and beliefs.

To minimize suffering in the face of pain, we must adopt a more constructive and resilient mindset. This involves accepting that pain is a part of life, reframing our thoughts from "why me?" to "what can I learn from this?" and letting go of the victim mentality. Avoiding excessive complaining and blaming, embracing imperfection, and fostering a growth mindset are all crucial steps in reducing suffering.

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A Jolt to What We Believe

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It is never easy to confront something that challenges a deeply held belief. One could feel, for instance, the collective sigh of relief among physicists in September when a study showed that antimatter particles fall down when released, thus demonstrating that they are subject to the same gravitational force as particles of ordinary matter. This finding represented the resolution of a long-standing question in physics; the opposite finding would have meant the need to revise fundamental laws of physics. Scientists are clearly not immune to the anxiety we all feel when something we are sure is true may not be.

Consider what happens when we ask readers of this article not to think about elephants. That instruction to suppress a thought inevitably leads to intrusive thoughts of elephants that one cannot, in fact, suppress. This rebound effect suggests that telling someone to suppress a thought leads to an increase in thinking about it.

What to do, then, with the recent report in the journal *Science Advances* that suppressing negative thoughts may have mental health benefits? As United Kingdom authors Zulkayda Mamat and Michael C. Anderson note, the fields of psychology and psychiatry

have long held to the notion that a road to treating some forms of mental illness, like anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and depression, is to "make the unconscious conscious." Freud, of course, believed that the repression of traumatic events into the unconscious is a cause of psychological symptoms and invented the procedure of psychoanalysis in part to retrieve these memories to help the sufferer exert greater control over them. More recently, using the paradigm of Pavlovian fear conditioning in rodents, it has been argued that there is a molecular basis to this idea and that making unconscious traumatic memories available to conscious manipulation before they are reconsolidated in memory may be therapeutic (see, for example, Gorman JM, *Neuroscience at the Intersection of Mind and Brain*, Oxford University Press, 2018).

SUPPRESSING NEGATIVE THOUGHTS FOUND BENEFICIAL

Now, however, the long-held belief that suppressing painful memories is harmful is challenged by Mamat and Anderson's study. In this work, conducted via Zoom, they recruited 120 people, 93 percent female, and asked them to identify negative, neutral, and positive thoughts, each with single-word reminder cues. They then trained 61 of them to suppress the negative

and 59 of them to suppress neutral thoughts over a three-day training period. Measures of various components of mental health were collected before, immediately after, and three months after the experiment was conducted.

They then presented the negative and neutral memory cues to the participants in the respective groups and asked them to suppress their thoughts about them. The results of the experiment are clear and startling. The participants were indeed successful in suppressing both negative and neutral thoughts, and, contrary to the example of trying to suppress the thought about elephants (and there you go again, thinking about them), there was no rebound effect among the participants in the negative memory suppression group. More surprisingly, the people in the negative memory suppression group, as compared to those in the neutral memory group, experienced improvements in ratings of several measures of anxiety and depression, which they attributed to their ability to suppress negative thoughts and which were sustained three months later.

Even those in the group who, at baseline, scored high on measures of anxiety and pandemic-related post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms experienced improvements in those symptoms and in overall mental well-being. Contrary to expectation, focusing on positive thoughts had no such

effect on improving mental health measures in any of the research participants.

NEGATIVE THOUGHT SUPPRESSION COULD BE A NEW THERAPY

Mamat and Anderson conclude that "the substantial and durable mental health benefits, safety, high endorsement, spontaneous use, and accessible delivery make suppression training a promising and scalable intervention on its own or as a neurobiologically grounded complement to standard treatments such as exposure or cognitive behavioral therapy." Thus, they suggest that training people with anxiety disorders, PTSD, and depression may be a viable new therapeutic approach. This, of course, challenges long-standing beliefs among many in the fields of psychology and psychiatry and even in the neuroscience community that suppressed thoughts are invariably harmful and must be released into consciousness to effect therapeutic improvement.

Of course, this work must be replicated before we jump to developing new therapies, and, as Mamat is quoted as saying, it is not clear that thought suppression would be helpful with all types of negative thoughts or with every person suffering from a mental health condition. "There are some thoughts that you try to think

about and process and deal with, but there are other thoughts about the future you can't do anything about, and suppressing them could help," he says. It is important to note that none of the research participants in this study was actually diagnosed with a mental health disorder as part of the study, but rather that some of them scored higher than others on measures of mental health. Hence, whether thought suppression works in clinical situations remains to be studied.

Here is a good example of a significant challenge to a long-held scientific belief. Unlike in the case of the discovery that antimatter particles fall down because of gravity, behavioral scientists will now have to grapple with this potential paradigm shifter. Physicists were left at least temporarily off the hook for having to reimagine their basic concepts in September, but psychologists and psychiatrists were not. It will be fascinating to see how they deal with this study. Will the anxiety it provokes cause some to try to suppress its significance, or will a substantial number embrace the findings and move to further study them? Considering the needs of people suffering from anxiety disorders, PTSD, and depression, we certainly advocate for the latter course.

- Psychology Today

