



# KASHMIR READER

Tuesday | 18 May 2021

06 Shawwal | 1442 AH

Vol. 11

No. 136

Pages 8

Rs. 3

New Zealand fast bowler Neil Wagner on Monday said his team is not going to treat the upcoming two-match series against England as warm-ups for the World Test Championship (WTC) final versus India.

Page 08 | SPORTS

Power consumption in the country grew by around 19 per cent in the first fortnight of May to 51.67 billion units (BU) over the same period last year, showing recovery in industrial and commercial demand of electricity, according to the power ministry data. Power consumption in the first fortnight of May 2020 was 43.55 BU.

Page 07 | BUSINESS

kashmirreader.com

facebook.com/KashmirReader

@Kashmir\_Reader

+Kashmirreader

Published from Srinagar

## J&K has higher death rate than 20 other States/UTs

### Ladakh's death rate even worse

SUHAIL A SHAH ■ ANANTNAG

Jammu and Kashmir has a higher death rate, in terms of Deaths per Lac (DPL) of population, due to Covid-19 than 20 other states (and UTs), which makes J&K behind only some of the worst-hit regions like Goa and Delhi.

Within the J&K, Kashmir division is a notch worse than its Jammu counterpart.

The facts have come to fore through the data released by the Union Ministry of Health and Fam-

ily Welfare. According to the data, the UT of Jammu and Kashmir has so far recorded a total death toll of 3,149, with a death rate of more than 23 per lac of the population. This is excluding the 59 people who died of Covid in Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday.

"If we take Kashmir division in isolation, the rate goes up to 24.37, which is worse than many other states and UTs across the country," a senior official in administration told Kashmir Reader, adding, "1,710 people have died in the ten districts of Kashmir valley so far, most of them (682) in Srinagar district."

Srinagar district has a death rate of about 57 per lac of the population,



FILE PHOTO

even as the central Kashmir district continues to be the epicenter of the

pandemic in the valley.

"Other districts with the same

population, like Anantnag and Baramulla, are doing way better than Srinagar in terms of cases as well as deaths," the official said.

Comparisons with other states reveal that Jammu and Kashmir is behind only some of the worst-hit states/UTs like Goa, Delhi, Maharashtra, Ladakh, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh and a couple of others.

According to the Health Ministry data, Goa has a death rate of 131.88 per lac of population, as 2,099 people have died so far due to Covid-19 in the state. The western state is closely followed by the Union Territory of Delhi (also the capital of India).

"In Delhi the numbers are far higher than Goa. As many as 21,

244 people have died there so far. However, the death rate per lakh of population is lower than that of Goa at 103.27, given that the population of Delhi is way higher," the official, privy to the data, told Kashmir Reader.

Ladakh has over 60 deaths per lac of the population owing to Covid-19. This erstwhile part of Jammu and Kashmir (now a UT) has so far recorded 165 deaths against a population of around 2.74 lacs.

"119 people have died in Leh and 46 in Ladakh division of the newly formed UT. The death rate is fourth worst in the country – behind Goa, Delhi and Maharashtra only," the official said.

### Doctor booked for practicing at private clinic during duty hours in Tangmarg

READER CORRESPONDENT ■ BARAMULLA

Police on Monday registered a First Information Report (FIR) against a woman doctor and sealed a private clinic where she was practicing in Tangmarg area of Baramulla.

Official sources said that following a complaint a team of police station Kunzar along with a magistrate raided the clinic namely Apollo Polyclinic at Gokhama Kunzar Tangmarg. They said the doctor identified as Dr Muzamil was found in the clinic along with patients with no regard to Covid SoPs including social distance, hence violating Covid-19 protocol and lockdown orders.

The officials said that it was found during investigations that the doctor is posted at Trauma Hospital Pattan and she was practicing at the clinic during duty hours.

They said that they sealed the clinic on the spot and registered an

■ More on Page 6

### First batch of anti-COVID drug 2-DG released

NEW DELHI: The first batch of anti-COVID oral drug 2-DG, developed by the DRDO, was released on Monday by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Health Minister Harsh Vardhan.

The Drugs Controller General of India (DGI) approved the 2-deoxy-D-glucose (2-DG) drug for emergency use as an adjunct therapy in moderate to severe coronavirus patients earlier this month.

In his brief remarks, Singh said the drug has brought a new ray of hope for the treatment of COVID-19 patients.

"This is a great example of the scientific prowess of our country," he said.

At the same time, the defence minister said that it is not the time to relax and get tired as there is nothing definitive about the course of the pandemic.

"We do not need to be relaxed, nor should we get tired. Because this wave has come for the second time,

■ More on Page 6

## Covid-19's deadliest day in J&K with 73 deaths



Photo: Faisal Khan

NAZIMA SIDIQ ■ SRINAGAR

Seventy-three Covid patients lost their lives in Jammu and Kashmir in the last 24 hours while 3,344 fresh cases of the viral infection were reported on Monday.

The official Covid bulletin said that 54 deaths were reported in Jammu Division and 19 in Kashmir Division in the last 24 hours. The two capital cities, Srinagar and Jammu, reported 8 and 24 deaths respectively.

Ten deaths were reported in Rajouri,

six in Poonch, five in Udhampur, three each in Kupwara, Shopian, Kathua, two each in Anantnag, Bandipora, Samba, Ramban, Reasi, and one in Kulgam district.

The bulletin said that the new cases included 1,926 from Kashmir Division and 1,418 from Jammu Division.

Srinagar and Jammu districts topped the list of fresh cases, reporting 495 and 613, respectively.

The bulletin said that 4,042 patients

■ More on Page 6

### 2.81 lakh cases, 4,106 deaths in India

NEW DELHI: India's COVID-19 tally mounted to 2,49,65,463 on Monday with 2,81,386 fresh cases, the lowest in 27 days, while the death toll climbed to 2,74,390 as 4,106 more people succumbed to the disease, according to Union health ministry data.

However, 2,11,74,076 patients have recuperated from the disease, while the case fatality rate stands at 1.10 per cent, it stated.

The number of active cases stands at 35,16,997, accounting for 14.09 per cent of the total infections. The national recovery rate has improved to 84.81 per cent, the data updated at 8 am showed.

## Central team of doctors calls for genome study in Jammu

JAMMU: The team of doctors deputed by Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on Monday called for conducting genome study in Jammu, while observing that the high mortal-

ity here due to Covid-19 may be because of the double mutant Indian strain.

Addressing a press conference here after visiting several Covid care facilities in Jammu

and Samba districts, the team advised for intensifying testing in the areas that are witnessing huge surge in cases.

"There is need to increase testing in such areas and the

samples, as per the protocol, be sent to Delhi for genome study," the team of doctors said and assured that the results would be shared with the UT within a week's time.

■ More on Page 6

## Two militants killed in gunfight on Srinagar outskirts

READER CORRESPONDENT ■ SRINAGAR

Two militants affiliated with Al-Badr outfit were killed in an encounter on the outskirts of Srinagar on Monday, police said.

According to police, they along with Army's 50 Rashtriya Rifles and CRPF laid a cordon and search operation in Khonmoh area in Srinagar based on input about the presence of militants.

When the presence of militants was confirmed during searches in a house, police said militants fired on forces ensuing into an encounter. According to locals, the militants were holed up in a two storey residential house which sustained partial damages in the firefight.



Photo: Faisal Khan

"They were given repeated opportunities to surrender, however they fired indiscriminately upon the joint search party which retaliated leading to an encounter," police added.

This encounter according to locals took place in a two storey residential

house which has also sustained partial damages.

Initially, a militant was killed in the exchange of fire. The second militant, according to police, was killed around 11:30 am. Two pistols, one hand grenade and three under barrel grenades

■ More on Page 6

## Panchs, Sarpanch accuse BDO of corruption, misuse of office

RAASHID HASSAN ■ SHOPIAN

The Sarpanch and Panchs here in Chitragam have levelled serious allegations of fund embezzlement and misuse of digital signature against the block development office (BDO) Tehsil Chitragam.

They also have written a letter to the District Commissioner Shopian and Director Anti Corruption Bureau for investigating the matter and initiation of action against the officials involved.

Moreover, they have levelled allegations of sub-standard use of material in government works by contractors.

The said letter, accessed by Kashmir Reader, reads that the works done in the

area are being carried out without the consent of the public and elected representatives, and that such works are being given to politically connected contractors. "The rural development works in our Halqa, be it MG-NNREGA or 14 FC, are carried out without any regulations and there is huge embezzlement of government funds in the name of development," the letter reads.

The representatives have said that digital signature devices meant for Sarpanchs were not given to them and later illegally used by the block development office without consent of the Sarpanch. They also said that the office is yet to hand over the device to the Sarpanch.

■ More on Page 6

## Cop's plea against eviction from govt quarters dismissed by HC

NUSRAT SIDIQ ■ SRINAGAR

The J&K High Court on Monday dismissed the plea of a police officer seeking a direction to authorities to not evict him and his family from an allotted government accommodation in view of perceived threat to his life.

Justice Ali Mohammad Magrey while dismissing the plea recorded that the petitioner cannot re-agitate the matter on the same set of pleadings as done earlier by him in another plea which was disposed of by this court.

The court said, "Perusal of the pleadings and the records made available reveal that the petitioner on similar cause of action has already filed writ petition

with the same pleadings, and the relief resulted in disposal of the writ petition at the motion hearing on the consent of the petitioner."

"Therefore, there is no scope for the petitioner to re-agitate the matter in the subsequent writ petition on the same pleadings and for the same relief, additionally on the ground that the respondents are not adhering to the order already passed by the writ court," Justice Magrey said.

The court recorded that there is no merit in the instant writ petition, "therefore, the same shall stand dismissed. However, if petitioner feels aggrieved of any action or inaction on the part of respondents,

■ More on Page 6

## Sehrai's wife suffers mild heart attack, says family

READER CORRESPONDENT ■ SRINAGAR

A day after her two sons were booked under UAPA for raising slogans at their father's funeral, wife of Tehreek-e-Hurriyat chairman late Mohammad Ashraf Sehrai suffered mild heart attack on Monday, a family member said.

Younis Rather, Sehrai's son-in-law told Kashmir Reader that Sara Ashraf suffered mild heart attack in the afternoon when she learnt about her sons being booked under Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

■ More on Page 6



## India registers 2.81 lakh fresh COVID-19 cases, 4,106 deaths



**NEW DELHI:** India's COVID-19 tally mounted to 2,49,65,463 on Monday with 2,81,386 fresh cases, the lowest in 27 days, while the death toll climbed to 2,74,390 as 4,106 more people succumbed to the disease, according to Union health ministry data.

However, 2,11,74,076 patients have recuperated from the disease, while the case fatality rate stands at 1.10 per cent, it stated.

The number of active cases stands at 35,16,997, accounting for 14.09 per cent of the total infections. The national recovery rate has improved to 84.81 per cent, the data updated at 8 am showed.

India's COVID-19 tally crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5 and 50 lakh on September 16. It went past 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and surpassed the one-crore mark on December 19. India's caseload crossed the grim milestone of 2 crore on May 4.

According to the Indian Council of Medical Research,

search, 31,64,23,658 samples had been tested up to May 16 with 15,73,515 tested on Sunday.

The 4,106 new fatalities include 974 from Maharashtra, 403 from Karnataka, 311 from Tamil Nadu, 308 from Uttar Pradesh, 262 from Delhi, 202 from Punjab, 188 from Uttarakhand, 156 from Rajasthan, 147 from West Bengal, 144 from Chhattisgarh, 139 from Haryana and 101 from Andhra Pradesh.

Of the total 2,74,390 deaths reported in the country, 81,486 were from Maharashtra, 21,837 from Karnataka, 21,506 from Delhi, 17,670 from Tamil Nadu, 17,546 from Uttar Pradesh, 13,284 from West Bengal, 11,895 from Punjab and 11,734 from Chhattisgarh.

The health ministry stressed that more than 70 per cent of the deaths occurred due to comorbidities.

"Our figures are being reconciled with the Indian Council of Medical Research," the ministry said on its website, adding that state-wise distribution of figures is subject to further verification and reconciliation. —PTI

## PM nowhere in sight when needed, alleges Rahul Gandhi

**NEW DELHI:** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi alleged on Monday that the government has failed to manage the Covid-19 crisis and the prime minister is nowhere to be seen.

He also lauded individuals who are helping out people in this crisis and expressed gratitude to them.

"While GOI has failed not just in managing Covid crisis but also in standing with the people, there are numerous individual stories of strength and altruism every day," he said on Twitter.

"Immense gratitude to these heroes dedicated to serving others and showing



the world what India truly stands for," he also said.

In another tweet, he took a jibe at the prime minister, drawing a comparison between him and the ventilators provided

through PMCAES Fund.

"There's a lot common between PMCAES ventilator and the PM himself: - too much false PR, don't do their respective jobs, nowhere in sight when needed," he tweeted.

Some states like Punjab, Rajasthan and Maharashtra have complained that the ventilators provided from PMCAES Fund have not been functioning properly.

Gandhi has been critical of the government's handling of the COVID situation in the country and the shortage of essential medicines and oxygen.

—PTI

## Political leaders have no business to hoard stocks of COVID-19 medicines: Delhi HC

**NEW DELHI:** The Delhi High Court on Monday said political leaders have no business to hoard stocks of COVID-19 medicines that are already in shortage and they are expected to surrender these drugs.

The high court said since it is projected that these medicines were procured for public charity and not for political gains, political leaders are expected to surrender their stocks to the Director General of Health Services, Delhi government for use for the poor and needy persons at government hospitals.

A bench of justices Vipin Sanghi and Jasmeet Singh expressed dissatisfaction over a status report filed by the Delhi Police on an inquiry conducted in relation to the allegations of politicians hoarding and distributing COVID-19 medicines, including Remdesivir, in the national capital.



The high court said it expects the police to conduct a proper investigation in the matter and file a better status report within a week.

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

—PTI

## Over two crore COVID-19 vaccine doses available with states: Union Health Ministry

**NEW DELHI:** More than two crore COVID-19 vaccine doses are still available with the states and Union territories, while nearly three lakh doses are in the pipeline and will be received by them within the next three days, the Union Health Ministry said on Monday.

The Centre has so far provided over 20 crore (20,76,10,230) vaccine doses to the states and Union territories for free. Of this, the total consumption, calculated on the basis of average figures, up to May 16, including wastage, is 18,71,13,705 doses (according to data available at 8 am on Monday), it added.

"More than two crore COVID-19 vaccine doses (2,04,96,525) are still available with the states and UTs to be administered," the ministry said. Furthermore, 2,94,660 vaccine doses are in the pipeline and will be received by the states within the next three days, it said.

As part of the nationwide vaccination drive against the viral disease, the Government of India has been



supporting the states by providing them vaccine doses for free, in addition to several efforts to ramp up the production and supply of the vaccines.

Vaccination is an integral pillar of the comprehensive strategy of the government for the containment and management of the pandemic, along with "Test, Track, Treat" and COVID-appropriate behaviour, the ministry said.

The implementation of

the Liberalised and Accelerated Phase 3 Strategy of COVID-19 Vaccination has started from May 1. Under the Strategy, every month, 50 per cent of the vaccine doses cleared by the Central Drugs Laboratory (CDL) of any manufacturer would be procured by the government.

It would continue to make these doses available to the states for free, the ministry added.

—PTI

**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**  
**BADAMIBAGH CANTONMENT BOARD**  
**SRINAGAR (JAMMU & KASHMIR)-190004**  
**Tele: 0194-2466575 Fax: 0194-2465451**  
**Email:ceobada-stats@nic.in**

### NOTICE INVITING EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Expression of Interest are invited for installation of Cell Tower on Wheels from eligible and interested Access Service Providers/ Licensees and IP-1 Companies on various land pockets in the Badamibagh Cantonment Board Srinagar. EO form is available on <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app> for the interested companies. The companies have to submit the EO Online only on or before the prescribed date and time. **(TENDER ID: 2021\_DGDE\_630227\_1)**

S. No.	Details	Date	Time
1	Date of publication of EO	17.05.2021	17:30 hours
2	EO submission start date	17.05.2021	17:30 hours
3	EO submission end date	07.06.2021	11:00 hours
4	EO opening date	08.06.2021	12:00 hours

Interested applicants are advised to examine carefully all the instructions / terms and conditions of the EO before submitting the EO. EO will be accepted via online only. The undersigned reserves the right to accept or reject any EO without assigning any reason thereof.

The Interested applicant may contact the office during working hours on all working days. In case of query/further information in this regard can also be sought on phone 0194-2466575 or via mail at [cbbadamibagh@dgst.org](mailto:cbbadamibagh@dgst.org)

**No. 4/13/3657/CB/BB/228**  
**DATED :17/May/2021**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Badamibagh Cantonment Srinagar**

## TENDER NOTICE

Air Officer Commanding, Air Force Station, Srinagar invites sealed tender from contractor to run the under mention Shops/Services for a period of Eleven Months from 01 July 2021 to 31 May 2022. Tender documents can be obtained from Humhama Guard Room, Air Force Station Srinagar on payment of Rs. 200/- between 1000hrs to 1400hrs. Last date for sale of tender document is 04 Jun 21. Bidders are required to deposit an amount of Rs. 5000/- at Humhama Guard Room, a, Air Force Station Srinagar as Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) and receipt of the same is to be enclosed with the bid/tender document. Tender Documents completed in all respect are to be dropped on the tender box kept at Humhama Guard Room by 1000hrs on 07 Jun 21. The tender box will be opened at 1100hrs on 08 Jun 21. Granting of contract will be subject to security clearance and verification of characters and antecedents of the bidders. 100% reservation will be given to Ex-Serviceman & War widows of Armed Forces and Para Military Forces.

For more details contact Tele 0194-2305001/7228/7235

- Note:
- Individual can apply for any other variety of shop not listed below.
  - Shops listed below are approximate and may vary as per the discretion of Estate Officer.
  - An individual can apply for a maximum of 02 shops.
  - Forms collected and EMD is to be deposited by individual applying in person.
  - Allotment of Location of Shop would be as per the discretion of Estate Officer.
  - The items rate list will have to be verified from the Estate Officer.
  - No shop will sale items other than the specified nomenclature.
  - Rent and allied charges will be as per the MES DEO Circle Rate.

### LIST OF SI SHOP/SERVICES FOR TENDERING

Sl NO.	Name of Shop	Qty	Base Price per shop Per month	Location
01	Provision Store and Ayush Products	03	20000.00	Area-I, Area-II
02	Barber Shop	03	2000.00	Area-I, Area-II
03	Cycle Repair Shop	02	2500.00	Area-I, Area-II
04	Scoter/Motorcycle Repair Shop	01	3000.00	Area-I
05	Dairy Product, Coffee Shop and Bakery	01	10000.00	Area-I
06	Tailor Shop (One Lady Tailor)	02	2000.00	Area-I, Area-II
07	Vegetable Shop	02	3000.00	Area-I
08	Ladies Emporium	01	3000.00	Area-I
09	Fruit and Juice Shop	01	3000.00	Area-I
10	Readymade Garments and Seasonal Clothing	01	7000.00	Area-I
11	Foot Wear and Repair Shop	01	4000.00	Area-I
12	Electronics, Mobile Sales, Repair and DTH recharge	01	7000.00	Area-I
13	Tour & Travels, Transportation and Photocopier	02	5000.00	Area-I
14	Dry Cleaning and Laundry Shop	02	1000.00	Area-I, Area-II
15	Stationery and School Uniform	01	5000.00	Area-I
16	Dry Fruit Shop	02	3000.00	Area-I, Area-II
17	Kashmir Emporium	02	8000.00	Area-I
18	Jewellery Shop	01	14000.00	Area-I
19	Mutton, Chicken and Fish Shop	03	2000.00	Area-I
20	Photographer and Photocopies	01	2000.00	Area-I, Area-II
21	Dhaba	03	20000.00	Area-I, Area-II
22	Sweet and Snacks	01	10000.00	Area-I
23	RO Bottled Water	01	Area-I	

(Ankit Uniyal)  
Wg Cdr OIC SI Funds

(GK Mohan)  
Air Cmde, AOC 1WG, AF

## Pak Opposition leader Shehbaz Sharif placed on no-fly list

**ISLAMABAD:** The Pakistan government led by Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday added the name of Opposition leader Shehbaz Sharif, who has been charged with corruption, to the no-fly list, barring him from leaving the country for medical treatment.

Earlier this month, the Lahore High Court granted Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) president Shehbaz—also the younger brother of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif—permission to travel abroad once for medical treatment.

After obtaining bail, Shehbaz, 69, was about to fly to London on May 8 when a Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) team at the airport stopped him from travelling on the grounds that his name had been on the provisional national identification list (PNIL), which imposes a temporary bar on someone to leave the country.

Shehbaz was offloaded from Doha-bound flight on May 8.

Addressing a press conference here on Monday, Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said She-

hbaz's name was added to the exit control list (ECL) after approval from the federal Cabinet.

A special committee of the Interior Ministry on May 12 had proposed to the Cabinet that Shehbaz should be barred from leaving the country due to corruption cases against him.

Shehbaz wanted to go to London for a medical check-up after he was bailed out of jail last month.

The interior minister said Shehbaz had not submitted any medical documents for travelling abroad or specified the treatment for his illness.

Last week, Shehbaz had challenged the placement of his name on a travel blacklist and sought one-time permission to go abroad for medical treatment.

"I have been a cancer patient and got treated in New York and London. I could not get treatment for more than seven months as I was in jail," the top PML-N leader said, adding in light of the medical test report conducted in jail, there was a need for immediate treatment. —PTI

### Principal District Court Anantnag (J&K)

**Present: Naseer Ahmad Dar**

Mst Subeena Akhter w/o Suhail Mushtaq Lohar 2.Sehal Bin Mushtaq S/o Suhail Ahmad Lohar 3 Usman Bin Suhail S/o Mushtaq Lohar 4.Mst Saja Banoo W/o Mushtaq Ahmad Lohar R/o Logripora Ashmuqam Ang

VS  
(1) Public at Large  
Respondant(s)

### PUBLIC NOTICE

WHEREAS, an application for succession certificate has been moved by petitioner(s) in respect of an amount of Rs. 19,00,000/38,00,000/7,00,000/10,00,000/- in the name of deceased Late Suhail Ahmad Lohar S/o Mushtaq Ahmad Lohar R/o Logripora Ashmuqam Ang. Hence, objection, if any are invited from all and sundry to the aforesaid claim, by or before next date of hearing i.e 05-05-2021, failing which matter shall be determined on merits.

Issued under my hand and seal of the court on 24-04-2021

**Principal District Judge**  
**Anantnag**

## OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER ANANTNAG

**Subject:- Final Seniority List of Jr. Drivers, appointed by competent Authority of**

### District Anantnag

S.NO	Name of the Driver	Designation	Date of Birth	Date of Ist. Apptt	Name of Instt/Block.	Appointing Authority
1	Shabir Ahmad Dar-I	Jr. Driver	15/03/1977	10/12/2009	Achabal	SSRB
2	Nazar Mohammad	Jr. Driver	11/01/1980	30/12/2009	Shangus	SSRB
3	Sabzar Ahmad Khan	Jr. Driver	03/02/1982	10/12/2009	Sallar	SSRB
4	Ghulam Mohd Mir	Jr. Driver	08/01/1973	10/12/2009	MCCH Ang	SSRB
5	Shabir Ahmad Sheikh	Jr. Driver	16/10/1977	10/12/2009	MCCH Ang	SSRB
6	Showkat Ahmad Teeli	Jr. Driver	03/03/1981	18/12/2009	SDH Seer	SSRB
7	Younus Ah Bhat	Jr. Driver	05/12/1983	10/12/2009	CMO Office	SSRB
8	Showkat Ah Wani	Jr. Driver	13/11/1977	10/12/2009	Achabal	SSRB
9	Khurshid Ah Reshi	Jr. Driver	01/09/1970	10/12/2009	Mattan	SSRB
10	Mohd Ashraf Wani	Jr. Driver	08/03/1976	10/12/2009	Larnoo	SSRB
11	Nisar Ah Bhat	Jr. Driver	01/04/1978	10/12/2009	Larnoo	SSRB
12	Shabir Ah Dar-II	Jr. Driver	06/04/1979	10/12/2009	Larnoo	SSRB
13	Nisar Ah Sheikh	Jr. Driver	03/04/1974	09/12/2009	Verinag	SSRB
14	Ab Rehman Bokad	Jr. Driver	01/03/1975	10/12/2009	Achabal	SSRB
15	Mohd Iqbal Wani	Jr. Driver	16/04/1970	15/10/2012	Bijbehara	Reg. by Govt.
16	Zahoor Ahmad Khatana	Jr. Driver	03/02/1976	11/01/2013	Larnoo	Reg. by Govt.
17	Saweer Ahmad Itoo	Jr. Driver	17/08/1985	07/12/2015	Larnoo	SSRB
18	Shamim Ahmad Ganje	Jr. Driver	14/03/1975	04/12/2016	Sallar	SSRB
19	Rajeer Rattan	Jr. Driver	10/03/1981	08/12/2015	Sallar	SSRB
20	Farooq Ahmad Wani	Jr. Driver	08/12/1970	31/12/2015	Bijbehara	Reg. by Govt.
21	Youj Raj	Jr. Driver	01/04/1985	13/02/2018	Verinag	SSRB
22	Sunil Kandal	Jr. Driver	20/03/1985	19/02/2018	SDH Doru	SSRB
23	Gh Qadir Mugloo	Jr. Driver	15/13/1971	28/03/2018	Verinag	Reg. by Govt.
24	Mushtaq Ah Wagay	Jr. Driver	25/03/1980	28/03/2018	Verinag	Reg. by Govt.
25	Mohmad Ismail Toss	Jr. Driver	15/06/1977	05/06/2018	Bijbehara	SSRB
26	Bilal Ahmad Wani	Jr. Driver	15/06/1984	05/06/2018	DH Anantnag	SSRB
27	Peer Showkat Ah Shah	Jr. Driver	12/02/1977	04/07/2018	Mattan	Reg. by Govt.

**NO.CMOA/Est-1/Sr.List/1191-1200**  
**Date:-17/05/2021**

**Chief Medical Officer**  
**Anantnag**



## Covid-19 watch

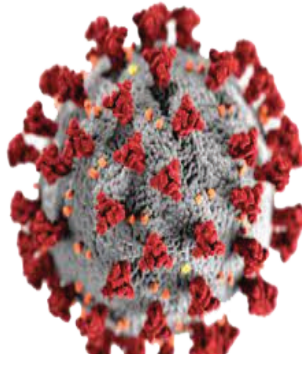
## Rs 6 fine lakh recovered from violators for defying lockdowns, SOPs in B'la

READER CORRESPONDENT ■  
BARAMULLA

A fine of Rs 5,94,130 has been realised from the Covid 19 violators from March in north Kashmir's Baramulla district, officials said.

They said that, Baramulla police has registered 63 cases against the Covid 19 violators and people who were not found wearing face masks besides 124 people have been arrested and released on bail from 30 March till date.

They said that 18 tippers, 43 Tractors, 01 trucks, 4 JCB machines, 12 LMV, 04 MMV vehicles, 03 coaching centres



were also seized in the district till date.

They said that 3766 people were challenged for not wearing face masks and for the violation of Covid 19 protocol in

the district.

Moreover, 37 shops were also seized in the different areas of the district, while a large number of people, including shopkeepers and others were warned in the district.

Recently, a photo in which senior superintendent of police (SSP) Rayees Ahmad Bhat urged a lady with folded hands to not move outside without any reason, went viral on social media sites.

The police again appealed to people to stay inside their homes and not to venture outside without emergency, till the end of the pandemic.

## JKCSF demands probe for 'vaccine famine and shortage of testing kits in Kashmir,

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Civil Society Forum expressed concern over the shortage of COVID-19 vaccine in Kashmir, asking govt to probe the lacunae and make essential arrangements for the all-time availability of Vaccine ,testing kits and oxygen gas.

Expressing concern over the shortage of vaccines across Kashmir, JKCSF Chairman, Abdul Qayoom Wani in a statement issued here said that the shortage of COVID-19 vaccine had created a panic like situation with people being turned away from the government designated vaccination centers across Kashmir.

"The authorities have been publicizing that adequate quota of vaccine is available with them but the ground situation is contrary to what is being claimed," he said.

"What use of door-to-door vac-

cination campaign drives, when the unavailability of vaccines at government vaccination centers remained a bitter truth in Kashmir? Jammu and Kashmir is a single unit and there happen to be fluctuations in the data of statistics of infections in different parts of J and K, a virus does not recognize people on the basis of color and geography so why vaccine availability should be kept discriminated? Wani questioned?

JKCSF vehemently urges upon the govt to keep a pace in its claims and the practice in terms of availability of COVID 19 fighting measures ranging from vaccines to the oxygen gas supply in health centers. The Forum asked the people to adhere strictly to the SOPs of COVID 19 especially the all-time mask wearing and the social distancing for the safeguard of self and the society.

## LAWDA demolishes illegal constructions raised in green belt areas



SRINAGAR: The Enforcement Wing of Lakes and Waterways Development Authority (LAWDA) today conducted a demolition drive in the area of Khawajabagh Teilbal, Kral Mohalla Ishber, Ranger stop Saidakadal, Friends Colony Shalimar and Rainawari.

During the drive two second storeys, one single storey and under construction shops raised in the green belt/ residential area were demolished on spot.

It was given out that the violators are taking advantage of

the current Covid-19 curfew situation. Besides, legal action warranted under rules was initiated against these violators.

The demolition team faced resistance in the area of Jogilanker Rainawari where miscreants hampered the demolition process.

Meanwhile, the authorities have warned the residents living in the LAWDA jurisdiction not to indulge in illegal construction activities or dumping the construction material in the restricted areas without permission.

## DC Srinagar reviews Covid Control/mitigation measures

SRINAGAR: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Mohammed Aijaz Asad Monday convened a meeting with all Block/ Zonal Medical Officers to review the control measures put in place by the district administration in mitigating covid-19 pandemic in the district.

During the meeting, the DC was given brief regarding Covid-19 mitigation measures undertaken at block level including Covid vaccination, sampling, testing and progress with regard to Community Triaging in the district.

The DC directed the officers to increase the sampling/ testing of target groups and give focused attention to areas having higher covid positivity rate for early detection, isolation, and medical treatment of COVID patient.

He also directed for promotion of COVID-appropriate behaviour in people through Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) activities focusing on precautionary measures, health-related



assistance, and helpline numbers.

The DC further asked them to fight the challenge of Covid-19 pandemic with added zeal and dedication to contain its spread besides saving precious human lives.

The DC said that additional manpower will be kept at the disposal of the CMO Srinagar to mitigate Covid-19.

The DC also asked the officers to impart necessary training to Anganwari workers to empower them to mitigate Covid-19 and directed for appointing resource persons for the said training.

Among others, incharge Covid War Control Room, Akshay Labroo, Incharge Covid, Masarat Hashim, Deputy Chief Medical Officer Srinagar and other concerned were also present in the meeting.

## Advisor Baseer Khan reviews functioning of oxygen manufacturing plants

SRINAGAR: Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Baseer Ahmad Khan today visited the oxygen manufacturing plants at Rangreth Industrial Estate and Sanath Nagar Industrial Estate and directed the officers to ensure continuous supply of medical oxygen to various hospitals amid the COVID-19.

During his visit to the oxygen manufacturing plants, the Advisor said that the plants should be utilised to the optimum capacity as the medical oxygen is an important commodity in the fight against COVID. He said the demand should be met on regular basis and efforts should be put to enhance the productions.

Director Industries Kashmir while giving details about the functioning of oxygen generation plants said that they are reviving a defunct oxygen generation plant in collaboration with FCIK. He said that this would increase the cylinder capacity by 500 per day.

The Advisor directed the officers to make concerted efforts so that the defunct plant is revived in the shortest possible time.

Advisor passed on spot directions to the district administration to deploy adequate security to the oxygen generation plants. He also



passed directions to the Chief Engineer PDD to ensure continuous power supply to the plants so that no disruption occurs and urged that the necessary back up should be provided to these units.

Advisor also visited the SMHS Hospital and Kashmir Nursing Home and reviewed the bed capacity and other facilities being provided to the Covid patients. He was informed that bed capacity has been increased by 20-30 percent in Government Medical Colleges, Associated Hospitals and SKIMS keeping in view the capacity of the oxygen generation plants.

The Advisor also directed the officers to ensure that Covid call centres are working round the clock. He reviewed the functioning of telemedicine at various hospitals and directed the officers to ensure that call centres are working round the

clock to ensure that patients other than Covid are being given proper advice and treatment. He said that telemedicine is the safest interactive system between patient and doctor in these testing times.

Commissioner SMC informed about readiness of two wellness centres at Srinagar and said that all arrangements are being put in place to ensure their functioning as soon as possible.

Advisor laid special emphasis on adoption of COVID-19 appropriate behaviour and said that it is the best way to stop transmission of the virus and its variants and added that stringent implementation of COVID appropriate measures remain the key to stop virus transmission. He also added that physical-distancing measures and movement restrictions can actually restrict the COVID-19 transmission.

## JKACC pays tributes to late Mirwaiz Farooq, Hawal martyrs

SRINAGAR: Jammu Kashmir Awami Action Committee (AAC) paid glorious tribute to its founder, the distinguished religious scholar, preacher and illustrious political leader Shaheed-e-Millat Mirwaiz Moulvi Muhammad Farooq (RA) on his 31st martyrdom anniversary. It also paid tributes to the Martyrs of Hawal and to Shaheed e Hurriyat Khawaja Abdul Gani Lone on his 19th martyrdom anniversary.

AAC said that the various commemorative functions held each year to pay tributes to the late leader over a period of one week called 'Hafta-e-Shahaadat', which included organising free medical and blood donation camps, seminars, stand cancelled as the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic is ravaging though J&K. Also due to AAC and All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) chairman Mirwaiz Muhammad Umar Farooq continued arbitrary detention at home since August 5, 2019.



Collective Fateha prayers at the Martyrs graveyard Eidgah and the commemorative rally thereafter as well as the shutdown to honour Shaheed-e-Millat, Shaheed-e-Hurriyat and the martyrs of Hawal stand postponed due to the covid circumstances.

Awami Action Committee appealed to people and Imams of masajids to remember the beloved Martyred leader in their prayers and pray for his highest status in Jannah as well as for Shaheed-e-Hurriyat, Hawal Martyrs and all the martyrs since 1931.

## 33 KAS officers including RTO Kashmir transferred

SRINAGAR: The government on Monday ordered transfer of 33 KAS officers in the interest of the administration with immediate effect.

According to an order issued here, Narinder Singh Bali, KAS, Special Secretary to the Government, Youth Services and Sports Department has been transferred and posted as Additional District Development available vacancy.

Muzaffer Ahmad Peer, KAS, awaiting orders of adjustment in the General Administration Department, has been posted as Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Budgam, against an available vacancy.

Navdeep Wazir, KAS, Deputy Secretary to the Government, Tourism Department has been transferred and posted as Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Udhampur, against an available vacancy.

Kanta Devi, KAS, Deputy Labour Commissioner, Jammu has been transferred and posted as Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Udhampur, against an available vacancy.

Pawan Kumar, KAS, awaiting orders of adjustment in the General Administration Department, has been posted as Assistant District Development Commissioner, Rajouri, against an available vacancy.

Akramullah Tak, KAS, Regional Transport Officer, Kashmir has been transferred and posted as Assistant District Development Commissioner, Budgam, against an available vacancy.

Jyoti Rani Slathia, KAS, Joint Director, Employment, Jammu has been transferred and posted as Assistant District Development Commissioner, Reasi, against an available vacancy.

Sham Lal, KAS, Additional Mission Director, J&K Rural Livelihood Mission, Jammu has been transferred and posted as Assistant District Development Commissioner, Kishtwar, against an available vacancy.

Sachin Dev Singh, KAS, awaiting orders of adjustment in the General Administration Department, has been posted as Addition-

al Deputy Commissioner, Rajouri, against an available vacancy.

Dr. Ravi Kumar Bharti, KAS, Additional Secretary to the Government, Tribal Affairs Department has been transferred and posted as Assistant Deputy Commissioner, Doda, against an available vacancy.

Shabir-ul-Hassan, KAS, awaiting orders of adjustment in the General Administration Department, has been posted as Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Budgam, against an available vacancy.

Navdeep Wazir, KAS, Deputy Secretary to the Government, Tourism Department has been transferred and posted as Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Udhampur, against an available vacancy.

Ashwani Kumar, KAS, Deputy District Election Officer, Kathua has been transferred and posted as Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Samba, against an available vacancy.

Bilques Jan, KAS, Deputy Director, ICDS, Social Welfare, Kashmir has been transferred and posted as Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Ganderbal, against an available vacancy.

Ideel Saleem, KAS, Deputy Director, Tourism, Kashmir has been transferred and posted as Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Anantnag, against an available vacancy.

Ashok Kumar, KAS, Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Katra holding additional charge of Sub-Registrar, Katra has been transferred and posted as Project Officer, Wage Employment (ACD), Jammu, against an available vacancy.

Sohan Lal, KAS, Deputy Director, Rural Sanitation, Jammu has been transferred and posted as Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Kathua, against an available vacancy.

Minakshi Vaid, KAS, awaiting orders of adjustment in the Gen-

eral Administration Department, has been posted as Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Jammu, against an available vacancy. Mohammad Rashid, KAS, Deputy Director, Employment (Central), J&K has been transferred and posted as Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Rajouri, against an available vacancy.

Sandeep Seointra, KAS, awaiting orders of adjustment in the General Administration Department, has been posted as Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Kathua, against an available vacancy.

Gulzar Ahmad, KAS, Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Srinagar has been transferred and posted as Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Baramulla, against an available vacancy.

Swaran Singh, KAS, General Manager, J&K Road Transport Corporation, Jammu has been transferred and posted as Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Ramban, against an available vacancy.

Syed Altaf Hussain Musvi, KAS, Deputy Secretary to the Government, Youth Services and Sports Department has been transferred and posted as Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Bandipore, against an available vacancy.

Mohammad Ashfa, KAS, awaiting orders of adjustment, has been posted as Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Doda, against an available vacancy.

Rizwan Asgar, KAS, Collector, Lakes and Waterways Development Authority, Srinagar has been transferred and posted as Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Shopian, against an available vacancy.

Nazwan Nazki, KAS, Deputy Director (Administration) in the Directorate of Social Welfare, Kashmir is transferred and posted as Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Pulwama, against an available vacancy. Shurjeel Ali Naiku,

KAS, Deputy Director, Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, Kashmir has been transferred and posted as Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Kulgam, against an available vacancy.

Mir Zahida, KAS, Deputy District Election Officer, Budgam has been transferred and posted as Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Budgam, against an available vacancy.

Shabir Ahmad Wani, KAS, Deputy Secretary to the Government, Horticulture Department has been transferred and posted as Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Kupwara, against an available vacancy.

Shafiq Ahmad, KAS, Deputy Director, District Employment and Counselling Centre, Rajouri has been transferred and posted as Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Poonch, against an available vacancy. Zakir Hussain, KAS, Deputy District Election Officer, Reasi has been transferred and posted as Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Kishtwar, against an available vacancy.

Deebah Khalid Peer, KAS, Deputy Director, Handicrafts, J&K has been transferred and posted as Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Srinagar, against an available vacancy.

Aijaz Ahmad Shah, KAS, Deputy Director, Urban Local Bodies, Kashmir holding additional charge of Deputy Director, Rural Sanitation, Kashmir has been transferred and posted as Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Pulwama, against an available vacancy.

Johar Ali, KAS, Sub-Registrar, Srinagar (West), has been transferred and posted as Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Kupwara, vice Bashir Ahmad Bhat, KAS, who has been asked to report to the General Administration Department for further posting.

## CUK condoles demise of KU faculty members

GANDERBAL: Vice Chancellor, Prof. Mehraj ud Din Mir, Registrar, Prof. M Afzal Zargar, Finance Officer, Prof. Fayaz A Nikka, faculty members and administrative staff of the Central University of Kashmir (CUK) condoled the demise of Prof. Ghulam Mohi ud Din Bhat, senior Professor, University

of Kashmir and Head of the Electronics and Communication Engineering, at varsity's Institute of Engineering, Zakura, Dr. Mustahsan Farooq Fazili, Assistant Professor, Zoology Department, KU and the father-in-law of Mr. Abdul Rashid Bhat, Deputy Registrar, CUK. In a condolence meeting

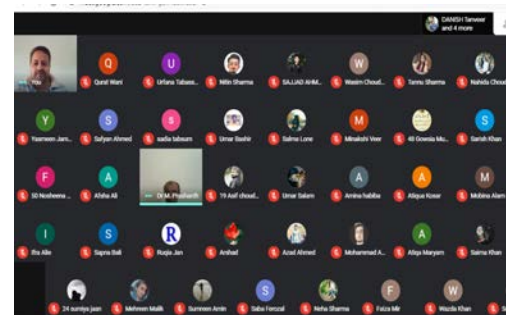
held online with Vice Chancellor, Prof. Mehraj ud Din Mir in chair, the participants expressed sympathies with the bereaved families in this hour of grief and prayed for peace to the departed souls. They described the deceased faculty members as teachers par excellence.

## Environmental Sciences, CBS, BGSBU organises special lecture

RAJOURI: Environmental Sciences, Centre for Biodiversity Studies, BGSBU University, Rajouri organised a special lecture on Environmental Approaches and Interventions on May 17, 2021 by Dr. M. Prashanth, Senior Assistant Professor, IGNOU, New Delhi. The lecture witnessed the participation of students from various Departments of the BGSBU University including Biotechnology, Botany, English, Mathematics and Microbiology.

Prof. Aakbar Masood, Vice Chancellor BGSBU in his message highlighted that there are numerous environmental challenges that impact society, economy and environment such as unsustainable consumption and production, environmental displacement, antimicrobial resistance, sand and dust storm, unsafe nano-materials, poverty, energy insecurity, unemployment, migration, loss of biodiversity, pollution, natural disasters. He said that different stakeholders have to collectively tackle these threats by adopting innovative approaches.

The speaker emphasized that the world is increasingly recognizing that environmental challenges such as climate change, environmental degradation, unsustainable consumption and production practices, resource scarcity have a significant impact on economies and the people. In addition, he gave a comprehensive account of the environment which stands as highly potent in providing solutions for accelerated socio-



economic transformation to solve leading challenges of food insecurity, poverty, unemployment, food waste, migration and implementation of global commitments. For effective implementation of global commitments and solutions to environmental challenges, there is need to re-focus our development pathways and for the effective implementation of SDGs and other related global commitments.

Prof. Iqbal Parwez, Dean, School of Biosciences and Biotechnology in his message, stressed that there must be a growing need to find innovative approaches that can help to address sustainability while offering opportunities for growth, cost reduction, competitiveness and prosperity.

Dr. Shreekar Pant, Coordinator, Centre for Biodiversity Studies introduced the speaker and conducted the proceedings of the programme.

Dr. Mamta Bhat, Assistant Professor Centre for Biodiversity Studies proposed formal vote of thanks.



# My lockdown diary I couldn't hold on to

YOUNIS AHMAD KALOO

(When phase 1 of the COVID-19 lockdown was announced on the evening of March 24, 2020, I decided to write my daily experiences for all the 21 days of the lockdown. But my interest waned only after writing for three consecutive nights. This piece is all I managed to write.)

March 24, 2020, 11:53 PM

Exactly 7 minutes from now, as I start writing, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 21-day country-wide lockdown will take effect. It will be stricter than 'Janta Curfew' (civil curfew) as he said in his televised address to the nation.

I don't know and, I guess, nobody knows what these days hold for us. I live with four other boys in a flat in Delhi's Johri Farm locality in lane 4. My flat number is 15 and the building is 185-A. I only know one of these boys. He used to be my batch mate for a 2-year degree course at the Central University of Kashmir. Rest are his friends and neighbours, one of whom just shifted today from lane 7. He probably was alone there as his other roommate had booked an emergency ticket to Kashmir that cost him, according to him, some 24,000 INR.

Today, when he was moving his belonging to my flat, one particular thing he carried attracted a neighbour's attention. In the evening, I got a call from my landlord saying that some neighbour had seen the newcomer with the luggage that had the airline baggage tags attached to it. They



suspected that he must have arrived from abroad. I clarified everything and he was convinced about what I said. But before I started writing, I received another call from him telling that the neighbours were still worried and suspicious about the boy's arrival and that they had started panicking more after an ambulance was spotted outside our apartment building which actually had come to take some patient for dialysis. I told him to allow me to speak to the neighbours but seeking reassurance from me again, he said he will tell the neighbours himself.

Soon after PM Modi announced the

country-wide lockdown, I along with other two flat mates, including the one who arrived only today, went for shopping to a nearby grocery store, not a big one though. Its aisles were already choked with people when we entered but we still managed to get our hands on a 21.8 kg sack of rice, few packets of biscuits, a bottle of cooking oil, a couple of types of pulses and few other items that we thought could be used. There were some people who didn't wear masks and it seemed they were more worried, like all of us I suppose, about food than the coronavirus. Reports of panic buying were coming from other places also which made the

PM tweet and clarify that essential services like food will not be affected by the lockdown. That remains to be seen, and I will insha Allah write whatever I come across during the day.

Day 1

March 25, 11:57 PM

I had decided not to continue writing here in this space but just about an hour ago I received a phone call from my elder sister from Kashmir. Her voice was trembling and she seemed terrified as she was speaking. She told me that the mosques' loudspeakers in the neighbourhood were blaring with Azan (call to prayer) which is unusual for this time of the night and that our uncle had told her that stars and the sky have come down a bit. I started reassuring her that nothing of that sort was possible and that it was some preacher from Pakistan who had told people to give azan from their homes at 10 PM tonight to ward off coronavirus, which she and my entire family didn't know about.

It took a lot of convincing to make my family members act normal. They were petrified, especially my elder sister who cried on the phone. My father even wished me luck should anything untoward take place in that moment.

Later, I came across reports that entire Kashmir was abuzz with azans and many shared on Facebook some big shining object in the sky, which couldn't be verified. But a journalist friend shared a report by CNN that said, "Venus is expected to reach

its maximum elongation for the year in the east of the evening sky by March 24, 2020, according to Earth Sky. On this night, Venus will stay out for a maximum amount of time after sunset".

One wonders how, in the absence of information or access to it, people believe everything. I pray its repercussions are not that serious there.

Day 2

March 26, 12:28 AM

I spoke to my sister and dad in the afternoon. They were not as scared as they were the previous night. But the news of the first death related to the coronavirus had got them worried a bit.

I didn't do much today. I was in my room for the entire day and only left it in the evening to buy some grocery from the market. Most of the shops were closed. Fruit and vegetable vendors and some grocery shops here and there were open. Most of the people who I passed or saw wore masks.

I am planning to go out on Saturday and take my friend's digital camera with me. Although the move looks dangerous, but I still plan to go and shoot some pictures or do a story on what is happening around. Such plans mostly never materialise because for me it is very tough as I fall between two tools: lack of enthusiasm and excuse of staying in the comfort of my flat which feels like home -- to some extent only, though.

—Younis Ahmad Kaloo is a journalist and short story writer.

I had decided not to continue writing here in this space but just about an hour ago I received a phone call from my elder sister from Kashmir. Her voice was trembling and she seemed terrified as she was speaking. She told me that the mosques' loudspeakers in the neighbourhood were blaring with Azan (call to prayer) which is unusual for this time of the night and that our uncle had told her that stars and the sky have come down a bit. I started reassuring her that nothing of that sort was possible and that it was some preacher from Pakistan who had told people to give azan from their homes at 10 PM tonight to ward off coronavirus, which she and my entire family didn't know about.

## Why Israel is Unacceptable to the Muslim World

AMEEN FAYAZ

The title of this article may be unacceptable to many readers across the world but that is what the ground reality is as far as the public opinion across the Muslim world is concerned, even though many Muslim governments enjoy a cozy relationship with Israel.

Whenever anything happens in Palestine, Muslims across the world react and sometimes the reactions turn violent. Recently, when Israeli troops raided the Al-Aqsa Masjid, Muslim masses across the world protested on streets as well as on social media. Why it is like that? What is the nature of the relationship between Israel and Palestine?

While all of us know that the Jewish state called Israel and the Zionist ideology that sustains it along with the vested interests of international players like the USA, France and Britain is a recent invention of the erstwhile colonisers in the heart of the Arab world, what is more indigestible for a civilised human society that claims to thrive on the ideas of democracy, freedom and fraternity is that such an illegitimate construction of the colonisers has resulted in the dispossession and displacement of millions of Palestinian Arab Muslims.

With humiliating defeats that Egypt and other Arab states faced as a result of their defence against Israeli aggression which was supported and facilitated by the mightiest of Western powers, what people across the Muslim world understand about Israel is that it has been created for not only occupying the Arab world but for the creation of Greater Israel. The reality of Palestinian dispossession and displacement accompanied by their dehumanisation at the hands of Israel and Western powers is further accompanied by the idea of the Zionist plan of creating Greater Israel across the Middle East. Such remembrance and idea of Israel adds fuel to the fire and so the backlash whenever anything happens.

The biggest connection that the whole Muslim world has with Palestine is the existence of Bait ul Maqdis. For Muslims, it was their first Qibla before Prophet Mohammed started offering prayers in the direction of Ka'aba which is

at Makka. There is this belief also that when Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) experienced ascension, he led all the one lakh and twenty four thousand prophets in a prayer at this Masjid before he started his journey towards the heavens. This element of faith and memory of a historical event connects Muslims living anywhere in the world with Palestine in general and Bait ul Maqdis in particular. It is, therefore, something natural that incidents like the recent raid and the subsequent desecration by Israeli troops leads to widespread condemnation across the Muslim world as wherever there is a bond based on faith such things are inevitable.

Another thing that has been crippling the Muslim imagination is the fact that the powerful countries like the USA, Britain, France and Russia have not addressed the issue of Palestine; all these countries have rather supported Israel to the extent that the genuine issues of Palestinian Muslims have been reduced to a non-entity. Palwstine is being seen and portrayed as if it were a "land without people" without any right to dignified life. Muslims throughout the world not only see it like this but their postcolonial understanding of the issue confirms it. While they can understand that Jews too have a right to a dignified life but what they cannot understand is, and rightfully so, that it cannot be at the cost of Palestinian Muslims and their properties.

An important thing that the Western powers and Israel itself has to understand is that the creation of Israeli Jewish state stands on the claim that Jews have been in exile for a long period of time from a piece of land which they believe was once upon a time inhabited by their ancestors. There is no doubt about this claim. Jews lived in Palestine and other parts of the Arab world long before the arrival of Islam. All the three holy texts of Islam, Christianity and Judaism testify to this fact. The holy book of Islam, the Quran, talks about Jews and interacts with them also on a host of issues. When Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) migrated to Medina, Jews lived there also and there were many confrontations between the two. The history of the whole world has been like this. The question of originality and purity has always been a matter of serious debate and contestation.

As migration is one of the biggest facts of



history, exiles on account of wars among people too have been a fact. While nobody on earth should and can contest the peaceful return of Jews to Palestine and other Arab countries, what everybody must contest is: 1) their forcible creation of a Zionist state that can be better described as an apartheid state and 2) their dispossessing and dehumanising of the present inhabitants of Palestine who include Muslims and Christians. If Hitler had been responsible for the holocaust of Jews and their ethnic cleansing, Jews have taken its revenge upon the Muslims community which never harmed them by snatching their land and olive gardens from them and by forcing them to leave Palestine and live in refugee camps away from their homes. This is what all humane souls across the world not only condemn but reject also. Noam Chomsky has criticised it and so has Edward Said and hundreds of other noted Christian, Jewish and Muslim intellectuals.

As far as Muslim masses across the world are concerned, such a thing is nothing but sheer injustice and oppression and so shall be always unacceptable. Drunk with the power of tanks, missiles, air force and nuclear technology which is all funded and supported by the Western powers, Israel continues to dehumanise, infantilise and miniaturise the Palestinian Muslim while feeling no shame in being an illegitimate state.

True that Israel with the help of the USA and other Western powers has been successful

in neutralising the governments of Muslims states across the world including of Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Egypt, but what it could not do is the management of the perception and understanding that Muslim masses across the world have about its place and position. It is also true that many Muslim leaders and Islamic scholars across the world have called for peace with Israel; however, what Muslims across the world have been calling for is the return of dignity, freedom, land and property to the dispossessed Palestinian Muslims and what Muslim masses reject is the Zionist agenda of the Jewish state. The way Israel has been expanding its control and authority over what does not belong to it has been acting as thorn in the Muslim perception of Israel; as a result of which Hamas and Islamic Jihad continue to have a strong support base among Palestinians, though Israel, the Western powers and some Muslim countries have unleashed a long and sustained propaganda against them for their de-legitimation.

What to do?

In the backdrop of all these facts, the question is: what to do? And how to solve this long-pending humanitarian issue? In this regard, one can offer some humble submissions to the concerned parties of this long-drawn dispute which can at any time have disastrous impact on the whole Arab world.

Firstly, Israel and its Western supporters have to be honest before man and God and come forward with the resolution that they will not commit any aggression against the wretched Palestinian people. Going by their power politics, it sounds impossible but it is not difficult provided Israel and the USA are honest to the God who they invoke for the creation and development of Israel. Until the aggressor and powerful corrects his policies, genuine peace shall never have a chance in the world. The powerful countries and people have to learn to be honest and accountable before man and God and then only they can sermonise the wretched.

Secondly, after having closed the doors for all aggression and violence from both the sides, an amicable atmosphere for dialogue between the Palestinian state as it existed before the creation of Israel and Israelis could be initiated wherein the two parties can negotiate

1) the peaceful coexistence of all the religious communities without encroaching upon each other's human rights and the right to free and dignified life; 2) the three religious communities can work out the Quranic formula of coming to commonalities between them and thus enter into an agreement of not hurting each other's religious and worldly rights; 3) Israeli settlers would ensure that only Arab Jews can live there and Jews coming from France, America, Russia and other countries can come for religious rites only but not for having permanent homes on the land that is being snatched from Palestinians day in and day out; 4) that Israelis would be duty-bound to shun their Zionist agenda and their plan for Greater Israel in order to create a peaceful atmosphere for coexistence with their Muslim cousins.

The problem with human history has been that it is the weak who is always asked to straighten himself. The powerful is not dared to correct the wrongs that it does to mankind. If the world has to be a peaceful paradise, the corridors of power have to be just, humane and peace-loving; otherwise, their lust for land, colonialism, settlement and loot will continue to create "largest open prisons" like Palestine and other such places. Whether we like it or not, the fact of the matter is that Israel and America, despite having state of art modern warfare technologies and control over the world market, are ultimately losers because they do not rule on the hearts of the people they forcibly rule and control. The USA and other powerful countries would be serving the interests of mankind if only they learn the art of humanising their power; otherwise, where there is power, there is resistance also.

Concluding, Israel must unilaterally stop the war that it has fuelled and come out of the gyre of genocide that it has been committing for the last seventy years. Such an act itself would be a passport for dialogue and better perception among Muslim masses across the world. Until this happens, the binary of resistance vs power would continue to exist and this is something that the larger interests of the human world cannot afford for long.

—ameenparray@gmail.com



## Avail vaccination of second dose at interval of twelve weeks: Microbiologist

Opportunity of getting vaccinated needs to be grabbed

**SRINAGAR:** With prolific sampling of people for SAR COV2, the work pressure on GMC Microbiology Lab has also increased manifold but everything is being managed very diligently and smoothly by the concerned GMC administration and Laboratory Staff while working without relenting, said Dr Lenah Bashir, Lecturer Microbiology, Government Medical College, Srinagar.

She said the Microbiology Department is guiding physicians in diagnosis of the Covid Virus through testing the samples collected at GMC Microbiology Lab and other identified centers. While mentioning the mild and severe symptoms of the disease, Dr Lenah said that cough, cold, loss of taste and smell, and fatigue are mild symptoms whereas breathlessness is a condition of severe infection.

"Severe symptomatic patients should be shifted to hospital for treatment and monitoring".

Regarding infection detection, she said two types of swabs are collected including nasal and throat swab. She added that Rapid Antigen Testing or RTPCR will identify the presence of infection. However, she stressed that any individual who will test negative through RAT testing should also go for RTPCR testing.

While sharing the details regarding availability of results, she said that RAT results are made available within fifteen minutes while RTPCR takes two days time due to its procedure and heavy load of samples. To cope up with the demand, the lab is working continuously without any break, to give results within least possible time.

Dr Lenah said that Real Time reverse transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT PCR) is the gold standard for SARS COV2 detection. "This molecular test targets more than one gene of SAR COV 2. I.e N gene & RdRp gene", she informed about detection of multiple mutants by RTPCR. Moreover, she said "these targets are considered best for

in vitro diagnostic detection, hence, it will show similar sensitivity and specificity in such situation", she further added.

Regarding double mutant covid virus, she said that double mutant strains of SAR COV2 are showing heightened infectivity and escape from the body's immune systems, hence increases lethal infections. "Previously infected people have a greater chance of re-infection due to double mutant", she said.

The Microbiology expert confirmed that vaccines are safe and requested people not to deny themselves of covid vaccination and avail the opportunity to get inoculated with two doses at the interval of twelve weeks. Depriving oneself of vaccination is an unwise decision some people make as they fall for misconceptions spread by Social Media, she said

while dispelling unverified conceptions.

She maintained that adherence to SOPs and Guidelines by normal and symptomatic persons will help to control contagious Corona virus. While speaking about the threat of third wave and mitigation measures for it, Dr Lenah Bashir emphasized on extended lockdown, Abiding of lockdown rules, Avoiding gatherings and mandatory masking. "More importantly vaccination is to be made available to all", she said. Besides, she said that hospitals have to be strengthened further.

Testing capacities have already been expanded and is being taken care of by the administration in terms of manpower as well as facilities, she maintained.

Regarding Black Fungus, she said, "it is a fungal infection which affects people with weakened ability to fight infections like diabetes, malignancy etc." and advised to strictly monitor blood glucose levels of such individuals and judicious use of steroids.

In this regard she said not to hesitate to seek medical attention and relevant microbiological investigations.



## Miniscule bleeding, clotting events post Covid-19 vaccination in India: Govt

**NEW DELHI:** The Union Health Ministry said in a statement on Monday that over 23,000 adverse events have been reported since the vaccination drive involving Covishield and Covaxin vaccines started in the country and of these 700 cases were reported to be serious.

The National Adverse Event Following Immunisation committee (AEFI) has completed an in-depth case review of 498 serious and severe events, of which 26 cases have been reported to be potential thromboembolic (formation of a clot in a blood vessel that might also break loose and carried by the blood stream to plug another vessel) events – following administration of Covishield vaccine – "with a reporting rate of 0.61 cases/ million doses".

"There were no potential thromboembolic events reported following administration of Covaxin vaccine," the ministry said.

As alerts were raised in some countries on post-vaccination "embolic and thrombotic events" on March 11 particularly with AstraZeneca-Oxford vaccine (Covishield), a decision was taken to conduct an urgent in-depth analysis of the adverse events (AE) in India in the light of global concerns, the ministry said.

The National AEFI committee noted that as of April 3, 75,435,381 vaccine doses had been administered (Covishield – 68,650,819; Covaxin – 6,784,562).

"Of these, 65,944,106 were first doses and 9,491,275 second dose. Since the Covid-19 vaccination drive was initiated – more than 23,000 adverse events were reported through the CO-WIN platform reported from 684 of the 753 districts of the country. "Of these,



only 700 cases (@ 9.3 cases /million doses administered) were reported to be serious and severe in nature," the statement said.

"The AEFI data in India showed that there is a very miniscule but definitive risk of thromboembolic events. The reporting rate of these events in India is around 0.61/million doses, which is much lower than the 4 cases/million reported by UK's regulator Medical and Health Regulatory Authority (MHRA). Germany has reported 10 events per million doses," the statement stated.

Thromboembolic events keep occurring in general population as background and scientific literature suggests that this risk is almost 70 per cent less in persons of South and South East Asian descent in comparison to those from European descent.

The ministry is separately issuing advisories to healthcare workers

and vaccine beneficiaries to encourage people to be aware of suspected thromboembolic symptoms occurring within 20 days after receiving any COVID-19 vaccine (particularly Covishield) and report preferably to the health facility where vaccine was administered.

The symptoms listed are breathlessness, pain in chest, pain in limbs/pain on pressing limbs or swelling in limbs (arm or calf), multiple, pinhead size red spots or bruising of skin in an area beyond the injection site, persistent abdominal pain with or without vomiting, seizures in the absence of previous history of seizures with or without vomiting, severe and persistent headache with or without vomiting (in the absence of previous history of migraine or chronic headache).

The symptoms also include weakness or paralysis of limbs or

any particular side or part of the body (including face), persistent vomiting without any obvious reason, blurred vision or pain in eyes or having double vision, change in mental status or having confusion or depressed level of consciousness or any other symptom or health condition which is of concern to the recipient or the family.

The ministry said that Covishield continues to have a definite positive benefit risk profile with tremendous potential to prevent infections and reduce deaths due to COVID-19 across the world and in India.

Over 13.4 crore doses of Covishield vaccine have been administered as on April 27 in India.

The ministry is continuously monitoring the safety of all COVID-19 vaccines and is promoting reporting of suspected adverse events.

—PTI

## DC Kupwara reviews oxygen, healthcare facilities of Covid Hospital

**KUPWARA:** The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Imam Din today convened a meeting of concerned Health Officers to review the utilization of oxygen cylinders in the Covid Sub District Hospital Kupwara.

On the occasion, the DC stressed upon the concerned for proper utilization and distribution of the oxygen cylinders as per requirement and recommendation of technical experts/doctors so that patients may not suffer in extreme situation.

He also reviewed availability of beds and other facilities for Covid patients in the hospital and advised doctors to take utmost care for providing better service in the hospital and patients in home isolation.

The DC directed the CMO to ensure strict adherence of the duty roster by the doctors. He also directed him for proper maintenance of the oxygen plant in the hospital. Incharge CMO Kupwara, Mohammad Ramzan, DSP Kupwara, Doctors and other concerned attended the meeting.

## Director Health service Kashmir visits upcoming Covid hospital at Khanmoh

**SRINAGAR:** Director Health Services Kashmir, Dr Mushtaq Ahmad Rather on Monday visited the site of the upcoming Covid-19 hospital at Khanmoh and interacted with a team of officers from DRDO and officers of various executing agencies.

A spokesperson of Directorate of Health Services Kashmir said that the director visited the upcoming Covid hospital which would be having 500 bed capacity and would be completed in the shortest period of time.

"Director Health service Kashmir interacted with a team of officers from DRDO and officers of various executing agencies while reviewing the status of a 500 bedded hospital which would be having 125 ICU beds. The Covid Care Hospital is under construction at Khanmoh Srinagar," the spokesperson said.

He said that the hospital is expected to start functioning in the 1st week of June with the support of Directorate of Health Services Kashmir and DRDO.

The director emphasized on timely



completion of remaining work and assured all support to the team. He said that the hospital would be completed in the shortest period of time. The di-

rector held an interaction and appreciated the role of engineers of DRDO lead by Anil Khurana, CCE estates North Chandigarh, Brijesh Kumar Maurya, Estate Manager,



Zubair Ali, Scientist 'E', Syed Alfaz Daniyal, Scientist 'E', Amit Rai, Scientist 'D', Pankaj Patil, T. O -B, Vikas Panda, To-do and Sanjay Kumar, TO-A.

The director hailed the role of engineers and other executive agencies in the construction of the hospital.

The spokesman said once the hospital is ready it would be a big boost for the management of Covid management in Kashmir division and a great service to the people.

## The unwitting are the target of COVID-19 falsehoods online

**D**r. Michelle Rockwell lost a pregnancy in December and shared her heartache with her 30,000 Instagram followers. Weeks later, she received the COVID-19 vaccine and posted about that, too.

By February, Rockwell was getting past the grief and finally starting to experience moments of joy. But then, to her horror, social media users began using her posts to spread the false claim that she miscarried as a result of the shot.

They said horrible things to me, like how could I possibly get the vaccine, that I was a baby killer, and that I would be infertile forever and would never have babies again, said Rockwell, a 39-year-old family medicine doctor from Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Even though she knows that research shows the vaccine is safe for pregnant women, she said the posts brought her trauma to the surface and hurt her to the core. From a movie prop master in Texas to a professor in New York, people across the country have found themselves swept into the misinformation maelstrom, their online posts or their very identities hijacked by anti-vaccine activists and others peddling lies about the outbreak.

Sharing other people's posts or photos out of context is a common tactic in the disinformation playbook because it's an easy, cheap



way to gain credibility, said Lisa Fazio, a Vanderbilt University psychology professor who studies how false claims spread. But during the COVID-19 pandemic, experts warn, false or misleading posts can mean the difference between someone taking precautions or not.

When you're in a situation where the world is confusing, you're trying to latch on to what's true. A common suggestion is

to listen to the experts, Fazio said. If you have people pretending to be those experts or grabbing that credibility, then that can cause a lot of havoc.

Scott Reeder, a movie and TV prop master in Austin, Texas, who frequently shares jokes and film industry secrets with his 1 million TikTok followers, posted a short video in September demonstrating how retractable stunt knives, syringes and

icepicks are used on a movie set.

In December, he learned that a clip of the footage was being misused on Facebook and Twitter. Someone had isolated the part of the video where he pushes the spring-loaded syringe into his arm, and falsely claimed that politicians overseas are using the devices to fake their COVID-19 vaccinations.

Reeder was able to tamp down the falsehoods with help from TikTok followers who vouched for him and by releasing a second video outlining the misinformation. But it upsets him that his posts were used to promote a conspiracy theory he knows is false.

I'm just trying to make people laugh with my dad jokes and my prop information, Reeder said. But people just try to suck you in or utilize your content to push their agenda. Robert Oswald, a professor of molecular medicine at Cornell University, hadn't even put anything on social media when he learned his name was being used in viral posts claiming the coronavirus was imaginary and fictitious.

A bogus statement claimed Oswald had done research that found COVID-19 was just another flu strain. "Some of the posts included his professional photo and office address. It said I had some sort of lab in California. It said I was a virologist. None of that's true, Oswald said. I was pretty horrified by it all, obviously. Oswald, who doesn't study

viruses in his work, disavowed the posts on his professional webpage and responded to each message he received with the truth, though some refused to believe it.

Powerful or dramatic claims can be especially difficult to stamp out.

A Cornell professor warning about COVID, that's boring. The same professor saying COVID is a hoax, well, that's interesting and guarantees traffic, said Elias Aboujaoude, a Stanford University professor who studies the intersection of psychology and technology. Dr. Nicole Baldwin, a Cincinnati pediatrician who posted a video in support of vaccines in January 2020, said she was subjected to harassing messages, calls to her office, one-star reviews of her work, and memes that used her picture and falsely claimed she was under investigation for drugging autistic children.

She now offers support over the phone and via email to people who have found themselves in her position including Rockwell.

I look back at that time in January now, actually, with gratitude, because it got me to the point where I am right now, Baldwin said. But in that period that I was there in January, I certainly wasn't saying, Yay, this is amazing. 'So I'm trying to help other people.

—PTI



# Afghans who helped the US now fear being left behind

**KABUL:** He served as an interpreter alongside US soldiers on hundreds of patrols and dozens of firefights in eastern Afghanistan, earning a glowing letter of recommendation from an American platoon commander and a medal of commendation.

Still, Ayazudin Hilal was turned down when he applied for one of the scarce special visas that would allow him to relocate to the US with his family.

Now, as American and NATO forces prepare to leave the country, he and thousands of others who aided the war effort fear they will be left stranded, facing the prospect of Taliban reprisals.

We are not safe, the 41-year-old father of six said of Afghan civilians who worked for the US or NATO.

The Taliban is calling us and telling us, ‘Your stepbrother is leaving the country soon, and we will kill all of you guys.’”

The fate of interpreters after the troop withdrawal is one of the looming uncertainties surrounding the withdrawal, including a possible resurgence of terrorist threats and a reversal of fragile gains for women if chaos, whether from competing Kabul-based warlords or the Taliban, follows the end of America’s military engagement.

Interpreters and other civilians who worked for the US government or NATO can get what is known as a special immigrant visa, or SIV, under a program created in 2009 and modeled after a similar program for Iraqis.

Both SIV programs have long been dogged by complaints about a lengthy and complicated application process for security vetting that grew more cumbersome with pandemic safety measures.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken told reporters last month that the US is committed to helping inter-

preters and other Afghan civilians who aided the war effort, often at great personal risk. The Biden administration has also launched a review of the SIV programs, examining the delays and the ability of applicants to challenge a rejection. It will also be adding anti-fraud measures.

Amid the review, former interpreters, who typically seek to shield their identities and keep a low profile, are becoming increasingly public about what they fear will happen should the Taliban return to power.

They absolutely are going to kill us, Mohammad Shoaib Walizada, a former interpreter for the US Army, said in an interview after joining others in a protest in Kabul.

At least 300 interpreters have been killed in Afghanistan since 2016, and the Taliban have made it clear they will continue to be targeted, said Matt Zeller, a co-founder of No One Left Behind, an organization that advocates on their behalf. He also served in the country as an Army officer.

The Taliban considers them to be literally enemies of Islam, said Zeller, now a fellow at the Truman National Security Project. There’s no mercy for them.

Members of Congress and former service members have also urged the US government to expedite the application process, which now typically takes more than three years. State Department spokesperson Ned Price said May 10 that the US Embassy in Kabul had temporarily increased staff to help process the visas.

In December, Congress added 4,000 visas, bringing the total number of Afghans who can come with their immediate family members to 26,500, with about half the allotted amount already used and about 18,000 applications pending.

Critics and refugee advocates said



the need to relocate could swell dramatically if Afghanistan tumbles further into disarray.

As it is, competing warlords financed and empowered by US and NATO forces threaten the future along with a resurgent Taliban, which have been able to make substantive territorial gains against a poorly trained and poorly equipped Afghan security force largely financed by US taxpayers.

While I applaud the Biden administration’s review of the process, if they are not willing to sort of rethink the entire thing, they are not going to actually start helping those Afghans who are most at need, said Noah Coburn, a political anthropologist whose research focuses on Afghanistan.

Coburn estimates there could be as many as 300,000 Afghan civilians who worked for the US or NATO in some form over the past two decades.

There is a wide range of Afghans who would not be tolerated under the Taliban’s conception of what society should look like, said Adam Bates, policy counsel for the International Refugee Assistance Project.

Those fears have been heightened

by recent targeted killings of journalists and other civilians as well as government workers. The Islamic State affiliate in Afghanistan has claimed responsibility for several, while the Taliban and government blame each other.

Biden raised the nation’s overall cap on refugee admissions to 62,500 this month, weeks after facing bipartisan blowback for his delay in replacing the record low ceiling set by his predecessor, Donald Trump.

The US is not planning to move civilians out en masse, for now at least. We are processing SIVs in Kabul and have no plans for evacuations at this time, a senior administration official said.

The White House is in the beginning stages of discussing its review with Congress and will work with lawmakers if changes in the SIV program are needed in order to process applications as quickly and efficiently as possible, while also ensuring the integrity of the program and safeguarding national security, the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations.

Former interpreters have support

in Congress, in part because many also have former American troops vouching for them.

Walizada, for example, submitted a letter of support from an Army sergeant who supervised him in dozens of patrols, including one where the interpreter was wounded by Taliban gunfire.

I cannot recall a linguist who had a greater dedication to his country or the coalition cause, the sergeant wrote.

Walizada was initially approved for a visa, but it was later revoked, with US Citizenship and Immigration Services telling him that it had adverse information you may be unaware of, in a letter he provided to The Associated Press.

Walizada said he has appealed the decision and hasn’t received a response.

Hilal, who translated from Dari and Pashto to English for the Army from June 2009 to December 2012, was rejected by the US Embassy, which said he did not meet the requirement for faithful and valuable service, because he was fired by the contracting firm that hired him after 31/2 years of service.

It was a stinging response, considering the dangers he faced. If I haven’t done faithful and good service for the US Army, why have they given me this medal? he says, holding the commendation, in an AP interview at an office in Kabul used by the former interpreters to meet with journalists.

Why he was fired by the US-based contractor, Mission Essential, is unclear. Hilal said he had a conflict with supervisors that started with a dispute over a work assignment. The company says it does not discuss current or former employees and declined to comment.

But whatever happened eventually, a November 2019 letter of support from his platoon commander was highly complimentary of stellar service that rivals that of most deployed service

members.

Hilal was by his side on hundreds of patrols and dozens of firefights, monitoring enemy radio traffic and interpreting during encounters with locals, Army Maj. Thomas Goodman said in the letter.

He was dependable and performed admirably, Goodman wrote. Even in firefights that lasted hours on end, he never lost his nerve, and I could always count him to be by my side.

As it happens, an AP journalist was embedded with the unit for a time, amid intense fighting in eastern Afghanistan, and captured images of Hilal and Goodman, surrounded by villagers as American forces competed with the Taliban for the support of the people.

Goodman said he stands by his recommendation but declined to comment further.

Coburn, who interviewed more than 150 special immigrant visa recipients and applicants for a recently released study of the program, said Hilal’s denial reflects a rigid evaluation process. There is no nuance to the definition of service, he said. You either served or you didn’t serve.

The special immigration visa program allows applicants to make one appeal, and many are successful. Nearly 80 per cent of 243 Afghans who appealed in the first quarter of 2021 were subsequently approved after providing additional information, according to the State Department. Hilal says his appeal was rejected.

Bates, of the International Refugee Assistance Project, says the fact that there is a US Army officer willing to support should count for something.

Even if he doesn’t qualify for the SIV program, this plainly seems like someone who is in need of protection, he said.

—Agencies

## WhatsApp privacy policy not conforming to Indian IT laws: Centre to HC

**NEW DELHI:** The Centre on Monday told the Delhi High Court that it views the new privacy policy of WhatsApp as a violation of the Indian Information Technology (IT) law and rules, and sought directions to the social media platform to make it clear whether it was conforming to the same.

The central government’s

claim was made before a bench of Chief Justice D N Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh during the hearing of several pleas challenging WhatsApp’s new privacy policy, which according to the platform has come into effect from May 15 and has not been deferred.

WhatsApp told the bench that while its new privacy policy has

come into effect from May 15, it would not start deleting accounts of those users who have not accepted it and would try to encourage them to get on board.

The platform said there was no universal or uniform time limit after which it will start to delete accounts as each user would be dealt with it on a case-to-case basis.

The bench issued notice to the Centre, Facebook and WhatsApp and sought their stand on one of the pleas by a lawyer who has claimed that the new policy violates users’ right to privacy under the Constitution.

During the hearing, the Centre said that according to it the policy was in violation of Indian IT laws and rules.

It said it has written to Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg on the issue and a reply is awaited and therefore, there was a need to maintain the status quo with regard to implementation of the policy.

WhatsApp, opposing the contention, said it was conforming to Indian IT law and rules and added that its policy has come

into effect from May 15, but it won’t be deleting accounts right away.

When the matter was initially listed before a single judge, the Centre had said that WhatsApp was treating Indian users differently from Europeans over opting out of its new privacy policy which was a matter of concern for the government and it was

looking into the issue.

It had also said it was also a matter of concern that Indian users were being “unilaterally” subjected to the change in the privacy policy by the instant messaging platform and that the government was looking into it.

The court listed the matter for further hearing on June 3.

—PTI

### FROM THE FRONT PAGE .....

#### Doctor booked....

FIR against the doctor and owner of the clinic.

#### First batch....

and there is nothing definite about this. We have to take steps with full caution,” he said at the event in DRDO headquarters.

Singh said the government has taken the overall situation seriously, whether it is the matter of oxygen supply or ensuring ICU beds or the arrangement of cryogenic tankers for transportation of liquid oxygen.

“I am happy to say that the Medical Corps has also decided to take back its retired doctors so that our health system can be strengthened further. I heartily commend such physicians who are joining this campaign even after their service,” Singh said.

The defence minister also listed efforts of the armed forces in helping civilian authorities deal with the situation across the country.

However, he asserted that deployment of the armed forces for Covid-relief measures has not impacted their operational preparedness at the borders.

“Even after going through all these difficulties, we have ensured that our preparedness at the border does not have any impact. There is no shortage of enthusiasm and enthusiasm of our forces anywhere. We know this very well, no matter how big the difficulty is, we will overcome it,” he said.

The Defence Ministry on May 8 said that the clinical trials of the drug 2-DG showed that it helps in faster recovery of hospitalised patients and reduces supplemental oxygen dependence.

The approval of the drug has come at a time India has been grappling with a record-breaking wave of coronavirus pandemic that has stretched the country’s healthcare infrastructure to its limit. The anti-COVID-19 therapeutic application of 2-DG drug has been developed by the Institute of Nuclear Medicine and Allied Sciences (INMAS), a leading laboratory of DRDO, in collaboration with Dr Reddy’s Laboratories (DRL) in Hyderabad.

The drug comes in powder form in sachet and is taken orally by dissolving it in water, the ministry said.

In efficacy trends, the ministry said, patients treated with 2-DG showed faster symptomatic cure than the standard of care (SoC) on various endpoints. PTI

#### Covid-19's....

recovered and were discharged from various hospitals in the last 24 hours, including 1,082 from Jammu Division and 2,960 from Kashmir Division. J&K currently has 5,0852 active cases, the bulletin said.

Providing district-wise breakup, the bulletin said that Srinagar reported 495 new cases and currently has 7,866 active cases, with 1,046 patients recovering in the last 24 hours.

Baramulla reported 118 new cases and cur-

rently has 3,080 active cases, with 478 patients recovering in the last 24 hours.

Budgam reported 376 new cases and currently has 4,080 active cases, with 290 patients recovering in the last 24 hours.

Pulwama reported 145 new cases and currently has 2,564 active cases, with 223 patients recovering in the last 24 hours.

Kupwara reported 124 new cases and currently has 1,761 active cases, with 173 patients recovering in the last 24 hours.

Anantnag reported 228 new cases and has 4,140 active cases, with 162 patients recovering in the last 24 hours.

Bandipora reported 137 new cases and has 987 active cases, with 45 patients recovering in the last 24 hours.

Ganderbal reported 82 new cases and has 1,105 active cases with 113 patients recovering in the last 24 hours.

Kulgam reported 164 new cases and has 3,395 active cases with 203 patients recovering in the last 24 hours.

Shopin reported 57 new cases and currently has 1,158 active cases with 227 patients recovering in the last 24 hours.

Jammu district reported 613 new cases, Udhampur 228, Rajouri 106, Doda 90, Kathua 115, Kishtwar 27, Samba 89, Poonch 56, Ramban 43, and Reasi 51.

#### Kashmir gets....

of these oxygen generation plants, the oxygenated bed capacity of the hospitals will be greatly enhanced.

He said that the government is keeping a keen eye on the developments and is taking adequate steps to augment its capacity.

Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, PK Pole and Chief Engineer, Kashmir (Mechanical), were also present on the occasion.

#### Panel decides....

Supreme Court on March 23, 2020 and May 07, 2021, directing the States and the UTs to decongest jails to ensure social distancing among the prisoners.

At the outset, the Committee appreciated the efforts of the prison department for not only managing the COVID-19 breakout in the prisons but also for maintaining hygiene in the jail premises.

The Members of the Committee discussed and deliberated upon the proposed category of prisoners, who may be considered for grant of interim bail for 90 days in view of the present circumstances.

The Committee decided to release all the jail inmates who were earlier released on parole or on interim bail for 90 days as per the directions of the Supreme Court in March 2020.

Justice Magrey directed the Member Secretary, J&K Legal Services Authority to coordinate with the other two members of the Committee to find out the category of convicts/UTPs who can also be released pursuant to the directions of the Supreme Court. Such an exercise

shall be completed within a week and the report be placed before the Committee.

Justice Magrey directed the DGP (Prisons) to coordinate with the Health department to ensure vaccination of jail inmates as well as staff on priority.

Besides this, the Committee directed the jail authorities to take appropriate steps by ensuring that the inmates and the staff wear masks and maintain social distancing and by keeping the frequently visited areas like kitchen, bathrooms etc. hygienic to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

Justice Magrey further directed the Legal Service Institutions across the J&K to provide the services of panel lawyers to the inmates who are eligible to be released from the custody by moving applications on their behalf.

It also called for the additional release of prisoners on parole or interim bail orders for which DGP Prisons and member Secretary JKLSA were asked to work out modalities within the stipulated time.

The Committee also suggested the creation of additional accommodation or temporary accommodation within or outside jail complexes for ensuring strict adherence to Standard Operating Protocols (SOPs) of COVID-19 issued by the medical experts.

Further, the high powered committee also decided to discontinue all the visits of outside visitors including NGOs but while doing so the families of the jail inmates will have access to meet the prisoners by use of virtual mode or by phones.

Frequent sanitization of jails and better medical facilities were also decided to be ensured in all the jails of J&K.

The Committee decided to accelerate awareness campaigns among jail inmates regarding SOPs to prevent the spread of COVID-19 pandemic.

The Committee further decided to ensure safety of prisoners by frequent testing and complete vaccination of jail inmates along with the jail staff.

It also called for measures like transportation of released inmates by providing them proper transport facilities in view of Corona curfew.

#### 92 inmates test....

in all the jails, officials said.

The special drive in the two jails was carried out nearly two weeks after a prominent separatist leader and chairman of Tehreek-e-Hurriyat Mohammad Ashraf Sehrai, who was lodged in Udhampur district jail under Public Safety Act, died of COVID-19 at a government hospital on May 5.

Officials said the highest 72 prisoners and seven staff members tested positive in Udhampur district jail.

A total of 479 inmates were subjected to RAT testing in the jail premises, they said, adding that 20 inmates tested positive for COVID-19 among 272 prisoners in Kupwara district jail.

Officials said all the positive prisoners are

asymptomatic and were lodged in separate barracks.

Last year, two elderly prisoners -- one each in district jail Rajouri and Sub-jail Bhaderwah -- succumbed to the virus, while the rest of the 540 infected prisoners recovered after successful treatment.

Earlier, 21 prisoners tested positive in Kathu district jail on May 10, while one inmate each was tested positive in district jail Jammu and central jail Kotbhalwal Jammu a few days earlier. PTI

#### Central team....

The Visiting team comprising Dr. Mahesh Waghmare, NCDC, Dr. Pranay Verma, Joint Director NCDC, Dr. Navneet Sharma, Professor Internal Medicine, PGI, Chandigarh, also called for strict enforcement of COVID Appropriate Behaviour in public places.

They further advised for intensifying the surveillance of the home isolated cases, so that patient is shifted to the hospital well in time when required.

Efficient Triage facility and framing of discharge policy was also emphasised for better patient management and adequate bed availability.

Earlier, the team, after arriving here on Sunday, visited GMC Jammu and had a threadbare discussion with the doctors, besides visiting the isolation wards.

On day two, the team visited District Samba and inspected the containment and micro containment zones & met with surveillance teams working at the grass-roots level.

Later in the afternoon, they held a virtual meeting with IDSP teams of 10 districts of Jammu Division.

The meeting was also attended by Choudary Mohammad Yasin, Mission Director NHM, J&K, Dr. Renu Sharma, Director Health Services Jammu, and the Chief Medical Officers of all districts.

—Information Department

#### Two militants....

were recovered from the procession of slain militants, it added.

The killed militants were identified as Umar Mushtaq Khanday son of Mushtaq Ahmed resident of Tulbagh village in Pampore and Wasim Bashir Pandit son of Bashir Ahmed resident of Kakapora area of Pulwama.

The bodies of the slain will be taken for burial by police as has been a norm since the outbreak of Covid-19 last year. Bodies of slain militants are not being handed to their families and are being buried away either in Sonamarg or Baramulla district. This has resulted in no gatherings at funerals of militants, which was seen as one of the factors for youth to sign up as militants.

Similarly, police said that last rites of the two militants would be performed after conducting medico-legal formalities and only nearest family members of the duo would be allowed to par-



# Power consumption grows nearly 19 pc in 1st fortnight of May

**NEW DELHI:** Power consumption in the country grew by around 19 per cent in the first fortnight of May to 51.67 billion units (BU) over the same period last year, showing recovery in industrial and commercial demand of electricity, according to the power ministry data.

Power consumption in the first fortnight of May 2020 was 43.55 BU. The power consumption in the entire month of May last year was 102.08 BU.

During the first fortnight of May this year (from May 1 to 14), peak power demand met or the highest supply in a day touched the highest level of 168.78 GW (on May 6, 2021) and recorded growth of over 15 per cent over 146.54 GW (peak met) recorded in the same period in 2020 (on May 13, 2020).

The power consumption in April grew nearly 40 per cent to 118.08 BU. Power consumption in April 2020 had dropped to 84.55 BU from 110.11 BU in the same month in 2019, mainly because of fewer economic activities following the imposition of lockdown by the government in the last week of March 2020 to contain the spread of deadly COVID-19.

The power consumption also



fell in May 2020 to 102.08 BU from 120.02 BU in May 2019.

Similarly, peak power demand met or the highest power supply in a day also slumped to 132.73 GW in April last year from 176.81 GW in the same month in 2019, showing the impact of lockdown on economic activities.

The fewer economic activities also resulted in a fall of peak power demand in May 2020 to 166.22 GW

from 182.53 GW in May 2019.

Taking to PTI, Davinder Sandhu, Advisor Primus Partners said, "Energy is derived demand, and with onset of summer and the productive pre-monsoon cycle of the Indian economy, an uptick is always expected."

Sandhu who is also a former Advisor at World Bank said, "Both energy demand and supply have risen by 25-40 per cent over March-May

2021, with thermal PLFs (plant load factor or capacity utilisation) rising to 75 per cent and more, after many quarters. This is aided by the opening of the economy in Q1 (January-March 2021), with rising economic output as well as sharp uptick in exports."

The second wave of lockdowns will certainly impact economic activity, and in turn, energy demand. The larger than usual increase in part is attributed to lower base, and as well as to the pent up demand being executed now, he added.

After a gap of six months, power consumption had recorded a 4.6 per cent year-on-year growth in September 2020 and 11.6 per cent in October 2020.

In November 2020, the power consumption growth slowed to 3.12 per cent, mainly due to the early onset of winters. In December 2020, power consumption grew by 4.5 per cent while it was up 4.4 per cent in January 2021.

Power consumption in February this year recorded at 103.25 BU compared to 103.81 BU last year. But 2020 was a leap year. In March this year, the power consumption grew nearly 22 per cent to 120.63 BU compared to 98.95 BU in the same month of 2020.

—PTI

# 'Kashmiri artisans without work, no help from govt'

JUNAID NABIZ BAZAZ ■ SRINAGAR

Kashmiri artisans who have kept the handicrafts trade alive are facing the most difficult times but the government has not come forward to ease their suffering so far, Parvez Ahmad, President of Kashmir Artisans Rehabilitation Forum, said on Monday.

Addressing a press conference here, Ahmad said that the ongoing pandemic has affected the already financially weak artisans as they literally have no work.

As per figures quoted by Ahmad, there are some eight lakh artisans in Jammu and Kashmir, dealing with more than seven types of handicrafts. The crafts include Pashmina, Carpets, Papier Mache, Wood Carving, Crevel, and Copper Antique.

"Is there any place in the world which is open and where handicrafts are to be sold? No. This means we don't have orders which we get from customers around the world. This means artisans do not have work," said Ahmad, who is himself a



handicrafts trader.

Parvez Ahmad Naqash is a fourth-generation exporter in his family that has been selling Papier Mache products to more than 46 countries. He said that no market place is open for a year now for business. "This has shrunk any possibility of getting orders which could have provided work to the artisans," he said.

To deal with the situation, Ahmad asked the government to provide relief for

the survival of the artisans.

"Rs 5,000 is not a big amount, but it can keep the hearth burning and provide some help for taking care of medicines," he said.

Jammu and Kashmir is battling with the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. More than 3,000 have died this year, of whom close to 1,000 died in just a month's time. On Monday a record 73 people died in JK in 24 hours for the first time.

## DC Kathua releases Evaluation Study on Start-up Village Entrepreneurship Programme under NRLM



**KATHUA:** District Development Commissioner Kathua, Rahul Yadav today released Evaluation study on Start Up Village Entrepreneurship Programme (SVEP) under National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) conducted by District Statistics & Evaluation Office Kathua here at DC Office Complex Kathua.

District Statistics & Evaluation Officer, Ranjeet Thakur; Chief Planning Officer, Uttam Singh and other staff members of DSEO Office were present at the release Ceremony.

The study was allotted by the District Level Evaluation Committee (DLEC) in which block Basholi of District

Kathua was selected and 60 beneficiaries, 10 non-beneficiaries and 05 knowledgeable persons were also selected randomly for collecting primary data. The data was collected from such beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries, and knowledgeable persons from blocks Basholi by conducting door to door survey by the officials of DSEO Office Kathua.

While releasing the study, the DDC appreciated the efforts of all the staff members of DSEO Office Kathua who were involved in conducting and finalizing the study.

He highlighted the findings of the study and pointed out the suggestions/

recommendations for consideration of the Rural Development Department for effective implementation of the scheme.

The suggestions drawn from the study includes spreading mass awareness about the scheme by organizing special camps with the involvement of the elected representatives of the areas. Moreover, it is recommended that the rate of interest should be reduced and interest of first six month should be waived off to encourage the new entrepreneurs besides, loan amount at SHG level should be enhanced from the maximum limit of Rs. 50,000 to at least Rs. 1,00,000.

## McDonald's plans Rs 100 cr investment to open 30 outlets this fiscal

**NEW DELHI:** Westlife Development, which operates McDonald's restaurants in southern and western region in India, plans to invest Rs 100 crore to open up to 30 outlets of the quick service restaurant brand in the current financial year.

The company, which now witnesses more than half of its sales from convenience channels such as delivery, takeaways and drive-thru, is bullish about growth in FY'22, leaving out the next 2-3 months.

"The intention is to open 20-30 McDonald's outlets in the current fiscal year. We will invest Rs 100 crore for opening these outlets," Westlife Development Vice-Chairman Amit Jatia told PTI.

In the last financial year, the company had opened five McDonald's outlets.

Jatia said COVID-19 has accelerated the shift towards convenience channels and the company is bullish about growth in the current fiscal.

"The business has pivoted towards becoming a convenience brand. Having brought all digital channels in place, we have entered this second wave with a lot of strength. Stark difference from the first COVID-19 wave and now is customers ordering outside food, which did not happen last year. I am quite bullish about FY'22, obviously leaving out next 2-3 months," he explained.

In the last quarter of the 2020-21, 55-60 per cent of the company's sales came from



convenience channels and 40-45 per cent from in-store business.

Westlife Development reported narrowing of loss to Rs 6.45 crore for March quarter 2020-21, helped by higher income. It had posted a net loss of Rs 25.26 crore in January-March period a year ago.

Its revenue from operations stood at Rs 357.58 crore, up 6.31 per cent from Rs 336.35 crore in March quarter 2019-20.

At present, Westlife Development's arm Hardcastle Restaurants operates 305 McDonald's restaurants across 42 cities in the states of Telangana, Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Goa and parts of Madhya Pradesh and Union Territory of Puducherry.

—PTI

## Harvesting of vegetable crop begins at Krishi Bhawan Jammu

**JAMMU:** Director Agriculture Jammu, K. K. Sharma, while inspecting the different interventions being made under the Vegetable Improvement Scheme at Krishi Bhawan Jammu today inaugurated the first picking of Bitter-Gourd (Variety Pali), Cucumber (Malini) and Bottle Gourd (Variety Babbu-Gosha) being grown under the bower System.



The Director also inspected the Medicinal & Aromatic plants unit where Mint, Ashwagandha, Lemon Grass, Rose Grass, Bach, Brahmin, Giloy, Clove Tulsi have been grown for demonstration. He directed the staff to raise the Mint, Brahmi & Ashwagandha plants in polybags to popularize among the growers. He also inspected the harvesting operations of Spinach (Beet-07) raised as seed crop at JPAE Farm.

It was informed that under Agronomist Vegetable Improvement Scheme, Chilly (Bebo), Brinjal (Shay-amali), Tomato (Abhilash), Brinjal (Nav-kiran), Bhindi (Kum-Kum), Bhindi (Diana) and Sweet Corn are being raised for the demonstration purpose for the visiting farmers/ vegetable growers groups, self help groups, NGOS and students.

It was further informed that 200 vegetables seedlings of different vegetables crops including Cucurbits, Chillies, Tomato and Brinjal are being grown in the Grow bags to popularize roof top cultivation in Urban areas which is gaining high importance during current COVID 19 times.

Rohit Singh Balaria Floriculture Development Assistant, Arun Jara Farm Manager JPAE Farm, Surinder Radotra, AEA G. A Wani AEA, Raghupartap Singh, AEA, Bhopinder Singh Farm Supervisor and Omparkash Farm Supervisor were also present on the occasion.

## Webinar organised on World Telecommunication Day

**SRINAGAR:** Webinar on World Telecommunication and Information Society Day was organised by The Institution of Engineers (India), J&K State Centre, Srinagar, in collaboration with National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM), Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt of India, Dept. of Telecom, J&K LSA, Ministry of Communications, Govt. of India, SSM College of Engineering & Technology, Parihaspora, Pattan, National Informatics Centre-J&K and State Emergency Operation Centre, Srinagar. The theme for the webinar was Accelerating Digital Transformation in Challenging Times. The Chief Guest was Dr. Kailash Chandra Pandey, Senior Deputy Director General, Department of Telecom, Ministry of Communications, Govt of India. Major General Manoj Kumar Bindal, Executive Director, National Institute of Disaster Management delivered the keynote address.

The Chief Guest Dr Kailash Chandra Pandey said that digital technology plays the most important role in achieving Sustainable Development Goals. He said that digital transformation has created a value system and improved efficiency. It has helped in creating transparency and capacity development. He said that a digitally empowered society is the aim of the Govt and it can bring about socio-economic transformation in India. He said that Artificial Intelligence

can assist the Administrators in Decision-making. He said that the officers in the field need to ensure that there is no digital divide which can be an impediment and bottleneck, while implementing various policies of the Govt.

Maj Gen Bindal said that the pandemic has accelerated the digital transformation process due to the challenging times and helped improve our efficiency. He said that the current difficult pandemic situation has accelerated different digital communication technologies for our benefit. He said that the protocols and procedures will keep changing and digital transformation will usher in a culture of transparency, by enhancing efficiently and effectiveness. He said that the use of technology has helped improve the quality of life and human well-being and is being used by different stakeholders, for achieving the defined Sustainable Development goals. He said that the global perspective has brought all the stakeholders together for effective use of technology to highlight the strengths and weaknesses, identify the issues and raise awareness. He congratulated the Institution of Engineers, J&K State Centre and NIDM team for holding webinars on various important topics and suggested that there is need to formalize the relationship with the two Institutions, by inking of an MOU, to continue the joint effort in



future, as well.

Er. Narendra Singh, President, Institution of Engineers (India) conveyed his message for the success of the Webinar. The Resource Persons were Er. Radhey Shyam Parmar, Dy. Director General, Dept of Telecom,

J&K LSA, Er Mohammed Saleem Khan Scientist "F", Additional State Informatics Officer-J&K, Er. Syed Irfan Yaqoob, Asst. Professor, SSM College of Engineering, Parihaspora and Sandeep Baruah, Scientist "F", Vigyan Prasar, Ministry of Science

and Technology Govt of India. The coordinators for the Webinar were Er. Aamir Ali Mir, Chairman IEI J&KSC and Dr. Amir A. Khan, Faculty NIDM. The programme was moderated by Er. M. Aaqib Sultana Waheed Deva, Honorary Secretary IEI J&KSC, Ms. Yogita Garbhal Young Professional NIDM, Mohammed Suhail Wani and Bilquees Dar, Consultants Disaster Management.

The Webinar was attended by over 200 participants from across the Globe, Council Members of IEI, Corporate Members of JKSC, students and staff from SSM College of Engineering and National Institute of Technology, (NIT) Srinagar and Officers and Staff of Emergency Operation Centre, Srinagar, besides Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) of J&K, including BSNL, Airtel, Reliance-Jio, Vodaphon.

Er. Aamir Ali said that the World Telecom Day is celebrated every year on 17th May to mark the founding of the International Telecommunication Union and signing of the first International Telegraph Convention in 1865. He said that COVID-19 Pandemic has impacted lives across the Globe and thrown unprecedented challenges to existing systems, including public health delivery systems and livelihood of the majority of the population. He said that Coronavirus is killing lakhs of people every day and peo-

ple have been forced to learn new norms of COVID protocol i.e. social distancing, face masks, hand washing, quarantine, lockdowns, work-from-home, virtual meetings, cloud conferencing, webinars etc. He said that Telecommunication and Digital Transformation is helping in managing crucial data on fatalities, diagnosis, treatment of patients, managing distribution of vaccines or medicines and even disseminating government policies and SOPs. Dr Amir Ali Khan, Faculty NIDM said that use of social media has revolutionized our lives, ICT tools are an important and integral part of Smart City concept. He deliberated on the advantages of ICT tools. Er Radhey Shyam Parmar said that telecom and digital transformation is linked with every sphere of life. He said that Fiber optics are the most reliable medium and effective tool for accelerating the digital transformation. Er Mohd Saleem Khan spoke about various programmes and activities launched by the National Informatics Centre and how these have been integrated in COVID-response. Dr Syed Irfan Yaqoob explained the meaning of Digital Transformation as a technology. Sandeep Baruah, gave a practical demonstration of operation of a HAM Radio and explained the procedure for obtaining an Amateur radio License.



## We're not going to treat matches against England as warm-ups for WTC final: Neil Wagner



**AUCKLAND:** New Zealand fast bowler Neil Wagner on Monday said his team is not going to treat the upcoming two-match series against England as warm-ups for the World Test Championship (WTC) final versus India.

India and New Zealand will lock horns for the inaugural WTC title, at Southampton's Ageas Bowl, from June 18-22, four days after the Test series against hosts England is scheduled to conclude.

"We're not going to treat these two Test matches against England just as warm-ups (for the WTC final)," Wagner told reporters at the Auckland airport before his departure.

"I know for a fact we're going to get out there and pride ourselves the way we've been playing Test cricket and we want to win Test matches for New Zealand," he added.

A majority of the New Zealand Test players arrived here on Monday for the two-match series against England and the WTC final against India, but Wagner was part of the second batch of cricketers to leave for their UK tour.

Wagner, ranked number three in the world among Test bowlers, trained with the Dukes ball in Lincoln before departing for England. Dukes ball is used for Test matches in England. He said he benefited from the camp.

"It's been quite nice, it's obviously got different characteristics to the Kookaburra,"

Wagner said. "The way we've been training for the last while is something we didn't always have in the past, having the facilities and having a marquee up and getting a number of training sessions in before going to England.

"On tours in the past you rock up there and you've only got a couple of training sessions and maybe one head out with the Dukes ball before the first Test and with that you can find yourself a little bit behind."

He added, "Having had those little bit of trainings leading into it has been quite beneficial, just because it's a little bit different, and obviously adapting to it. It's been really good preparation and everybody is excited bowling with it."

This will be Wagner's third trip to England as part of the New Zealand squad, although he played there only during the 2013 Test series, besides playing in the County Championship for Lancashire.

"Sometimes you have to control all that because there's a high expectation of the ball doing a lot and moving around but sometimes you can get there and it can be quite flat and slow as well," Wagner said.

"The nice thing about it is we've got a wealth of experience and the guys have been there before so we can feed off each other and bounce ideas off each other as well," he added.

—PTI

## Barcelona routs Chelsea 4-0 to win WCL final for 1st time

**GOTHENBURG:** Barcelona's slow start two years ago doomed its European dream so this time it came out firing against Chelsea, scoring after just 32 seconds en route to a 4-0 victory and its first Women's Champions League title.

In a ruthless offensive display, Barcelona's attackers sliced through Chelsea's defense and did all of their scoring inside 36 minutes, beginning with an own-goal.

Bar a is the first team from Spain to win Europe's top club competition, which had been dominated recently by seven-time champions Lyon. In its only other appearance in the final, Barcelona lost 4-1 to Lyon in 2019 after conceding a goal after five minutes and falling behind 4-0 before halftime in Budapest.

"The idea is to keep dominating European football, Barcelona coach Lluís Cortes said. "Winning this game is part of the journey and losing in Budapest was part of it, too."

Making its first appearance in the final, Chelsea was under pressure immediately and went down 1-0 when a clearance ricocheted off Chelsea midfielder Melanie Leupolz and over goalkeeper Ann-Katrin Berger into the net.

Alexia Putellas scored from the penalty spot in the 14th minute after Leupolz was adjudged to have fouled Jenni Hermoso in the box. Seven



minutes later, Aitana Bonmati collected a pass from Putellas in front of goal, shot past Berger, and the rout was on for Cortes's side.

Lieke Martens brilliantly set up the fourth goal, dribbling down the left side and crossing to Caroline Graham Hansen, who blasted it into the net from close range in the 36th minute at an empty Gamla Ullevi stadium.

The 34-year-old Cortes said his side played with confidence right from the start.

"The final is to be won, and that's what we did," he said, adding that it's a victory for all of Spanish women's soccer. The championship is also a boost for a Barcelona club that is heavily in debt and with a men's side that has stumbled lately. The club

could also face sanctions for its support of the ill-fated European Super League. Chelsea was the first English team to reach the final since 2007, when Arsenal won the competition.

"We didn't have the start to the game that we wanted and in these types of games against these opponents, you can't concede sloppy goals," Chelsea defender Millie Bright told BT Sport.

The loss ended Chelsea's bid to match Arsenal's quadruple from 14 years ago. The Blues have won the Women's Super League title and League Cup this season and are still alive in the women's FA Cup.

Chelsea threatened after the own-goal when Pernille Harder caught up to a cross but shot high.

Blues manager Emma Hayes cited inexperience and naivety at times by her side.

"Today was difficult because the game was over before it began, she said. "To concede so early and then we had two good chances, then they got the second through a penalty. The damage was done."

The Blues started the second half with more urgency but barely threatened. This campaign, Barcelona eliminated Manchester City in the quarterfinals and Paris Saint-Germain in the semis. PSG had earlier beaten Lyon.

—PTI

## India's Tests against England, Australia were not fixed: ICC

**DUBAI:** The ICC on Monday dismissed claims made by news channel Al Jazeera that India's Test matches against England (2016) and Australia (2017) were fixed, saying the passages of play identified as fixed were entirely predictable, and therefore "implausible as a fix."

Al Jazeera in a documentary - "Cricket's Match Fixers" - released in 2018 had claimed that India's game against England in Chennai in 2016 and the one against Australia in 2017 in Ranchi were fixed.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) also cleared five people - filmed by the channel - of any wrongdoing, saying even as they behaved in a questionable manner but no credible evidence was available to charge them.

During the pro-



gramme, an alleged bookie Aneel Munnawar was seen making claims about his dubious con-

The ICC had launched an investigation into the claims.

"The programme alleged that two matches were fixed: India v England in Chennai in 2016 and India v Australia in Ranchi in 2017. To assess whether the passages of play highlighted in the programme were unusual in any way, the ICC engaged four independent betting and cricketing specialists to analyse the claims," the ICC said in a release after it concluded its investigation.

"All four concluded that the passages of play identified in the programme as being allegedly fixed were entirely predictable, and therefore implausible as a fix," the release added.

The ICC did not name the people exonerated

but sources said former Pakistan cricketer Hasan Raza, Sri Lanka's Tharindu Mendis were among them. They had joined the investigation, carried out by the world governing body. While small-time Mumbai first-class cricketer Robin Morris was also filmed, he didn't join the investigations.

"No charges will be brought under the ICC Anti-Corruption Code against any of the five Participants to the Code who featured in the programme due to insufficient credible and reliable evidence," the ICC said. The comprehensive ICC investigation focused on three main areas: the claims made by the programme, the suspects who were part of it and how the programme gathered evidence.

"In the case of the claims aired in this programme, there are fundamental weaknesses in each of the areas we have investigated that make the claims unlikely and lacking in credibility, a viewpoint that has been corroborated by four independent experts," GM (Integrity Unit) Alex Marshall was quoted as saying in the release.

"On the basis of the programme, the Participants to the Code who were filmed appear to have behaved in a questionable manner, however, we have been unable to assess the full context of the conversations that took place beyond what was seen on screen versus what the Participants claim actually happened."

—PTI

## NZ refuses to visit India for Hockey Pro League games



**NEW DELHI:** The Indian men's hockey team lost an opportunity to test its competitive skill after its FIH Hockey Pro League home matches against New Zealand this month were postponed as the opponents refused to visit India due to the raging coronavirus pandemic.

The two matches were to be held on May 29 and 30 in Bhubaneswar.

"Due to the second coronavirus wave in India, the New Zealand men's hockey team has refused to travel to Odisha to play the Pro League matches against India," IANS reported on Monday.

The matches would have also helped India prepare for the Olympic Games, scheduled to start on July 23 in Tokyo.

Earlier, the Indian men's team's Europe tour to play a series of Pro League matches were put off, again due to the pandemic.

The Great Britain leg of Pro League in London on May 8 and 9 was postponed as Indians were denied visas because coronavirus cases surged in India. The Spanish leg of the league in Valencia on May 15 and 16 was also postponed as the team couldn't travel to Spain.

Germany, too, restricted travellers from India and the hockey team couldn't play matches on May 22 and 23 in Hamburg.

Last month, India competed in the Argentina leg of the Pro League. Since then the core group of 33 players have been training at Sports Authority of India training centre in Bengaluru.

—Agencies

## Federer hopes clay swing will help Wimbledon bid



**LONDON:** Roger Federer said he has never faced problems in switching from clay courts to grass and hopes his decision to play on his least favourite surface at Roland Garros will prove beneficial to his Wimbledon bid.

The Grand Slam on red clay has proved to be the least productive for the 39-year-old, who has won the title only once, and the Swiss has not competed at Roland Garros in four of the last five years due to injuries and scheduling preference.

After missing more than a year following two knee operations, Federer returned to the Tour in March and will kick-start his claycourt campaign at this week's Geneva Open to prepare for the French Open starting on May 30.

He will play the Wimbledon tuneup event in Halle, Germany before the grasscourt Grand Slam he has won eight times.

"I was happy that the knee didn't feel any different from hard to clay, so I expect

the same to go from clay to grass," Federer told reporters on Monday.

"Since '98, since we have the grass in my schedule, I've never really had any major issues going between surfaces."

"I think that the tennis player is used to these switches but of course with an injury there is always a little bit more concern, especially when you haven't played as long as I have."

This year's French Open was pushed back by a week due to the COVID-19 pandemic and Federer said the shift had a huge impact on his schedule but he was happy with his preparations for Wimbledon starting on June 28.

"I'm convinced that hitting a lot of balls - you have to really power through the ball, like you have to on clay because otherwise you're not going to have an impact on this surface - is going to be beneficial for me for the grasscourt season," he said.

—Agencies

## 31 سال شہادت پر حسلوں سرخ حقیقت



شہید ملت میر واعظ کشمیری محمد فاروق صاحب کو ان کے 31 ویں سال شہادت پر انجمن اوقاف جامع مسجد سربنگر، اوقاف کے بانی صدر کو تین دہائیوں پر مشتمل جامع مسجد کے منبر و محراب سے قال اللہ وقال الرسول ﷺ کی منصبی ذمہ داریوں کے ساتھ ساتھ انجمن کو خود کنٹرول بنانے اور جامع مسجد کی تعمیر و تجدید اور ترقی کے تعلق سے گرانقدر خدمات اور کشمیری عوام کی بے باک ترجمانی پر موصوف کو بھرپور خراج عقیدت پیش کرتا ہے۔

**نوٹ:** ہفتہ شہادت کے دوران مختلف اداروں کی طرف سے جو علمی، دینی، اصلاحی اور سماجی پروگرام منعقد کئے جاتے تھے COVID-19 کی تہرگگیراہ، لاک ڈاؤن اور جناب میر واعظ ڈاکٹر مولوی محمد عمر فاروق کی مسلسل نظر بندی کی وجہ سے ملتوی کئے گئے ہیں۔ عوام اناس سے گزارش ہے کہ وہ شیخ و مفتی نمازوں کے دوران بارگاہ خداوندی میں شہید رہنما سمیت جملہ شہدائے جموں و کشمیر کے درجات کی بلندی کے ساتھ ساتھ موجودہ متعدی اور خطرناک وبا COVID-19 سے پوری دنیا کے انسانیت کی نجات کیلئے بارگاہ رب بے نیاز میں خصوصی دعاؤں کا اہتمام کریں۔

## شائع کردہ انجمن اوقاف جامع مسجد سربنگر