

Kashmiri youth creates 80,000 face masks to help COVID fight



Kashmiri youth avail PMEGP scheme to create new opportunities, contribute against COVID fight

ANI | Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, India

Zahoor Ahmad is a busy man, but feels 'fulfilled.' As Covid-19 crisis gripped the Kashmir Valley, his garment-manufacturing unit, nestled in South Kashmir's Pulwama, manufactured thousands of face masks for the people of the region.

"When this virus came, we made about 80,000 face masks after district administration placed an order with us," says Ahmad, sitting in a cozy chair in his factory amidst the sound of dozens of sewing machines.

Ahmad's spirit of 'help your neighbour' is inspiring. The Khadi Village Industries Board (KVIB) helped him establish the factory, where other youth also work.

After the abrogation of Article 370 in August last year, several governmental schemes have reached Kashmir and benefitted many like Ahmad, who borrowed a loan under Prime Ministers Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP).

One of the flagship schemes of the government, PMEGP is

a credit-linked subsidy programme aimed at generating self-employment opportunities through establishment of micro-enterprises in the non-farm sector by helping traditional artisans and unemployed youth.

Tariq Ahmad is one such beneficiary, who established a similar sewing unit, where over 20 men meticulously stitch garments for the people. "This is a very good step by the central government and unemployed educated youth are being benefited," Tariq told ANI.

He is now not only earning for himself but has been able to provide employment to several other youths in the district.

Javaid Malik, an employee of the unit said he got work opportunity the under PMEGP.

"I was jobless but now I am working at my friend's unit here. It is a good initiative by the administration, and I am thankful to them for giving me employment," said Malik.

The Kashmir Valley is home to nearly seven million people, out of which a little less than half are youths.

Sun Pharma latest to sell favipiravir in India

● Favipiravir was originally developed by Japan's Fujifilm Holdings Corp as Avigan

Reuters | Bengaluru

India's Sun Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd said on Tuesday it would soon begin selling its version of favipiravir, becoming the latest generic drugmaker to supply the antiviral to treat COVID-19 in the world's third worst-hit nation.

Favipiravir, along with another antiviral, remdesivir, has

emerged as one of the most sought-after drugs at hospitals fighting COVID-19 in India, which saw a surge of 50,000-plus infections for the sixth straight day on Tuesday.

Sun's version of favipiravir, to be called FluGuard, will cost 35 rupees (47 cents) per 200 mg tablet, making it the cheapest version available. Stocks will be available from this week.

Shares in Sun Pharma, one of the world's largest generic drug manufacturers, climbed after the news and were last up 1.7% in an upbeat Mumbai market.

Favipiravir was originally developed by Japan's Fujifilm Holdings Corp as Avigan. Once



vir in June in an effort to tackle the "urgent and unmet" need for COVID-19 treatments in the country.

Separately, another Indian drugmaker, Jubilant Life Sciences Ltd, on Monday announced the launch of its version of remdesivir, priced at 4,700 rupees per 100 mg vial. Jubilant is among the companies producing the drug under licence from US-based Gilead Sciences Inc.

Global coronavirus cases have crossed 18.3 million, resulting in close to 694,000 deaths. India has a caseload of over 1.8 million, the third biggest, behind the United States and Brazil.

Insider Jagdishan to take reins at India's most valuable lender



Sashidhar Jagdishan (Courtesy of Live mint)

Reuters | Bengaluru

India's top private-sector lender HDFC Bank Ltd has received the approval to name insider Sashidhar Jagdishan its chief executive officer, the bank said yesterday, as it steers itself through the coronavirus downturn.

Jagdishan, who will replace Aditya Puri - HDFC Bank's CEO of 26 years, takes over at a time when the country's lenders are facing a flood of potential loan defaults as the pandemic brings small businesses to the brink.

Currently the head of finance and "strategic change agent" at the Mumbai-based bank, Jagdishan will start his new role from Oct. 27, the lender said, after the Reserve Bank of India cleared the appointment.

Puri, who has been at the helm since HDFC Bank's inception in 1994, is the country's highest paid banker and has been credited with turning the bank into a financial powerhouse over the years.

Puri has run the bank with an iron hand, preventing it from accruing a high level of bad loans at a time when most of its peers are struggling, analysts have said.

It is one of three domestic lenders that the Reserve Bank of India has designated as "too big to fail". The bank has been able to maintain strong profit growth and stable asset quality amid the pandemic.

Heavy rain batters Mumbai



People drive through a flooded street during heavy rains in Mumbai, India

Reuters | Mumbai

Authorities in the Indian city of Mumbai issued a red alert yesterday and warned people not to venture out after heavy overnight rain in the financial hub brought flooding and travel chaos.

Some suburbs have seen more than 300 mm of rain in the 24 hours to Tuesday morning and more heavy rain is expected over the next two days, said India Meteorological Department (IMD) official K.S. Hosalkar.

The department issued a red alert for the city for the next two days and civic authorities advised people not to venture out unless absolutely necessary.

Trains, already running skeleton services due to the novel coronavirus lockdown, were suspended in several places because of flooding and traffic was disrupted on some of the city's main roads.

A landslide swept down a slope onto a main road in a northern suburb, media reported.

There was no impact on operations at Mumbai's airport apart from reduced visibility, a representative said.

World's highest railway bridge over Chenab river getting ready

PTI | New Delhi

The world's highest railway bridge over river Chenab in Jammu and Kashmir will be ready by next year, and will connect the Valley with the rest of India by train for the first time by 2022, officials said on Sunday.

"This is the tallest railway bridge in the world and the maximum designed wind speed for the bridge is 266 kmph," a senior government official said.

The construction work of the bridge was accelerated in the last one year under the direct supervision of the top echelons of the central government, the official said. According to the plans, Kashmir will be connected with train by December 2022.

The Udhampur-Katra (25 Km) section, Banihal-Quazigund (18 Km) section and Quazigund-Baramulla (118Km) section have already been commissioned.

The last remaining section, the 111 km Katra-Banihal section is currently under execution. It is targeted for completion in December 2022. The 126 km out of 174 km of tunnels on this section has already been completed.



File photo of a general view of the site of the under-construction railway bridge on Chenab river in Jammu-Kashmir (HT /AFP File Photo) Inset picture, courtesy of metrorailnews

There has been a greater push in the last one year for imple-

mentation of various projects under the Rs 80,068 crore Prime

Minister's Development Pack-

age (PMDP) announced on November 7, 2015, the official said. The package is meant for



The bridge, which has a central span of 467 metres, is being built at a height of 359 metres from the bed level. The height of Qutab Minar in Delhi is 72 metres and that of the Eiffel Tower in Paris is 324 metres.

strengthening socio-economic infrastructure and balanced regional development of Jammu and Kashmir.

The programme touches practically every sector and provides for massive investments in basic infrastructure, another official said.