

Maximum : 1°C Today 05:50 PM Minimum : -7°C Humidity : 67% SUNSET Today 05:50 PM SUNRISE Tomorrow 07:34 AM



Life & Times / OB HERE'S WHY MOTHERS STILL FACE BARRIERS TO BREASTFEED AT WORK Despite the protections in place to support breastfeeding for employees, the burden still falls on working mothers to advocate for the resources they need, says a new research....

'WE WANT THEM OUT': IRAQI PROTESTERS CALL FOR US TROOPS EXIT Thousands of people have taken to the streets in Iraq's capital, Baghdad, after Shia leader Muqtada al-Sadr called for a "million-strong" march to demand the withdrawal of US troops from the country, putting the protest....

FIRMINO 'WORLDIE' SECURES ANOTHER LATE LIVERPOOL WIN Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp hailed another moment of magic from Roberto Firmino as the Brazilian's late winner opened up a 16-point lead at the top of the Premier League....



News Digest

Khrew Shuts Against Militant's Killing

Pulwama: Khrew and its adjacent areas observed a shutdown on Friday against the killing of a non-local militant by government forces in a fierce encounter. Witnesses said that all the shops and business establishments remained shut in Khrew and its neighbourhood areas, while the transport also remained off the roads against the killing of foreign militant whom Police identified as Abu Saifullah of Pakistan. The non-local militant was killed in an encounter at Zantrag area of Khrew here in South Kashmir's Pulwama district. (KNT)

5 Injured In Car-Truck Collision At Ramban

Jammu: Five members of a family were injured in a collision between a car and a truck in Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban district on Friday, officials said. A Santro, which was on its way to Srinagar from Ramban, collided with a truck coming from the opposite direction due to slippery road conditions at Sherbibi in the Banihal belt of the district, they said. Five members of a family travelling in the car were seriously injured in the incident, the officials said. The injured were shifted to the district hospital, Ramban, they added. They have PIO

10 Held On Charges Of Militancy, Stone Pelting

Pulwama: Government forces have detained at least eight youth from different parts of the Valley for their alleged role in militancy and stone pelting. A local news-gathering agency KNT reported that two youth were arrested by police from Ratnipora area of Pulwama. The duo have been identified as Ajaz Ahmed Hurrah and Muzamil Ahmed Dar. A police official confirmed the arrest of the duo and said they are being questioned in connection with a militancy case. In neighbouring Shopian district, two youth PIO

Locals Kill Leopard After 2 Injured

Srinagar: Angry locals in Pulwama killed a leopard after the beast injured two villagers in a surprise attack on Friday. According to reports, a leopard appeared in Parigam village of Pulwama this morning and attacked and injured two men identified as Javed Ahmed Teli and Feroz Ahmed Bhat. The locals, reports said attacked and killed the leopard after the wildlife authorities allegedly failed to reach the spot after being informed by the villagers. Witnesses said the body of leopard was lying on Srinagar Pulwama road for an hour, before being taken into custody by the PIO

Fresh Alert Sounded In Kashmir; Frisking, Searches Intensified

AGENCIES SRINAGAR: A fresh alert has been sounded in Kashmir valley, where Republic Day (RD) is being celebrated on January 26 for the first time after central scrapped Article 370 and 35 A and split the state into two Union Territories (UTs) on August 5. Meanwhile, authorities have ordered closure of all tuition and coaching centres besides other computer institutions as a precautionary measure till January 26. Though Central Paramilitary Forces (CPMFs) and Jammu and Kashmir police personnel remained deployed to prevent any law and order problem, fresh alert has been issued to field commanders to thwart any attempt by militants to cause any disturbance before or on RD functions across the valley. Official sources said a number of meetings were held to discuss security and other related matters with regard to holding peaceful RD functions in the valley. However, they said, there was no specific intelligence input about any militant plan to cause disturbance by or before RD. But, they said, there is no room for taking any chance to relax if there was no disturbance after August 5. Security forces also conducted successful Cordon and Search Operations (CASO) in the valley, particularly in south Kashmir during which about eight militants were killed. Two security force personnel were also killed in one of the encounter. The main RD function PAGE 10



2 Security Men Among 3 Injured In Noorbagh Attack

OBSERVER NEWS SERVICE SRINAGAR: Two days ahead of January 26 celebrations in the Valley, suspected militants Friday attacked government forces in Old City of Srinagar leaving a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) trooper, a policeman and a civilian injured. Officials told Kashmir Observer that suspected militants lobbed a grenade towards the joint deployment of CRPF and police in Noorbagh locality of the Old City here this evening. In the surprise grenade attack, a CRPF driver, a cop and a civilian were injured. The security personnel identified as M Mahindaran of PIO

Cold Wave Tightens Grip On Kashmir; Drass Records -30 Deg C



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA SRINAGAR: The minimum temperature at most places in Kashmir dropped several notches on Friday as the cold wave tightened its grip on the valley, where light rain or snow is likely in the next few days, according to the Meteorological Department. The night temperature witnessed a drop of several degrees Celsius at most places in the valley owing to clear sky, a MeT official said here. He said the minimum temperature in Srinagar dropped nearly six degrees from minus 0.5 degree Celsius a day before to settle at minus 6.1 degrees Celsius. The official said the mercury in Qazigund the gateway town to the valley in south Kashmir settled at a low of minus 8.2 degrees Celsius, a decrease of nearly eight notches from the previous night's minus 0.4 degree Celsius. The night temperature in Pahalgam tourist resort in south Kashmir settled at a low of minus 13.4 degrees Celsius as against PAGE 10

....KHREW ENCOUNTER

Police Identify Slain Militant As Abu Saifullah

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA SRINAGAR: The militant killed in a gunfight with security forces in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama district on Wednesday has been identified as a Pakistani national affiliated to proscribed Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) outfit, a senior police officer said on Friday. The "most wanted" militant was operating under code names "Abu Saifullah" and "Abu Qasim" and was active in militancy-infested south Kashmir for the past over one and a half years, he said. The officer said the Saifullah was wanted in connection with the abduction and killing of two civilians and threatening special police officers (SPOs) and non-local labourers. A close associate of JeM self-styled chief commander Qari Yasir of Pakistan, who was killed in an encounter with security forces in Kupwara district in July 2013, Saifullah was trapped along with his local associate during a search and cordon operation at Zaintrag village in the Awantipora area of Pulwama on Tuesday morning, he said. The operation, which was launched on a specific information, turned into a gunfight when the hiding PAGE 10

Using Modern Gadgets To Foil Militants' Designs: IGP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA SRINAGAR: Police is using modern gadgets to foil the designs of militants to mount attacks in Kashmir, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Vijay Kumar said, as he appealed to the people to participate in Republic Day functions across the valley. He was speaking on the sidelines of full-dress rehearsal for the Republic Day function at Sher-e-Kashmir Cricket Stadium here. "Security is beefed on occasions like August 15 or January 26 and night-time patrolling is also undertaken. We also undertake checking and frisking in which we use modern gadgets and we will not allow any (militancy-related) incident," Kumar told reporters. The IGP said the security forces counter-plan to whatever the militants plan in the Kashmir valley and they are ready to foil their designs. "Whatever planning the militants have, we have counter-planning to that and we are ready for it and are taking preventive action," he said, appealing to the general public to participate in the functions. Earlier, PAGE 10

DGP Pays Surprise Visit To PS Pantha Chowk Director General of Police (DGP) Dilbag Singh paid a surprise visit to the Police Station Pantha Chowk and took stock of the functioning there, a police spokesperson said Friday. DGP Singh, who was flanked by Inspector General of Police, Vijay Kumar, enquired about the working of police station in crime prevention, investigation and maintaining law & order. He interacted with the police personnel, including officers working in the PIO

R-Day Functions: BDC Chairpersons To Take Salutes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA JAMMU: For the first time, the chairpersons of the block development councils will take salutes at the Republic Day functions at block development offices (BDOs) in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, a senior official said on Friday. Chairpersons of 307 blocks were elected in J&K in October last year. Of these, 81 were won by the BJP, one by the Congress, eight by the J&K Panthers Party and 217 by independents. "I am directed to convey that the chairperson of BDCs shall take a salute at their respective block headquarters on the Republic Day," Deputy Secretary G. L. Sharma said on Friday in a directive to PAGE 10

Law Will Decide Fate Of Detained Leaders: Avinash Rai Khanna

AGENCIES SRINAGAR: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Friday said that fate of the leaders, who are undergoing detention from past five months since the abrogation of Article 370 and Article 35A, will be decided by the law. National vice president of BJP and incharge of Jammu and Kashmir, Avinash Rai Khanna while talking to reporters on the sidelines of a function at Tagore hall, said that the leaders have been put under detention and action against them is PIO

Met With 'Brick Wall' When I Approached PM Modi: Imran Khan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA DAVOS: Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has claimed that he met with a "brick wall" when he approached his counterpart Narendra Modi with a peace proposal soon after assuming office. In an interview to Foreign Policy magazine on the sidelines of WEF 2020 here, Khan also said he had told Modi that Pakistan will act firmly if it was given evidence of any Pakistani involvement in the Pulwama attack, but India instead "bombed" Pakistan. Tensions have escalated between the two neighbours following India withdrawing special status of Jammu and Kashmir in August 2019. Since then, Khan has been trying to seek global intervention to de-escalate the tensions. On Thursday, India's External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Raveesh Kumar categorically ruled out any third party role on the Kashmir issue, asserting that any issue between the two countries should be resolved bilaterally. PAGE 10

Operate Only With J&K Bank: Admin Tells Officers

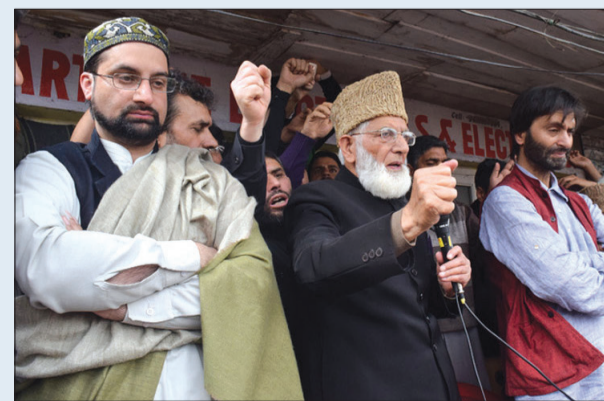
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Friday directed officers to close all official accounts in banks other than the J&K Bank by January 31 or face stern disciplinary action. The J&K administration had last year issued a direction to accounts officers and drawing and disbursing (DDOs) asking them to open official accounts only in J&K Bank. The J&K Bank is the official bank of the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir. However, a circular issued by Financial Commissioner Arun Kumar Mehta said that the finance department has noted that despite the standing instructions, there are instances of official accounts having been opened in banks other than the J&K Bank. The circular reiterated that the official accounts opened in other banks shall be closed forthwith and balances shall be transferred to the accounts in J&K Bank by or before PAGE 10

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Invisible Hurriyat: Has The Crackdown Grounded Amalgam For Good?

KO CORRESPONDENT Like their mainstream counterparts, major separatist leaders in Kashmir have also been under detention since the scrapping of Article 370 on August 5. They include top Hurriyat leaders like Syed Ali Geelani and Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, both of whom are under house arrest. The JKLF supreme Yaseen Malik who is a part of the Hurriyat triumvirate along with Geelani and Mirwaiz was arrested and sent to Tihar jail in the run up to August 5 move. So, unlike during extended 2016 unrest following the killing of militant commander

Burhan Wani, Hurriyat has been conspicuously absent from the scene. The separatist amalgam has been unable to issue hartal and protest calls. Even the few leaders who have not been detained have stayed short of doing it, in the absence of a direction from the top leaders. A few calls for hartal which were attributed to Geelani are believed to have been issued from across the border. So, people in the Valley were by and large left without any plan of action in the wake of withdrawal of Article 370. Intermittent protests notwithstanding, Kashmir Valley remained eerily calm. Markets



remained uninterrupted for four months. Public transport was off the roads. But in recent past, the businesses have started tentatively reopening and public transport has returned to roads. Kashmir is now largely nor-

mal. Rather the Valley has lapsed into normalcy following a drawn civil disobedience. Both Hurriyat and mainstream leadership have remained disconnected from it. It is difficult to say how the two ideological camps will react once the leaders are released. More so, the Hurriyat which before August 5 had threatened agitation against withdrawal of Article 370. At the same time, Hurriyat approach towards Article 370 has been marred by some ideological scruples. The amalgam which basically spearheads the movement for freedom for Kashmir occasionally fights shy of advocating for restoration of

J&K's autonomy under India's constitution. So, an agitation geared to bring back Article 370 is construed as a climbdown from the Azadi bandwagon. But, in past, Yaseen Malik has defended Hurriyat support for Article 370 on the premise that its withdrawal will pave way for demographic change in J&K and hence undermine struggle for freedom. The amalgam has thus always been at the forefront of the struggle against attempts to tinker with J&K's special constitutional status but in the name of struggle for freedom. The detention of top leaders on August 5 has, however, crippled the grouping's PAGE 10