



Maximum : 8°C  
Minum : -3°C  
Humidity : 71%

SUNSET  
Today 06:17 PM  
SUNRISE  
Tomorrow 07:12 AM



# OBSERVER

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..... LIFE & TIMES/08  
**PLAYING FREELY IN NATURE MAY BOOST  
COMPLEX THINKING, SOCIAL SKILLS IN KIDS**  
Any activity that gets children thinking and acting spontaneously outdoors without needing adult control can help them develop complex thinking abilities, social skills, and creativity, according to .....



**CENTRE TO SPEND RS 85 CRORE FOR DONALD  
TRUMP'S THREE-HOUR VISIT TO GUJARAT**  
US President Donald Trump will inaugurate the world's largest cricket stadium when he arrives in Ahmedabad, the home base of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Monday at the start of a two-day .....

11/SPORTS.....

**MESSI, HAMILTON SHARE LAUREUS WORLD SPORTSMAN  
OF YEAR HONOUR; BILES GETS THIRD AWARD**

British F1 ace Lewis Hamilton and Lionel Messi, arguably the world's greatest footballer, were declared the joint winners of the prestigious Laureus World Sportsman of the year award here. The duo received the same number of votes.....



## News Digest

### Police Detain Geelani's Domestic Help

Srinagar: Police on Tuesday detained a man who was working as a domestic help at the residence of ailing separatist leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani, official sources told PTI. Sirajuddin Ganaie was taken into custody outside Geelani's house this evening and shifted to a police station for questioning, they said. Ganaie, a resident of Tral in Pulwama district, was suspected to be circulating the videos of the Hurriyat Conference chairman through social media, the sources said. ● P10

### Tasaduq Mufti Meets Mehbooba

Srinagar: Tasaduq Mufti Tuesday met her sister and former Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti, who is lodged at a government quarter in this capital city. The incarcerated PDP President and former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Mehbooba Mufti received her brother Tasaduq Mufti, who arrived here around noon today, a local newsgathering agency KNT reported. The siblings spent around an hour with each other. Mehbooba Mufti has been kept in solitary. ● P10

### CRPF Vehicle Hits Car, 2 Hurt

Srinagar: At least two tourists from Madhya Pradesh were injured on Tuesday when their car was hit by a CRPF vehicle in Qazigund area of south Kashmir's Anantnag district. Harshid Divedi and Nana Divedi, both residents of Madhya Pradesh were injured when the car they were travelling in, was hit by a CRPF vehicle in Qazigund today, a local newsgathering agency KNT reported. The tourists were on their way to Jammu when the accident happened. ● P10

### Uri Woman Ends Life

Srinagar: A woman allegedly committed suicide at her house in Salamabad area of Uri in north Kashmir's Baramulla district. The woman (name withheld) consumed some poisonous substance at her home in Salamabad, police sources told KNT. She was rushed to hospital where she breathed her last. Police have registered a case and set investigation into motion.

### 2 Drug Peddlers Held In Sopore: Police

Srinagar: Police on Tuesday claimed to have arrested two drug peddlers and recovered contraband substance from their possession in Sopore town of north Kashmir. Police intercepted two people at a checkpoint at Magraypora crossing in Sopore and seized contraband substance from their possession, a police spokesperson said. Both the persons were arrested and shifted to Police Station Sopore. Police identified the accused as Bashir Ahmad Baba. ● P10

## Panchayat Bypolls In J&K Postponed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**JAMMU: The bypolls to panchayats scheduled from March 5 in Jammu and Kashmir has been postponed due to security reasons, J&K Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Shailendra Kumar said on Tuesday.**

By-election to over 12,500 panchayat seats in Jammu and Kashmir was scheduled to be held in eight phases from March 5. The announcement in this regard was made by the Election Commission (EC) last week.

"The bypolls to panchayats has been postponed for three weeks due to security reasons," Kumar said.

He said this step was taken after inputs given to him by the home department over security issues.

The eight-phase poll was earlier scheduled to be held from March 5 to March 20 on a party basis. The polling was slated for March 5, March 7, March 9, March 12, >>PAGE 10



### Mir Not Allowed To Visit Srinagar: Cong to CEO

**JAMMU:** The Jammu and Kashmir Congress on Tuesday claimed that despite issuance of notification for the panchayat by-election in the union territory, its chief GA Mir was not allowed to visit Srinagar to hold poll-related meetings. The Congress leadership raised the issue at a pre-poll meeting with J&K Chief Election Officer (CEO) Shalinder Kumar. By-election to over 12,500 panchayat seats in Jammu and Kashmir will be held in eight phases beginning March 5.

The party said Mir was not allowed to visit. ● P10

## India, Pak Troops Trade Fire In Poonch

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**JAMMU:** India and Pakistan troops exchanged heavy gunfire along the Line of Control (LoC) in the twin sectors of Shahpur and Kirni in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said Tuesday.

Pakistani troops violated the ceasefire and resorted to firing and shelling along the LoC in the Shahpur and Kirni sectors for a brief period today, the officials said, adding that there were no reports of any casualties. The Pakistani troops resorted to small arms firing and shelling.

The firing and shelling by the Pakistani troops triggered a fear psychosis among the LoC residents in the wake of recent casualties and damage to a few houses, they added. Meanwhile, the Army detected and defused three mortar shells fired by Pakistani troops in Balakote and Mendhar along the LoC, officials said. The shells had landed in hamlets on Thursday last but did not explode. The bomb disposal squads of the Army detected them and defused them safely, they said.

### Forest Fire Triggers Mine Blasts

A forest fire triggered several mine blasts along the Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch district, officials said. The fire broke out in Balakote sector and spread to various areas, they said. As a result of the fire, several mines exploded, triggering panic among the residents, the officials said. The fire was brought under control by Army and forest personnel within a few hours, they said.

## What's The Rush: Soz Wants Delhi To Wait For Delimitation Exercise

OBSERVER NEWS SERVICE

**SRINAGAR:** Former Union minister Saifuddin Soz on Tuesday said the Centre should undertake the delimitation exercise in Jammu and Kashmir only after the Union Territory elects a legislative assembly to prevent arbitrary distribution of seats.

The Congress leader's remarks came a day after Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora named Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra as his nominee for the proposed Delimitation Commission for Jammu and Kashmir.

"The Union Home Minis-

try has prioritized to Institute Jammu and Kashmir Delimitation Commission. This is on expected lines" Soz said in a statement, adding "Soon after the Parliament had passed the J&K Reorganisation Act, 2019 on 9th August, 2019, I had imagined that 'Kashmir Centric' events would follow, one after the other".

"I want to remind the people that the Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir which forbade Delimitation till 2031 is no longer in existence. The Delimitation Commission has to increase the number of seats in the Union Territory of J&K by 7 seats >>PAGE 10

## Govt Indulging In Propaganda, Misinformation: Iltija Mufti

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI:** Iltija Mufti, daughter of incarcerated former chief minister Mehbooba Mufti said on Tuesday that the government was indulging in propaganda and spreading misinformation after abrogating the special status of Jammu and Kashmir.

Speaking at a press conference, she said Article 370 was Kashmir's "emotional connect" with the rest of India, and the abrogation of its provisions has come at a great cost.

"I am talking not just as Mehbooba Mufti's daughter, but also as an anguished Kashmiri.



We all know what has been happening since Article 370 was abrogated.

"It was an emotional connect for Kashmiris with the rest of the country and that was abrogated. The clampdown had had a huge cost and Jammu and Kashmir is grappling with an economic, psychological and emotional crisis," she said. >>PAGE 10

## Pak PM Meets Guterres, Talks Kashmir

Imran Urges UN To Honour Its Commitments On Kashmir

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**ISLAMABAD:** Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday urged the UN to fulfil its commitments with the people of Kashmir and help them achieve right of self-determination as he met chief of the global body Antonio Guterres here.

During his meeting with the UN Secretary-General, Prime Minister Khan highlighted the "dire human

rights and humanitarian situation" in Jammu and Kashmir following India's August 5 decision to end the special status of the region.

"The Prime Minister underscored that the Kashmiri people continued to look to the United Nations to honour its commitments for the realisation of their right to self-determination, as enshrined in numerous UN Security Council resolutions," the Prime Minister's Office

said in a statement.

Tensions between India and Pakistan spiked after New Delhi ended the special status of Jammu and Kashmir on August 5 last year. India's decision evoked strong reactions from Pakistan, which downgraded its diplomatic ties and expelled the Indian envoy.

India has defended its move, saying the special status provisions only gave rise to terrorism in >>PAGE 10

## British MP's Visa Row: Cong Backs Govt Action

**NEW DELHI:** Congress leader Abhishek Manu Singhvi on Tuesday backed the government's deportation of British lawmaker Debbie Abrahams, saying she is not just an MP but a "Pakistan proxy".

Abrahams, who chairs a British parliamentary group on Kashmir, was denied entry into India upon her arrival at the New Delhi airport on Monday, with officials saying she was informed in advance that her e-visa had been cancelled.

"The deportation of Debbie Abrahams by India was indeed necessary, as she is not just an MP, but a Pak proxy known for her clasp with Pak

govt and ISI. Every attempt that tries to attack India's sovereignty must be thwarted," Singhvi tweeted.

Singhvi's party colleague Shashi Tharoor had, however, tweeted in support of Abrahams on Monday.

"I find it ironic that some of the same people who applauded me for going to Britain as an Indian MP & telling them off about their colonial misbehaviour, are attacking me for wanting India to grant a British MP the same privilege! If we can dish it out, we shld be able to take it," Tharoor wrote on the microblogging site.



## Visa Revoked Over 'Anti-India Activities': Govt Sources

**B**ritish lawmaker Debbie Abrahams' e-Business visa was revoked as she was involved in anti-India activities, and the cancellation was conveyed to her on February 14, government sources said on Tuesday. Asserting that the grant, rejection or revocation of a visa or electronic travel authorisation is the sovereign right of a country, the sources said Abrahams was issued an e-Business visa on October 7 last year which was valid till October 5, 2020 for attending business meetings. "Her e-Business visa was revoked on February 14, 2020 on account of her indulging in activities. ● P10

## NIA Files Chargesheet Against 2 Lashkar Militants

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**JAMMU:** The NIA has chargesheeted two Pakistan-controlled-Kashmir (PcK) residents associated with Lashker-e-Taiba outfit, who were caught by the Army for allegedly smuggling arms and ammunition into Jammu and Kashmir from the higher reaches of Gulmarg, an official

spokesman said on Tuesday.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) filed the chargesheet at the designated court here on February 15 against Khalil Ahmad Kayani and Mohammed Nazem under various sections of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and the Arms Act, besides invoking clauses of the Jammu and Kashmir Egress and >>PAGE 10

## Man Booked For Fraudulently Obtaining PRC In Jammu

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**JAMMU:** The Crime Branch of Jammu and Kashmir police on Tuesday booked a man for fraudulently obtaining permanent resident certificate (PRC) in connivance with revenue department staffs, officials said.

The Crime Branch registered a criminal case against the accused, identified as Mohinder Pal Singh of R S Pura (Jammu),

for fraudulently obtaining PRC in connivance with revenue officials, they said.

By virtue of PRC, he took all the benefits of being a resident of Jammu and Kashmir, including allotment of land at Korotana Kalan village in R S Pura and a compensation of Rs 5,49,665, thereby cheating the government, they said.

A written complaint was lodged by a person >>PAGE 10

## At Harwan, A Grid Station Eats Up Protected Fruit Bearing Trees

ATHAR PARVAIZ

**SRINAGAR:** Despite strong opposition from the Horticulture Department, the 160 MVA, 220/33KV GIS grid station, to be constructed at Haripora Harwan, will come at a cost of 17 Kanals of horticultural land and felling of 56 walnut, chestnut and peach trees nourished by the horticulture department for years over 17 Kanals of orchard land which has now been taken over by Power Development Department (PDD).

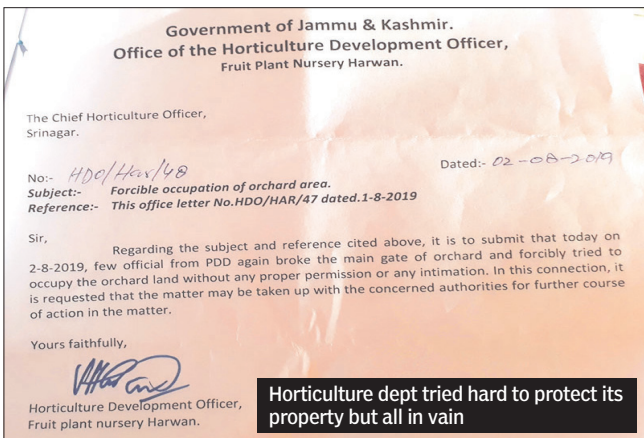
Official communications ac-

cessed by Kashmir Observer, have revealed that Deputy Commissioner Srinagar's office has steered clear of granting explicit permission for felling of 17 fruit-bearing walnut trees at the proposed site for construction of grid station. But, all the trees at the site, including 17 fruit-bearing walnut trees stand axed. PDD has gone ahead with axing all the trees on the orchard land including the 17 fruit-bearing walnut trees (as per the official records of Department of Horticulture). The construction of grid station is yet to start, but

all the trees on the 17 Kanals of land have been felled.

According to the official records 56 trees in the orchard have been axed, 48 of them bearing fruit. The fruit-bearing trees include 17 walnut trees, 24 chestnut trees and seven peach trees. The Power Development Department (PDD) is constructing the Grid station at Haripora to connect it with the Alsteng-Ganderbal Grid Station which was commissioned on Saturday.

As per the official communications seen by the Kashmir Observer, the horticulture



Horticulture dept tried hard to protect its property but all in vain

department has tried hard to deny the orchard land to PDD for the construction of grid station, but their efforts have not borne fruit.

Interestingly, while seeking permission from the Deputy Commissioner Srinagar's office for felling of trees in the orchard, the PDD had pegged the total number of trees in the orchard at 58 which included five fruit-bearing walnut trees, 21 fruit-bearing chestnut trees, six fruit-bearing peach trees, 20 walnut trees without fruit, two old and dried walnut trees,

three old and dried chestnut trees and one dried peach tree.

However, while granting the permission, the DC Srinagar's office has given permission for cutting down all the trees, but has chosen not to mention the walnut trees except two dead and dried walnut trees.

The operative part of an order on 31-07-201 from the Deputy Commissioner office reads: "Whereas the Executive Engineer TLCD 2nd PDD Srinagar wide his communication bearing No. TLCD2S/TS/1622-25 Dated 30-07-2019 >>PAGE 10