



Maximum : 9°C
Minimum : -2°C
Humidity : 62%

SUNSET
Today 06:21 PM
SUNRISE
Tomorrow 07:08 AM

OBSERVER

23rd year OF PUBLICATION KASHMIR

28 Jumada ul-Sani | 1441 Hijri | Vol:23 | Issue:46 | Pages:12 | Price: ₹3

www.kashmirobserver.net • twitter.com / kashmirobserver • facebook.com/kashmirobserver • Postal Regn: L/159/KO/SK/2014-2016



Contact: -0194-2502327
FOR SUBSCRIPTIONS &
YOUR COPY OF



.....LIFE & TIMES/ 08

SOIL HEALTH CARD BOOSTS

FARM INCOME UP TO RS 30,000/ACRE

Use of soil health card has helped farmers reduce substantially the cost of production and achieve higher production, thereby increasing farm income up to Rs 30,000 per acre, depending on the crop, according to.....

OS NEWS.....



TRUMP WILL RAISE ISSUE OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM WITH NARENDRA MODI: WHITE HOUSE
U.S. president Donald Trump will raise the issue of religious freedom with prime minister Narendra Modi during his visit to India that is starting on February 24, the White House said on Friday.....

11/SPORTS.....

INDIA-NZ 1ST TEST: ISHANT SIZZLES, WILLIAMSON DAZZLES ON AN INTRIGUING SECOND DAY

Ishant Sharma's lion-hearted bowling effort met its match in Kane Williamson's elegance as New Zealand ended an attritional second day of the opening Test against India with a slight upper-hand, here on Saturday.....



News Digest

Lashkar Worker Arrested In Sopore: Police

Srinagar: Police on Saturday claimed to have arrested an over-ground worker of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) outfit from Sopore area of Baramulla district. According to a police spokesperson, Muzamil Ahmad War of Warpora was providing logistic support and shelter to the active militants of LeT outfit operating in Sopore. "Incriminating materials have been recovered from his possession. Case under relevant sections of law stands registered against him," the police spokesperson added.

Truck Falls Into Ramban Gorge, Driver Killed

BANIHAI: A truck driver was killed after his vehicle skidded off the road and plunged into a deep gorge in Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban district early on Saturday morning, police said. The deceased was identified as Jagdish Kumar (40), a resident of Udhampur district's Ramnagar area, they said. The truck, which was loaded with washing machines and refrigerators, was on its way to Srinagar from Jammu. It skidded off the road and rolled down into a 400 feet deep gorge at Chahal was near Banihal in Ramban around 5 am, a police • P10

DTO Suspended On Alleged Graft Charges

Kupwara: The District Treasury Officer (DTO) Kupwara on Saturday was under suspension over alleged charges of corruption. DTO Kupwara, Mohammad Ashraf Ahanger was placed under suspension on the directions of Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Baseer Ahmad Khan, an official spokesperson said today. Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Anshul Garg had recommended his suspension. The suspended officer has been attached with the office of Director Accounts and Treasuries, Kashmir, Srinagar. The complaint was filed by Sajad Hussain Shah before • P10

Amarnath Yatra Arrangements Reviewed

Srinagar: Senior Jammu and Kashmir officials on Saturday convened a meeting to review arrangements being put in place for the smooth conduct of the ensuing Amarnath Yatra 2020. The meeting was chaired by Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, Baseer Ahmad Khan. The Divisional Commissioner directed the district administration of Anantnag to conduct a joint survey with DIG CRPF to find out whether more yatris (pilgrims) can be accommodated. The team will also inspect FCI area at Mir Bazar for an additional transit camp, in which 1,500 yatris will be accommodated. Khan also directed • P10

Trump To Raise Kashmir Issue With PM Modi

OBSERVER NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: The United States President Donald Trump is expected to raise Kashmir issue with Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his two-day visit to India on February 24.

"I think what you'll hear from the President is very much encouraging a reduction in tensions between India and Pakistan, encouraging the two countries to engage in bilateral dialogue with each other to resolve their differences," a senior administration official said in Washington, when asked whether Trump would offer to mediate on the Kashmir issue again during his upcoming maiden visit to India.

Trump had last month again offered to help resolve the dispute between India and Paki-



Sikh Leader Urges Community Members to Remain Vigilant

A Sikh organisation on Saturday asked the community members in Kashmir to remain vigilant ahead of US President Donald Trump's visit to India, saying such high profile visits bring back memories of the 2002 Chattisinghpura massacre when unidentified gunmen killed 36 Sikhs. "The visit of a high profile foreign personality especially that from the US leads • P10

stan, saying that the US was watching the developments between the two countries over Kashmir "very closely".

Although Trump offered to mediate on the Kashmir issue in the past, New Delhi has told Washington that it is a bilateral matter between India and Pakistan and there is no scope for any third-party mediation.

"We continue to believe a core foundation of any successful dialogue between the two is based on continued momentum in Pakistan's efforts to crack down on terrorist extremists on its territory. We continue to look for that. I think the President will urge both countries to seek to maintain peace and stability along the line of control and refrain from actions or statements that could increase • PAGE 10

2 Lashkar Militants Killed In Anantnag Gunfight

OBSERVER NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: Two Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) militants were killed in a gunfight with state forces in Anantnag district of Jammu and Kashmir on Friday night, police said.

They have been identified as Naveed Ahmad Bhat alias Furqaan, a resident of Qaimoh in Kulgam, and Aqib Yaseen Bhat, a resident of Wanpora Qaimoh, also in Kulgam, Director General of Jammu and Kashmir Police Dilbag Singh told reporters here. Singh described the encounter, which took place at Sangam in Bijbehara area of south Kashmir, as another successful counter-militancy operation by state forces in the valley.

The DGP said Naveed Ahmad Bhat had joined the LeT outfit in 2018 and was involved in a number of militancy-related incidents.

"Seven FIRs stand registered against him. He was involved in carrying out attacks on police and security forces camps, firing on civilians, threatening

and intimidating people and shopkeepers and pasting posters post the abrogation of Article 370, Singh said.

He said Aqib Yaseen Bhat was active since June 2019 and was also involved in a number of militancy-related incidents.

The gunfight took place during the night and some • PAGE 10

240-250 Militants Active In Kashmir: DGP

The number of listed militants in Kashmir has come down to less than 250, while 25 militants were killed by security forces in nearly a dozen operations in the first two months of this year, Director General of Jammu and Kashmir Police Dilbag Singh said here on Saturday. He also said there has been confirmation of only three militants infiltrating into the Valley through the International Border so far this year. "The number of listed militants has come down from what it was earlier. Around 240 to 250 listed militants are there • P10

India, Pak Troops Trade Fire For Second Day In Poonch

AGENCIES

SRINAGAR: India and Pakistan troops exchanged heavy gunfire for the second consecutive day Saturday along the Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir.

According to sources, Pakistani Army resorted to unprovoked firing from across the LoC in the Qasba, Shahpur and Kirni sectors of Poonch district this morning.

According to details, firing, which started this morning, was going on from both sides.

Sources said Indian army was giving a befitting response to Pakistani firing. • PAGE 10

Cab Falls Into Kathua Gorge, 9 Dead

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

JAMMU: Nine people, including three women and as many children, were killed and five others injured on Saturday when a passenger cab skidded off the road and fell into a deep gorge in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district, officials said.

The accident took place around 5.30 pm in remote Malhar village when the driver of a Tata Sumo lost control over the vehicle which rolled down into the 300 feet deep gorge, the officials said. The vehicle was on way to Nailo village, they said, adding the villagers • PAGE 10

Kashmir Schools To Reopen On Monday



OBSERVER NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: All schools in Kashmir are set to re-open on February 24 after the winter break, officials said Saturday.

Director School Education Mo-

hammad Younis Malik said all arrangements were in place. While the timing for school in the Srinagar municipal limits will be 10 a.m. to 3 p.m, for others it will be 10.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. Malik was speaking at • PAGE 10

Our Next Goal Is Pak-Controlled Kashmir: Ram Madhav

Says Art 370 Revocation Was First Step Towards 'Akhand Bharat'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI: The abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution was the first step towards fulfilling the objective of "Akhand Bharat" and its next step would be to take back the Pakistan-controlled Kashmir (PcK), BJP national general secretary Ram Madhav said on Saturday.

The abrogation of Article 370 was a step towards the goal of "Akhand Bharat" (integral India), said Madhav, while address-



ing the participants of "Chhatra Sansad" in Vigyan Bhawan here.

Asked by a participant when will the dream of Akhand Bharat be realised, he said, "It will happen in phases. The first thing is that Jammu and Kashmir which was somewhat not in the mainstream, has been holistically connected to India."

"Our next objective is to take back the Indian land which is under illegal occupation of Pakistan," said the senior BJP leader, pointing out that a resolution to take back PCK had been passed by the Parliament in 1994. • PAGE 10

Govt Designates Commercial Courts In J&K UT

AGENCIES

SRINAGAR: The government of Jammu & Kashmir has designated commercial courts in the Union Territory, reports said Saturday.

The courts have been designated by the government in consultation with common High Court of J&K under the commercial courts, commercial divisor and commercial appellate division of High Courts Act, 2015, a local newsgathering agency KNO reported today.

As per a notification, the courts of additional district judge (bank cases) at Jammu and Srinagar as commercial courts respectively for Srinagar and Jammu districts.

The principal district courts in remaining 18 districts of the UT

have been designated as commercial courts, it further states.

The notification has been issued by the Department of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs.

According to the notification, the commercial courts will have jurisdiction over cases of Rs three lakh and above. "In exercise of powers conferred by sub-section (1A) of Section 3 of the said Act, and in consultation with the common High Court of Jammu and Kashmir, the pecuniary value of the jurisdiction of the above-mentioned cases is fixed at Rs three lakh and above," reads the notification. It is worthwhile to mention here that government had last month designated Principal District and Session judge courts • PAGE 10

I Pray For Mehbooba, Abdullahs Early Release: Rajnath

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Saturday said that he is praying for the early release of three former chief ministers of Jammu & Kashmir from their detention and hoping that they will contribute to normalizing situation in Kashmir.

In an interview with IANS today, Singh said that after abrogation of special status, Kashmir has been peaceful and the situation was improving rapidly.

"Along with the improvement, these decisions (release of politicians from detention) will also be finalized. The government has not tortured anyone" he said.

Defending the government's move to revoke special status



accorded to Jammu and Kashmir, the Defence Minister said that certain steps had been taken in the interests of Kashmir.

"Everybody should welcome it," he said.

Singh said he will pray for the early release of the Abdullahs and Mufti from their detention.

"I also pray that once they are out, they work and contribute towards improvement of the situation in Kashmir," he said.

National Conference (NC) Patron Farooq Abdullah, his son Omar and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) chief Mehbooba Mufti and hundreds of main-

stream and separatist leaders were detained on August 5 last year, hours before the Centre revoked the special status of J&K and bifurcated it into two Union Territories, carving out Ladakh as a separate UT.

The Public Safety Act (PSA) is an administrative detention law that allows detention of any individual for up to two years without a trial or charge. The Act that allows for the arrest and detention of people without a warrant, specific charges, and often for an unspecified period of time has been in vogue in Kashmir since 1978.

Ironically, PSA was introduced by Omar's grandfather and the then Chief Minister Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah in 1978 to book timber smugglers • PAGE 10

J-K Institute, Canadian Firm Ink Pact On Cannabis Research

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir will be the first in the country to develop medicines from the cannabis plant, said Union minister Jitendra Singh describing it a "historic" achievement.

The CSIR-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (IIIM), Jammu, signed a major agreement on cannabis research with IndusCann, a Canadian company, here on Saturday in the presence of the Union minister and R R Bhatnagar, adviser to Lt Governor G C Murmu.

"This is the first-of-its-kind project in India and a historic moment for Jammu and Kashmir. Till now, we only have the misuse and abuse of this ancient • P10