

News Digest

Fresh Traffic Allowed On Kashmir Highway

Srinagar: The authorities on Tuesday allowed fresh traffic on the Srinagar-Jammu highway after clearing the vital road link, connecting Valley with rest of the country, of stranded vehicles. Traffic today plied from Srinagar to Jammu today after all the vehicles stranded on the strategic 270-km highway were cleared by the officials, a police official said today. The highway was closed for traffic on Saturday after heavy rain triggered shooting stones on the Ramban-Banihal stretch.

PCI Team To Visit Kashmir On Saturday

Srinagar: A three-member sub-committee of Press Council of India (PCI) would be visiting Kashmir on a four-day visit on Saturday. The PCI team will arrive in Kashmir on March 14 and will meet newspaper owners, journalists, press club members besides enior government functionaries dueing their four-day stay in Kashmir, news agency KNS reported today.

Nursing Student Found Dead In Soura

Srinagar: A Nursing student on Tuesday was found dead at her rented house in Srinagar outskirts. The female student (name withheld) was found dead at her rented accommodation in Soura locality of the city outskirts this morning, news agency KNT reported. The slain was a student of a private college here. She was a native of South Kashmir's Dooru. Meanwhile, a police official said that prima facie, it seems a natural death, however, they have registered a case for investigation.

Police Claims Arrest Of Drug Peddler

Srinagar: Police on Tuesday claimed to have arrested a drug peddler and recovered contraband substance from his possession in the city outskirts. A police team intercepted an auto rickshaw on the 90-foot road here and recovered 50 grams of cannabis from the possession of the driver identified as Javid Ahmad Bhat of Nagbal. The accused was arrested by police and his vehicle seized, a police spokesperson said. "Case FIR No. 17/2020 under relevant sections of law has been registered in Police Station Soura. Further investigation into the matter is in progress," he added.

Six Shops Guttred In Srinagar Fire

Srinagar: At least six shops were destroyed in a fire incident in Alamgari Bazar area of the Old City. According to news agency KNT fire raged from a shop that engulfed five other shops within no time. In the incident, property worth lakhs were destroyed. Prima facie, short circuit seems to be the cause of the fire, but police have taken up the investigation and trying to ascertain the facts.

CRPF Trooper Injured In Pulwama Grenade Attack



SRINAGAR: A Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) trooper was injured on Tuesday after militants lobbed a grenade on police station Kakpora in south Kashmir's Pulwama district. Sonu Kumar of CRPF 41 battalion sustained splinter injuries when militants lobbed a grenade inside the police station Kakpora this evening, a police official told news agency GNS. The injured trooper was shifted to hospital for treatment, the official said. Soon after the blast, the cops manning the main gate fired several shots in air triggering panic in the area. The state forces also launched search operation in the area to nab the attackers, the report said.

Threat Of Coronavirus Pandemic 'Has Become Very Real', Says WHO

Agencies

GENEVA: The coronavirus is closer to causing a pandemic but outbreaks in countries can still be controlled through a combination of containment and mitigation measures, the World Health Organisation (WHO) said on Monday.

"Now that the virus has a foothold in so many countries, the threat of a pandemic has become very real," Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO director-general, told a news conference. "But it would be the first pandemic that could be controlled."

The bottom line is we are not at the mercy of the virus. "Four countries account for 93% of the nearly 110,000 cases worldwide, Tedros said.

"We are encouraged that Italy is taking aggressive measures to contain its epidemic and we hope that those measures prove effective in the coming days," he added.

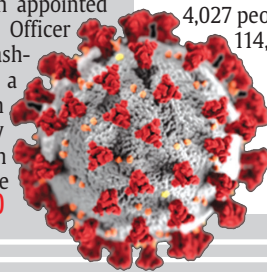
Man Suspected Of Coronavirus Admitted To SKIMS

705 Persons Under Radar In J&K, Reports of 29 Awaited; 26 Test Negative

Auqib Javed

SRINAGAR: As the threat of deadly coronavirus looms large over the Valley, the Sher-e-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), Soura on Tuesday admitted another suspected case of the infection for quarantine.

Dr Ghulam Hassan Yatoo who has been appointed COVID- 19 Nodal Officer at SKIMS, told Kashmir Observer that a male patient with a travel history from Iran has been admitted at the isolation



Children Least Affected By Coronavirus: DAK

The Doctors Association Kashmir (DAK) on Tuesday said children are least affected by the novel coronavirus that has so far killed at least 4,027 people and infected 114,458 worldwide. "Kids are largely spared by the novel virus," said DAK President

HC Suspends Bio Metric Attendance Till March 31

Observer News Service

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir High Court on Tuesday ordered suspension of bio metric attendance system of the staff till March 31 and impressed upon lawyers and litigants to avoid unnecessary overcrowding

400 Calls Made, Received At Srinagar Control Room

SRINAGAR: The round-the-clock control room established in Srinagar as part of arrangements put in place to prevent spread of novel coronavirus has made and received some 400 calls since Monday afternoon

NC Demands Release Of 3 Ex-CMs, Others 'Detention Of Leaders Unprecedented, Highly Undemocratic'

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Expressing serious concern over prolonged detention of mainstream leaders for over seven months, National Conference today welcomed the joint statement of the opposition seeking release of detainees in Kashmir including three former chief ministers, saying curbs on civil liberties don't augur well for the largest democracy of the world.

"The appeal made by the opposition to the Centre for release of detainees and restoration of political

activities in Jammu and Kashmir is reflection of deeply ingrained democratic spirit of the country that has been acknowledged globally", senior National Conference

leaders said in a joint statement issued from Sher-e-Kashmir Bhavan here this afternoon.

Incarcerated Omar Abdullah Turns 50

Former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Omar Abdullah turned 50 on Tuesday and spent the day at Hari Nivas here where he has been under detention for the last seven months. Detained under the stringent Public Safety Act (PSA), Omar had a quiet day in the sub-jail not far from his residence on Gupkar road. His mother, sisters and some other members of the family met him for sometime in the afternoon.

His father and five time chief minister Farooq Abdullah, himself a PSA detainee, could not meet his son on his special day.

Masrat Alam Produced Before TADA Court

Agencies

JAMMU: Senior separatist leader and President Jammu Kashmir Muslim League, Masarat Alam Bhat on Tuesday was presented before a TADA court here in a case filed against him by Jammu and Kashmir Police in 2012.

The firebrand separatist leader who has mostly been in jail since 2010, was produced by police before the TADA court here today, news agency KNT reported.

After listening the arguments from the Public Prosecutor and the Counsel representing Alam, the court

4 Children Among 5 Killed In Udhampur House Collapse



Press Trust Of India

UDHAMPUR - Five members, including four children, of a family died and another was injured when a boulder hit a house in Jammu

and Kashmir's Udhampur district early on Tuesday, officials said. The incident occurred at Barmean village in Ramnagar area, following which the house totally collapsed and five family members

British Legal Body Calls For Mian Qayoom's Release

Observer News Service

London: A British legal body has expressed concern over the continued detention of senior Kashmiri lawyer and President High Court Bar Association Mian Abdul Qayoom and sought his immediate release.

In a letter written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 5, The Law Society of England and Wales said that they

were gravely concerned about Qayoom, who has been detained under the Public Safety Act 1978 (PSA), along with others who were arrested after the government of India repealed Article 370 of the Constitution of India.

The legal body also sent copies of the letter signed by Simon Davis, president of the Law Society of England & Wales, to Home Minister Amit Shah, Chief Justice of India Sharad Arvind Bobde, and National

Rechristening Landmarks Expose UT Govt's Priorities: Bukhari 'Release Salaries Of Daily Wagers Than Following A Renaming Frenzy'

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR - Jammu Kashmir Apni Party (JKAP) President Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari on Tuesday took a strong exception to the priorities of Union Territory Government saying that instead of rechristening names of roads and buildings, the focus should have been on addressing the issues and sufferings of people.

Referring to the decision of Jammu and Kashmir administration, by virtue of which, it dropped 'Sher-i-Kashmir', from the title of government owned convention centre 'Sher-i-Kashmir International Con-

ference Centre' and renamed it as Kashmir International Conference Centre, Bukhari in a statement said that by changing names of landmarks, the priorities of the government seem less apt about the day-to-day difficulties faced by the people especially the unemployed youth of Jammu and Kashmir.

"It is highly unfortunate that the present dispensation in Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir has started indulging in selective tokenism, with its administration not able to grapple with the complexities and challenges of governance," Bukhari remarked.

He said that instead of focusing on public welfare measures and addressing issues of basic amenities

the government has restored to kind of chicanery in order to cover up for its ineptitude and

Dropping 'Sher-E-Kashmir' Title An Attack On History Of J&K: Tarigami

The state unit of CPI(M) on Tuesday slammed the government's move to remove the title of 'Sher-e-Kashmir' from the international convention complex here and termed the decision as a 'brazen attack' on the history of Jammu and Kashmir.

In a statement issued here, CPI(M) leader Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami said that removing NC founder's name was a brazen attack on the history of Jammu and Kashmir and to



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Why It May Not Be Easy For Apni Party To Become 'Our Party'

KO CORRESPONDENT

Finally, Apni Party was launched in Kashmir on Sunday. As expected, its leader Altaf Bukhari made politically correct noises, staying well short of demanding a reversal of the revocation of the Article 370 which granted J&K autonomy under India's constitution. Instead, he chose to focus on what he termed as "achievable demands", which includes statehood for J&K and domicile rights for land and government jobs. While these demands do resonate with people of J&K, a preponderant majority is loathe to let go of the semi-autonomous status enjoyed by the region under Article

370. So, it is unlikely that Bukhari's party will find much of a purchase in J&K. That is, unless it is the only party that is allowed to carry out the political activity in the region and which is the case as of now.

As is well-known, New Delhi has imprisoned the top leadership of the main regional parties like National Conference and the PDP. Or for that matter that of the smaller parties like People's Conference and J&K People's Movement floated last year by the former IAS topper Shah Faesal. This has brought their political activities to a halt. For the past seven months, none of these parties has held a rally, a public outreach program or even a

press conference.

Ditto for separatist groups. Almost all their leadership and the activists have been jailed. They have thus struggled to even issue a call for a hartal, let alone hold protests, otherwise their regular activity.

The consequent political vacuum certainly needed filling. But with a political representation that gave voice to the aspirations and the grievances of the people and certainly not with the one that is seen to work variance with it.

So, on the face of it, Apni Party is unlikely to find a spontaneous support for its politics. Its relevance, if any, under the circumstances hinges on an absence of a political



opposition and which centre has so far ensured by denying space to the established parties across

mainstream-separatist divide.

But there is a limit to centre's role. For example, it cannot pre-

vent the other parties from participating in the polls, which will be the real test for Apni Party. And should the other parties contest the future elections, as looks

likely, Apni Party is unlikely to fare well. Although, some of its leaders do enjoy a strong support base in their respective constituencies, a perceived pro-New Delhi tilt of Bukhari's party may not translate into votes. That is unless centre re-

sorts to wholesale rigging of polls, ala 1987 style, when a Congress government at the centre facilitated manipulation of election in favour of National Conference. Mus-

lim United Front which otherwise had appeared favourite to sweep the polls ended up winning just four seats. But it may not be easy or advisable for the centre under the BJP to go that far this time.

Bukhari will have to

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