



Maximum : 9°C
Minimum : 4°C
Humidity : 78%

SUNSET
Today 06:37 PM
SUNRISE
Tomorrow 06:44 AM



OBSERVER

23rd year OF PUBLICATION

KASHMIR

17 Rajab-UL-Murajjab | 1441 Hijri | Vol:23 | Issue:62 | Pages:12 | Price: ₹3

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

LIFE & TIMES / 08 MASK-WEARERS CAN BE IDENTIFIED WITH CHINESE FACIAL RECOGNITION TECHNOLOGY

A Chinese company says it has developed the country's first facial recognition technology that can identify people when they are wearing a mask, as most are these days because of the coronavirus, and help

05/NEWS....



DELHI POLICE DELIBERATELY TARGETED MUSLIMS DURING RIOTS: NYT REPORT

A report published by the The New York Times on Thursday said that recent evidence suggests that New Delhi police "concertedly moved against Muslims" and "actively helped Hindu mobs" that

11/ Sports.....

SAINA MAKES FIRST-ROUND EXIT FROM ALL ENGLAND; OLYMPIC QUALIFICATION BID TAKES A HIT

Indian badminton star Saina Nehwal's chances of qualifying for the Olympics took a hit after she made a first-round exit from the All England Championships, following a loss to Japanese nemesis Akane Yamaguchi. Up against world number three Yamaguchi, it was a tough opening round.....



News Digest

2 Absconders Held After 22 Years: Police

Srinagar: Police on Thursday claimed to have arrested two people who were evading arrest since 1998. Mehraj Din Bhat and Javed Ahmad Dar, both residents of Zoonimar Srinagar were arrested by a police party headed by Nikhil Borker-IPS (Prob) SHO Ram Munshi Bagh under the supervision of SDPO Nehru Park Dr. Sachit Sharma-JKPS and SP East Ms. Sheema Nabi, a police spokesperson said today. The duo were wanted in a case filed at police station Ram Mushi Bagh Srinagar in 1998. ● P10

'Drug Peddler' Slapped With PSA

Srinagar: An alleged drug peddler on Thursday was booked under the Public Safety Act (PSA) in Sopore town of Baramulla district. The accused identified as Tanveer Hassan of Reban Sopore was today booked under the PSA for his alleged involvement in supplying narcotics to youth in the town, news agency KNT reported today. It is for the third time in 3 weeks that Sopore police have recommended PSA against drug peddlers. A police spokesperson told the news agency that Hassan ● P10

Father Of Four Found Dead In Baramulla

Baramulla: Father of four children on Thursday was found dead under mysterious circumstances at his home in a village in north Kashmir's Baramulla district. Shabir Khan, son of Mohammad Yousuf Khan was found dead at his home in Zehanpora locality of Boniyar this morning, news agency KNO reported. Police officials said that it was not clear whether he has consumed the poisonous substance or he was administered the poison by ● P10

Police Claims Arrest Of Six Gamblers

Srinagar: Police on Thursday claimed to have arrested six gamblers from Harwan area of this capital city. According to an official spokesperson, on a specific inputs, a police team led by SHO Mir Hafeezullah carried out a raid at a gambling site at Chandpora area of Harwan and apprehended six gamblers on the spot. The team also recovered playing cards and a cash amount of Rs 8,500 from the alleged gamblers. The trio were shifted to ● P10

Inter-state Car Lifters Gang Busted: Police

Srinagar: An interstate gang of car thieves has been busted with the arrest of five people and seizure of nine stolen high-end SUVs, police said on Thursday. Investigation was launched after police came to know that some people were selling high-end vehicles at throwaway prices, raising suspicion that these might have been stolen. A case was registered at Parimpora Police Station and the investigation led to the arrests and seizure. The vehicles, ● P10

COVID-19 Is A 'Controllable Pandemic': WHO

Agencies

GENEVA – The new coronavirus outbreak "is a controllable pandemic" if countries step up measures to tackle it, the head of the World Health Organisation said on Thursday.

WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus acknowledged on Wednesday that the global outbreak of the new coronavirus could now be considered a pandemic – a disease actively spreading globally.

But he told diplomats in Geneva that describing the outbreak as a pandemic should not mean that countries give up the fight to stop it spreading further.

"This is a controllable pandemic," he said, according to a statement of his remarks.

"We are deeply concerned that some countries are not approaching this threat with the level of political commitment needed to control it. The idea that countries should shift from containment to mitigation is wrong and dangerous," he stressed.

More than 4,500 people have died, according to an AFP tally, while the WHO said some 125,000 cases had been reported from 118 countries and territories.

"To save lives we must reduce transmission," Tedros insisted.

"That means finding and isolating as many cases as possible and quarantining their closest contacts," he said, urging states to test every suspected ➤ PAGE 10



WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus's Covid-19 media briefing.

Another Man Tests Positive In Leh, 2 Suspects Admitted To SKIMS

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: One more person on Thursday tested positive for coronavirus in the recently carved out union territory of Ladakh, while two suspects were admitted to SKIMS here, even as the number of people under scanner in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir reached 1433 today.

A man hailing from Chushot Gomga area of Leh today tested positive to the deadly infection, Commissioner Secretary Rigzin Samphel said. He said the man was infected after being in touch with his father, who too had tested positive to the deadly ➤ PAGE 10

No Public Meetings, Darbars In JK Till March 31

JAMMU – In the view of coronavirus scare, the Jammu and Kashmir administration has put all darbars and public meetings in abeyance till 31 March 2020.

"All darbars and public meetings to be put in abeyance till 31 March," said the government spokesperson, Rohit Kansal on Twitter.

Earlier on Wednesday ● P10

WE ARE DEEPLY CONCERNED THAT SOME COUNTRIES ARE NOT APPROACHING this threat with the level of political commitment needed to control it. The idea that countries should shift from containment to mitigation is wrong and dangerous," he stressed.

Power Tariff Arrears In J&K Swells To Rs 9321.71 Cr JK, Central Govt Depts Major Defaulters; 11 HEPs Functional, 5 Under Construction

Agencies

SRINAGAR: A whopping sum of Rs. 9321.71 crore is due to Jammu and Kashmir Power Distribution Companies as arrears of electricity charges from Central and local government departments, industrial and domestic consumers.

Giving details about it, Union minister of state (independent charge) for power, new & renewable energy R.K. Singh informed parliament in a written reply that the government departments, both J&K and central, have Rs 5935.04 due as arrears— Rs 1864.20 crore to Kashmir Power Distribution Company Limited (KPDC) and Rs 4070.84 crores to Jammu Power Distribution Company Limited (JPDC) respectively.

Raju, who is also MoS for Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, said that industrial and commercial



consumers owe Rs 1462.33 crores— Rs 5891.81 crore to KPDC and Rs 880.52 crore to JPDC.

Domestic consumers have Rs 1924.34 crore due as arrears— Rs 828.29 crore to KPDC and Rs 1095.95 crore to JPDC.

Cumulatively, total due as arrears is due to KPDC is Rs 3274.40 crore and nearly double, Rs 6047.31 crore, to JPDC. The minister was responding to various questions by Hasnain Masoodi, the National Conference ➤ PAGE 10

7 Officials Get Notice Over Breach Of Service Conduct Rules

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir administration issued on Thursday show-cause notice to seven officials on probation in different departments on the charge of violation of service conduct rules.

According to an order issued by the General Administrative department (GAD), the probationers reportedly participated in protests at public spaces frequently and denounced the terms and conditions of service as contained in the Rules and Jammu and Kashmir Government Employees (Conduct) Rules, 1971.

The probationers have been asked to explain why their period of probation may not be terminated and ➤ PAGE 10



TWO GIRLS WALKING THROUGH SRINAGAR'S RESIDENCY Road on a rainy day Thursday. Pic: Abid Bhat

Mercury Dips After Rain, Snowfall In Valley

Agencies

SRINAGAR: World famous ski resort Gulmarg and other upper reaches received fresh snowfall while rain lashed plains in Kashmir valley on Thursday, resulting in sharp dip in day temperature.

However, the night temperature improved and settled above normal across the valley, where there is prediction of wet weather during 24 days.

A Met department spokesperson said light to moderate rain and snow would occur at many places during the 24 hours in the valley under the influence of a Western Disturbance (WD), which is active in the region. "The weather will remain wet on Friday," he said, adding the weather will start to improve from Saturday onwards.

Gulmarg, about 55 km from here in north Kashmir, received fresh snow since early this morning, resulting in further dip in the day temperature. Kongdori and Agharwat, the highest point of the cable car project in Gulmarg, also received light to moderate snowfall. "Despite snow since early this morning, the tourists are out on ski slopes, which are already covered under several feet of snow, enjoying different activities," a hotelier said.

However, he said the mercury during the night improved 2 degree from Wednesday and settled at minus 2.2 degree, which is 1.5 degree above normal.

Here in Srinagar, the intermittent rains caused waterlogging at several places causing much inconvenience to the commuters. City's commercial hub Lal Chowk and its neighbourhood areas saw thin movement of people, as the rains had inundated many lanes and streets.

Reports of water logging due to incessant rains have also been received from other parts of Srinagar.

Despite incessant intermittent rain overnight, the night temperature improved and settled above normal in the summer capital, Srinagar, where people woke up to a sunny but chilly Thursday morning. However, as the day progressed rain lashed the city, resulting in dip in the maximum temperature, which settled below normal. Against 1.8 degree recorded on Thursday, the night temperature in Srinagar was 4.6 degree.

The Met spokesperson said that skies would be generally cloudy to light rain and snow in Srinagar, where maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 16 degree and 4 degree, respectively.

World famous health resort of Pahalgam, about 100 km from here in south Kashmir, received rain since wee hours on Thursday, resulting in dip in the day temperature. The night temperature at the health resort improved about 5 degree and settled at 2.4 degree, which is a degree above normal.

However, the upper reaches in Pahalgam, including Chandanwari, received very light snowfall. Amarnath ➤ PAGE 10

Kashmir Highway Closed Due To Snowfall, Landslides

The arterial 270-km Jammu-Srinagar national highway, the only all-weather road linking Kashmir with the rest of the country, was closed on Thursday amid fresh snowfall and landslides at several places in Ramban and Udhampur districts, officials said.

There was overnight snowfall at Jawahar Tunnel, which serves as a gateway to Kashmir valley, while rains triggered multiple landslides along Kheri belt in Udhampur district and Banihal-Ramban stretch overnight, hampering efforts of early restoration ➤ PAGE 10

9 J&K Residents In Foreign Jails: Govt

SRINAGAR: 22 people from J&K were lodged in jails outside India in July last year and their number now is nine, Minister of State for Ministry of External Affairs V Muraleedharan told the Parliament on Thursday.

However he did not give details about countries which released these 12 persons. Last year, the minister had informed that of the 22 persons, highest number of them, 11 were imprisoned in Saudi Arabia followed by seven in Pakistan and one each in Cyprus, China, Cambodia and Bangladesh.

"As per the information available with the Ministry, the number of residents of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) in foreign prisons as of 15.07.2019 was 22. The number of residents of J&K as on 31.01.2020 has come down to 9," the minister said, replying to a written query by CPI's K. Somaprasadi.

However he did not give details



about countries which released these 12 persons. Last year, the minister had informed that of the 22 persons, highest number of them, 11 were imprisoned in Saudi Arabia followed by seven in Pakistan and one each in Cyprus, China, Cambodia and Bangladesh.

"This has been possible due to sustained and proactive efforts of the Government," the minister said, asserting that the Government attaches the highest priority to the safety, security and well-being of Indians in foreign countries, including those in the foreign jails.

"Indian Missions / Posts abroad remain vigilant and closely ➤ PAGE 10

Pak Condemns Recent Communal Violence In Delhi

Press Trust Of India

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Thursday condemned the recent communal violence in Delhi and asked the international community to take "practical steps" to stop the Indian government from what it called "pursuing discriminatory and anti-minority policies".

"The large-scale, targeted violence against Muslims that took place in New Delhi in the backdrop of highly communal statements against Muslims by BJP leaders has been a matter of grave concern and is highly condemnable," Foreign Office spokesperson Aisha Farooqui said.

She also condemned the "desecration and vandalization of places of worship" during the violence.



"We expect the international community including the United Nations, OIC and relevant Human Rights organisations ➤ PAGE 10

Army's Northern Command Chief Briefs LG On Security Situation



Observer News Service

JAMMU: General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GOC-in-C) Northern Command, Lt Gen Y K Joshi on Thursday met Lieutenant Governor, Girish Chandra Murmu at the Raj Bhavan here.

Joshi briefed the LG about the overall security situation along the

International Border, LoC and hinterland and the anti-militancy operations being conducted by the Army.

The LG and the Army officer also discussed various important matters relating to the role being played by the Army in safeguarding the territorial integrity and the internal security of Jammu and Kashmir.

"The LG lauded the ➤ PAGE 10