



Maximum : 21°C
Minum : 09°C
Humidity : 54%

SUNSET
Today 07:08 PM
SUNRISE
Tomorrow 05:51 AM



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.....LIFE & TIMES

P5

HUMANS TO BLAME FOR SPREAD OF CORONAVIRUS AND OTHER 'ZOOSES'

Whether it came from a bat or a pangolin is not certain, but one thing is: the coronavirus outbreak that has killed tens of thousands and turned the world upside down comes from the animal world. It is human activity that enabled the virus to jump to people, and specialists are warning that if nothing changes many other pandemics of this nature will follow. The name given to diseases transmitted from animals to humans is "zoonoses", based on the Greek words for "animal" and "sickness". They are not new — tuberculosis, rabies, toxoplasmosis, malaria, to name just a few, are all zoonoses.

News Digest

40 More Discharged After Quarantine

Srinagar: Authorities on Tuesday discharged forty more people after they completed their mandatory quarantine period at a government operated facility in this capital city. According to an official spokesperson, forty more persons who were shifted into administrative quarantine in Srinagar two weeks ago, were discharged today after successfully completing their 14-day quarantine period.

"The group like all others before them was under thorough medical supervision throughout their quarantine period and was discharged after clearance from doctors and health authorities," the official spokesperson said. He said that concerned supervising officers oversaw their discharge and transportation to their respective homes.

"A total of 1906 persons have been discharged from" **P-02**

High Court Employee Found Dead

Srinagar: An employee of Jammu and Kashmir High Court on Tuesday was found dead in Qamarwari area of Srinagar city. 50-year-old Abdul Gani Lone of Doda district was found dead by locals near PDD Quarter near Police Colony in Qamarwari area this morning, news agency GNS reported. The locals informed the police after spotting the body. Immediately, a police team led by SHO Parimpora and DO Qamarwari reached the spot and taken the body to nearby hospital for medico legal formalities, they said. A police officer said the deceased was working as record assistant in Jammu and Kashmir High Court, the officer said. He said that a case under section 174 CrPc **P-02**

36 Vehicles Seized For Lockdown Violation

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir police said Tuesday that 36 vehicles were seized in south Kashmir's Awantipora for defying government imposed restrictions.

12 vehicles were seized by cops in the areas falling under the jurisdiction of police station Awantipora for violating orders issued under section 144 CrPc, a police spokesperson said. Four other vehicles were seized from Pampore for violating lockdown. 6 vehicles were seized in Tral and 14 in Khrew for violating the government prohibitory orders.

3 Booked For Hiding Travel History

Jammu: Three people were booked on Tuesday for hiding their travel history in Jammu and Kashmir's Samba district, police said.

Radhay Sham, Sham Lal and Ashok Singh travelled to their respective villages from Jaipur and Ahmedabad in a truck carrying essential items, they said. All the three have been put under quarantine at Ghagwal with the help of health department, they said.

4G Internet Restoration: SC Seeks Centre, J&K's Reply By April 27

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked Centre and Jammu and Kashmir administration to file their responses by April 27 on a plea seeking restoration of 4G internet services in the Union territory in view of prevailing Covid-19 pandemic.

The top court was told that due to non-availability of 4G services, several aspects are affected including medical facilities and education services.

The Centre opposed the plea by telling the apex court that it is a question of national security as militancy still poses a serious threat in Jammu and Kashmir and cited a recent incident where hundreds of people gathered in the valley for a funeral of a militant killed by state forces.

A bench of Justices N V Ramana, R Subhash Reddy and B R Gavai asked Attorney General K K Venugopal, appearing for the Centre and Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing Jammu and Kashmir administration, to file detailed reply on affidavits by April 27 after assessing the ground situation.

At the outset, the bench enquired

from the parties about the status of a 4G services related case, which was taken suo motu (on its own) by the Jammu and Kashmir High Court.

Senior advocate Huzefa Ahmadi, appearing for petitioner — "Foundation for Media Professionals" — said that his petition concerns only with restoration of 4G services in Jammu and Kashmir.

He informed the bench that in the suo motu case taken by the High Court, notice has been issued and it deals with whole gamut of matters **»PAGE 02**



Covid-19: Doctor, 11 Others Test Postive, J&K Tally At 380

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The number of coronavirus cases in Jammu and Kashmir rose to 380 on Tuesday after twelve more people, including a doctor and ten residents of south Kashmir's Shopian, tested positive for the dreaded infection in the Union Territory, officials said.

"12 new cases- 11 from Kashmir 1 from Jammu division (Kathua), 10 recoveries too. Total cases now 380. Jammu Division-56 and Kashmir Division-324," government spokesperson Rohit Kansal tweeted.

41-year-old junior doctor posted at GMC Baramulla tested positive for the pathogen four days after he developed symptoms of the dreaded disease, reports said.

The doctor had attended general patients and authorities are now trying to trace all his contacts including the patients he has seen at the health facility.

Apart from the doctor's family and his in-laws, the health officials have also put four others doctors and 15 staffers under quarantine, news agency GNS reported quoting sources. **»PAGE 02**

57 Iran-Returned Pilgrims Reach Kargil After Quarantine In UP

Press Trust Of India

Kargil: The first batch of 57 Iran-returned pilgrims reached here on Tuesday in a special Indian Air Force (IAF) flight after undergoing quarantine in Uttar Pradesh, officials said.

However, they would not be going home just now as they have to undergo another phase of 14-day administrative quarantine for their own and others' safety, they said.

The UT administration is happy to announce the homecoming of the first batch of 57 Iran returnees to Kargil post quarantine, tweeted the of-

fice of the Ladakh Divisional Commissioner and Secretary Saugat Biswas.

The flight carrying the pilgrims from Hindon Air Force Station in Ghaziabad (UP) landed at Kargil at 11:15 am and the administration is actively pursuing the return of the next batch on Wednesday, the tweet added.

When contacted, Kargil District Development Commissioner Baseer Ul Haq Choudhary said they were among over 550 pilgrims hailing from Kargil who were evacuated from Iran in the last week of March in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic.

The others are under quarantine in different parts of the **»PAGE 02**

Govt Directs Private Health Institutions To Resume Ops

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Tuesday asked all the private hospitals and diagnostic centers to resume normal functioning within a week failing which strict action will be taken against them.

The directions in this regard were passed by the Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, Pandurang K Pole during a meeting held here today. Director Health Services Dr Sameer Matto, senior officials and owners of private health institutions also participated in the meet.

Directing the owners of the private health institutes to resume normal functions with 50% staff on weekly roster, the Divisional Commissioner said that to restrict the movement and ensure health safety, staff should be stationed round the clock at health premises.

"After completion of one week, remaining 50% staff can join duty, as per the same guidelines. Any institution found violating the directions regarding the essential services rules, will be strictly dealt with under relevant laws," he said.

He said all the doctors, paramedics and other staff **»PAGE 02**

Editors Guild Slams 'High-Handed' Action Against 2 Kashmiri Scribes

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The Editors Guild of India on Tuesday expressed concern over the "high-handed manner" in which the law enforcement agencies in Jammu and Kashmir used prevailing laws to deal with two Srinagar-based journalists and demanded that the charges against them be withdrawn.

In a statement, the Guild also said it believes that this is an indirect way of intimidating journalists in the rest of the country as well.

It noted that while only an FIR has been filed in connection with a report filed by Peerzada Ashiq, a reporter working for The Hindu, the authorities in the Union Territory have used the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act against Masrat Zah-



ra, a young freelance photographer.

"Any recourse to such laws for merely publishing something in the mainstream or social media is a gross misuse of power. Its only purpose can be to strike terror into journalists," the Guild said.

The editors body said it has noted with shock and concern, the "high-handed manner" in which the law enforcement agencies in Jammu and Kashmir have used the prevailing laws to deal **»PAGE 02**

Kashmiri Photojournalist Masrat Zahra Questioned By Police

SRINAGAR- Journalist Masrat Zahra, who was booked for uploading "anti-national posts", was questioned by police on Tuesday in connection with the case filed against her under Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, officials said.

Zahra was questioned for more than an hour at the Kashmir's Cyber Police Station in Shergarhi area of the city, they said. **P-02**

Police Files Case Against Journalist Gowhar Geelani

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir police on Tuesday filed a criminal case against another journalist over his social media posts terming them "prejudicial to the national integrity, sovereignty and security of India." The cyber wing of police filed case against prominent journalist and author Gowhar Geelani **P-02**



India, Pak Troops Exchange Heavy Gunfire In Poonch

SRINAGAR: India and Pakistan troops on Tuesday exchanged heavy gunfire along the line of control (LoC) in two sectors of Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir.

"At about 1720 hours, Pakistan army initiated unprovoked ceasefire violation by firing with small arms and shelling with mortars along the LoC in Kirni and Qasba sectors," a defence spokesperson said.

Earlier at about 11.20 AM, Pakistan initiated unprovoked ceasefire violation by firing with small arms and intense shelling with mortars along the

LoC in Kerni sector, the spokesperson said.

He said the Indian Army retaliated befittingly and cross-border shelling between the two sides was going on when last reports were received.

However, there was no immediate report of any casualty during the shelling by Pakistan, the spokesperson said.

This is the 15th consecutive day of shelling and firing along the LoC in Jammu and Kashmir.

Fear has heightened among villagers along the LoC in Rajouri, Poonch and Kupwara since three civilians were **»PAGE 02**

OVER 3,200 CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS by Pakistan's troops were recorded in 2019. There is a 198-km IB and over 510 km of LoC with Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir.

Pak Pushing Militants When World Is Battling Covid-19: DGP

JAMMU: The Director General of police (DGP) Dilbagh Singh said on Tuesday that Pakistan was trying to push militants through line of control (LoC) and international border (IB) into Jammu and Kashmir when the entire world is making efforts to combat coronavirus pandemic.

Singh said that Pakistan and its sponsored militants were making all out attempts to disrupt the measures being taken to safeguard the lives of the people in J&K. He said that even during the present health crisis "our forces would continue to consolidate peace while maintaining good security" **P-02**

Gunfight Rages In south Kashmir's Shopian

Agencies

SRINAGAR: A gunfight broke out between government forces and militants on Tuesday night in Melhora village of south Kashmir's Shopian district.

Special operations group (SOG) of police, army's 55 RR and CRPF laid a siege around Melhora village on Tuesday night amid intelligence reports suggesting presence of militants in the area, news agency GNS reported. When the joint team start-

ed search operations, the militants hiding in the village opened random fire in a bid to break the cordon.

"The search team fired warning shots towards the spot where militants were believed to be hiding. The militants opened fire to escape from the spot. However, the joint team engaged them," a police officer told the news agency.

Quoting sources, the news report further says that two to three militants associated with Ansar Gazwatul Hind were **»PAGE 02**

THE SEARCH TEAM FIRED WARNING shots towards the spot where militants were believed to be hiding. The militants opened fire to escape from the spot. However, the joint team engaged them,"

Of Two Buddies, Accord, And Lotus in Kashmir: A Blast from Past

Observer Web Desk

Soon after his mother's assassination, as Rajiv Gandhi took over as India's next Prime Minister, he sent his loyalist to Kashmir to break bread with his "buddy" — whom his late mother had hounded for his "secessionist" past.

Later those parleys would shape up into the much-talked about Rajiv-Farooq Accord, floated on the pattern of the 1974 Indira-Abdullah Accord.

Back in the day, negotiations with Farooq were either directly conducted by Rajiv or through his loyalist Union Surface Transport minister, Rajesh Pilot.

With his infectious laughter and shrewd sense of discretion, Pilot

was Rajiv's ace troubleshooter.

But as behind-the-scenes deliberations began at Gupkar, many senior Congress members in the state, including Mufti Sayeed and Arun Nehru, were opposed to Farooq's reentry.

Rajiv Gandhi, however, moved out his cousin, Nehru, of discussions on Kashmir, along with Mufti Sayeed, and the old family Kashmiri confidante, ML Fotedar.

Among those covering these intriguing political developments then, was journalist Ashwini Bhatnagar.

Thirty five years later, Bhatnagar, now a seasoned scribe, has come out with his book, 'The Lotus Years: Political Life In The Times Of Rajiv Gandhi'.

Published by Hachette, the book of-



fers a "360-degree view" of politics in India during the time of Rajiv Gandhi. "Rajiv and lotus are synonyms,"

Bhatnagar tells those who wonder: Why BJP's symbol, 'Lotus', has been used with the Congress leader?

"His grandfather named him Rajiv after the name of his own wife Kamala. So, I went back to Kamala — hence the Lotus Years. Moreover, I thought the title will intrigue the readers because much of the reference to lotus is currently in the context of the BJP!"

If you look at it closely, the author writes, much of the current BJP agenda is directly drawn from the ideas of the Rajiv regime.

"[It was] Rajiv [who] initiated the majoritarianism process after his landslide win in 1984 by opening the locks at the Ram Jammhoomi in Ayodhya," Bhatnagar notes. "He started drive against corruption and his hectic foreign tours in which he was heartily fetted by governments across the world."

Compare even the **»PAGE 02**

APHC Seeks Release Of Mirwaiz, Other Political Leaders

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Expressing concern over the continued detention of political leaders and the youth, the Hurriyat Conference Tuesday sought release of Chairman by Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and all other prisoners who have no criminal records.

In a statement issued here today, a Hurriyat Conference spokesperson said that the amalgam was greatly concerned for the life and safety of political prisoners and youth locked up in jails in J&K and other states of India, including Bihar, Agra and Jodhpur.

"As the number of coronavirus cases is rapidly rising in India, it makes these prisoners more vulnerable, especially the elderly and infirm among them," the spokesperson said. He said that all the prisoners who

are no criminals should be immediately released and sent home to ensure their safety, ahead of the holy month of Ramzan.

"Chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq who is under arbitrary house arrest since 5th August 2019, along with all other leaders should be released," the spokesperson said.

The Hurriyat spokesperson also condemned the harassment of Kashmiri journalists, especially freelance photojournalist Masarat Zahra and the Hindu correspondent Peerzada Ashiq. He said the journalists were repeatedly being pressurized even as they are reporting in very constricting environment

Extending greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir for the coming holy month of Ramzan, the Hurriyat Conference spokesperson **»PAGE 02**