



Maximum : 22°C
Minimum : 08°C
Humidity : 49%

SUNSET
Today 07:09 PM
SUNRISE
Tomorrow 05:50 AM

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AS PEOPLE STAY HOME, EARTH TURNS WILDER AND CLEANER

An unplanned grand experiment is changing Earth. As people across the globe stay home to stop the spread of the novel coronavirus, the air has cleaned up, albeit temporarily. Smog stopped choking New Delhi, one of the most polluted cities in the world, and India's getting views of sights not visible in decades. Nitrogen dioxide pollution in the northeastern United States is down 30 per cent. Rome air pollution levels from mid-March to mid-April were down 49pc from a year ago. Stars seems more visible at night.

.....LIFE & TIMES
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News Digest

Snow Leopard Kills 37 Livestock In Ladakh

Leh: A snow Leopard killed 37 sheep and Pashmina goats in a remote village near here, taking the number of livestock perished in wild animal attacks over the past four weeks in the district to 170, officials said on Wednesday. The snow leopard strayed into the Yourgo village from a nearby forest and entered the livestock shed of Tsering Dorjay during the intervening night of April 19-20, the officials said. Executive Councilor for Wildlife Konchok Stanzin immediately sent a wildlife team to the village to catch the snow leopard. Caught snow leopard will be released back into the wild after a **P-02**

No Friday, Taraweeh Prayers In Jamia

Srinagar: There would be no congregational Friday and Taraweeh prayers in Jamia Masjid Srinagar for the holy month of Ramadhan in view of the ongoing coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, the grand mosque's management said on Wednesday. "In view of the ongoing coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic Anjuman Auqaf Jamia Masjid Srinagar keeping in view the strict medical advisories of maintaining social distance by health experts will continue with the suspension of Friday congregations and Taraweeh prayers in Jamia Masjid, till **P-02**

Burglars Strike Soldier's House In Anantnag

Srinagar: Unidentified burglars struck a soldier's house and decamped with valuables in south Kashmir's Anantnag district, reports said Wednesday. The burglars broke into the abandoned house of Ghulam Nabi in Seer Hamdan village of Anantnag on Tuesday night and decamped with valuable goods, news agency KNT reported. The soldier is posted at army's Badami Bagh cantonment area and lives with his family in Srinagar. Meanwhile, a police official said that a case has been registered and further investigations started in this matter.

Arms Recovered During Searches In Poonch

Jammu- A cache of arms and ammunition was recovered on Wednesday during a search operation in a forest area in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir, a senior police officer said. The combing operation was launched in Sheendhara top in Surankote area after information was received about suspected movement of militants, SSP Poonch Ramesh Angra said. He said the operation led by Deputy Superintendent of Police (Operations) Manish Sharma led to the recovery of an AK-47 rifle, its three magazines with 43 rounds, a Chinese pistol with a magazine and a pouch from a hideout. However, no one was arrested during the operation which was still going on when last reports were received, the officer said.

‘Weary, Worried, Wondering’—Kashmiri Students In Lockdown



Hirra Sultan
SRINAGAR: Ever since she became a pandemic prisoner in her home, Mehnaaz Shafi, 18, has been equating her life with a protracted

ed plague threatening her normal upbringing and student life.

"The lockdown is another reminder of our cursed lives," Mehnaaz laments, "as it [closure] is what has always happened to our studies."

Even though, she says, the year 2020 started with some internet promise and 'normalcy', it looks miserable now, as Kashmir, like rest of the world, is under the contagion curbs.

"This is not the first time," she continues. "At least there's a disease out there this time, and not someone's blood."

Campus Cravings

Mehvish Akhtar, 20, was supposed to join college this year, which amid pandemic, looks difficult now.

The wannabe architect says she has already lost precious time facing the situational torment in Kashmir, which last summer, was stripped of its special status.

"After last August, schools had reopened this early spring to everyone's joy in Kashmir," Mehvish says. "But now, they [campuses] are once again under a lock and key. It's crazy to make peace with

such a stressful situation, every now and then!"

Future Tense

"What would become of us in the face of these repeated campus-closures?" wonders Haziq Ali, a class 10 student from Srinagar.

"How long are we going to suffer silently under the tormenting situation? I cannot even sleep at nights any longer."

For weary indoors amid pandemic lockdown, the online tutorial is a global solution.

But as the union territory government seems in mood to restore

4G internet, despite the pleas from civil society members and veteran unionist like Dr. Farooq Abdullah, Kashmiri students are only becoming anxious for their careers.

"They tell us to compete with students from all over India and yet do not give us the same facilities," Shoaib Bhat, a Sopore-based student preparing for IIT-JEE, says. "Which other city has been under a curfew for this long?"

Kashmiri students, Shoaib says, don't have sufficient internet speed to even download a PDF file. "How are we supposed **PAGE 02**

BEING A KASHMIRI DOESN'T FEEL LIKE OLD TIMES OUTSIDE THE VALLEY NOW,"
Arsalan Mir, a college-goer, says. "It feels as if you've become some symbol of suspicion now."

COVID-19

27 More Test Positive, Cases Cross 400-Mark

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- The number of coronavirus cases crossed 400 mark in Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday as 27 more people tested positive for the pandemic, said an official.

"27 new cases reported today. All from Kashmir Division. Total now 407. Jammu-56 and Kashmir-351," Govt spokesperson Rohit Kanasaal tweeted. The total number of confirmed Covid-19 cases in J&K has gone upto 407 — 351 in Kashmir and 56 in Jammu divisions.

Out of total cases, there are 310 active positive cases (272 in Kashmir and 38 in Jammu division) as 92 patients (75 in Kashmir and 17 in Jammu) have recovered and have been discharged from different hospitals. Five people (four in Kashmir and one in Jammu) have died.

Meanwhile, the media bulletin issued by the government said today that 11 more Covid-19 patients

have recovered and discharged from the hospitals.

The bulletin said that till date 64089 travellers and persons in contact with suspected cases have been enlisted for surveillance,

including 5806 persons in home quarantine, 252 in hospital quarantine, 310 in hospital isolation and 15376 under home surveillance.

"Besides, 42340 persons have completed their **PAGE 02**

DAK Calls For Mass Screening Of Healthcare Workers

SRINAGAR: Raising concern about transmission of coronavirus in Kashmir hospitals following a doctor testing positive for the virus, Doctors Association Kashmir (DAK) on Wednesday called for mass screening of healthcare workers for the novel virus.

"That would ensure the safety of patients," said DAK President Dr Nisar ul Hassan who is also Associate Professor of Medicine at GMC Srinagar. **P-02**

16 More Set Free After Quarantine Ends

SRINAGAR: As many as 16 people on Wednesday were discharged after they completed their mandatory quarantine period at a government operated facility in this capital city.

16 people, who were shifted to a government run quarantine centre in Srinagar two weeks ago, were discharged today after successfully completing their 14-day quarantine period, an official spokesperson said. All these people remained under medical **P-02**

BESIDES, 42340 PERSONS HAVE COMPLETED THEIR surveillance period. Out of 10039 test results available, 9632 samples have tested as negative till April 22, 2020," the spokesperson said.

Govt Grants Rs 1 Cr Relief For Lawyers Hit By Lockdown

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir government on Wednesday granted financial relief of Rs one crore to lawyers whose livelihoods have been severely hit due to the coronavirus-induced lockdown.

Lieutenant Governor G C Murmu on Wednesday handed over a cheque of Rs one crore to Registrar General, Jammu and Kash-

mir High Court, Jawad Ahmad in the presence of High Court Bar Association Jammu president Abhinav Sharma here.

A Raj Bhawan spokesperson said Murmu handed over a cheque of Rs one crore as relief to financially distressed lawyers whose livelihoods have been severely hit due to the ongoing coronavirus lockdown.

He claimed the Jammu and Kashmir government became the first in the country to **PAGE 02**

225 Iran Evacuees Airlifted From Jodhpur To Leh

Press Trust Of India

LEH- The second batch of 225 pilgrims who had returned from Iran reached here on Wednesday in a special Indian Air Force plane after undergoing quarantine in Rajasthan, officials said.

The returnees, 208 hailing from Kargil and 17 from Leh, were airlifted from Jodhpur to Leh and were subjected to screening by a medical **P-02**

India Ranks 142nd On Global Press Freedom Index

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- India has dropped to rank 142, two points below its 2019 rank, in the 2020 World Press Freedom Index unveiled Tuesday.

Reporters Without Borders analysis released on Tuesday.

While Scandinavian countries like Norway, Finland and Denmark made up the top 3, India was ranked 142. Its neighbour Pakistan was 145, while Bangladesh was 151.

The RSF report stated: "With no murders of journalists in India in 2019, as against six in 2018, the security situation for the country's media might seem, on the face of it, to have improved. However, there have been constant press freedom violations, including police violence against journalists, ambushes by political activists, and reprisals instigated by criminal groups or corrupt local officials."

It attributed the decline in index to "pressure on the **P-02**

South Kashmir: 4 Militants Killed In Overnight Gunbattle

SHOPIAN: A gunbattle that erupted Tuesday night between government forces and militants in a South Kashmir village has left four militants dead, police said this morning.

Reports said that a joint team of army's 55 RR, police and CRPF laid a siege at Melhora village late Tuesday evening.

Police said the operation was launched following inputs about the presence of some militants.

The exchange of fire took place in the area soon after the joint team fired some warning shots towards the suspected hideout.

According to sources militants tried to break the cordon amid

the exchange of fire; however, the joint team engaged them in the gunfight. "The intermittent exchange of fire continued through the night. A fierce exchange of fire took place early Wednesday morning and during the course of gunfight, all four militants were killed, police said.

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Vijay Kumar confirmed the killing of four militants.

"We have taken DNA samples of all four unidentified killed militants. We are conducting burial in presence of the magistrate," he said.

"So far, the family of one of the slain militants came. If they identify, then 2-3 family members **PAGE 02**

WE HAVE TAKEN DNA SAMPLES of all four unidentified killed militants. We are conducting burial in presence of the magistrate," he said.

COVID-19: J&K Police Uses ‘Eye-In-The-Sky’ To Enforce Lockdown

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU- As a drone hovers over an area in Jammu and Kashmir, people walking in the narrow lanes run inside their houses, while those standing outside a ration shop quickly queue up keeping adequate distance between each other.

After August 5 last year, when the special status of J-K was scrapped and the state was divided into two union territories, police had extensively used drones for surveillance to prevent any law and order problem.

Now, as J-K faces the challenge of coronavirus outbreak, these unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) have become a vital tool for authorities in enforcing the lockdown to check the spread of the disease, especially in hotspots where multiple cases have been detected.

"We are using scores of high-tech



KO-File Pic. Abid Bhat

drones to keep vigil and electronic surveillance in most of the red zones across the union territory," a senior police officer told PTI here.

Any place that has three or more cases is a red zone.

The intention was to use technology to complement manual surveillance and strictly enforce the lockdown, he said.

Drones have been increasingly used in Srinagar, Jammu, Baramulla,

Kupwara, Pulwama, Shopian, Badgam, Rajouri, Udhampur and Kathua districts besides over the highways during the past fortnight.

In videos shared by J-K Police, cops can be seen spreading the message via drones asking people to stay indoors and not come out unless it is necessary.

There have been 380 coronavirus cases and five deaths in Jammu and Kashmir till now, according to Union Home Ministry data.

At least 90 red zones have been declared.

Police said drones allow them to keep an eye on a wider area.

"Especially, in rural areas where people tend to gather in crowds or indulge in group activities, more than in urban areas. Using drones has definitely been a deterrent," an officer said.

Drones can travel up to a distance of one to five kilometres and to a height of 500 metres. **PAGE 02**

KPC Demands Withdrawal Of FIRs Against Journalists

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR- The Kashmir Press Club on Wednesday expressed grave concern over a series of FIR registered against journalists working in Kashmir Valley and demanded their withdrawal.

"The Kashmir Press Club (KPC) yet again notes with grave concern the series of FIRs that have been filed against journalists in the valley," the journalist body said in a statement.

It said in the latest instance, a case has been registered against journalist and author Gowhar Geelani. This is the third such FIR against media persons from the valley in the last few days. **P-02**

Yatra Flip-flop: SASB Reserves Decision on Amarnath Yatra

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Shortly after releasing a press note announcing the cancellation of this years Amarnath Yatra, the state government issued a new statement stating the decision about the Yatra will be taken in near future.

Lieutenant Governor, Girish Chandra Murmu, Chairman of Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB), presided over the 38th Board Meeting held here today at the Raj Bhavan, the statement released late at night said.

"The Board expressed its apprehension and held that as on date, it may not be possible to organize the Yatra 2020. Due to the current COVID-2019 pan-



demetic situation being dynamic, appropriate decision can be taken on organizing the Yatra on reviewing of the situation in coming future."

According to the earlier press release, "The Board decided unanimously that in view of the pandemic situation prevailing in the world it would not be prudent to organize the Yatra. 2020. It was also decided **PAGE 02**