

News Digest

I'm Not In Self-Quarantine: Dr Farooq

Srinagar: The National Conference patron and Member Parliament Dr Farooq Abdullah Wednesday said that he has not been advised for self-quarantine and the reports in the media were false. "There is no truth in it that I have been advised not to move around and stay indoors in self-quarantine," Dr Farooq Abdullah was quoted as saying. He said he is physically fit and no medical advice has been issued to him by the health experts.

Covid-19: Ladakh Has 84% Recovery Rate

Srinagar: Ladakh has the highest recovery rate of Covid positive patients, highest in the country, officials said. 14 more samples were tested positive on Wednesday in the UT taking the tally of positive cases to 1142 in Ladakh. "18 patients were discharged on Wednesday after their complete recovery taking the tally of recovered persons to 964 in Ladakh," official said. They said that with 18 more recoveries, 964 out of 1142 patients have recovered in Ladakh which is 84.41 percent of total cases in the Union Territory, highest in the country.

33 Discharged From Rainawari Hospital

Srinagar: At least 38 Covid-19 positive patients including 7 Gynae patients and 2 new born babies were discharged from Rainawari hospital today after their repeat samples tested negative for Covid-19 infection. Nodal Officer for Coronavirus at Rainawari Hospital, Dr Bilquis said that 33 patients were from Srinagar and one from North Kashmir's Baramulla district. She said 3 patients were from Mumbai and one was from Uttar Pradesh. "All the patients were asymptomatic and discharged after 10 to 12 days of their Hospital stay." "The total discharged patients from Rainawari Hospital till now are 560. Covid-19 positive patients admitted in the Hospital at present are 50 in General Isolation Wards and 16 positive pregnant patients in Gynae Isolation Ward." A total of Covid-19 positive patients admitted in the hospital are now 66.

CASO Launched In Srinagar Outskirts

Srinagar: Government Forces Monday launched a cordon-and-search operation in Ahmad Nagar area of Srinagar outskirts. Sources said that combined forces launched a cordon-and-search operation Ahmad Nagar Bachapora area. The sudden operation launched in the area surprised people. Sources said the operation was launched following the inputs about the movement of suspected militants in the area. A police official said that random searches were conducted in some houses. He added that search operation concluded peacefully.

Fake Anti-Graft Body ACB Initiates Legal Action

SRINAGAR: The Anti Corruption Bureau on Wednesday initiated a legal action against the fake Facebook post.

"A Facebook post by Muzamil Majeed Bhat regarding Anti Corruption Foundation of India is circulating on social media. The post reads as under, 'On demand of bribe by any State or Central Government employee, then you should complaint to the Anti Corruption Foundation of India District Pulwama with proof in writing above the affidavit of Rs. 10 and send that complaint to us...'Contact-9682171517," a statement said.

"Anti Corruption Bureau is already established for receiving complaints relating to corruption in UT of J&K. Anti Corruption Bureau already has an official WhatsApp No. 94196-78060, Facebook account-J&K Anti Corruption Bureau, Twitter account - J&K Anti Corruption Bureau @JKACB and Helpline No.s. a. Jammu - 0191-2542530 b. Kashmir-0194-2430792 and Toll-free No.18001807152. All these

PAGE 1 Anchor Hoping Against Hope: Half Widows Of Kashmir In Lockdown

Arshi Qureshi

BEFORE abrogation of Article 370 last summer, Habla Begum as a half widow of Kashmir used to get Rs 1,000 monthly assistance from some welfare body. But after the political and pandemic lockdowns were enforced in the valley, she has been struggling to survive despite some Samaritans actively managing destitution in the strife-stricken society.

"Last summer's crisis followed by coronavirus made it tough for us," Habla Begum, sounding sullen, said. "My son is an electrician. He doesn't get work regularly. We're struggling to manage amidst this lockdown."

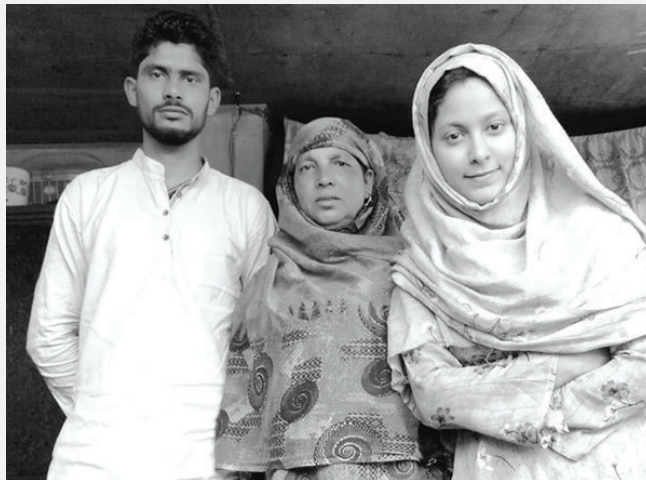
There're many social welfare

bodies that help these women financially but due to the successive lockdowns in Kashmir, many of them aren't getting the much-needed support.

As the home crisis is deepening for these struggle-hardened half widows of Kashmir today, their troubled past is only returning to haunt them behind the gloomy walls of their home.

"There were times," Habla's daughter, Muskaan, recalled her family's 22 years of unending agony, "when I used to stay hungry at home and wait for my mother the entire day to come back and feed and cuddle me, while she ran pillar to post in search of my father."

Daughter of a disappeared man from Sopore, Muskaan is a college student and one of those thou-



sands of children who were never fortunate enough to meet their father. Her mother is one of the

2,000-2,500 "half widows" in the conflict-torn region. Half widows are the women

whose husbands disappeared but are not declared dead. These men have disappeared but their muffled cries are still heard in every household of Kashmir.

Muskaan was six-months old when her father Abdul Majeed Gurroo, a plywood businessman, was picked up from his house.

"On the morning of 22 December 1998," Muskaan's mother, in broken Urdu, recalled, "I was away with my elder daughter to buy some medicines. When I returned home, my mother informed me that the army took away my husband for some inquiry at around noon, and promised to send him back by 4:00 in the evening."

She waited for him till 5:00 pm that day, before plunging into the never-ending search campaign

for her better half. Even after losing her youth, possessions and comfort, she's still waiting for his homecoming.

Muskaan helped her mother as she struggled to explain the exact chronicle of the ill-fated day that haunts them even after twenty-two years. The memories of that fateful day in 1998 are still fresh in Habla's mind.

"Three to four uniformed personnel had come to our house and asked my father to accompany them to the police station," Muskaan translated for her mother. "When he asked for the reason, those men blindfolded him and took my father to an undisclosed place in their van."

Habla searched for her husband for years, running from

COVID-19 Claims 13 More; J&K Toll 206

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Wednesday recorded 13 more deaths due to the COVID-19, in a single day, taking the number of total fatalities to 208.

Eleven patients died at SKIMS Soura while one each died at GMC Anantnag and SMHS Srinagar, according to officials.

The patients who died at SKIMS included a 60-year-old man from Saida Kadal Srinagar, a 70-year-old man from Illahi Bagh Srinagar, a 52-year-old man from Lal Bazar Srinagar, 60-year old female from Buchpora Srinagar, a 77-year-old man from New Colony Pulwama, a 60-year-old woman from Sopore, an 85-year-old man from Ladoora, a 60-year-old man from Hathlango Sopore, 70-year-old patient from Rathuna, Budgam while a 60-year-old man from Khrewan, Malpora died at GMC Anantnag and 62-year-old male died at SMHS Srinagar.

Dr G H Yatoo, Nodal Officer for Covid-19 at SKIMS said that a 60-year-old man



SKIMS Cancels Vacations, Sanctioned Leaves

In view of ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the authorities in Sher-e-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) on Wednesday said that the institute has cancelled summer vacations as well as leaves sanctioned to the staff

Govt Appeals Public To Wear Masks

The government on Wednesday said that recent studies have shown that use of masks has been the most effective way to reduce person-to-person spread of coronavirus. Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Baseer Ahmad Khan appealed to people asking them to wear masks in

Gag Order For Sharing Details With Press

SRINAGAR: The government on Wednesday barred all health institutions from sharing details on Covid-19 related testing in Jammu and Kashmir with the media.

"It has been observed that all the institutions at their own are giving official statements to the press / electronic media separately regarding the Covid Lab testing conducted in their respective institutions, as a result, there is every likelihood of confusion on the exact number of total lab tests being earned cut in all the labs of the UT," Financial Commissioner, Health and Medical Education, Atal Dulloo, said in an order. The letter has been addressed to Director SKIMS Soura, Principal Govt. Medical College Jammu/Srinagar, Principal SKIMS Bemina and Director Health Services Kashmir / Jammu.

"The assignment of press briefing has been given to the Mission Director National Health Mission, J&K, who after compilation of the reports of all labs, briefs the media about the daily activities related to COVID inducing test testing," the order said, adding, "It is therefore, impressed upon on all the Head of the Institutions to ensure that no such press briefing on COVID related activities including lab testing are given and the daily reports are submitted to the National Health

SC Refuses To Entertain Plea Against 100% Domicile Quota In J&K



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI- The Supreme Court Wednesday refused to entertain a plea challenging legal provisions which provide 100 per cent reservation to domicile of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir in public employment.

A bench comprising Justices L Nageswara Rao, Hemant Gupta and S Ravindra Bhat asked Ladakh-based lawyer Najum Ul Huda to move the Jammu and Kashmir High Court with his plea.

The plea had sought "quashing of sections 3A, 5A, 6, 7 and 8 of the Jammu and Kashmir Civil Services (Decentralization and Recruitment)

Act as violative of Articles 14, 16, 19 and 21 of the Constitution of India as these sections direct 100 per cent reservation to domicile of the UT of Jammu and Kashmir in public employment."

The plea, filed through lawyer Nishant Khatri, said that since the abrogation of Article 370 in August last year, the UT is equally subject to all laws and the Supreme Court judgments which are applicable to the rest of the country.

"Therefore, if any reservation has to be granted in the UT on the basis of residence, the same may be done only in consonance with Article 16(3) of the Constitution," the plea said. It said that section 5A

Defence Minister, Army Chief To Visit Ladakh Again

NEW DELHI: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will visit Ladakh on Friday to take stock of the country's military preparedness and review the overall situation, government sources said on Wednesday, as India and China move to finalise a framework for a complete disengagement at friction points on their border.

Mr Singh will be accompanied by Chief of Army Staff Gen MM Naravane and it will be his first visit to Ladakh after the stand-off between the armies of India and China on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) began on May 5.

Singh's trip comes days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's surprise visit to Ladakh

Jailing Kashmir Bar Chief After Expiry Of PSA Order:SC Seeks Explanation

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI- The Supreme Court Wednesday asked the Jammu and Kashmir administration to explain the basis for detaining high court's bar leader Mian Abdul Qayoom who has challenged his detention under Public Safety Act (PSA) since August 7 last year.

The top court asked it to take into consideration various aspects including Qayoom's age, expiry of detention period and the COVID-19 pandemic.

A bench of Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and Indu Malhotra posted the matter for July 23 after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for J-K, said that he needs 10 days time to consider various aspects.



We want to know on what basis you (J-K administration) would like to detain him in Delhi's Tihar Jail. Moreover, his detention as per order has already expired," the bench said.

At the outset, Mehta said he had not received the copy of the plea and sought time to reply to it. Senior advocate Dushyant

Police Rescues Abducted BJP Worker

Omar Raises Questions

BARAMULLA: Police On Wednesday said it "rescued" BJP's Vice President Municipal Committee Watergam Baramulla, Meraj ud Din Malla who was allegedly abducted by some unknown persons in the north Kashmir district.

"The person has been rescued by police," Inspector General of Police Vijay Kumar said. However, he declined to divulge further details. A police official said that details would be revealed after Malla's interrogation.

Earlier a senior police officer said that Malla was bundled into a Santro vehicle by the 'unknown persons' while he was walking on a road to meet his friend.

HC Asks SASB To Urgently Decide On Amarnath Yatra

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir High Court on Wednesday asked Shri Amarnath Shrine Board (SASB) to take an urgent decision on holding the annual pilgrimage to the cave shrine, located in the higher reaches of South Kashmir, keeping in mind the threat of COVID-19.

A 23-page order issued by a division bench comprising Chief Justice Gita Mittal and Justice Sanjay Dhar directed the SASB to convey their decision to amicus curiae Monika Kohli and the petitioner.

The court directed the Jammu and Kashmir administration to place the July 10 status report on holding Amarnath Yatra this year and other relevant material before

the SASB for its consideration.

"The Shri Amarnath Shrine Board and the respondents (JK government) shall urgently take all decisions regarding the yatra while complying with the order of the Supreme Court" of July 13 and the several concerns pointed out by the amicus curiae and the petitioner before the court, it said.

Asking them to take the decision, the court also directed that while taking a final call they should ensure compliance of all healthcare protocols, Standard Operating Protocols notified by the Centre as well as by the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, guided by the principles laid down by the apex court that the right to health of every person has to be placed at the highest

UN Body Concerned Over Criminal Proceedings Against Kashmiri Journalists

KO Web Desk

SRINAGAR: The office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has made public its letter to the Government of India, voicing "strong concern at the criminal proceedings and investigations initiated" against the four Kashmiri journalists.

David Kaye, the UN's Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion, in a detailed letter has expressed concern over the police action against four Kashmiri journalists Naseer Ganai, Gowhar Geelani, Peerzada Ashiq and Mas-



rat Zehra. The letter condemns the alleged harassment meted out to these journalists.

Leigh Toomey, Vice-Chair of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, and Mark Lawlor, Special

Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, are the two other signatories to the letter.

According to the letter there is a "pattern of silencing independent reporting on the situation in Jammu and Kashmir through the threat of criminal sanction." The letter further says that "In this regard, we recall that the penalisation of a journalist solely for being critical of the government or the political social system espoused by the government is incompatible with the State's obligation under international human rights law."

The UN Special Rapporteurs have written their letter

JK Bank Jumps To 4Th Place In Digital Transactions

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: J&K Bank has scaled to number four position among all the banks in India in achieving targets in digital payment transactions up to July 14 of the current financial year surpassing many other top players in the market. The bank has shown strong digital footprints in continuation of its mission towards helping the 'Digital India' mission.

The data available from 'Digital India Dashboard' platform of Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India (GoI) reveals that the bank has captured 1.83 crore digital payment transactions in the first quarter of the current financial year.

Commenting on this feat, J&K Bank Chairman and Managing Di-



rector, Rajesh Kumar Chhibber said, "In line with our envisioned path and expected objectives, we are in sync with the larger national vision of digital transformation as the initiatives taken in the direction of digitalization have started to give perceptible results."

Notably, the bank has put in place robust technological infrastructure and digital banking platform which offers mobile banking facilities through Mpay, e-Banking, Unified Payment Interface (UPI),