

## News Digest

### Pak Begins Phase-III Trial Of COVID Vaccine

Islamabad: The Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) has given a nod for phase-III clinical trial of a COVID-19 vaccine developed in collaboration with a Chinese company, a media report said on Tuesday. According to a statement from the National Institute of Health (NIH), it has obtained "formal approval" from the DRAP for phase-III Clinical Trial of Recombinant Novel Coronavirus Vaccine Adenovirus Type 5 vector (Ad5-nCoV) developed by CanSinoBio and Beijing Institute of Biotechnology China (BIB). The NIH said this would be the first-ever phase-III clinical trial for any vaccine in Pakistan. "It is a multi-country multi-centre clinical trial which CanSinoBio is already conducting in China, Russia, P-02

### India, Pak Troops Trade Fire Along IB

Jammu: India and Pakistan troops exchanged heavy gunfire along the International Border in Kathua district of Jammu region, sources said Tuesday. Pakistani Rangers opened fire on border out posts (BoPs) along the International Border in Kathua district, sources said told PTI. BSF troops guarding the border retaliated, resulting in exchanges, they added. Sources said Pakistani Rangers fired from machine guns at forward BoPs of Chandwara and Karol Matraya in Hiranagar sector on Monday night. There were no casualties in the firing.

### Lashkar Militant Held In Hajin: Police

Srinagar: Police on Tuesday claimed to have arrested a Lashkar-e-Taiba militant from Bandipora district of north Kashmir. Based on credible information, police, army's 13RR and the personnel of IRP 8th battalion arrested Lashkar militant Subzar Ahmad Rather alias Aatish Bhai from Check Chandrageer area of Hajin in Bandipora, a police spokesperson said. He said that incriminating materials, arms & ammunition including a pistol, one magazine and four rounds were recovered from the militant, who hails from Awneera area of Shopian. Rather, the police spokesperson said had recently joined the outfit and was tasked to carry out P-02

### Youth Dies Of Drowning In Shopian

Srinagar: A youth on Tuesday died of drowning in a stream in south Kashmir's Shopian district. 24-year-old Idrees Ahmad Mir of Oyel Damhal Kulgam was beating the heat when the incident took place on Tuesday afternoon. The locals rescued him from the Nallah Reshinagri and took him to nearby hospital for treatment. However, the doctors there declared him brought dead on arrival. Meanwhile, a police officer told news agency KNS that investigations have been started in this regard.

### Shepherd Slips To Death

Srinagar: A shepherd on Tuesday slipped to death while grazing his cattle in south Kashmir's Anantnag district. 40-year-old Ahmed Shakhor of Gowas village was grazing his cattle at Rawat Raksh pasture in the south Kashmir district, when he lost his balance and fell into a deep gorge, police sources said. People present in the pasture shifted Shakhor to the district hospital Anantnag for treatment. However, he succumbed to his injuries. (KNT)

## Mobile Internet In J&K Gives Social Media Humour A 4G Edge

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: High speed mobile internet services are back in Jammu and Kashmir but only in Ganderbal and Udhampur and humour mills are on overdrive with whacky one liners, visual jokes and a veritable meme fest playing out on social media.

Sharp, satirical and sometimes just slapstick, the posts, mostly on Twitter, reference Bollywood, use photographs and also some nifty photoshop editing to make their point and tickle a few funny bones while they are at it.

So there is one post featuring an Air Company boarding card from Srinagar to neighbouring Ganderbal, the prized Kashmir district 30 km away where 4G mobile services started from August 16

## Kreeri Gun-Battle Ends After Two Days

5 Security Personnel, Lashkar Commander Among 3 Militants Dead

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The two-day long encounter between militants and the joint team of police, CRPF and army in the orchards of Kreeri in Baramulla district ended on Tuesday, consuming eight lives in all—three of them militants including two Lashker-e-Taiba commanders, two army soldiers, as many paramilitary CRPF men besides a policeman.

Having been suspended on Monday night, the firefight resumed at first light today (Tuesday), leading to the killing of the trapped militant, Usman reportedly a Pakistani national.

Also, one among the two soldiers succumbed to the injuries, taking the fatality toll of soldiers in the gunfight to two.

"Two soldiers who were critically injured succumbed to their injuries," Army spokesperson Lt. Col Rajesh Kalai said. He said two AK rifles and three pistols were recovered from the encounter site.

"Conspirator Sajad alias Haider and one foreign militant Usman of killing BJP leader late Waseem Bari,



File Pic

his father and brother have been killed," Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir Vijay Kumar said.

"Haider was also instrumental in recruiting youth into militant folds and was involved in several attacks on Police, security forces, civilians and political workers," he said. The search operation in the area is in process, the official said.

The encounter had ensued after a joint team of Police, CRPF and army launched a cordon-and-search-operation following the attack in the morning in which two

CRPF men and an SPO were killed. "At about 0915hrs on Monday, (militants) fired indiscriminately upon a joint naka party of Police and security forces from nearby orchards at Nawan mode Kreeri area of Baramulla," a police spokesperson said. In the militant attack, he said, two CRPF personnel of 119 battalion and a police personnel (SPO) sustained grievous gunshot injuries.

"The injured were evacuated to nearby hospital for the treatment of their injuries. However, PAGE 02

**TWO SOLDIERS WHO WERE CRITICALLY INJURED SUCCUMBED to their injuries," Army spokesperson Lt. Col Rajesh Kalai said. He said two AK rifles and three pistols were recovered from the encounter site.**

## Shopian Encounter: Court Of Inquiry In Progress, Says Army

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: An army court of inquiry on Tuesday began recording statements of witnesses in connection with the killing of three alleged militants in an encounter last month in Shopian in South Kashmir, following allegations by families in Rajouri area of Jammu region that as many of their kin were missing from the same place. Srinagar-based Defence spokesperson Colonel Rajesh Kalia asked additional civil witnesses to depose before the court of inquiry.

According to sources, the inquiry

is being headed by a Brigadier rank officer as the unit involved in the encounter was headed by a Colonel.

The incident took place on July 18 when the army claimed to have killed three militants at Ashimpura in the higher reaches of Shopian in South Kashmir.

However, little over two weeks thereafter, missing complaints were lodged by the families of three youths, working as labourers in apple and walnut orchards, who had disappeared from the same region and they had last talked to them on July 17.

Colonel Kalia in his statement said the high-level court PAGE 02

## IAF Deploys Fighter Jets Along Pak Border Amid Tensions With China

Agencies

NEW DELHI: The Indian Air Force (IAF) deployed the home-grown Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas on the western front along the Pakistan border in view of the tensions with China on the Ladakh front.

"The LCA Tejas was deployed by the Indian Air Force on the western front close to the Pakistan border to take care of any possible action by the adversary there," government sources told ANI.

The first LCA Tejas squadron, 45 Squadron (Flying Daggers) based out of Sullur under the Southern Air Command, was deployed in an operational role there, the sources said. The indigenous Tejas aircraft had

### Navy Commanders Conclave To Discuss Ladakh Standoff

Top commanders of the Indian Navy will extensively deliberate on the evolving maritime security architecture in the region and the border row with China in eastern Ladakh at a three-day conclave beginning Wednesday, officials said. A major focus of the conclave will be to review the Indian Navy's operational readiness as well as issues relating to India's security interests in the Indo-Pacific, a region P-02

been praised by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his Independence Day speech where he had stated that the deal to buy the LCA Mark1A version was expected to be completed soon.

While the first squadron of the planes is of the Initial Operational Clearance version, the second 18

Squadron 'Flying Bullets' is of the Final Operational Clearance version and was operationalized by the IAF chief Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhaduria at the Sullur airbase on May 27.

The Indian Air Force and the Defence Ministry are expected to finalise the deal for the 83 Mark1A aircraft by the end of this year. PAGE 02

### Morning Showers Break Dry Spell In Kashmir

SRINAGAR- A spell of early morning rainfall broke the prolonged dry spell in Kashmir valley even as the summer capital Srinagar had on Monday recorded the hottest August day in the last nearly four decades, officials said on Tuesday.

Many places in the Kashmir valley received a spell of rainfall during the night, the officials said. They said the valley witnessed rains and thunderstorm with lightning and gusty winds which continued at few places till the morning.

Srinagar city recorded 20.2 mm rainfall, while Qazigund 12.2 mm, Pahalgam 6.2 mm, Kupwara 5.2 mm, Gulmarg 2.6 mm, and Koker-nag 1.8 mm, they said.

The clouds dispersed in the morning, the officials said, adding, there was no forecast of any major rainfall activity for next three days. However, he stated that scattered rain is expected around 20-21st August.

The rainfall broke the prolonged dry spell in Kashmir valley which had been witnessing hotter days in the recent weeks.

On Monday, Srinagar city recorded a maximum temperature of 35.7 degrees Celsius, which was the hottest August day in the last 39 years, the officials said.

They said Monday's maximum temperature was six degrees above the normal.

The city remained hotter than Jammu – the winter capital of the UT – which had recorded 32.1 degrees Celsius on Monday.

While the Met office had announced the arrival of monsoon on June 24 this year, the valley witnessed dry weather conditions amid soaring temperatures.

Pertinently, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Pandurang P-02

## Hundreds Protest Across Valley Against Blasphemy Video

File Pic



Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: Hundreds of people on Tuesday held protests in several parts of the Valley against the members of an extremist Hindu group in Jammu's Reasi for making blasphemous remarks against Prophet of Islam (Pbuh).

According to reports, protests were held in many parts of Srinagar, Anantnag, Pulwama and Baramulla districts against the members of members of right-wing Sentinel Bharat Raksha Manch, who had made derogatory remarks against Prophet of Islam

(Pbuh) triggering massive outrage.

On Sunday, police arrested Satpal Sharma, the main accused and his associate Deepak soon after the video containing derogatory remarks against Prophet of Islam (Pbuh) went viral. Rohit Sharma, a resident of Pacca Danga locality, was the third accused arrested in connection with the case related to the communally sensitive video.

Police had also filed a case under section 153A IPC (promoting enmity between different groups) and 295A IPC (deliberate and malicious acts, intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by PAGE 02

### Flash Floods Threaten IB Fencing In J&K

JAMMU: Flash floods triggered by heavy rains are threatening the three-tier border fencing along the Indo-Pak International Border and have caused minor damage to a section of the fencing in Jammu frontier belt, officials said.

Heavy rains have caused flash floods in various rivers along the border, threatening the border fencing in Samba-Kathua-Jammu belt, they said. A senior BSF officer said that parts of the fence in Basantar river area are likely to get washed away. "It is 150 to 200 metres of patch. There was partial damage to it. If there is more flooding, it will cause complete damage to the fence and to the adjoining village in Ramgarh."

"Efforts are being made to repair the damage," he said. He said no post has P-02

### Landslide Halts Traffic On Kashmir Highway

SRINAGAR: A landslide triggered by rains prompted authorities to briefly suspended vehicular traffic on the strategic Jammu-Srinagar highway on Tuesday.

According to the reports, the overnight rain triggered a landslide at Nehad in Ramban along the 276-kilometre Jammu and Kashmir highway prompting the authorities to suspend the movement of vehicles on Tuesday morning.

Reports said that the highway was thrown open for traffic after National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) and Border Roads Organization (BRO) pressed into service sophisticated machines P-02

## Kashmir Reports 12 More Covid-19 Deaths, J&K Toll 566

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: Coronavirus claimed twelve more lives in Kashmir Valley on Tuesday, taking the number of fatalities since the pandemic outbreak in the Union Territory to 566.

While four of the victims were residents of south Kashmir's Anantnag, three hailed from Kupwara, two each from Budgam and Srinagar districts, besides one from Bandipora, official sources said.

They said a 70-year-old man from Handwara who

### 434 New Covid-19 Cases In J&K, Total 29326

At least three pregnant women and 29 travellers were among 434 new Covid-19 cases reported from Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday, taking the total number of P-02

died at SKIMS Soura, six days after he was admitted to the tertiary care hospital.

A 55-year-old woman from Om-pora Budgam who was PAGE 02



KO Investigation

Notably, axe had started falling

on Kashmir forests as early as in April 2020 – when the valley was

yet to complete a month under the Covid lockdown.

Acting on ground leads, KO team visited the Tangmarg-Gulmarg stretch to witness what looked like the tree massacre scene. It was April 16.

'Things Under Control'

Despite the screaming evidence, even gathered by district commissioner Pulwama during his surprise forest visit in the district during the early phase of pandemic, many forest officials term the situation under control.

"There has been a spurt in smuggling in the beginning of the Covid lockdown, but things are under control now," Irfan Rasool, Forest Conservator for North Kashmir, told Kashmir Observer. "They [smugglers] PAGE 02