



Maximum : 32°C  
Minimum : 18°C  
Humidity : 55%

SUNSET  
Today 07:08 PM  
SUNRISE  
Tomorrow 05:58 AM



## News Digest

### India, Pak Troops Trade Fire Along IB

Jammu: India and Pakistan troops exchanged heavy gunfire along the International Border (IB) in Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir officials said on Saturday. Pakistani Rangers violated ceasefire by resorting to unprovoked firing and mortar shelling along the IB in Kathua district, they said. The ceasefire violation in the Border Out Post Karol Mathna area of Hiranagar sector started at 11.30 pm on Friday, prompting strong and effective retaliation by the Border Security Force (BSF), they said. The cross-border firing between the two sides continued throughout the night and ended at 4.40 am on Saturday, officials said. **● P-02**

### IAF Officer Shoots Self Dead

Jammu- A warrant officer in the Indian Air Force (IAF) allegedly committed suicide by shooting himself with his service pistol inside a camp here, officials said on Saturday. Warrant Officer Inder Pal Singh, 53, a resident of Uttar Pradesh, allegedly shot himself at Air Force Station Kalu Chak on the outskirts of Jammu on Friday, they said. The officials said Singh's colleagues rushed him to a nearby hospital, where doctors declared him dead.

After conducting a postmortem and a COVID-19 test, the body of the deceased was handed over to his family on Saturday, they said. The motive behind his taking such an extreme step was not **● P-02**

### Youth Slips To Death In Poonch

Srinagar: A youth died after slipping of a cliff in Loran area of Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said Saturday. 20-year-old Zakir Hussain of Naganari in Mandi was cutting grass in Dokh Pathra Loran on Saturday morning when he slipped from the hilltop and died, news agency GNS reported. The police, report said was informed by a person about the incident. A police team later went to the area and retrieved the body.

### Case Filed After IGP's Fake Account Created

Srinagar: The cyber wing of Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday filed a case against unidentified users for creating fake accounts of Inspector General of Police (IGP), Kashmir, Vijay Kumar on popular social networking website Facebook. In a handout issued here, a police spokesperson said that the fake Facebook accounts have been created by some miscreants containing pictures of IGP Kashmir Zone with the mala-fide intention to cause mischief and cheat common masses by virtue of **● P-02**

### 5 ISJK Militant Associates Held: Police

Srinagar: Police on Saturday claimed to have arrested five supporters of Islamic State Jammu Kashmir (ISJK) from Bandipora district of north Kashmir. On a credible input, Police arrested five militant associates of ISJK and recovered incriminating material including Matrix Sheets, ISJK Flags and ammunition from their possession, a police spokesperson said Saturday. During the preliminary investigation, the police spokesperson said it was revealed that the alleged OGWs had carried out reconnaissance of an army camp to attack it in future. "They were also involved in motivating and radicalizing the local youth to join the militant **● P-02**

## Unionist Parties Vow To Fight For Statehood, Special Status

# 'August 5 Changed J&K's Relationship With Delhi'

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A year after Modi-led Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) government scrapped Article-370 and 35-A and split Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories, the signatories of last year's 'Gupkar Declaration' on Saturday vowed to fight for restoration of special status to the erstwhile state.

A joint statement issued and signed by National Conference president Farooq Abdullah, PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti, J-K Congress chief Ghulam Ahmad Mir, Peoples' Conference leader Sajjad Lone, state CPM leader M Y Targami and Jammu and Kashmir Awami National Conference senior vice-president Muzaffar Shah termed the August 5 events as unfortunate and said it has "unrecognizably changed the relationship between J-K and New Delhi".

"In a spitefully shortsighted and unconstitutional move, Articles 370 and 35A were abrogated and the State was bifurcated and relegated to the status of two Union Territories and its Constitution tried to be made unenforceable," the joint statement said.

The joint statement on 'Gupkar Declaration' comes over two weeks after NC patron unsuccessfully tried to hold all party meet at his Sonwar residence on August 5 anniversary **►PAGE 02**



NC President Farooq Abdullah addresses a press conference after holding a meeting with party leaders. KO Photo: Abid Bhat

## Kashmir Politicians Day-Dreaming: BJP

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir BJP president Ravinder Raina on Saturday said the Kashmir-based politicians are day-dreaming for the restoration of Article 370 and Article 35A of the Constitution which is next to impossible.

He claimed the controversial Articles were like a wall of hatred which did nothing except

digging an ocean of misunderstandings and retarding the growth and development of the erstwhile state.

The J&K BJP chief made the remarks after various political parties in Kashmir on Saturday unanimously resolved to fight for the restoration of the special status of the erstwhile state as it existed before August 5, 2019,

and said the measures taken were "spitefully shortsighted" and "grossly unconstitutional".

Reacting to the statement, Raina said "the restoration of Articles 370 & 35(a) is next to impossible. Due to these Articles, J&K has suffered for decades and they gave rise to militancy, separatism and flared up the Pakistani agenda **►PAGE 02**

## India Rejects Kashmir Reference In China-Pak Joint Statement

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: India on Saturday categorically rejected the reference made to Jammu and Kashmir in a joint statement issued by Pakistan and China after talks between foreign ministers of the two countries.

Spokesperson in the Ministry of External Affairs Anurag Srivastava said the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir is an "integral and inalienable" part of India and that it expects the parties concerned not to interfere in the country's internal matters.

"As in the past, we categorically

reject the reference to the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir in the joint press release of the 2nd Round of China-Pakistan foreign ministers' strategic dialogue," he said.

In their second annual strategic dialogue on Friday, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and his Pakistani counterpart Shah Mahmood Qureshi discussed the Kashmir issue and progress on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor among a host of other issues.

In his reaction, Srivastava reiterated India's consistent position on the so-called "China **►PAGE 02**

## Rajnath Reviews Ladakh Stand-Off With NSA, Top Military Brass

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Saturday reviewed the overall security scenario in eastern Ladakh amid the ongoing talks between India and China on the disengagement process in the high-altitude region, people familiar with the developments said.

The meeting was attended by National Security Advisor Ajit



Doval, Chief of Defence Staff Gen Bipin Rawat, Army Chief Gen MM Naravane, Navy Chief Admiral Karambir Singh and IAF Chief Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhadauria. The sources said all **►PAGE 02**

## Pakistan Freezes Bank Accounts Of Dawood, Saeed

ISLAMABAD: Seeking to wriggle out of the FATF's grey list, Pakistan has imposed tough financial sanctions on 88 banned militant groups and their leaders, including Hafiz Saeed, Masood Azhar and Dawood Ibrahim, by ordering the seizure of all of their properties and freezing of bank accounts, a media report said on Saturday.

The Paris-based Financial Action Task Force (FATF) put Pakistan on the grey list in June 2018 and asked Islamabad to implement a plan of action by the end of 2019, **● P-02**

## BSF Kills 5 Pak Intruders On Punjab Border

CHANDIGARH: The BSF shot dead five heavily armed Pakistani intruders along the India-Pakistan International Border in Punjab early Saturday, the force said.

This was the highest number of intruders killed in a single incident along the 3,300-km-long border with Pakistan in more than a decade, officials said.

Punjab shares a 553-km-long frontier with Pakistan, apart from Jammu, Rajasthan and Gujarat, which together constitute the remaining part of the IB.

A BSF spokesperson said troops recovered nine packets containing 9.92kg heroin, an AK-47 rifle, two magazines and 27 rounds, **● P-02**

LG Reviews Progress Of Jammu-Baramulla Railway Line

## Project Likely To Be Completed By August 2022



Press Trust of India

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday reviewed the progress of the much-awaited 272 km-long Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla rail

link, which is likely to be completed by August 15, 2022, an official spokesperson said.

Sinha reviewed the progress of the project at a meeting here, which was attended by Railway Board chairman **►PAGE 02**

## Kashmir Highway Reopens After 2-Day Closure

JAMMU- The 270-km Jammu-Srinagar National Highway re-opened on Saturday after remaining closed for the past two days owing to multiple landslides triggered by heavy rains, officials said.

The highway got blocked at over a dozen places between Udhampur and Banihal on Thursday, leaving thousands of vehicles stranded. "The highway was cleared for one-way traffic around 10 am. After clearance of the stranded vehicles, the traffic will be allowed from Srinagar **● P-02**

## Army's 'Saviour' In 2014 Floods Takes Up Arms

Agencies

SRINAGAR: A Pampore youth, who won praise for saving dozens of soldiers during devastating floods in 2014, has reportedly joined militant ranks, six years after his heroic acts.

A resident of Sambora in saffron town of Pampore, Asif Muzaffar Shah has reportedly joined militant ranks, ten days after he went missing, news agency KNT reported Saturday. His family had filed a missing report on August 14 at the police station, after he failed to return home.

Shah, an arts graduate was running

a perfume-cum-stationary shop at Kakpora area of the district.

The report further says that Shah was arrested on charges of supporting militants following the deadliest attack on state forces in Lethpora in 2019 in which over 40 CRPF personnel were killed.

Pertinently, Shah is said to have played a saviour's role in rescuing over two dozen soldiers, who were trapped in flash floods triggered by incessant rains in September 2014.

For his bravery, the report said Shah was hailed by army and the state authorities. **►PAGE 02**

Hameeda Syed

With the arrival of the pandemic, the more vulnerable sections of the society were hit harder than their counterparts. While reeling from the damage and trying to maintain their footing in an already ineffective health infrastructure, the reality of contracting a seemingly unbeatable virus in Kashmir loomed heavily on their minds.

These silent voices of women who were pregnant, on the verge to deliver and/ or had delivered a baby amidst these trying times were lost in between scores of people rushing through dimly lit hospitals to save their loved ones.

It has been a traumatising experience for us'

## Caught In Covid: Kashmir's Beleaguered Birthgivers

"Coronavirus was already feeling like a nightmare come true, and we had three expecting women in our family," Ameena, a resident of district Ganderbal said, while giving a third-person account of the experience. "The first delivery happened on the 5th of June. That was a time when the cases in Kashmir had not yet spiked owing to the lockdown and the district I come from was still a green zone."

The three women in Ameena's family who were expecting were her two sister-in-laws and her

cousin. Detailing their plight, Ameena said that her family decided to go to a private hospital, owing to news about mismanagement in government hospitals.

"I remember very clearly how my sister-in-law, Zahida wept when she was leaving for her mother's place, and the only thing she kept saying to us was to pray for her," she said. Zahida was the first in their family to get tested for the virus before the delivery date.

"We were a little apprehensive, but comparatively calmer because the situation seemed to be



under control. We kept on calling her and asking her to stay calm and if the swab test hurt, just to

know how exactly it is done. The test was negative and the delivery went fine, Alhamdulillah."

Zahida gave birth to her first child, a baby girl, who was received warmly. "I surprisingly didn't even see a single person sighing over the birth, everyone was just relieved that the baby and the mother were fine. Priorities shifting, you see," Ameena said.

The second sister-in-law, Saima was expecting her third child. The delivery was scheduled to happen in July. By then, the cases were already peaking.

"This time we were a little more apprehensive as the situation in Kashmir had suddenly turned

bad, and after unlock, everything seemed to have gone the wrong way," Ameena said.

However, contrary to their expectations, Saima's pre-delivery COVID test came out positive. Immediately, the rest of Saima's family, including her 5-year-old son and 1-year-old daughter were tested, with only her husband's report coming out positive.

Following the news, Saima was forced to deliver a baby boy in a government COVID facility. Only one person, her mother, was allowed to accompany her. Although the delivery went well, it wasn't until late in the evening when a doctor arrived for a check-up and administered a dose of painkillers.

"She wasn't allowed to hold the baby. Another family **►PAGE 02**