

24th year OF PUBLICATION

KASHMIR OBSERVER

Thursday 18 March | 03 Shaban | 1442 Hijri | Vol:24 | Issue: 64 | Pages:08 | Price: ₹3

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P3 CITY

LG FOR SPEEDY COMPLETION OF SMART CITY PROJECTS

Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha Wednesday chaired a high-level meeting to review the progress being made on the Jammu and Srinagar Smart City Projects....

P5 THINK

THE SAFETY CONUNDRUM

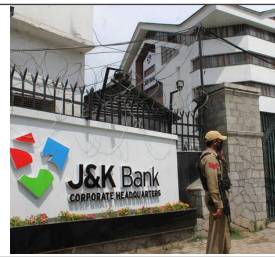
Earlier this month, Sarah Everard was allegedly abducted and killed while walking home from a friend's house in London. In response to her disappearance, women were reportedly advised to avoid going out alone. Yet at the same time, the Metropolitan....



P7 STATE

J&K BANK BAGS IBA'S BEST TECHNOLOGY BANK OF THE YEAR AWARD

Jammu and Kashmir Bank Wednesday bagged the Best Technology Bank of the Year Award presented by India Banks' Association (IBA) for the year....



Widom Quote!

The best classroom in the world is at the feet of an elderly person

—Andy Rooney

NEWS DIGEST

Cases Surge In J&K, 126 Test Positive

SRINAGAR: Coronavirus cases in Jammu and Kashmir have started showing an upward trend as 126 more people on Wednesday tested positive for Covid-19, while one more person succumbed to the virus in the last 24 hours.

The lone victim belonged to Kashmir Valley, taking the overall fatality count to » [More On P6](#)

CRPF Vehicle Injures Teen Critically

SRINAGAR: A teenager on Wednesday was critically injured after being hit by a CRPF vehicle in Saida Kadal area of this capital city. 16-year-old Safran Ahmad of Nadiyal locality was hit by a CRPF vehicle near Saida Kadal area leaving him critically injured, eyewitnesses said. The injured, they said, was immediately taken to the SHMS hospital for treatment. » [More On P6](#)

CASO Launched In Budgam

SRINAGAR: The government forces on Wednesday launched a cordon and search operation (CASO) in central Kashmir's Budgam district. Special Operations Group (SOG) of police, army's SORR and CRPF cordoned off Braripora-Gund area of the district on Wednesday evening and conducted house to house searches there, news agency KDC reported. The report said that all the entry and exit points towards the area were » [More On P6](#)

3 Youth Held For 'Posing As Cops'

SRINAGAR: Police on Wednesday claimed to have arrested three youths who posed as cops and carried out a robbery in Rambagh area of the city. Burhan Mukhtar Wani, Suhail Ahmad Khan and Sahil Jahingir, all residents of Karfali Mohalla here were arrested by police on the basis of a complaint filed by Nowshad Ali, a resident of West Bengal alleging that three persons impersonating » [More On P6](#)

3 Gamblers Held In Khrew: Police

SRINAGAR: Police on Wednesday claimed to have arrested three gamblers in a raid in south Kashmir's Awantipora. Irfan Ahmad Lone, Mohammad Aslam Sheikh and Irshad Ahmad Sheikh were arrested by cops after an input driven raid was carried out in village Sheikh Mohalla, Khrew, a police spokesperson said Wednesday. Besides playing cards, he said, an amount of » [More On P6](#)

Centre Unveils Over Rs 1Lakh Crore Budget Of J&K For 2021-22

Each DDC To Get Rs 10 Cr Development Fund, BDC Rs 25L

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday unveiled Rs 1, 08,621 crore budget of Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory for 2021-22 in the Lok Sabha.

The budget document reveals that its focus is on good governance, socio-economic development of the people, infrastructure building and generation of employment.

"The budget for 2021-22 for J&K shall again cross Rs.1 lakh crore mark, an indicator or our commitment to make J&K a model of development," reads the budget documents.

Budget figures:

The total budget estimates for the next fiscal is Rs 1,08,621 crore. Of which Rs. 39,817 are earmarked for capital expenditure and Rs 68,804 crore for revenue expenditure.

This means 37 % of the earmarked budget shall be spent on development and

infrastructure projects.

Key announcements:

For the first time, the government has earmarked development funds for district development councils and block development councils.



According to the budget document, Rs 200 crore has been earmarked for DDCs in the budget. This means each DDC will get Rs 10 crore each in 2021-22.

Similarly, Rs 71.25 crore have been proposed as 'development fund' for 285 block development councils. This means each BDC will get Rs 25 lakh as development.

The government has also proposed to spend Rs 30 crore for establishment of DDCs/BDCs offices in 2021-22. Around Rs 1313 crore have been provisioned for PRIs/ULBs for rural and urban infrastructure, the documents reveal.

In the budget, Rs 400 crore has been provisioned for GST reimbursement to ensure timely reimbursement of the claims. Around Rs 200 crore has been set aside for the "Mission Youth programme".

The government has also kept a budgetary provision of Rs 800 crore for » [More On P6](#)

245 WORKS WOULD BE COMPLETED DURING 2021-22 which include construction of model schools, additional classrooms, lavatory facilities, smart class rooms. In the budget, Rs 200 crore has been provisioned for development of new industrial estates in UT during 2021-22.

Govt Bars Transfers Of Teachers In Kashmir

Agencies

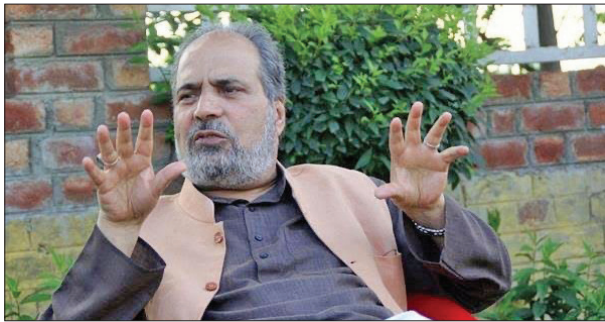
JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir government on Wednesday directed all Chief Education Officers of Kashmir Division to stop publishing or issuing of any kind of transfers/ posting orders with immediate effect till process of ATD 2021 by School Education Department was completed at its level.

"Director School Education. Kashmir is advised to put on hold all transfer orders issued by the CEOs under ATD 2021 and also issue instructions to all Chief Education Officers of Kashmir Division to stop publishing/issuing of any kind of transfers/ posting orders with immediate effect till process of ATD 2021 by School Education Department is completed at its level," reads an order issued B. K. Singh, Administrative Secretary School Education.

"If any order has been issued in violation » [More On P6](#)

'Ghar Wapsi' After Four Decades

PDP Co-Founder Muzaffar Beigh Joins Peoples Conference



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Senior pro-India politician and former Jammu and Kashmir Deputy Chief Minister, Muzaffar Hussain Beigh on Wednesday joined Sajad Gani Lone led Peoples Conference.

According to reports, Beigh joined PC today in presence of party chief Sajad Gani Lone, vice-chairman Abdul Gani Vakil, senior leaders

Raja Aijaz Ali, Abid Ansari, Irfan Panditpuri, Bashir Ahmad Dar and others at his residence in Srinagar.

"Lone on this occasion invited Beigh to once again return home and be a part of the party from where he started his political career. He impressed upon Beigh that the need of the hour is that people like him should share their experience, expertise, knowledge » [More On P6](#)



A man carrying out early morning exercise inside the blossomed Badamwari orchard in Srinagar on Wednesday. KO Photo, Abid Bhat

Militancy In J&K Declined In Last Three Years: Govt

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: There has been a significant decline in militancy incidents in Jammu and Kashmir in the last three years but instances of shelling from across the border have gone up abruptly, Rajya Sabha was informed on Wednesday.

Union Minister of State for Home G Kishan Reddy shared this in a written reply.

'During the past three years, there has been a significant decline in militant incidents and attempts of infiltration



from across the border in Jammu and Kashmir. However, the incidents of shelling from across the border have increased during the past three years,' he said. » [More On P6](#)

'Pak Sending Weapons Through Drones'

The government Wednesday said some instances of supply of weapons through drones from Pakistan have come to light and security agencies were taking action on it. Union Minister of State for Home G Kishan Reddy said this in Rajya Sabha, while responding to a question on whether the central government is aware that Pakistan has started supplying weapons to infiltrators via drones. » [More On P6](#)

Lt Gen Pandey Takes Command Of 15 Corps

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Lt General Devendra Pratap Pandey on Wednesday assumed charge of the strategic Kashmir-based 15 Corps relieving Lt Gen BS Raju on the end of his one year tenure.

Lt Gen Raju, who has also served in past as Uri Brigade Commander, GOC of Victor Force, and commanded the 15 Corps in critical phase in 2020 where Kashmir was confronted with the twin challenges of militancy and coronavirus pandemic. » [More On P6](#)

3800 KPs Returned To Kashmir For Jobs: GoI

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Nearly 3,800 Kashmiri migrants have returned to Jammu and Kashmir in the last few years and 520 of them after the abrogation of Article 370 to take up jobs under the prime minister's special package, the Rajya Sabha was informed on Wednesday.

Union Minister of State for Home G Kishan Reddy said the provision of special jobs

for the Kashmiri migrant youths under the PM package is an important part for the rehabilitation of Kashmiri migrants, who left the valley in 1990s due to militancy.

"A total of nearly 3,800 migrant candidates have returned to Kashmir in the last few years to take up the PM package jobs. Post abrogation of Article 370 (August 2019), as many as 520 migrant candidates have » [More On P6](#)

Peace With Pak Will Give India Direct Access To Central Asia: Imran

Press Trust Of India

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Wednesday said India will be benefitted economically by having peace with his country as it will be able to directly access resource-rich Central Asia through it.

Delivering the inaugural address at the launch of the two-day Islamabad Security Dialogue, Khan also said that his government after coming to power in 2018 did everything for better ties with India and it was for India to reciprocate.

India will have to take the first step. Unless they do so, we cannot do much, he said.

India last month said that it desires normal » [More On P6](#)

Kashmiri Students, Travellers 'Barred' From Visiting Pak

Badar Bashir

SRINAGAR: Protest broke out Wednesday at the Wagah border in Punjab after dozens of Kashmiris, including travellers and students were allegedly barred from visiting Pakistan despite possessing all travel documents.

According to reports, hundreds of people, including Kashmiris had converged near the Wagah since Tuesday to cross over to the neighbouring country. However, dozens of Kashmiris, including students, travellers and elderly who were scheduled to visit their relatives on the other side were prevented from crossing over, while Pakistani travellers were allowed to return.

"I had to visit my sister who

is currently pursuing MBBS in Pakistan. However, when I reached the border this morning, we were told that Kashmiris can't be allowed to go to Pakistan," Hamnah Parvez, a protester said.

"Another family stranded with me has a daughter who has to appear in exams. If she can't make it soon, she will have to drop a year," she added. A medical student wishing not to be named alleged that the officials at the Wagah were continuously changing their statements causing distress among the Kashmiris.

"They told us that the procedure has changed and that we have to bring permission from home ministry. We don't what the officials are up to," he said.

He said that » [More On P6](#)

Deadlock Over Mutton Rates Ends In Kashmir

Govt Fixes New Rates At Rs 535, Rs 490

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: The four month deadlock over the rates of mutton ended in Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday with the administration fixing the retail price of mutton at Rs 535 per kilogram without offal and Rs 490 with it.

The stalemate over revised mutton rates ended during a meeting between Divisional Commissioner Kashmir P K Pole and the President Retail Mutton Dealer's Association, Kashmir, Khazir Muhammad Regoo and Co-Chairman Kashmir Economic Alliance (KEA) Farooq Ahmed Dar here on Wednesday, reports said.



"We had a threadbare discussion with the Divisional Commissioner Kashmir. Government is not ready to fix Rs 550 as rate for per kg mutton and after discussions, new rate has been fixed at Rs 535 per kg," Regoo said.

He said that the mutton dealers have agreed to sell meat at

Rs 535 per kg from tomorrow though the revised rates will give them less profit.

KEA Co-Chairman Farooq Ahmed Dar said that there were some black sheep in the mutton trade who were not allowing the stalemate to end.

"In the interest of Kashmir's ailing lot, general » [More On P6](#)

Temp Rises Above Normal Across Kashmir

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Amid forecast for moderate rains or snow likely on March 21 and 22, mercury remained above normal in Kashmir Valley, weatherman said on Wednesday.

A meteorological department official said that Srinagar recorded a low of 6.2 degree Celsius against 5.6 degree Celsius on the previous night. The minimum temperature was 4.7 degree Celsius above normal for this time of the year in this summer capital, the official said.

Qazigund recorded a low of 5.2 degree Celsius, same as on the previous night while mercury settled at 3.7 degree Celsius against minus 2.0 degree Celsius on the earlier » [More On P6](#)