

03 Amit targets at multi-level parking during SMGS Hospital visit

09 Illegal constructions at Patnitop: DB seeks action taken report

11 A doctor's death in Kashmir stirs debate about bureaucratic meddling

J&K's COVID-19 tally reaches 25,931 with 564 fresh cases

Intensive Red Zone Testing Strategy being prepared: CS

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday recorded 564 new coronavirus cases, taking the caseload to 25,931, while 12 patients died due to the disease in the last 24 hours, officials said.

Ten deaths were reported in the Kashmir valley, while two patients died in the Jammu region.

With the new fatalities, the COVID-19 death toll in the union territory has risen to 490, of which 453 were from the valley and 37 from the Jammu region, they said.

Of the 564 fresh cases, 133 were from the Jammu region and 431 from the valley, the officials said. Among them, 88 had returned to the union territory recently.

So far, 17,979 patients have recovered from the infection and the union territory now has 7,462 active coronavirus cases.

The officials said Srinagar district in central Kashmir recorded the highest of 90 new COVID-19 cases, followed by 72 in Jammu district. This was for the first time in the last few days that

Govt issues guidelines on reopening of religious places from Aug 16

JAMMU: The J&K government on Tuesday issued guidelines and instructions for opening of all religious places from August 16. According to an order, any deviation shall attract penal action under the Disaster Management Act, 2005.

The government has made the installation and use of Aarogya Setu App as mandatory for all visitors.

However, it said, touching statues, idols or holy books will not be permitted.

"In the exercise of powers conferred under Section 24 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005, the instructions are hereby issued by the State Executive Committee for the opening of religious places/places of worship within the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir with effect August 16, 2020 till further orders," reads the government

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Confirmed coronavirus cases reach 20 million across world

BALTIMORE (US): The confirmed number of coronavirus cases in the world has reached 20 million. That's according to the tally kept by Johns Hopkins University.

Health officials believe the actual number is much higher, given testing limitations and the fact that as many as 40% of all those who are infected have no symptoms. The US, India and Brazil have together accounted for nearly two-thirds of all cases since the world hit 15 million on July 22.

Srinagar district recorded less than 100 fresh cases in a day.

Meanwhile, Chief Secretary, B V R Subrahmanyam this after-

noon chaired a meeting to take stock of the efforts toward mitigating COVID-19 pandemic and review the related Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and poli-

cies.

Administrative Secretaries of departments of Health & Medical Education, Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction and Mission Director, National Health Mission (NHM) participated in the meeting.

Divisional Commissioners of Jammu, Kashmir and Director, SKIMS, Directors of Health Services, Jammu/Kashmir, Principal, GMC, Srinagar along with other HoDs attended the meeting through video conference.

Chief Secretary complimented the divisional administration of Jammu province for effectively implementing hospital referral policy to ensure optimal utilization of resources, wherein the tertiary hospitals would only admit critical COVID patients being referred from district hospitals. Directions were issued for daily monitoring of COVID admissions, testing, discharges and bed occupancy across the COVID care institutions.

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Remote voting should inspire trust of all, assure integrity of electoral process: EC Chandra

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Stressing on the importance of ensuring greater "inclusiveness" in elections, Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra said remote voting should be such that it inspires trust of all stakeholders and assures integrity of electoral process and secrecy.

Delivering the keynote address on a webinar on "Technology aspects

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Railways suspends all regular passenger services indefinitely

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The Railways has stated that all regular passenger train services will remain suspended till further notice, but 230 special trains will continue to be in service.

This is to bring to the notice of all concerned that as decided and informed earlier as well, regular passenger and suburban train services will continue to remain suspended till further notice," a statement from the Railways said.

It may be noted that 230 Special Trains, which

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My 'innocuous dissent' was seen as act of 'treason': Shah Faesal

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR/NEW DELHI: Shah Faesal, the first resident of Jammu and Kashmir who topped the civil services exam in 2009, on Tuesday said his decision to join politics last year had done more harm than benefit as his "innocuous act" of dissent was seen as an "act of treason".

A day after announcing that he was quitting politics, the 37-year-old defended his decision saying "we evolve with time" and abrogation of the special status on August 5 last year brought forth a new political reality in

Kashmir.

Faesal had brought glory to the erstwhile state by standing first in the civil services exam and was seen as a role model for youths. He, however, resigned from the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) in January last year.

"While in detention I thought a lot about it. And I realised that I am not the person who can promise to people that I can undo these decisions," Faesal, who was released after being kept under preventive detention and later booked under the draconian Public Safety

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First Census of Water Bodies in J&K launched

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Financial Commissioner Revenue, Dr Pawan Kotwal, on Tuesday launched 1st Census of Water Bodies of Jammu and Kashmir during a function which was attended by Director Planning

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Three suspected terrorists apprehended in Kupwara

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: The Army has apprehended three suspected terrorists during a search operation in Kupwara district, officials said on Tuesday.

A joint search operation was launched by the security forces on the inputs of Jammu and Kashmir Police in Lalpora area of Kupwara on Monday, an army official said. He said three suspects were apprehended and

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WEATHER

Temperature (Jammu)

Max: 34.7°C Min: 25.8°C

Humidity

Max: 85 Min: 75

Temperature (Srinagar)

Max: 33.4°C Min: 19.2°C

Humidity

Max: 69 Min: 34

Sunset : 19:22 Hours

Sunrise : 05:53 Hours

CDS briefs Parliament's PAC on situation at LAC in Ladakh; says armed forces ready for long haul

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat has told a parliamentary committee that the country's armed forces are prepared to deal with any eventualities along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh, and are ready for a long haul even during the harsh winter months, sources in the panel said on Tuesday.

Gen Rawat made the remarks when he along with top commanders of the Army appeared before the Parliament's Public Accounts



Committee (PAC) on Monday on the issue of procurement of high-altitude clothing for the armed forces,

they said.

During the interaction, several PAC members sought to know from Gen Rawat about

the standoff between Indian and Chinese troops in the eastern Ladakh region to which the CDS responded that the armed forces are prepared for any eventualities, the sources said.

Gen Rawat appeared confident and clearly conveyed to the panel that the armed forces are prepared for a long haul in the region, they said. The PAC is headed by Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury.

India and China have been holding diplomatic and military talks on

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Pranab Mukherjee's condition worsens, on ventilator support post surgery: Army hospital

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The condition of former President Pranab Mukherjee has worsened and he remains on ventilator support, the Army's Research and Referral (R&R) Hospital said on Tuesday, a day after he underwent a brain surgery.

The 84-year-old was admitted to the military hospital around noon on Monday, and had also

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Blood Bank Storekeeper placed under suspension for misbehaviour with attendant of Thalessemic patient

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Taking a serious cognizance of the complaint regarding repeated misbehaviour with a chronically ill patient, the Principal Government Medical College Jammu Dr. Nasib Chand Digra placed under suspension Rakesh Kumar, Theater Assistant presently working as Storekeeper in Blood Bank of Shri Maharaja Gulab Singh (SMGS) Hospital Jammu vide his office order number

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR/JAMMU: The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Tuesday produced a charge sheet against three people including former chairman of Jammu and Kashmir Cooperative Bank for sanctioning a Rs 250 crore loan to a non-existent cooperative housing society two years ago.

"The ACB filed a charge sheet against Mohammad Shafi Dar, the then chairman of J&K State Cooperative Bank Limited (JKSTCB), Hilal Ahmad Mir, chairman of non-existent River Jhelum Cooperative House Building

Society, Srinagar and Abdul Hamid Hajam, secretary of the non-existent River Jhelum Cooperative House Building Society, Srinagar," a spokesperson of the anti-graft body said here.

The ACB registered a case against Dar and others under various sections of prevention of corruption act for allegedly sanctioning a loan to the tune of Rs 250 crore in favour of the non-existent society for the purpose of construction of a satellite township at Shippora locality in Srinagar bypassing the credit

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Doctors' dearth in J&K: DB directs FC H&ME to file status, selection undertaken in 2019-20

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: A Division Bench (DB) of the J&K High Court comprising Chief Justice Gita Mittal and Justice Javed Iqbal Wani on Tuesday (through video conferencing) directed

Financial Commissioner Health and Medical Education J&K Government and Director Health Services Jammu and Secretary J&K PSC to file an affidavit indicating the latest position with regard to the shortage of doctors in

public hospitals in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

The court direction came in the much publicized Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by RTI Activist Balwinder Singh wherein the petitioner has sought directions to the State

Government to provide duly sanctioned staff in all the Health Institutions in Jammu Province as out of 259 PHCs, NPHCs and CHCs in the hilly and remote

areas of all the Districts of Jammu Province, 184 are running without doctors and lacking the staff including the Medical Officers/Consultants and Para-Medical Staff in Sub-District Hospitals, District Hospitals of entire Jammu Province.

When this PIL came up for hearing, Advocate Sheikh Shakeel Ahmed with Advocates Supriya Chouhan, Irtiza Mushtaq Salaria

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Paid media trying to dictate terms to J&K administration



JAMMU: It is all about paid media and fake news that has wreaked havoc in Jammu and Kashmir over the years. Both are motivated, obviously for vested interest and creating mistrust.

A media house, known for blackmailing and dictating terms to the administration by twisting news and distorting the facts, for obvious reasons, is as usual engaged in its malicious intent of impressing the new set of the administration by carrying concocted news stories and scripting editorial columns.

Despite facing many criminal and civil suits, the media house shamelessly leaves no chance to show its true colours. This is where the role of the pro-active administration chips, which has a bounden responsibility of initiating concrete steps to make such media houses and portals to maintain the sanctity, dignity and credibility of the fourth pillar of democracy, which is under severe strains. Any delay can prove counterpro-

ductive and encourage such unscrupulous media houses to continue tarnishing reputations, engage in blackmailing and dictate the course of administrative processes for their vested interest.

This is a virus that if not treated in time will infect the entire body fabric of the society in general and the administration in particular.

Already the administration is grappling with the menace of the paid and fake news that has created chaotic situations in a sensitive place like Jammu and Kashmir.

What can be the example of paid and fake news than the fact that the perpetrators are twisting facts as per their malicious designs? One such example of the fake news is as recent as the other day, about the Shopian encounter which is being twisted in a malicious way to create a question mark on the credibility of the security agencies. Advisor to Lieutenant Governor Farooq Ahmad Khan had to go public saying that some people on social media call Shopian an encounter to "deteriorate situation" in Kashmir.

"We will defeat all the conspiracies of those who want to deteriorate the situation in Kashmir.

There are some reports about the missing of three persons. Enquiry has been started and everything will be clear very soon," Khan told reporters in south Kashmir.

On July 18, the army said three terrorists were killed in the higher reaches of Shopian in South Kashmir. However, no further details were shared. Families in Jammu region's Rajouri have filed written complaints saying three men involved in labour work were missing from the same area. The army claimed that it is inquiring into an encounter by its troops in a South Kashmir village following complaints by families who have reported some men missing.

On Monday, Srinagar-based Defence spokesperson Colonel Rajesh Kalia issued a brief statement saying the army has noted social media inputs linked to the operations at Shopian on July 18. "The three terrorists killed during the operation have not been identified and the bodies were buried based on established protocols. The army is investigating the matter," Colonel Rajesh Kalia said. The political parties have been demanding an impartial probe into the alleged encounter to ensure speedy justice.

Abdullahs' pleas for release of 16 NC leaders: J&K Admn tells HC none of them detained

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir administration has informed the high court that none of the 16 National Conference leaders, for whom the party's president Farooq Abdullah and vice president Omar Abdullah had filed a bunch of habeas corpus petitions seeking their release, had been detained and that they were free to move "with certain precautions" as deemed fit for their security.

Filing responses to the pleas before the Jammu and Kashmir High Court, senior additional advocate general Bashir Ahmad Dar said it was "not only surprising but shocking as well" as there was neither any legal proceedings underway nor was

being contemplated.

The similarly worded replies, which have been vetted by the Inspector General of Police (Kashmir Range), however, said that in wake of constitutional amendments carried out in August last year, "it was apprehended that inimical elements may disturb the peace" and the leaders "may provoke them to cause aggravation in the disturbance".

However, no order of detention either under preventive detention law or substantive law was issued against any of the leaders, it said, adding they were free to move with certain precautions "as deemed fit" for their security. The reply said that the petitioner being a

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