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ROUHANI: FATE AWAITING TRUMP NO BETTER THAN SADDAM HUSSEIN'S

Iran's President Hassan Rouhani has drawn a parallel between the hostile policies of outgoing US President Donald Trump ...

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UP ANTI- CONVERSION LAW

The Ordinance law in the first place owes its existence to a hypothetical and bogus term of 'Love-Jihad'.



P12 OBSERVER OUTPOST

REPUBLIC TV CHANNEL FINED FOR HATE SPEECH VS PAKISTANIS

Britain's communications regulator Ofcom imposed a £20,000 (US\$26,720) fine Tuesday on an Indian TV station for a program ...



Wisdom Quote!
"I can calculate the motion of heavenly bodies but not the madness of people."
— Isaac Newton

news
DIGEST

PAGD Candidate's Cavalcade Attacked

SRINAGAR: A female worker of a DDC candidate, who won from Baramulla block constituency, 'sustained injuries' after her cavalcade came under stone-pelting in Hudpora locality of Baramulla district on Wednesday.

The successful PAGD candidate Qurat-ul-Ain Bashir from PDP was approaching towards her native village along her workers when her cavalcade was pelted with stones near Hudpora area in the district, news agency GNS reported.

In the incident, some vehicles got damaged even as a female worker (name withheld) also sustained injuries. She was removed to hospital for treatment.

Meanwhile, police has filed a case in this regard, the report added.

MCA Student Goes Missing In Baramulla

BARAMULLA: Family members of a 24-year-old youth, who has gone missing since 20 December, have urged their son to return home and appealed to the government to help them in tracing him.

Saqib Ashraf from Fatehgarh here, went missing on December 20, while he was returning from Kashmir University, news agency KNO reported. After coming to know that Saqib has not returned home, the report said, his father tried his mobile number. However, his phone was switched off.

Unable to make any contact with their son, an anxious family started searching in the neighborhood.

Saqib's family has also registered a missing report of their son in the police station Sheeri.

Congress Leader Madan Lal Sharma Dies

JAMMU: Veteran Congress leader and former minister Madan Lal Sharma passed away at a private hospital in Katra on Wednesday morning.

He was first elected as MLA in 1983 and again in 1987 from Chhamb constituency on Congress mandate, a party spokesman said.

He became minister in the NC-Congress coalition government in 1988. He was again elected from Akhnor in 2002 and became a minister in the PDP-Congress government.

Sharma was twice elected to the Lok Sabha from Jammu-Poonch seat in 2004 and 2009. However, he lost the 2014 Lok Sabha elections.

Man Held With Cannabis In Rajouri

JAMMU: A man was arrested with a consignment of five kilograms of cannabis in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district on Wednesday, police said.

Rajouri Senior Superintendent of Police Chandan Kohli said that a team intercepted a car at Darhali bridge and carried out a thorough search of the car.

They recovered 252 rolls of cannabis weighing around five kilograms. He said that the accused Sharaz Ahmed has been arrested and booked in a case.

Gupkar Alliance Sweeps DDC Polls, Wins 110 Seats

BJP Emerges Single Largest Party With 75 Seats

SRINAGAR: The People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) swept the maiden District Development Council (DDC) polls by winning 110 seats, while the BJP emerged as the single largest party by getting 75 seats after securing the largest vote share in Jammu and Kashmir, officials said on Wednesday.

The results of two constituencies - one each in Bandipora and Kupwara districts of north Kashmir - are still awaited as counting of votes has been deferred there till further orders, they said.

The counting of votes for the 280 DDC constituencies - 14 each in 20 districts - started on Tuesday morning after the peaceful culmination of the eight-phase election from November 28 to December 19. This was the first democratic exercise in Jammu and Kashmir post abrogation of Article 370 and bifurcation of the erstwhile state into union territories last year.

Out of the 278 seats for which results have been declared by the J-K Election Commission so far, besides the PAGD and the BJP, Independent candidates have won 50, Congress 26, Apni Party 12, PDF and the National Panthers Party two each and the BSP one.

Two women from Pakistan-controlled Kashmir, who are married to former militants from the Valley, are among the contestants from the Dragma constituency in Kupwara and Hajin-A in Bandipora and the state Election [More On P8](#)

Independents Emerge As Key Players With 50 Seats



The supporters of a BJP candidate dance to celebrate his victory in DDC polls in Srinagar outskirts on Tuesday. —KO Photo: Abid Bhat

JAMMU: Independent candidates have emerged as big winners in Jammu and Kashmir's maiden District Development Council polls, with 50 of them having been declared elected from 278 seats, putting them ahead of parties like the Congress and the PDP.

Among the big Independent wins is Taranjit Singh defeating BJP's

two-time MLA and former minister Sham Lal Choudhary in Suchetgarh in Jammu region by a slender margin of 11 votes.

Though the BJP maintained its supremacy by emerging as the single largest party with 74 seats and is leading in another seat, the defeat of its stalwarts Choudhary and another former minister Shakti [More On P8](#)

5 Of 7 Ex-Ministers Secure Win

JAMMU: Five out of the seven former ministers who contested the DDC election in Jammu and Kashmir have won, while two belonging to the BJP suffered defeats, according to data issued by the state election authority (SEA).

Senior Congress leader and former minister Taj Mohiuddin, who was in the fray for Parenpilla constituency of Uri tehsil in north Kashmir's Baramulla [More On P8](#)

This Is A Victory For India: Amit Shah

NEW DELHI: Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on Wednesday hailed the recent conclusion of the District Development Council (DDC) elections in Jammu and Kashmir and said that the Modi government was doing everything to restore the grassroots democracy in the union territory. [More On P8](#)

Candidates from Pck

Counting Suspended On 2 Seats

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir State Election Commissioner K K Sharma on Wednesday said the counting of votes in two DDC constituencies has been kept in abeyance to clear doubts over the citizenship of two of the contesting candidates from north Kashmir's Bandipora and Kupwara districts.

Sharma said the counting in rest of the 278 District Development Council (DDC) seats, which started on Tuesday morning, concluded peacefully Wednesday morning.

The counting of votes was deferred in Drugmulla constituency (Kupwara district) and Hajin-A (Bandipora) in view of a question that has arisen on eligibility of one each contesting candidates from the two seats, Sharma told reporters here. Two persons hailing from Pakistan- [More On P8](#)

Loud And Clear Rejection Of August 5 Move: Omar Says PAGD Was Formed In 'Very Difficult' Circumstances



KO Photo: Abid Bhat

SRINAGAR: The Centre should listen to the people's voice against the abrogation of Article 370 since it has itself termed the DDC polls as a victory of democracy, National Conference (NC) vice-president Omar Abdullah said on Wednesday.

Addressing party workers at NC headquarters Nawa-i-Subah, he said the people have made clear their view by supporting the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) in the District Development Council polls.

The NC leader also said he does not foresee assembly elections in the union territory anytime soon because of the poll results.

The seven-party PAGD swept the maiden DDC polls by winning 110 seats out of 276 for which results

were declared, while the BJP emerged as the single largest party by getting 74 seats after securing the biggest vote share in Jammu and Kashmir.

If you really say that democracy has won, then you will have to listen to the voices of the people, and the people of Jammu and Kashmir have said it with a huge majority that they do not accept (the decisions of) August 5, 2019, Abdullah said.

The Centre abrogated Article 370 which gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcated the erstwhile state into two union territories on August 5 last year.

We also accept it (that democracy has won). When did we say that we do not trust democracy? It is another thing that you do not trust us. We have been saying this from day

one that we will fight for our rights but not unlawfully or unconstitutionally. We are not for disturbing the atmosphere in this state, but to make it better, Abdullah said.

Omar said the results of the DDC elections have proved that the BJP will not be able to "bury" the NC.

The next elections in J-K are very far because of the defeat of the BJP in this election. I do not think they will have the assembly elections here anytime sooner. If they believed in democracy, they would have sounded the bugle of the assembly elections," he said.

Referring to the alliance with other mainstream parties for seeking the restoration of the special status of the erstwhile state, Abdullah said the PAGD was formed in "very difficult" circumstances and "its aim was not power".

He said the party rendered many sacrifices for the alliance and many of his colleagues were not happy with the seat-sharing arrangement.

We could have many more seats had we not contested in the alliance. But, for achieving a bigger goal, small or big sacrifices have to be made. It was our duty to keep aside our differences and to come on a single platform for our identity, he said. (PTI)

I'm Sher-e-Kashmir's Son, Won't Bow Before Anyone: Farooq



KO Photo: Abid Bhat

SRINAGAR: National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah, who is facing an ED probe in connection with the Jammu and Kashmir Cricket Association (JKCA) money-laundering case, asserted on Wednesday that he will not bow before anyone.

Addressing party workers at the NC headquarters, Nawa-i-Subah,

a day after the results of the DDC polls were announced, Abdullah, in an apparent reference to the BJP, said the saffron party thinks he will bow before it, but he will not.

"They think Farooq Abdullah will bow before them. I will only bow my head before my god and no one else. He is my creator. They are trying to induce fear," [More On P8](#)

Mehbooba Accuses BJP Govt Of 'Witch-Hunting'

Peoples Democratic Party president Mehbooba Mufti on Wednesday accused the Centre of "weaponising" probe agencies such as the NIA, ED and CBI "for political gains", and said the BJP should stop harassing her friends, family and party colleagues. [More On P8](#)

ED Raids Houses Of Mehbooba's Close Aide, Rs 28L Cash Seized

NEW DELHI: The Enforcement Directorate on Wednesday seized over Rs 28 lakh cash after it raided the premises of Anjum Fazili, a close aide of PDP president Mehbooba Mufti, in a money laundering case linked to alleged financial fraud at the J&K Bank, official sources said.

The searches were conducted at the premises of the former party MLA in Srinagar and Delhi.

Mufti, in her reaction, described the central probe agency's action as a

"witch hunt" against her.

Cash amounting to Rs 21,38,200 was seized from her residence in Srinagar while another Rs 6,62,500 was recovered from her residence in the national capital, they said.

The total cash seizure stands at just over Rs 28 lakh, the officials said. The central probe agency also recovered a dozen fixed deposit receipts worth Rs 67,29,490 during the searches at her Srinagar premise.

The raids were conducted to gather

Cold Wave Intensifies In Kashmir

SRINAGAR: Cold condition intensified in Kashmir with most parts of the valley witnessing a dip in their minimum temperatures on Wednesday.

The weather has remained dry and cold across Kashmir since it snowed on December 12, with the night temperature staying several degrees below the freezing point, a meteorological department official said.

The weather department has forecast that the cold and dry weather would continue till Christmas Day.

The Valley continued to reel under sub-zero night temperatures on Wednesday as well, even though there was a slight improvement in the mercury at most places.

Srinagar -- the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir -- recorded a low of minus 5 degrees Celsius, slightly up from the previous night's minus 5.2 degrees Celsius.

The mercury in Pahalgam in south Kashmir went down from the previous night's low of minus 5.8 degrees Celsius to settle at minus 6.6 degrees Celsius, officials said. It was the coldest recorded place in the Valley.

They said Gulmarg recorded a low of minus 6 degrees Celsius, slightly down from [More On P8](#)

4 CRPF Men, Cop Injured In Grenade Blast

SRINAGAR: Four paramilitary CRPF personnel, a policeman and a BDO ranked Rural Development department official were injured on Wednesday in a grenade blast in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district.

Suspected militants lobbed a grenade towards a joint party of CRPF and police at Tawheed Chowk area of the district on Wednesday afternoon leaving at least six people injured, news agency GNS reported. The injured identified ASI Nibtal Singh, Constable Anand Mal, Manoj Sipahi and Head Constable RN Manojan, all from CRPF's 115 battalion, besides Mohammad Sulemaan, a police head constable and BDO Wakoora, Syed Nasrullah were removed to the hospital for treatment.

According to the report, the condition of one of the injured CRPF men was said to be serious.

Soon after the attack, government forces cordoned [More On P8](#)

SPO Goes Missing Along With Rifle

SRINAGAR: A Special Police Officer (SPO) has gone missing in South Kashmir's Kulgam district, officials said on Wednesday.

A police officer while confirming the incident said that the SPO, Zakir Hussain Malik (Belt no.967A) son of Mohammad Skinder Malik of Ahgar Yaripora Kulgam is missing along with an AK-47 rifle from Tuesday (December 22). "We are trying to bring him back," the officer said.

Govt Gears Up To Meet New Corona Strain Challenge

OBSERVER NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: As United Kingdom and several European countries are battling with the rapidly spreading new coronavirus strain, the authorities in Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday ordered immediate screening of travellers who have been to London and Europe in the last two weeks, besides creation of separate quarantine facilities for

the travellers and their contacts, in case they test positive.

Chairman District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) Srinagar, Dr Shahid Iqbal Choudhary on Wednesday ordered that all those who have travel history to the UK or any European country in the past two weeks - since December 9 - will have to undergo RT-PCR testing for coronavirus, an official spokesperson said. [More On P8](#)

J&K Reports 250 New Cases, 3 Corona Deaths

SRINAGAR: Three more people died of coronavirus in Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday while 250 fresh cases of Covid-19, including 2 minors were detected in the Union Territory during the last 24 hours. [More On P8](#)