



Maximum : 9°
Minimum : -2°
Humidity :25%
SUNSET
Today 05:29 PM
SUNRISE
Tomorrow 07:35 AM



P4 WORLD

DAYS AFTER CALLING IT 'DISGRACE', DONALD TRUMP SIGNS US COVID-19 RELIEF BILL

The signing comes after unemployment benefits expired for millions of Americans on Saturday ...

P6 THINK

ANOTHER TAKE ON DDC POLL

As the details of DDC polls emerge, there is one aspect that has gone completely unnoticed...



P12 OBSERVER OUTPOST

SAUDI RIGHTS ACTIVIST LOUJAIN AL-HATHLOUL SENTENCED TO ALMOST SIX YEARS IN JAIL

Court suspends some of sentence and backdates start of term ...



Quote!

"Be wiser than other people if you can; but do not tell them so."
— Dale Carnegie

NEWS DIGEST

Srinagar Teen Found Dead In Pahalgam

SRINAGAR: A teenager from Srinagar on Monday was found dead under mysterious circumstances in the tourist resort of Pahalgam in south Kashmir's Anantnag district.

19-year-old Mubashir Sajad Dar of Nowpora here was found unconscious by his friend at a hotel in Pahalgam on Monday morning, news agency KNO reported. He was removed to the government medical college (GMC) Anantnag where doctors declared him brought dead.

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Toddler Drowns In Hajin Canal

SRINAGAR: An 18 month-old child died on Monday after drowning in a canal in Hajin area of north Kashmir's Bandipora district. Faizan Ahmad Ganaie drowned in a canal in Sodhnara village of Hajin this morning, reports said Monday.

The locals rescued him in an unconscious state and removed him to the nearby Community Health Centre (CHC) Hajin. However, the doctors there declared him brought dead.

Cab Rolls Into Gorge, 9 Injured

POONCH: Nine persons were injured when a vehicle they were travelling in met with an accident in Poonch district on Monday.

Official sources said that a TATA Sumo (JK12B-1646) on way from Sawjian to Mandi skidded of the road near Sundri Nullah at around 1110 hours and fell down about 10-15 feet, resulting in injuries to nine persons who were later shifted to PHC Sawjian, reported news agency GNS.

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Protest In Batwara Over Water Shortage

SRINAGAR: The residents of Batwara on Monday staged a protest against the Jal Shakti department over the alleged shortage of clean drinking water.

According to reports, dozens of people, including women and children assembled at Batwara Chowk on Monday morning and staged a protest against the Jal Shakti department. Chanting slogans, the protesters alleged that they were facing acute shortage of water in the harsh winters. The protesters blocked the traffic on the busy road for nearly an hour to seek the attention of the administration.

"From last more than two months we are facing a water crisis in the area and concerned authorities are least bothered to

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House Guttred In Bandipora Blaze

SRINAGAR: A residential house and a cowshed were completely gutted while three other houses suffered partial damage in a fire incident in Kulosa area of Bandipora district, reports said Monday.

The fire broke out during intervening night of Sunday-Monday in one of the residential houses and later engulfed cowshed and other nearby houses, news agency KNO reported. The fire completely damaged a cowshed and a residential house belonging to Saif-ud-Din Ganai.

Quoting an unnamed official, the report said that three more houses also suffered partial damage in the fire incident.

● 'Dream of Gram Swaraj Realized'

Newly Elected 138 DDC Members Take Oath



A newly elected DDC member being administered oath at SKICC Srinagar on Monday —Pic: Abid Bhat

AGENCIES

SRINAGAR: The newly elected District Development Council (DDC) members were on Monday administered oath in their respective districts in Kashmir valley.

An official spokesperson said that the oath taking ceremony was held in all 10 districts of the valley for DDC members, who were elected in recently held eight-phased elections which witnessed a voter turnout of about 51 per cent in J&K.

"On the occasion, 138 DDC members representing 138 Block Constituencies of 10 districts of the division took oath in the name of God and pledged to bear true faith and allegiance to the constitution of India and also uphold the Sovereignty of India," he said, adding the ceremonies were attended by senior police and security force officers, besides officials from the administration.

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Will See If Anti-Defection Law Can Be Imposed: Govt

SRINAGAR: Amid allegations of horse-trading by the political parties, the divisional administration Kashmir on Monday said that it will verify whether the anti-defection law can be enacted in Jammu and Kashmir.

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Poll For DDC Heads In Next 20 Days

SRINAGAR: The election for chairperson and vice-chairperson of district development councils (DDCs) in Jammu & Kashmir Union Territory will be held in next 20 days. According to Jammu & Kashmir Panchayati Raj Rules, the election for chairperson and vice-chairperson of DDCs shall not be held later than 20 days after administering of oath to members.

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Apni Party Aims To Have 6-7 DDCs In J&K: Bukhari

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party (JKAP) is aiming to have its chairpersons in at least six to seven District Development Councils with the help of Independents and members of other parties who are "willing" to cross over, its chief Altaf Bukhari said on Monday.

Elected DDC members will pick the chairpersons in 20 districts -- 10 each in Jammu and Kashmir -- within three weeks. The JKAP won only 12 DDC constituencies out of a total of 280 in the first democratic exercise in Jammu and Kashmir after the revocation of its special status under Article 370 of the Constitution and its bifurcation into union territories in August last year.

A businessman-turned-politician who was part of the



PDP-BJP coalition government in Jammu and Kashmir between 2015 and 2018, Bukhari said his party had quietly fielded independent candidates.

"On Sunday, I have paraded all the 21 (winning) independent candidates at the party meeting. There was no coercion whatsoever," he said.

Targeting the rival People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD), Bukhari

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Panun Kashmir Reiterates Homeland Demand

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

JAMMU: Reiterating its demand for a separate homeland in the Valley for rehabilitation of Kashmiri Pandits, Panun Kashmir Monday sought a one-time compensation for their youth who could not apply for government jobs on account of being in "exile".

It also called for setting up a special crimes tribunal to enquire into the "excesses, genocide and ethnic cleansing" against the community, and a law for preservation and management of Hindu temples and shrines in the Valley.

The demands were highlighted by 'Panun Kashmir' leaders at a function here to mark the '29th Margdarshan Divas', a party release said.

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Govt Starts Rolling Out Forest Rights Act In J&K

AGENCIES

SRINAGAR: After facing flack for forcibly evicting tribal population and forest dwellers the Jammu and Kashmir government on Monday started rolling out the Forest Rights Act 2006 (FRA) in the Union Territory.

According to the reports, a training schedule has been prepared by the Forest Department wherein training will be imparted to Govt officers for implementing the Forest Rights Act in J&K in the coming months.

"Government has prepared a roster for a training programme on the Forest Rights Act so that this law could be implemented in J&K at different levels. Under the level-1, the official members of District Level Committees (DLCs) will be provided the training which include Deputy Commissioners, Divisional

Forest Officers (at District hqr's), District Panchayat Officers (DPO) -- other Senior officers of Forest, Revenue, Rural Development and Tribal Affairs Department(s)", an official told news agency KNS.

The training session will be for two and a half hours and will start from December 29th, the official added.

He further added that the Forest Department would be imparting the training to these officers.

"Under the level-2 training programme, the Sub-Divisional Forest Committee officials like SDM's, Range Officers, BDO's will be imparted 3 ½ hrs on-line training on Forest Rights Act 2006 (FRA) on 30th and 31st December at Jammu and Srinagar respectively. For frontline functionaries of the Government like

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Most Announcements Made In Financial Package Awaited: KCCI

OBSERVER NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: Terming the financial package announced by Jammu and Kashmir, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha as a ray of hope for the business community, the Kashmir Chamber of Commerce & Industry (Inc) on Monday urged the government to take more steps to bring relief to the "stressed" business community of the Union Territory.

In a statement issued here, a KCCI spokesperson said that the business community of Kashmir was undergoing a period of unprecedented stress and turbulence and heading towards financial instability. The financial package announced by LG, he said, was a ray of

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KASHMIR In Capital: Old Delhi's Delicacy Maker

ROMAAN ARORA

SHAHJAHANABAD, DELHI: On a chilly December morning, one can see several Kashmiris -- single and with family -- moving a little ahead of the Jama Masjid, towards a small, yet lively restaurant.

They're going to the most famous Kashmiri eatery in the area-- Kashmiri Restaurant.

The restaurant termed as home by many is run by Ghulam Hassan Sarkar, an erstwhile resident of Budgam, Kashmir.

In 1985, Hassan, now 60, came to Delhi as a struggler--running from



his homeland's political troubles-- for a better life and employment opportunity.

"My mother was against my decision, as she always believed that a little earning at home is better than making fortunes elsewhere," Hassan said, as we sat to talk about his life and times in India's capital.

In the first five years after arriving in Delhi, he was indulged in the Shawl business that eventually resulted in the loss.



My own beloved people were stranded here in Delhi during Covid lockdown, and I just couldn't have let them die with hunger"

Then, he tried his hands on carpet business, before finding his call in Wazwan eatery.

But even as the man from mountains was resilient enough to create his niche in the sweltering plains, Delhi never made it a cakewalk for him.

"The beginning was full of difficulties," he recounted with solemn expressions. "There was no food and I used to sleep empty stomach, with tears coming out of my eyes. Even then I had to pay Rs 60 per month as rent."

That tumultuous period lasted for a decade--between 1985 and 1995. He still feels pain of that troubling time.

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