

Widom

Quote!

"It takes a lot of rehearsing for a man to be himself."

— William Saroyan

NEWS DIGEST

J&K Sees One Death, 256 Corona Cases

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir reported on Friday one more coronavirus death, while 256 fresh cases of virus, including seventeen travelers were also detected in the Union Territory during the last 24 hours.

According to the reports, a person from Jammu succumbed to the virus on Friday, taking the number of fatalities since the outbreak of pandemic in the Union Territory to 1884, officials said.

Also, officials said, 256 new cases, including 106 from Jammu division and 150 from Kashmir Valley were reported today, taking the overall tally to 121227.

Giving district wise details, the officials said that Srinagar reported 61, Baramulla 10, Budgam 14, Kupwara 6, Pulwama 26, Anantnag 6, Bandipora 5, Ganderbal 11, Kulgam 2, Shopian 9, Jammu 72, Udhampur 7, Rajouri 2, Doda 2, Kathua 3, Kishtwar 1, Samba 14, Poonch 1 and Reasi 4 new cases of Covid-19.

Word 'State' Deleted From JKBOSE

SRINAGAR: Government had deleted the word 'State' from the name of 'Jammu Kashmir State Board of School Education. Now it will be known as Jammu Kashmir Board of School Education.

Secretary Administration Central Ghulam Hasan Wani in this regard has issued an order which reads that in pursuance of SO 3465 (E) dated 15-10-2020, issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs (Department of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh affairs) it is hereby ordered for the information and compliance of all the Officers and Sub / Branch Heads of the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education that hence forth all the official communications and correspondences shall be made under the title of "The Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education" instead of "The Jammu and Kashmir State Board of School Education", thus deleting the word "STATE" from its name.

"Violation or non-compliance If any, detected in this regard shall attract severe action against the defaulter or defaulters," the order reads.

Fire Damages Bhaderwah Court Complex

BHADERWAH : A massive fire broke out in a court complex in Bhaderwah belt of Jammu and Kashmir's Doda district, damaging the heritage court building and a shrine located in the premises, official said on Friday.

No casualty has been reported in the blaze that broke out on Thursday evening. The fire caused damage to the heritage building made of cedar wood and a shrine located in the complex, they added.

Fire personnel could not bring the blaze under control immediately as the structure was made up of wood and the blaze spread rapidly. To control the fire, the administration also called additional fire tenders from Doda.

The cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained.

OGW Arrested In Pulwama: Police

Srinagar: Police on Friday claimed to have arrested an associate of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and recovered incriminating material, including explosive substance, from his possession in Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir.

Aqif Ahmad Teli, a militant associate of LeT outfit, was involved in providing shelter, logistics and other support to active militants, besides transporting arms and ammunition for them in Awantipora and Tral areas, a police spokesperson said.

A resident of Cherso Awantipora, Teli, he said, was also involved

Vaccination To Start Soon Across J&K: Govt

OBSERVER NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir government said on Friday that the vaccination drive will soon start in the Union Territory and during the first phase around 2.8 million identified people will be vaccinated.

The details in this regard were shared in a meeting of Union Territory Level Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFI) regarding COVID-19 vaccination programme chaired by Financial Commissioner, Health and Medical Education, Atal Dulloo on Friday.

The meeting was attended by Director Health Services Jammu, Principal Government Medical College Jammu, Drug Controller J&K, HODs Pediatrics, Medicine, Pharmacology, Microbiology, Pathology, Forensic, Anesthesia and SPM of GMC Jammu while Director Health Services Kashmir, Principal GMC Kashmir, HODs Pediatrics, Medicine, Pharmacology, Microbiology,

Pathology, Forensic, Anesthesia and SPM of GMCs Srinagar, Anantnag, Baramulla, Kathua, Rajouri, Doda, SKIMS Soura and JVC Bemina attended the meeting through video conferencing, an official spokesperson said.

The meeting, he said, was also attended by the representatives of J&K Police, National Health Mission, J&K, Health Officers of Jammu Municipal Corporation and Srinagar Municipal Corporation besides other concerned officers.

According to the official spokesperson, State Immunization Officer, Dr Qazi Haroon, gave a detailed presentation about the development and the current stage of COVID-19 vaccine in the country.

"He informed the meeting that a vaccine is expected to be introduced shortly for which two doses would be administered and the second dose to be administered after 28 days of first dose," he said.

"He informed that senior doctors from majority fields of medicines



A SHUTDOWN WAS observed in parts of Srinagar on Friday against the killing of three youth in Lawaypora encounter on Wednesday. —KO pic. Abid Bhat

LAWAYPORA ENCOUNTER

Two Of The 3 Slain Youth Were Lashkar OGWs: Police

OBSERVER NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: Two of the three youth killed in an encounter in the Lawaypora area of the city were "radically inclined" and working as overground workers of the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) militant outfit, police said on Friday and added that the case was being investigated.

In a statement here, a spokesman of the Jammu and Kashmir Police said the claim of the

family of one of the trio -- Aijaz Maqbool Ganai -- that he had gone to the university to fill up a form was verified through modern techniques and was found to be untrue.

The families of the slain youths have claimed that they had no connection with militancy. They staged a protest outside the police control room here and claimed that those killed included a Class 11 student, a university student and a carpenter.

Mehbooba Writes To LG, Seeks Probe

SRINAGAR: PDP president Mehbooba Mufti sought on Friday an impartial investigation into the killing of three youths in an alleged fake encounter here two days ago and demanded that the bodies be returned to their families. In a letter to Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, Mufti said

Jeweller's Killing Poses New Challenge To Security Establishment

OBSERVER MONITORING DESK

SRINAGAR: The killing of a non-local jeweller by unidentified gunmen in Srinagar's Sarabala area on Thursday has thrown up a new challenge before the security establishment

70-year-old Satpal Nischal, born and brought up in Punjab, was shot dead by suspected bike-borne militants near his shop at Sarabala here, months after he purchased it after obtaining a domicile certificate.

KO Pic. Abid Bhat

Women offer water to the wailing daughter-in-law of slain jeweller at her Indira Nagar residence on Friday.

Parties Condemn Killing

SRINAGAR: Political parties in Jammu and Kashmir on Friday condemned the killing of a goldsmith in Srinagar a day ago, saying violence has no place in a civilised society. Suspected militants on Thursday evening shot dead Satpal Singh, a goldsmith, at Sarai Bala area in the city.

He had received three gunshot wounds in chest and died before making it to Srinagar's SMHS hospital for treatment.

The Resistance Front (TRF)

claimed responsibility for killing Satpal, hours after the shootout. The statement of militant outfit went viral on the social media in which it threatened

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New Year Starts In South Kashmir Districts With Internet Gag, Strike

PULWAMA: The first day of 2021 has started with internet blockade and complete shutdown in Pulwama and Shopian district against the killing of three youth in an encounter in Srinagar.

Three youths, two from Pulwama and one from Shopian, were killed in an encounter at Lawaypora after which police said that the slain were militants. The Pulwama and Shopian districts are said to be the epicenter of new-age militancy as most of the top commanders of different militant groups belonging to the twin districts.

After the killing of Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) commander Burhan Muzaffar Wani in 2016, whenever a militant belonging to Pulwama and Shopian districts are killed in an encounter with government forces, the authorities snap-down internet services for many days to avoid law and order problem, while the districts observe complete shutdown.

Traders from twin districts said they have suffered huge losses since 2016 due to shutdowns but now frequent internet suspension has made things even more worse.

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Severe Cold Wave Continues In Kashmir + Srinagar Shivers As Mercury Dips To Minus 6.4 Deg C

OBSERVER NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: Severe cold wave conditions continued unabated in Kashmir where the minimum temperature settled below zero, marking a frozen welcome to the New Year.

The sub-zero temperature across the Valley resulted in the freezing of water supply

lines and water bodies in several areas, officials said.

The weather remained dry across Kashmir but the valley continued to experience sub-zero nights as the minimum temperature settled several degrees below the freezing point, they said.

The officials said the dry weather brought

India, Pakistan Exchange List Of Nuke Installations

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI: Continuing a 30-year practice, India and Pakistan on Friday exchanged a list of their nuclear installations under a bilateral arrangement that prohibits the two countries from attacking each other's atomic facilities.

The two countries exchanged the list of nuclear installations and facilities covered under the Agreement on the Prohibition of Attack against Nuclear Installations and Facilities between India and Pakistan, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

This was done simultaneously through diplomatic channels in New Delhi and Islamabad.

"India and Pakistan today exchanged, through diplomatic channels simultaneously at New Delhi and Islamabad, the list of nuclear installations and facilities,

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Indian Soldier Killed In Pak Firing

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SRINAGAR: A soldier was killed as India and Pakistani troops traded gunfire for the second consecutive day Friday along the Line of Control (LoC) in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir.

Firing and mortar shelling from across the LoC was reported in the Nowshera sector of the district around 3:30 pm and at 5:30 pm, officials said.

Indian troops are retaliating to the unprovoked ceasefire violations by Pakistan, they said.

"At about 1530 hours today, the Pakistan army initiated unprovoked

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Grenade Attack On SSB In Chanpora

OBSERVER NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: Suspected militants on Friday attacked camp of paramilitary Sashastra Seema BAL (SSB) with a grenade in Chanpora area of this capital city.

Around 7pm Friday, suspected militants lobbed a grenade towards an SSB camp in the Chanpora area of the city, officials said. The grenade, they said, exploded with a bang causing panic among the pedestrians and traders in the area.

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Camus Over a Cup of Tea

In Agha Shahid Ali's hometown, Albert Camus has been brewing the literal storm in a teacup since long now.

SHABEER AHMAD DEKA

In a crowd of idlers, drifters and idealists, some fresh-faced bibliophiles also turn up on Srinagar's iconic Bund – just to talk about literal plots and 'plotters'.

They strike steamy discussions in the shade of the vintage Suffering Moses and inside the trendy teahouses frequented by the gregarious and garrulous of the city.

Many of them detail the canonized treasure left behind by a French writer

whose pen bled for the beleaguered, especially when he was himself grappling with hot and cold war.

Albert Camus is not a stranger in Srinagar's literary circles.

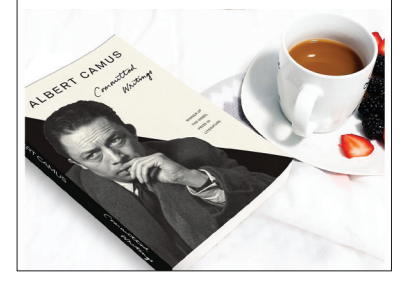
His The Stranger, The Plague, The Myth of Sisyphus, The Fall, and The Rebel are possibly in all eager readers'wishlist, if not on theirshelves.

As a literary heavyweight, the Nobel laureate in Literature is known for his poignant prose and philosophical insights about life. This also holds true in the fabled city of Seven Bridges.

Even Kashmir's contemporary English writers—like Mir Khalid of Jaffna Street fame makes no bones about his Camus captivation through his social media posts.

"Camus pleads our case when he writes, 'The only way to deal with an unfree world is to become so

absolutely free," says Munaza Shafi, reading CamusThe Plague in the times of a plague.



"His head and heart were in the right place amid a free run of sleight of hand penmanship era."

Camus clicks with many Kashmiris for his open disapproval of the "totalitarian" USSR and his advocacy for a pluralistic

Algeria during its wartimes.

Back then, during those Leftist meetings—either held on star Marxist Nazir Ghash's SafaKadal paend, or inside the smoked space of Indian Coffee House at Srinagar's Residency Road—Camus was the mover and shaker of any debate, says Javed Bhat, a senior socialist looking a pale shadow of his jola-slitting bygone avatar.

Even though comrades celebrate him, Camus had contested the leftist ideology during the Algerian War itself, when he rejected the classical Marxist canon—that history defines morality.

"For his bold and brilliant views, Camus was a flame during his lifetime itself," Bhat says. "But his untimely death at the age of 46 only created a new class of comrades under the New Left front."

Then in the Red corners of Srinagar, Camus resurrected after the Soviets

started tumbling in the "graveyard of empires". His death only popularized his version of communism.

"At the heart of that New Left was Camus's skeptical humanism and his support for political tolerance, dialogue and civil rights," Bhat says.

Years later, as the city comrades have now lost their social say and sway, Bhat during his solitary strolls on the Bund often bumps into young readers carrying Camus in hand.

"Back in the day as the aggressive armed conflict dominated the scene, we feared that the war machinery might extinguish the literary spirit of this heritage city forever," Javed says.

"But then, as Camus says it, 'The hopeless hope is what sustains us in difficult moments; our comrades will be more patient than the executioners and more numerous than the bullets.'"

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Despite his life torn asunder by wars and conflicts, Camus stayed optimistic