



P3 CITY

**MINI-PASSENGER VEHICLES PLYING ON CITY ROUTES OVERCHARGE PASSENGERS**

Residents of various areas of city outskirts including Harwan, Nishat and Shalimar Monday alleged that Taxi Drivers Union in New Thed Harwan is displaying a 'fake' rate list and...

P7 THINK

**BADAM VAER ALMONDS AND AURA**

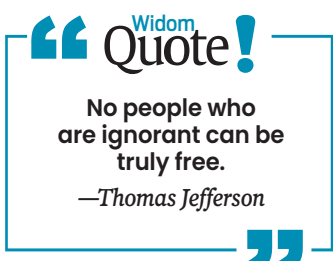
THE other day I cannot believe that after 14 years I am finally back and trying to settle down at my native place. It was an amazing experience to see the better and bitter side of life. It provided me an opportunity...



P11 SPORTS

**PUNJAB FC DEFEAT REAL KASHMIR 1-0 IN I-LEAGUE**

Chenchu Gleytsehn's 37th minute strike helped Punjab FC register a hard-fought 1-0 win over Real Kashmir FC in an I-League match at the Kalyani Municipal...



## NEWS DIGEST

**J&K Reports 132 New Cases**

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir recorded 132 fresh COVID-19 cases, including 28 travellers, taking the infection tally to 1,28,679 on Monday, even as no new death due to the virus was reported in the past 24 hours, officials said. Out of the fresh cases, 28 were **More On P10**

**Lecturer Held For Issuing Fake Orders**

JAMMU: The Crime Branch of Jammu and Kashmir Police on Monday said a lecturer was arrested for allegedly issuing fake appointment and transfer orders. Arfat Ahmad Khan, a resident of Assar area of Doda, was working in the school education department for the past two-and-a-half **More On P10**

**Teacher Found Dead In Sopore**

SRINAGAR: A teacher on Monday was found dead under mysterious circumstances in Sopore area of Baramulla district. 35-year-old Ghulam Mohammad Wani of Daragam village of Pattan was found lifeless by the locals near an auto stand in Tarzoo area of Sopore, an official said. A police team, he said, reached the spot after being informed by the locals. **More On P10**

**Boy Charred To Death In Samba**

JAMMU: A 12-year-old boy was charred to death in Jammu and Kashmir's Samba district when a temporary wooden shed he lived in caught fire apparently due to an electrical short circuit, officials said. Khalid got trapped inside the "Kulla (temporary shed mostly made of wood)" in Chak Manga Gujra village on Sunday after it **More On P10**

**Burglars Loot SBI ATM, 6 Shops**

SRINAGAR: Burglars decamped with cash from an ATM of State bank of India in Shopian district of south Kashmir, officials said on Monday. They said that the unidentified thieves also looted six shops—two at the old bus stand, adjacent to four-way; two near Batho Chowk and three others at Gole Chakri area. A police officer **More On P10**

**Soldier Shoots Self Dead In Jammu**

JAMMU: A 26-year-old soldier shot himself dead inside a camp in Jammu, officials said on Monday. They said Nitish Mishra, a resident of Madhya Pradesh, used his service rifle and shot himself dead while he was posted at the sentry duty at his Raipir camp in Belicharana area late Sunday night. The soldier died instantly and his **More On P10**

# 4 Militants Killed In Shopian Encounter: Police

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: Four militants who police said were associated with the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) were killed in an encounter with state forces on Monday in Shopian district of south Kashmir.

State forces launched a cordon and search operation in Manihal area of the district around midnight, following information about the presence of militants there, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Vijay Kumar said.

He said the militants refused repeated offers of surrender and opened fire at the forces.

"We appealed to them to surrender and brought their families, including wife and a



File Photo: Abid Bhat

four-year-old child of a militant, to appeal to them to surrender. But they refused," he said.

Kumar said after the militants opened fire at the state forces, there was a gunbattle in which

four militants were killed.

"All the four were categorised militants belonging to LeT outfit. Although, they call themselves as Lashkar-e-Mustafa, they are **More On P10**

## Stone Pelting More Serious Problem Than Militancy: IGP

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Inspector General of Police Vijay Kumar on Monday termed stone pelting more serious problem than then the militancy and reiterated to book those indulging in such incidents under Public Safety Act.

"When firing starts, we evacuate people and some people, miscreants among



them resort to stone pelting. People from other village don't **More On P10**

**Assures Incident Free Amarnath Yatra**

Fool-proof security arrangements, including round-the-clock monitoring using CCTV cameras and drones, will be in place for the Amarnath Yatra this year to ensure an incident-free pilgrimage, police said on Monday. Addressing a press conference here, Inspector **More On P10**

**HC Upholds J&K Bank's Notification For Filling 1850 Vacancies**

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The J&K High Court on Monday dismissed petitions challenging Jammu and Kashmir Bank's fresh notification for filling up of 350 probationary officers and 1500 banking associates' vacancies.

The petitions were filed by at least 288 aspiring candidates who had participated in the selection process pursuant to a notification on 6 October 2018 and had challenged the bank's 15th April 2020 announcement cancelling the whole selection process.

Subsequently, the bank had issued an advertisement notice (no. JKB/HR-Rectt-2020-27 & 28) on 1 January 2020, inviting applications from the de-sirous candidates for the posts of Probationary Officers and Banking Associates.

"It needs no reiteration that since the **More On P10**

## MeT Predicts More Downpour Today



KO Photo: Abid Bhat

**Upper Reaches Of Kashmir Receive Snow, Rains Lash Plains**

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Valley's upper reaches on Monday received fresh snowfall while rains continued in plains dipping the day temperature sharply, even as the weather department has forecast more downpour on Tuesday. **More On P10**

**Highway Closed For Traffic**

Jammu-Srinagar highway, the only surface link connecting Kashmir Valley with the outside world, has been closed and shall remain shut on Tuesday, officials said on Monday. **More On P10**

## Why People Take 'Secret Bath' In This Kashmir Village On Nauroz?

Umer Ahmad

In the dead of the night haunted by canine howling, Javed Ahmad suddenly rises from his warm bed and ventures into darkness.

His dazed state makes him appear a sleep walker. And yet he warily walks out of his courtyard as a solitary man. With that nocturnal move, he embarks on an eerie expedition.

Despite Kashmir nights silenced by strife scare, Javed walks unperturbed by the side of weeping willows and watchtowers. He soon steps on the bank of a river meandering through his village.

What he does next looks suicidal. He jumps into the frozen water

body, and comes out after sometime, with a new spirit.

"This sounds crazy, isn't it?" Javed says with a beaming face. "But that's how we celebrate the arrival of Nauroz here."

Marking the start of spring in a unique way, people of Mijhapathi in Central Kashmir's Budgam district leave their home before the first light of the day for rivers, brooks and streams, to take what they call a "secret bath". Residents of neighbouring Raithan village equally seem keen about it.

But while the idea of bathing with cold water can send chills down one's spine, the villagers embrace this age-old ritual wholeheartedly.

"I'm taking these **More On P10**

## Pandey Warns Action Against Plagiarist, Irregular Newspapers



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In a stern warning to the newspapers practicing plagiarism and publishing irregularly with suspension and de-empanelment, the Director Information and Public Relations, Rahul Pandey said on Monday that those newspapers

need to be encouraged which run on professional lines and maintain the desired standards.

Chairing a meeting here with the officers of divisional office at Directorate of Information & Public Relations Srinagar, Pandey emphasized that department needs **More On P10**

## UAE Brokering Secret India-Pak Peace Talks: Report

Agencies

NEW DELHI: About 24 hours after military chiefs from India and Pakistan surprised the world last month with a rare joint commitment to respect a 2003 cease-fire agreement, the top diplomat of the United Arab Emirates popped over to New Delhi for a quick one-day visit.

The official UAE readout of the Feb. 26 meeting gave few clues of what Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed spoke about with Indian counterpart Subrahmanyam Jaishankar,



noting they "discussed all regional and international issues of common interest and exchanged views on them."

Yet behind closed doors, the India-Pakistan cease-fire marked a milestone in secret talks brokered **More On P10**

**INDUS WATER TREATY Pak Delegation Arrives in India**

A seven-member Pakistani delegation led by the country's Indus Commissioner Syed Muhammad Meher Ali Shah arrived here Monday for the annual Permanent Indus Commission meeting during which he will hold talks with his Indian counterpart, an official said. The Indus commissioners of the two countries will hold the annual dialogue on March 23-24. The Indian delegation will be led by PK Saxena **More On P10**

## J&K Aims Rs 24485 Cr Revenue In Next Fiscal

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Jammu & Kashmir has estimated to generate revenue of Rs 24,485 crore during the next financial year.

Documents reveal that tax revenue of J&K is projected at Rs

16, 276 crore in 2021-22, while non-tax revenue is estimated to be 8209 crore during the fiscal.

"The committee sought to know about the quantum of revenue generated by UT of J&K by their own resources. The administration of the **More On P10**

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