



Maximum : 31°C
Minimum : 18°C
Humidity : 62%

SUNSET
Today 07:09 PM
SUNRISE
Tomorrow 05:57 AM



News Digest

Pak Violated Ceasefire In Poonch: Army

Jammu: The Pakistan army on Friday resorted to heavy firing and mortar shelling in forward areas along the LoC in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district violating the ceasefire, officials said. "At about 1830 hours today, Pak army initiated unprovoked ceasefire violation by firing with small arms and resorting to intense shelling with mortars along the LoC in Mankote sector," Defence spokesperson said. The Indian Army retaliated befittingly to the ceasefire violation by Pakistan, he added. A 65-year-old man was killed as the Pakistan army resorted to mortar shelling in Poonch district. One jawan too was killed in the Pak firing in **● P-02**

2 Youth Held With Grenade, Bullets: Police

Srinagar: Police on Friday claimed to have arrested two youth with ammunition in Ganderbal and Anantnag districts of the Valley. Adil Fayaz Bhat of Khiram was riding his motorcycle when he was intercepted by a police team near a naka at Karikadal, a police official said. During searches, the cops recovered 50 rounds of AK-47 from his possession. The youth, the police official said was arrested on the spot. A case FIR no 184/2020 under section 7/25 Arms Act and 23 ULA Act has been registered in this regard in Police Station Bijbehara. Meanwhile, police also claimed to have arrested a youth with grenade in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district. **● P-02**

Electric Shock Kills Bandipora Youth

Srinagar: A youth died of electric shock on Friday in Chatibandi area of north Kashmir's Bandipora. 23-year-old Shah Nawaz Ahmad Mir received an electric shock when he came in contact with a live wire at his home in Langerpora village on Friday afternoon, an official said. The youth, he said was immediately taken to the district hospital in an unconscious state where doctors declared him brought dead on arrival. After completing all the legal and medical formalities, the **● P-02**

IAF Technician Dies Of Heart Attack

Srinagar: A 28 year old Indian Air Force (IAF) auto technician on Friday died of heart attack at old Airport in central Kashmir's Budgam district. A local news gathering agency KNT reported that Station Adjutant approached Police Station Humhama saying that Rohit Mehta, an Air Force warrior from Unit 1, died after suffering a massive heart attack. The deceased was an Auto Tech by profession. Meanwhile, Police Station Humhama has initiated proceedings under section 172 CrPc in this regard.

BUMS Student Goes Missing In Awantipora

Srinagar: A Bachelor in Unani Medicine and Surgery (BUMS) student from Awantipora area of South Kashmir's Pulwama district has been missing for the last four days and there are no traces of him since then. Aadil Rashid Bhat, son of Abdul Rashid of Charsoo Batpora village of Awantipora area of Pulwama district, who is a last semester student of BUMS at Tibiya College Sumbal is missing since Tuesday afternoon. Bhat's brother, Altaf said that on Tuesday afternoon after having lunch, he offered Zuh prayers with him and since then he didn't return home. "We contacted all our relatives, his friends and other people **● P-02**

Friday Prayers Offered In Major Mosques After 5 Months

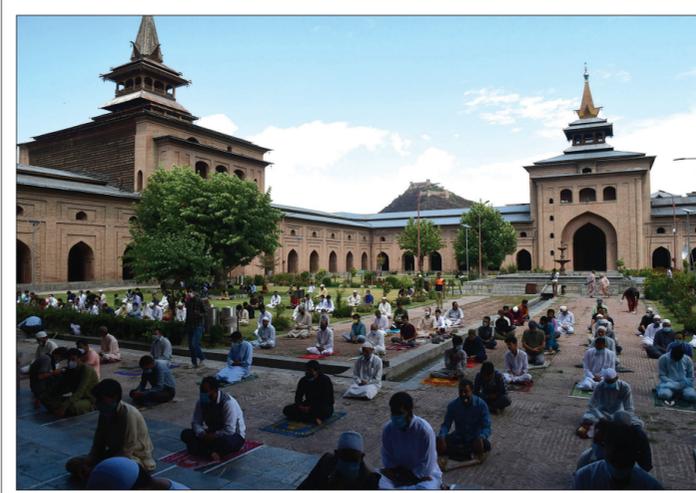
Agencies

SRINAGAR: Thousands of faithful turned up at the mosques and shrines across the Kashmir Valley to attend the congregational Friday prayers held, five months after the government imposed lockdown to combat Covid-19 pandemic.

Prayers were offered in Jamia Masjid in downtown Srinagar, Hazratbal shrine -- which houses the relic of Prophet Muhammad -- shrines of Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Noorani in Charari Sharief, Hamza Makhdoom Kashmiri Sahib, Harzat Syed Yaqoob Sahib, besides other Jamias and mosques in accordance with the guidelines issued by the authorities, including social distancing and facemasks.

A large number of people, maintaining social distance and wearing masks, offered Friday prayers in Hazratbal shrine, on the bank of world famous Dal Lake. Good number of women also offered prayers.

Jamia Masjid, which is a stronghold of Hurriyat Conference (HC) chairman Mirwaiz Moulvi Omar Farooq, witnessed large gatherings of people through social distance maintained during prayers and while leaving the mosque. Last year, the historic mosque remained closed for 132 days due to restrictions imposed by the



DEVOTEES OFFERING congregational Friday prayers after 22 weeks at the Jamia Masjid in Old City of Srinagar. Pic, Abid Bhat

authorities after scrapping Article 370 and Article 35 A on August 5, 2019.

Devotees in large numbers also thronged the shrine of Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Noorani in Charari Sharief after it was thrown open for the general public last week.

Similarly, for the first time in five months people offered prayers in congregations in other

mosques and shrines across the valley, where authorities and religious groups have urged people to strictly follow guidelines issued to curtail the spread of COVID-19. However, people offered Friday prayers in small and interior mosques in the valley though authorities were yet to lift the ban on congregational prayers from the last couple of weeks.

The special weekly prayers were offered on Friday in mosques and shrines across the valley after the J&K administration ordered reopening of all worship places from August 16. Meanwhile, Jamia Masjid, which is a stronghold of Hurriyat Conference (HC) chairman Mirwaiz Moulvi Omar Farooq, reopened on August 18 after **▶PAGE 02**

'Give Us Back State, 35A': Farooq Tells Delhi

Says Govt Of India Treated Him Like A 'Criminal'

Observer News Service

NEW DELHI: National Conference (NC) patron and member parliament Farooq Abdullah has demanded restoration of statehood and Article-35A to Jammu and Kashmir, saying that people have lost faith in the democratic process of this government.

"People have lost faith in the democratic process of this government. It is impossible to trust them because of what they have done. There's not a day when they don't lie. They say everything is hunky dory and people of the nation are believing them," Abdullah told New Delhi based NDTV.

"We feel 35A should be returned to the state. Full statehood should return to the state. That's my demand. Enough is enough," he added. The former J&K Chief Minister



also questioned the government's claim that the people were happy with the decision of revoking special status and dividing the state into two Union Territories.

"If we are happy with whatever they have done, why are there so many soldiers on the street?" Abdullah said, adding "I humbly request the prime minister **▶PAGE 02**

HIGHLIGHTS

- PM Gave Us No Indication When We Met Him
- Being an MP, I Am Supposed To Have A Phone. I Was (Treated) Like A Criminal.
- We Feel Art-35A, Statehood Should Be Returned To J&K.
- People Have Lost Faith In The Democratic Process Of This Government
- It's Impossible To Trust Them Because Of What They've Done.
- Yaswant, Rahul's Delegations Sent Back, EU Puppets Brought In

2nd Batch Of NC Leaders Meet Farooq

National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah on Friday held a meeting with the second batch of party leaders who were under detention for over a year, a party spokesman said. "The attendees included Mubarak Gul, Choudhary Ramzaan, Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi, Shameema Firdous and Basharat Bukhari. These members who were under detention or house arrest met Abdullah after over a year," the spokesman said. **● P-02**

China, Pakistan Discuss Kashmir During Strategic Dialogue

Press Trust Of India

BEIJING: The foreign ministers of China and Pakistan held their 2nd annual strategic dialogue on Friday during which they discussed ways to enhance their all-weather bilateral ties, the Kashmir issue, progress on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and the Afghan peace process.

Billed as highly relevant and very important by both the countries ahead of the meeting held in the southern Chinese island resort of Hainan, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and his Pakistani counterpart Shah Mahmood Qureshi discussed a host of bilateral, regional



and international issues.

A joint statement issued at the end of the meeting said that both sides underlined that a peaceful, stable, cooperative and prosperous South Asia was in common interest of all parties. Parties need to settle disputes and issues in the region through dialogue on the basis of equality and mutual respect. **▶PAGE 02**

12 More Die As Covid-19 Toll Crosses 600 In J&K

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: Twelve more people, including a paramilitary CRPF personnel succumbed to coronavirus infection in Kashmir valley on Friday, raising the number of fatalities due to virus in the Union Territory to 602.

Among the victims, five were Budgam residents, three from Srinagar and one each from Baramulla, Pulwama, Shopian and Bandipora districts, official sources

said Friday.

A man from Chadoora, who was admitted to SMHS hospital in wee hours, died at SMHS hospital this afternoon, they said. "He tested positive on a rapid Antigen test," they said.

A woman from Chadoora who was admitted on August 20 as a case of "T2DM with HTN" died in the hospital late on Friday, they said.

A 74-year-old man from Kralpora Budgam died, two days after he was admitted to the SKIMS Bema, one among the exclusive facilities for the management of covid-19 patients in Valley, they said.



16 CRPF Men Among 654 New Cases

At least 49 travellers, 16 CRPF men and 3 expecting mothers were among 654 people, who tested positive for coronavirus in Jammu and Kashmir on Friday, taking the number of people infected by the virus in the Union Territory **● P-02**

Another patient, a 70-year-old woman from Chhattal Srinagar also died at SKIMS Bema and according to a doctor **▶PAGE 02**

Kashmir Highway Closed Again After Landslides

JAMMU: The 276-km long stretch of Jammu and Kashmir on Friday was closed due to landslides triggered after fresh rains while the MeT department has also predicted fresh spells of rains prompting authorities to sound an alert in parts of the Union Territory.

The Jammu-Srinagar National Highway (NH44) has been blocked due to shooting stones and landslides between Ramban and Ramsu. "Due to fresh landslides, the road has been blocked while teams of police, BRO men are on job to clear the highway," an official here said.

He said that the overnight rainfall has aggravated the situation due to which the shooting stones have blocked the road at Panthial, Trishul Mod, Marog, Monkey Mod, Iron Shed Digidol, **● P-02**

Take 'Final Call' On Trust Vote Against Dy Mayor, HC Tells SMC

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir High Court has directed SMC to take a final call on a motion moved against the corporation's Deputy Mayor and asked later to prove his majority "if the motion is strictly under rules and regulations."

"Keeping in view the averments made in petition and having regard to submissions made on behalf of the official respondents (SMC) that they may be given 14 days time to consider the motion, I deem it appropriate to dispose of this petition, directing the respondents to take final call on the motion moved by petitioners strictly un-

der rules and regulations," a bench of Justice Tashi Rabstan said.

"It is further provided that if the motion is strictly under rules and regulations, let respondent No.5 (Deputy Mayor) prove his majority on the floor of the house of Srinagar Municipal Corporation by or before 29.08.2020," he added.

However, the court said, the SOPs issued from time to time to prevent the spread of COVID-19 including social distancing shall be strictly adhered to.

The former Mayor SMC Junaid Azim Mattu and others had petitioned the high court, seeking its direction for culmination of a motion moved against the **▶PAGE 02**

Soldier, BSF Jawan Commit Suicide In J&K

SRINAGAR: An army man and a Border Security Force (BSF) trooper on Friday allegedly committed suicide in Kupwara and Poonch districts of Jammu and Kashmir.

Police said that a BSF trooper shot himself with his own service rifle at Branwari area of Kupwara leading to his on spot death.

The trooper has been identified as head constable Ram Kumar of 169 battalion.

"Preliminary investigations reveal the trooper was suffering from acute depression and hypertension. An FIR has been lodged into the incident," the police said. In a similar incident in Poonch, an army man posted in a forward area along **● P-02**

No Let Up In Protests Against Blasphemy Video

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: For the fifth straight day Friday, hundreds of people across the Valley protested against the blasphemous remarks made by the members of a rightwing group against the Prophet of Islam (Pbuh) in Jammu's Reasi.

Like the past four days, hundreds of angry protesters hit the streets in Srinagar, Pulwama, Anantnag, Baramulla and Ganderbal districts and staged demonstrations to condemn the blasphemous remarks made by members of rightwing Sentinel Bharat Raksha Manch members in Jammu's Reasi on Sunday, reports said Friday.

Here in Srinagar, members of All

Jammu and Kashmir Tehreek Soutyik-Awliya (TSA) assembled at Press Colony and staged a peaceful protest denouncing the derogatory remarks, reports said. The protesters led by Muhammad Arfat Shafi demanded capital punishment for the culprits for hurting sentiments of the Muslims.

A group of people, mostly youth also held a protest in Fateh Kadal area of the Old City. Carrying placards and banners, the protesters condemned the blasphemous remarks and sought stringent punishment for the culprits.

Pertinently, on Sunday, police arrested Satpal Sharma, the main accused and his associate Deepak soon after the video containing derogatory remarks against **▶PAGE 02**

Police Plays Down Baramulla Attack Video

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir police on Friday said that militants want to glorify militancy after a video of Baramulla attack which left five forces personnel dead surfaced on social media.

Taking on to the twitter, police wrote "By releasing video of attack, militants want to glamourise militancy. But they can't. We replied by actions & killed 04 top commanders, Sajjad @Haider & FT Taimur Khan @ Abu Usman (seen in said video/attack) & Naseer @ Sad bhai & FT Ali bhai @ Danish within 72 hours, the tweet ends".

Earlier, a video of the attack on forces personnel in Kreetri **● P-02**

Cracks In Leh Congress Over August 5 'Black Day' Decision

Samphel, Spalbar Resign From Their Party Posts

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The Congress party unit in Ladakh is heading towards a split after two senior leaders resigned from their posts in protest against party President Asgar Karbali's decision to observe August 5 as 'black day'.

The cracks surfaced after the party's vice-president T. Samphel and General Secretary Rigzin Spalbar announced their resignation from their posts to protest against Karbali's move.

"I wish to draw your kind attention to the letter dated August 5 addressed to you by our senior Congress leader Sh. T. Samphel regarding the shocking statement made by the



File Pic

working President of Territorial Congress Committee (Ladakh) Haji Asgar Ali Karbali, who earlier chose to observe August 5 as 'Black Day' for declaring it as a Union Territory," reads the letter to AICC working resident Sonia Gandhi from Rigzin Spalbar. "Samphel's letter is self-explanatory who tendered his resignation from the post of Vice President of Ladakh Territorial Congress over **▶PAGE 02**

In Kashmir, 45-Day Deadline Set To Save 'Water Kidney'

Swati Joshi

On August 13, 2020, Kashmir's bureaucratic battery penalized the swelling wetland crisis in Kashmir. Driven by the belief of "resting all violations", the officials headed by Divisional Kashmir PK Pole reserved the progress—demarcation, land transfer, installation of boundary walls, pillars, removal of encroachments and non-dumping of solid waste—of Hokarsar, Wular and Kreetcho-Chandhara wetlands.

Pole instructed officials to take stringent action including register FIRs against the offenders indulging in repeated illegal activities. He directed concerned to constitute committees and activate field staff teams for close monitoring of wetlands. But Wetlands are Shrinking

Despite the official stiff stand, the wetlands in Kashmir are shrinking at an alarming rate.

According to "National Wetland Atlas: Jammu and Kashmir" released in 2010, there are 3651 wetlands covering 3,91,501 hectares in the then undivided state of Jammu and Kashmir, out of which 2240 wetlands have an area less than 2.25 hectares.

The Narkara wetland located on the outskirts of Srinagar has shrunk from 22.63 square kilometers (sq km) in 1965 to a mere five sq km in 2016. Another wetland, the Hok-



ersar, also known as the queen of wetland, has lost 5.75 sq km from 1969 to 2008. Brari Nambal, a marshy lagoon in Srinagar which

covered an area of 1 sq km in 1971 has according to 0.77 sq km by 2002. According to a study by researcher Shahid Ahmad Dar on the cur-

rent status of wetlands in Srinagar, the major threats to wetlands include pollution, land use and land cover changes, urbanization, encroachments, and climate change.

"The intensive agricultural practices, the introduction of exotic species, and changes in hydrological flows during the past few decades have resulted in degradation of wetlands over this region," mentions the study.

Kashmir has a large number of wetlands due to its peculiar geomorphic setup, says Dr. Shakeel A. Romshoo, Dean of Research at the University of Kashmir. These wetlands have significant hydrological functionality and provide **▶PAGE 02**