

Maximum: 12º Today 05:22 PM Minmum :-1º Humidity: 68%



11 Rabi-us-Sani | 1442 Hijri | Vol:23 | Issue: 265 | Pages:08 | Price: ₹3

www.kashmirobserver.net ● twitter.com / kashmirobserver ● facebook.com/kashmirobserver ● Postal Regn: L/159/KO/SK/2014-2016



P6 LIFE & TIMES

Study reveals cooking with wood may cause lung damage



P5 PANORAMA

My Visit to Al Agsa

Planning this trip to Palestine had been an ongoing process since I had begun whilst studying the conflict ...



P8 OBSERVER OUTPOST

COVID-19: Only Women, No Children Allowed In **Mumbai's Local Trains** 



#### **NEWS DIGEST**

#### **DGP Reviews Security Arrangements**

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir DGP Dilbag Singh on Friday reviewed security arrangements for the **District Development Council** (DDC) polls and stressed on increasing vigilance, saying Pakistan and its "sponsored agents" are continuously attempting to disturb peace in the region.

Jammu and Kashmir is all set to witness its first elections since being reorganised as a union territory last year with the maiden DDC polls beginning on Saturday.

#### **9 Absent Employees** Suspended

**DODA:** The District election Authority Doda on Friday suspended 9 employees for dereliction of election duty.

Acting tough against the non-seriousness and deliberate absence in election duties, District Panchayat Election Officer, Dr Sagar D Doifode, issued the suspension order, an official spokesperson said. He said that the suspended employees were of PWD(R&B), Education, DYSSO, and FCS & CA departments.

"As per the order, during the suspension they shall remain attached in the office of Dy. DEO office Doda. Besides, ADDC has been asked to make a detailed inquiry into the matter and report within a week time along with comments," he added.

#### **Soldiers 'Halt' Traffic Outside BB Garrison**

SRINAGAR: Traffic came to a standstill on Friday afternoon outside army headquarters Badamibagh here in this capital city for almost half an hour after soldiers emerged on the road and laid barricades.

A local news agency KNT quotng evewitnesses reported that the soldiers closed the road, laid concertina wires, and halted vehicular movement on the stretch from BB Cantonment's Brigadier Rajinder Singh Gate upto GB Pant Hospital. The soldiers, the report said, also barred an ambulance from District Hospital Shopian (JK22A-6028) carrying a patient to Srinagar.

The report further said that the residents of Batwara and Shivpora were surprised over the sudden closure of the road for half an hour till the siege was lifted and traffic allowed again.

The report also quoted Srinagar based Defense Spokesperson Colonel Rajesh Kalia as saying that "everything is normal"

#### **2 Employees Attached Over Poll Campaigning**

**POONCH:** The government has attached two class-IV employees after a complaint alleging their participation in electioneering in Mendhar area of Poonch district,

officials said on Friday. The complaint was filed before **Deputy Commissioner Poonch** by National Conference candidate from Mendhar-C who had also alleged campaigning by an AEE ranked official in favour of his brother who is contesting as independent candidate. The **Deputy Commissioner Poonch** has also written to Managing Director JKPDC to enquire and take action in conduct of the AEE. Shokit Hussain.

The two class-IV employees-Mohammad Ashraf and Israr Ahmad-have been asked to report

in DC office till further orders. "A government employee is expected to remain neutral during election and the active participation of government employee in political activities is against model code of conduct and Representation of People Act," Deputy Commissioner Poonch said in the order. These two class-IV employees have been asked to attend and mark their attendance in DC office Poonch till further orders. (GNS)

# **After Art-370** Revocation, J&K To Witness First **Polls Today**

all set to witness its first elections since being reorganised as a union territory last year with the maiden District Development Council (DDC) polls beginning on Saturday, officials said.

#### **Holiday On Polls Day In Respective Areas**

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir government has declared public holiday in the respective gram panchayats/municipal bodies on day of polls. More On P2

They said by-elections to 12,153 panchayat constituencies are also taking place along with the DDC polls. Out of these, 11,814 are in the Kashmir valley and the rest 339 in Jammu

Campaigning for the first phase came to an end on Thursday and officials said elaborate arrangements have been put in place for the smooth conduct of the polls and

special measures taken in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As many as 1,475 candidates are in the fray for the first phase of these polls, they said.

The eight-phase elections are seen as a triangular contest among the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD), the BJP and the Apni Party floated by former finance minister Altaf Bukhari.

The PAGD -- an amalgam of several mainstream political parties, including NC and PDP, seeking the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's special status which was revoked by the Centre last year -- has been accusing the Bukhari-led party of being a B-Team of the BJP.

There are 280 DDC seats in the union territory - 140 each in Jammu and Kashmir regions, the officials said, adding 14 constituencies have been earmarked in each of the 20 districts of the union territory.
Out of 1,475 candidates, 296 are

contesting the first phase of the DDC polls, they said, adding 172 of them are from the Kashmir valley and 124 from the Jammu region.

In the first phase of the DDC elections, 43 constituencies will go to polls -- 25 in



Devotees offer congregational Friday prayers outside the shrine of Dastgeer Sahab at Khanyar on the annual urs of Sufi saint Sheikh Syed Abdul Qadir Jeelani (RA).

#### **8 More Corona Deaths In J&K**

SRINAGAR: Eight more died of coronavirus in Jammu and Kashmir on Friday, raising the number of fatalities since the outbreak of pandemic in the **Union Territory to 1676.** 

Five more people succumbed to Covid-19 in Jammu division, while three others >> More On P2

**Ex-BJP Minister, 6 Soldiers Among** 

**New Cases** 

### **Cold Wave Grips Kashmir, Pahalgam Shivers At -6.5 Deg C**

SRINAGAR: Kashmir experi- almost around the normal for on Friday with Pahalgam tourist resort in Anantnag district being the coldest recorded place in the Union Territory at minus 6.5 degrees Celsius, the Meteorological Department said.

enced a dry but cold weather this part of the season at most of the places, the minimum settled several degrees below the normal at many places.

The weather in the valley was dry but cold on Friday, owing to the mostly clear sky, the official A MeT Department official said said. Srinagar, which recorded a while the day temperature was minimum of 0.5 → More On P2

#### **Iran's Top Nuke Scientist Assassinated** in Tehran

#### Iran blames Israel

TEHRAN: High-ranking Iranian nuclear physicist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, who, Israel alleged, led the Islamic Republic's military nuclear programme until its disbanding in the early 2000s has been "assassinated" in an ambush near Tehran.

Fakhrizadeh was shot and injured "by terrorists" in his vehicle in Absard, a suburb in eastern Tehran, and later succumbed to his injuries in what amounted to a "martyr's death," Iran's Foreign Ministry said on Friday. Local authorities had confirmed Fakhrizadeh's death several hours earlier and also >> More On P2

#### 2 Soldiers Killed **In Pak Shelling Along LoC**

JAMMU: Two Army soldiers were killed on Friday in cross-border shelling along the Line of Control (LoC) in Rajouri district of Jammu region, an army official said.

"The Pakistani army resorted to unprovoked ceasefire on the Line of Control (LoC) in Sunderbani sector of district Rajouri today (Friday)," the defence spokesperson said, adding that Indian Army immediately responded to the firing.

More On P2

### Mehbooba Put Under House Arrest, **Barred From Visiting Para's Home**



SRINAGAR: PDP president and former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Mehbooba Mufti and her daughter Iltija on Friday claimed that they had been detained at their residence to prevent them from visiting the house of arrested party leader Waheed Ur Rehman Parra in Pulwama in South Kashmir.

Reacting to the alleged detention, National Conference (NC) vice president Omar Abdullah said personal liberty is treated as a favour by the government, giving and withdrawing it at will, with no interference from the judiciary.

#### Mehbooba's **Presser Foiled**

**SRINAGAR:** Authorities on Friday disallowed PDP president Mehbooba Mufti's press conference here, as the former chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir was allegedly put under house arrest and not allowed to visit the Pulwama residence of party leader Waheed Parra who was arrested by the NIA earlier this

#### **Para Remanded To** 15-Day NIA Custody

JAMMU: PDP leader Waheed Para was remanded to 15 days of National Investigation Agency (NIA) custody on Friday following his arrest earlier this week for allegedly conspiring with Hizbul Mujahideen militants to get their support during the 2019 parliamentary elections.

Para was taken to Jammu and produced before a designated NIA court in a case related to his alleged "close links" with Irfan Shafi Mir, who was arrested along with Hizbul Mujahideen militant Naveed Babu and suspended Deputy Superintendent of Police Davinder Singh earlier this year, officials said.

After his arrest on Wednesday, the NIA produced Para in a Delhi court on Thursday and sought a transit remand for his production before a designated court in Jammu, the officials said.

According to the officials, during the investigation into Singh's association with Hizbul Mujahideen militants, the NIA came across phone records of Mir which showed that he was in close con-

#### **Mirwaiz Family Bereaved**

#### **Mirwaiz Umer's Uncle Passes Away**

SRINAGAR: With deep grief and sorrow, it is to inform that an octogenarian member of Mirwaiz Family, Moulvi Ali Muhammad Ian, who was the elder brother of Shaheed-e-Millat Mirwaiz Moulvi Muhammad Farooq and the uncle of Mirwaiz-e-Kashmir Dr Moulvi Muhammad Umar Farooq, passed away today after a brief illness. Innaa Lillaahi Wa Innaa Ilaihir Raaii'oon. More On P2

### **Junaid Mattu Joins Apni Party**

**OBSERVER NEWS SERVICE** 

SRINAGAR: Junaid Azim Mattu, who was recently elected as Mayor of Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Friday joined Apni Party at its office in Srinagar.

Junaid Mattu was welcomed into the party-fold by Apni Party President Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari, Party's Provincial President Mohammad Ashraf Mir and District President Srinagar Noor Mohammad Sheikh. → More On P2

## AC Nod To 850 MW **Ratle Hydroelectric Project In J&K**

NHPC, JKPDC To **Execute Rs 5300 Cr Joint Venture** 

**OBSERVER NEWS SERVICE** 

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir administrative council on Friday gave nod to the construction of 850 MW ratle hydroelectric project in a joint venture between the JK Power Development Corporation (JKPDC) and the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC)

The Rs 5300 crore power project to come up in the Union Territory, was approved by the administrative council in its meeting here on Friday, an official spokesperson said. He said that the new joint venture company named-Jammu Hydroelectric Power Corporation Limited will be formed between the JKPDC and NHPC.

JKPDC in the company pegged at to the bare minimum necessary Rs. 776.44 crore will be provided to obtain viability of the project. as grant from the Government of India," the official spokesperson share of free power (12%) from the said, adding "Today's decisions project was approved in a decrewill pave the way for an early beginning of work on the project. All spokesperson said. >> More On P2

the clearances for the project are already in place; hence the project is expected to be completed within 36 months of the start of work," The official spokesperson fur-

ther said that the project would be a major developmental and financial benefit to J&K which would benefit from sale of power as well employment opportunities and other developmental benefits arising out of the project.

'Today's decision regarding execution of 850 MW Ratle project will ensure that over 3000 MW additional generating capacity will be available to supplement the demand-supply position in J&K and boost the overall economy of the UT," he said.

The Administrative Council, he said, also approved the exemptions to the project in order to make it viable.

"However, the accord of ex-"The equity contribution of emptions has also been restricted Accordingly exemption of the UT's mental manner only," the official

# **Dark Times: Power Cuts Getting Worse In Kashmir This Winter**

**AUQIB JAVEED** 

t's becoming frustrating for someone like Mushtaq Shah to operate his power loom these days, as the unscheduled power cuts make it

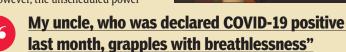
But Shah is not alone. After facing pathological spring and summer, Kashmiris are now facing dark

The people are up in arms against the Power Development Department (PDD)—responsible for transmission

**According to official** data, there are 10 lakh consumers registered with the PDD in the **Valley. The region** witnesses a 10-12% increase in power demand annually.

and distribution of electricity in the valley—for failing to provide adequate power supply during the early phase

With the onset of winter, the demand for power supply grows as most of the households use heat blowers, power blankets, heaters, geysers, and other warming devices that run on electricity. However, the unscheduled power



cuts have become synonym to Darbar move in Kashmir, with people alleging that the electricity is being diverted to Jammu to "keep the babus warm".

Every October, the Jammu and Kashmir administration shuts its offices in the summer capital of Srinagar to move to the winter capital of Jammu, a process anachronistically referred to as "the darbar move".

With this archaic power shift practice, electricity cuts inevitably grow longer in Kashmir.

'Since the existing grid infrastructure in the Valley can