



Maximum : 12°
Minum : -1°
Humidity : 68%

SUNSET
Today 05:22 PM
SUNRISE
Tomorrow 07:16 AM



P6 LIFE & TIMES

Study reveals cooking with wood may cause lung damage

P5 PANORAMA

My Visit to Al Aqsa

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.

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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 quoting eyewitnesses 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

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir is 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.

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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

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KO Photo: Abid Bhat

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

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Ex-BJP Minister, 6 Soldiers Among New Cases

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

SRINAGAR: Kashmir experienced a dry but cold weather 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.

A MeT Department official said while the day temperature was

almost around the normal for 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 said. Srinagar, which recorded a minimum of 0.5

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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

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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.

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



KO Photo: Abid Bhat

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 contact with Para.

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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 Para who was arrested by the NIA earlier this week.

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Dark Times: Power Cuts Getting Worse In Kashmir This Winter

AUQIB JAVEED

It's becoming frustrating for someone like Mushtaq Shah to operate his power loom these days, as the unscheduled power cuts make it impossible.

But Shah is not alone.

After facing pathological spring and summer, Kashmiris are now facing dark winter.

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 of winter.

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



“My uncle, who was declared COVID-19 positive last month, grapples with breathlessness”

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

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