



Maximum : 07°C  
Minimum : -4°C  
Humidity : 72%

SUNSET  
Today 05:42 PM  
SUNRISE  
Tomorrow 07:37 AM



## News Digest

### Moderate Earthquake Jolts Kishtwar

Jammu: A moderate intensity earthquake of magnitude 5.1 hit Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar district on Monday, an official of the Meteorological Department said. A police official said there was no immediate report of any damage in the earthquake which caused panic among the people who rushed out of their buildings. The tremors were felt at 7.32 pm and lasted for a few seconds, the official said. The earthquake had a depth of five kilometer and the epicentre was at latitude 33.34 degrees north and longitude 75.47 degrees east.

### Two OGWs Arrested In Pulwama: Police

Srinagar: Government forces on Monday claimed to have arrested two overground workers of Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) from Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir.

"Police along with Army and CRPF arrested two militant associates of proscribed outfit Jaish-e-Mohammad from Awantipora area who are involved in providing shelter, support and logistics," a police official said. He said the arrested persons were also transporting arms and ammunition of the militants in Awantipora and Tral areas of the district and passing sensitive information to the **● P06**

### Bandipora Teacher Dies Of Cardiac Arrest

Srinagar: A middle-aged private school teacher died of a cardiac arrest on Monday in Ajas area of north Kashmir's Bandipora district. 50-year-old Mohammad Ramzan Rather suffered a massive cardiac arrest at his residence Sheikh Mohalla in Ajas area of the district on Monday morning. He was immediately taken to the health centre Sumbal by his family. However, on reaching there, the doctors declared him brought dead.

### Man Stabbed To Death In Khanyar

Srinagar: A man was killed while another was injured in a scuffle in Khanyar area of Srinagar on Monday, reports said. Some unknown persons attacked the duo at Dastgeer Sahib shrine Khanyar in Srinagar on Monday evening, news agency KNO reported. One among the duo identified as Ziyaan Chisti of Rainawari was stabbed to death while another person accompanying him identified as Faizan Fida Bhat of Ellahi Bagh area of Srinagar was injured, the report said. The report said that both the persons were taken to SMHS Hospital Srinagar. Medical **● P06**

### Thief Caught Red-Handed In Kupwara

Kupwara: A thief was caught red-handed while stealing goods from a provisional store at Ganipora market in Kupwara district of North Kashmir late last night, officials said on Monday. Wearing a Camo jacket, the thief was caught by locals and police around midnight, concerned Station House Officer Zahoor Ahmad said. A police official identified the thief Bilal Ahmad Khan of Halmarpora Kupwara. Further investigations are underway, the police said.



AN ELDERLY MAN walks through the compound of snow-covered Hazratbal shrine on Monday.

KO Pic: Abid Bhat

## Highway Closed For 5 Days After Road Caves In

Press Trust Of India

BANIHAL: The 270-kilometre Jammu-Srinagar national highway, the tenuous lifeline for the Kashmir valley, was closed for traffic after a portion of the strategic road caved in near Ramban town, officials said on Monday, adding the repair work would take at least five days to restore the arterial route.

A portion of the road near Kela Morh, about four km ahead of the Ramban district headquarters, sank after a concrete retaining wall of the bridge collapsed, leading to the sinking of the road on Sunday evening, the officials said. "The construction company concerned has started the restoration work on the damaged portion of the road but it will take at least five days to complete the work," Senior Superintendent of Police (Traffic), National Highway, Jatinder Singh Jowhar said.

He said a 16-metre retaining wall of a bridge collapsed, which led to the sinking of a 15-metre road, rendering the highway unsafe. The officers of the Ramban district administration along with officials of the National Highways Authority of India (NHA) rushed to the spot, which is located adjacent to an under-construction tunnel, to devise a strategy for an early restoration of the highway, the only all-weather **▶▶PAGE 06**

### Gulmarg Coldest In Valley At Minus 9.6 Degree Celsius



KO Pic: Abid Bhat

SRINAGAR: There was some respite for residents of Srinagar from intense cold as minimum temperatures rose at most places in Kashmir on Monday, officials said.

Srinagar city recorded a low of minus 0.2 degrees Celsius up from minus 2.6 degrees Celsius the previous night, the officials said.

The minimum temperature in Gulmarg tourist resort settled at minus 9.6 degrees Celsius down from minus 7.2 degrees Celsius the night earlier.

Gulmarg was the coldest recorded place in the valley. Pahalgam recorded a low of minus 4.6 degrees Celsius, up from minus 5.9 degrees Celsius a night earlier. **▶▶PAGE 06**

**THE CONSTRUCTION COMPANY CONCERNED HAS STARTED the restoration work on the damaged portion of the road but it will take at least five days to complete the work,"**

## Govt Cuts Down Valley's Foodgrain Quota: Report

Store Keepers, Fair Price Shop Dealers Aghest

Agencies

SRINAGAR: In a move that could prompt fair shop dealers to down their shutters, the government has reportedly curtailed rice and wheat quota for Kashmir Valley by over one lakh quintals.

Over 120371.62 quintals of foodgrain, both rice and wheat have been curtailed to Kashmir Valley as store keepers and fair price shop dealers have virtually locked their stores demanding supply of rice as per the desired quota, local news agency KNT reported Monday.

Quoting official sources, the report says that under National Food

Security Act (NFSA), Government of Jammu and Kashmir, Directorate of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Kashmir has allocated 210849.89 quintals of foodgrain for the month of January 2021.

Last year in October, 331221.51 quintals of foodgrain had been allocated for Valley.

"This is a deficit of 120371.62 quintals of foodgrain and it is a huge margin that will affect people badly," said an official on condition of anonymity.

For the month of January 2021, under Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) category, 30457.95 quintals of rice (50595.74 **▶▶PAGE 06**

### Teen Injured In Cross-LoC Firing

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: A 14-year-old boy was seriously injured on Monday as Indian and Pakistani troops traded heavy gunfire along the Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said.

Mohammad Jehangir was hit by splinters when a mortar shell exploded near his house in Shahpur sector during intense shelling by Pakistan Army, the officials said. The injured boy is being shifted to hospital, the officials said.

The Shahpur sector witnessed heavy mortar shelling by the Pakistan side twice during the day, prompting strong retaliation by the Indian Army, the officials said.

Pakistan Army first targeted the forward posts and villages in the sector at 11.30 am and **● P06**

### Elderly Man Dies Of Covid-19 In Jammu

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: An elderly man died of coronavirus in Jammu and Kashmir on Monday, even as 113 fresh cases of Covid-19, including 13 travellers were detected across the Union Territory during the last 24 hours.

An 85-year-old man from Subhash Nagar area of Jammu died at a hospital in the winter capital taking the fatality count to 1911, officials said Monday.

So far 1199 people died in the Valley while 712 have succumbed to the virus in Jammu region. **● P06**

## No Avian Death In Hokersar Wetland: Govt

SRINAGAR: No bird deaths have been reported from Hokersar wetland -- Kashmir largest and the most prominent wetland -- even as a sustained surveillance and monitoring campaign for bird flu has been launched in the valley, officials said on Monday.

A team of experts from the Institute of Animal Health and Biological Products (IAH&BP), Zakura, Animal Husbandry Department, Kashmir, in coordination with the Wildlife Protection Department, Kashmir, visited the wetland Monday to set in motion sustained surveillance and monitoring for bird

## Army Rejects Police Charges Against Accused Captain

No System Of Cash Rewards For Acts In Combat Situations: Col Kalia

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: The Army on Monday denied that its captain, who is facing disciplinary proceedings for an alleged fake encounter in Amshipora, was "driven" by a Rs 20-lakh reward for killing militants, virtually contradicting the charge sheet filed by Jammu and Kashmir in the case.

A brief statement by Srinagar-based defence spokesperson Col Rajesh Kalia said there was no system of cash rewards for Army personnel for any acts in combat situations or otherwise in the line of duty.

"There are media reports quoting that Amshipora encounter actions were driven by a Rs 20 lakh

award for the killing of militants. It is clarified that the Indian Army has no system of cash awards for its personnel for any acts in combat situations or otherwise in the line of duty," it said.

The statement said the reports are "not based on facts of the processes internal to Indian Army". Three youths, who were dubbed as militants, were killed in a fake encounter in July last year.

The Special Investigation Team constituted by the Jammu and Kashmir police to probe the incident stated in its charge sheet that "by staging the encounter" the accused Capt. Bhoopinder Singh and two other civilians --Tabash Nazir and Bilal Ahmed Lone **▶▶PAGE 06**

### PDP Youth Leader Para Arrested Again

Political Vendetta For Raising Voice Against Delhi's Onslaught: Mehbooba

SRINAGAR: PDP youth wing president Waheed Para, who was granted bail by an NIA court Saturday, was arrested again on Monday by the Jammu and Kashmir Police over a case related to an alleged nexus involving politicians and militants, officials said.



The case was registered by the Criminal Investigation (Kashmir) range which **▶▶PAGE 06**

### SKIMS Bemina Resumes Non-Covid Services

SRINAGAR: The Sher-e-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) Medical College is all set to resume non-COVID activities from January 12 while all departments along with IPD services will be started from January 15.

An order issued by the administration has stated that as a follow up of de-notifying of SKIMS Medical College as COVID designated hospital, the non-COVID activities of the hospital shall be initiated w.e.f. 12/01/2021 and subsequently all departments along with IPD services shall be started in full w.e.f. 15/01/2021.

The authorities in order **● P06**

## India Returns Captured PLA Soldier To China

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: The Indian Army on Monday handed back to China a soldier of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), three days after apprehending him at the southern bank of Pangong Tso in eastern Ladakh, official sources said.

The soldier was returned to China at the Chushul-Moldo border point in eastern Ladakh at 10.10 am, they added.

The Chinese soldier was captured at the southern bank of Pangong lake in the early hours of

**THE PLA SOLDIER HAD TRANSGRESSED across the LAC and was taken into custody by Indian troops deployed in this area.**

Friday after he transgressed across the Indian side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

"The PLA soldier, who was apprehended on January 8, was handed back to China at Chushul-Moldo at 10.10 am on Monday," a source said.

Indian and Chinese troops are locked in a tense border standoff in eastern Ladakh for over eight months. The faceoff began in May last year, following a clash between the two sides in the Pangong lake area.

"The PLA soldier had transgressed across the LAC and was taken into custody by Indian troops

### CDS Rawat Reviews Military Preparedness

Chief of Defence Staff Gen Bipin Rawat is on a visit to Ladakh to review the country's overall military preparedness as thousands of Indian and Chinese troops remained deployed in a high **● P06**

### IAF Chief Tours Landing Strips

Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhadauria on Monday visited the strategically located Daulat Beg Oldie, Thoise and Nyoma advanced landing strips in Ladakh and undertook a comprehensive review of the IAF's preparedness in the region in **● P06**

deployed in this area. Troops from either side are deployed along the LAC since friction erupted last year due to unprecedented mobilisation and forward concentration by

Chinese troops," the Army said in a statement on Saturday.

Following the capture of the soldier by the Indian Army, China had sought his immediate return **▶▶PAGE 06**

## In FOCUS

## KASHMIR In Capital: Pashmina Threads In Nizamuddin

Romaan Arora

At a stone's throw from Nizamuddin Markaz, "The Art of Kashmir" is a small window of the valley in the sizzling souk of South Delhi.

Its owner, Abdul Rasheed, has been trying to uphold the capital's craft reputation since mid-nineties after he introduced the art of embroidery and shawl-making from Kashmir.

"It was difficult in those days," says Rasheed, who came to Delhi as a struggler in 1995.

"I was 35 at that time. I came here by road, and it was the first time I had gone outside the valley to earn."

In the beginning, he worked as a hawker under the hostile sun, car-



rying a bundle of shawls to every nook and cranny of the capital. But the different culture, language and

habits became barriers for him.

Once he overcame those initial hitches, he started visiting embassies

to sell his shawls and suits to diplomats. "I would interact with foreign tourists in Srinagar, so I applied that experience here," Rasheed recalls. "It worked for me in Delhi."

It went for around 5 years till 2000. After that, he realized there's nothing much to gain from high commissions.

"So I changed my target location and started hawking around South Delhi. And it proved to be a good decision," the Pashmina seller says.

But to create a niche in Nizamuddin wasn't a pushover for Rasheed. It was more about setting and cementing his base based on the local trust and contacts.

After years of slog, his efforts finally paid off in 2008, when he

opened his Pashmina store. He shortly rose to become a prominent Kashmiri trader in town.

Apart from selling "good quality products", there was also the first-mover advantage and a blend of good business practices.

"If I'm here today," Rasheed says, "it's only because of my constant hard work."

But since Kashmiri shawls stay in Delhi market for four months only, from November to March, Rasheed has to grapple with the eight-month-long workless period.

Even in the ongoing Covid-marred season, his customer base has badly shrunk. People from different states would arrive in Delhi on vacations during winters and buy his Pashmina stock.



"Apart from Indian clientele, I used to cater customers from Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, and other foreign countries," Rasheed says.

These tourists used to visit Nizamuddin Markaz (Islamic Centre for the religious congregation) during winters. "But that winter rush has ended

after Markaz was declared as the "Corona hotspot" and closed down," the trader says.

Markaz was one of his main sources of income, and its closure has made the whole market suffer in an unprecedented manner. "It's deserted now," **▶▶PAGE 06**