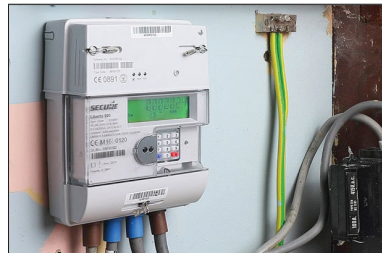




Maximum : 5.2°
Minum : -2.0°
Humidity : 93%

SUNSET
Today 05:58 PM
SUNRISE
Tomorrow 07:31 AM



P3 NEWS

SMART METERS INSTALLATION IN SRINAGAR UNDERWAY; MD KPDC

MD KPDC, Mr. Mohammad Aijaz IAS, today convened a meeting to review the progress of Smart Metering of Srinagar City. The Nodal Officer Smart Metering...

P4 WORLD

GLOBAL ICE SHEETS MELTING AT 'WORST-CASE' RATES: UK SCIENTISTS

The rate at which ice is disappearing across the world matches "worst-case climate warming scenarios", UK scientists have warned in new research...



P11 SPORTS

CRISTIANO RONALDO REFUSES £5.3 MILLION-A-YEAR OFFER TO PROMOTE SAUDI TOURISM: REPORTS

Members of the England cricket team including captain Joe Root arrived in the city on Wednesday for the ...



Quote!

It is never too late to be what you might have been.

— George Eliot

NEWS DIGEST

MERC Holds Mudasir Ali Memorial Session

SRINAGAR: The Media Education Research Centre (MERC) on Wednesday organized Mudasir Ali Online Memorial Session in which the invited speakers discussed the 'Journalism during pandemic: Opportunities & Challenges'. A galaxy of media professionals working for local, national and international media besides the faculty and the students of the department marked the occasion, according to a statement. Mudasir Ali was a pass out of MERC. ● More On P10

Cop Falls From Escort Vehicle, Injured

SRINAGAR: A policeman was on Wednesday injured in a road accident in Soura area of Srinagar. Officials said that a Selection Grade Constable (Sgt) identified as Nazir Ahmad of Police Station Soura fell down from a running police vehicle (Rakshak) when he was performing escort duty in the area. They said after the incident, the injured cop was taken to SKIMS hospital where he is undergoing treatment.

3 Officials Reinstated, 2 Suspended

SRINAGAR: The Government of Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday placed two officials under suspension citing their 'conduct' as reason. The office of the Lieutenant Governor issued a formal order in this regard. "Pending inquiry into their conduct, the two officials are hereby placed under suspension, with immediate effect." The officials are Muhammad Omran, Section Officer, Higher Education Department and Vijay Kumar, Section ● More On P10

Budgam Teen Dies Of Cardiac Arrest

SRINAGAR: A teenage girl student from central Kashmir's Budgam district on Wednesday died of cardiac arrest plunging her native village in mourning. Khushboo Jan, daughter of Parvaiz Ahmad Bhat suffered a cardiac arrest at her home in Budran Beerwah on Wednesday evening, news agency KNS reported. The teenage girl was a matriculation student. A pale of gloom descended in the area after the ● More On P10

Active Covid-19 Cases In Ladakh Drop To 51

LEH: The number of active COVID-19 cases dropped to 51 in the Union Territory of Ladakh after recovery of four more patients, while 490 healthcare workers have been vaccinated against the infection till date, officials said on Wednesday. A new coronavirus case was detected in Leh, taking the total number of cases in the union territory to 9,687. Ladakh has so ● More On P10

IED Blast in Kulgam; Soldier Killed, 3 Injured

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Suspected militants on Wednesday triggered an improvised explosive device (IED) blast in south Kashmir's Kulgam district leaving a soldier dead and three others injured, officials said.

A Road opening party (ROP) of 24 Rashtriya Rifles were passing through government middle school building in Subhanpora area of Kulgam district on Wednesday morning when an IED exploded with a huge bang leaving at least four soldiers injured, officials said. All the injured soldiers were shifted to army hospital in Srinagar for treatment, officials said, adding one among them succumbed to his serious injuries.

In a statement issued here this evening, a police spokesperson said that the preliminary investigation have revealed that a rudimentary IED with a low powered explosive and ball bearings was planted in an abandoned building inside the school premises, where the soldiers used to



Soldiers inspect the site of IED explosion in Subhanpora area of Kulgam district on Wednesday. Photo: PTI

visit on routinely.

"The IED was planted by militants probably during the night hours. In this incident, 4 soldiers of 24RR sustained injuries and were evacuated to nearby hospital for the treatment of their injuries. Among the injured, one jawan succumbed to his injuries," he said.

Accordingly, the police spokesperson said, a case FIR No. 05/2021 under relevant

sections of law has been registered in Police Station Qaimoh.

"Investigation is in progress and officers continue to work to establish the full circumstances of this crime. Area has been cordoned and search in the area is going on," he added.

Earlier in the day, Srinagar based defence spokesperson Col. Rajesh Kalia said that army's ROP were attacked with a grenade by ● More On P10

Youth Injured In Militant Firing Succumbs

Observer Monitoring Desk

A youth shot at and injured by suspected militants nearly two months ago in Soura area of the city, succumbed to his injuries at the SK institute of medical sciences (SKIMS) here on Wednesday. 24-year-old Nadif Hanief Khan of Soura died at the SKIMS on

Tuesday night, where he was being treated for grievous wounds sustained in a militant attack near his residence in Bilal Colony, Soura on December 1, reports said. Medical Superintendent SKIMS Dr. Farooq Jan said that Nadif had a firearm injury in the head and died at the hospital overnight. Police have already registered a case in this regard. (With GNS inputs)

...PENSION NOT EX-GRATIA

HC Holds 389 JKSRTC Workers Entitled To Retiral Benefits

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Observing pension is not an ex-gratia but a payment for the past service rendered by an employee, Jammu and Kashmir High Court on Wednesday held entitled to retiral benefits 389 members of Jammu and Kashmir Road Transport Corporation Association.



The petition was filed by the members comprising Sweepers, Helpers, Cleaners, Bus Washers, Assistant Fitters, Fitters, Conductors and Drivers through association's Coordinator.

The petitioner sought a direction to the administration to treat them as Government employees and, consequently, entitled to ● More On P10



Lt Governor Manoj Sinha held the 4th run of LG's Mulaqaat with applicants through videoconferencing on Wednesday. Grievances were redressed on the spot during two-hour long Live Public Grievance Hearing.

► Full Report on Page 5

Dry Weather Conditions To Continue Till January 31: MeT

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: Dry weather conditions will persist in Jammu and Kashmir till January 31 and there's a possibility of a Western Disturbance hitting the region on February 2, the meteorological department said Wednesday.

"There are least chances of precipitation over the next few days and weather shall remain dry till 31st January 2021. We are expecting a substantial drop in minimum temperatures in the upcoming days, one can expect sunlight in the afternoons," a MeT department official said.

According to the official, the minimum temperatures are expected to remain below freezing point for the next week due to the possibility of a Western Disturbance on February 2.

Meanwhile, the minimum temperature in Kashmir



KO Photo: Abid Bhat

stayed below freezing point on Wednesday and is expected to remain so till the next week, the official said.

Srinagar city recorded a low of minus 2 degrees Celsius, up from minus 2.4 degrees Celsius the previous night, the officials said.

Qazigund recorded a minimum of 4.4 degrees Celsius down from minus 2.8 degree

Celsius the previous night, they said.

The minimum temperature at the Gulmarg skiing resort, in north Kashmir's Baramulla district, settled at minus 12 degrees Celsius.

Pahalgam tourist resort in south Kashmir, recorded a low of minus 7.7 degrees Celsius marginally down from previous ● More On P10

Key Farmer Leaders Blamed for Violence, Booked



Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: As many as 37 farmer leaders, including Rakesh Tikait, Yogendra Yadav, Darshan Pal and Gurnam Singh Chaduni, have been named in an FIR in connection with the violence during the tractor parade that left 300 police personnel injured even as two farmer unions on Wednesday withdrew from the agitation against the farm laws.

Delhi Police said that 22

FIRs have been filed and around 200 people detained. Multiple videos and CCTV footage are being scanned to identify those involved in the violence and strict action will be taken against the culprits.

The FIR registered at Samaypur Badli names 37 farmer leaders including Tikait, Yadav, Darshan Pal and Chaduni and their role will be probed, the police said.

The FIR has been registered under various sections of IPC ● More On P10

Who Is Deep Sidhu?

Actor-turned-activist Deep Sidhu is in the eye of a storm for being among the protesters who put up a religious flag atop the Red Fort on Republic Day. Many farmers' bodies blamed him for inciting protesters to head towards the Red Fort during the farmers' tractor parade on Tuesday. They also accused 36-year-old Sidhu of allegedly trying to defame the farmers' peaceful agitation against the agri reforms introduced by the central government. Sidhu, since he joined the farmers' agitation against the new farm legislation last ● More On P10

BJP Notice To Local Leader Over Misconduct

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: The BJP on Wednesday issued a show cause notice to party activist Wasim Kohli for anti-party activities during the District Development Council (DDC) elections in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district.

J-K BJP disciplinary committee chairman Sunil Sethi served the notice to Kohli, who is the BJP leader from Kalakote, based upon the complaints by local BJP leaders regarding anti-party activities in his assembly constituency.

The leaders alleged that Kohli supported candidates from other parties and hence the party's disciplinary committee served the notice to Kohli, Sethi said.

In the notice, Kohli has been given seven days' time to clarify his stand before the party, he added.

Sethi said that the disciplinary committee received a complaint against Kohli about gross indiscipline in the recently concluded DDC elections, along with an audio clip allegedly containing his confession of indiscipline and of helping other candidates win elections, besides not supporting official party candidates.

The matter has been ● More On P10

Faith Healer Who Lost His 'RTI Amulet' In J&K's Reorganization

Umer Ahmad

MUJHPATHER, Budgam – Sitting on a wooden seat and surrounded by scattered sheets, a faith-healer sporting skull-cap and flowing beard is scribing on a white paper as countless eyes are gazing him—as if seeking salvation—in stillness.

His meditative silence is keeping his audience captive inside a crowded room. After done writing an amulet, he tells his followers, "You've to just use the old method with new rules."

As a spiritual leader and "superhero" of Gujjar Community, Peer Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-Ud-Din dedicates Saturdays and Sundays every

week to get his tribe's work done through RTIs.

Over the years, he has raised a cadre of about 20,000 "information warriors" and earned a unique name for himself: RTI-Amulet Peer.

His grass-root information campaign helped Budgam in central Kashmir to become a "RTI district", where hundreds of activists brought the information to the public getting benefited from government schemes.

But since the abrogation of the Article 370, Mohi-Ud-Din's cadre is not able to file RTIs, as they remain oblivious of new rules.

The faith-healer is now training all the activists again and teaching them



how to file RTIs under the Central RTI (Right to Information) Act 2005—he

terms less powerful than the abolished Jammu and Kashmir Right to

Information Act 2009.

Before August 5, 2019, the information peer would write a J&K RTI amulet to his adherents. But after the scrapping of the Article 370 and subsequent nullifying of the other laws including the JK RTI Act 2009, he saw his years of hard labour getting wasted to his chagrin.

"Almost 80 per cent RTI work has stopped now," Peer Mohi-Ud-Din sighs inside his room where he attends people every weekend.

"When we file RTI in any government offices now, they don't respond to common man's applications, because they know that the Information Commission in Kashmir is dysfunctional, and people cannot

take a further step."

Only those people can file RTI and get the information who have really good command over the Central RTI Act and other tactics of getting the information from government offices, he says.

"J&K RTI Act was more efficient than Central RTI Act," the faith-healer reiterates, "because government officials were bound to provide information with a fixed time period under it."

One of the justifications given behind the abrogation of Article 370 was to make Jammu and Kashmir a corruption-free state.

"But if New Delhi really wanted to end corruption ● More On P10