

3 family members die due to suffocation

Excelsior Correspondent
SRINAGAR, Jan 5: Bodies of three family members including a couple and their son were found in their house in Nehalpora village of North Kashmir's Pattan area.

Police said that the death has been caused apparently due to the suffocation by the gas heater that the trio used last night to save themselves from the intense cold followed by heavy snowfall. "It appears they had died due to suffocation but further investigation is underway."

Budget session from Jan 29

NEW DELHI, Jan 5: The Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs (CCPA) has recommended that the Budget session of Parliament be held in two parts from January 29 to April 8, and all COVID-related protocols including the shift system are likely to be followed as was done during the Monsoon session.

According to the Committee's recommendation, Part 1 of the Budget session

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UK PM cancels India trip

NEW DELHI, Jan 5: UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who was invited as the chief guest for the Republic Day parade, has cancelled his visit to India due to the serious Coronavirus situation in his country.

Officials said Johnson called up Prime Minister Narendra Modi and regretted that he would have to cancel his visit to India because of the pandemic situation.

The Coronavirus infection has been spreading in the UK for some time owing to a large extent to a new mutant of the virus, which has been found to be more infectious. (PTI)

India's response to China was firm: MoD

NEW DELHI, Jan 5: The "unilateral and provocative" actions by the Chinese military to change the status quo by force in more than one area on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) were responded to in a "firm" and "non-escalatory way", the Ministry of Defence (MoD) has said in an annual report.

The report said Indian troops are well entrenched to counter any "misadventure" by Chinese forces and that the

Lowest daily cases in 6 months

NEW DELHI, Jan 5: India recorded 16,375 new cases of Coronavirus, the lowest in over six months, taking the country's COVID-19 caseload to 1,03,56,844, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated today.

The death toll increased to 1,49,850 with 201 new fatalities, the data updated at 8 am today showed.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 99,75,958 pushing the national recovery rate to 96.32 per cent, while the COVID-19 case fatality rate

NIA files charge sheet in narco-terror case

NEW DELHI, Jan 5: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) today filed a supplementary charge sheet in the Hizbul-Mujahideen (HM) narco terror case before the Mohali NIA Special Court in Punjab against narco-terrorists Jaswant Singh aka Jassa of Gurdaspur and Gursant Singh aka Gora of Tarn Taran, Punjab.

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DM assures Leh delegation to address all issues

Rajnath to visit Ladakh, tour LAC; inter-act with forward areas' people

Sanjeev Pargal
JAMMU, Jan 5: As crucial meeting between representatives of People's Movement for Sixth Schedule of Leh with Union Home Minister Amit Shah was deferred to tomorrow in view of his preoccupation today, some of the representatives from Leh called on Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and discussed with him the situation prevailing along Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh where standoff between Sino-Indian troops has prolonged due to which people living close to the LAC are also suffering.

Rajnath is understood to have assured the delegation that he will himself visit Ladakh shortly including forward areas along LAC in Eastern Ladakh and some of the villages where people are facing problems due to continued standoff between Indian Army and People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China.

Former two-time Lok Sabha member from Ladakh Thupstan

*Apex body meet with Shah deferred for a day

Chhewang led the delegation which also comprised Councilor from Chushul, an area which falls close to the LAC where large number of the Indian troops were present to effectively counter any threat from the Chinese army.

They briefed Rajnath Singh about problems faced by the people living close to the LAC as their cattle are unable to graze in the forward areas and their movement has also been restricted to some extent due to the standoff.

Chhewang told the Excelsior that Rajnath Singh gave patient hearing to the delegation and assured them that he will be visiting Ladakh shortly during which apart from touring forward areas of Eastern Ladakh along the Line of Actual Control he will also visit villages close to the LAC and inter-act with repre-

sentatives of the villagers to address their issues.

The Defence Minister is reported to have expressed commitment towards resolving all issues of Ladakhi people living close to forward areas of LAC saying the people have bravely faced lot of difficulties but continued to extend their full support to the Indian Army which has given a very effective response to the Chinese troops despite harsh weather conditions.

Indian and Chinese troops have been engaged in tense standoff in Eastern Ladakh for the past about six months and several rounds of military and diplomatic-level talks didn't yield fruitful results.

Only few days back, some Chinese people backed by their troops riding on two vehicles had entered forward village of

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Under the new provisions, a detailed mechanism to be followed for compulsory retirement of the Government servants has been defined so that such cases can withstand the judicial scrutiny in case officials declared as 'dead-wood' knock at the doors of the court of law against the Government decision.

In order to ensure utmost transparency and neutrality

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Govt forms panels for compulsory retirement

Excelsior Correspondent
JAMMU, Jan 5: Government of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir today constituted committees in all the 39 Administrative Departments to consider the cases of non-gazetted officials under Article 226 (2) of the Jammu and Kashmir Civil Service Regulations, 1956 which deals with compulsory retirement of the officials on completion of 22 years of qualifying service or on attaining 48 years of age.

Several new provisions were incorporated by the Government in the Article in the month of October last year to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of the Government servants.

Under the new provisions, a detailed mechanism to be followed for compulsory retirement of the Government servants has been defined so that such cases can withstand the judicial scrutiny in case officials declared as 'dead-wood' knock at the doors of the court of law against the Government decision.

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Well-staffed CHC to handle emergency cases LG calls for best arrangements for Shri Amarnath Ji pilgrims

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Jan 5: Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha today called for best-in-class arrangements for Shri Amarnath Ji pilgrims to improve their overall yatra experience.

He was chairing a preparatory review meeting of Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra-2021 here at Civil Secretariat. He will personally review the preparations and setting up of on-ground facilities for the pilgrims.

Laying special emphasis on providing best medical facilities to the pilgrims, Sinha passed directions for the increase of accidental insurance of pilgrims during the yatra, besides doubling the number of life saving ambulances.

Explore the possibility of setting up a well-equipped and well-staffed CHC to handle emergency cases, he directed the officers.

He asked the CEO to rope in the governments of neighbouring states to provide services of more doctors and medical paramedics, besides various NGOs that already send doctors and



Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha chairing preparatory review meeting of Shri Amarnath Ji yatra in Jammu on Tuesday.

paramedics during the yatra. The Lt Governor directed the concerned officers to improve the utilities enroute, besides repair of roads and other infrastructure well in time. He asked

*Watch video on www.excelsionews.com

them to take all requisite measures and involve more NGOs and religious organisations to ensure smooth pilgrimage of Shri Amarnathji and proper facilities for the pilgrims.

He also stressed on dissemination of informative materials and pamphlets in as many languages as possible, including official languages of the UT to reach out to the wider population.

During the meeting, Sinha

sought a detailed report on all aspects related to the conduct of Shri Amarnathji Yatra which included routes to holy cave, terrain, accommodation and tent facilities, medical arrangements, duration of yatra, weather conditions, registration process, langar arrangements etc. He also enquired about the role of different stakeholders and their active contribution in the conduct of yatra.

BVR Subrahmanyam, Chief Secretary; Nitishwar Kumar, Principal Secretary to the Lt Governor and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB); Anup Soni, Additional CEO, SASB and senior officers attended the meeting.

Calls for focus on Schemes funded under CSS, PMDP, NABARD

Finance Deptt releases remaining 50 pc funds under District Capex for DDCs

*Ban on engagement of casual workers to stay

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Jan 5: The Finance Department today ordered release of further 50 percent of funds under District Capex (Regular Component) out of balanced expenditure of 2020-21 in favour of the District Development Commissioners for ongoing works and non-construction activities to be completed during current financial year or, at the most, in next financial year.

An order to this effect was issued today by Financial Commissioner (Finance Department) Dr Arun Kumar Mehta.

The Finance Department has directed the DDCs to pay due attention towards implementa-

tion of scheme funded under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS), Prime Minister's Development Programme (PMDP) and NABARD which are shared on 90:10 basis.

Though there will be no restriction on expenditure, but it will be restricted to the extent of funds authorized by the Finance Department, the Government order said. However, for expenditure on vehicles and furniture, the DDCs will require specific permission from the Finance Department.

"The DDCs/Controlling Officers/AOs, before authorizing funds through BEAMS will ensure that the ongoing works and non-construction activity has been initiated after following due e-tendering proce-

dures," the order read and added that in no case the funds will be released to clear any past liability and the same, if any, shall be referred to the Finance Department for appropriate action.

The Finance Department directed the Treasury Officers to ensure that all codal formalities have been fulfilled and all documents like e-tendering etc are in place while entertaining the bills through the 'JKPaySys'.

"Execution of works will be taken up strictly for approved activities only within the approved cost and no liability will be created ensuring financial discipline in the system. The DDC/Controlling Officer will be personally responsible for any liability created on account of un-approved/un-authorized

works," the order further said.

It added that all works/schemes must be supported with technically vetted Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) and prepared by executing agencies in close consultation with the user agency.

The projects/ schemes shall be executed and completed strictly within the timeline as stipulated in the tender document and as fixed by the Competent Authority" the order said and added that the departments shall ensure that the expenditure against the authorized funds, are made in stipulated timeframe.

The ban on engagement of casual workers, need based workers, etc shall continue to be in force. All development/

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Reports to be disclosed to KAS officers before finalization

Govt inserts new provisions for more transparency in APRs writing process

Mohinder Verma

JAMMU, Jan 5: To ensure more transparency in the process of writing Annual Performance Reports (APRs) of the officers of Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Service commonly known as KAS, the Government has inserted new provisions in the procedure and defined different timelines so that entire exercise is completed by March 31st every year.

The new provisions have been incorporated on the instructions of the Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha consequent upon the implementation of Smart Performance Appraisal Report Recording Online Window (SPARROW) for writing up of Annual Performance Report for the members of Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Service and in

*Timelines defined for completion of process by March 31

partial modification of relevant Government orders of 2001 and 2019.

Under Chapters VII and VIII of the procedure for writing up, custody and maintenance of the APRs defined vide Government Order No.1311-GAD dated November 9, 2001, there was provision for making representation by the officers only in case of adverse entries in the Annual Performance Report.

"The officer to whom an adverse entry is communicated may represent to the Accepting Authority against it within six weeks and the Accepting Authority/Administrative Department on receipt of repre-

sentation against the adverse remarks shall obtain the remarks of the Initiating/Reviewing Authority (author of the adverse remarks) and all such representations shall, as far as possible, be decided within three months from the date of submission of the representations", read Chapter VIII.

Notwithstanding these instructions, the Government has inserted new provisions which shall be applicable to the members of Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Service. The new provisions permit disclosure of Annual Performance Report (APR) to the officer reported upon and procedure for representation

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No flight Ops at Srinagar, 9 cancelled in Jammu

NH closed for 3rd day, 6000 vehicles stranded

*Total blackout in many towns, villages in J&K

Gopal Sharma/ Fayaz Bukhari

JAMMU/ SRINAGAR, Jan 5: The Jammu-Srinagar National Highway remained closed for the third consecutive day today as snowfall and heavy rain continued to play

*Watch video on www.excelsionews.com

havoc across J&K while most of the roads have also been blocked with landslides and accumulation of snow in many hilly areas and scores of towns and villages across J&K have plunged into dark-



A roadside fruit seller takes a cover of polythene sheet to protect himself from heavy rain in Jammu on Tuesday. Another pic on page 13.

ness due to power failure. The flight operation at Srinagar Airport remained sus-

pending for the third day due to snow at the airfield while at Jammu Airport, nine flights

were cancelled due to bad weather and two others were diverted. The snowfall in Kashmir continued for the third consecutive day today disrupting life across the region and continues to remain cut off from rest of the country as surface and air traffic remained disrupted.

Due to closure of the 270 km Jammu-Srinagar highway for the third day, over 6000 vehicles including most of the trucks/ load carriers have been stranded at many places right from Nagrota Bypass Jammu up to Udhampur, Ramban, Chanderkote and

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Cutlery, bed-sheets, carpets worth lakhs

In just 6 months, Mehbooba made Rs 82 lakh worth purchases as CM

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Jan 5: People's Democratic Party (PDP) president and People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) vice president Mehbooba Mufti spent Rs 82 lakh on purchase of furniture, bed-sheets, television sets, carpets and other luxurious items during just six months when she was Chief Minister of the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir heading the PDP-BJP coalition Government after sudden death of her father Mufti Mohammad Sayeed.

This information has been revealed in an RTI application filed by Kashmir based activist Inam-un-Nabi Soudagar. In six months period between January-June 2018, Mehbooba spent nearly Rs 82 lakh on various items.

In just single day on March 28, 2018, Mehbooba purchased carpets worth Rs 28 lakh. In the month of June 2018 alone, she incurred more than Rs 25 lakh on various items including LED Television sets amounting to Rs 22 lakh.

The RTI reply revealed that on January 30, 2017, Mehbooba Mufti spent Rs 14 lakh. The items purchased on January 30 include garden umbrella at the cost of Rs 2.94 lakh. The RTI response further revealed that bed-sheets worth Rs 11.62 lakh were purchased on February 22, 2018. Further, in March 2018, Mehbooba spent nearly Rs 56 lakh including Rs 25 lakh on furniture and nearly Rs 28 lakh on the carpets. Purchases also include cutlery items worth Rs 40 lakh in a period of two years from August 2016 to July 2018. This was also the period when Mehbooba

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16 fresh cases in Ladakh

6 die of COVID in J&K

*137 test +ve, 215 recover

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU/SRINAGAR/ LEH, Jan 5: Six persons died of COVID-19 five in Jammu region and one in Kashmir while 137 persons tested positive for the virus and 215 others recovered.

Of five deaths reported in Jammu region, four occurred in Jammu district and one in Kishtwar.

A 67-year-old man from Surinsar in Jhajar Kotli area and 82-year-old from Sainik Colony in Jammu district died of COVID-19 in 166 Military Hospital Jammu.

A 73-year-old man from Shakti Nagar and 81-year-old from Dream City Muthi, also in Jammu district, died of co-mor-

bidities and virus in Narayana Hospital Katra.

An 85-year-old man from Kishtwar died of multiple ailments and pathogen.

Five fatalities have taken Jammu's Corona toll to 706, the highest being 361 in Jammu district followed by 64 Doda, 57 Udhampur, 54 Rajouri, 49 Kathua, 39 Samba, 24 Poonch, 22 Kishtwar, 21 Ramban and 15 in Reasi district.

Seventy one persons tested positive for Coronavirus in Jammu region, 49 in Jammu district alone, seven Udhampur, five Kathua, four Doda and two each in Kishtwar, Samba and Ramban districts. No new cases

were reported from Rajouri, Poonch and Reasi districts today.

Among 105 persons, who recovered from the virus in the region, 68 belonged to Jammu district followed by 12 in Rajouri, 10 Udhampur, seven Poonch and four each in Doda and Kathua districts. No recoveries were reported in rest of the districts.

Jammu region now has 50383 Corona cases. Among them, 1195 are active positives while 48482 have recovered and there have been 706 casualties. Meanwhile, one person died of COVID-19 in Kashmir while 66 people tested positive.

One person who died today was from Kashmir taking the death toll to 1,897.

Those who tested positive in Kashmir include 22 from Srinagar, 5 Baramulla, one Budgam, two from Kupwara, 18 Pulwama, five Anantnag, two Bandipora and 11 from Ganderbal.

As per officials figures, 25,503 positive cases including 450 deaths and 24,556 recoveries are from Srinagar, 8,009 including 172 deaths and 7,727 recoveries are from Baramulla, 7,646 including 7,433 recoveries and 110 deaths are from Budgam, 5,573 including 5,370 recoveries and 92 deaths are from Kupwara, 5,618 including 88 deaths and 5,361 recoveries

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Court vacates stay on NIT for construction of GMC Udhampur

Nishikant Khajuria

JAMMU, Jan 5: In a significant development, the Court of 2nd Additional District Judge Jammu today vacated the stay on Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) for the construction of new Government Medical College, Udhampur, thus paving the way for commencement of the GMC building work.

Vacating the interim direction passed by the court on July 7, 2020 and disposing of application of plaintiff M/s Vij and Anand Associates, 2nd Additional District Judge, Jammu, Virinder Singh Bhou ordered that the defendants are at liberty to go ahead with the on

line offer of the NIT of April 21, 2020.

"I am constrained to hold that plaintiff is not entitled for confirmation in interim injunction granted by this court so far as relief claimed in the petition," said Virinder Singh Bhou after considering the rival submissions of both sides and material on record.

The plaintiff, M/s Vij and Anand Associates, Bahu Plaza Jammu, through its proprietor Architect Anil Anand, had filed the suit on the ground the Executive Engineer Public Works (R&B), Division Udhampur, had arbitrarily and unconstitutionally copied the drawing and DPR prepared by the firm for Medical College

Udhampur and issued the e-NIT No.01/2020-2021 of 4/2020, dated 21-04-2020 calling on line offers from consultancy firms for the purpose of establishment of new GMC at Udhampur.

Seeking injunction in its favour on account of theft of his artistic work by the defendant by making it available to other consultancy services, the plaintiff had sought confirmation of the interim direction dated July 7, 2020 till disposal of suit and also direction to the defendants to issue him the work.

The defendants included FC Health & Medical Education Department, Chief Engineer PW(R&B) Department Jammu

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