

After bird flu scare in HP, R'sthan, UT Govt sounds alert in J&K

***No need to be panicky: Chief WLW**

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Jan 5: After the neighbouring state Himachal Pradesh besides Rajasthan, reported some cases of bird flu, the Jammu and Kashmir UT Administration today sounded alert and started closely monitoring situation in Kashmir and Jammu regions by constituting teams of Wild Life Protection and Animal Husbandry departments.

Official sources told the 'Excelsior' that the joint teams have been directed to collect samples to check the health of the guest birds flocking the Jammu and Kashmir. The teams also visited today several wetlands in Kashmir and Jammu region to monitor the situation and collect samples of birds droppings. The same have been sent for tests in the Labs by the teams.

Chief Wild Life Warden J&K, SK Gupta said that the joint teams of Animal Husbandry and Wildlife departments led by Wild Life Warden Jammu Anil Atri today visited Gharana wetland near Indo Pak border in Sutchetgar area collected bird droppings samples for testing to ascertain whether

any of the birds, is infected with the dreaded avian influenza.

Gupta said though the J&K Government has sounded alert but there is no need to be panicky. Justifying his point CWL warden said that migratory birds generally arrive during first or maximum second week of December every year. They remain confined to a particular area during their stay here. Therefore, there are very less chances of spreading of this flu in this part at this juncture. Even then all the precautionary measures are being taken where the birds are kept or the wetland areas.

"The J&K Administration has sounded alert and issued certain guidelines as a precautionary measure," Gupta added.

WLW Jammu, Atri who along with Dr Ranjit Katoch of the Wildlife department joined the Animal Husbandry team at Gharana wetland, said all the birds present in the wetland looked healthy.

He disclosed that Gharana Wetland Conservation Reserve in RS Pura sector near the International Border was notified in 1981 and is home to more than 170 species of birds like bar-headed geese, gadwalls,

common teals, purple swamp hens, Indian moor hens, black-winged stilts, cormorants, egrets and green shanks. During winters, the wetland is visited by many birds from Central Asia and some of the migratory bird species visiting this wetland are endangered.

"The team of Animal Husbandry Department, Jammu collected the bird dropping samples for testing," he said, adding there is no need for alarm as this is being done just as a precautionary measure in view of reported cases in HP, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh to keep the wetlands safe and check the spread of the H5N8 virus.

Atri said the number of birds does not remain static and keeps changing. Bar-headed geese outnumber other migratory birds at the wetland," he added.

Dr Katoch, however, said the sampling team of the Animal Husbandry Department collected the samples which would be tested in Jalandhar. So far, no death of any migratory or local bird was reported from the wetland. We have checked the birds and all are healthy," Katoch added.

Advisor Farooq reviews infrastructural needs of Fruit & Vegetable Mandi Complex Narwal

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Jan 5: Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Farooq Khan, today reviewed functioning of Department of Horticulture Planning and Marketing besides infrastructural needs of Vegetable Mandi Complex Narwal at Kissan Ghar, Fruit and Vegetable Mandi Complex Narwal.

Principal Secretary Horticulture, Navin Kumar Choudhary besides senior officers of concerned department and representatives of Fruit and Vegetable Mandi Association were present in the meeting.

Director Horticulture gave power point presentation on physical and financial progress of the department including achievements during 2018-19 and 2019-20 against the approved action plans.

Advisor Khan highlighted the need for maximizing the reach of different schemes with time bound completion of all ongoing programmes and projects. He asked the officers to implement the schemes in letter and spirit for benefit of farmers and fruit growers.

He said that the UT administration is determined to give thrust to Agriculture and Horticulture sectors to boost the production and improve the socio-economic status of farmers of J&K. He asked the

officers and field functionaries to work with dedication, honesty and sincerity to create awareness regarding various technological interventions and farmers welfare schemes. He said that adoption of such measures will improve the living standards of farmers by getting fair and better remunerative prices for their produce.

Advisor asked the members of the Association to register themselves at e-platform for better sale and purchase of their products and use Kissan-rath app for transportation purpose. He stressed for transparent annual audit of funds allotted for development of Mandis.

The members of Fruit & Vegetable Association Narwal demanded additional toilet complexes, canteens, guard rooms, residential quarters, restoration of boundary wall, shops transfer, lease extension besides link road to Mandi via Balidaan Stambh and improvement in basic facilities like sanitation.

Advisor assured the Association that all their grievances and demands raised would be looked into for redressal at the earliest. He asked the representatives of the Association to constitute a committee of three members who shall be authorised to negotiate and take final decision regarding resolution of their issues.

Later, Advisor Khan along with other senior officers of the department visited Fruit and vegetable Mandi Narwal to take stock of its functioning. He had a detailed assessment of problems being faced by the business community dealing with fruit and vegetables.

Two days Kargil Losar Festival inaugurated

Excelsior Correspondent

KARGIL, Jan 5: Acting Chairman and Chief Executive Councillor (CEC), LAHDC, Kargil Mubarak Shah Nagvi

chief guest Mubarak Shah Nagvi said that 2020 was a tough year for the whole humanity due to challenges thrown by the COVID-19 pandemic and hoped that the New Year brings happi-

Balti, Muhammad Yasin Ansari, Skarma Junglay, Akbar Ali Khan Shaheen, Raza Amjad Badgami, Ghulam Nabi Skith, Abdul Rehman Misbahi, Ghulam Murtaza Advocate, and Aga Syed Kazim.



Dignitaries during Kargil Losar Festival.

The paper reading and short story recital sessions comprised of two research-oriented paper presentations by Ajaz Hussain Munshi and Muhammad Sadiq Hardassi on the topics Collection of Indian and Central Asian Coins and Currencies at Munshi Aziz Bhat Museum Kargil and Balti Traditional New Year-Losar respectively while Muhammad Taqi

inaugurated two days Kargil Ladakh Losar--Traditional New Year Cultural and Literary Festival organized by Ladakh Academy of Culture and Languages (LAACL) at Language Center New Academy Complex, here today.

Executive Councillor for Tourism Er Phunsog Tashi was the guest of honor on the occasion while those who sat in the presidium along with the dignitaries included noted Balti poet Akhona Asgar Ali Basharat, State awardee Shina Dardi poet and writer Ghulam Ahmad Khan Jawan and prominent Purgi poet Aga Syed Raza Shah Razi.

ness and joy to all.

He expressed happiness over the participation of young writers, historians, poets and artists of district Kargil in promoting culture and heritage of the place and stated that it is encouraging to see them draw inspiration from the intellectuals, which is a positive development and also need of the time.

Executive Councilor for Tourism Er Phunsog Tashi expressed hope that this year will prove a herald of good health and joy.

Earlier, Deputy Secretary/Special Officer for Cultural Activities G-1, LAACL Kargil Nazir Hussain presented the welcome address.

In the poetry reading session, the poets include Ghulam Ahmad Khan Jawan, Bashir Ahmad Wafa, Muhammad Ali Baba, Fazil Abbas Turtuki, Hadi Ali

Khan presented a short story titled 'Lschama in Purgi language. Meanwhile, folk singers and musicians including Yasmin Fatima, Fatima Nissa, Tundup Fokar, Muhammad Sadiq Ashour, Ghulam Muhammad, Tsering Namgyal, Muhammad Abbas Skith and Sonam Wangdun presented Balti and Purgi folk songs.

Later, Special Officer for Cultural Activities Kargil Muhammad Ali Tak presented vote of thanks.

Noted Purgi writer, poet and broadcaster Muhammad Issa Bahar conducted the proceedings of different sessions held today.

Writers, poets, district officers, prominent citizens besides good number of cultural and literary enthusiasts were present on the occasion.

It is pertinent to mention that the festival will continue tomorrow also.

Sleepwell welcomes 2021 with its annual "Run for Health" initiative

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Jan 5: Sleepwell, India's leading mattress brand from Sheela Foam Limited has always encouraged people to lead a healthy and active life.

Taking its vision for a healthy tomorrow forward, Sleepwell conducts an annual marathon "Run for Health" at the onset of every New Year to celebrate fitness and health among its employees. In the light of the current pandemic, the brand took a unique and innovative initiative by conducting this event virtually for all its employees across offices and factories in India.

More than 300 employees participated in two categories in the run--one below 40 years and the other above 40 years. The former had options of either 3 km and 5 km run, while the latter opt for either 3 km or 5 km walk/run at convenient time between 6 am to 6 pm completed the run or walk at preferred places.

Despite the cold and rainy weather, people enjoyed the concept and very happy to be a part of such a sporting activity after a long time.

Speaking about the initiative, Rahul Gautam, Managing Director, Sheela Foam Limited said, "At Sheela Foam, we firmly believe that when people are in good health, they develop and



nurture a healthy environment around them which aid in their individual success as well as the success of the organization. This was made even more crucial last year as the virus further accelerated our already fast changing world. Surviving with newer skills, thriving with fresher knowledge and being happy with continual improvements are crucial to succeed, however, only possible with unlearning what has become outdated and learning what creates value. In fact, life is referred to as "Anubhavdharma" - a string of experiences and learning is a direct outcome of how we interpret and respond to those experiences. Therefore, the objective of our annual marathon is to inspire everyone to learn from our experiences and adopt a healthy lifestyle. We are overwhelmed by the participation of our employees in this marathon, even though it was conducted virtually, and look forward to organizing more such initiatives in the future. As we begin the New Year, we wish everyone not just a happy but a healthy 2021."

Migrant Pandit cop's daughter Ritika is Miss India J&K

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Jan 5: Ritika Raina, the daughter of a migrant Kashmiri Pandit cop is the VLCC Femina Miss India Jammu & Kashmir 2020.

In a detailed post on her Instagram, Ms Raina said she participated in the beauty contest at the behest of her father who has been very impressed by the 1994 Sushmita Sen becoming Ms India.

"Her story of being afraid to participate in Miss India 1994 because of tough competition and then winning the international title inspires me the most", she said, adding, she is now preparing herself for the competition at the national pageant.

"I always wanted to participate in Femina Miss India but somewhere I knew that I have a bigger responsibility of supporting my parents, so I kept my dream on hold and tried to get a job first so that I can support my parents financially," Ms Raina said.

Currently working as a financial analyst with a foreign bank in India, Ms Raina is preparing for her masters. A graduate from Symbiosis in Pune, Ms Raina has been singing, dancing and gardening while studying but has never been associated with the beauty and wellness sector. Her first photo-shoot has been the one that led her to become the Ms Jammu 2020.

Ritika firmly believes in the saying 'when people throw stones at you, you turn them into milestones' and she did just that. The

beauty queen gathered the courage to participate in the national contest of VLCC Femina Miss India 2020, co-powered by Sephora & Roposo, to use this platform to inspire people to dream big and step out of their comfort zone.

Ms Raina hopes to start an NGO with a focus on teaching and promoting the handicrafts with the help of technology. This, she believes, will create job opportunities for the women.



In her Instagram, Ms Raina also divulged how his family in Kashmir faced 'forced migration' in 1990 and their house was 'set on fire', following which their family sold their land in Kashmir and built a house in Jammu.

"As I grew up, I realized the pain of losing our own house, which made me empathic towards the homeless; all the difficulties we have faced made me grounded and grateful for whatever I've received till now," she has written.

For most of the nineties, her father was posted in Srinagar and would visit his family once or twice a year. This, she has said, made her internally strong and independent externally.

FAIVM submits budget proposal to Union Finance Minister

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Jan 5: Nations apex trade body Federation of All India Vyapar Mandal (FAIVM) has submitted its budget proposal to Union Finance Minister.

According to Sanjay Bansal, President - J&K (Federation of All India Vyapar Mandal), the budget proposal stressed that every stakeholder i.e., Industry, Service and Trade should be considered at par and all policy matters should address revival and survival of Trade and Retail in post pandemic era.

"The traders community of India is going through a miserable state after demonetization and complex GST. Online e-commerce has further fuelled the question of survival of nation's brick and mortar trade. Budget 2020-21 which is the first step towards path of \$5 trillion economy should rationalize fiscal policies of the nation," he said while listing proposals for the budget.

FAIVM has advocated an Income Tax on partnership and Limited liability Partnership to be taxed at 22 percent instead of 30 percent at present bring at par with Income Tax applicable to Corporates.

"In addition, the provision to deduct tax on the source should be applicable only to

those traders whose annual turnover is more than Rs 10 crores; increasing online e-commerce is affecting the domestic traditional retail business, so it is very important to impose a special tax of 5 percent on the total business of online e-commerce, this will also increase the revenue of the Government and make the traditional retail of the country competitive; in order to rectify the error in the GST return happened earlier due to ignorance, the introduction of the amnesty scheme in the GST like Vivaad se Vishwas should be brought by Government to settle small litigation in GST; Government must give a chance to rectify these errors without any monetary penalty," suggested the Federation in its proposals.

In its budget suggestion, the FAIVM also requested an interest subvention scheme on the loans of traders, relieving traders from the provisions of Minimum Wages Act, postponement of Provident Fund registration of traders for at least 2 years if the minimum number of employees is less than 20, putting manufacturing, service and retail together under one ministry and like MSME and service sector, retail businesses should also be given all benefits including issuance of Udyog Aadhaar.

Don't take policy decisions in haste, end anti-youth approach: Bhalla

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Jan 5: Former minister and senior Congress leader Raman Bhalla today expressed strong resentment over the anti-youth policies of the BJP Government towards Jammu and Kashmir.

Bhalla termed the policies of BJP Govt towards the youth of J&K as unsympathetic who are facing the brunt of militancy, disturbed conditions and various kinds of difficult situations like internet blockage during the ongoing turmoil, for last three decades. This was observed by former minister

promised 50,000 Govt jobs besides creating lot of job opportunities post abrogation of Special Status but the youth and students feel deceived and betrayed. Every action of the Centre Govt is costing the educated youth of J&K quite heavily and there are no jobs for them in Govt or private sectors.

Bhalla also questioned the BJP's betrayal & false promises to the various kinds of daily rated & need basis workers and temporary, adhoc and contractual youth in Govt jobs besides its failure to revoke the SRO 202 completely, which is totally anti-youth and newly



PCC leader Raman Bhalla interacting with people in Gargal area of Jammu.

while interacting with prominent persons of Ekta Vihar, Gargal.

Bhalla maintained that the youth friendly policies of Congress led UPA and other previous Governments are being discontinued at this crucial juncture when the situation is quite disturbed and the academic atmosphere is vitiated and youth & students are even deprived of internet facilities. On one hand the Government is not able to restore internet due to disturbed conditions, while on the other BJP Govt is withdrawing the existing concessions and facilities to the youth of J&K to compete for jobs, which is unfortunate.

recruited employees. He expressed his resentment over the promises to the different category of reserved sections like OBC, SC, ST who were promised better deal and parity in reservations like rest of the country, post abrogation of Article 370.

He warned that the youth and students would continue to protest against the wrong policies of the Govt, to force the Centre Govt and UT administration to redress their genuine grievances. It appears that BJP is taking the people especially youth of Jammu and Kashmir for granted but the people and youth shall not forgive the BJP for its anti-youth approach, he added.

HC upholds detention of OGW under PSA

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Jan 5: High Court upheld the detention of an Over Ground Worker (OGW) of Lashker-e-Toiba (LeT) and said the order of detention under Public Safety Act against the detenu issued by the detaining authority is well within the parameters of law.

Justice Rajesh Oswal said that no fault can be found with the detention order as such the same is upheld and dismissed the petition by adding that the same is found to be without merit.

Through the medium of the petition, Petitioner Arif Rashid Mir of Sopore had questioned the detention order passed by the District Magistrate Baramulla on the ground that the detaining authority has merely acted as a rubber stamp on the report of Senior Superintendent of Police, Sopore and there is no satisfaction recorded by the DM Baramulla while passing the detention order.

On the contrary, Government counsel while defending the order of detention as also the grounds of detention submitted that all the procedural requirements have been

followed while passing the order in question.

Court said the detaining authority has recorded its satisfactions that because of the past activities there is every apprehension that the detenu may indulge in subversive activities.

Court on questioning the order of detention on various grounds said, all the grounds taken by the detenu to prove the detention order is bad, fails as the detenu has indulged in subversive activities prejudicial to the security of the state.

Court said that such type of activities are not conducted openly but in clandestine manner. Court after perusal of the grounds of detention said, these grounds reveal that the detaining authority has stated in details the subversive activities of the detenu and his indulgence in these activities.

"He has been continuously providing logistic support to the foreign and local militants and the purpose of preventive detention is to prevent a person from indulging him in illegal activities", Justice Oswal said.

J&K Bank commissions ATM in Durbuk

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Jan 5: J&K Bank has commissioned Automated



Dignitaries inaugurating J&K Bank's ATM at Durbuk.

Teller Machine (ATM) at BU Tangse in Durbuk Sub-Division of the Union Territory of Ladakh.

The Bank's In-charge Zonal Head Tsewang Dorjai inaugurated the first on-site ATM in the presence of Sarpanch Shashukul of Tangse and a gathering comprising of valu-

able customers and local residents.

Speaking on the occasion, Tsewang Dorjai said that the dedication of ATM for the public at places like this testifies the bank's commitment to make the world-class banking and financial products, services available to people of the region irrespective of their location or status.

The Sarpanch Shashukul said that bank's CMD R K Chhibber has fulfilled the long

pending demand of the people living in the area with sub-zero temperature by commissioning the ATM here.

Notably, after commissioning of the ATM, the number of such machines in UT Ladakh has reached 49.

New dates for PET, PST announced

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Jan 5: Chairman, Police Recruitment Board 2 Battalions has informed that the Physical Entrance Test and Physical Standard Test (PET/PST) which was scheduled to be held today and tomorrow for remaining candidates belonging to district Samba has been postponed due to incessant rains and forecast of rainfall.

The physical entrance test and physical standard test which was scheduled to be held today will now be conducted on January 7, 2021 and the physical entrance test and physical standard test

which was scheduled to be held tomorrow will now be conducted on January 8, 2021 at 1200 hours. The venue of the test shall remain same.

The candidates are required to bring along with them all original testimonials, latest COVID free certificate and no risk certificate on the day of test.

It is pertinent to mention here that Jammu and Kashmir Police has re-started recruitment process on 24th of December for 2 Border Battalions for the remaining candidates of Jammu and Samba districts. The recruitment process was postponed in March last year due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Thief arrested with stolen vehicle

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Jan 5: Bus Stand Police arrested a thief along with stolen vehicle.

As per police sources, a complaint was lodged by a person namely Prabhjot Singh of Bhour Camp Satwari with Police Station Bus Stand stating that his motorcycle has been stolen from BC road.

Acting over the complaint, a case under FIR Number 1/2021 under Section 379 IPC was registered at Police Station Bus Stand and investigation started.

During the course of investigation, a team from Police Station Bus Stand led by SHO Inspector JJ Bhagat rounded up several suspects and finally arrested the thief with the help of technical team and CCTV camera footage.

The arrested person has been identified as Mohammad Tufail, son of Mohammad Hafeez Wani, a resident of District Reasi, at present Momanabad Sunjwan, Bhatindi District Jammu.

On his disclosure, stolen motorcycle was recovered.

Further investigation is going on to ascertain his involvement in any other cases.

Police rescues 22 nomads from snow at Devsar

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Jan 5: Kulgam police rescued 22 nomads



A police official rescuing Bakerwal family stuck in snow at higher reaches of Devsar in Kulgam.

heavy snowfall at higher reaches of Qasba Devsar.

Police Station Devsar received a call for assistance from the nomads residing in tents at higher reaches of Qasba Devsar, who had got stuck due to heavy snowfall and there were apprehensions of snow avalanche.

Acting swiftly on the assistance call, a team led by SHO Devsar Inspector Jazib Mohammad under the supervision of Deputy SP PC Kulgam Arvind Kumar Badgal was constituted to rescue the stuck families.

With strenuous efforts of the police party deputed, all the stuck persons were rescued safely and rehabilitated in Government Middle (Gujjar-Bakerwals) stuck in School Devsar.