

**17 Sub-Judges appointed as District Judges**  
*Excelsior Correspondent*

JAMMU, Jan 15: As recommended by the High Court, Government has ordered appointment of 17 Sub-Judges as District Judges.

According to the order issued by Law Secretary Achal Sethi, these appointments have been made in terms of Rule 20 of the Jammu and Kashmir Higher Judicial Service Rules, 2009.

These Judges are Abdul Nasir, presently posted as Secretary, J&K High Court Legal Services Committee, Surinder Singh, CJM Sopore, Javid Ahmed Gilani, CJM Handwara, Mohammad Amin

**Govt nod to age relaxation for JKCCE aspirants**  
*Excelsior Correspondent*

SRINAGAR, Jan 15: The Government today ordered one-time relaxation in the age limit for the aspirants of Jammu and Kashmir Combined Competitive Examination (JKCCE).

In a tweet from the official account of the Office of LG J&K, it was ordered that for the open merit candidates, the age limit has been ordered to be enhanced to 37 years, while as for the reserve and in-service candidates, the age limit has been ordered to be enhanced to 39 years.

**14 Engineers transferred**  
*Excelsior Correspondent*

JAMMU, Jan 15: Public Works (R&B) Department has ordered transfer and postings of 14 Engineers.

According to the order, MP Singh, Incharge Superintending Engineer (Mechanical), presently posted as OSD to Chief Engineer Mechanical Engineering Department Jammu has been posted as Incharge Superintending Engineer PHE Urban Jammu, Rajesh Kumar Gupta, Incharge Executive Engineer (Civil), R&B Katra, on promotion as Incharge Superintending Engineer has been posted as Incharge Superintending Engineer PMGSY Batote and Pankaj Bhalla, Incharge

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**Govt endangering lives of political opponents: Mehbooba**  
*Excelsior Correspondent*

SRINAGAR, Jan 15: A day after People's Democratic Party leader and former Minister Naem Akhtar was shifted to hospital after being found unconscious in a makeshift Jail, former Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti alleged that Government of India is deliberately endangering the lives of political opponents.

Akhtar was arrested from his home on 21st December last month. The family had alleged that police directed him to come along with them without showing any formal order with regard to arrest.

The 68 year old PDP senior

**Army's revised SOP leads to surrenders**  
*Excelsior Correspondent*

AWANTIPORA, Jan 15: The Indian Army has changed its Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for anti-terror operations in Jammu and Kashmir to now focus on ensuring surrenders during live encounters notwithstanding the threat to the lives of its personnel — a policy that has helped save the lives of 17 youths in the last six months.

On the occasion of Army Day today, four Rashtriya Rifles (RR) units working under the Victor Force, which combats terrorist activities in south Kashmir and parts of central Kashmir, were awarded the coveted Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Unit Citation.

The units — 50 RR, 44 RR, (Contd on page 9 Col 1)

**'Sacrifices of Galwan heroes won't go waste'**  
**300-400 Pak-trained militants ready to infiltrate into J&K: Army chief**

**\* Morale of troops high in Eastern Ladakh**

NEW DELHI, Jan 15:

Around 300-400 terrorists trained in camps across the Line of Control (LoC) are ready to sneak into Jammu and Kashmir, Army chief General M M Naravane said today.

In his speech during the Army Day Parade, he also said that there has been 44 per cent increase in ceasefire violations that reflects Pakistan's sinister design. Pakistan often provides cover fire to help terrorists sneak into Jammu and Kashmir.

Gen Naravane said India's active operations and strong counter-infiltration grid not only inflicted heavy losses on the enemy but they contained infiltration attempts as well.

He said the Army killed over 200 terrorists in counter-terror operations and on the LoC last year, adding these measures have provided people of Jammu and Kashmir relief from terrorism.

"Strong response is being

given to the enemy on the other border. Pakistan contin-

ues to provide safe haven to terrorists. In the training camps, across the LoC around 300-400 terrorists are ready to infiltrate," he said.



Army chief General M M Naravane addressing on the occasion of the 73rd Army Day parade at Parade Ground in New Delhi on Friday. (UNI)

There were efforts to smuggle weapons into India from Pakistan's sinister plans. There were also attempts to smuggle weapons using drones," he added.

"There was an increase of 44

per cent in the ceasefire violations last year which is proof

across the border using drones and tunnels, he mentioned.

In a tough message to China amid the Ladakh stand-off, Gen Naravane said no one should make any mistake of testing India's patience even as he asserted that a befitting response was given to the "conspiracy" of unilaterally changing the status quo along the northern frontier.

Gen Naravane at the same time said India is committed to resolve the over eight-month-long military standoff with China through talks.

He said the sacrifice of the "Galwan heroes" in Eastern Ladakh in June last year will not go waste and that the Indian Army will not allow any harm to the country's sovereignty and security.

"We are committed to resolve disputes through talks and political efforts but no one should make any mistake of testing our patience," he said in the presence of the country's top

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**'No expenditure on revenue, ban on casual workers to stay'**  
**FD releases 100 pc funds from Capex budget for development works in J&K**

Sanjeev Pargal

50 pc funds approved for new works of next FY

JAMMU, Jan 15: With a view to give boost to ongoing developmental works in Jammu and Kashmir, the Finance Department today ordered release of 100 percent funds out of approved Capital Expenditure (Capex) budget in respect of on-going works and non-construction activities targeted to be completed during current financial year of 2020-21.

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

The work-wise activity-wise release of funds will be made through Budget Estimation, Allocation and Monitoring System (BEAMS) and Administrative Secretaries of the Departments will review progress of completion/expenditure on fortnightly basis. Major focus of the Departments should be on outcome and each work taken up for execution should be fully verified and conform to laid down procedures like accord of Administrative Approval/Technical Sanction, tendering, furnishing of Geo-tagged photographs of projects etc," the Finance Department

order said. It added that due attention shall be paid to implementation of schemes funded under Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS), Prime Minister's Development Plan (PMDP), NABARD etc which are shared on 90:10 basis after checking availability of funds subsequent to which matching share shall be provided and they should be the first priority.

The Finance Department has, however, imposed conditions on utilization of funds.

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**Dynasticism is a rule in Cong, in BJP it is exception: Dr Jitendra**

Avtar Bhat

'Results in Kathua-Udhampur Constituency proved political Pundits wrong'

JAMMU, Jan 15: Maintaining that BJP is party with a difference, Union Minister in PMO with Independent charge of North Eastern States, Dr Jitendra Singh today said it is not a dynastic party like Congress.

Speaking at a function to introduce and present mementoes to the party candidates elected from Kathua, Udhampur and Doda Lok Sabha Constituency here today, Dr Jitendra Singh said in Congress dynasticism is a rule and not an exception while in BJP it is an exception and not the rule.

He said like Congress, BJP is not the mother-son duo party where tickets are given on their recommendations and wishes. "In BJP ticket distribution is being done on the basis of cred-

ibility, dedication and capacity of a party activist and not on the basis of dynastic background", he added.

Dr Jitendra Singh said that hard work, honesty and dedication of a party activist counts

more in BJP which is not case with the Congress where power was transformed to a particular dynasty from one generation to another generation since Nehruvian era.

Dr Jitendra Singh, while congratulating the newly elected District Development Council (DDC) members said that Kathua, Udhampur and Doda proved political Pundits

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**Illegal mining mafia causing damage to BRO's Ujh bridge, Admn in deep slumber**  
**\*Despite protests by villagers, G&M officials unmoved**

Gopal Sharma

KATHUA, Jan 15: Illegal mining mafia in connivance with some groups from Punjab and insiders in the G&M Department, is carrying out its activities by digging deep river bed near prestigious BRO's bridge over river Ujh, posing great threat to its existence on Old Samba-Kathua road near Kotpunu village in Kathua district, bordering Pakistan and Punjab.

Constructed by Project SAMPARK of the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) and funded by the Ministry of Defence, Govt of India, Rs 50.01 crore amount was spent on this 1000 mt long Segmental Box Girder



An excavator digging near Ujh bridge and loading Tipper at Kotpunu in Kathua. -Excelsior/Pardeep

bridge over river Ujh near India Pak border. This also connects Bamyal and other nearby Punjab (Gurdaspur) villages with J&K. This vital bridge was inaugurated by Defence Minister, Rajnath Singh in presence of MoS in PMO Dr Jitendra Singh in April 2019.

Official sources told the Excelsior that as per existing guidelines and norms of Environment Assessment authorities and NGT directives besides advisory of the

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**Trial run of Bailey bridge today**

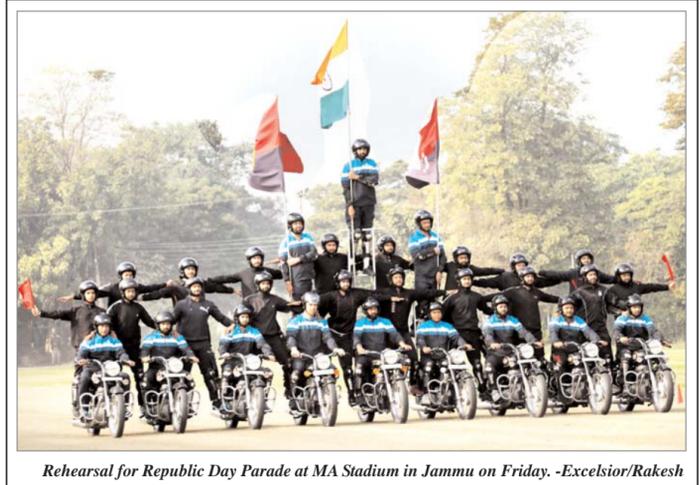
Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR/ JAMMU, Jan 15: While Kashmir continues to remain in the grip of severe cold, the trial run of vehicle on the Bailey bridge launched by Border Roads Organisation (BRO) on Jammu-Srinagar

National Highway at Kela Morh near Ramban, will be conducted tomorrow morning.

Deputy Commissioner Ramban, Nazim Zai Khan and Chief Engineer BRO, Brigadier IK Jaggi, who were closely supervising the progress of construction work of Bailey bridge besides repairing work of damaged concrete bridge at Kela Morh, said that BRO engineers have almost completed the task

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Rehearsal for Republic Day Parade at MA Stadium in Jammu on Friday. -Excelsior/Rakesh

**4000 soldiers deployed in Eastern Ladakh to get vaccination on LAC**

Excelsior Correspondent

5 die of COVID in J&K, 144 test +ve

JAMMU/SRINAGAR/ LEH, Jan 15: Four thousand soldiers and Army doctors and paramedics deployed along Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh will be vaccinated in Phase-I of Corona vaccination beginning tomorrow while five persons died of COVID-19 in Jammu and Kashmir, 144 tested positive for the virus and 179 others recovered.

Official sources told the Excelsior that the Union Health Ministry along with the Union Territory administration in Ladakh and Army have made special arrangements to vaccinate 4000 Army soldiers deployed in various forward areas of the Eastern Ladakh in prolonged standoff with the Chinese troops.

Ladakh had yesterday received 11,500 doses of Covishield vaccine.

"Along with troops, who are braving harshest weather conditions in Eastern Ladakh, Army doctors and paramedics deployed there, will also be given vaccine, beginning tomorrow," sources said.

The vaccine drive will begin at 10.30 am tomorrow at 20 sites each in Jammu and Kashmir divisions and 4000 persons are expected to be vaccinated on Day

one. Meanwhile, three Corona fatalities were reported in the Jammu region and two in the Kashmir valley today.

A 75-year-old man from Gadigarh in Jammu district died of multiple ailments and Coronavirus in Narayana Hospital Katra.

A person aged 67 hailing from Chack Bhagwana in Jaurian area of Akhnor and 65-year-old from village Barnoti in Kathua district died of co-morbidities and COVID-19 at Dayanand Medical College (DMC) Ludhiana today.

With three deaths today, Jammu region's Corona toll has reached 715, the highest being 367 in Jammu district, 64 Doda, 57 Udhampur, 55 Rajouri, 51 Kathua, 39 Samba, 24 Poonch, 22 Kishtwar, 21 Ramban and 15 in Reasi district.

On Wednesday and Thursday, no COVID casualties were reported in the Jammu region.

Sixty four persons tested positive for the virus in Jammu region today, 46 of them in Jammu district alone, nine Samba, five Ramban, two Udhampur and one each in Kathua and Poonch districts. Rajouri, Doda, Kishtwar and Reasi districts didn't report any

positive case today.

As many as 111 persons recovered from the virus today including 80 in Jammu district, 10 Rajouri, nine Udhampur, six Ramban, four Poonch and two in Kathua district. No recoveries were reported from Doda, Samba, Kishtwar and Reasi districts.

Jammu region now has 51027 Corona cases. Of them, 668 are active positives while 49644 have recovered from the virus and there have been 715 casualties.

Two persons today tested positive for COVID-19 in Ladakh, both in Leh district.

Meanwhile, two persons died of COVID in Kashmir today while 80 persons tested positive.

Those who died today include a 55-year-old woman from Vessu in district Kulgam and a 50-year from Machama Beerwah in Budgam district.

So far, 1920 people have succumbed to virus in J&K including 1205 in the Valley.

Srinagar district with 453 deaths topped the list followed by Baramulla 172, Budgam 114, Kupwara 94, Pulwama 88, Anantnag 84, Bandipora 61, Kulgam 54, Ganderbal 46 and (Contd on page 9 Col 1)

**No action on complaints forwarded by Raj Bhawan**  
**Govt fails to dig out facts about fraudulent appointments during past one & half year**  
**\*Fresh committee framed due to inaction by earlier panel**

Mohinder Verma

JAMMU, Jan 15: Incredible it may sound but it is a fact that Government has failed to dig out facts about fraudulent appointments made in the Technical Education Department and Autonomous Bodies/Corporations under its administrative control during the past more than one and half year even after framing of committee of bureaucrats.

The dilly-dallying approach on the part of the administration in this regard is notwithstanding the fact that complaints about fraudulent appointments in the Technical Education

Department (now Skill Development Department) and its wings were received by none else than the Raj Bhawan.

Official sources told EXCELSIOR that in early 2019 a number of complaints came to the notice of the then Governor of erstwhile State regarding fraudulent and illegal appointments made during the period between 2010 and 2018 in different departments particularly Technical Education and Autonomous Bodies, Corporations and Organizations under its administrative control.

Accordingly, all these complaints were forwarded to the Government with the direction to constitute Fact Finding

Committees for each of these departments. In respect of Technical Education Department, which has recently been named as Skill Development Department, the General Administration Department vide Government Order No.578 dated May 11, 2019 constituted a committee to look into all fraudulent appointments.

The committee headed by Commissioner/Secretary to Government, Forest, Environment and Ecology Department and comprising Secretary to the Government, Department of Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation and Construction and Secretary, Technical Education

Department was directed to identify those responsible for fraudulent appointments and submit its Report by June 14, 2019.

"What to talk of accomplishing the assigned task within the time-frame specified in the Government order, the committee failed to submit report even at belated stage as a result of which Government has failed to dig out facts regarding fraudulent appointments till date", sources said, adding "had serious attention been paid by the committee more than one and half year time was sufficient enough for completion of exercise".

They further said, "it is a (Contd on page 9 Col 1)

**'Army in position of operational advantage in Ladakh'**  
**J&K situation stable but has propensity to flare up: Joshi**

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Jan 15: Northern Command chief Lt Gen Y K Joshi today said the troops have shown immense grit and determination to match the Chinese aggression in Eastern Ladakh and gave a befitting reply, adding talks on the military standoff are being held with the PLA from a position of "equivalence".

"Today, I am extremely satisfied with all the actions that the Northern Command has taken towards the end of August last year. Now, we are in a position of operational advantage and are negotiating with the People's Liberation Army (PLA) from a position of equiv-

alence", Lt Gen Joshi told reporters at Northern Command headquarters in Udhampur.

Around four months back, Indian troops occupied a number of strategic heights in the Mukhpari, Rechin La and Magar hill areas around the southern bank of the Pangong lake after the PLA attempted to intimidate them in the area on the intervening night of August 29 and 30. The Indian Army has been holding onto the heights despite objections from Chinese military.

Gen Joshi said the Northern Command is facing a triple challenge posed by China, Pakistan and the internal security situation.

"At Northern Command,

we are contending with a triple challenge. Firstly, we have a western adversary Pakistan which has not yet relented from using terror as a State policy... at the Northern border we have seen the Chinese belligerence along the LAC... third is the internal security situation," he said.

"We all got involved in the fight against the (COVID-19) pandemic. It was followed by the PLA act in Ladakh which had us totally occupied... we had our hands full with the job," the General said.

The Chinese tried to change the status quo in Eastern Ladakh which is being contested with resolve by the Indian Army, he (Contd on page 9 Col 5)