



Indian players celebrating after historic victory against Australia in fourth and final Test match at the Gabba in Brisbane on Tuesday. Details on Page 14.



Gururubar Greetings To All Our Readers

CBI books ex DC in Roshni scam

NEW DELHI, Jan 19:

The CBI has booked former Deputy Commissioner of Pulwama and 12 others in connection with conferring of land ownership rights under the Roshni Act in alleged violation of provisions, officials said.

It is alleged that Kakapora-residents Ghulam Ahmed Pandith, Ghulam Nabi Naikoo, Mohammad Amin Pandith and Farhat Pandith, Abdul Majid Sheikh and Ghulam Rasool Wani had occupied six kanals, 10 marlas and four sirais.

(Contd on page 6 Col 3)

SC paves way for construction of NH

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Jan 19: The Supreme Court has paved way for construction of road widening and flyover on National Highway connecting the Jammu-Akhnor-Poonch and Rajouri, by staying the operation of order of High Court whereby status quo was directed to be maintained.

The three Judge bench comprising Justice A M Khanwilkar, Justice B R Gawai and Justice Krishna Murali stayed the operation of the order of Division

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J&K Bank to shift 8.23% stake to Ladakh

NEW DELHI, Jan 19:

J&K Bank today said its board has given in-principle approval to transfer 8.23 per cent stake to Union Territory of Ladakh.

It is to be noted that the State was divided into Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh after the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019.

The board decided "to give its 'In-principle approval' for

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JeM militant module busted

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Jan 19: Police today busted a Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) militant module in Anantnag by arresting a recently recruited militant and a militant associate during two separate operations.

Police said that they along with Army's 1st RR unit laid nakas at multiple places and conducted intensified checking.

"During checking one recently recruited militant of proscribed JeM outfit namely

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Govt declares Neta Ji's birth anniversary as 'Parakram Diwas'

NEW DELHI, Jan 19:

The Government has decided to observe January 23 as 'Parakram Diwas' every year to commemorate the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, Union Minister Prahlad Singh Patel said today.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will participate in the first 'Parakram Diwas' programme in Kolkata on January 23, Bose's 125th birth anniversary, and inaugurate an exhibition on the grounds of National Library to

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Intrusion bid foiled amid firing, shelling

3 infiltrators killed on LoC in Khour sector, 4 jawans injured

Militants taken to IB to identify spot of arms dropping by drone

Sanjeev Pargal

JAMMU, Jan 19: Three infiltrators were believed killed while four Army personnel sustained injuries, one of them seriously, as troops thwarted infiltration attempt on the Line of Control (LoC) in forward village of Jogma in Khour sector near Akhnor last night.

Reports said Pakistan army resorted to heavy mortar shelling at forward village of Jogma in Khour sector of Akhnor last night with a view to push trained militants into the Indian territory. The Indian Army retaliated.

Four Army jawans were injured in the shelling while there were reports that at least

three militants who were being pushed into the Indian territory under the cover of firing were killed in retaliatory action.

Injured Army jawans were evacuated from the forward area. While three of them were admitted in the Military Hospital Akhnor, another was airlifted to the Military Hospital Udhampur in view of his serious condition.

The Army jawans admitted in the Military Hospital Akhnor were responding to the treatment and their condition is stated to be stable.

"At least three armed infiltrators have been killed in retaliatory firing by the Indian troops," sources said, adding their bodies were lying on the LoC but haven't been picked up by the Pakistani troops so far.

Pakistan army's shelling and firing were aimed at pushing trained militants into the Indian territory but their attempt was foiled. The possibility of one or two infiltrators retreating to Pakistan under the cover of

Pakistani firing is not ruled out.

The infiltrators, according to sources, were well-trained cadre of Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) outfit and were trying to intrude with a view to either reach South Kashmir using Pir Panjal mountains from area near Sunderbani or they might have intentions to disturb Republic Day celebrations in Jammu. However, the alert Army personnel have successfully foiled the infiltration plot.

Asserting that this was rare infiltration attempt using Khour-Pallanwalla sector, bordering Sunderbani area of Rajouri district, sources said this area isn't a normal intrusion route. However, rarely, the Pakistan army resorts to shelling and firing in this area to target civilian areas in frustration after they suffer casualties.

During past quite some time, even shelling and firing have become very less in Khour-Pallanwalla belt. Infiltration attempt by the militants from this sector was aimed at giving

element of surprise to the Indian troops. But, the Pakistan army didn't succeed in their designs.

In the past few weeks, Pakistan army has tried to abet infiltration attempts by the militants from the LoC in the twin border districts of Rajouri and Poonch under the cover of heavy shelling and firing.

Few days back, Army had foiled similar infiltration attempt on the LoC in Rajouri district in which at least four militants and two Pakistani army personnel were killed.

There have been repeated intrusion attempts under the cover of shelling and firing by the Pakistan army in Rajouri and Poonch districts but all of them have been thwarted by the troops. In some of the attempts, the militants have been killed or injured while in others they retreated to Pakistan.

"Number of militants have been camping at launch pads on the LoC waiting to intrude into the Indian territory," sources said.

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Subsidy in Parliament canteens ends

NEW DELHI, Jan 19:

Food served in Parliament canteens for MPs and others will become costlier as a subsidy given for it has been stopped, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla said today.

While Birla did not specify the financial implications of the move, sources said the Lok Sabha Secretariat can annually save more than Rs 8 crore with the subsidy coming to an end.

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14 workers, girl crushed to death

SURAT, Jan 19:

Fourteen migrant labourers and a year-old-girl from Rajasthan who were sleeping by the roadside in Gujarat's Surat district were killed after a dumper truck ran over them today, police said.

Those killed include eight women and a migrant worker from Madhya Pradesh, police said. While 12 of them died on the spot, three died during treatment at a hospital, police added.

Except for the 19-year-old worker from Madhya Pradesh,

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India records 10,064 new cases

NEW DELHI, Jan 19:

India reported the lowest number of daily Coronavirus infections in over seven months with 10,064 new cases, which took the caseload to 1,05,81,837, while recoveries have surged to 1,02,28,753, according to Union Health Ministry data updated today.

The country's death toll increased to 1,52,556 as 137 fatalities, the lowest in around eight months, were recorded in a span of 24 hours, the data updated at 8 am showed.

The number of people who have recuperated from the dis-

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Govt allows jabs without App, offline mode

Co-WIN App almost collapses, badly hits vaccination in J&K

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU/SRINAGAR, Jan 19: Serious glitches in Co-WIN App have badly marred COVID vaccination drive in Jammu and Kashmir with the Union Territory giving jabs to just one-fourth of targeted health workers on Day 3 of the drive prompting top brass of Health and Medical Education to review the issues and issued revised guidelines to boost the inoculation.

As against the targeted vaccinating 4000 health workers each day at 40 sites set up in the Union Territory—20 each in Jammu and Kashmir divisions—only 2180 persons got jabs on Day 1 followed by 1223 on Day 2 and just 1021 today i.e. Day 3. While around 50 percent target was achieved on first day of vaccination, on day second and third, it was just about 25 percent.

Worst was the performance in some of the districts including Kupwara district where just 10 healthcare workers got the vaccination today as against the tar-

Only 25 pc target met in first 3 days

get of 200. In other districts, 12 persons got the jabs today in Shopian district, 13 Bandipora, 26 Kathua, 29 Kishtwar, 30 Doda, 38 Baramulla and 40 each in Ganderbal, Anantnag and Ramban districts. Even in Jammu district, just 129 workers were vaccinated as against the target of 400 while Srinagar district, the figure was just 33 while the targeted workers were 300.

In the Government Medical College (GMC) Jammu, around 40 healthcare workers were vaccinated during last two days.

Official sources attributed slow pace of vaccination in the Jammu region to serious glitches in Co-WIN App due to which number of healthcare workers couldn't be vaccinated.

"The Co-WIN App was showing some of the healthcare workers in different sites of vaccination. Names of registered workers were missing from the sites where they were supposed to receive vaccination. Moreover, the App was

repeatedly getting down leading to vaccination of very few healthcare workers during last three days of the drive," sources said, adding the App was calling abstained healthcare workers again but they are not coming forward for vaccination.

In view of the glitches, Financial Commissioner Health and Medical Education Atal Dulloo today called meeting of senior functionaries of the Department to review the slow pace of vaccination.

Reliable sources said the authorities have been permitted to vaccinate any of the registered 1.10 lakh healthcare workers if those shown by Co-WIN App are not available from tomorrow. This, according to sources, will boost the vaccination drive as many registered workers are coming forward to take jabs but their names didn't figure in Co-WIN App. Now such workers will be able to get

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Leaders oppose any tie-up with Cong

We proved our worth in DDC polls: Farooq

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Jan 19: As National Conference president and former Chief Minister Dr Farooq Abdullah today called for strengthening secularism and brotherhood and bridging differences between Jammu and Kashmir regions, senior leaders of the party from Jammu region strongly opposed any alliance with Congress in future saying the party has always dodged the NC.

Dr Abdullah was addressing a meeting the National Conference functionaries after reviewing working of the party at district and block level in the aftermath of the District Development Council (DDC) elections at the NC headquarters



NC president Dr Farooq Abdullah addressing party functionaries in Jammu on Tuesday.

Sher-i-Kashmir Bhawan.

NC provincial president Devender Singh Rana and senior party leaders were present.

The National conference initially had alliance with Congress in first two phases of the DDC elections but had terminated the tie-up after a senior Congress

leader in New Delhi made a statement that Congress wasn't part of People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD).

Insiders told the Excelsior that majority of senior leaders of the National Conference, who spoke in the meeting in

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Two Corona deaths in Kashmir, Leh

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU/SRINAGAR/LEH, Jan 19: One person each died in the Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh due to COVID-19 today.

In J&K, 113 persons tested positive for the virus and 120 others recovered while in Ladakh, five persons tested positive, all in Leh district.

Lone Corona casualty in Ladakh was also reported from Leh district while a 60-year-old man from Uri area of Baramulla district became one more victim of COVID-19 in Kashmir.

Ladakh now has 9662 Corona cases but only 79 are active positives as 9454 have recovered from the virus while there have been 129 casualties- 85 in Leh and 44 in Kargil.

Jammu region today reported no Corona death but 53 positive cases including 40 in Jammu district. No fresh cases were reported from Udhampur, Rajouri, Doda and Reasi districts.

113 test +ve in J&K, 5 in Ladakh

Fifty two persons recovered from the virus, 29 of them in Jammu district alone.

So far 1923 people have succumbed to virus in J&K including 1206 in the Valley.

Srinagar district with 453 deaths topped the list followed by Baramulla 172, Budgam 115, Kupwara 94, Pulwama 88, Anantnag 84, Bandipora 61, Kulgam 54, Ganderbal 46 and Shopian 39.

Those who tested positive in Kashmir include 37 from Srinagar, five Baramulla, seven Budgam, four Pulwama, two Kupwara, one Bandipora, two Kulgam and two from Shopian.

As per officials figures, 25,867 positive cases including 453 deaths and 25,175 recoveries are from Srinagar, 8,069 including 173 deaths and 7,836 recoveries are from Baramulla, 7,722 including 7,555 recoveries and 115 deaths are from Budgam,

5,675 including 5,517 recoveries and 88 deaths are from Pulwama, 5,628 including 94 deaths and 5,473 recoveries are from Kupwara, 4,852 including 4,718 recoveries and 84 deaths are from Anantnag, 4,680 cases including 4,591 and 61 deaths are from Bandipora, 4,578 including 4,459 recoveries and 46 deaths are from Ganderbal, 2,682 including 2,589 recoveries and 54 deaths are from Kulgam and 2,553 including 2,479 recoveries and 39 deaths are from Shopian.

With fresh case, the positive cases in Kashmir division have reached 72,306 including 70,392 recoveries and 1,207 deaths.

The active cases in Jammu and Kashmir are 1,103 including 707 from Kashmir division.

With 120 more recoveries, the tally of total recoveries in Jammu and Kashmir has reached 120,512, which is 97.55 percent of the total cases.

PC pulls out of PAGD over proxy candidates' issue

Fayaz Bukhari

SRINAGAR, Jan 19: The Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Conference led by former Minister Sajjad Gani Lone has pulled out of Peoples Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) over the fielding of proxy candidates by various parties of the alliance in the recently concluded District Development Council (DDC) elections.

The decision to pull out from the PAGD was conveyed by the party through its chairman Sajjad Gani Lone, who also happens to be the spokesman of the alliance, formed last year to fight for the restoration of Articles 370 and Article 35A.

The PAGD won 110 seats in Jammu and Kashmir in the last year's DDC polls but its constituents alleged their formal

rivals of fielding proxy candidates. Several Independents who won these elections in Kashmir were proxy candidates of constituents of the PAGD.

In his letter to PAGD president Farooq Abdullah, Lone said that "there has been a breach of trust between partners which we believe is beyond remedy."

"I am writing to you in reference to the recently held DDC elections and a spate of statements issued by leaders belonging to our party. The recurring theme of the statements was the fielding of proxy candidates by constituent parties against the officially mandated candidates of the PAGD," Lone said in the letter.

Lone said it is difficult for us to stay on and pretend as if nothing has happened. "There has been a breach of trust between

partners which we believe is beyond remedy. The majoritarian view in our party is that we should pull out of the alliance in an amicable manner rather than waiting for things to get messier," Lone said and announced that "we will no longer be a part of the PAGD alliance."

"I would, however, want to add that we are divorcing from the alliance not its objectives. We will continue to adhere to the objectives that we set out when this alliance was made. And the PAGD leadership should be assured that we will extend support on all issues which fall within the ambit of stated objectives," he said, adding, "We have issued clear instructions to all party leaders not to issue any statements

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Obtaining 2% of GSDP as additional borrowing from GoI

Achieve specified core benchmarks expeditiously: CS to Admn Secys

J&K needs to act fast on power sector, business, ULB reforms

Mohinder Verma

JAMMU, Jan 19: In order to get 2% of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) as additional borrowings from the Government of India as recommended by the 15th Finance Commission, the Chief Secretary of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir BVR Subrahmanyam has directed the concerned Administrative Secretaries to achieve the specified core benchmarks as expeditiously as possible.

Official sources told EXCELSIOR that in the month of May last year the Union Government raised borrowing limits for the States and Union

Territories for the current fiscal to 5% of the Gross State Domestic Product from 3% subject to their carrying out specific reforms.

This decision was taken keeping in view the fact that while entire country was struggling due to dwindling revenues following the near halt in economic activities because of the lockdown imposed to contain Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), the condition was more precarious for several States and Union Territories with limited resources of their own, sources said.

The additional borrowing of 2% was linked with reforms in four areas such as universalization of "One Nation One

Ration Card", Ease of Doing Business, Power Distribution and Urban Local Body Revenues, sources informed.

The issue of availing of additional borrowing limit came up for discussion in the high-level meeting chaired by the Chief Secretary BVR Subrahmanyam recently wherein it was revealed that Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir is eligible for 2% borrowings provided that the Government achieves core benchmarks in respect of Power Sector, One Nation One Ration Card, Property Tax and Business Reforms Action Plan.

"A constant relentless effort is required on the part of Administrative Secretaries to

(Contd on page 6 Col 1)