

NHAI guidelines for Toll Plazas

NEW DELHI, May 26:
The NHAI today said it has issued guidelines to ensure not more than 10 seconds service time per vehicle even during the peak hours at Toll Plazas to ensure minimal waiting time.

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) in a statement said the new set of guidelines will also ensure seamless flow of traffic at the Toll Plazas by not allowing vehicles to queue up more than 100 metres.

Noting that although at most (Contd on page 9 Col 1)

GMC Jammu gets 50 more BiPAP machines

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, May 26: Jammu and Kashmir Medical Supplies Corporation Limited (JKM-SCL) today provided 50 more BiPAP machines to Government Medical College (GMC) Jammu for COVID patient care.

These BiPAP machines got inspected and checked in the Intensive Care Unit of Government Medical College Jammu by concerned doctors

(Contd on page 9 Col 1)

Nanda posted for COVID work in Jammu

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, May 26: The UT Government today deployed senior IAS officer Sheetal Nanda, Secretary Social Welfare Department, with the Health and Medical Education Department for performing COVID containment related work at Jammu in place of Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, Administrative Secretary Tribal Affairs Department, who had recently suffered mild heart attack.

Nanda will oversee all COVID containment related work at Jammu as assigned to her by Financial Commissioner Health and Medical Education Department Atal Dulloo.

JEE-Advanced postponed

NEW DELHI, May 26:

The Joint Entrance Examination (JEE)-Advanced scheduled for July 3 has been postponed in view of the COVID-19 situation, according to officials at IIT-Kharagpur, the institute which is conducting the exam this year.

The exam is conducted for admission to the prestigious Indian Institutes of Technology and the National Institutes of Technology.

"Considering the prevailing pandemic situation due to (Contd on page 9 Col 1)

2 non-local labourers missing

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, May 26: Two non-local labourers have gone missing from Mawar area of North Kashmir's Handwara.

As per reports, two workers namely Sunil Manjhi, 25, from Sitamari district of Bihar, and Mohammad Mumtaz, 30, from Muzaffarpur district from Bihar have gone missing while they were out on work at Mirpora Qalamabad in the Mawar area (Contd on page 9 Col 5)

Several names under consideration for coveted post

Centre begins exercise to find substitute to Subrahmanyam

Neeraj Rohmetra

JAMMU, May 26: Union Government has initiated the process to find replacement of Chief Secretary, B V R Subrahmanyam and the process is likely to be culminated within few days.

Authoritative sources told EXCELSIOR, "Subrahmanyam, who was hand-picked by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to 'clean up' the Jammu and Kashmir administration, is likely to be given an important post in Union Ministry and exercise is on to find a suitable post for him".

1987 batch IAS officer of Chhattisgarh cadre, who hails from Andhra Pradesh had taken over as Chief Secretary on June 23, 2018 and had steered the transition of Jammu and Kashmir from State to Union

Territory and also been the key man in implementation of Centre's agenda during its abrogation of provisions of Article 370.

"Several IAS officers, whose names are under consideration to replace the present Chief Secretary included Pradip Kumar Tripathi, Sudhanshu Panday and Arun Kumar Mehta", sources said adding, "the first two are on Central deputation while Mehta is presently serving as Financial Commissioner (Finance)".

Tripathi, 1987 batch IAS officer is presently serving as Secretary, Union Ministry and Sudhanshu Panday (1988 batch) is serving as Secretary, Ministry of Department of Food and Public Distribution. Sources said, "both the officials had been approached for the

coveted assignment. While one of them has refused to take over as Chief Secretary, other is still weighing his options".

Subrahmanyam and Tripathi along with 26 other IAS officers had been empanelled in the rank of Secretary in the Central Government on October 9, 2019. Similarly, Appointments Committee of Cabinet (ACC) had also cleared the empanelment of Sudhanshu Panday and Arun Kumar Mehta on April 14, 2020 as Secretaries in the Government of India.

Subrahmanyam, who is considered as expert in internal security matters, had served in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) after Narendra Modi became the Prime Minister in May 2014. He stayed in the PMO till March 2015 and then

moved to his cadre State Chhattisgarh. Prior to this, he has worked as Private Secretary to former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh during 2004-2008.

He had also worked with the World Bank during June 2008 and September 2011 before joining again the Manmohan Singh-led PMO in March 2012.

"Subrahmanyam had been working sincerely to create a robust institutional infrastructure which is free of corruption and had initiated several reforms during his tenure and a multi-fold strategy had been put in place to ensure transparent and accountable administration", officials said, adding, "several administrative issues, which were pending since the past several decades had been resolved during his tenure".

LG sets deadline for replacement of damaged transformers

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, May 26: Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha today chaired a high level meeting to review the preparedness of Power Department for Jammu division in view of the ongoing summer season.

During the meeting, which was attended by senior officers of Jammu Power Distribution

*Watch video on www.excelsiornews.com

Corporation Limited (JPDCL), and J&K Power Transmission Corporation Limited at Raj Bhavan, Sinha passed various important directions to streamline the power transmission and distribution system in the UT.

Stressing on speeding up the process of replacement of dam-

'Put power cut schedule in public domain'

aged transformers to avoid inconvenience to the people, he fixed an 8-hour deadline for replacement of damaged transformers in urban areas, while rural areas will get transformers replaced within 48 hours.



"Adopt a futuristic approach, make procurements in advance and fix responsibilities for delays," besides taking corrective measures to provide consumers with the requisite facili-

ties, the Lt Governor asked the Power Department.

He further emphasized on urgent re-examining of short-term and medium-term measures to minimize disruption in supply, network resilience,

besides developing better synergy between officials at all levels.

In order to make the repair and replacement working more effective, the meeting decided

(Contd on page 9 Col 3)

Corona-hit families to get assistance

Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha today launched a Special Scheme for financial assistance to families which have lost their only bread earner due to COVID pandemic, as part of its endeavour to ensure necessary support to families in their moment of crisis.

The J&K Government has adopted a comprehensive approach, by creating a Special Cell in Social Welfare Department to identify and track support to these families over time, in spirit of leaving no one behind. Under the scheme, called 'Special Assistance Scheme for COVID Mortalities (SASCM)', cash assistance of Rs 1000 per month shall be provided to spouse and the eldest member of the family.

(Contd on page 9 Col 5)

21 die, 1948 test +ve in Kashmir

Fayaz Bukhari

SRINAGAR, May 26: Kashmir today reported 21 deaths due to COVID-19 while 1,948 tested positive for the virus taking Jammu and Kashmir death toll to 3702.

Those who died include a 75-year-old man from Tulwari Baramulla, a 37-year-old woman of Nawa Gabra Kupwara, a woman from Litter Pulwama, an 80-year-old man from Narwa Pulwama, a 75-year-old man from Arampora Khansahib Budgam, a 65-year-old woman from Peer Bagh Srinagar, a 65-year-old man from Beechama Ganderbal, a 40-year-old woman from Tangmarg Baramulla, a 32-year-old woman from Kreeeri Baramulla, a 70-year-old man from Urahal Anantnag and a 55-year-old man from Zablipora Anantnag.

Those who tested positive include 493 from Srinagar, 260 Baramulla, 197 Budgam, 145 Pulwama, 153 Kupwara, 212

Anantnag and 89 Bandipora, 219 Ganderbal, 117 Kulgam and 63 from Shopian.

As per officials figures, 63,448 positive cases including 751 deaths and 56,802 recoveries are from Srinagar, 20,435 including 248 deaths and 17,251 recoveries are from Baramulla, 19,358 including 15,503 recoveries and 169 deaths are from Budgam, 12,322 including 9,936 recoveries and 161 deaths are from Pulwama, 11,131 including 138 deaths and 9,160 recoveries are from Kupwara, 13,715 including 9,548 recoveries and 156 deaths are from Anantnag, 8,131 cases including 7,089 and 84 deaths are from Bandipora, 8,192 including 6,845 recoveries and 67 deaths are from Ganderbal, 9,385 including 7,120 recoveries and 90 deaths are from Kulgam and 5,130 including 3,907 recoveries and 54 deaths are from Shopian.

The number of cases in Kashmir division has reached

171,247 including 143,161 recoveries and 1,918 deaths.

The number of active cases in Jammu and Kashmir are 43,892 including 26,168 from Kashmir division.

With 4,024 more recoveries, the tally of total recoveries in Jammu and Kashmir has reached 231,265 which is 82.93 percent of the total cases.

And Kashmir continued to be under a strict curfew for the 28th straight day today in order to prevent the Coronavirus from spreading.

Police arrested 21 persons in the Valley and fined over 1100 people for violating the guidelines and norms.

Police and paramilitary troopers were deployed on the roads to enforce the Corona curfew. However, some of the areas witnessed movement of private vehicles throughout the day while the majority of the roads remained blocked with iron barricades and concertina wires. (Contd on page 9 Col 3)

3853 projects completed despite several constraints

COVID-19 fails to put brakes on developmental activities in J&K

*Over 100 works completed under District Capex in 7 distts

Mohinder Verma

JAMMU, May 26: The COVID-19 pandemic has failed to put brakes on the developmental activities across the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir with Government completing a total of 3853 projects under Back to Village (B2V) and District Capex during 2020-21 financial year.

The achievement has been made despite the fact that there were numerous constraints in the shape of shortage of work-force and delay in supply of construction material because of lockdown.

As per the official data, the copy of which is available with EXCELSIOR, during 2020-

21, 2177 projects were completed under Back to Village as against 1930 projects in 2019-20 under this special initiative of the Government. Similarly, 1676 projects were completed under District Capex as against 1165 in 2019-20.

"These figures clearly reveal that COVID-19 pandemic has failed to put brakes on the developmental activities across the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir despite several constraints", official sources said, adding "during the last two years, several procedures have been streamlined by the Government with the objective of improving public service delivery".

For the completion of 1676

projects under District Capex during 2020-21 financial year, funds to the tune of Rs 320017.96 lakh were released by the Government and an amount of Rs 283846.65 lakh was expended by the executing agencies.

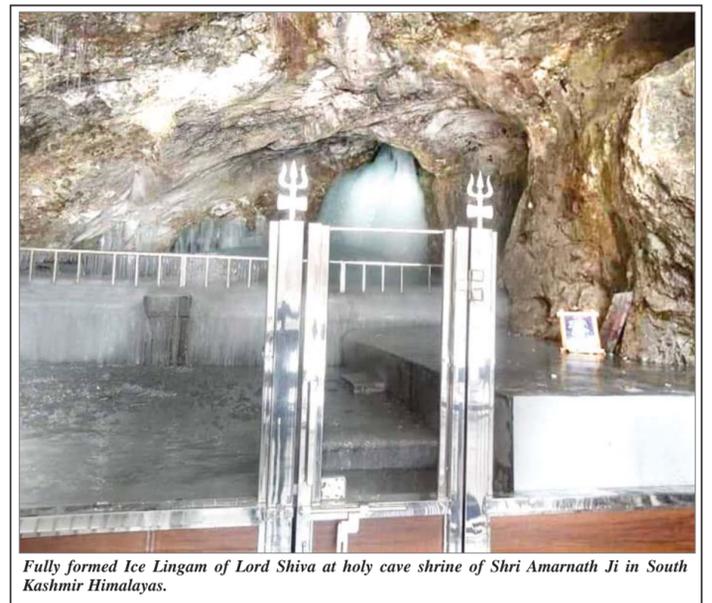
As far as District Capex is concerned, seven out of 20 districts of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir have witnessed completion of more than 100 projects during 2020-21 financial year.

These districts are Budgam, Srinagar, Pulwama, Kupwara, Ganderbal, Kathua and Anantnag. Maximum 355 projects were completed in Budgam followed by Srinagar with 129 projects and Pulwama with 124 projects. In

Kupwara district, 120 projects were completed while as in Ganderbal, a total of 113 projects were completed by the Government.

Similarly, 109 projects were completed in Kathua district and 102 projects in Anantnag district. As far as other districts are concerned, 35 projects were completed in Shopian, 50 in Bandipora, 19 in Kulgam, 50 in Baramulla, 71 in Jammu, 58 in Samba, 46 in Ramban, 25 in Reasi, 61 in Rajouri, 59 in Poonch, 60 in Udhampur, 57 in Kishtwar and 33 in Doda.

"District Plans have assumed great significance in the Union Territory due to land mark implementation of 73rd and 74th Constitutional (Contd on page 9 Col 1)



Fully formed Ice Lingam of Lord Shiva at holy cave shrine of Shri Amarnath Ji in South Kashmir Himalayas.

Youth, woman die of suspected fungus

Teenager, officer's mother, 101-year-old woman among 19 deaths in Jammu

37 prisoners, 53 Rohingyas test +ve in Kathua, Hiranagar

Jammu becomes first Distt in J&K to record 1000 casualties

Sanjeev Pargal

JAMMU, May 26: COVID casualties and cases showed decline in Jammu and Kashmir today with 40 deaths and 3037 positives. In Jammu region too, the daily deaths came down to 19 and the cases stood at 1089. Jammu became the first district in the Union Territory to cross 1000-death toll with nine fatalities today taking the tally to 1003.

Among the dead were seven women. Two persons succumbed to the virus at home. Jammu reported nine casualties, Kathua three, Doda two and Kishtwar, Samba, Rajouri, Reasi and Udhampur districts one each.

Two more suspected deaths of Mucromycosis or black fungus were reported in Kathua district today.

A 22-year-old youth from

village Manyal in Hiranagar tehsil of Kathua district died of brain stroke, Type-1 diabetes and COVID-19 in the Government Medical College (GMC) Jammu. He is suspected to have developed black fungus

■ Pic on page 9

during treatment but the official report from Microbiology Department of the GMC is awaited.

A 55-year-old woman from village Nagri Parole in Kathua district died of COVID-19. She was also suspected to be victim of black fungus.

Few days back, a 40-year-old man from Surankote in Poonch district had become first victim of black fungus. He had died in the GMC Jammu.

GMC Jammu Principal and HoD Microbiology Department Dr Shashi Sudhan Sharma told the Excelsior that so far there is

only one confirmed case of Mucromycosis in Jammu and he was the 40-year-old person from Surankote. However, she added, some more cases are being examined for black fungus.

A KAS officer's 70-year-old mother hailing from village Topa in Darhal area of Rajouri district succumbed to COVID-19 in the Government Medical College (GMC) Rajouri.

Three persons died of COVID-19 in Bani tehsil of Kathua district today including 13-year-old girl from Duggan, 29-year-old youth from Bani town and 70-year-old man from Bhatta. All of them succumbed to the virus in Community Health Centre (CHC) at Bani.

A 101-year-old woman from Matyal Katra died of COVID-19 at CHC Katra.

District Magistrate Kathua (Contd on page 9 Col 7)

Vaccine important to save lives, defeat Corona: Modi

'Pandemic has caused huge economic impact'

NEW DELHI, May 26:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi today described COVID-19 vaccines as "absolutely important to save lives and defeat the pandemic", noting that this "once-in-a-lifetime" crisis has brought tragedy and sufferings at doorsteps of many and caused huge economic impact.

Delivering the keynote address on the occasion of "Vesak Global Celebrations" on Buddha Purnima, he said the pandemic has impacted every nation, adding that the planet will not be the same after this and the events in future will be remembered as either pre or post-COVID.



He, however, added that there have been many noteworthy developments which strengthen our strategy to fight it.

"Most importantly, we have the vaccine which is absolutely important to save lives and defeat the pandemic," Modi said, asserting that the emer-

gence of jobs within a year of the COVID-19 outbreak shows the power of human determination and tenacity.

India is proud of its scientists for developing vaccines, he said, and also saluted healthcare and frontline workers for risking their lives to save others.

Offering condolences to those who have suffered and lost near and dear ones in the pandemic, the Prime Minister said he grieved with them.

In COVID-19, the humanity has faced its worst crisis in decades and has not seen a pandemic like this for a century, he said.

His comments came amid several States complaining of a (Contd on page 9 Col 5)

India conducts 22.17 cr tests in a day
New cases 2.08 lakh, deaths 4157

NEW DELHI, May 26:

India today reported 2,08,921 COVID-19 infections, pushing the overall tally of cases to 2,71,57,795, as the country conducted 22,17,320 Coronavirus tests, its highest ever in a day, according to Union Health Ministry data.

The death toll also climbed to 3,11,388 with 4,157 fatalities reported in a 24-hour period, the data updated at 8 am showed.

A total of 22,17,320 tests, the highest in a day, were conducted on Tuesday taking the cumulative number so far in the country to 33,48,11,496, while the daily positivity declined to 9.42 per cent, the Ministry said.

This is the second day in a row that the case positivity rate has remained below 10 per cent, the Ministry said. The weekly

positivity rate has also declined to 11.45 per cent.

The updated data showed that the number of active cases have further come down to 24,95,591, with a net decline of 91,191 in a span of 24 hours.

The active cases now constituting 9.19 per cent of the total infections.

The data also showed that 2,95,955 patients recovered from the virus in a span of 24 hours, pushing the total recoveries so far to 2,43,50,816. The national COVID-19 recovery rate has improved to 89.66 per cent, it showed.

The case fatality rate was 1.15 per cent, the data showed. India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5 and 50 lakh on September 16.