



PARDESH BHUMI

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Div Com inspects progress on 100 bedded Emergency block at GMCH Jammu

Work at its final stage; executing agencies directed to ensure completion by May 31, 2021

JAMMU
Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Dr Raghav Langer today inspected the progress on construction of New Emergency Block of Government Medical College Jammu.

He was accompanied by Principal GMC Jammu, Dr. Shashi Sudhan, Medical Superintendent GMC, HOD, Anesthesia besides Engineers of JK Police Housing Corporation, JPDCL, PWD, Mechanical Engineering Department and other concerned.

As per press statement issued to mercury times,

the Divisional Commissioner took a round of each section of the block and inquired about the work progress. The concerned engineers briefed the Div Com about the work completed so far and ongoing works and expected date of completion.

It was informed that the work was in final stage and would be completed in all respects by May 31, 2021.

The Divisional Commissioner directed the concerned executing agencies to work in close coordination and expedite the pace for early commissioning of the new block.

"Expedite the pace of work and complete the project within stipulated time so that the existing ICU bed capacity can be augmented for success-



ful management of Covid patients" the Div Com directed.

Responding to the need for shut downs for electric panel works, the Div Com directed the

engineers of JPDCL, R&B electric division and hospital authorities to conduct a joint survey and find out the power back up so that the

upcoming block and power set up ready before its functioning. The Div Com took a strong note of delayed work on the lift system. He directed the Mechanical Engineering department to start the work and ensure the functioning of the lift system as soon as possible. Meanwhile, the Divisional Commissioner also directed the Engineers of MED to work in double shifts and ensure commissioning of dedicated 2400 LPM oxygen generation plant for the new emergency block within the stipulated time frame.

The Divisional Commissioner also reviewed the status of augmentation of bed capacity (ICU beds) in GMCH. He was informed that the GMC was going to augment the bed capacity for Covid-19 patients by dedicating ward 4 and 5 for positive patients. The Div Com directed the engineers of MED to expedite the work on installation of oxygen, vacuum pipelines in both the wards to augment the bed capacity with ventilators and oxygen supported beds. Directions were also issued to the JPDCL for completing electric work in both the wards at the earliest.

power supply to the already existing emergency block is not affected. He also passed directions to JPDCL for installation of an independent transformer for

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(PR/DI)

Government extends Corona Curfew across J&K till May 24

JAMMU
The government on Saturday extended Corona Curfew across Jammu and Kashmir till May 24 in order to prevent the

more days.

"The Corona Curfew imposed in all 20 distts of J&K till 7 am on Monday, 17/5/21 is extended further till 7 am on Monday, 24/5/21. The curfew



COVID-19 cases from spreading.

As per press statement issued to mercury times, Directorate of Information and Public Relation (DIPR) in a tweet informed the extension in Corona Curfew for seven

will be strict except for a few essential services," DIPR-J&K tweeted. In wake of the spike in the COVID-19 cases, the Corona Curfew continued to remain in place across Jammu and Kashmir from April 29 evening. (PR/DI)

B.1.617 variant responsible for recent COVID-19 surge in J&K: GMC Jammu

JAMMU: As per the recent sequencing data analysis of positive COVID-19 patients received from NCDC, New Delhi, B.1.617 variant is responsible for the recent surge in COVID-19 cases in Jammu Division of JK UT.

As per press statement issued to mercury times, Principal & Dean Government Medical College, Jammu, Dr. Shashi Sudhan Sharma said that the Department of Microbiology at GMC, Jammu besides testing of COVID-19 samples is also coordinating with NCDC New Delhi for routine sequencing of positive sample and as per the latest report received from them UK Variant was reported in >60% samples in March, 2021. However, in April the %age of UK Variant dropped to 47% and B.1.617 increased from 5.8% to 38%. It is pertinent to mention here that the variant of SARS COV.2 has been observed to originate from a specific geographic location and with the time was able to move to other locations of the Globe. These two variants found circulating in the UT have UK and Western Coastal States as the sites where original virus mutated and their observed changed in frequency in UT is through Epidemiological Investigation. Dr. Shashi Sudhan Sharma further added that till date 434 samples have been sent to NCDC from Jammu Division among which a report of 64 samples is still awaited. (PR/DI)

Pro-Palestine protests: 21 persons arrested in Kashmir: Police

SRINAGAR: At least 21 people were arrested for participating in the pro-Palestine protests in Kashmir on Saturday even as police said that it was keeping a close watch on elements who are attempting to leverage the "unfortunate situation in Palestine" to disturb peace and order in Kashmir." A police official said that of the 21 arrests, 20 youth were arrested from Srinagar district alone while one was picked up from Shopian district. Asked whether any one was booked under PSA, he said that arrests are being examined case-wise, and it takes time to decide who needs to be booked under PSA.

As per press statement issued to mercury times, IGP Kashmir Vijay Kumar told that J&K Police is keeping a very close watch on elements who are attempting to leverage the unfortunate situation in Palestine to disturb public peace and order in the Kashmir valley. "We are a professional force and are sensitive to public anguish. But J&K police have a legal responsibility to ensure law and order as well," the IGP said. The IGP Kashmir, however, wouldn't allow cynical encashment of the public anger to trigger violence, lawlessness and disorder on Kashmir streets. "Expressing opinion is a freedom but engineering and inciting violence on streets is unlawful. All irresponsible social media comments that results in actual violence and breaking of law including Covid protocol will attract legal action. I urge people to cooperate," the IGP said. (PR/DI)

Together we can win war against Corona Virus

WE salute medical professionals, healthcare and sanitation workers, bank employees, security persons, government employees in essential services and media persons who put their lives at risk to ensure that we stay safe at home in our battle against Coronavirus. Because of these frontline warriors that the Nation was able to overcome the crisis situation during the first wave and once again they deserve full appreciation for risking their and their families' life in order to bring the nation and its people out of the health calamity that has assumed serious dimension today. To win the battle against COVID-19 all the people irrespective of caste, creed or political affiliations unite to lead the crucial battle against the lethal Corona virus to a logical conclusion at the earliest.

Following SOPs and other guidelines still holds the key to keep the virus in dock. Going for vaccine jabs as and when government allows is the only fail safe remedy in sight as the experts in the field have assured that those who have got vaccinated are safe despite getting corona positive again. Public should come forward for their vaccination without any fear or hesitation. Infection rate in people who have undergone vaccination has been noted below one percent, which is a healthy sign.

Even today when we are facing second wave of Corona we need not panic, even now if we follow protective measures, Covid SOPs such as wearing masks, maintaining social distancing, hand hygiene, avoiding social gathering we can continue daily routine while protecting ourselves from infection.

To tackle the recent upsurge of Covid 19, implement the 5-pronged strategy in Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory which includes testing, containment, isolation & treatment, Covid appropriate behavior and vaccination. We can't lower our guard under any circumstances.

Make the COVID jabs free for everyone

UTTAM GUPTA
Under the 'Liberalised Pricing and Accelerated National Covid-19 Vaccination Strategy (LPANCVS)', announced on April 19, which was kicked off from May 1, the Centre has plans to vaccinate all adults above 18 years of age. Before this, the inoculation drive that was launched on January 16, covered healthcare and frontline workers and people above 50 years of age and those with comorbidities. In the second phase of the drive the age limit was brought down to those above 45. Vaccine manufacturers were giving all their supplies to the Government of India (GOI) and charging Rs 150 per dose even as the latter was arranging for inoculation of eligible people free at Government vaccination centres (GVCs). However, those opting to get vaccinated at private hospitals needed to pay Rs 250 per dose. The GOI incurred a subsidy on vaccination done at GVCs equal to Rs 150 per dose, plus the cost of administering it. It was funded from the Union Budget.

Even as the above arrangement involved differential pricing, like free for those who got vaccinated at GVCs and others getting the jab at private hospitals for a price, the proposed system from this month is much more complex. Under it, of its total supply, the vaccine manufacturer would give 50 per cent to the GOI at the rate of Rs 150 per dose and make the remaining 50 per cent available to State Governments, private hospitals, industrial establishments at a price to be declared in advance (the price charged for vaccination by private hospitals would be monitored). People can make an "informed" choice at the time of booking an appointment at a private vaccination centre.

The vaccines will not be available for sale at pharmacists or chemist shops in the open market. The present system of private hospitals inoculating those above 45 years for Rs 250 per dose will cease to exist as they will no longer be getting any supplies from the GOI quota and will have to procure directly from vaccine manufacturers at the price notified by the latter.

Meanwhile, the manufacturers have announced prices they intend to charge from the State Governments and private hospitals. The Serum Institute of India (SII), the maker of Covishield, will charge Rs 300 per dose on supplies to States and Rs 600 per dose from private hospi-

tals. Bharat Biotech, the maker of Covaxin, will charge Rs 400 per dose from States and Rs 1,200 per dose on supplies to private hospitals.

Both will continue to supply to the GOI at the rate of Rs 150 per dose (this is as per a statement issued by Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare).

Putting all pieces together, there will be a minimum of five prices for the Covid-19 vaccination dose i.e. zero, Rs 300, Rs 400, Rs 600, Rs 1,200 (the cost to the recipients will be higher by an amount equal to the "service charge" levied by the State Governments/private hospitals to cover the cost of administering the vaccine) depending on the vaccine type and the channel through which it is done.

Meanwhile, more vaccines like Sputnik V, Nasal Covaxin and so on, are expected to get approval shortly. But those are likely to be priced even higher. The earlier arrangement was far from optimal as it entailed differential treatment of eligible people depending on the place they got the jab. While, those going to GVCs got it free, others opting for private hospitals paid Rs 250 per dose.

Even as the involvement of private hospitals was justified in view of the need to cover a large number (there are 300 million in the 45 plus group) within a short time frame, putting a price tag to it and that too Rs 100 over and above the price they paid to manufacturers militated against this objective. Indeed, this was a potent factor behind dismal results thus far with only about 20 million in a total of 300 million having got both the shots (even as other factors such as the initial vaccine hesitancy among the public at large as also supply constraints were equally responsible).

Under the new regime, even as the facility of getting a jab for Rs 250 per dose at private hospitals for persons in the 45 years plus category has been withdrawn, the Central Government wants over 500 million people (50 per cent of about one billion of the adult population i.e. over 18 years whom it expects to get jabs from States and private hospitals' quota) to pay a price high enough to destabilise the budget of even a middle income family.

Consider the following two scenarios: First, let's take the lowest in the price spectrum i.e. Covishield - supplied for Rs 300 per dose to States. Add service charge of Rs 200 per dose (67 per cent of the price; this is the mark-up applied to Rs 150 per dose being the price billed to private hospitals under the erstwhile dispensation), the recipient will pay Rs 500 per dose. For two doses,

this comes to Rs 1,000. A family of four will have to shell out Rs 4,000.

At another extreme, consider Covaxin supplied for Rs 1,200 per dose to private hospitals. Plus service charge, the recipient will pay Rs 2,000 per dose. For two doses, this will be Rs 4,000. In this case, the dent on this family's budget will be Rs 16,000.

Given the high prices at State centres and much higher at private hospitals and considering that vaccination from the GOI quota (50 per cent of total supply) is for free, people will tend to gravitate towards the latter. The clamour for getting vaccinated at GVCs will be so pronounced as to cause a complete breakdown of this network. This could be averted if only the State Governments decide to do free inoculation even out of the paid quota; however, this will require them to give heavy subsidy from the State Budget.

Already, some States like Maharashtra, Delhi and so on have announced their intent to give it all free and others are likely to follow suit. If, it has to be free for all involving subsidisation by the Centre or States then why go through such a cumbersome route?

Considering that the crisis is of an unprecedented magnitude (once in a lifetime) afflicting the entire population, there is a dire need for vaccinating at least one billion within the shortest possible time frame and given the pitfalls of differentiated pricing, the Centre should opt for inoculating everyone free of charge.

Apart from GVCs, all other stakeholders like the State health facilities, private hospitals, industrial establishments and so on should be involved in the vaccination drive. They can pick up their requirements directly from the manufacturers even as the GOI does overall coordination, negotiates a good price and makes payment.

Given the mammoth numbers i.e. two billion doses, a price of Rs 200 per dose should be good enough to cover the cost and give good return to the manufacturers (here, it is pertinent to recall a statement by Adar Poonawalla, CEO, SII, "the firm was making a profit even at a price of Rs 150 per dose").

The cost of purchase i.e. about Rs 40,000 crore can be met from the allocation of Rs 35,000 crore made in the Union Budget for 2021-22 (an additional Rs 5,000 crore would be needed to make up for the deficit). As for the "service charge" for vaccination, this cost may be paid by the States from their Budgets.

The writer is a New Delhi-based policy analyst. The views expressed are personal.

Kavinder Gupta seeks people's cooperation in battle against COVID pandemic

PB NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU: *Senior Bharatiya Janata Party leader and former Deputy Chief Minister, Kavinder Gupta has appealed to the people of Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory to keep patience and cooperate with the administration to support the measures initiated to win the battle against COVID-19 pandemic.*

He made this appeal while interacting with people at a COVID-19 test centre here today.

As per press statement -

sued to mercury times, the former Dy CM accompanied by Corporator and Mandal President Lucky Neeraj Puri and District Secretary Sanjay Gupta today visited various Corona testing centers and took stock of the problems being faced by the people visiting these centres.

While seeking people's support and cooperation in the hour of crisis, Kavinder said that the Govt is committed to ensure welfare measures for the people and these testing centres have been opened with the aim to contain spread of Covid-19 virus.

He advised the people at these centres to get them-

selves enrolled themselves for the vaccination.

Acknowledging the shortage of vaccines presently, Kavinder assured them that the shortage of vaccination will be done away with very soon as the administration is making all efforts to procure the substantial number of vaccines so that none suffers due to the vaccine shortage.

He said that the Union Health Ministry which is monitoring the situation 24x7, has informed that there will be availability of a large quantity of vaccines very shortly.

Kavinder reminded the people to be fully prepared


for battle against the pandemic and not forget that vaccination is the only weapon to win this battle. Referring to NHM report he said, it has been proved that during the past 29 days, 93 per cent of those dead in J&K due to corona were not vaccinated while 7 per cent of dead had received only a single jab of the vaccine. He urged people to understand the significance of vaccination and take jab of vaccination at the earliest.

Meanwhile, Corporator and Mandal President Lucky Neeraj Puri and District Secretary Sanjay Gupta appealed to the people to get


themselves vaccinated at the earliest to remain safe and keep others safe too.

They urged them not to come out of their homes unless inevitable and follow all the SOPs issued by the Govt from time to time in this regard.

Assuring them that BJP workers and activists are fanned out in all directions to help the people in the ongoing difficult times, they asserted only with people's cooperation it would be possible to win the battle against pandemic at the earliest. BJP activists Tarsem Lal and Surinder were also present on the occasion.




MASK is better than Ventilator. HOME is better than ICU. PREVENTION is better than Treatment.




Follow COVID Appropriate Behaviours


Always wear a mask




Maintain physical distance



Discourage crowd-
Encourage safety



Wash hands frequently
and thoroughly



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Vibodh appreciates Civil, Police and hospital administration of Rajouri for their exemplary role

PB NEWS SERVICE
RAJOURI: BJP J&K General Secretary and former MLC Vibodh Gupta today offered condolences to the families of all those in Rajouri who have lost their loved ones recently due to ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Addressing a press conference, Vibodh said that recently due to COVID-19 pandemic Rajouri has lost many doctors, scholars, teachers and prominent citizens and expressed solidarity with all those who have lost their loved ones.

This he said is a great loss to the society and prayed for grant of peace to all the departed souls. At this time of

grief and sorrow, Vibodh said that he along with all the BJP members stood behind the families of the deceased and called upon every section of the society to do the same as a mark of respect to these departed souls. On this occasion Vibodh also conveyed his appreciation to the shopkeepers and trading community of Rajouri for their support to the civil and police administration in their efforts to curb the further spread of coronavirus in Rajouri. This he said is very vital to break the chain and to control the further spread of

deadly coronavirus. While appreciating the civil, police and hospital administration for their exemplary role in

As per press statement issued to mercury times, Vibodh also appreciated employees of Rajouri

municipality specially the safai karamcharis who are working day and night during these tough times even risking their life. On the role of hundreds of BJP party workers, Vibodh said that all these party workers are doing great service to the society by following PM Modi's recent slogan of Seva Hi Sangathan. He

in the UT and asserted that party workers are committed to serve people wherever and whenever required.

Throwing light on the ongoing vaccination programme, Vibodh appreciated the LG government for expediting vaccination programme even in the remotest area and called upon sarpanches and panches to play their role in ensuring that all the eligible persons in their areas are vaccinated on top priority.

In his concluding remarks Vibodh said that present tough times demand compassion and oneness of all political parties irrespective of their ideologies. He called upon everyone to stand behind all those who are working day and night to move the country out of this crisis.



DC B'la inspects GMC, takes stock of Covid-19 control measures

So far over 65% eligible beneficiaries vaccinated in the district: Bhupinder Kumar

BARAMULLA
The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Baramulla, Bhupinder Kumar accompanied by Principal GMC, Medical Superintendent

Associated Hospital and other concerned officers today inspected Covid-19 wellness center established in GMC Baramulla where he took review of the mitigation measures besides taking the first-hand appraisal of various necessities associated with the pandemic.

On the occasion, the DC took a detailed review of various related aspects including the supply position of Oxygen, availability of necessary facilities for the patients, implementation of SOPs and other advisories.

As per press statement issued to mercury times, the DC directed the concerned authorities to ensure that all the required medicare and other necessary facilities are provided effectively and efficiently.

He also directed to scale up anti-corona activities by taking all the stakeholders

on board. Meanwhile, the DC informed that, in view of the present circumstances an additional medical Ward is being established at GMC which shall be made operational shortly.

He added that best and qualitative Medicare facilities shall be made available in the Ward which is need of the hour.

Kumar also took stock of the Covid-19 vaccination programme undergoing in the district during which he informed that over 2.5 lakh eligible beneficiaries comprising 65 percent of the total, population has been so far vaccinated.

He emphasized upon the concerned authorities to work in coordination and synergy so that the coverage is enhanced in the shortest possible time.

Moreover, the DC stressed for following all the requisite SOPs and guidelines adding that only the strict adherence of related advisories can avert any kind of health emergency.

He also said that strict legal action shall be taken against those who violate any kind of advisory.

(PR/DI)

these tough times, Vibodh extended support to them in the wake of a massive surge in COVID-19 cases.

told that Bhartiya Janta Party has also launched helpline numbers for people in distress due to coronavirus

Vaccination only shield for Covid-19: Dr Nisar Ahmad Shah

Gastroenterology problems caused by covid are self limiting, need only symptomatic treatment

Individuals having gastroenterology problems are not at any additional risk of super added infection

SRINAGAR

Covid is known to cause a variety of gastroenterological problems like dyspepsia, diarrhoea, abdominal pain; oesophageal, gastric & duodenal ulcers, hepatitis and pancreatitis like illness said Dr Nisar Ahmad Shah, Professor of Medicine, Gastroenterology, Government Medical College Srinagar but "All these problems are self limiting and need only symptomatic treatment", he added.

Besides, "Covid is known to cause anxiety symptoms; but it is covid itself and not anxiety which causes gastroenterological symptoms", Dr Nisar Ah Shah clarified on relative effects of covid anxiety and gastro problems.

As per press statement issued to mercury times, Dr Nisar also clarified misconception regarding the risk to patients suffering from gas-

troenterological problems and said that those having gastroenterology problems are not at any additional risk of super added infection.

As most of the doctors recommend paracetamol for mild covid relate symptoms, Dr Nisar asked for limited intake of paracetamol.

He said, "A normal individual can take upto 2gms (4 tablets of 500mg tablets) per day without any problems whereas those having liver problems and severe renal problems need caution".

However, Dr Nisar cautioned that excessive use of paracetamol can damage the liver and can cause severe gastrointestinal upset in elderly patients, those who indulge in alcohol abuse, people with borderline kidney function and liver disease and fasting aggravates paracetamol poisoning.

He also said steroids can cause a lot of side effects and

advised that steroids should never be taken of your own.

He cautioned that steroids involve almost every system of our body hence have multi systemic effects and side effects.

In the Gastro-Intestinal system, "steroids are known to cause gastric and duodenal ulcers especially if taken along with pain killers", Dr Nisar said regarding the side effects of steroids taken by some people during covid infection.

Moreover, Dr Shah recommended early Covid vaccination and extra precautions for those patients who have gastroenterological conditions requiring immunosuppressive treatment for ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease, autoimmune hepatitis etc. While insisting on Vaccination, Dr Shah said that Vaccination is the only shield and weapon against Covid-19 infection and appealed to people to get vaccinated without any fear. (PR/DI)

Additional testing facility for RAT, sample collection centre for RT-PCR operationalised at Anantnag

ADC inspects the site, monitors arrangements

ANANTNAG
Acting upon the directions of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag, the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Ghulam Hassan Sheikh today operationalized Covid-19 RT-PCR sample collection and Rapid Antigen Testing center at GHSS, Ranibagh Anantnag.

The facility has been made functional to decongest the premises of Government Medical College Anantnag and will go a long way in reducing the rush at the District Hospital

During his visit, the ADC took on spot inspection of the facility and also monitored the Rapid Antigen Testing and RT-PCR sample collection operations being

done there.

Speaking on the occasion, the ADC as per press statement issued to mercury times, said that the purpose of creating the facility is to reduce the footfall of people at GMC Anantnag and ward off chances of virus exposure besides helping the hospital staff to focus on the treatment of Covid positives and timely testing of indoor patients.

He also informed that adequate staff has been deployed at the centre and appealed to people of Anantnag town and its peripheral areas to drop in and get tested hassle free in a secure environment. Meanwhile, the move of the administration has been widely appreciated by the people of the town.

(PR/DI)

DM Shopian applauds public for adhering to SOPs, religiously observing corona curfew

SHOPIAN
The District Magistrate (DM) Shopian, Sachin Kumar Vaishya today applauded the people of Shopian for strictly adhering to the Covid-19 SOPs especially on the occasions of Jummatal-Vida, Shab-e-Qadar and Eid-ul-Fitar and observing corona curfew in letter and spirit.

As per press statement issued to mercury times, the DC said that this covid appropriate behaviour of the public has helped greatly in containing spread of the virus and number of daily positive cases has stabilised and a downfall in number of cases is now expected in coming days.

He said but we should not

at any cost lower the guard and continue our fight against this deadly virus by religiously following all SOPs.

Vaishya emphasised that people should not pay heed to rumours and they can contact control rooms established at district, sub-district and tehsil level for any clarification or assistance.

He said the district has a sufficient number of oxygen supported beds and manpower available and there is no need to panic as the situation is well under control. He also appealed to the public to keep an eye on home isolated positive cases and if they roam outside they should be properly counselled or the matter be brought in notice of concerned tehsildars. The DC appealed to the general

public of the district to stay in their homes, not to roam around unnecessary, wear mask, keep sanitizing and not to come in contact with other people besides also getting vaccinated.

Regarding vaccination he appealed that any person in the age group of 45 years or above and has not received the first dose should visit the nearest health facility for vaccination and those who have received the first dose should go for the second dose as well.

Giving details about the number of positive cases in the district, the DC said that there are 1237 active positive cases out of which 1179 are under home isolation and 31 at DH Shopian besides recovery rate in the district is 75 percent. (PR/DI)

Natrang Jammu marks its 39th Foundation Day, holds Webinar

PB NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU: Natrang commemorated its 39th foundation day by organising a webinar for its artists. Founder Director Natrang, Balwant Thakur expressed his heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has contributed immensely for the growth and development of this brand called 'Natrang'. He further said that in last 38 years, through the selfless contribution of thousands of its associates, Natrang has brought the J&K theatre to the National and International limelight and its highly acclaimed plays vibrated the theatre world and proudly travelled the whole length and breadth of the country and also crossed the boundaries of India as well and won appreciation in Russia, Germany, U.K., Singapore, Turkey, Hungary, Poland, South Africa and UAE and thus established a globally acknowledged brand called NATRANG.

This organization has been highly instrumental in giving a new cultural and intellectual identity to this part of the country and revolutionized the cultural life of the place through its out of the world creative initiatives. Speaking about the

prevailing situation of Covid crisis, he expressed that theatre and arts have been the major victims of the onslaught of COVID-19. Entire theatre activity of the world has collapsed. He hoped that we would come out of this crisis and the theatre would again witness pack houses buzzing with fantastic performances.

As per press statement issued to mercury times, Natrang was established on 15th May, 1983 with the presentation of two unique short plays 'Neeli Jheel' and 'Nanhen Kandhey Pair' directed by Balwant Thakur at Abhinav Theatre Jammu. The actors who featured in first performance of Natrang included Vijay Atri, Aasha Arora, Arvind Anand, Mohan Singh, Prabodh Jamwal and Arun Sharma.

In 38 years, the plays which vibrated the theatre scene of the country included 'Bawa Jitto' 'Ghumayee' 'Mahabhoj' 'Aap Hamare Hain Kaun' 'Chauraha' 'Poster' 'Mere Hise Ki Dhoop Kahan Hai' 'Sainyan Bhaye Kotwal' 'Raktbeej' 'Comedy of Terrors' 'Suno Eh Kahani' 'Kanjoo's' 'Holi' 'Mind Games' 'Richard III' 'Choonna Hai Aasmaan' and 'Kaun Nachaye Naach' etc. Natrang has produced over two thou-

sand actors and many have made their mark in films and TV world as well. Prominent among them include Bhanu Goswami, Anjali Abrol, Sunil Palwal, Harish Khanna, Neelu Dogra, Tajasvi Sharma, Ekta Kaul, Mansi Sharma, Vikram Sharma, Mridul Suri, Narinder Sachchar, Arvind Anand, Mohit Sharma, Pankush Verma, Ashok Verma, (Vrinda Gujral and Satyam Mehra, Child Artists). In addition to having six pass-outs of National School of Drama and Seven Masters in Dramatics, Natrang sent four for International studies which included Harish Khanna (London School of Acting and Speech), Aishesh Nijhawan (London International School of performing Arts) Aarushi Thakur (University of Leicester, UK & Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts, London) and Vikram Sharma (Lee Strasberg Theatre and Film Institute, Manhattan, New York USA).

Out of near about 7000 shows by Natrang in last thirty seven years, the credit of maximum number of participation is shared by Neeraj Kant, Anil Tickoo, Suresh Kumar, Arvind Anand, Sanjeev Gupta, Vikrant Sharma, Sumeet Sharma, Pankaj Sharma, Juhi Singh, Sat

Salarbi, Vijay Bhat, Dimple Sharma, Mohit Sharma, Mohd. Yaseen, Rahul Singh, Gaurav Jamwal, Subhash Jamwal, Gauri Thakur and Sajra Qadir and in these years over forty actors of Natrang brought National/ International honours and accolades. From National scholarships to International fellowships, these recognition gave a distinct identity and pride to Jammu theatre. Prominent honors included International fellowships to Balwant Thakur (Ford Foundation USA) Harish Khanna (British Council UK) Ashish Nijhawan (Inlaks, USA), National Awards to Balwant Thakur (Padamshree, Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, Sanskriti Award, National Senior Fellowship, Gurusree Samaan, Abhinayak Samaan, World Theatre Day Honor). Anil Tickoo (Sangeet Natak Akademi Award & National Fellowship), Sanjeev Gupta, Sumeet Sharma, Ashish Nijhawan, Vikrant Sharma, Sunil Palwal (Sangeet Natak Akademi's Yuva Bismalla Khan Award) Deepika B. Thakur (National Fellowship) Neeraj Kant (National Fellowship) Mohd Yaseen (National Fellowship and Scholarship), Rahul Singh, Sajra Qadir, Shivam Singh, Gopi Sharma, Kritika

Bhau, Rythm Misher, Asma Gul, Vrinda Gujral (National Scholarships). Amongst others, Suraj Singh, (Music) Brij Mohan (Music) Suraj Ganjoo (Lights) Ankush Lakhnotra (Lights) Chander Shekhar (Publicity Design) contributed immensely to the growth of Natrang.

In the year 2016, Natrang brought yet another laurels for the State of Jammu & Kashmir by presenting its cultural diversity at London where these performances were cherished by more than 50000 audience at the historic Trafalgar Square.

Director Natrang, Balwant Thakur expressed that Natrang has a dream for Jammu and a mission to establish this place as an International destination of the-atre.

The Institution is all set to create an International level campus in Jammu housing an auditorium, two Studio Theatres, theatre residences, resource centre and an exclusive centre for children.

On the occasion he thanked all those who contributed to the making of this historic revolutionary creative journey called Natrang and hoped that all admirers and patrons of Natrang will continue to shower their blessings.

Covid warriors of Batote taking on Covid through proper precautions, positive thinking

RAMBAN
As the phone rings continuously, Dr. Puneet Singh is constantly taking the calls of home isolated patients at the busy Community Health Centre (CHC), Batote.

CHC Batote being the only health facility catering to the entire population of Batote in present times of pandemic has thrown tremendous pressure on the doctors.

Dr. Puneet's family is in Jammu so the hospital has virtually transformed into his makeshift home with duties starting from as early as 8 a.m. in the morning to sometimes past midnight.

"Away from my parents, grand-parents, siblings and being continuously under work pressure, one does not even have the solace of offering prayers", says Dr. Puneet Singh, Medical Officer, at CHC, Batote. "My only inner-satisfaction comes from rendering the best possible treatment to those who come to the health centre. I see the reflection of my parents and grandparents while treating the old patients and image of my siblings in young

patients', he adds.

In the fight against Covid-19, Ramban district has been one of the front runners despite limitations of staff, resources and infrastructure in this remote hilly area. This all is being achieved due to an efficient and cohesive team effort of Corona Health Warriors like doctors, para-medical staff and the staff of other departments deputed for the purpose.

Dr. Puneet Singh giving details of his daily work routine said that besides his routine duty in Casualty, OPD and Emergency Ward, he also has to visit Quarantine Centers besides handling of Covid related administrative meetings.

"Donning PPE kit for about 8 hours daily and telephonically attending all the home quarantine patients, which at present are 179 in Batote, is a rigorous job," he said. He adds that there are patients coming regularly with mild symptoms who are

being referred for home quarantine. There are people who are only seeking medical advice because of anxiety

and a healthy diet with lots of fluids.

All those working in institutions need to take all the precautions of using a mask, following hand hygiene and social distancing.



and are being given consultation on the telephone.

"Long duty hours without any break including emergency duties and occasionally doing double duty from 8 am to 2pm and then from 8pm to 8am next day besides night duties twice a week is also affecting my health," he said. Dr. Puneet added that for doctors also it is advisable to take regular exercise

and a healthy diet with lots of fluids. All those working in institutions need to take all the precautions of using a mask, following hand hygiene and social distancing. "We can win the battle against Corona with precautions, confidence and positive thinking", he says. Another Corona Health Warrior from Ramban district Dr. Rajesh Kumar Kotwal, MO, PHC, Bhatni of Batote Block was back on the front after fighting his battle against the deadly virus.

Sharing his experiences he said that prior to his job in Government sector, he had worked in some charitable hospitals. The inspiration for serving in this remote and obscure hilly village with meager amenities, poor tele-communication comes from his experience in the charitable hospital.

"Though I have been extra cautious in not getting infected with Covid for which I had bought my own PPE kit as soon as the Covid had bro-

ken out earlier last year and took all precautions, yet I got infected with Covid." "While under treatment for Covid at GMC, Jammu, I had not only attended the Covid patients of my own family but also helped the Covid patients in the same ward by guiding them in Prone Exercises and with other suggestions which relieved many in emergency", Dr. Rajesh said.

(PR/DI)

BSF recovers AK-47 rifle, pistol dropped by Pak drone in Samba district

SAMBA
The BSF on Friday recovered an AK-47 rifle, a pistol and some ammunition dropped by a Pakistani drone from the border belt of Samba district in Jammu and Kashmir, officials said. The arms and ammunition cache was found wrapped in a yellow-coloured polythene and lying on the ground, they said.

The recoveries included one AK-47 rifle, one 9mm pistol, one pistol magazine, 15 bullet rounds and a wooden frame used to support the payload of the drone, they said.

The drone is suspected to have flown back into the Pakistani territory after it dropped the consignment, officials said.

The Border Security Force guards the India-Pakistan International Border. Several similar incidents, in which arms and ammunition dropped by Pakistan drone has been reported earlier from areas falling along the IB in Samba, Kathua and Jammu districts.

The BSF had recovered bombs dropped by a drone along the IB in Jammu's Samba sector on February 14, putting security agencies on high alert.

The drone-dropped consignment had six pistols and 14 Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) with in-built magnets, which could be used as "sticky bombs" by sticking them on vehicles and controlling them using a timer and a remotely-held device.

On December 21 last year, the Punjab Police had seized 11 hand grenades, suspected to have been dropped by a drone from Pakistan, from a field near the IB in Gurdaspur district, officials said.

On September 22 last year, an arms consignment dropped by a drone operated by Pakistan-based terrorists was seized in Akhnoor sector in Jammu district, they said.

These included 2 packets containing two AK assault rifles, three magazines with 90 rounds and a pistol with two magazines and 14 rounds, officials said.

The consignment was seized in a joint operation by the police and the special forces of the Army from Sohal Khad, located at an aerial distance of 13 km from the border. (PTI)

Technicians fighting along medics on the Covid frontline

UDHAMPUR
It is said that travesty throws its own heroes, who bring new hope amidst despair. One such hero is Manohar Gupta, a Technician in CT scan section of district hospital Udhampur.

As Covid infections surged in the district, there was considerable rush of patients going for CT scan to detect infections. Once a section which was visited by a few patients became a busy corridor of Covid patients.

When asked about his new role, Manohar said that he is aware of the severity of the disease, and therefore he always makes sure that he takes all precautions.

During this pandemic he reveals that he is faced with a number of duties- duty to his patients, duty towards his own protection and a duty to his family.

He said that as far as possible, his section ensures that the reports are sent to the patients on time, adding that at times he is doing online delivery of reports to the patients who are sick. "There are some cases where the whole family is infected, then we try to ensure that they receive the report on time on whatsapp," he said. Speaking about CT scan process, he reluctantly said that it should only be done on the advice of the doctor. In the pressure imposed due to increase in working hours, he calmly maintained that it was his job and for that he is prepared. "In times like this only real strength of a person is tested", he said. He prayed that the challenge posed by Covid pandemic gets over and people return to their normal lives. (PR/DI)

“Doctor Speaks” Consultant Microbiology GMC stresses on extra caution, 2nd wave Virus highly transmissible & fatal

JAMMU Covid-19 is to double the precautions; wear two masks instead of one and keep distance of du gaz, instead of one at public places’. He urged the public to avoid participation in and organis-



ing ‘super spreader events’ like functions, parties and religious events. Highlighting its significance, Dr Sandeep said that the vaccine is the most important tool to break the chain of transmission of the virus. He appreciated enthusiasm shown by the people of 18-45 year age for taking vaccine. He also urged those older than 45 years, especially the ones with comorbidities to get vaccinated. Pregnant and lactating women are not to be vaccinated, he added.

Dr Sandeep said that while the first wave mostly affected the middle aged, the old and the sick, the second wave is targeting to all age groups and is more transmissible on the whole. He says that the second wave has reached far into the rural areas of the country unlike the first one.

“Our lax covid appropriate behavior is responsible for the second wave. We have to make sure that the same mistakes are not repeated. The virus is fast mutating. Just like us humans the virus is also fighting for its survival. This is a war which we have to win at all costs!”, he continued.

Reassuring, Dr Sandeep said, “The mantra to stay safe from the second wave of

fall under mild category. Such patients either show no symptoms or very few symptoms. They recover easily and require only isolation in a well ventilated space, and regular self monitoring.’

Explaining the process of self monitoring, Dr Sandeep said that it involves routine checkup of body temperature and oxygen saturation levels. Self monitoring, he warns, should not involve self medication. He said that medication should only be taken after consultation, telephonic or otherwise, with a doctor. He informed that telemedicine services have also been launched by the government and should be used. He concluded by saying that the public needs to religiously follow Covid appropriate behavior and get vaccinated to ensure that the third wave doesn’t ensue. (PR/DI)

Samba admin starts distribution of free ration under PM-GKAY
1.58 lakh eligible rationees being benefited in the district: DC

SAMBA

District Samba has started distributing food grains under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana (PM-GKAY), which is aimed at providing free additional 5 kg food grain per month to beneficiaries covered under National Food Security Act over and above their monthly entitlement for two months, May and June, the Deputy Commissioner, Samba, Anuradha Gupta said on Friday.

The DC also said that under the PM-GKAY scheme 1.58 lakh beneficiaries will be benefited in the district through 125 government sale depots. While elaborating on the steps taken by Department of Food Civil Supplies & Consumer Affair, Assistant Director Mukhter Ahmed, said there are 41 thousand approx Ration card holders in Samba district who will be provide 5 kg food grains additional through govt. sale depots.

He also said the standing instructions regarding covid-19 SOPs are being strictly followed at each sale depot. TSO’s, ration dealers and staff of FCS&CA have been strictly advised to follow covid-19 appropriate behaviour and marking proper demarcation of standing positions at the distributions outlets. “Migrant population can also avail the benefits of the scheme through ‘one nation one ration card’ he added. (PR/DI)

BJP providing succour to people confronting Covid-19: Yudhvir Sethi

‘Declare journalists as frontline warriors’

PB NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU: Yudhvir Sethi, Vice President BJP J&K and Convenor Sewa Hi Sangathan Abhiyan-2 on Friday said that his party is rendering selfless service to provide succor to the people confronting with COVID-19 and related issues.

In a statement issued here to mercury times, the senior BJP leader said that the party is working round the clock to reach out to the people facing difficulties with regard to healthcare facilities, hunger, livelihood, education, etc. He said that party cadre has lived the Mantra of ‘Sewa Parmo Dharma’ by its unrelenting and selfless service of providing food packets to patients, organizing Covid testing camps, providing assistance to people for vaccination, arranging oxygen cylinders and other medical aid for those who are less resourceful. He said that the union territory is passing through a very crucial stage with mutations in the COVID-19 virus taking heavy toll.

He said that the people

should understand the exigency and follow all the precautions suggested by the government and health experts to ensure that the situation does not deteriorate and the tally of the fresh coronavirus cases could see a decline which holds much significance in getting out of this mayhem.

Citing the negative role played by the other parties in the UT, the J&K BJP Vice President said that NC, PDP and Congress have been badly exposed in this hour of crisis as these political outfits are doing nothing except criticizing government at the centre and in the UT.

He categorically said that those who enjoyed power for over 70 years in J&K and filled their coffers by siphoning public money are nowhere in sight during these testing times.

“Contrary to the opposition’s negative role, BJP workers while facing the challenging times have shown their mettle to world by working tirelessly to help those in need. For BJP worker, serving the people comes first”, he said adding that people need to be very

cautious against the disease and the dicey ploys of those political parties which are often standing with entities inimical to the country.

He said that the people should voluntarily go for vaccination against the coronavirus because it is the only remedy to overcome the crisis and drag out the virus from the UT.

The senior BJP leader also demanded that journalists as well as media persons should be declared as frontline COVID-19 warriors. He said that several journalists have lost their lives while performing their professional duties on ground like all other frontline warriors and emphasized that in such a situation it is necessary that they be immediately declared as frontline warriors by the Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory.

Sethi urged the Lt Governor to realize this lapse now and immediately issue a notification declaring all the journalists associated with print, electronic and news portals as frontline COVID-19 warriors thus securing them along with their families.

Covid Fear, Panic and Anxiety affects Mental Health: Dr Yasir Rather

Endorphins released during exercise uplifts mood, alleviates anxiety
Obsession with Covid news also affected a person psychologically

SRINAGAR
Psychiatry
Expert, Dr Yasir
Rather, Professor,
Department of
Psychiatry, GMC
Srinagar stressed on
Psychological
Appropriate
Behavior to mitigate
influence of Covid
pandemic on mental
health of a person.

"The pandemic and the second wave spike of positive cases and deaths created fear, panic, distress and anxiety among the people which takes a toll on their mental health", said the expert while highlighting the consequences of Covid-19 pandemic.

He said it is equally important to take care of mental health as well as the rest of the respiratory system.

Dr Yasir stated that due to the panic, people keep hoarding essential items, oxygen which affects others who are in need of oxygen and essential items. This practice aggravates the situation and creates further panic in the society. He appealed to people not to resort to such unethical practices to subvert the fight against pandemic.

He reiterated that the government and doctors are giving their best but the common people should demonstrate civil sense and social responsibility and said that hoarding practice is unbecoming of our society. Moreover, the Psychiatrist said, "In lockdown, people feel frustrated and sullen at home which also affects

their mental health", and advised "People should not focus on the issues while being at home



which are beyond their reach and capacity setup and because focusing on such activities to develop a new life style including

spending time with family and children, create innovative ways and hobbies for interaction with them to keep the family environment flamboyant because it will keep mind stimulated and healthy", the doctor advised.

Those living or feeling lonely at home should connect with family, friends, relatives and neighbours through virtual medium only.

Besides, he stressed on the routine of physical exercises and brisk walk because he said, "Exercises and brisk walk release endorphins and keep the mood of a person elevated and helps to overcome and alleviate anxiety". He also suggested proper sleep and diet to maintain sustainable mental health during lockdown and pandemic. (PR/DI)

Constant Oxygen Supply Chain to hospitals is being maintained: say DIC Srinagar officials

Two Oxygen plants in Khonmoh IE supplying 1000 oxygen cylinders to hospitals per day

SRINAGAR
The second wave of
Covid-19 pandemic has
seen huge surge of
Covid positive cases
which has created a
necessity of increased
oxygen production to
support hospitals
because oxygen is the
elementary lifeline and
most important life sup-
porting
weapon to help
severe Covid
Positive
patients
to recover from
the disease.

In this regard, the Jammu & Kashmir Government has put together all the resources to increase the oxygen production and maintain the oxygen supply chain with ever growing demand for oxygen.

In Kashmir all the tertiary hospitals have been equipped with oxygen concentration plants to cope up with pandemic induced demand.

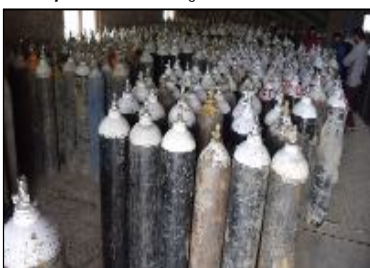
"Two Oxygen production capacity of these two plants is 3500 to 3600 cubic meters which is supplied to all the allied hospitals on daily bases in about one thousand cylinders.

A senior officer of Industries & Commerce department when contacted said that there are four oxygen manufacturing plants in Kashmir Division having an overall production capacity of 17400 cubic metre which works out to a total production of roughly 2483 oxygen cylinders in 24 hours.

The officer said the Industries & Commerce department is been deputed to oversee the operations.

He stated that the District Administration is monitoring the oxygen production capacity of these oxygen plants in Khonmoh Industrial Estate.

The officer informed that the oxygen production



Sat hands over 100 medical kits for distribution amongst needy Covid patients

PB NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU: For distribut-
ing medical kits
amongst Covid positive
patients in Jammu
West, Former State
President BJP handed
over 100 Covid medical
kits to Jammu West unit
of BJP headed by

District President
Munish Khajuria. The
kits were provided by
District General
Secretary BJP Advocate
Rajesh Gupta. BJP
activists are seen working on
leader and Corporator
Sanjay Baru, District
General Secretary
Advocate Karan
Sharma and District
Spokesperson Ravi
Kant, District BJP lead-
ers Rajan Gupta &
Anupam Gupta were
also present on the
occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, Sat Sharma said that it is indeed a great initiative taken by BJP leaders for providing full medical kits to Covid patients prescribed by the LG headed Government including Paracetamol, Ivermectin, Azithromycin, Zinc and Vitamins C & D. He

Div Com Jammu visits Mandi -Poonch; inspects progress on mega developmental projects

Also reviews Covid management, control measures in the district

POONCH
Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Dr Raghav Langer on Thursday visited Mandi - Poonch and inspected the progress on developmental projects being executed there.

He was accompanied by District Development Commissioner, Inder Jeet; Senior Superintendent of Police, Vinod Kumar; Chief Executive Officer, Poonch Development Authority, Dr Mohammad Tanvir; Executive Engineer PWD, Pervaiz Ahmed besides other concerned officers.

The projects inspected included landscaping and beautification of the Tourist Reception Centre, PSC Mandi Bridge, OPD Complex at Community Health Centre Mandi, Oxygen generation plant and Government polytechnic building at Sathra.

During his visit to the Tourist Reception Centre, the Div Com was apprised that the Cost of the project is Rs 1.42 crore. The Div Com asked Deputy Commissioner Poonch to hold a meeting with the Baba Budha Amarnath Committee members to discuss different components of the project.

At the OPD Complex being constructed at CHC Mandi, the concerned Engineers informed that against the sanctioned cost

of Rs. 1.90 crore, an expenditure of Rs. 1.30 crore has been incurred till date with only partition work of the building pending. While reviewing the progress on

the pace of the project to complete for its early commissioning and to meet the Oxygen supply need.

At the Government Polytechnic building being

The Div Com asked the concerned executing agency to ensure that the work on the developmental projects is completed within the set deadlines to provide necessary benefits to the common masses.

The Div Com also directed the concerned officers to adhere to quality parameters. He also warned the contractor of strict action in case of missing the deadline.

Meanwhile, the Div Com also paid a visit to the District Hospital Poonch and reviewed the health care facilities being provided to the patients and the arrangements being put in place for the management and control of COVID 19 infection in the district.

The Div Com enjoined upon the Hospital Administration to focus on quality assurance, access, affordable health care so that satisfaction level among the public is enhanced and people repose faith in the public health system.

The Div Com also directed the Health Authorities to ensure that the Covid SOPs are followed by the patients and the medical staff in the hospital to avoid the risk.

(PR/DI)



Home Dept clarifies on news item published in a section of media

JAMMU: The Home Department has clarified on a news item published in a section of media regarding the deployment of staff from School Education Department to Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL), wherein a distorted picture has been presented regarding deputation of officials in the FSL.

In this context the Home department has presented certain facts and said that the deputation has been done to overcome the shortage of manpower in FSL and is a transient measure.

The department further maintains that Fresh Recruitment is going on but given the disruption caused by the pandemic, it may take time and adds that this temporary arrangement is not by engaging unqualified staff but those selected have the requisite qualifications and are otherwise eligible to apply for fresh recruitment notice also.

It further says, the

Government is well within its rights to make temporary arrangements and these persons have not been taken randomly but have been selected through a careful process.

In fact, they are better placed than freshly recruited candidates since they have hands-on experience of lab work in the schools.

The FSL analysis depends on their theoretical knowledge and practical experience – they do not lack either. Out of the 10 selected persons, 1 is for the ASO post while the rest 9 are for Lab Technician post. In both these ranks, there are a very large number of vacancies – only 6 ASOs are in position against sanctioned strength of 37, while in respect of Lab Technicians against 22 posts, none is in position. In particular, Lab Technician is a 100% promotion post and there is unlikelihood of it being filled up soon due to non-availability of eligible candidates in FSL.

The posts were advertised in November/December 2020 to

invite applications - 27 candidates applied for the posts of Lab Technicians, out of which 9 have been selected while for Assistant Scientific Officer, 11 persons applied out of which one person has been selected, it says.

The department highlights that in the past year or so, Recruitment Rules for gazetted as well as non-gazetted levels have been substantially revised and notified.

Thereupon, At Gazetted Level, nine (09) number of posts of Scientific Officers (SO) have been referred to the Public Service Commission for recruitment while as at non-gazetted level, 23 posts of Assistant Scientific Officers (ASO) are under process of reference to Service Selection Board (SSB) for fresh recruitment; in view of the small strength of the cadres of different specialties, the matter is being examined for clubbing of vacancies as per DoPT guidelines so as to ensure that the benefit of reservation is not denied to the reserved categories. Besides that, an opportu-

nity of 32 posts has opened up for post graduates – i.e. Scientific Officers and Assistant Scientific Officers. Further, 19 posts of Lab Assistants and 21 posts of Lab attendants (Class – IV) have been referred to the Service Selection Board (SSB) which has advertised the same on 29.12.2020.

The department further maintains that Prior to 2019, in the technical cadre, FSL had 69 vacancies against a total strength of 138. After 1983, only 3 ASOs were appointed in the non-gazetted cadre in 2017 apart from a Gas Mechanic.

It adds that the Forensic Science Laboratory has been besetted with seniority disputes and court cases.

Through concerted effort, since July 2018, these matters have been resolved and FSL has been reorganized in October 2019, whereby many important aspects have been addressed like sanctioned Technical Posts have been increased from 138 to 190, existing divisions have been re-organized on modern lines into 04 divisions i.e.,

Narcotics / Chemical, Biology/Serology, Physical and Technical, while introducing DNA and Cyber Forensics subjects. For specialization, Medical and Non-medical streams have been separated in the recruitment rules, Sanction of District Mobile Forensic Units (DMFU), one in each of the 20 Districts, for providing expert trained team on the crime scene in the shortest possible time and to prevent loss of evidence due to inept handling and Seniority disputes were resolved and promotions accorded which were pending for more than 20 years besides more than Rs. 30 Crores earmarked by MHA for equipment upgradation of FSLs.

In a most far reaching reform, FSL has been made independent from the Police Department, in pursuance of the directions of the MHA vide G.O. no. 189 – Home of 2020 dated 14.09.2020. It is relevant to mention that the High Court of J&K has been monitoring the FSL's functioning in a PIL. (PR/DI)

No curfew relaxation on Eid eve in Kashmir: Div Com Pole

SRINAGAR
The Divisional Commissioner Kashmir P K Pole Wednesday said that there won't be any relaxation on Eid-ul-Fitr eve in Kashmir given the steep rise in COVID-19 infection cases while the overall situation is under control in the Valley. He was quick to add that 30-40 per cent of surplus oxygen was available in Kashmir as of now.

Pole was on a visit to the border district of Kupwara along with other administrative officials to review COVID preparations put in place by the health authorities and district administration. As per press statement issued to reporters on the sidelines of his visit to Kupwara, Pole said that the overall situation in Kashmir is under control while the preventive restrictions put in place up to May 17th will remain in place. "There won't be any sort of relaxation on Eid eve in Kashmir," he said, adding that Covid 19 does stop on any special occasion.

He said that around 175

oxygen-supported beds are available in Kupwara and a plant of 1000 LPM has been made functional at SDH while the occupancy of beds is below 40%. "The Covid situation, however, is good and the cases have started to decline," Pole said. He said: "We hope that the COVID ends soon but there won't be any laxity from the administration side and preparations are in full swing to contain the spread," he said.

About the situation in Kashmir valley, the Divisional Commissioner said that the overall situation is definitely under control.

"The cases will increase in the coming days in Kashmir and that shouldn't be a source of panic for people," he said.

The Divisional Commissioner Kashmir urged the people to stay away from any such information that leads to health issues mainly mental problems saying that people must stick to things that don't impact stability. Asked about the oxygen refilling issue faced in Kupwara, he said that the 1000 LPM oxygen plant is already functional

here and the cylinders won't be of that use besides concentrators have been made available.

Pole as per mercury times, said that oxygen is being monitored scientifically outside the states like Maharashtra. "Doctors have conducted the oxygen audit in J&K and stated that around 40% of the oxygen is surplus and there is no question of shortage at any point," he said.

He assured that there is no shortage of vaccines for people aged above 45-years across the valley and the drive is being carried out as per the schedule while the registrations are underway for individuals above 18 years.

The Divisional Commissioner said that that the COVID-19 situation has not worsened that much in the northern belt of Kashmir and the administration is ensuing preparation while people must cooperate with the government to fight this deadly pandemic and adhere to precautionary measures and not come out unnecessarily. (PR/DI)

DC Bandipora interacts with Imams, Religious Heads

Seeks cooperation to ensure covid appropriate behaviour on Eid

BANDIPORA
The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Dr. Owais Ahmad today held an interactive meeting with prominent religious leaders, Imams and Khateeb of the dis-

trict ahead of the Eid Festival.

The interaction was held in view of the upcoming Eid Festival and the DC sought the cooperation of religious leaders in ensuring covid appropriate behavior during the festival times by ensuring social distancing is maintained and no large gatherings take place any-

where in the district. Dr Owais said that the religious leaders, Imams, Khateeb and Management Committees of local Masjids have a key role during the fresh wave of Covid-19 and appealed to them to use their influence for ensuring

prayers shall be held in Eidgahs and instead Eid Prayers shall be held at local mosques amid strict covid-19 guidelines and social distancing. The Imams, Khateeb and other Religious leaders assured full support to the administration in this regard. They pledged to follow in letter and spirit the decisions and directions of administration that are being issued for tackling the rate of infections. Dr Owais emphasized that the war against the pandemic will be won only by collective efforts and everyone needs to be responsible at this critical juncture. He urged the people to ensure social distancing and use of face masks.

He said the people especially senior citizens with comorbidities should avoid visiting masjids for their own well-being. ASP, Ashaq A. Tak, Tehsildars and other senior officers were also present during the interaction. (PR/DI)



Secy DLSA Udhampur interacts with Jail inmates regarding COVID 19 pandemic

UDHAMPUR

On the directions of Executive Chairman J&K Legal Services Authority, and Guidance of Chairman District Legal Services Authority Udhampur, Y.P Bourney, Secretary, District Legal Services Authority, Rajni Sharma today held an online interaction programme with jail inmates to know about the problems being faced by prisoners due to COVID-19 Pandemic.

Sub Judge interacted with the under trial prisoners to know about their problems and grievances and their family members particularly amid the ongoing Pandemic Covid 19. She tried to interact and reach out to almost all categories of prisoners including the foreign inmates.

During the interaction, the foreign inmates by and large projected a common grievance that they are all desperate to establish contact with their families which could not be materialized as yet. However, they have no complaint with regard to providing them the basic facilities in Jail.

The Secretary DLSA also interacted with other under trial/convicted prisoners to know about the well being of their families. The majority of prisoners with whom she interacts do not express any serious problem about their families in normal times. However, they expressed concern about their families in this pandemic situation and accordingly requested for extending some help to them, if possible.

Meanwhile, the Secretary DLSA instructed the concerned PLVs and Panel lawyers to establish contact with the families of inmates so that requisite remedial measures may be taken as early as possible. She also instructed the concerned Jail authorities to follow the SOPs regarding Covid 19 Pandemic strictly and also make the prisoners aware how to maintain the standard of hygiene to stay safe amid the deadly infection.

Panel Lawyers of DLSA Udhampur namely Sanjeet Kumar and Pawan Gupta were also present with Secretary DLSA during interaction with jail inmates. (PR/DI)

PMGKAY: FCS&CA starts distribution of free ration for May in district Ramban

NFSA quota also disbursed among beneficiaries

RAMBAN

Ramban Dr. Nasir Ahmed Butt, under PMGKAY, 5 kg ration is being provided per head to the families covered under National Food Security Act (NFSA) during the lockdown.

Till date 1153.48 Qtl of wheat and 1728.09 Qtls of rice have been distributed among AAY and PHH ration card holders, while normal distribution under NFSA for the month of May 2021 is also going on under which Department has distributed 475.43 Qtl of wheat,

Government of India has announced free ration for 1451.36 Qtl of atta till date, he added. He further informed that ration will be distributed through PoS machines only and that too after AADHAR authentication along with dealer's authentication in case of mismatch. All Covid SOPs have also been followed during distribution of ration to beneficiaries. (PR/DI)

Covid-19 related drugs available in adequate quantity: GM, JKMSC

There is no dearth of drugs, people should not pay heed to rumours

Continuously getting medicine/ medical supplies from Gol

SRINAGAR
General Manager (GM), Jammu and Kashmir Medical Supplies Corporation (JKMSC), Dr Abdul Majid Mirab today informed that there is no dearth of any Covid-19 related drug in Kashmir and the same is distributed among the Covid care hospitals as per the demand and requirement.

"Since we are dealing with the Covid supplies and its distribution, so it becomes imperative for us to make it clear to the general public that the situation of medicines is perfectly alright, as the medicines that we require for the treatment of Covid-19 are available with us in adequate quantity," General Manager said.

He said that their mandate is that from diagnosis to treatment they are providing every required medicine/ medical supplies to the patient.

"In terms of diagnostics, we provide Rapid Antigen, RTPCR logistics to the end

users like the Directorate of Health Services, Government Medical College and SKIMS-JVC Medical College to conduct investigations," Dr Mirab added. If we talk of stock position in terms of Oxygen cylinders and Concentrators we have been getting the same from the Government of India continuously, he said adding, "Yesterday we also received 200 Oxygen Cylinders and we also got 100 certified Oxygen concentrators and the same are also being distributed among the concerned quarters.

General Manager said that the stock position of JKMSC is perfectly fine and there is no need to worry and they are also upgrading the facilities from time to time. Besides this, he said that on the directions of Lt. Governor of UT of Jammu and Kashmir, the JKMSC has been providing Covid Management Kit for home treatment to the patients who are detected Covid-19 positive.

"This kit is given to such

patients on spot after he is reported Covid-19 positive through Rapid Antigen Test or the same is handed over to him at his home if he has been confirmed positive through RTPCR test and the Covid Management Kit contains pulse oximeter and other mandatory medicines required for the treatment of the virus," he added.

Dr Mirab said that there is a monitoring system that keeps track of the health of the patients under home isolation and keeps guiding them till they turn negative. "With the existing monitoring system in place, the person is called twice by the concerned officials to check his health status including pulse and saturation level and on that basis patients are being managed at home," he added.

He said the public should not pay heed to rumours; rather the only important thing that people should focus on right now is to follow the Covid-19 related SOPs and guidelines in letter and spirit to come out of this pandemic. (PR/DI)

ACD Doda discusses modalities for active involvement of PRIs, Youth in Covid-19 containment efforts

Briefs on Vaccination, timely testing with special focus on rural areas

DODA
Government has called for active participation of Panchayati Raj Institutions and Youth in Covid-19 mitigation efforts with special focus on vaccination of vulnerable population, information dissemination and promoting Covid appropriate behaviour apart from building capacities in rural areas of District Doda.

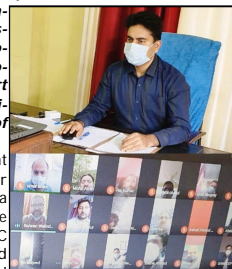
In this regard Assistant Commissioner Development Doda Mohammad Idrees Lone held virtual meet with BDC Chairpersons and Sarpanches and briefed them about the initiative aiming at to increase the testing and vaccination especially in rural areas.

The ACD Doda urged them to lead from the front along with the District Administration so that the people living in the rural areas shall be mobilised to get vaccinated and timely tested if having any Covid symptoms.

He also called for formulation of youth groups to carry forward the information and for constructive public engagement.

The ACD apprised the participants that Mission Youth J&K has initiated the process to select volunteers at Panchayat level/Block Level and train them for community engagement, public awareness, promotion of vaccination and timely testing, facilitating PRIs, augmenting the efforts of healthcare workers and other initiatives.

Meanwhile Keynote speakers Dr Waliad Khawar Balwan Assistant Professor GMC Doda and District Epidemiologist Umar Anayat Khan also interacted with the participants and briefed in detail about the benefits of Vaccination, timely testing and follow of Covid appropriate behaviour. (PR/DI)



Div Com Kashmir visits Kupwara district

Reviews Covid containment measures, facilities in hospitals

KUPWARA
The Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Pandurang K Pole today had a whirl wind tour of North Kashmir district of Kupwara to take stock of Covid containment measures and facilities available in health institutions there.

The Div Com was accompanied by Deputy Commissioner (DC), Kupwara Imam Din, ADC, Kupwara, Nazir Ahmad Lone, President Municipal Committee, Handwara Mansoor Bandy, Incharge Covid Kashmir, Dr Waseem Qurashi, Ex. Eng. Hospital Engineering, Mubashir Naqueshbandi, CMO Kupwara and other concerned officers.

During the tour, the Div Com visited various

Hospitals including District Hospital (DH), Handwara; Sub District Hospital (SDH), Langate, SDH Kupwara, Covid Dedicated Hospital

Kupwara, Handwara and Langate Hospitals and passed on spot directions for further improvement in Covid management facilities.

SDH, Kupwara. He said that the aim of his tour was to get first hand assessment and feedback from ground zero. He directed CMO



Kupwara and took stock of facilities being provided in the Hospitals. He also reviewed other Covid related facilities including availability of oxygen and medicines. Testing, tracing and treatment facilities were also reviewed. The Div Com also inspected quarantine wards, Hospital Laboratories, Emergency wards at

He also took stock of infrastructure, bedding and other required facilities being provided to Corona positive patients in the Hospitals.

Pole also inspected the oxygen generation plant at SDH Kupwara, District Covid control room at Kupwara and also inaugurated Covid Immunization Centre at ANMT School

Kupwara to ensure that vaccination drive is accelerated through a camp mode and aware the public aware of the need to take doses of vaccine so that cent percent vaccination of targeted groups could be achieved.

The Div Com interacted with doctors and staff members on duty and appreciated their contribution towards

containment of the pandemic. He stressed on following the SOPs while attending the patients. During the visit, the Div Com also enquired about the status of sample collection, vaccination, registration under Ayushman Bharat Sehat Scheme, contact tracing, ICU facilities, availability of bedding capacity etc.

Talking to media persons, the Div Com appealed to people, especially above 45 years of age to strictly follow the guidelines of 'no venturing out unnecessarily' for their better safety.

He also urged people to follow social distance, maintain hand and face hygiene and above all ensure wearing masks. He also advised people to keep in touch with radio and television as all Government information is easily accessed through this medium of communication.

(PR/DI)

Oxygen supplies going smoothly across Kashmir; however, wastage, imprudent utilization a concern: Experts

Div Adm organizes online training workshop on optimal usage

SRINAGAR
An online training workshop was today conducted under the Chairmanship of Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Pandurang K Pole in order to ascertain the efficient and optimal usage of oxygen across all dedicated Covid-19 hospitals.

During the meeting threadbare discussion was held on prevention of wastage of Oxygen at different levels including proper flow, checking the leakage and curbing all wastage.

The training was organized by Divisional Covid Control Room, Kashmir and

conducted by National Resource Faculty- Dr. Kaustubh Butala, Consultant Govt of Maharashtra, Dr. Pankaj Arora, Senior Faculty, Hospital Administration (PGI, Chandigarh), Dr. Sonali Salvi, Consultant Anaesthesiologist.

A team of representatives from SKIMS Soura, SKIMS Bemina JVC, SMHS Hospital, CD Hospital, Kashmir Nursing Home and JLNM attended the workshop and a committee was constituted for monitoring and auditing of oxygen delivery systems on a daily basis.

Among the participants who attended the online meeting were representatives from tertiary care hos-

pitals and representatives from all districts of Kashmir Division consisting of members from healthcare, administration, technical experts, mechanical engineer and oxygen plant operators. All the participants will act as ToTs and will impart training in their respective districts within two days.

The Divisional level committee constituted shall regularly inspect the oxygen plant, manifold/pipeline and oxygen delivery ports to ascertain any leakages in the Oxygen delivery system.

The Div Com stressed that the committee shall ensure that the LPM delivery setting changes are carried with the precautions and staff is trained for the same.

The committee shall submit detailed inspection reports to the Head of the Institutions for corrective measures needed.

Earlier, a committee was constituted comprising Director SKIMS, Director Health Services Kashmir and other officers to assess the oxygen supply status, and submitted a detailed report to the experts in India including Maharashtra.

In the backdrop of the report, experts conducted the workshop to address the issues related to smooth supply of oxygen.

The experts opined that, "the oxygen is sufficiently available to the requirement, however, there are also huge wastage which needs to be

addressed on priority".

The Div Com stressed that the district level committees shall monitor, audit and evaluate all the parameters related to oxygen delivery systems which shall be supervised by committees at the divisional levels.

Districts were emphasized to complete the training and execute monitoring and evaluation on war footing basis. More such training sessions will be conducted for third party audit.

The meeting ended with closing comments from MD NHM, M Yasin Chaudhary and on behalf of the Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, a vote of thanks was presented to National Resource Faculty. (PR/DI)

District Planning Committee approves Rs 529 crores Annual Plan for Bandipore

65% funds to be spent on JJM, PMGSY works for augmenting water supply, road connectivity

BANDIPOORA
A Plan allocation of Rs 529.88 crore including Rs 56 Crores under UT component, Rs 444.00 Crore under Centrally Sponsored Schemes and Rs 28 Crore as loan component for District Bandipore has been approved for the financial year 2021-22 at the District Development Council Meeting that was chaired by Chairman DDC, Abdul Gani Bhat.

Vice-Chairperson Kousner Shafeeq, Deputy Commissioner Bandipore Dr. Owais Ahmad, DDC members, BDC Chairpersons, Additional District Development Commissioner Afzar Ali Khan, Joint Director Planning Imtiyaz Ahmad, Assistant Commissioner Development Abdul Rasheed Dass and other senior officers of the district were present on the occasion.

During the meeting, the Chairman exhorted the officers to take the development on mission mode basis so that its fruition is cherished by the general public.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner highlighted the major achievement achieved during the last financial year and also presented the outline of the developmental activities to be taken up during the current financial year as per circular instructions of the Govt., under a 3-tier planning system.

It was given out that under PRI grants, Rs 23.30 Lakhs shall be allocated per Panchayat, Rs 25 lakhs per Block for Block Development Councils and Rs 10 Crore grants for District Development Councils that shall be made part of Capex in addition to MNREGA, 14th Fc., PMAY, JJM and PMGSY etc sectors.

He said this year the administration intends to spend 51 percent of the budget on priority sector that includes completion of all 114 Jal Jeevan Mission schemes and PMGSY roads besides other under execution projects of public interest. Dr Owais said the Planning committee of Bandipore laid a proper road map for preparation of Annual Capex 21-22, with large

participation of stakeholders of the three tier planning system. He said it is for the first time that massive exercise has been done in a time bound manner. "The exercise started with the formulation of Panchayat development plans, through Gram Sabhas which were notified and completed just ahead of Corona curfew". He said the block and District plans were framed simultaneously as per guidelines and wider consultations of PRIs by Line Departments.

It was given out that under Jal Jeevan Mission 114 DPRs worth Rs 309 Crores have been prepared for the current financial year that include 30 filtration plants and 60 service reservoirs that shall be constructed this year. Meeting was informed that 36 DPRs have already been tendered and all the projects are planned to be completed by August 2021 for which an amount of Rs 269.61 Cr have been earmarked during the current financial year.

Dr Owais said under PMGSY the administration has targeted to complete 24 projects out of the total 30 ongoing projects with an allocation of Rs 112 Crores in current financial year. He said the major road projects among these include the road From Neeru to Skinder, Athwatoo to Labkachal Road and Gund preng to Batgund Road.

Meeting was further informed that under NRLM, a total number of 1741 SHG's have been formed till March 2021 while further formation of 192 SHG's are targeted for the Current Financial Year.

The DC said that under PMAY (G), 40 houses are targeted for completion during the current financial year at an estimated cost of Rs 137.51.

He said under MGNREGA 7.50 Lakh Person days have been provided during the last financial year while this year 7 Lakh Person days are targeted for which Rs 23.41Cr have been earmarked.

Under the ICDS sector, Supplementary nutrition to 24762 beneficiaries shall be provided by

utilizing an amount of Rs. 11.26.Cr allocated under District Plan 2021-22 while under MDM sector, 35338 meals to students shall be provided during the current financial year by utilizing an amount of Rs. 3.23Cr allocated under District Plan 2021-22.

The DC further informed that under the BAPD sector, Out of 47 On-going Projects costing Rs 19.08 Cr, 17 projects are targeted for completion this year for which an amount of Rs 1.39 Cr have been earmarked for the current Financial Year.

He said that some of the targeted schemes that shall be completed this year include Road From Kashpat to Kilshay Phase II in Gurez, Food Godown at Wazirthal and electrification of Below-Neil, Sekinder and Safadaab Villages of Gurez Valley.

In the Education Sector, DC informed that the administration has targeted to complete some of the important projects that include Mini Auditorium in the Premises of N.M. Hr. Sec School Kaloosa, construction of 3 roomed double storey building at MS Gashri Mohalla Naidkhat. Completion of 03 Roomed Building at PS Kota Sathri and construction of fencing from one side at Govt Boys Middle School Branch Bandipore. Constt of residential quarter at HSS P. Tulail, Completion of 04 Roomed Building School Building at HSS Chuntimulla by way of Repair & renovation, construction of 03-Roomed Double Storey at HSS Nowgam, completion of 05 Roomed Building at HSS Ajas and completion of 04 Roomed Building at HSS Shadipora.

Under the Health Sector the district administration has targeted to complete the construction of the Sub Centre at Markoot, Health Sub Centre Hussangam, Doban, Pannar, Ahamshareef, Dardpora and NTPHC Dangeerpora.

During the meeting DDC members unanimously earmarked Rs One Cr out of their fund for Covid mitigation measures in the district. (PR/DI)

Horticulture Planning and Marketing J&K appeals all stakeholders to adhere to Covid appropriate behaviour

JAMMU
Horticulture Planning and Marketing Department Jammu Under the Guidance Of Director Horticulture Planning and Marketing Vishesh Paul Mahajan (JKAS) constituted a team comprising of Area Marketing Officer Priya Parihar, Grading and Marketing Inspectors Vikas Malhotra, Vishal Gupta and Abdul Kabir today under the Supervision Of Joint Director Mr. Digvijay Gupta remained Present in Fruit And Vegetable Mandi Narwal from 5:30 am onwards, All the instructions Issued from Chairman/District Disaster Management Authority Jammu (Mr. Anshul Garg) IAS were implemented in letter and Spirit as Follows:-

Audios Recorded Announcements on Loudspeakers in both Fruit and Vegetable Mandi were made on regular intervals to follow the COVID SoP strictly in accordance with the guidelines issued in this behalf.

Entry/ Exit Points of Autos and other vehicles plying in the Mandi were properly maintained.

The random testing of Covid was done by Health Department team in which 600 people were tested. Concerned Tehsildar Also

Issued the Directions to the Associations to follow the SoP. Meeting was conducted in Association office wherein the Association members, Joint Director, Area Marketing officer Jammu, Tehsildar, SHO and other concerned officials were present. All the issues were discussed threadbare and it was decided that entry of Vehicles in Vegetable Mandi shall Be from Gate No:-1 and Gate No:-2 and Exit From Gate No:-4 and Gate No:-5 so that Plying of Vehicles could be Managed One way To Avoid Traffic Jamming. Banners (10*20) with Covid Guidelines Stands installed each in Fruit and Vegetable Mandi. One More Banner Depicting Covid SoP and Benefit Is of e-NAM also stands installed today at Main Entry gate of Narwal Mandi

It was further decided that Vendors selling Vegetables in front of Auction Platform shall follow odd/even Pattern with Respect to Auction Platform numbering so that 50 percent vendors may remain in the Mandi Premises everyday.

Director Horticulture Planning and Marketing J&K once again appealed to all the stakeholders to adhere to the Covid appropriate behaviour like wearing of Mask, Sanitizing the hands and maintaining Social distancing while doing business in Mandi Premises. (PR/DI)

Dr Jitendra Singh calls for audit of oxygen cylinders and ventilators in GMC Jammu

JAMMU Minister of State (Independent Charge) for DoNER, MoS in Prime Minister's Office; Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Department of Atomic Energy and Department of Space, Dr Jitendra Singh today called for audit of oxygen cylinders and ventilators in the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir for the equitable distribution in time of distress for needy patients. He said, even a single death due to alleged unavailability of Oxygen causes tremendous social unrest and negates all the other good work if any. A confidence building message has to go out loud and clear that a premier institution like GMC Jammu will ensure that not a single death occurs on account of Oxygen unavailability.

Dr Singh made the clarion call during a high level meeting of administration and medical staff convened by him in view of certain disturbing reports emanating from Govt Medical College, Jammu with regard to COVID management facilities. The meeting was attended by Advisor to LG Sh Bhatnagar, Financial Commissioner, Sh Atal Dullio, Divisional Commissioner Sh Raghav Langer, DC Jammu Sh Anshul Garg apart from the Principal, GMC Jammu Dr Shashi Sudan Sharma and others.

Dr Jitendra Singh said,

Div Com Kashmir inspects Covid-19 Wellness Centres at Baramulla, takes stock of mitigation measures

Directs scaling up of anti-corona activities in larger public interest

BARAMULLA The Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Pandurang K Pole today paid visit to Baramulla where he took inspection of several Covid-19 wellness centres and reviewed the mitigation measures besides other related aspects.

The Div Com during the visit was accompanied by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Baramulla, Bhupinder Kumar, COVID-19 Nodal Officer, Dr Wassem Quereshi, Dy Director Health Kashmir, Dr Bashir Ahmad Chalkoo and other concerned officers.

The Div Com inspected Covid-19 wellness centres established at Covid Care Hospital

community management is a vital component of optimum Covid management and the GMC as well as the administrative authorities should not feel shy of taking the community into confidence and soliciting their cooperation.

Dr Singh asked about vari-



ous steps being taken by the administration for augmenting the oxygen capacity of Government Medical College (GMC) Jammu and various District Hospitals across the UT. In this regard it was informed that two Oxygen Plants each of 1200 lpm capacity have been set up in GMC Jammu.

A 1000 lpm Oxygen plant has also been set up in Chest and Diseases Hospital, Jammu. Further, in Govt. Hospital, Gandhi Nagar another 1000 lpm plant has been set up. In addition to this, two more

plants are being set up in GMC Jammu to augment its oxygen capacity. With regard to the buffer stocks of Oxygen cylinders Dr Singh was informed that presently buffer stock of 400 cylinders was present in GMC Jammu. While commending the steps being taken to aug-



ment the oxygen capacity of hospitals Dr Singh called for audit of oxygen capacity as well as ventilators in the UT so that no lives should be lost for want of critical care. He further expressed his support to Administration and Hospital Staff for fighting the battle against Covid and saving precious lives of people.

Dr Jitendra Singh instructed the Divisional Commissioner to post one Biomedical Engineer in GMC to exclusively look after the upkeep of Oxygen supply so that the patient's attendants or

nurses don't have to undergo the ordeal of struggling to maintain oxygen supply. He asked for a regular issue of medical bulletin by the authorities and keeping public representatives informed about what is being done by the GMC informed.

Dr Singh also reviewed the



situation of the ventilators to handle critical patients. In this regard it was informed that around 60 ventilators and Respirators were being provided to GMC Jammu.

To overcome the shortage of staff, Dr Jitendra Singh asked the administration to engage post-graduate students, final year medical Students para-medical and nursing students to fight the problem of lack of human resource. Dr Singh urged the GMC Doctors to surrender their private rooms/chambers in Chopra Nursing Home so that the same could be converted into COVID chambers.

For the patient's relatives, Dr Jitendra Singh asked for arranging proper SoPs and PPE kits. Instead of being dealt by police force, the patient's relatives should be sensitively counselled with the help of social volunteers and well-meaning

Pole also took stock of the COVID-19 vaccination programme undergoing in the district during which he exhorted upon different stakeholders to ensure that the process runs smoothly.

He directed to educate and motivate people so that they come forward for vaccination at their stipulated time.

Meanwhile, the Div Com stressed for following all the requisite SOPs and guidelines adding that only the strict adherence of related advisories can avert any kind of health emergency.

He also said that strict legal action shall be taken against those who violate any kind of advisory. (PR/DI)

NGOs. For this, he assigned the DC Garg to take the responsibility.

While taking a stock of vaccination status in Jammu, Dr Singh was informed that around 96% of population of the age-group of 45 plus had been vaccinated in Jammu alone while the figure was around 60% for the whole UT. He was also informed that the vaccination in the age-group 18-45 years was under process and daily around 200-250 shots in this age group were being provided in Jammu and around 16,438 persons had received first dose in this age group. Dr Singh suggested that better information flow to the public should be carried out to facilitate the vaccination process and if the vaccination centre is not operating at a certain time, it should be frankly conveyed to the public..



Dr Singh also said that the referral process should be streamlined and only patients that need critical care should be shifted to GMC Jammu. In this regard, he was informed that Home kits were being provided to covid patients and call centres had been engaged for making calls to covid patients on regular basis so that patients only in dire need of hospitalisation may visit hospitals.

Dr Singh also called for better coordination and synergy between various departments, involvement of civil society groups and NGOs for reaching out to the public to fight covid and follow covid appropriate behaviour. He further said that the Union Government was committed to support the UT administration and to fill in missing gaps where required so as to save lives and improve the health infrastructure of the UT. (PIB)

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JPDCL assess working of Electric Central Workshop Division at Narwal

JAMMU: Er. Gurmeet Singh, Managing Director, Jammu Power Distribution Corporation Limited (JPDCL), Jammu, accompanied by Er. Ashwani Kumar Sachdeva, Chief Engineer Distribution, JPDCL Jammu and other senior officers today inspected the Electric Central Workshop Division (ECWD), Narwal. They assessed the on-spot buffer stock position of the fresh and repaired Distribution Transformers (DT) of various ratings and also to review the progress of the Repair Jobs being under taken by the Technical Staff of ECWD, Jammu. This step was taken to ensure that activities related to 'Summer Preparedness Action Plan' being implemented by JPDCL for providing of 24x7 Reliable power supply across Jammu Province, during the prevailing summer season, are effective on ground. Instructions were passed to the Executive Engineer, ECWD, Jammu to scale up the pace of the ongoing DT repair works and implement correct management techniques for improving the overall quality and output efficiency of the workshop. It was impressed during the visit that adherence to prevailing COVID related SOPs, issued by the Government, should be complied in the ECWD without compromise. The Executive Engineer, ECWD, Jammu along with his concerned staff reassured that they shall continue to work dedicatedly for achievement of the above objectives, for general welfare of the public of Jammu Province. (PR/DI)

"Many of our near and dear ones have left us untimely due to Covid-19. The Govt has decided to reach out to each and every such family and they will be provided with financial assistance for self-employment": LG Sinha

*Lt Governor announces a slew of measures for Families, who lost their loved ones to Covid-19 pandemic
Special Pension for life to senior citizens who lost their only earning member of the family
Children, who have lost their parents to Covid-19 pandemic, will be provided with special scholarship by the government
Rs 1,000 per month into accounts of registered construction workers, ponywalas, palkiwalas, pithuwalas for the next two months
Rs 55 crore to be released to Div Coms, DCs, J&K Police under SDRF for emergency use*

S R I N A G A R : The Lt Governor, **Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha today announced a slew of measures to mitigate the suffering of families who have lost their loved ones to Covid-19 pandemic.**

The Lt Governor said, senior citizens who have lost only earning member of the family will be provided special pension for life while children, who have lost their parents to this calamity, will be provided with special scholarship by the government.

"Many of our near and dear ones have left us untimely due to Covid-19. The Government has decided to reach out to each and every such family and they will be provided with financial assistance for self-employment by the Jammu & Kashmir Bank," the Lt Governor said. The Lt Governor also observed that the global pandemic has rendered thousands of daily workers jobless. "The Government has decided to provide Rs 1000 per month to all registered construction workers, ponywalas, palkiwalas, pithuwalas for the next two months", maintained

demographic with people's participation. I urge all you to follow Covid appropriate behaviour and get vaccinated. We will soon prevail together over this pandemic," Lt

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back from the senior officers over the Covid-19 management and other measures in J&K. While taking the review of Covid scenario in the UT, the Lt Governor enquired about the availability of Covid dedicated beds, high flow oxygen supply, installation of oxygen plants in the Union Territory. He was informed that additional oxygen plants are being imported and would be installed soon in the government-run hospitals. The Lt Governor reiterated that the additional oxygen capacity would cater to

the requirement of oxygen, besides helping in enhancing the bed capacity with oxygen support. The Lt Governor directed the concerned officers to enforce strict

back from the senior officers over the Covid-19 management and other measures in J&K. While taking the review of Covid scenario in the UT, the Lt Governor enquired about the availability of Covid dedicated beds, high flow oxygen supply, installation of oxygen plants in the Union Territory. He was informed that additional oxygen plants are being imported and would be installed soon in the government-run hospitals. The Lt Governor reiterated that the additional oxygen capacity would cater to

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SMHS Hospital Nursing staff reiterate their commitment to Healthcare in Deadly pandemic

Celebrating International Nurses day with patients to instill hope against despair in pandemic

SRINAGAR SMHS and other hospitals keep their guard up to deliver their services and strengthening the backbone of healthcare in Srinagar and other districts. "The surge in covid positive cases has constrained health sector everywhere, but nurses in Kashmir are motivated to execute their services to withstand this pandemic." This was maintained by Assistant Matron, SMHS Ms Shapoo, leading the fight against covid-19 disease.

While congratulating all the nursing staff in J&K, she said, "We, nurses are frontline workers executing our duties with full dedication and high spirits to help our government, society and entire humanity to come out of this challenging phase". She said that the SMHS nursing staff are standing with patients every time to ensure that their oxygen supply is sustained besides providing all necessary medical

requirements and logistics including medicine. She said, "Nurses are first to attend to the covid patients and supporting them with oxygen and drugs". She maintained that there isn't any issue regarding treatment of infected persons in the hospital as SMHS hospital is equipped with adequate number of beds supplemented with abundant oxygen. While reiterating com-

mitment, she said that nurses are giving best of their capabilities and hoped that like last year, Kashmir will emerge successfully from the gloom of Covid-19 pandemic. Also, she appealed relatives of covid patients admitted in SMHS hospital to avoid frequent visits saying that it is imperative to break the chain of virus spread, as nurses are taking due care of all the patients without any discrimination. (PR/DI)

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Cough, Cold, Fever, Bodyache, Vomiting Diarrhoea, Lethargy, symptoms of covid infection in children: Dr Muzaafar Jan

Children can develop convulsions, shock due to infection

Covid positive mothers can breastfeed children under SoPs

SRINAGAR Cough, Cold, Fever, Body ache and Diarrhea are the symptoms of Covid infection among children, he said and added, "Oxygen saturation of children should be above 94. However, the O2 saturation reading between 94 to 90 is a symptom of mild infection and below it indicates severity of infection". "In severe infection a child becomes lethargic, vomits and gets diarrhoea. Sometimes children get convulsions and shock due to infection", said Dr Muzaafar Jan while sensitizing parents

to monitor symptoms of their children. Monitor advised. "Infectious children should be kept in isolation and administered immunity boosters including vitamins and zinc besides a paracetamol tablet". "In a condition of severe symptoms a child should be hospitalized." However, he maintained that Covid vaccination for children is not allowed because the issue is under trial, yet. Although USA has allowed vaccination for children above 12 year olds just a day before but still covid has become lethargic, and check whether a child is breathing, responding normally or has become lethargic,



has not been permitted in other countries till now, Dr Muzaafar Jan, should be deferred by 3 months, instructed Dr. Regarding breast Jan. It was advised by Dr Muzaffar that children can breastfeed child should be kept away from elderly people because old age people are prone to get covid infection besides high morbidity risk to them. Meanwhile, he appealed to people to get vaccinated and said that there is no need to worry for mild reactions. He called for avoiding social gathering and following SoP guidelines. (PR/DI)

Covid appropriate behaviour, healthy diet, exercise- multiple lines of defence against Covid: Dr Arun Sharma

Lists containment measures; appeals people to contact for Medicare on helpline Nos

JAMMU ing currency, he added. ing alert against the signs of infection, he said the helpline number to manage home isolation for themselves, isola- tion facilities are being created at Yatri Bhawan, Bhagwati Nagar and Youth Hostel, Nagrota. Dr Arun Sharma informed that two Triage Chest Disease & TB Hospital and MCH Gandhi Nagar, have been set up by the government to facilitate people from all corners of Jammu region and sufficient number of beds, oxygen and other facilities are in place to treat one and all. The J&K Government has also started a live phone-in health programme on Gulistan channel which is to be aired twice daily- from 8:30 am to 9 am and 8:30 pm to 9 pm. Eminent doctors are taking during the show and replying to their queries. Anybody from the public can call on the a b o v e - m e n t i o n e d Divisional Control Room phone numbers and seek information related to Covid treatment, home isolation and other non-Covid health problem. (PR/DI)

Covid appropriate behaviour, exercise, healthy and hygienic diet are multiple lines of defence against Covid-19 infection, said Medical Superintendent, Mother and Childcare Hospital Gandhi Nagar, Dr Arun Sharma. Elaborating further, he said 'Covid Appropriate Behaviour' is not limited to wearing face mask in public and frequent hand-wash, it also includes proper sanitisation of objects one comes in contact and proper social distancing while in public space. This is equally important to break the chain of transmission, said he. The Medical Superintendent said that all the objects and articles that a person comes in contact need to be appropriately sanitised to ensure Covid-19 virus doesn't reach any household. It is being widely suggested that the people prefer online transactions instead of exchange-

ing currency, he added. ing alert against the signs of infection, he said the helpline number to manage home isolation for themselves, isola- tion facilities are being created at Yatri Bhawan, Bhagwati Nagar and Youth Hostel, Nagrota. Dr Arun Sharma informed that two Triage Chest Disease & TB Hospital and MCH Gandhi Nagar, have been set up by the government to facilitate people from all corners of Jammu region and sufficient number of beds, oxygen and other facilities are in place to treat one and all. The J&K Government has also started a live phone-in health programme on Gulistan channel which is to be aired twice daily- from 8:30 am to 9 am and 8:30 pm to 9 pm. Eminent doctors are taking during the show and replying to their queries. Anybody from the public can call on the a b o v e - m e n t i o n e d Divisional Control Room phone numbers and seek information related to Covid treatment, home isolation and other non-Covid health problem. (PR/DI)



namely carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins and minerals. He suggested that people should take fiber rich food, brown bread, oats, cereals and sprouts as part of healthy diet. 'One must also drink one litre water per 20 kg body weight, that is to say 3 litres of water for a healthy 60 kg person', he advised. Physical exercise for half an hour daily or walking 15 thousand steps must be done to maintain a healthy body with good immune system, advised Dr Arun Sharma. Calling for stay-

ing alert against the signs of infection, he said the helpline number to manage home isolation for themselves, isola- tion facilities are being created at Yatri Bhawan, Bhagwati Nagar and Youth Hostel, Nagrota. Dr Arun Sharma informed that two Triage Chest Disease & TB Hospital and MCH Gandhi Nagar, have been set up by the government to facilitate people from all corners of Jammu region and sufficient number of beds, oxygen and other facilities are in place to treat one and all. The J&K Government has also started a live phone-in health programme on Gulistan channel which is to be aired twice daily- from 8:30 am to 9 am and 8:30 pm to 9 pm. Eminent doctors are taking during the show and replying to their queries. Anybody from the public can call on the a b o v e - m e n t i o n e d Divisional Control Room phone numbers and seek information related to Covid treatment, home isolation and other non-Covid health problem. (PR/DI)

FC Fin condole demise of Dr Shamim Wani, Imtiyaz Ahmad

SRINAGAR A condolence meeting was today conducted by the officers of the Finance department under the Chairmanship of Financial Commissioner, Finance, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta.

The meeting recalled the role of Dr Shamim Wani, Special Secretary Finance and Imtiyaz Ahmad, 2nd Manager, J&K Bank, Civil Secretariat, who recently left for heavenly abode. The Financial Commissioner termed both the officers upright, dedicated and noble. He said that their departure would be missed for many times to come. He further said that the role played by these officers is worth mentioning in golden letters. The meeting also called the loss of these officers as irreparable and hard to fill. It was also recalled that both of these officers were humble, friendly and always ready to help everyone calling for the same. The meeting observed a silence of 2 minutes in respect and remembrance of these noble souls. The participants held prayers for the peace of departed souls and forbearance of their families to bear this great loss. Pertinent to mention here that Dr Shamim Wani was awarded with the LG's Gold Medal for the Honesty, Integrity and meritorious service to the public for the year 2020. (PR/DI)

Yudhvir Sethi performs Havan to ward-off COVID-19

PB NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU: **Yudhvir Sethi, Vice President BJP J&K unit & incharge Seva hisangthan on Saturday performed Havan Yagya here on Saturday amid recitation of Gayatri Mantra to ward off the COVID-19 pandemic.**

The senior BJP leader said that people in India used to perform Havans since the ancient times to purify the atmosphere.

As per press statement issued to mercury times, Sethi said that he has undaunted faith that the Havan will eliminate the dreaded coronavirus from the vicinity. He asked the people to turn to the Vedic lifestyle to get rid of modern day world diseases which came into existence due to unprincipled ways of living. He said that the benefits of Havan Samagri containing mixture of wood, odoriferous and medicinal herbs had extensively been written in the epics of Hindu religion and even science has endorsed in many cases that by performing Havan many

air-borne bacteria and other harmful germs are neutralized and the environment becomes pollution free. He said, "On the basis of all this,

and should take refuge under the realms of Vedas to overcome diseases like COVID-19.

He categorically made it



one can say that Havan is a scientific method to eliminate the disease-causing micro-organisms in the environment and by performing this one can even eradicate coronavirus".

"According to Vedas the ancient knowledge books of India, saints used to perform Havan Yagyas to purify the environment by sublimate the Havan Samagri in fire," he said and added that people should take a cue from rich heritage of the country

clear that guidelines issued by the government to contain the coronavirus should be followed strictly as there is no alternate to them. "However, turning to our traditions in combating such airborne diseases also holds much relevance and therefore people should not feel shy to perform such Havans and Yagyas at their respective places as these are helpful in many ways to counter the pandemic", he maintained.

Corporator Anil Masoom,

Ajit Yogi, Parveen Kerni, Pawan Sharma, Roshan Lal Sharma and Satish Kumar were also present. The Ha-

van was performed by strictly following all the SOPs and guidelines related to COVID-19.

District Admin Srinagar to set up Star PHCs

SRINAGAR

To further strengthen the patient care facilities in Srinagar, the District Administration, Srinagar is setting up 5 Model Primary Health Centers termed as STAR PHCs at different locations in the district.

This was stated by the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Mohammed Aijaz Asad during his visit to different primary level Health care centres in Srinagar on Saturday.

As per press statement issued to mercury times, the DC accompanied by Joint Director Planning Mohammad Yaseen, Chief Medical Officer Srinagar, Dr Jameel and other senior officers conducted inspection of various health institutions and enquired about facilities available and additional support required for extending best possible healthcare services to patients particularly in wake of present situation arisen due to 2nd wave of Covid-19.

The DC said that 5 Primary Health Centers including at Batmaloo, Khonmoh, Lasjan, Sangam and Nishat are being upgraded to Model PHCs. He said each Model PHC will have minimum 25-30 bed capacity with oxygen support system meeting present requirements of Covid-19. The DC directed the CMO Srinagar to take up the necessary measures in this regard so that all 5 designated Star PHCs start functioning with upgraded infrastructure at an earliest. Executive Engineer ME Department has been asked to immediately start work on installation of Oxygen pipes. The DC said administration has chosen to upgrade existing infrastructure to ensure early operationalization of these Model PHCs to make better healthcare facilities available to patients in the district. He also said that the objective of setting up of Star PHCs is to add additional infrastructure support to various health institutions in the district to ensure better healthcare at nearest possible health facilities so that unnecessary rush to tertiary care hospitals is reduced. (PR/DI)

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