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Record 5,992 fresh...

shall be applicable till further orders."

Elaborating on the spike in detection of the cases, officials said the previous highest one-day jump in infections was recorded on Wednesday when 5,818 fresh cases were registered in the Union Territory. During the second wave of the pandemic, Jammu and Kashmir had on May 7 last year detected 5,443 new cases.

Out of the fresh cases recorded on Thursday, 1,920 were from the Jammu division and 4,072 from the Kashmir division, the officials said.

They said Srinagar district recorded a maximum of 1,306 new cases, followed by Jammu district which registered 1,217 such infections. While 825 cases were recorded in the Baramulla district, Budgam recorded 636 cases, Pulwama 125 cases, Kupwara 137 cases, Anantnag 259 cases, Bandipora 237 cases, Ganderbal 270 cases, Kulgam 243 cases and Shopian reported 34 fresh cases.

Similarly, Reasi district in the Jammu division reported 58 cases, Udhampur reported 200, Rajouri 70 cases, Doda 72 s, Kathua 105, Samba 86, Poonch 23, Kishtwar 47 and the Ramtan district reported 42 fresh cases for today.

There are 31,044 active cases in the Union Territory, while the count of recoveries stands at 34,031, the officials said.

The new fatalities raised the death toll from the pandemic to 4,586 in Jammu and Kashmir. According to the daily Media Bulletin, out of 378661 positive cases, 31044 are Active Positive (10535 in Jammu Division and 20508 in Kashmir Division), 343031 have recovered and 4586 have died; 2237 in Jammu division and 2349 in Kashmir division. The Bulletin further said that out of 20605493 test results available, 378661 samples have tested positive and 20226832 samples have been tested as negative till date. Besides, 87,470 COVID tests have been conducted in last 24 hours.

LeT terrorist arrested...

operation, an active terrorist affiliated with proscribed terror outfit LeT was apprehended. The official identified him as Jehangir Ahmad Naikoo, a resident of Memandar in Shopian. Incriminating material, arms and ammunition including a pistol, two pistol magazines and 16 pistol rounds, was seized from his possession, he said. A case has been registered and further investigation initiated, the official said.

Missing youth who...

To flee from the spot as also attempted to fire upon the joint party. However, alert naka party apprehended him tactfully. He has been identified as Rahil Showkat Dar son of Showkat Ahmad Dar resident of Drabgam Pulwama Rajpora, according to a handout issued by the police organisation.

Pertinently, he had recently gone missing regarding which a missing report was got lodged by his family members at Police Station Rajpora and had recently joined terror ranks. During his personal search, one Pistol and several rounds of ammunition were recovered from his possession. Accordingly, a case vide FIR No. 04/2022 under relevant sections of law has been registered at Police Station Rajpora and further investigation has been initiated, the handout added.

Govt issues revised...

patient host factors, local epidemiology and antimicrobial policy of the hospital, it said. The guidelines stated that steroids are not indicated and are harmful in asymptomatic and mild cases of COVID-19.

They are indicated only in hospitalised severe and critically ill COVID-19 cases under strict supervision, the guidelines said.

Steroids should be used at the right time, in right dose and for the right duration, they stated. Corticosteroids may be used in rapidly progressive moderate and all severe cases, such as dexamethasone 0.15 mg/kg, maximum dose six mg once a day or methylprednisolone 0.75 mg/kg, maximum dose 30 mg once a day, the guidelines stated.

They can be continued for five to seven days and tapered up to 10-14 days, depending on clinical assessment on daily basis, they stated.

Steroids should be avoided in the first three to five days since onset of symptoms as it prolongs viral shedding, the guidelines stated.

Anticoagulants are not indicated routinely and all hospitalized children should be evaluated for risk of developing thrombosis and monitored for development of thrombosis, the ministry said. As far post-COVID-19 care is concerned, the guidelines stated that children with asymptomatic infection or mild disease should receive routine childcare, appropriate vaccination (if eligible), nutrition counselling, and psychological support on follow up. In addition to the above, parents or caregivers of children, who suffered moderate to severe Covid, during discharge from hospital should be counselled regarding monitoring for persistence or worsening respiratory difficulty and explained the indications for bringing the child back to the facility, the guidelines stated.

Children who develop any organ specific dysfunction during hospital stay or subsequently, should receive appropriate care, they said.

These guidelines are dynamic, and will be reviewed and updated, on availability of new evidence, the ministry stated.

2 lakh COVID...

till now, 1.64 lakh genomes have been sequenced.

"In December, 16,000 genome sequencing was done, and genome sequence is important in terms of public health response. It is not beneficial to an individual to know if they are infected with Delta or Omicron because the testing procedure and treatment remains the same. So, genome sequencing is important to understand how to mould public health response," he said.

NITI Aayog Member (Health) Dr V K Paul said genome sequencing has to be strategic and has to be based on systematic collection of specimens.

"When Omicron started the most important phase was that when travellers are coming then what impact that has. Then in facilities it has to be monitored who was getting admitted, those infected with Omicron or Delta," he said.

He said that 269 sentinel centres have been established and these are still functioning. "So, there is no specific formula of genomic sequencing," Paul said.

CAG raps Home...

execution as of August 31, 2020. Similarly, the procurement of 413 CCTVs for police stations was under tendering process even in August 2020, the report said.

Excise collections in FY22 expected to exceed last fiscal's target by Rs 300 Cr in J&K

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The excise collection during the current fiscal year is expected to exceed the last year's target by Rs 300 crore, Additional Chief Secretary Finance Atal Dulloo said on Thursday. He made this observation while reviewing the functioning of the finance department in which other senior officers of the department were present on Thursday. "Excise collections during the (financial) year are expected to exceed the last (financial) year's target by Rs 300 crore," Dulloo said. He further said that SGST collections as on December 2021 have been 46 per cent higher than the corresponding period in the last year while IGST settlement has registered a growth of 35 per cent over the previous year in the same period. He said that stamp collection is 87 per cent higher than the previous year over the same period even as MST (motor and spirit tax) collections have shown a growth of 46.41 crore. The department will ensure that all 24 services in the excise department are integrated in the single window under the business reform action plan of the department, he said. The Additional Chief Secretary further directed the department to bring all 16 services under e-governance on top priority.

CRIME REPORT

Woman charred, 4 injured in devastating fire at Jamalata

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: A woman was charred to death while four persons including an elderly couple and personnel of Fire & Emergency Department got injured in a devastating fire incident, in which four houses were completely gutted and three others were partially damaged at Jamalata Nawakadal locality of Srinagar on Thursday.

As per details, fire erupted in one of houses at congested locality, apparently due to some gas cylinder blast. Subsequently, the fire spread to other houses and caused extensive damage to all four structures and partial damage to three others before it was doused.

In accident, a woman who failed to move out was charred alive while three civilians including an elderly couple identified as Abdul Aziz and his wife Fazia Begum got injured along with a leading fireman Mohammad Rafiq. All injured have been hospitalised. The deceased woman has been identified as Shakeela, wife of Ghulam Mohammad Khosa.

Private company engaged in Thannamandi road work booked for illegal mining

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

RAJOURI: Police on Thursday booked a private company engaged in vital road project for widening of Rajouri-Thannamandi-Bufliyaz road and registered a case for illegal mining and extraction of mining minerals. As per details, a private company namely Dharam Raj Contracts India Pvt. Ltd was engaged by Border Roads Organization (BRO) for road widening project of Rajouri-Thannamandi-Bufliyaz road. The company was found indulged in illegal mining from a local river by using excavator, dumpers and other machinery causing huge loss to UT exchequer as mining was being done without paying any royalty to Government and without any allotment of mining block. The company has decayed river bed which is also causing ecological imbalance as level of water has gone down significantly.

The company illegally extracted RBM from natural source and crushed the same by stone crusher illegally installed at village Planger. A huge stock of crushed materials approximately 70,000-80,000 metric tonnes were also found at crusher during inspection. Police said that continuing

The CAG said 669 vehicles of various types (bulletproof bunkers, Rakshak vehicles, Gypsy, anti-riot vehicles, hydraulic crane, JCB, tractor) were sanctioned and only 547 had been procured, of which 499 vehicles had been delivered as of August 2020.

It pointed out that purchases worth Rs 100.27 crore, which included vehicles, body protectors, bulletproof patkas, anti-riot vehicles, farm track tractors and backhoe loaders were made by the police headquarters (PHQ) either on repeat order basis or from original manufacturers without ascertaining reasonability of rates by way of inviting tenders.

The GAG also pointed out that audit scrutiny of records revealed that the department had made purchases from particular firms and single sources, which resulted in an avoidable expenditure of Rs 9.20 crore.

The department purchased seven MBP vehicles at higher rates from Ashok Leyland Limited, thereby incurring an extra expenditure, it said.

"Despite lower rates offered by Tata Motors Limited for MBP vehicles, vehicles were procured from Ashok Leyland Defense Systems Limited at higher rates," it added.

Although the department had taken the plea that MBP vehicles are a proprietary item, the process of placing supply orders with both the firms was self-contradictory, the CAG said.

"Thus, considering the nature of urgency in such purchases, the department may adopt a streamlined procedure, consistent with the objectives of the high-end security," it noted.

63 pc healthcare...

are eligible," he said. NITI Aayog Member (Health) Dr V K Paul said there are still about 1 crore people (in the over 60 age group) who are yet to get their first dose.

"And 25 per cent are yet to get a second dose. This is unfinished work. 52 per cent children have been covered in the 15-17 years age group, more healthcare and frontline workers should also come forward. Availability is not at all an issue here," he said. Paul said there are still 6.5 crore people whose second dose is overdue.

"Why should it be overdue, everyone should take their second dose. All those who are not fully protected will not be a danger to itself but others too. We have to accept masks and protect our seniors and the prevention tool here is vaccination and we need to take it in this paradigm," he said.

Back-deep into...

vigilance along LoC. We are not scared of such situations and circumstances", a soldier guarding a forward post through his surveillance equipment tells the visiting journalists here.

The troops had to battle with nefarious designs of cunning enemy troops and their snipers, terrorists awaiting for opportunity to sneak in, and threat of attacks by Pakistan's border action teams (BATs) on one side and extreme cold climatic conditions, inhospitable terrains and deep gorges on their side of the borderline with Pakistan.

Another jawan says that they have to fight snow, cold climatic conditions and inhospitable terrains during long range patrolling to guard LoC.

"Visibility in cloudy and snow fall conditions along the LoC becomes so poor that we cannot see our own jawans even at a distance of some metres. At the same time, we have to protect ourselves from nefarious designs of Pakistan", he said.

Ahead of the winter, army prepares rope networks to forward and hilly posts to patrol the LoC with the help of these ropes, they said adding that they are armed with a new set of rifles including Israel made light machine guns 'Negev NG-7' and high tech surveillance equipment.

NG-7 SLR, which in automatic mode has a rate of fire of over 600-700 rounds per minute and weighs over 8 kg, was inducted into Army along LoC last year as it can target up to one kilometer.

"Due to heavy snowfall, we move and patrol LoC with the help of the rope. It is put in place ahead of winters as a part of winter strategy", one Army man said.

Another jawan manning a high-altitude post at Hajipur bulge says that they have now Isreali weapons, which had replaced old Indian INSAS rifle.

"It is effective weapon. It is an Isreali rifle. Its weight is 8.2 kgs. It has a one kilometer range. Its cycling fire rate is 600-800 rounds per minute", he said.

The officials says that it is daily drill to patrol LoC, keep surveillance on launching pads and infiltrating terrorists, movement across LoC, alertness from snipers and Pakistan's BAT team and check border fencing from any intrusion.

The Indian Army along with fighting the enemy has to secure their own safety in the changing weather conditions from time to time.

"The weather conditions can turn extreme and thus bunkers have been revamped. Now army personnel guarding the borderline have graded its bunker to Fiber Reinforced plastic (FRP) to sustain temperature changes", an Army personnel said.

"We come back from duty guarding LoC and patrolling after six hours in this FRP bunker. We instantly feel comfortable from extreme chilly weather as the temperature is hot inside. We have heating arrangements as well inside", a jawan said.

He says inside it "we feel home like conditions".

Jawans maintain that they had over 200 to 250 terrorists staged on launching pads across LoC in Nijapira area ready to infiltrate into this side.

"We keep a continuous surveillance on their movement across through high tech equipments", a army man deployed on a surveillance, said.

Pakistan tried to activate border belt of twin border districts of Rajouri-Poonch in 2021 by pushing in more terrorists to engineer terrorists incidents in the area but the Indian Army foiled those bids.

Situation in the past year in Poonch-Rajouri sector has become fragile following series of encounters, and killing of half-a-dozen terrorists which has forced jawans, officers and commanding officers to remain on their toes along the 225-km-long LoC.

Jawan manning a LMG post, bang on Zero line in HP sub-sector pointed out in the dark and said in a defiant tone, "We will not be cowed down."

BSF seizes 7.25 Kg....

morning a comprehensive search operation was launched," the statement read.

The troops fired at the flying object and also lit up the area with illumination bombs. It said seven packets of heroin, totally weighing 7.25 kg, were recovered.

Further investigation is being carried out, the BSF stated.

SC ropes in...

with respect to deaths recorded, the claims are not received and/or the amount of compensation is not paid, in that case, the concerned State Legal Services Authority through the concerned District Legal Services Authority and/or Taluka Legal Services Authority, as the case may be, shall reach to the concerned persons so that claims are submitted

its drive against menace of illegal mining a multi-pronged strategy was devised by Thannamandi police in which police party headed by SHO Thannamandi Mohd Shoket, acting stringently on specific inputs, raided at different locations in various areas and seized a dumper and an Excavator from the spot. FIR 12/2022 under sections 379/431/34 of IPC was registered at Police Station Thannamandi and investigation is going on.

Woman among two bootleggers arrested, approx 45 lts of illicit liquor seized

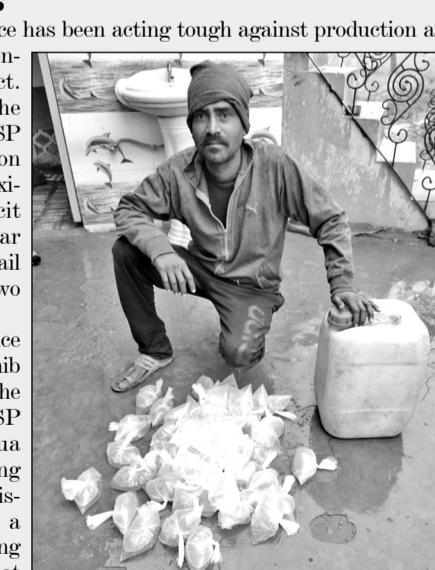
■ STATE TIMES NEWS

KATHUA: Kathua Police has been acting tough against production and sale of illegal liquor menace in District.

Accordingly, under the overall supervision of SSP R C Kotwal, Police on Thursday seized approximately 45 lts of illicit liquor in Kathua near Sakta Chak & Kangrail village and arrested two persons.

As per details, a police team led by Insp O P Chib SHO Kathua under the supervision of DySP Headquarters Kathua Shammie Kumar during patrolling duty in its jurisdictional area noticed a suspect who was selling illicit liquor to people at backside of Jhelum Dhaba near canal. During checking, police team apprehended the accused, identified as Tarseen Kumar, son of Suraj Kumar, resident of Beeko Bridge Near Railway Station Amritsar, at present Sakta Chak Tehsil & District Kathua. On physical checking, approximately 20 lts of illicit liquor was recovered from his illegal possession.

In another instance, police team of Police Station Kathua noticed a suspect namely Suman Devi, wife of Sham Lal, resident of Kangriyal Tharhara Tehsil & District Kathua, who was also doing illegal trade of selling illicit liquor to people. At that time, she was carrying huge quantity of illicit liquor (approximately 25 lts) which was recovered and seized by police. Duo was arrested and two FIRs No. 29 & 30/2022 under sections 48 (A) of Excise Act were registered against them at Police Station Kathua.



and actual payments are made to them, the bench said.

Justice Shah, while hearing the submissions on Wednesday, had said that the top court may follow the Gujarat High Court model involving State Legal Services Authority for providing relief to the affected families.

The top court was hearing a batch of pleas filed by advocate Gaurav Kumar Bansal and intervenors, represented by advocate Sumeer Sodhi, seeking ex-gratia assistance to family members of COVID-19 victims.

It said, we also direct the concerned States to cross-check/verify whether with respect to all the deaths recorded/registered, the claims are received or not and if it is found that with respect to some of the deaths recorded/ registered, still the claims/applications for payment of compensation are not received, as observed hereinabove, the States must reach to them as the relevant particulars/ information must be available with the States

. The Gujarat High Court on February 17, 2001, in its verdict passed in the aftermath of the massive earthquake on a plea raising apprehensions on improper utilisation of relief materials and funds for the quake victims leaving the victims high and dry, has appointed District Judge in each district, who is ex-officio Chairman of District Legal Services Authority constituted under the Legal Services Authorities Act, as Ombudsman in his district.

It had said that the role of Ombudsman is not to supervise or oversee the relief and rehabilitation operations of the Governmental agencies, but he would receive complaints and grievances of the quake victims, and after necessary investigation with the assistance of Legal Services Authorities and NGOs, bring them to the notice of the government officials and agencies in charge of relief and rehabilitation programmes.

On the morning of January 26, 2001, an earthquake of a high magnitude, more than 7 on Richter Scale, had shaken the whole of Gujarat and more devastatingly of its entire Kutch district, leaving