

Lack of timely steps deepening J&K's COVID-19 crisis: Bhalla

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: JKPC Vice President and former Minister, Raman Bhalla on Sunday expressed deep concern over the high number of casualties, especially in Jammu, and urged for immediate measures to save the loss of lives.

He appealed Administration to address shortage of hospitals beds, medicine, ambulance services and other facilities and stressed the urgent need to address those on top priority.

This was observed by former Minister after visiting several vaccination centres in Jammu City.

He was accompanied by Satish Sharma Ex Chairman JMC, Jatin Vasisht, Sunpreet Singh, Sonu Verma, Baldev Singh Wazir.

He asked the LG administration to upgrade the health infrastructure on a war footing as the situation is "extremely disappointing"



Former Minister, Raman Bhalla visiting a vaccination centre.

and needs to be contained to avoid further loss of lives.

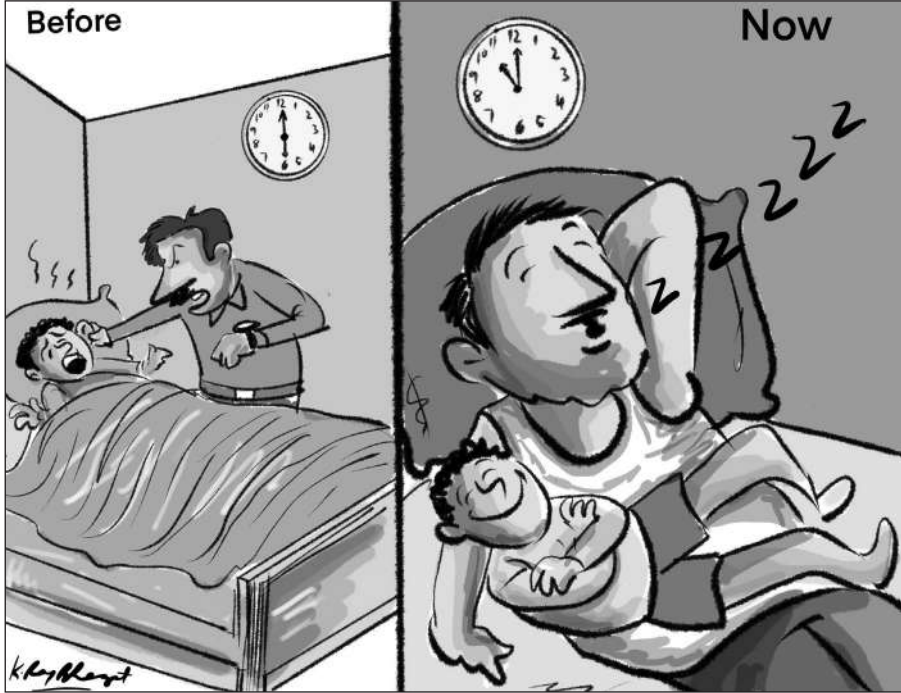
Bhalla urged Administration to reach out and be in touch with the patients in hospitals or home quarantine and provide them all possible help by way of medicines, food packets, masks or arranging oxygen cylinders from private outlets or any other required help to ensure timely relief to patients," he said.

Expressing serious concern over surges in cases in rural areas, Bhalla suggested Govt to ensure COVID

as politicization rather than being accepted in the spirit that the nation is in crisis, every single life matters and, therefore, "all of us must stand together and do whatever we can to save lives regardless of our politics. Why are free vaccines not being made available to 18-45 year olds?"

The new variants are supposedly even more virulent and many young people are affected. And why is the government allowing middlemen into the equation without price controls?" he said. Govt see precious human life in terms of demand and supply.

He asserted that the Congress is firm in its commitment towards the people of India to remain constructive and supportive during this crisis. We have not and will not politicize this unprecedented human tragedy under any circumstances. We will, however, continue to push the government to act, we will continue



Police hands-over 17 boys to parents after counselling in Srinagar

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
SRINAGAR: Police on Sunday handed over seventeen boys to their parents after proper counselling in Central Kashmir's Srinagar district.



Police handing-over boys to family members.

In a statement issued here, the police said that these boys were arrested for participating in protests in violation of Section 51 of DM Act during Corona Curfew.

The police spokesperson further stated that the parents assured that they will guide their children to not engage in any activities which are against the law and in times of Covid can lead to spread of infection.

SSP Srinagar Sandeep Chaudhary appealed to the youngsters to concentrate on their studies and career building. He told them that there is a section in society who manage best facilities and life opportunities for themselves and their families but use boys from humble backgrounds as fodder for further

ing their careers and agendas.

Those who push young boys on path of violence never show up to help the parents of those whose careers get destroyed through engaging in illegal activities, he said.

He assured the parents that Jammu and Kashmir Police is duty bound to release their wards after counselling in transparent manner. The larger goal of preventing youngsters from taking greater leap of criminality is sole motto of Community

Bond because parents and elders of localities take responsibility for better conduct on part of these boys, he said. SP South Srinagar Sajjad Shah, SP North Srinagar Mubashir Bukhari and other officers of district were also present during the interaction, reads the statement.

It's pertinent to mention that scores of boys were arrested across Srinagar after they had participated in Pro-Palestine protests.

Kazmi welcomes release of welfare fund in favour of NoKs of deceased employees

Appeals to declare all employees performing essential/ Frontline services as Corona Warriors

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Apni Party Trade Union (APTU) J&K President Ajaz Kazmi on Sunday welcomed the decision of Government of Jammu & Kashmir for disbursement of welfare fund in favour of next of kins (NoKs) of the employees who lost their precious lives due to present COVID-19 pandemic.

Kazmi in a statement issued today said that he hailed this decision of Government but simultaneously appealed for doling out usual compensation in favour of their families as well by providing one job per family to tide over their deprivations as their lone bread earners have lost the battle of their lives due to this COVID-19 virus and left their families in distress and pain.

Kazmi said the Next of kins of employees of PDD or other departments who lost their lives during this COVID pandemic



while performing their assigned duties be also given compensation and provided with usual jobs to eke out their livelihood.

Kazmi also demanded that the employees of all such departments like doctors, paramedical staff, Municipal corporations, PHE, PDD etc including daily wagers who are performing frontline and essential duties during this tough time braving all the dangers to their lives as well as to their families be declared as corona warriors and well be duly rewarded.

He further expressed that Journalists who are fighting insurgency and working under testing times for more than three decades be also treated properly and declared frontline warriors as they are doing a commendable job during all the times including time of COVID-19 pandemic also braving all odds.

Kohli urges business houses to extend support for mitigating people's sufferings

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Drawing attention of UT administration towards increasing mortality rate in Jammu region, Pankaj Kohli, social activist, on Sunday urged the business houses to come forward and cooperate with administration for mitigating sufferings of people in the hour of crisis.



In a press statement issued here, Kohli said, "Everyone knows that death rate due to COVID-19 is increasing in Jammu region from last few weeks and authorities are unable to curb the trend. The Government of the day, especially medical experts, needs to explain this phenomenon

so that the doubts created in the minds of people are cleared." He further said that even Centre has sent a team to Jammu for finding the reasons behind increasing cases/deaths due to COVID.

Kohli further appealed to all political parties to rise above political values and serve people on humanitarian grounds. He asked administration to allow medium class shopkeepers to attend their business houses once or twice in a week on rotational basis. He also appealed business houses to come forward in reducing problems of different strata of people suffering from economic distress.

COVID fatalities can be reduced by timely testing, hospitalisation: WHO Surveillance Officer

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: COVID fatalities can be reduced as appropriate action including timely testing and hospitalisation can save precious lives, said Surveillance Medical Officer of World Health Organisation, Jammu, Dr Ravinder Pal Singh, here on Sunday.

"It is the duty of every individual to protect oneself and his family against COVID-19 infection. The virus shows no mercy towards any individual", warns the Doctor. However, he said that COVID is no taboo and the majority of the patients who contract the infection recover easily. "We can ensure prevention from the infection by avoiding three Cs- Crowded spaces, Closed spaces and Close contact" advised the Doctor adding



"The three can help make or break the chain of transmission of the virus."

Dr Ravinder Pal further urged the public to keep helping families in need while observing COVID appropriate behaviour. "Let us not make it a taboo. If some family in your neighbourhood has a COVID patient, do not ostracise them. Give them support, moral or otherwise. Most patients recover conveniently

ly after infection', he added.

"Many of the COVID fatalities can easily be prevented by timely testing and hospitalisation", said Dr Ravinder sounding highly optimistic. He said that early detection and treatment can help save lives. "Don't have any apprehension about the test. If you observe any symptoms in yourself or a family member, immediately go for a test. Have no stigma against it", he pleaded.

Echoing similar views, Professor and Head of Department, Chest Disease, GMC Jammu, Dr Rahul Gupta urged the public to get vaccinated. He said that both the vaccines, Covishield and Covaxin are safe and have somewhat similar efficacy.

The Professor dispelled all rumours about the vaccine

and said, 'I am myself vaccinated against the virus and therefore I can go about my job, am treating COVID patients with greater confidence and sense of security against fatal infection. Everybody should get vaccinated according to eligibility and available time slots', he said.

"Some mild side effects like fever, headache or nausea are natural and there is nothing to worry about if they appear after vaccination" Dr Gupta added. On the contrary, he said, it comes due to the body's immune-response, a sign that the vaccine is doing its job within your body.

He advised that if the side effects persist even after two days, one should visit a health centre or consult a doctor.

Meanwhile, the Doctors said that all COVID-related queries and doubts can be cleared on the helpline number 0191 2571616. Public can also call the Divisional Control Room at 0191-2520982, 2549676, 2674444, 2674115, 2674908. Moreover, J&K Government has started a live phone-in health programme on Gulistan TV channel which is aired twice daily- from 8:30 AM to 9:00 AM and 8:30 PM to 9:00 PM. The eminent doctors respond to public queries during the programme. Anybody from the public can call on the above-mentioned Divisional Control Room phone numbers and seek information related to COVID treatment, home isolation and other non-COVID health problems.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: The residents of Kot Bhalwal are facing tough time in getting basic health facilities as Government Sub District Hospital (SDH), Kot Bhalwal has been declared as dedicated COVID Hospital by the District Administration.

The OPD and Emergency services were suspended temporarily in SDH Kot Bhalwal and people have to visit Public Health Centers (PHCs) and Community Health Centers (CHCs) established in other Panchayats of the block for basic health care.

SDH Kot Bhalwal is a newly constructed 70-bedded hospital having five ventilators, 22 oxygen supported beds and two ambulances. The hospital is

admitting patients routed only from CD and Gandhi Nagar hospitals, which were recently declared as triage centers for referral of COVID-19 patients to dedicated COVID hospitals across the district.

"A separate health centre must be established here", said Sarpanch Raj Dev Singh Jamwal adding, "The old age patients and children are suffering badly with the closure of OPDs in SDH Kot Bhalwal as it is very difficult for them to travel to nearby PHCs in absence of public transport due to restrictions imposed amid Corona Curfew".

"Moreover, the SDH Kot Bhalwal has only two ambulances which are not sufficient to cater to the needs of locals", Jamwal said.

When contacted, BMO Dr. Sushma Mattoo said that the OPDs and emergency services have been suspended due to pandemic situation and all facilities were shifted to PHCs where emergency treatment and procedures would be conducted.

"People had been asked to avail all other important facilities from the PHCs which are running 24x7", she said and added that the vaccination and COVID testing centers are also running smoothly and staff is working efficiently to meet needs of the public.

Meanwhile, locals are asking the health authorities to adopt some alternate measures, so that they can also get basic health facilities at SDH Kot Bhalwal.

NC seeks DRDO hospitals in non-GMC districts of J&K

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: National Conference today sought establishment of well oxygenated 100 bed-hospitals by the Defence and Research Development Organisation (DRDO) in the non-GMC districts of Jammu and Kashmir, keeping in view the spread of COVID in the semi-urban and rural areas.

In a statement, State Secretary and former MLC Rattan Lal Gupta the situation is worsening with each passing day and there seems to be no let up in view of deficiency of beds and supply of oxygen. He lauded the efforts of the DRDO in expediting the establishment of 500 bedded Hospital in Bhagwati Nagar Jammu but regretted over the attempts of the BJP in deriving political capital out of it. What is the motivation of the BJP leaders behind visiting the site, he asked, adding that when in power they ditched the Jammu division by compromising on the crucial health sector. At this juncture, baking breads on dead bodies speaks volumes about the political bankruptcy of the BJP, he lamented.

Gupta said that at this critical juncture we don't want to politicize the issues but also can't be mute spectators as well.

Instead of making tall claims the administration must come out with a blueprint about measures taken for combating pandemic. The Jammu people need answers about lackadaisical approach adopted in setting up of Oxygen Generating Plants and designating more hospitals to meet the exigencies, he said. Gupta also expressed concern over scarce availability of oxygen especially in far-off places and referred to the grim situation in Kishtwar and other areas where patients are virtually grappling with the death due to administrative apathy. He sought mobilization of all resources in putting the health sector on rails to instill confidence among panic ridden people. The State Secretary reiterated his demand for a probe into delay in the setting up of oxygen generation plants across the Jammu Province, saying the hollow statements would not minimize the enormity of the negligence. He also sought adding up in the bed strength for patients in view of surge in the COVID cases.

Gupta saluted the frontline warriors including doctors, paramedics and other staff and organisations in braving the situation despite various odds for saving human lives.

Div Com inspects progress on oxygen gen plant at SMGS hospital

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Dr Raghav Langer on Sunday visited Shri Maharaja Gulab Singh (SMGS) Hospital and inspected the progress on the under construction oxygen generation plant.



Div Com Jammu, Dr Raghav Langer inspecting under construction oxygen generation plant at SMGS Hospital.

He was accompanied by Chief Engineer JPDCL, Superintendent Engineer, MED, Superintendent Engineer PWD, Medical Superintendent SMGS, Deputy Medical Superintendent SMGS and other concerned officers.

The Divisional Commissioner took a round of various sections of the hospital including the sites of Oxygen Generation Plant with Manifold system and under construction 250-bedded block, etc.

At the Oxygen Generation plant, the concerned Engineers briefed the Div about the work completed so far and ongoing works and expected date of completion of 3000 LPM Oxygen Generation Plant. It was informed that the work was in progress on the Plant Room and flooring work has been completed. The Divisional Commissioner directed the PWD to expedite

the pace of work and ensure completion of Plant Room at the earliest. He also directed the MED to start the work on installation of the Oxygen Generation Plant at the earliest.

Responding to the need for shut down for shifting of electric poles, the Div Com directed the engineers of JPDCL and hospital authorities to conduct a joint survey and find out the power back up/ alternate source of power so that the power supply to the hospital is not affected. He also passed directions to JPDCL to install an independent transformer for the upcoming Oxygen Generation Plant and keep power set up ready before its functioning.

The Divisional Commissioner directed the

concerned executing agencies to work in close coordination and expedite the pace of work for early commissioning of the Plant.

Meanwhile, the Divisional Commissioner also reviewed the functioning of the already installed 500 LPM Oxygen Generation Plant and manifold system.

The hospital authorities apprised the Div Com about the requirement of oxygen pipeline. The Div Com directed the engineers of MED to expedite the work on installation of Medical Gas pipelines in the wards to augment the bed capacity with ventilators and oxygen supported beds.

Later, the Divisional Commissioner chaired a meeting with HoD Pediatrics & HoD Gynae/Obs and

Increase testing capacity, intensify lockdown: Shiv Sena J&K



Shiv Sena Jammu & Kashmir unit members distributing food among poor people.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Shiv Sena Jammu & Kashmir unit on Sunday distributed food among poor and helpless people at various places in Jammu including Trikuta Nagar, Gandhi Nagar, Railway Station, Vikram Chowk, Government Medical College etc.

Speaking on the occasion, Shiv Sena President Ashwini Gupta urged people to follow all precautions religiously, as notified by the Government, from time to time. "Corona can be prevented from becoming a terrible epidemic only by joint efforts of Government and public,"

said Gupta. He further asked the administration for enhancing testing and intensifying lockdown restrictions for containing the spread of the virus.

Others present on the occasion included Raj Singh General Secretary, Rakesh Kak Working President, Nathpal Choudhary Working President, Ramesh Gupta Senior Vice President, Raju Salaria Vice President, Pawan Singh Manhas Vice President, Mangru Ram State Secretary, Sanjeev Kumar Secretary, Sanjeev Kumar Sudan District President R S Pura and Ganesh Bhagat.