Work on strategic Z-Morh, Zojila tunnels will be completed ahead of schedule: NHIDCL

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SONAMARG: Work on the strategically important Z-Morh and Zojila tunnels on the Srinagar-Leh highway is going on at a fast pace and will be completed ahead of schedule, the NHIDCL said on Monday.

Speaking to reporters near the Z-Morh tunnel site here in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district, NHIDCL executive director Brigadier Gurjeet Singh Kambo said the 14.15-km long Zojila tunnel will be Asia's longest bi-directional tunnel.

Both projects are under the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL) and Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari will visit them on Tuesday to review the construction work.

"The work on both the tunnels is going on at a fast pace and we are confident that it will be completed ahead of the schedule, before the contracted time of completion," Kambo said.

The project cost of the Z-Morh tunnel is Rs 2,300 crore and that of the Zojila tunnel is Rs 4,600 crore.

Giving details, he said work on the 6.5-km Z-Morh tunnel recommenced last year and it has to be completed by 2023 according to the original target line.

"But, work has been done very very speedily. We are ahead of the schedule. The breakthrough on the escape tunnel had taken place in June, and for the main tunnel, connectivity was established 72 hours prior which was on September 24. That was a landmark day for Sonamarg," Kambo said.

The Z-Morh tunnel between Gagangir and Sonmarg will provide connectivity in all weather conditions between Srinagar in Jammu and Kashmir and Kargil in Ladakh.

Kambo said this year, the Sonamarg township will be kept open, selectively, for traffic for the the first time in winter.

He said that Union minister Gadkari will be the first dignitary to cross the main tunnel. "We are sure that by the middle of next year, all work will be completed," Kambo said.

For the Z-Morh tunnel, there is a five-km approach road and the tunnel is 6.5-km long and is bi-directional. It also has an escape tunnel for emergencies, he said.

The Zojila tunnel, Kambo said, has an 18-km approach road, and state-of-the-art technology has been adopted from European nations in its construction.

"It also has two small tunnels one two-km-long and the other 500 metres --that have got two tubes one for the upcoming traffic and the other for the down going. With all the technology used, we are confident that we will keep the approach road open in all situations," he said.

The executive director said the tunnel is through the Zojila Pass at a height of 11,500 feet which keeps the road cut off for about five to six months.

"The main tunnel is 14.15-km and it is being made at an altitude of 9,000-9,500 feet. It has three vertical shafts for ventilation and also for an access to speed up the work on the tunnel," Kambo said.

"The work started in October 2020 and in about a year, the work on all fronts started, including on both sides of the tunnel, vertical shafts, road, bridges,' he said.

The target date for completion of the tunnel is 2026, but "we are confident that we will be able to do the work much earlier", he said.

"We have already done nearly about 500 metres of the tunnel excavation and every day we are carrying out a large number of blasts and the excavation of 30-40 metres in the tunnel portion alone," Kambo said.

With these tunnels coming through, tourists can more easily visit Sonamarg, and connectivity to Ladakh will be established on the Kashmir side, he added.

He said both the Apco the construction agency for Z-Morh tunnel -- and MEIL for Zojila tunnel -- have taken up the works of the two tunnels in a very diligent manner and they are doing a wonderful,job for the nation.

He said in the past five to six years, Rs 6,500 crore worth of projects have been completed in J-K and Rs 22,500 crore worth of projects are presently ongoing.

Establishment of Integrated Command Control Centre for Jammu City in progress

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: An Integrated Command and Control Center (ICCC) is being established in the Jammu City under Smart Cities Mission with an aim to create a better IT based monitoring system to bring various smart services and solutions under one umbrella and to develop the digital ecosystem that will enable development of smart solutions.

Jammu Smart City Limited (JSCL) has recently signed a contract agreement with Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) for setting up ICCC for Jammu city at the cost of Rs 53 crore. The ICCC, which also includes a Data Centre, will integrate all civic and essential services into a single platform aimed at monitoring and addressing public issues on a real time basis. A giant screen would be installed at the centre, where data related to all these services will be monitored by the officials.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) JSCL, Avny Lavasa on Monday visited one of the two centres that will be set up in Jammu city. She discussed the functioning of the centre with the officials and also inquired about installation of the Intelligent Traffic Management System (ITMS) with the Traffic police officers.

The ICCC will serve as the nerve centre for various citizen centric services and will lead to efficient monitoring and delivery of services. The Integrated Command and Control Centre, being set up in Jammu City is envisioned to help better address the needs of citizens, thus channelising citizen-centric holistic governance and act as a decision support system.

Once operational, the ICCC will have representatives from all departments stationed at the centre headquarters with the aim to put in place a mechanism of synergy between concerned departments for prompt coordination and redressal of public issues.

Through an ICCC, a centralised location, it is possible to quickly disseminate information to citizens on a real-time basis through variable message displays (VMD), PA systems, etc, to facilitate faster action and better management. The ambitious project of ICCC also includes an Intelligent Traffic Management System (ITMS) which will be linked to the control centre. Deployment of ITMS is the best solution to ease out the traffic congestion in the city and to ensure a smooth flow of traffic along with the safety of the drivers and pedestrians.

ITMS can assist in addressing and resolving a variety of traffic law enforcement challenges. It is an Artificial Intelligence-based application that works in conjunction with cameras set at traffic intersections to detect and identify vehicles that are breaking traffic rules and provide real-time notifications to the Central Command Center. ITMS is a smart and intelligent mobility platform that integrates traffic management devices and equipment effectively.

Deployment of ITMS solution will help to enhance the overall reliability and operational efficiency of the traffic management of the city.

ITMS will be deployed at the identified junctions along with the necessary cameras for area monitoring. The proposed ITMS will involve setting up of ANPR, RLVD, Box and PTZ cameras across identified Junctions/Intersections in the city.

The key identified locations for installation of surveillance cameras are traffic junctions and the entry/exit points of the city. CCTV surveillance at traffic junctions shall be managed with the help of RLVD, ANPR, and PTZ Camera & Box Cameras along with accessories for reviewing, recording and storage of video feeds of CCTV Cameras. JSCL intends to deploy 633 cameras (65 PTZ, 147 RLVD, and 273 ANPR) and 148 Box cameras as part of this ITMS project.

The proposed ITMS system shall house software and analytics applications to facilitate deployment of intelligent analytics on the selected cameras and raise alarms & triggers in case of unwarranted activity/policy violations etc. Analytics software shall bring significant benefits to review the incidences and look for suspicious activity in both live video feeds and recorded footages. Jammu Smart City is closely working with JK police to make the Intelligent Traffic Management System (ITMS) functional in the coming months. This will help the city officials in addressing traffic related challenges like traffic congestion and traffic violation etc.

MSGVS hails LG for identifying deadwood

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: A meeting of Mandli Surya Gram Vikas Samiti (MSGVS) (Regd) was held today under its Chairman J. S Salathia at Jammu in which the participants highly appreciated the Lt Governor Manoj Sinha for taking the historical decision to deal with the 'Dead Wood' officials who misuse their appointment and positions, while away the time in the offices and attend only the cases of their own interest.

Salathia said that such officials and officers keep on giving dates to the petitioners, tease them and exhaust them to such an extent that they come forward to please them. Many of these are totally disappointed and give up their demands. Salathia said that dead wood people are in abundance in the departments of Revenue and Social Welfare. A proper screening process will bring them to light leaving back a lesson for the youngsters. Salathia further suggested that the property of such people should also be checked if it is within the limit of their known source of income.

Prominent among others present in the meeting include Parveen Sharma, Joginder Sharma, Manjeet Singh, Karan Singh, Santokh Singh and Happy Singh.

Deaths of infants due to spurious drugs

NHRC reiterates directives regarding submission of proof of compensation payment to NoKs of victims

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Amidst delaying tactics by J&K Administration, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has once again directed J&K Union Territory Administration to pay monetary compensation to next of kin of infants/children, who allegedly died due to consumption of spurious cough syrup in Ramnagar Tehsil of Udhampur during December 2019 - January 2020. In a press statement issued here on Monday, Sukesh C Khajuria, an eminent social Activist of J&K, said that NHRC vide its recent proceeding dated September 21, 2021 in case No.80/09/14/2020 has asked the Chief Secretary, UT of Jammu & Kashmir to submit any additional/final report of proof of payment of aforesaid amount of Rs 3 lakh to NoK of each deceased infant/child by November 26, 2021 to Commission.

Earlier, UT Administration told the Commission that the proposal of the payment of compensation is under active consideration in the General Administration Department (GAD) for placing it before the Administrative Council for consideration and approval. Interestingly, while on the one hand, the UT Administration has been trying to portray that it was willing to pay compensation to the victims, on the other hand, it has even filed a Special Leave Petition (SLP) in the Supreme Court against order of J&K High Court, which has not only rejected the plea of the administration against payment of compensation but also passed strictures against the conduct of the bureaucracy. It seems that UT Administration is trying to delay the matter by pleading approval by the Administrative Council headed by Lt Governor Manoj Sinha and also subject to the outcome of the SLP pending before the Supreme Court of India, the Apex Court of the country. Pertinent to mention here that issue of deaths of infants was taken up by Sukesh C Khajuria with NHRC seeking compensation for the families of the victims and fixing of the responsibility of the concerned authorities.

Admin announces Best Teacher Award scheme for teachers of school

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Monday announced the 'Best Teacher Awards' scheme for the teachers of the school and higher education departments.

In an order issued by the General Administration Department (GAD), the government said that it has notified the scheme for the institution of 'Best Teacher Awards' for encouraging and motivating dedicated Teachers teaching faculty working in schools, colleges, universities in the Jammu and Kashmir for School Education and Higher Education Department respectively.

"The School Education Department has a total of 10 ten awards that include 5 for Jammu and five for Kashmir Division.

Stating the prize, the administration said that the teachers will be awarded a silver medal of 40 grams, a certificate and Rs. 50,000 as award money. "Each award shall be given annually on teachers' day on September-05," the order reads. The GAD also said, "The Union territory Level Selection Committee (UTLSC) shall review the list of 20 candidates as forwarded or uploaded by the Divisional Level Selection Committees and carry out a fresh assessment and shortlist nominations, accordingly."

"For Higher education department, the government said that at least eight awards will be for college teachers, four each for Jammu and Kashmir Divisions. Two more awards will be for university teachers, one each for Jammu and Kashmir Division," it reads.

"The administration said that the committees shall screen the applications of the university and college teachers and recommend sixty applicants, including forty for college teachers (Twenty each for two divisions) and twenty nominations for University Teachers with ten each for the two divisions," the administration said.

Court rejects pre-arrest bail plea of AEE in molestation case

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Principal Sessions Judge Reasi R.N Wattal rejected the pre-arrest bail application of Assistant Executive Engineer posted as Bhawan in molestation case.

Principal Sessions Judge Reasi R.N Wattal while rejecting the bail application of Sunit Mahajan who is presently posted as Assistant Executive Engineer at Mata Vaishno Devi Bhawan, observed that the Mata Vaishno Devi is very sacred place for Hindus all over the world and daily thousands of pilgrims reach to Vaishno Devi on foot or by other means of transport to have Darshans of Pidies at the Bhavan. The accused being totally disrespectful to the place has outraged the modesty of a young pilgrim to fulfill his sexual lust and as such does not deserve the concession of bail at this stage in anticipation of his arrest. Any concession in favour of petitioner for bail shall be outrageous and faith that a common man has got in this prestigious institution particularly devotees of Mata Vaishno Devi shall be eroded.

According to the FIR that complainant of Panchkula moved a written application before SDPO Katra that complainant came to Mata Vaishno Devi Katra for Darshan on 20.09.2021 on Vande Bharat train, at 2:00 PM, Sunit Mahajan called her that he is working as A.E.E in Shrine Board at Bhavan, told her to directly come at Bhavan and not stay at Katra, she took a pony and one Pithu person and reached Bhavan, at 5:40 PM, the accused made her to sit in his room, served her water and tea, took her to Darshans, before Arti the accused told her that he will leave for Katra where he resides and will leave for Katra at 6:00 PM, however, instead he stayed at Bhavan in his room where she was sitting, at 8:30 PM, the complainant wanted to go for a dinner but the accused forced her and told her that he will send her servant for food, the servant brought the food in the room itself and accused started to click the pictures from his mobile, in the evening at 9:30 he told him where she will stay at night and told him to allot him room, in reciprocal the accused told her to stay in his room, use his bed. The complainant told him that she will not sleep here and allot another room and accused told her that he will sleep on ground and told the complainant to sleep on the bed, the complainant refused and at 11:30 he gave her another room adjoining to her room and sat there till 12:00 AM and before leaving the room, the accused forcibly physically touched her without her consent, kissed her on the cheeks and hugged her and in the morning she came to the police station and moved the application. It is on this report, the FIR No. 09/2021 under section 354 was registered and investigation commenced. Principal Sessions Judge Reasi R.N Wattal after hearing Adv Rakesh Jeet Singh for the applicant observed that petitioner is involved in the offences that are against the woman folk. In the recent time we have seen increase in the offences against the women enormously. The women are afraid of going outside. Any concession of bail in favour of the petitioner shall not be taken any good taste by the society at large and women folk in particular. Any concession of bail shall positively boot those who believe in exploiting the women folk for their sexual lust and the provision for anticipatory bail is for those who apprehend arrest at the hands of police agencies on the basis of cases instituted only to harass them or to lower their estimation in the society. A person like that of petitioner who tried to outrage the modesty of a pilgrim cannot take refuge under the provision of anticipatory bail when the allegations are prima facilely established against him. With these observations Court dismissed the pre-arrest bail application.

Country witnessed medical revolution after 70 years of independence: Yudhvir

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: J&K BJP Vice President, Yudhvir Sethi today distributed Golden cards of Ayushman Bharat Sehat Scheme under National Health Protection Scheme (NHPS) among the beneficiaries in Jammu. The distribution of the Golden cards of Ayushman Bharat Health Insurance commenced at Ward 19 in East Constituency Jammu under the ongoing Sewa Hi Samarpan Ahbiyan.

J&K BJP Vice President, Yudhvir Sethi distributing Golden cards.

Sethi said that Ayushman Bharat, a flagship scheme of Government of India, was launched as recommended by the National Health Policy 2017, to achieve the vision of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) providing coverage up to Rs five lakh per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization across the country. He said that after about 70 years of independence the country has witnessed such a medical revolution which will prove out to be boon for nearly 80 crore people.

The J&K BJP Vice President emphasised upon the need to spread the Ayushman Bharat scheme among masses that can avail benefits of the scheme through implementing agencies and sought active participation of everyone in the implementation of the development and welfare schemes launched by Union Government. He also reiterated that the Centre has launched multiple schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP), AB PM-JAY SEHAT scheme, Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, PM-KISAN (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi) Scheme, Pradhan Mantri Kisan Dhan Jan Yojana, PM Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY) and several others.

The senior BJP leader exhorted upon the people to take maximum benefits out of several welfare schemes launched by Centre for them.

Among others who were present include Anju Dogra, State Secretary BJP, Rajesh Dogra Media Secretary OBC, Brij Lal, Harjeet Singh, Naresh Sharma and Gorav Sikaa.

CS reviews progress of mega dev projects in J&K

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: The Chief Secretary, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta on Monday chaired a meeting to review the progress of various mega developmental projects in Jammu and Kashmir.

CS, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta chairing a meeting.

Administrative Secretaries of departments of Health & Medical Education, Agriculture Production & Farmers Welfare, Forest Ecology & Environment, Industries & Commerce, Higher Education, and Tourism, besides Divisional Commissioners Kashmir/Jammu and CEO, ERA along with concerned Heads of department participated in the meeting. While reviewing the progress of various developmental projects relating to public health, Dr Mehta directed the completion of infratructural works of government medical colleges at Kathua, Doda, Anantnag, Baramulla, and the State Cancer Institute, Jammu by December 2021.

He also urged the line department/executing agencies to expedite the completion of work of Bone and Joint Hospital, Bakshi Nagar Jammu, AIIMS Awantipora, and Gynecological Block at Lal Ded Hospital in line with the original completion schedules.

In the Higher Education sector, it was informed that works of Government Engineering College Safapora, IIT Jammu, and IIM Jammu will be completed in October 2021, April 2023, and October 2022, respectively. In the tourism sector, the Chief Secretary directed the Mubarak Mandi Heritage Society to complete the works related to landscaping, conservation, repairs and renovation, and installation of vertical lift between the cable car project and Mubarak Mandi complex within one year.

The Society was also advised to develop a food court, local craft bazaar, besides making arrangements for light and sound show/laser show at the complex to boost tourist footfall at the heritage site.

For the ensuing 3-month tourism festival in Jammu and Kashmir under the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav celebrations, Dr Mehta directed both the Divisional Commissioners to develop 37/38 new tourist destinations in their respective jurisdictions having niche product/characteristics.

They were advised to tap the potential of cultural and architectural heritage, eco-tourism and adventure tourism of each of the selected sites.

Dr Mehta asked the Tourism deparment to expedite the development of the Jammu-Srinagar-Pahalgam-Anantnag-Salamabad Uri-Kargil-Leh circuit under the Swadesh Darshan scheme, besides developing ancillary facilities at the Hazratbal Shrine by December 2021. The Chief Secretary also directed both the Divisional Commissioners to print brochures of the integrated tourist circuit of Bani-Basohli-Sarthal-Bhaderwah-Doda-Kishtwar for dissemination of the beautiful and pristine places in these areas amongst the potential tourists.

He also asked them to identify and keep ready the huts of Forest, Fisheries and Tourism departments located in the integrated Bani-Kishtwar tourist circuit, which can be offered to the visiting tourists.

In Agriculture and allied sector, the Chief Secretary reviewed the development of fruit and vegetable mandis at Aglar, Jablipora, and Narwal, and directed operationalization of all services and facilities at the earliest. He further directed the Department to connect all its 17 mandis to the e-National Agriculture Market (e-NAM) for their greater integration with the national market grid.

It was informed that farmers and consumers are also being linked through various small-scale farmers' markets with a special focus on organic and progressive farmers. Dr Mehta asked Industries & Commerce Department to develop handicraft and handloom haats in all district headquarters to provide readymade market to the local products.

The Department was further asked to identify one product per district that can be taken up for large-scale export to national and international markets.

In the Power sector, the hydroelectricity projects like Kiru, Kwar and Rattle including Ujh multipurpose project were also reviewed.

Court rejects bail plea in fake appointment scam

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Additional Sessions Judge Srinagar Masarat Roohi rejected the bail application of one Abdul Majid Dar who duped innocent people of lakhs of rupees by giving them fake and forged appointment letter in Northern Railway.

Court while rejecting the bail application observed that the accused person has duped youth under the pretext of providing them government jobs in Northern Railways and subsequently provided them fake and forged appointment orders against illegal consideration. Accused has been found involved in extorting a huge amount of money dishonestly and fraudulently from the unemployed youth and has given fake and forged letters of appointment and cheques in the name of different banks to the victims and the said cheques were dishonoured by concerned banks.

The offences to have been committed by the applicant are not only serious in nature but are grave and against the ethics of the society.

It is beaten law of the land that while granting bail, the courts shall take into consideration the gravity of the offence, severity of punishment which it carries, prima facie satisfaction of the court in support of the charge, impact of such offences on larger public interest, possibility of tampering of evidence by accused and other like facts.

The accused is involved in the commission of serious and grave offenses against the social fabric of the society, as per the police report the applicant has fraudulently extorted huge amount of money from the unemployed youth in the garb of providing them with appointment letters and has also issued fake and forged appointment letters and cheques which were dishonoured by various banks.