



P5 STATE

COVID-19 SURGE: PAGD POSTPONES JAN 15 MEETING IN JAMMU

The People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) has postponed its January 15 meeting here in view of a surge in Covid cases, its spokesman said on Friday.

P7 PRIDE, PREJUDICE AND PRINCIPLES

WHY DO SO MANY MUSLIM WOMEN LIKE THIS AUSTEN CLASSIC?

It's safe to say that women have always made up the majority of Jane Austen's fanbase, yet her work has also found particular appeal amongst Muslim women. From a dedicated



P11 SPORTS

SOUTH AFRICA BEAT INDIA BY 7 WICKETS, WIN SERIES 2-1

South Africa beat India by seven wickets to win the third Test and secure the series 2-1. Resuming the day 101 for two, South Africa go the job done in 63.3



Quote!
It does not matter how slowly you go as long as you do not stop
- Confucius

....Coronavirus III Wave Engulfs J&K

J&K Logs Highest Spike With 2456 New Cases, 5 Deaths

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The third wave of Coronavirus continues to tighten its grip over Jammu and Kashmir as 2456 more people on Friday tested positive for the virus, the highest spike in daily cases in the recent months, while five more people succumbed to the deadly infection in the Union Territory during the last 24 hours.

According to the officials, 1522 fresh cases of novel Coronavirus were registered in Kashmir Valley and 934 from different districts of Jammu division, taking the total number of people infected since the outbreak of pandemic in J&K to 352623.



In the Valley, officials said, Srinagar detected the highest 464 new cases of virus, followed by Baramulla with 457, Budgam 139, Kulgam 120, Kupwara 104, Anantnag 101, Bandipora 95, Pulwama 22, Ganderbal 12 and Shopian 8. In the winter capital, officials said, Jammu **More on P10**

10 Fold Increase In Last Ten Days: Govt

The Jammu and Kashmir administration said on Friday that the Coronavirus cases have witnessed 10-fold increase in the last ten days necessitating strict observance of Covid Appropriate Behaviour (CAB), COVID SOPs and protocols and curtailment of unnecessary movement by the general public. These details were shared in a meeting chaired by the Chief Secretary, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta on Friday to review the rising COVID **More on P10**

Hospitals To Be Designated For Covid Care

The administration has announced the start of 3rd wave of Covid-19 in Kashmir Valley and among others ordered establishment of Triage Centres besides designating all those hospitals as "dedicated Covid Hospitals which were earmarked for such purpose previously. As per minutes of meeting regarding implementation of mitigation measures for the control **More on P10**

Over 200 Doctors, Paramedics Catch Virus

Auqib Javeed

SRINAGAR: In what could hamper the administration's efforts to curb the spread of Coronavirus, over 200 doctors and paramedics of the Government

Medical College (GMC) Srinagar and its associated hospitals here have tested Covid-19 positive in the last two weeks. Professor and HoD Community Medicine, SPM, GMC Srinagar, Dr S. Muhammad Salim Khan told Kashmir Observer **More on P10**

IED Found At Delhi's Flower Market

NEW DELHI: An improvised explosive device (IED) stuffed with RDX and ammonium nitrate was found inside an unattended bag at the Ghazipur flower market here Friday morning but it was later defused, officials said. The explosive was kept in an iron box and concealed in the black coloured backpack. The incident comes ahead of Republic Day **More on P10**

Earthquake Of 5.3 Magnitude Hits J&K

SRINAGAR: An earthquake of magnitude 5.3 on the Richter scale hit Jammu and Kashmir on Friday, but there were no reports of any loss of life or damage to property, officials said. The epicentre of the quake was in Hindukush in Afghanistan, they said. The quake of magnitude 5.3, which occurred at 9.43 pm, was also felt in Jammu and Kashmir, the officials said. **More on P10**

Arms Cache Recovered In Ganderbal

SRINAGAR: The government forces on Friday recovered a cache of arms and ammunition from an orchard in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district. Police and army's 24 RR carried out a joint search operation in the Watlar area of the district on Friday morning and recovered a cache of arms and ammunition from an **More on P10**

PDD Worker Succumbs To Injuries

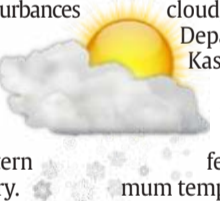
SRINAGAR: A daily wagger in the Power Development Department (PDD) succumbed to injuries on Friday which he had sustained after falling from an electric pole in Kulgam district early this week. Reports said that the lineman, Shabir Ahmad Dar son of Mohammad Ismail Dar was repairing an electric line when he fell from **More on P10**

Kashmir To Receive More Snow Next Week

Zaid Bin Shabir

SRINAGAR: The meteorological department on Friday predicted more snowfall and rains across Jammu and Kashmir as two back to back western disturbances are expected to hit the region on January 16 and 18. "A fresh Western Disturbance is likely to affect Jammu & Kashmir region from 16th and another Western Disturbance from 18th January. During the period of these three days, no major snowfall is predicted in the region. For higher reaches the

weather is likely to cause light to moderate snowfall and in the lower reaches, the weather is predicted to cause scattered rainfall. For the city, the three days will mainly remain cloudy." Director Meteorological Department, Sonum Lotus told Kashmir Observer. "In these two western disturbances, the minimum temperature will rise by a few degrees and the maximum temperature will decrease a bit." Meanwhile, the minimum temperature dropped at most places in Kashmir on Friday as the **More on P10**



'Surya Namaskar' Order Stokes Controversy In J&K

Mainstream Parties, Religious Groups Criticise Govt Move

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Friday said that people performed 'Surya Namaskar' exercise in some areas of the union territory under a government initiative, which drew criticism from several political and religious groups who termed it an interference in religious matters. An official spokesman

said the Youth Services and Sports Office in Anantnag organised a large-scale virtual and physical performance of 'Surya Namaskar' by students and staff members on the occasion of Makar Sankranti.

The exercise was performed at the district headquarters and some other areas of the district following COVID-19 guidelines, the spokesman said. The participants showed a lot of interest

in the exercise as they all believe that such events improve physical fitness, particularly when they are in home isolation due to Covid restrictions, he claimed and added that the initiative was taken as part of the 'Azaadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav'.

Various political and religious groups criticised the Jammu and Kashmir administration's order directing college heads in the union **More on P10**

9 Teachers Sacked For Absence

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The Director School Education Kashmir has ordered termination of services of nine teachers for unauthorized absence.

The teachers include Aijaz Ahmad Bhat (GPS Shulloora Kupwara), Saima Gani (teacher BHSS Zaidibal Srinagar), Suhail Anees (Teacher BHS Nawagabra Kupwara), Mohammad Rafiq Khan, (RREt MS Fraw Ganderbal), Sheetal Bhat (Teacher PM's package, posted in BHSS Kupwara), Nazia Mushtaq (BHS Laderwan Kupwara), Arumeall Koul, **More on P10**

Why Is Water Becoming Murkier For Displaced Dal Dwellers?

Syed Burhan

SRINAGAR: Even as his red-shot eyes make him look livid, Mushtaq Bala comes across as a feisty man in his forties. But his fiery yet fruitless campaign for his community welfare has aged him beyond his years.

Days before snow would fall as "sorrow" over his community confined to Srinagar's erstwhile flood channel, he took his tribe to city's press enclave to campaign for basic rights. The year-ending protest hardly helped his case. "We were cleaning



agents of the world's most picturesque lake," Mushtaq, taking a watchful walk on the slippery roads

of his colony, says. "But see," he points his index finger at the shabby state of his community,

"how we've been reduced to mere slum dwellers now."

His tribe was driven out of the Dal Lake decades back and housed in the wetland. The shift proved proverbial for them — out of the frying pan into the fire. In that zone they gradually lost their identity and grappled with the inadequate facilities for years. And while they await the official intervention, their colony allegedly became a "piece of cake".

Fear of losing land after losing waters made them struggle-hardened campaigners. But when **More on P10**

CAG Report Picks Holes In CM's Business Interest Relief Scheme

Major Beneficiaries Not Affected By 2014 Floods

Observer Monitoring Desk


SRINAGAR: The Chief Minister's Business Interest Relief Scheme (CMBIRS) announced by the previous PDP-BJP government has come under scanner, with the Comptroller and Auditor General of India pointing out that the scheme was not as per the guidelines of the interest subvention scheme of the Prime Minister's Development Package (PMDP) for J&K.

In its report, the CAG has revealed the scheme was not as per the guidelines of the interest subvention scheme of the PMDP. "An amount of Rs 180 crore received from the Government of India and payment made to beneficiaries under CMBIRS towards commitment of the Government of Jammu and Kashmir made during budget session of 2018-19, was not as per the guidelines of the interest subvention scheme of the PMDP," reads the report.




The report also reveals ten out of 19 major beneficiaries were not at all affected during the flood of September 2014 and they had been re-structured only after the unrest of 2016 under a special rehabilitation package.

"Further scrutiny of records (revealed that out of release of Rs 190.20 crore to Jammu & Kashmir Bank Limited, Rs 41.32 crore was provided to only 19 borrowers. Further, out of these 19 borrowers, accounts of ten borrowers to whom benefit of interest subvention of **More on P10**



Technology Development Board
Department of Science & Technology
Government of India



"Women empowerment is vital to our development. Indian women continue to lead in different walks of life. Our space programmes, including the Mars Orbiter Mission, have had immense contribution from our women scientists."
-Narendra Modi

Inviting Applications for

National Tech Excellence Award for Women 2022

Under 2 Categories

National Women Scientist Award
for Excellence in Translational Research
Senior (45 Yrs and above)- Prize of ₹3Lakh
Young (Below 45 Yrs)- Prize of ₹1Lakh


National Women Entrepreneur Award
Senior (45 Yrs and above)- Prize of ₹3Lakh
Young (Below 45 Yrs)- Prize of ₹1Lakh

(Total 8 Awards)

Awards to be presented on
Women's Day
08th March, 2022

LAST DATE TO APPLY 15TH FEB, 2022

For more information, visit www.tdb.gov.in or Scan QR Code
#aatmanirbharnarishakti



davp 36106/15/0007/2122

'Youngsters Who Self-Identify As Multilingual Perform Better At School'

Agencies

A new research has found that young adults who consider themselves multilingual tend to perform better across a wide range of subjects at school, regardless of whether they are actually fluent in another language.

The study has been published in the 'Journal of Language, Identity & Education'. The study, of more than 800 pupils in England, found a positive relationship between GCSE scores and 'multilingual identity': a reference to whether pupils felt a personal connection with other languages through knowledge and use.

Those who self-identified as multilingual typically outperformed their peers not just in subjects such as French and Spanish, but in non-language subjects including maths, geography, and science. This applied whether or not they actually spoke a second language fluently.

Perhaps surprisingly, however, not all pupils who were officially described by their schools as having 'English as a Second Language' (EAL) thought of themselves as multilingual, even though the term is used by schools and Government as a proxy for multilingualism.

Correspondingly, these pupils did not necessarily perform better (or worse) as a group at GCSE than their non-EAL peers. The results indicated that encouraging pupils to identify with languages and to value different styles of communication could help them to develop a mindset that supported academic progress overall.

Other recent research has argued for broadening the scope of language lessons so that, as well as studying vocabulary and grammar, pupils explore the importance of languages and their significance for their own lives.



This new study was the first, however, to examine the relationship between multilingual identity and attainment.

Dr Dee Rutgers, a Research Associate at the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge, said, "The evidence suggests that the more multilingual you consider yourself to be, the higher your GCSE scores. While we need to understand more about why that relationship exists, it may be that children who see themselves as multilingual have a sort of 'growth mindset' which impacts on wider attainment."

Dr Linda Fisher, Reader in Languages Education at the University of Cambridge, said, "There could be a strong case for helping children who think that they can't 'do' languages to recognise that we all use a range

of communication tools and that learning a language is simply adding to that range. This may influence attitude and self-belief, which is directly relevant to learning at school. In other words, what you think you are maybe more important than what others say you are."

The study's authors argued that being multilingual meant far more than the official EAL definition of being 'exposed to a language at home that is known or believed to be other than English'. They suggested that even young people who see themselves as monolingual possessed a 'repertoire' of communication.

For example, they may use different dialects, pick up words and phrases on holiday, know sign language, or understand

other types of 'language' such as computer code.

The study involved 818 Year-11 pupils at five secondary schools in South East England. As well as establishing whether pupils were officially registered as EAL or non-EAL, the researchers asked each pupil if they personally identified as such.

Separately, each pupil was asked to plot where they saw themselves on a 0-100 scale, where 0 represented 'monolingual' and 100 'multilingual'. This data was compared with their GCSE results in nine subjects.

Students who spoke a second language at home did not always personally identify either as EAL or multilingual. Conversely, pupils who saw themselves as multilingual were not always those earmarked by the school as having English as an additional language.

"The fact that these terms didn't correlate more closely is surprising considering that they are all supposedly measuring the same thing," Rutgers said.

"Just having experience of other languages clearly doesn't necessarily translate into a multilingual identity because the experience may not be valued by the student," Rutgers added.

School-reported EAL status had no impact on GCSE results, although pupils who self-identified as EAL generally did better than their peers in modern languages. Those who considered themselves 'multilingual' on the 0-100 scale, however, performed better academically across the board.

The strength of this relationship varied between subjects and was, again, particularly pronounced in modern languages. In all nine GCSE subjects assessed, however, each point increase on the monolingual-to-multilingual scale was associated with a fractional rise in pupils' exam scores.

از ریاست بڑگام با اجلاس خوبہ نظام نامی صاحب نام تحصیلدار بڑگام عنوان: مضمون درخواست منجانب شریف محمد قاسم ڈار ولد علی محمد ڈار ساکنہ کڑی پورہ تحصیل بڑگام برآمد وصول ڈیپنٹ سرٹیفکیٹ باپت میڈیکل کیم

اشتہار برآوا گا می ہر خاص و عام

معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان صدر میں درخواست سائل دفتر بڑگام میں زیر کاروائی ہے اس نسبت پڑاری حلقہ سے رپورٹ بشمول مطلوبہ تفواالات ریکارڈ طلب کے گئے جس سے عیاں ہوتا ہے کہ سائل ساکنہ کڑی پورہ بڑگام میں رہائش پذیر ہے کہ سائل بذیل افراد پر مشتمل ہے

محمد قاسم ڈار ولد علی محمد ڈار سرکاری ملازم 48 سال 618,660

سمائیہ شریف زید محمد قاسم گھریلو کام 45

نسیہ زید محمد قاسم گھریلو کام 28

عامر حسین ولد محمد قاسم جسنائی طور مزدور 26

شبنم زید محمد قاسم زینہ تعلیم 24

سماء احمد ولد محمد قاسم زینہ تعلیم 22

اسکے علاوہ کوئی بھی فرد کہ نہیں بتایا گیا ہے سرٹیفکیٹ زیر بحث ادا کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص یا شخص کو کوئی نذری اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا نذری اعتراض ساتھ ہی کے اندر پیش کریں۔ میعاد گزرنے کے بعد کوئی نذری اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

نام تحصیلدار info

از دفتر نائب تحصیلدار کٹترہ عنوان: مضمون درخواست منجانب اشیر احمد شاہ صاحب سپریمہ اللہ ساکنہ کوشل تحصیل کڑی نسبت حصول RBA سرٹیفکیٹ بنج

اشتہار برآوا گا می ہر خاص و عام

معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان صدر میں درخواست سائل دفتر بڑگام میں زیر کاروائی ہے اس نسبت پڑاری حلقہ سے رپورٹ بشمول مطلوبہ تفواالات ریکارڈ طلب کے گئے جس سے عیاں ہوتا ہے کہ سائل ساکنہ کوشل پورہ تحصیل کڑی میں رہائش پذیر ہے سائل کی نسبت کی مہادت نامی

12000 روپے ہے کہ سائل بذیل افراد پر مشتمل ہے

اشیر احمد شاہ سربراہ 52 سال

سلیہ نسیم زوجہ 50

قیم احمد شاہ پسر زینہ تعلیم 22

رقت دختر زینہ تعلیم 20

طاہر اشیر شاہ طاہر زینہ تعلیم 18

اسکے علاوہ کوئی بھی فرد کہ نہیں بتایا گیا ہے سرٹیفکیٹ زیر بحث ادا کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص یا شخص کو کوئی نذری اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا نذری اعتراض ساتھ ہی کے اندر پیش کریں۔ میعاد گزرنے کے بعد کوئی نذری اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

نام تحصیلدار RPT azj

Public Notice

I have lost the RC of my vehicle bearing Rgd No; Jk03G-2774 . Now I am applying for the duplicate of the same if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the ARTO Anantnag within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Mukhtar Ahmad Lone S/o Mohd Akbar R/o Kanelwan Bijbahara Anantnag RNA

Public Notice

I have applied for the issuance of "D Class" Contractor Card . If anybody having any objection he/she may file his/her objection in the office Superintendent Engineer R&B Office Anantnag Within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Syed Shahid Farooq S/O Syed Farooq Ahmad R/O Aho-piason RNA

Public Notice

از دفتر نائب تحصیلدار کڑی ا کلترہ با اجلاس نائب تحصیلدار کڑی ا کلترہ درخواست منجانب مریم رشیدہ عصمت رشیدہ دختران عبدالرشیدہ اننگر و سلیمہ بیگم زوجہ عبدالرشیدہ اننگر ساکنہ کڑی پورہ تحصیل بڑگام

اشتہار برآوا گا می ہر خاص و عام

معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان صدر میں درخواست سائل دفتر بڑگام میں زیر کاروائی ہے اس نسبت پڑاری حلقہ سے رپورٹ بشمول مطلوبہ تفواالات ریکارڈ طلب کے گئے جس سے عیاں ہوتا ہے کہ سائل ساکنہ کوشل پورہ تحصیل کڑی میں رہائش پذیر ہے کہ سائل بذیل افراد پر مشتمل ہے

عبدالرشیدہ اننگر 50

سلیمہ بیگم زوجہ عبدالرشیدہ 42

شائستہ رشیدہ دختر عبدالرشیدہ 21

رقت رشیدہ دختر عبدالرشیدہ 21

مریم رشیدہ دختر عبدالرشیدہ 18

عصمت رشیدہ دختر عبدالرشیدہ 16

اسکے علاوہ کوئی بھی فرد کہ نہیں بتایا گیا ہے سرٹیفکیٹ زیر بحث اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص یا شخص کو کوئی نذری اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا نذری اعتراض ساتھ ہی کے اندر پیش کریں۔ میعاد گزرنے کے بعد کوئی نذری اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

نائب تحصیلدار fko_r

Public Notice

I have lost my driving license bearing DL No: JK131999001190 . Now I am applying for the duplicate of the same if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the ARTO Pulwama within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Shahir Ahmad Rather R/o Shopian Bongam AST

SAD DEMISE

With profound grief and sorrow this is to inform the sad demise of Haji Ghulam Mohammad Pandit R/o B4 Bagarden, Srinagar today i.e. Friday, 14th January, 2022. Fatima Khawni will be observed on Sunday, the 16th January, 2022, 11.00 a.m. at their ancestral Graveyard near Jhelum Market, Bagarden, and Srinagar. Due to ongoing COVID19 scenario, no congregational prayer meetings will be held at residence.

Bereaved:
Mushtaq Ahmad Pandit (9419093837)
Mohammad Ashraf Pandit (9796368286)
Hilal Ahmad Shah
Muzaffar Ahmad Pandit x

University of Kashmir, Srinagar

Notice

The candidate whose particulars are given below has reported to the University that he / she has lost his/her University Certificate/s and has applied for issuance of duplicate certificate/s:

Name : Aayatullah Rubani
Parentage: Molvi Bashir Ahamd
Residence: Ramanagri Shopian
Registration No: 13549- BC 2002
Certificate lost PG (History) -2nd Semester
Roll No 10222005 Session/Year 2005 dec

Before University will consider issuance of Duplicate Certificate/s in favour of the candidate, any person having any objection shall report to the undersigned within one week from the date of issuance of this notice. The original certificate/s issued to the candidate be treated as cancelled

No: F(Duplicate/) KU) Assistant Controller of Examinations (PG/UG/Prof) ast

UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR

NAAC ACCREDITED GRADE A+
Printing & Stationery Section)

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDERS

For and on behalf of the University of Kashmir, e-tenders are invited in two bid system from reputed printers / suppliers for printing and supply of UG Answer Books. The bid/tender document consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), terms & conditions and other details can be downloaded from website www.jktenders.gov.in as per the schedule given below:

Particulars	Date & Time
S.No	
1	Date of Issuance of Tender Notice 11-01-2022
2	Date of downloading bid documents 12-01-2022
3	Bid submission Start Date 12-01-2022
4	Bid Submission End Date 27-01-2022
5	Last date for submission of Hard copies 27-01-2022
6	Date & time of opening of Technical Bid 28-01-2022
7	Date & time of opening of Financial Bid 28-01-2022

The bidders have to upload scanned copies of all necessary documents as mentioned in the bid/tender document. The Hard Copy of Technical bid of required documents in a sealed envelope super-scribed "tender for UG Answer Books" must reach to the office of the Registrar, University of Kashmir, Hazratbal, Srinagar, JK-190006 by or before 27-01-2022 upto 4PM. Tender incomplete in any respect shall be liable for rejection.

Deputy Registrar (Printing & Stationery)
No.F(UG Answer Books.-P&S)KU/2022
Dated: 12-01-2022

DIPK-NB-6538/21

Expression of Interest (Eol) for ToT of DRDO developed "Granules for Bio-Pegradable Bags"

Polythene bags/ bottles have become persistent threats to environment. The pollution caused by all pervasive polythene based packing material is having inadvertent impact on nature. Plastics and polyethylene takes about 200-300 years to decompose on its own. The efforts to recycle plastic by collection and segregation are tedious and costly. Keeping in view of ill effects of pervasive usage of plastics and polyethylene bags, various options are being researched to replace these hazardous materials.

In such efforts, DRDO scientists have developed Granules for bio-degradable bags to replace single use polyethylene bags. The single use bags is based on a formulation developed using PBAT starch and food graded additives. The salient features of the Technology/ product are:-

- A alternate to conventional single use plastic.
- Eco friendly, Bio-degradable and Home compostable.
- No harm to animals/ aquatic life by disposal/ consumption.
- Bio-degradable within 60 days.
- Home compostable in 90 days.
- Fully tested and certified.
- Printable in multiple colors based on user requirement.
- Cost effective.

DRDO is willing to transfer the technology to industries for mass production to the benefit of society and mankind. 'NI' ToT Fee to be paid by industry to DRDO for entering into Licensing Agreement for Transfer of Technology (LAToT). Interested Industries may apply for ToT by submitting Eol by email before 30th June 2022. The detailed information to apply for ToT can be downloaded from DRDO website (<https://www.drdo.gov.in/transfer-technologies>) under Category B Technologies (Dual Use / Commercial Technologies).

-Sd-
Director, DITM DRDO Hqs
DAVP/10301/11/0140/2122

Government of Jammu and Kashmir

Office of the Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, Srinagar

(Divisional Control Room, COVID-19 Mitigation Operations)
(Old Assembly Complex Srinagar)
Phone No. 0194-2455385; Email: osdkrmcivid19@gmail.com

Covid-19 Preventive Measures

چونکہ صوبہ کشمیر میں اوٹیکران کا خطرہ لاحق ہوا ہے اور گزشتہ دو ہفتوں کے دوران کرونا وائرس کے معاملات میں مزید اضافہ اندراج کیا جا رہا ہے، لہذا عوام الناس سے گزارش کی جاتی ہے کہ کرونا وائرس کی اس نئی لہر سے نمٹنے کے لیے مخصوص طریقے عمل اور نیک کاری کو فوراً عملاً کریں۔ مزید برآں آپ سے گزارش کی جاتی ہے کہ اجتماعات پر مندرجہ ذیل نکات سے عوام الناس کو آگاہ کریں:

- 1- کرونا وائرس ابھی ختم نہیں، لہذا گھر سے نکلنے پر ہر وقت فیس ماسک کا استعمال کریں۔
- 2- ہاتھوں کو لگاتار صابون اور سینٹائزر سے دھوئیں جب کہ آپ دفاتر یا کسی چھوٹے اجتماع میں بھی ہوں۔
- 3- چھت کی سماجی دوری بنانے رکھیں جب آپ اپنے ساتھیوں کے درمیان یا کسی اور جگہ پر ہوں۔
- 4- 15 سے 18 سال کے درمیان عمر کے بچوں کے لئے کرونا مخالف ٹیکے دستیاب ہیں، فوراً اس عمر کے بچوں کو ٹیکہ لگوائیں۔
- 5- 60 یا 60 سال سے زائد عمر کے افراد اپنی قوت مدافعت مزید بڑھانے کے لئے احتیاطی ٹیکہ ضرور لگوائیں۔
- 6- اپنے ساتھیوں کے ساتھ ہاتھ ملانے اور گلے ملنے سے دور رہیں اور پریزی کریں کیونکہ یہ کرونا انگھن (متعدی بیماری) کے پھیلنے کا باعث بن رہے۔
- 7- اگر آپ میں کرونا انگھن کی علامات جیسے تپ، کھانسی، زکام یا بدن میں درد ہو تو فوراً اپنے آپ کو گھر میں الگ کریں اور اپنے نزدیکی صحت مرکز سے باہر جائیں۔

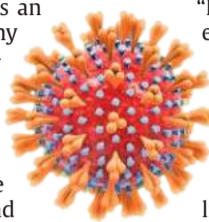
بارسو خیمہ مساجد اور مفتیان کو ام سے گزارش کی جاتی ہے کہ وہ کرونا وائرس کے تدارک اور پھیلنے کے لیے مخصوص طریقے اور نیک کاری کو سختی سے عملانے کے تعلق سے اپنے صوبائی پیغامات ریکارڈ کریں جو کہ ایام جمعہ کے مذہبی اجتماعات کے مواقع پر چلائیں جائیں گے۔

DIPK-16690/21
Tahir Ahmad Magray KAS In-Charge
Divisional COVID-19 Control Room, Kashmir

Covid Cases In Kashmir Higher Than Reported: DAK

SRINAGAR: With Omicron driven third Covid wave raging in Kashmir... Doctors Association Kashmir (DAK) on Friday said the actual number of Covid positive cases in the valley is higher than what is being reported.

reported," he said. "Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in its new guidelines has waived off testing requirement for many categories including contacts of confirmed Covid positive cases, unless they are in the high risk categories," said Dr Nisar.



SKUAST-K Holds Workshop On Innovation Education

SRINAGAR: Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir held a one-day workshop on innovation and education at Beniama Campus, Gandral in resonance with the newly adopted National Education Policy (NEP) for the promotion of skill and entrepreneurship in the students.

of innovations that contributed to the economic and social development of the world. Suhail -ul-Islam, Deputy Secretary, Department of Forest, Ecology and Environment (J&K Govt.) discussed innovation vis a vis Govt. policies. He further deliberated upon academia-policy linkages and creating entrepreneurship in the forestry sector.

Mehta Reviews Preparations For R-Day Celebrations



JAMMU: The Chief Secretary, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta on Friday chaired a meeting to take stock of preparations to be put in place for the celebration of Republic Day-2022. Director General of Police, Administrative Secretaries of Departments of Health & Medical Education, Home, PWD(R&B), General Administration, Youth Services & Sports, Forest, Ecology & Environment, Rural Development, Jal Shakti, besides Divisional Commissioners of Jammu and Kashmir, Additional Director General of Police, along with HODs of concerned departments participated in the meeting.

Rights Activist Untoo Held For 'Inciting Violence'

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir Police on Friday arrested human rights activist Mohammad Ahsan Untoo... a proactive secessionist, is an active participant and speaker at Twitter spaces, titled 'Radio Resistance Kashmir', led by two known secessionists Muzammil Ayyub Thakur and Dr. Asif Dar.



but also spreading disaffection, ill-will and disharmony against the Union of India, the spokesman said. He said Untoo is also actively spreading the militant, secessionist agenda and is thus inciting the youth to resort to violence and indulge in unlawful activities.

Covid-19 Surge: PAGD Postpones Jan 15 Meeting In Jammu

JAMMU: The People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) has postponed its January 15 meeting here in view of a surge in Covid cases, its spokesman said on Friday. The meeting of the alliance of Jammu and Kashmir-based mainstream political parties, including the National Conference (NC) and the PDP, was to be held to discuss its 'future plans', CPI(M) leader Mohammad Yusuf Tarigami said.



here" the spokesman. Tarigami said whenever the Covid situation improves, the alliance will hold the meeting here. It was scheduled to be held at the residence of NC chief Farooq Abdullah at Bhatindi, and PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti and Tarigami were among others schedule to take part.

Omar Accuses Admin Of Targeting Gujjar, Bakarwals

SRINAGAR: National Conference (NC) vice president Omar Abdullah on Friday accused the Jammu and Kashmir administration of targeting the Gujjar and Bakarwal tribals at the behest of its political masters. The former chief minister's remarks came after the houses belonging to the community were demolished by the Jammu Development Authority (JDA) as part of its anti-encroachment drive recently.

"The demolition operation has been apparently carried out unmindful of the possessory and other rights of the victims in possession of the residential sites for decades and in gross violation of law," Masoodi said in a statement. The NC MP said it was shocking that while the party in power at the Centre boasts of having in 2020 regularised 1,731 illegal colonies in Delhi under PM-UDAY and claimed to have set up an efficient and hassle-free mechanism of providing ownership papers to thousands of beneficiaries, the Jammu and Kashmir administration "orders selective demolition when it comes to ST population of J-K".

Jammu To Srinagar Traffic On Highway Today

SRINAGAR: Jammu-Srinagar highway, the only surface link connecting Kashmir Valley with the outside world, shall remain open for only one-way traffic on Saturday, officials said here. "Tomorrow, subject to fair weather and better road condition, LMVS passengers/private cars shall be allowed from Jammu towards Srinagar (strictly one way) on Jammu-Srinagar highway and shall be allowed from Nagrota (Jammu) at 0900 hours to 1300 hours and from Jakheni Udhamapur at 1000 hours to 1400 hours," a traffic department official said here in a statement.

PCOS Among Kashmiri Women Above 30%; Highest Across Globe: ICMR

SRINAGAR: As per the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) national task force, the prevalence of Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) among Kashmiri women is above 30 percent by Rotterdam Criteria, which probably is the highest percentage globally. As per the official figures, Kashmiri women have 33.3 percent by Rotterdam Criteria of PCOS, which means out of these three, anovulation, hyperandrogenism or polycystic ovaries, two must be present on ultrasound of the woman with PCOS. The data further reveals that prevalence of PCOS among Kashmiri women is 28.9 percent by National Institute of Health (NIH) criteria, which is the criteria earlier used to diagnose PCOS in women.

Kupwara Starts Vaccination Drive For Teens

SRINAGAR: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Imam Din on Friday kick-started vaccination drive for 15-17 year age group of children at a function organized at Government Higher Secondary School (GHSS) Khumriyal. DDC Member Kalarooos, Ghulam Mustafa, Principal GHSS, Tehsildar Kupwara, BDO Kalarooos, Nodal Officer Covid Vaccination and other concerned were present at the occasion. Addressing the function, the DC said that the vaccination for 15-17 year age group of children has been kick-started to safeguard them from any Covid related infection and to continue their studies. He appealed to the students who got vaccinated to become ambassadors and inform other children to vaccinate themselves for their safety and the safety of others.

Omicron Symptoms Mild But Spike In Cases Can Create Trouble: Dr Fayaz

JAMMU: While it took 25 days for daily cases to rise from 100 to 1000, during the second wave of Covid-19, the numbers have more than doubled in just 15 weeks in the third wave. Roughly double the number of cases are being recorded in half the time in the present Omicron wave'. Professor Department of Medicine, Government Medical College Jammu, Dr. Fayaz Ahmad Wani has warned that the high infectivity rate of the coronavirus during the present wave should not be taken lightly. Although the symptoms are mostly mild in appearance, the sheer number of infected is a major concern nonetheless, he highlighted. Dr Wani advised everybody to keep observing Covid appropriate behaviour, maintain social distancing and avoid unnecessary public gatherings. He suggests that senior citizens, comorbid patients and those with severe health conditions need to take extra precaution and take a healthy diet. The Professor also assured that the Covid hospitalisation rate is only around 5 to 10 percent, which is less as compared to 20-23 percent recorded during the second coronavirus wave. He warned that the rate might even increase owing to the sudden rise in positive cases as hospitalisation is usually required a week post infection. For asymptomatic patients and people in isolation, Dr Wani said that such persons must contact the doctor if they feel breathlessness, chest pain, have their breath rate exceeding 24 or if they feel a sense of confusion. Any such unusual development must be intimated to the doctor and medical help be sought, he advised. The doctor has also urged all eligible persons to get vaccinated and practise hand hygiene and frequent hand sanitisation.

Minor Fire At Kulgam Temple, Police Deny Foul Play

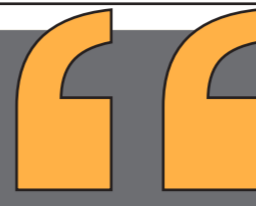
KULGAM: A minor fire broke out at a temple in Kulgam district of Jammu and Kashmir on Friday, police said. They, however, said preliminary investigation ruled out any foul play. The incident at the Mata Tripura Sundari temple in Devsar area is being investigated, but the preliminary inquiry suggests that the fire broke out accidentally due to the diyas that were lit up in the temple, a police official said.



The minor fire incident in Mata Tripura Sundari (Devsar) temple is being investigated by Police. Pre Enquiry reveals #Fire happened accidentally by the DIYAs/ARTI being kept in Temple for daily routine.... No signs of Mischreant act. Public are requested not to pay heed to rumors (sic), Kulgam district police tweeted.

SKIMS Bemina Suspends OPD Services, Elective Surgeries

SRINAGAR: Amid upsurge in covid-19 cases, SKIMS Medical College Hospital Bemina here on Friday put on hold OPD services and elective surgeries in the larger public interest till further orders. "Pursuant to the directions issued by the government (Ref Divisional Commissioner Kashmir under endorsement no. DDRK/ Covid/2021-22/8854-8600 dated 13-01-2022), the SKIMS Medical College Hospital Bemina has been designated as dedicated covid-19 hospital in this hospital," Principal SKIMS Medical College said in an order. "Accordingly, all the OPD services/ elective surgeries in the hospital are hereby being temporarily put on hold in the larger public interest till further orders", the order further added.



OVERSEXUALISATION IS A MAJOR ISSUE IN SOCIETY
today, with social media, the fashion industry, and pornography pressuring our individualistic egos to display our bodies and build identities based on our sexuality. This goes hand in hand with the acceptance of diminished gender boundaries, an increasing sense of individualism, and disregard for our elders' opinions

Pride, Prejudice And Principles

Why Do So Many Muslim Women Like This Austen Classic?

Ayah Aboeela

It's safe to say that women have always made up the majority of Jane Austen's fanbase, yet her work has also found particular appeal amongst Muslim women. From a dedicated book club in Pakistan (where women dress up to attend Austen-themed tea parties) to the Muslim retellings of the story, there are some particular factors that endear her books specifically to a Muslim audience.

As Muslims, it can be difficult to find fiction that is both relatable and aligns with our moral standards, especially as wider society sees increasingly loose social norms. Jane Austen by contrast, uses her values as a Christian woman to write unique, dynamic, and moral characters, and manages to create a world where Muslim women can draw parallels to our own values and circumstances.

Yet when reading *Pride and Prejudice* in particular, not only do we not fear any immodesty, but we can also appreciate its social commentary. As a study of character and personality, there are many messages on morals and values that Muslims can appreciate through an Islamic framework.

True Qiwaamah

It should be a truth universally acknowledged that women and men are dependent upon each other. However, contemporary dialogue – be it gender discourse or fictional portrayals – undermines the responsibilities that women and men have towards one another. For example, literary studies on the “strong female character” trope suggest that contemporary literature often equates “masculine” traits with heroism, and thus fewer female characters with “feminine” traits are portrayed as heroes. This re-emphasises harmful gender stereotypes and does little to truly “empower” women; it only (falsely) argues that each gender is capable of doing anything the opposite gender can, and does so by setting masculinity as the benchmark. In contrast, Austen tends to balance the individuality of her male and female characters while still emphasising their reliance upon each other. In an Islamic framework, we know that Allah has tasked each gender with responsibilities towards the other, hence we have the concept of *qiwaamah*, a defining feature of masculinity that relates to men's treatment of women:

“Men should be constant caretakers of women with what Allah has favored one over the other and with what they spend (for support) from their wealth.”

Al-Qur'an 4:34

This ayah clarifies that true *qiwaamah* requires men to use the blessings Allah has given them – such as wealth, physical strength or social status – to uphold the rights of their daughters, mothers, sisters, wives, aunts, and nieces. The concept of *qiwaamah* is foundational to how we as Muslims understand masculinity and men's roles, regardless of how modern concepts like alpha-beta binaries try to distort them.

Enter Mr. Darcy.

Austen interrogates notions of masculinity through her depiction of both Mr. Darcy and Mr. Wickham. Although she does not use the concept of *qiwaamah* per se, we can use it as a gauge since its tenets often align with Austen's depictions. We see Mr. Wickham as a clear antagonist because of his dishonesty, selfishness, and desire for fortune; this prevents him from committing to a profession, keeping his promises, and fuels his gambling addiction. His chief fault lies in how he deceives multiple women, eventually harming Lizzie and her family. In short: he is not a good *qawwam*.

On the contrary, Mr. Darcy highlights the seriousness of a *qawwam's* role in society. As we move beyond our first impressions of him, we learn that unlike the self-centered Mr. Wickham, Mr. Darcy is very considerate of the people around him. Mr. Darcy certainly does not fit the confident charming protagonist stereotype; he is awkward, blunt, and introverted. But that does not diminish his good qualities: a man's good character, especially in terms of how he treats the women in his life, depends on fulfilling the characteristics of a *qawwam*. Mr. Darcy does this by becoming a holistic caretaker to his sister – financially, emotionally, and scholastically – and by fulfilling his role as a protector when he prevents Mr. Wickham from harming other women.

The concept of *qiwaamah* matters because of its impact on society: both men and women benefit when we have a positive understanding of masculinity, and when we are able to fulfil our duties and treat each other with respect and care.

Religious Hypocrisy

Religious hypocrisy is a phenomenon that is unfortunately not uncommon in our communities, and it was not uncommon in Austenian Regency Era England. It can manifest in someone who appears to be publicly pious, but is privately oppressive and deceptive. It can also be quite overt, including some scholars who publicly support oppression and use religion as a justification, or those who work in the counter-terrorism industry, betraying both their people and principles for worldly gain.



Austen mocks religious hypocrisy in the often-hilarious, yet ever-unbearable character of Mr. Collins. As a clergy member, Mr. Collins had received an extensive religious education, but it is obvious from the start that his ultimate goal is to flatter his rich patroness. His insincere religious practice causes extreme self-righteousness, and his scornful comments on pastimes like reading novels are a source of humour in the novel.

Perhaps the epitome of all this is when Mr. Collins advises Lizzie and her father that though they should forgive Lydia and her husband for eloping,

“Allah does not like the public mention of evil except by one who has been wronged. And ever is Allah Hearing and Knowing.”

Al-Qur'an, 4:148

This is why Mr. Darcy regretted covering up for Mr. Wickham: he realised that hiding Mr. Wickham's faults, after it was clear that he manipulated one woman, only allowed him to continue harming more women. This also connects to the concept of being a *qawwam*. In the novel, Lizzie falls for Mr. Darcy be-

THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT AUSTEN'S NOVELS align with all “Islamic” boundaries, despite some overlapping values. It's amusing to consider how dramatically Austen's plots would have changed if the characters had followed Islamic inheritance laws! But regardless, thinking about the fiction we consume in terms of how it agrees or differs with our Islamic values can enhance our understanding of our own identity in relation to the culture and literature that shapes our world

they should also “[never] admit them in your sight, or allow their names to be mentioned in your hearing” – to essentially completely cut ties with them. The response to this hypocritical self-righteousness in the novel is an important lesson for us as Muslims, especially at a time many are disillusioned by corrupt community leaders. It is summed up in Mr. Bennet's scoffing response to Mr. Collins's advice: “That is his notion of Christian forgiveness!”

Mr. Bennet understands that, although Mr. Collins has a high socio-religious standing, he does not represent Christianity. The novel scorns Mr. Collins's fake religiosity but does not blame religion itself for it. Religious hypocrisy appears across faith groups and time periods. So as Muslims, we are reminded that no one is infallible and immune from criticism, and that people's faults—even if they appear to be religiously high-standing – are not representative of Islam.

Monsters as Saints

Expanding on the issue of religious hypocrisy, we sometimes (knowingly or not) hide the faults of people who seem outwardly righteous, but are privately oppressive. As Muslims, we value hiding each other's faults, as per the narration of the Prophet that if we conceal the faults of our brothers and sisters in this world, Allah will conceal our faults in the next life. We should not seek to deliberately embarrass our brothers and sisters. Yet Austen shows us how being over cautious of this can result in failing to warn others about problematic individuals.

Mr. Wickham – certainly a greater threat than silly Mr. Collins – is presented as a dashing, personable young man. This is perhaps what led many people, including Lizzie, to give him the benefit of the doubt and assume he was as good as he appeared. Even Mr. Darcy, who knew of Mr. Wickham's evil past, did not want to expose him or ruin his reputation. However, though we may try to hide the faults of others so as not to expose them, this can sometimes only serve to put vulnerable community members in danger. We sometimes forget that oppressive actions and threats to the community should not be kept hidden. As the Qur'an reminds us:

cause he redeems himself for not having exposed Mr. Wickham earlier, by preventing Mr. Wickham from entering an abusive relationship with Lydia. Part of being a *qawwam* is speaking outwardly against other men who are abusive towards women, and not being complicit with their actions by remaining silent.

Good Men for Good Women

Oversexualisation is a major issue in society today, with social media, the fashion industry, and pornography pressuring our individualistic egos to display our bodies and build identities based on our sexuality. This goes hand in hand with the acceptance of diminished gender boundaries, an increasing sense of individualism, and disregard for our elders' opinions. However, as Muslims, we value the concept of *hayaa'*, a form of modesty that requires both a respect for gender boundaries and are wary of *riyaa'*, showing off. As *hayaa'* becomes harder to embody in a world that places self-promotion on a pedestal, stories that condemn the lack of modesty become more appreciated by a Muslim audience.

In *Pride and Prejudice*, Lydia's *riyaa'* and lack of *hayaa'* make her a cautionary character, obsessed with adorning herself for the male gaze, consistently ignoring any advice from her family. After going as far as eloping with Mr. Wickham, Lydia faces moral justice in the novel when she suffers in the long term and realises that the match was not well made. Through Lydia, Austen shines a light on the sanctity of relationships, be it between husband and wife, or parent and child – bonds that are revered highly within our faith.

In contrast, Lizzie and Mr. Darcy did not enter their relationship on a whim, but looked beyond the exterior and recognised how much they valued one another's character. They did not marry in pursuit of *riyaa'*, as Lydia clearly sought herself when she haughtily commented that by marrying young she would achieve a superior status to her elder sisters. Lizzie and Mr. Darcy abided by socially respectable customs and asked for the approval of Lizzie's father. In today's world, where the norm is to serve one's ego, this classic novel refreshingly emphasises *hayaa'* and the respect owed to parents.

The contrast between Lydia and Mr. Wickham ver-

sus Lizzie and Mr. Darcy, is echoed in the Quran:

“Corrupt women are for corrupt men, and corrupt men are for corrupt women; good women are for good men and good men are for good women. The good are innocent of what has been said against them; they will have forgiveness and a generous provision.”

Al-Qur'an 24:26

Gossip and Riyaa'

Materialistic competition, gossip, and *riyaa'* are all things that the Qur'an advises us to avoid. Lizzie, like many of Austen's heroines, often finds herself in the company of people whose primary entertainment is to engage in these things. These traits are not exclusive to women, but they are often portrayed as stereotypical female qualities – across time, culture and even fictional depictions.

The Qur'an addresses the believers:

“Believers, no one group of men should jeer at another, who may after all be better than them; no one group of women should jeer at another, who may after all be better than them; do not speak ill of one another; do not use offensive nicknames for one another. How bad it is to be called a mischief-maker after accepting faith! Those who do not repent of this behaviour are evildoers.”

Al-Qur'an 49:11

Austen's heroines are so timelessly lovable because they often defy their contemporary social norms and expectations while still adhering to their morals. While Lizzie's social circles are often filled with gossip, she learns not to trust every rumour she hears about others—something we are also advised to do in Surat al-Hujurat—and she craves more meaningful conversations that do not centre around judgmental gossip. On the other hand, Mrs. Bennet, though respected by Lizzie as her mother, is not regarded very highly in the novel overall, because she is very ostentatious and competitive with her social circle, often gossiping and displaying her jealousy. Lizzie feels the pressure of a society filled with negative judgement and constant comparison and scrutiny by certain family members, neighbours, friends, and acquaintances—things that are not unfamiliar to our social circles today.

Today, social media has proliferated both *riyaa'* and negative judgement: it has become a medium to flaunt wealth and beauty, and comments sections are rife with harshness and hostility. Female Muslim characters (even those written by Muslims, unfortunately) are often celebrated as strong and empowered when they subvert norms by engaging in activity that is deemed Islamically immoral, such as removing their hijabs or having a boyfriend. While Austen's characters also subvert norms, they are also empowered through their strong sense of morality, whether it is respecting and caring for a family member or avoiding mindless gossip.

Beyond Austen

Thankfully, we are starting to see works of fiction written by Muslims that embrace Islamic values. S.K. Ali's novels are great examples; she incorporates authentic, flawed yet striving Muslim characters with important social commentary on some of the topics mentioned here, such as religious hypocrisy and monsters-as-saints.

But there is still much to be done. As we wait for the world of Muslim fiction to develop, we can recognise that there are many existing works of fiction with values that align with our own. In *Pride and Prejudice*, the compatibility is heightened for multiple reasons: the absence of immodesty, a focus on morality and social commentary that fits into Muslim societal experiences today. All in all, the protagonists can arguably be seen as role models in some respects for us as Muslims – women and men, young and old! Both consumers and creators of fiction should use a semi-critical lens to consider how its messages and values align with our Muslim identities. As Austen's classic excellently shows, novels can be well-written and much-loved even while adhering to certain values and guidelines. This should be an inspiration for Muslim writers to write while considering Islamic guidelines of modesty and morality, without worrying about whether this would limit the story's potential.

Of course, this is not to say that Austen's novels align with all “Islamic” boundaries, despite some overlapping values. It's amusing to consider how dramatically Austen's plots would have changed if the characters had followed Islamic inheritance laws! But regardless, thinking about the fiction we consume in terms of how it agrees or differs with our Islamic values can enhance our understanding of our own identity in relation to the culture and literature that shapes our world.

Ayah is a graduate student in World History and Digital Humanities at Northeastern University. She hopes to combine her background in software and love for history and storytelling to make historical stories more accessible to diverse audiences. You can follow her on Instagram @caveofkutub. The article was originally published by The Qarawiyin Project

Russia Threatens Latin America Troop Deployments Amid US Tensions

Agenceis

A top Russian official has refused to rule out military deployments to Cuba and Venezuela if tensions with the West over Ukraine continue to escalate. Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said on Thursday that he could "neither confirm nor exclude" the possibility of Russia sending military assets to Latin America if the United States and its allies do not curtail their military activities on Russia's doorstep. "It all depends on the action by our US counterparts," Ryabkov said in an interview with Russian television network RTVI, citing Russian President Vladimir Putin's warning that Moscow could take unspecified "military-technical measures" if Western powers fail to heed its demands.

Thursday's spat came as a week of Western-led diplomacy aimed at easing Russia-Ukraine tensions headed to a close without a breakthrough. US-Russia talks in Geneva on Monday and a related NATO-Russia meeting in Brussels on Wednesday took place in response to a significant Russian troop buildup near Ukraine that the West fears might be a prelude to an invasion. Russia, which annexed Ukraine's Crimea Peninsula in 2014, has denied having plans to make another incursion into its neighbour. Instead, the Kremlin has accused NATO of threatening its territory and demanded that the military alliance never embrace Ukraine or any other ex-Soviet nations as new members.



US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan dismissed the statements about a possible Russian deployment to Cuba and Venezuela as "bluster in the public commentary." He told reporters in Washington that "if Russia were to move in that direction, we would deal with it decisively". Soon after his first election in 2000, Putin closed a Soviet-built military surveillance facility in Cuba as he sought to improve ties with Washington. But Moscow has intensified contacts with Cuba in recent years and in December 2018, Russia briefly dispatched a pair of its nuclear-capable Tu-160 bombers to Venezuela in a show of support for President Nicolas Maduro. Cuban Missile Crisis comparison

Washington and its allies firmly rejected the demand this week as a point they would not back down on, but NATO and Russian negotiators agreed to leave the door open to further talks on arms control and other issues intended to reduce the potential for hostilities. Ryabkov last month compared the current tensions over Ukraine with the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis - when the Soviet Union deployed missiles to Cuba and the US imposed a naval blockade around the island. That crisis ended after then-US President John F Kennedy and Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev agreed that Moscow would withdraw its missiles in exchange for Washington's pledge not to invade Cuba and the removal of US missiles from Turkey.

Meet The Avatar Robot That Goes To School For Sick 7-Year-Old German Boy

Agenceis

Berlin: Joshua Martinangeli, 7, is too ill to go to school. But the German student can still interact with his teacher and classmates through an avatar robot that sits in class in his place and sends a blinking signal when he has something to say. "The children talk to him, laugh with him and sometimes even chitchat with him during the lesson. Joshi can do that quite well, too," Ute Winterberg, headmistress at the Pustelblume-Grundschule in Berlin, told Reuters in an interview. Joshua cannot attend classes because he wears a tube in his neck due to a severe lung disease, said his mother, Simone Martinangeli. The project is a private initiative paid for by the local council in the Berlin district Marzahn-Hellersdorf.

"We are the only district in Berlin that has bought four avatars for its schools. The impetus was COVID-19, but I think this will be the future well beyond the pandemic," said district education councillor Torsten Kuehne. "It does happen from time to time, for various reasons, that a child cannot go to class in person. Then, the avatar can give that child a chance to remain part of the school community," Kuehne said. He added that he had already brought up the project in political discussions at a state level. "I like it either way because I like the avatar," said student Noah Kuessner when asked if he is looking forward to seeing Joshua again. "And I would like it better if Joshi could really come to school," said another classmate, Beritan Aslangul.

Pandemic To Endemic? Moderna Chair Says It Could Happen This Year



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The pandemic could start moving into an endemic phase in 2022, though countries will need to stay vigilant as the omicron variant spreads, according to Moderna Inc. co-founder Nour Afeyan. While some countries slowly begin to consider treating Covid as an endemic disease, like the flu, World Health Organization officials have said it's too early to make that call as cases surge. "2022 may be the year that the pandemic enters an endemic phase, but it really depends on what happens and the decisions that are made across the world,"

Afeyan said in a Bloomberg Television interview Friday with Francine Lacqua. Although omicron is highly transmissible, "on the other hand it's having a lesser effect in terms of seriousness of disease," he said. Moderna's omicron-specific booster shot could enter into human trials within weeks, he said, reiterating comments Chief Executive Officer Stéphane Bancel made earlier this week. The CEO said he expected another booster would be needed in the fall, and it is likely to contain a component tailored to omicron. "We will be ready with our testing starting in weeks," Afeyan said Friday. "Whether we need a booster rather in the spring than the fall is something that we're going to have to work with officials all around the world to sort out." Shares of Moderna declined 3.3% in pre-market trading in New York. Moderna, along with Pfizer Inc. and its partner BioNTech SE, developed highly effective Covid-19 vaccines based on messenger RNA technology. Moderna said earlier this week that it has signed vaccine purchase agreements worth \$18.5 billion for this year, along with options for another \$3.5 billion, including booster shots.

PM Imran Khan Launches Pakistan's First-Ever National Security Policy

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Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Friday launched the country's first-ever National Security Policy, which articulates a citizen-centric framework, placing economic security at its core unlike the previous one-dimensional security policy where the focus was on the military. Unveiling the public version of the policy, which was separately endorsed by the National Security Committee and the Cabinet last month, Prime Minister Khan said that the previous governments had failed to strengthen Pakistan's economy. The national security has been clearly explained in the new original 100-page document, he said, adding that the policy articulates a citizen-centric framework, placing economic security at its core and seeking a secure and economically resilient Pakistan. Khan said that Pakistan, since its evolution, has had a one-dimensional security policy where the focus was on the military. "For the first time, the National Security Division has developed a consensus document which defines national security in a proper way," he added. The powerful army, which has ruled Pakistan for more than half of its 70 plus years of existence, has hitherto wielded considerable power in the matters of security and foreign policy. The five-year-policy document covering a period between

2022-26, is being propped up by the Khan government as the country's first-ever strategy paper of its kind that spells out the national security vision and guidelines for the attainment of those goals. "We need to realise that our biggest security is when the people become stakeholders and stand up for the country. And this can be achieved through inclusive growth. We need to develop as a nation, not in sections," Khan said. The original version of the policy will remain classified. The main themes of the National Security Policy are national cohesion, securing an economic future, defence and territorial integrity, internal security, foreign policy in a changing world and human security. Earlier, National Security Advisor Moeed Yusuf said that Pakistan, under the new policy, will be shifting to a Comprehensive National Security Framework with the aim of ensuring the safety, security, and dignity of the citizens of Pakistan. "The policy puts economic security at the core. A stronger economy would create additional resources which would then be distributed to further bolster military and human security, he said. On the foreign front, the new policy highlights disinformation, Hindutva, and the use of aggression for domestic political gains as key threats from India, the Express Tribune newspaper reported. The report, quoting Yusuf, said

the policy places the Jammu and Kashmir issue as the core of the bilateral relationship. When asked about the message it sends to India, Yusuf said: it tells India to do the right thing and jump on the bandwagon to benefit from regional connectivity to uplift our peoples. It also tells India, if you don't want to do the right thing, it will be a loss to the entire region, but most of all India. Earlier this week, an official said that Pakistan is willing to make peace with immediate neighbours, including India, under the new security policy which leaves doors open for trade with New Delhi even without the settlement of the Kashmir issue provided there is headway in bilateral talks. Peace with immediate neighbours and economic diplomacy will be the central theme of Pakistan's foreign policy in the new National Security Policy, the newspaper reported on Tuesday. "We are not seeking hostility with India for the next 100 years. The new policy seeks peace with immediate neighbours, the official said on condition of anonymity. If there is a dialogue and progress, there would be a possibility of normalising trade and commercial ties with India as it had happened in the past, the official added. India has told Pakistan that it desires normal neighbourly relations with Islamabad in an environment free of terror, hostility and violence.

UN Chief Warns Millions Of Afghans Are On "Verge Of Death"

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The United Nations chief warned Thursday that millions of Afghans are on the "verge of death," urging the international community to fund the UN's USD 5 billion humanitarian appeals, release Afghanistan's frozen assets and jump-start its banking system to avert economic and social collapse. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told reporters that "freezing temperatures and frozen assets are a lethal combination for the people of Afghanistan," and "rules and conditions that prevent money from being used to save lives and the economy must be suspended in this emergency situation."

Afghanistan's aid-dependent economy was already stumbling when the Taliban seized power in mid-August amid the chaotic departure of US and NATO troops after 20 years. The international community froze Afghanistan's assets abroad and halted economic support, unwilling to work with the Taliban, given their reputation for brutality during their 1996-2001 rule and refusal to educate girls and allow women to work. The UN says 8.7 million Afghans are on the brink of starvation and Guterres said it's critical to rapidly inject liquidity into the Afghan economy "and avoid a meltdown that would lead to poverty, hunger and destitution for millions." It's "absolutely essential" to avoid a breakdown, he stressed, "because with the present situation you have Afghans on the verge of death." The secretary-general said the United States has "a very important role to play because most of the financial system in the world

operates in dollars" and the United States has frozen \$ 7 billion in Afghan foreign reserves, mainly held in the US. UN humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths and Peter Maurer, president of the International Committee of the Red Cross, are scheduled to hold a virtual meeting Friday with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken. Guterres said one reason for the meeting is to try and create "mechanisms that allow for an effective injection of funds into the Afghan economy and, at the same time, create the conditions for the financial system in Afghanistan to be able to operate in the local currency." The UN chief said international funding should be allowed to pay the salaries of doctors, sanitation workers, electrical engineers and other civil servants, as well as help Afghan institutions deliver health care, education and other key services. Last month, the World Bank transferred USD 280 million from a reconstruction trust fund it administers for Afghanistan to the UN children's agency, UNICEF, and the World Food Program for their operations in the country, Guterres said. "I hope the remaining resources - more than \$ 1.2 billion - will become available to help Afghanistan's people survive the winter," he said. While appealing to the international community to support the Afghan people, Guterres said he was making an equally urgent appeal to Taliban leaders "to recognise and protect the fundamental human rights, and in particular the rights of women and girls," and to build government institutions in which all Afghans feel represented.

Multiple Rockets Target US Embassy In Baghdad: Report

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A number of rockets were launched at the US embassy in Baghdad on Thursday in the city's Green Zone that is also home to the country's national government. At least four rockets launched from the Dora neighborhood of the city targeted the embassy, with three crashing down near the building and a third hitting a nearby school, ABC News reported, citing two unnamed Iraqi security officials. Three of the missiles struck within the perimeter of the American Embassy, the officials said. Another hit a school located in a nearby residential complex. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the media. An Iraqi military statement said a girl and a woman were injured in the attack, without providing more details. The statement said the rockets had been launched from the Dora neighborhood of Baghdad. The U.S. Embassy in Baghdad said in a statement that its compound had been attacked by "terrorists groups attempting to undermine Iraq's security, sovereignty, and international relations." The embassy's C-RAM defense system - supposed to detect and destroy incoming rockets, artillery and mortar shells - was heard during the attack. The attack is the latest in a series of rocket and drone attacks that have targeted the American presence in Iraq since the start

of the year, following the second anniversary of the U.S. strike that killed Iranian Gen. Qasim Soleimani and Iraqi militia commander Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis. Last Thursday, a series of attacks targeted American troops in Iraq and Syria. Rockets struck an Iraqi military base hosting U.S. troops in western Anbar province and the capital. Pro-Iran Shiite factions in Iraq have vowed revenge for Soleimani's killing and have conditioned the end of the attacks on the full exit of American troops from the country. The U.S.-led coalition formally ended its combat mission supporting Iraqi forces in the ongoing fight against the Islamic State group last month. Some 2,500 troops will remain as the coalition shifts to an advisory mission to continue supporting Iraqi forces. The top U.S. commander for the Middle East, Marine Gen. Frank McKenzie, warned in an interview with The Associated Press last month that he expects increasing attacks on U.S. and Iraqi personnel by Iranian-backed militias determined to get American forces out. A spokesperson for the embassy told the news outlet that it had been targeted by "terrorists groups attempting to undermine Iraq's security, sovereignty, and international relations." Thursday's attack is the latest in a string of military strikes against US forces in the region. Last Thursday, a military base in Iraq that houses US troops was also hit by rocket fire.

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