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P5 STATE

TRADERS BODY TO OBSERVE VOLUNTARY WEEKEND LOCKDOWN IN JAMMU

A traders body, dealing with essential supplies, on Wednesday announced its decision to observe weekend lockdown here to support the efforts of the Jammu and

P7

TO BE A GREAT INNOVATOR, LEARN TO EMBRACE AND THRIVE IN UNCERTAINTY

Madam C.J. Walker, born Sarah Breedlove, was America's first female self-made millionaire. She pioneered a line of hair care and beauty products for people of color early in the 20th century, and the recent Netflix



P11 SPORTS

ATV RALLY, SKI SHOW HELD AT DOODPATHRI

In a bid to promote Doodpathri as a winter tourism destination, the Director Tourism G N Ittoo and Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Shahbaz Ahmed



Quote!

Only the dead have seen the end of war

— Plato

NEWS DIGEST

Kupwara Admin Issues Weather Advisory

SRINAGAR: The district authorities in Kupwara on Wednesday issued a weather advisory asking people living in higher reaches to refrain from venturing in avalanche prone areas till improvement of weather in view of prediction by Meteorological Department for light rain/snowfall **More on P06**

4 Held With Heroin Worth Rs 15.50L

JAMMU: Four alleged drug peddlers were arrested with 4.7 kg charas and four grams of heroin, worth over Rs 15.50 lakh in grey market, in Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir, police said on Wednesday. Amjad Khan and Mohammad Ashraf alias Shongu were arrested after 4.440 kg of charas and **More on P06**

Kargil Air Service Tickets Available Online

LEH: In a first, the Ladakh administration has set up online booking of tickets for air services run by the Indian Air Force in the Union territory, officials said on Wednesday. The administration flagged off the operation of subsidised helicopter service from Ladakh. **More on P06**

Active Covid Cases In Ladakh Rise To 965

LEH: Ladakh has reported 164 fresh COVID-19 cases, taking the total number of cases in the union territory to 23,700, officials said on Wednesday. The union territory has recorded 222 Covid-related deaths — 164 in Leh and 58 in Kargil — since the outbreak of the pandemic last year, they said. **More on P06**

5818 Test Positive In Highest Spike Since Covid Outbreak



People wait for their reports inside a makeshift Covid-19 testing facility at the Tourist Reception Centre (TRC) Srinagar on Wednesday. KO Photo, Abid Bhat

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir reported on Wednesday 5818 fresh cases of novel Coronavirus, the highest single day spike since the outbreak of pandemic,

while four more people succumbed to the deadly infection in the Union Territory during the last 24 hours.

According to officials, Kashmir Valley reported an unprecedented spike in Covid-19

cases on Wednesday with 4066 people confirmed to have contracted the deadly infection during the last 24 hours. In Jammu division, 1752 new cases of virus were registered, taking the total **More on P06**

Medical Students All Set To Join The Frontline

800 Doctors, Paramedics Infected Since Jan 1

Auqib Javed

SRINAGAR: The health department is mulling to engage final year medical students to meet the third wave of Coronavirus as over 800 health workers, including doctors and paramedics in the Valley have contracted the infection since the first week of January.

An official told Kashmir Observer on Wednesday that over 500 doctors of Government Medical College (GMC) and its associated hospitals in Srinagar have tested Covid-19 positive, since January 1, this year.

“Over 292 Doctors and 277 paramedics from GMC associates hospitals have

been tested positive since Jan 1 till date,” Professor and HoD Community Medicine, SPM, GMC Srinagar, Dr S. Muhammad Salim Khan told Kashmir Observer.

He further informed a number of Doctors and paramedics have recovered and joined back their duties.

However, the spread of infection at a lightning speed has sent alarm bells ringing in the Health department.

A doctor from SMHS told Kashmir Observer that they are overloaded with work since a number of doctors are off due to Covid.

He said people are visiting hospitals since the OPD's have not been closed yet. The doctors **More on P06**

LG Hails 2 Crore Vaccination Milestone

The Union Territory Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Wednesday hailed healthcare and frontline workers for achieving the landmark of administering over 2 crore vaccine doses among the people in Jammu and Kashmir. According to an official spokesperson, J&K has been a front runner among the States and Union Territories in vaccinating the eligible population **More on P06**

Covid Infected CRPF Man Ends Life

A Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) man infected by Coronavirus last week, ended his life on Wednesday at a Covid-19 care centre in Humhama area of central Kashmir's Budgam district. Bharat Bhai of CRPF 43 battalion hanged himself to death at a COVID care centre Humhama on Wednesday where he was admitted after testing positive for Coronavirus last week, reports said. **More on P06**

J&K Bank Uri Shut After Staffers Test +Ve

The district authorities on Wednesday shut down a branch of Jammu and Kashmir Bank in Chandanwari area of Uri in Baramulla district after five employees tested positive for Coronavirus. According to reports, five bank employees came out positive for Covid-19 on Wednesday, a day after their samples were taken for RT-PCR tests to determine if they were infected. Besides the bank **More on P06**

Militants Target CRPF In Anantnag

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Unidentified militants on Wednesday attacked a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) picket in south Kashmir's Anantnag district.

According to reports, unknown militants fired upon the bunker of CRPF 40 battalion near FM Gali on KP road in the south Kashmir Township. However, no injuries were reported in the incident.

A local news agency quoted an unnamed CRPF officer as saying that militants fired 3-4 bullets towards the bunker before fleeing from the spot.

The officer also said that searches have been launched to nab the attackers.

Pertinently, militants on Tuesday triggered off a low-intensity **More on P06**

LG Asks JK Bank To Help Youth With Financial Schemes

Observer News Service

JAMMU: The Union Territory Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Wednesday asked Jammu and Kashmir Bank to explore all possibilities to extend financial handholding to the youth through various schemes and interventions, besides ensuring targeted support to identified segments of the economy.

Sinha made these remarks during an interaction with Baldev Prakash, who recently joined as the first Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (MD&CEO) of the J&K Bank, at the Raj Bhavan here on Wednesday, an official spokesperson said.

Parkash, he said, apprised the LG about the plans to take J&K Bank to the forefront in the banking sector and making it a key



LG also interacted with Dr Ajay K Sood, CGM, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) at Raj Bhavan, Jammu on Wednesday.

contributor in the development of the economy of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

According to the official spokesperson, the LG asked the MD&CEO to explore all possibilities to extend financial handholding to the youth through various schemes and interventions, besides ensuring targeted support to

identified segments of the economy.

“He also emphasized the high importance of making continuous improvements in the functioning of the bank and maintaining discipline among the bank functionaries to nurture transparency and accountability at all levels,” he said.

The LG, he said, **More on P06**

MeT Predicts Another Wet Spell On Weekend

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The meteorological department on Wednesday predicted another wet spell in Jammu and Kashmir on weekend, even as the higher reaches of the Valley received fresh snowfall, while light rains lashed many areas in the plains dipping day temperature.

“A spell of light rain/snow is likely (60% chance) during January 22-23rd. Thereafter,

mainly dry weather is expected from January 24 onwards till ending January,” an official of the meteorological department said, adding, “There is no forecast of any major snow spell till ending January.”

Meanwhile, the famous skiing resort of Gulmarg and some other places in the higher reaches of Kashmir received fresh snowfall, while light rains lashed many areas **More on P06**

Jammu Bound Traffic On Highway Today

Jammu-Srinagar highway, the only surface link connecting Kashmir Valley with the outside world, shall remain open for only one-way traffic on Thursday, officials said here. “Commuters are advised not to travel on the highway without confirming the status of road from traffic control unit **More on P06**

J&K, Ladakh Categorised 'Hard Areas' In Joint AGMUT Cadre

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Ministry of Home Affairs, government of India, has categorised Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh as “hard areas” in the Joint AGMUT Cadre.

Subsequent to abrogation of Article 370, central government ordered merging of the Jammu and Kashmir cadre of IAS, IPS and IFS officers with that of Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Mizoram and Union Territory (AGMUT) — also known as the Union Territory cadre.

“Consequent upon the merger of the J&K cadre into AGMUT cadre, the matter has been examined and with the approval of Competent Authority, it has been decided that the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir and the Union Territory

of Ladakh may be categorised as Category B (Hard Areas) in the Joint AGMUT Cadre,” reads a communication sent among others to Chief Secretary J&K by Rakesh Kumar Singh, Under Secretary to Government of India, MHA.

“Accordingly, in partial modification in para 3 of the said guidelines, the segments of the AGMUT Cadre are hereby Classified into two categories, namely regular and hard areas,” the communication reads, adding Category ‘A’ - Regular Areas—Delhi, Chandigarh, Goa, Puducherry, Dadar Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu and Category ‘B’ - Hard Areas—Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.”

Kashmiri Businessmen Looted In Punjab

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Unidentified people looted cash and merchandise worth lakhs from the flat of Kashmiri shawl dealers in Jalandhar district of Punjab when they were out to clear transactions with local businessmen.

These Kashmiri shawl dealers are from Chandigarh Lolab area of North Kashmir's Kupwara district. The incident occurred a day before these shawl retailers were scheduled to return back to Valley, a local news agency KNT reported Wednesday.

Divulging information about the incident, one of the victims, Irshad Ahmed said that the burglars entered into the room in their absence and

not only stole shawls worth Rs 50,000 but also cash to the tune of Rs 4.75 lakh.

“The incident occurred in broad daylight. The burglars had made a mess of the room, ransacking everything. We had put the cash into the bag that belonged to a few retailers. Before leaving for home, we wanted to clear the transactions with local businessmen,” he said.

He said they approached the police who assured them that the burglary incident will be solved. “We are finished as we have lost everything that we had earned this season,” Irshad Ahmed said.

The victim shawl dealers appealed to Jammu and Kashmir civil and police administration to **More on P06**

Murder Most Foul

Lucknow Family 'Missing' In J&K Killed In Hometown

Observer Monitoring Desk

JAMMU: Startling revelation came to light on Wednesday about a Lucknow family allegedly missing during their travel to Jammu and Kashmir.

Earlier reports had said that three members of a family from Lucknow — Mehmood Ali Khan, his wife Darakhshan and their son, Shavez — had gone missing in Ramban district while they were on their way from Jammu to Srinagar.

News agency IANS quoting police sources said according to Salim Khan, brother-in-law of Mehmood Ali Khan, all 3 members were murdered by elder son, Sarfaraz Khan on January 5, the day they were leaving towards Jammu by train.

“After disposing of their dead



bodies, he meticulously planned to mislead the relatives and police. He clandestinely visited Jammu and Kashmir and messaged via WhatsApp from his father's mobile phone on 14th January morning in which he posed as his younger brother, Shavez and said that they are stuck on the

highway due to landslides. “He even posted some pictures of the highway,” said the report quoting sources.

The details of the case came to light when the J&K police traced the phone in Lucknow that was used to send WhatsApp message. Police said **More on P06**

Here's what new study says

A recent study by Waseda University, Japan, provided a causal link between chewing and diet-induced thermogenesis (DIT). The study, led by Dr Yuka Hamada and Professor Naoyuki Hayashi, has been published in the journal 'Scientific Reports'.

The fact that chewing food well makes a healthy eating habit is an age-old wisdom. Slow eating and thorough chewing help prevent obesity and weight gain – a view popularized a century back and tested after-

wards in sporadic scientific studies. Typically, the chewing process reportedly enhanced the energy expenditure associated with the metabolism of food and increased intestinal motility - all summing up to an increased heat generation in the body after food intake, known as diet-induced thermogenesis (DIT). However, how prolonged chewing induces DIT in the body, remains unclear.

DIT increased energy expenditure above the basal fasting level - a factor known to prevent weight gain. Earlier, the team of Dr Hamada and Prof Hayashi found

that slow eating and thorough chewing not only increased DIT but also enhanced blood circulation in the splanchnic region of the abdomen.

Although these studies linked chewing-induced-DIT with increased digestion and absorption-related activity in the abdomen, they left scope for further exploring a few crucial points.

Hayashi explained, "We were unsure whether the size of the food bolus that entered the digestive tract contributed to the increase in DIT observed after slow eating. Also, do oral stimuli generated during prolonged chewing of food play any role in increasing DIT? To define slow chewing as an effective and scientific weight management strategy, we needed to look deeper

To find the answers, the researchers designed their new study to exclude the effect of the food bolus by involving liquid food. The entire study included three trials conducted on different days.

In the control trial, they asked the volunteers to swallow 20-mL liquid test food normally every 30 seconds. In the second trial, the volunteers kept the same test food in their mouth for 30 seconds without chewing, thereby allowing prolonged tasting before swallowing. Lastly, in the third trial they studied the effect of both chewing and tasting; the volunteers chewed the 20-mL test food for 30 seconds at a frequency of once per second and then swallowed it.

The variables such as hunger and full-

ness, gas-exchange variables, DIT, and splanchnic circulation were duly measured before and after the test-drink consumption. The results of this well-designed study turned up to be quite insightful. There was no difference in hunger and fullness scores among the trials. However, as Hayashi described, "We found DIT or energy production increased after consuming a meal, and it increased with the duration of each taste stimulation and the duration of chewing. This means irrespective of the influence of the food bolus, oral stimuli, corresponding to the duration of tasting food in the mouth and the duration of chewing, increased DIT."

The study highlighted that chewing well, could indeed help prevent obesity and metabolic syndrome.

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Srinagar:0194-2312629(f) 2312631

Discipline	Qualification	Experience
Neonatology	i). DM Neonatology or DNB (Neonatology) from a Multi-Speciality Teaching Institution/Hospital, having at least 500 Bed strength, duly recognized by Medical Council of India. Where DNB (Neonatology) has not been done from a 500 bedded Institution / Hospital, the candidate shall have additional one year Senior Residency or equivalent experience from an Institution/Hospital duly recognized by Medical council of India. ii). M.D. Paediatrics with 2 years special training in Neonatology with 1 year post training experience in Neonatology from an Institution duly recognized by Medical Council of India. Note: Candidates with DM/DNB Neonatology shall be given preference.	
Paediatric Anesthesia	MD Anesthesia/DNB Anesthesia with three years post MD/DNB experience in Paediatric Anesthesia from a teaching Institution duly recognized by Medical Council of India.	
Paediatric Bio Chemistry	MD (Biochemistry)/DNB (DNB (Bio-Chemistry/ MBBS with M.Sc. (Medical Biochemistry)/M.Sc (Medical Biochemistry) with Ph.D. (Medical Biochemistry)/ M.Sc. (Medical Biochemistry) with D.Sc. (Medical Biochemistry) from an institution duly recognized by Medical Council of India/University duly recognized by University Grants Commission.	Minimum of two (02) years Teaching/ Research experience as Registrar/ Tutor/Demonstrator or as a Senior Resident after post graduation from an Institution duly recognized/ permitted by the Medical Council of India
Paediatric Cardiology	i). MD Paediatric with DM Paediatric Cardiology or DNB Paediatric Cardiology from a Multi-Speciality Teaching Institution/Hospital, having at least 500 Bed strength, duly recognized by Medical Council of India Where DNB Paediatric Cardiology has not been done from a 500 bedded Institution / Hospital, the candidate shall have additional one year Senior Residency or equivalent experience from an Institution/ Hospital duly recognized by Medical council of India. or ii). M.D. Paediatric Cardiology with 2 years post Special Training in Paediatric Cardiology from an institution duly recognized by Medical Council of India.	

8. Documents to be uploaded

While filling the online application form the applicants are required to upload the documents as per details given below:

- a) Documents (Mandatory):-
 - i) Date of Birth certificate (Secondary School/Matric Certificate- 01 leaf
- ii) Domicile certificate - 01 leaf
- iii) M.B.B.S Degree certificate along with consolidated Marks Cards-upto 05 leaves
- iv) PG Diploma / PG/DM/MCh/ DNB (BS)/ DNB(SS) alongwith consolidated marks card (for non-clinical posts) Certificate; alongwith Registration certificate, from competent authority-upto 04 leaves.
- v) Verification Certificate from NBE for equivalence of DNB qualifications with MD/MS or MD/M.Ch as per MCI Notification No. MC-12(2)/2010-Med.Misc dated 11.06.2012 -01 leaf
- vi) Two years experience certificate from the teaching institutions recognized by the Medical Council of India (now National Medical Commission), as per format - 01 leaf

i) Documents (Mandatory) if claiming benefit under that category):-
ii) Valid category certificate - 01 leaf
iii) For Physically Challenged Candidates Disability certificate on the prescribed format, if required - 01 leaf.
iv) In-Service Certificate Signed by HOD.
v) Any other document for which the candidate is claiming weightage as per Provisions laid down in J&K (Business and Procedure) Rules, 2021:-
i) Certificate of Distinction In Sports in terms of J&K (Appointment of Outstanding Sports Persons) Rules, 1998- 01 Leaf
ii) "C" Certificate in NCC activities- 01 Leaf
iii) Gold Medal Certificate for overall first position in the minimum prescribed qualification- 01 Leaf. In case the convocation for award of Gold Medal has not been convened, a certificate from the competent authority shall be uploaded to the affect that he/she is entitled to Gold Medal for securing overall first position in the prescribed qualification and that the Gold Medal shall be awarded in the Convocation of the University/Institution.
iv) List of Research Papers/Publications as per format-01 leaf
v) List of Conferences (Participation & Presentation) as per format - 01 leaf.
vi) List of Books as per format- 01 leaf.
It may be noted that no further opportunity to upload any document shall be provided hereafter and action under rules including rejection of application form/candidature etc will be taken.

9. Scheme of Selection
Selection shall be made in accordance with the provisions laid down in the Jammu & Kashmir Public Service Commission's (Business & Procedure) Rules, 2021 as amended from time to time. Candidates are especially advised to apprise themselves with the provisions of Rule 44(ii) of the Jammu & Kashmir Public Service Commission's (Business & Procedure) Rules, 2021.

10. Important instructions regarding filling up of online applications are given herein below:
i. Candidates are required to apply online through the website of the Commission i.e. <http://www.jkpsc.nic.in>. No other means/ mode of application shall be accepted.
ii. Candidates are first required to go to the JKPS C website <http://www.jkpsc.nic.in> and click on the link "One Time Registration" or click on Login menu if you have already created your profile with the JKPS C.
iii. After logging into your account, candidates are required to fill all the requisite fields of One Time Registration (OTR) i.e. personal information, contact information & educational qualification, service details etc.
iv. The candidate shall also be required to upload the image of date stamped recent passport size color photograph and signature. The photograph should not be taken earlier than 01.01.2021.
v. Size of the photograph (passport size) and signature must be between 10Kb to 20Kb in Ljpeg or jpg only.
vi. After successful submission of all the details in your OTR account, check the eligibility conditions as mentioned in the advertisement notification before applying for the post.
vii. Click on the "show examination" as shown against the respective post/examination you want to apply.
viii. On Clicking on the "show examination" a window will appear on your computer screen. Select the month of the advertisement notification for which you want to apply, a link(s) for the post(s) will appear on the computer screen.
ix. An "APPLY" button is shown against the respective post and the candidates will click on the APPLY button against the post he/she is eligible.
x. On clicking "APPLY" button, an instruction window will appear. Candidates should read instructions carefully before clicking on "APPLY" button at the bottom of the webpage.
xi. On clicking "APPLY" button, the system will display all facts/particulars that a candidate may have mentioned while filling up the necessary fields of his/her OTR account. Candidate shall fill up the remaining required fields in the application form and accept the declaration thereof.
xii. Once the candidate is satisfied about the correctness of the filled in details, then, he or she may click on "SUBMIT" button to finally push the data into server with successful submission report.
xiii. On successful submission of the basic details, the candidates will be required to pay the online fee and uploading of the documents, for final submission of the online application form.
xiv. Candidates can pay the requisite fee through online mode in the "SUBMITTED APPLICATIONS" menu in your account.
xv. After successful payment of the fee, the fee status will get reflected on the Online Application form. Candidates can check the fee status by clicking on the Print Application Button in the submitted Applications menu in your JKPS C account. In case the payment status shows either "not submitted or under processing or status has not been reflected on your submitted application form", candidates(s) are advised to contact the JKPS C office at Solina Srinagar/Resham Ghar Colony Jammu immediately for clarification. Further where the online fee is paid through other service providers the candidate must ensure that not only the amount of fee is debited from his/service provider's Account but also credited into the official account of JKPS C.
xvi. The candidate would be able get the printout of his/her submitted application only after the payment of the requisite fee and uploading of mandatorily prescribed/requisite documents.
xvii. The JKPS C will not undertake detailed scrutiny of applications for the eligibility and other aspects at the time of filling up of online and therefore, candidature will be accepted only provisionally. The candidates are advised to go through the requirements of educational qualification, age, etc and satisfy themselves that they are eligible for the post(s). Copies of supporting documents will be sought at the time of document verification. When scrutiny is under taken, if any claim if made in the application is not found/substantiated by proof, the candidature will be cancelled and the Commission's decision shall be final and binding.
xviii. Please note that the above procedure is the only valid procedure for applying. No other mode of application or incomplete steps would be accepted and such applications would be rejected.

11. Editing of the online application form
Candidates who have successfully submitted the online application form along with requisite fee will be allowed to edit some of the fields in their submitted online application form within three days after the cut-of date i.e. from 19.02.2022 to 21.02.2022 (upto 11.59 PM) Detailed instruction in this regard will be made available on the website.

12. Action against candidates found guilty of misconduct
Candidates are advised that they should not furnish any particulars that are false or suppress any material information.
A candidate who is, or has been, declared by the Commission, to be guilty of:
i. obtaining by wrongful support of his/her candidature by any means, or
ii. impersonating, or
iii. procuring impersonation by any person, or
iv. submitting fabricated documents or documents which have been tampered with or
v. making statements which are incorrect, or false or suppressing material information, or
vi. resorting to any other irregular or improper means in connection with his/her candidature for the selection, or
vii. attempting to commit or, as the case may be, abetting the Commission of all or any of the acts specified in the foregoing clauses may, in addition to rendering himself/herself liable to criminal prosecution, shall be liable:
a) to be disqualified by the Commission from selection for which he/she is a candidate, and/or
b) to be debarred either permanently or for a specified period:-
i) By the Commission from any selection held by them.
ii) By the Union Territory Government from any employment under them, and
c) if he/she is already in service under Government, disciplinary action can be taken against him/ her under the appropriate rules.

No: PSC/DR/Lect/AP/H&ME/ /21
Dated:. 01.2022

Sd/-
(R.K Katoch) JKAS
Secretary
J&K Public Service Commission

DIPK-16821-21

Sd/-
(R.K Katoch) JKAS
Secretary

SMC to go tough against illegal Construction

Agencies

Srinagar: Authorities on Wednesday said that Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) will utilize its all Enforcement Wing and Demolition Squads to ensure no illegal construction is spared.

The news agency, has learnt that the mayor of Srinagar, Junaid Azim Mattu said in a meeting regarding pertaining to ban on illegal construction.

Mattu said, "State of the art-technology and machines to be operationalized to demolish illegal/unauthorized concrete buildings. This is another first for SMC. Every single unauthorized construction will be demolished."

"SMC will for the first time ever fully and adequately equip its Enforcement Wing and Demolition Squads to ensure no illegal construction is spared. Have sought a holistic project report to be conceptualized by our Mech Wing within two weeks - to be proposed to the HUDD," he said.

Mattu further said, "We are also ensuring that all Demolition Squad Members (transferred to other wings) are returned to demolition squad. 4 squads of 10 members each to be stationed in each city zone with independent conveyance and equipment. All members have full safety equipment."

"There is going to be zero tolerance for illegal constructions. If any official/public representative is found involved in any such malpractice - prompt action will be initiated. AND the building will be demolished. PLEASE don't violate the law. Apply for permissions," he said—(KNO)

COVID-19: Srinagar Records Highest Spike in Cases

Observer News Service

Srinagar:-- As the summer capital of J&K recorded highest ever daily covid-19 cases on Wednesday, Deputy Commissioner Srinagar Mohammad Aijaz Asad said that taking the virus "mild is a mistake."

"1745 positive cases in Srinagar today. That is way ahead of 1300 cases during peak of second wave. Virus is warning us. Taking it mild is a mistake," he said in a tweet.

Time and again, the deputy commissioner, appealed to the people of Srinagar to abide by covid appropriate behavior and do not invite complete lockdown. He said violation of CAB will have serious repercussions.

It may be noted, Covid-19 cases continue to mount as Jammu and Kashmir reported 5818 fresh cases while four persons died due to it in last 24 hours, officials said on Wednesday.

They said 1752 of the fresh cases were confirmed from Jammu Division and 4066 from Kashmir valley, taking the overall tally to 372669.

Over 1255 Covid-19 patients recovered during the time—592 from Jammu Division and 663 from Kashmir. So far 341854 people have recovered, leaving active case tally at 26236—9336 in Jammu and 16900 in Kashmir.

They said there was no new confirmed case of mucormycosis (black fungus) reported today. So far 51 black fungus cases have been confirmed in J&K, the officials said.

They also informed that 41266 doses of covid-19 vaccine were administered during the time in J&K.

DHSK Visits Maternity Hospital Chanpora, Takes Stock Of Facilities

Observer News SERVICE

Srinagar: Director Health Services Kashmir (DHSK), Dr Mushtaq Ahmad Rather on Thursday visited dedicated Covid-19 maternity hospital Chanpora and took stock of all the facilities being provided to the patients.

A spokesperson of the Directorate of Health Services Kashmir said the director visited the Chanpora which has been especially dedicated for maternity services.

He inspected all the sections of the hospital including the x-ray section, theatre, general wards, and took stock of Covid-19 arrangements for better patient care services.

The director also interacted with patients and said the administration is fully geared and has made all the arrangements especially for maternity care in hospitals.

On the occasion, Dr Mushtaq said that the health facility will be upgraded and will cater to Covid-19 patients of Pulwama, Srinagar and Budgam district.

He said that staff for the same will be pooled from these districts. Pertinently, at the dedi-

The director also interacted with patients and said the administration is fully geared and has made all the arrangements especially for maternity care in hospitals.

cated Covid-19 facility, around 15 Covid-19 positive patients are admitted in the hospital and are undergoing treatment.

On the occasion, Dr Mushtaq said that maternity services are an important part as this point of time and we need to keep facilities for maternity care so that pregnant women, who are Covid-19 positive, do not face any kind of difficulty.

He was accompanied by various officers and officials of the health departments.

Auqaf Condole demise of Dr Handoo

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Anjuman Auqaf Jama Masjid Srinagar has expressed deep sorrow over the demise of the illustrious son of the Handoo family, Dr Muhammad Iqbal Handoo, son of late Khawaja Ghulam Mustafa Handoo of Narwara Srinagar.

In its condolence statement, the Anjuman while mentioning the close ties and religious affiliations of the Handoo family with the Mirwaiz family said, "Dr Muhammad Iqbal Handoo not only had very close relations and association with Shaheed-e-Milat (RA) but also treated the present Mirwaiz with utmost compassion, love and devotion.

The Anjuman said the demise was a great loss not only to the Handoo family but also to the entire Kashmiri society. Dr Iqbal Handoo was not only a pioneer in religious, educational, welfare and social work but he also used to play a key role in arranging special sermons of Mirwaiz-e-Kashmir on the occasion of Ashura, the 10th Muharram at Alam Sb Narwara.

Students Stage Protest Against Tibbia College For Demanding Hefty Fee

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Bachelor of Unani Medicine and Surgery (BUMS) students of Kashmir Tibbia College Hospital and Research Centre Wednesday staged a protest against College Administration for demanding hefty fee for last year internship course.

Students emerged at Press Enclave Srinagar and alleged that they are being forced to Pay Rs 1.10 lakh as a fee for last year's internship course.

"It is a 5 and a half year course. The first 4 and a half year course is academic in nature while last year is for internship. During the last year of internship, the government offers a stipend to students, but here the case is different. Instead of offering a stipend to the students, the College has been demanding fees from us, that too when people are suffering heavily in wake of the Covid-10 situation," the protesters said.

The students said that they are being barred from attending the classes. "We can't afford such a hefty amount at this juncture. The



situation that has emerged due to Covid-19 has crushed the economy. We appeal to LG Manoj Sinha to intervene in the matter and save our future," the protesting students said.

Unani Medical Association President Javaid Ahmed Lone said that it is totally injustice towards students to demand hefty fees at

one go and that too at this stage when there is Covid-19 induced lockdown.

The college which is popularly known as Kashmir Tibbia College was founded in 1995. This Private BUMS College is affiliated with the University of Kashmir and is approved by the Ministry of Unani and the Government of India.

از نیابت والکولر لہ پورہ باجلاس
نائب تحصیلدار انکیز بھٹو بیٹ درجاول
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یہ ذرا انتہائی دیکھ کے ساتھ دی جاتی ہے کہ سماجی پڑی رہا تھوڑے چہرہ مہم نامہ تھوڑا سا کند عمر کا کوئی تھوڑے میں سرنگر اس دینے فانی سے مورخہ 18 جنوری 2022 بروز منگلواروفا ت پائیں سر جوہر کا رام پھارم بروز بعد الحیا پارک بتاریخ 21 جنوری 2022 کو صبح ساڑھے دس بجے آجانی مقبرہ مدردہ بل سرنگر میں انجام دی جائے گی عوام الناس سے استدعا ہے کہ کوئی بھی خردوش میوہ وغیرہ مانتہ نہ لائے تعزت ان کے فسزدہ فیاض احمد راتھر کے خرواق عشا راجہ عمر کالونی GD Goenka اسکول کے نزدیک پڑ ہوگا
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HIGHWAY STATUS

Sgr-Jammu highway - (Open)
Mughal Road - (Closed)
Srinagar- Leh- (Closed)

HIJRI CALENDAR
16 Jumada al-Sani
1443

PRAYERS

FAJR	6: 07
ZUHR	12:42
ASR	4:11
Magrib	5:52
ISHA	7:16

This Day In History

- 1265 - First English Parliament summoned other than by royal command (in this instance by Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester) meets in Westminster Hall
- 1667 - Treaty of Andrusovo ends 13 year war between Poland & Russia
- 1807 - Napoleon convenes great Sanhedrin, Paris
- 1921 - British submarine HMS K5 (which was unusually equipped with steam turbines) sinks with 57 crew during exercises in the Bay of Biscay
- 1921 - Dagestan ASSR forms in RSFSR
- 1925 - The Soviet and Japan sign a convention resuming relations: Russia agrees to limit revolutionary activity of the Third Communist International, while Japan agrees to leave the Sakhalin
- 1936 - Edward VIII succeeds British King George V
- 1941 - Chinese Communist leaders re-organize the New Fourth Army in defiance of Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek's order for it to be disbanded
- 1944 - RAF drops 2,300 ton of bombs on Berlin
- 1945 - Franklin D. Roosevelt sworn-in for an unprecedented (and never to be repeated) 4th term as US President.
- 1945 - The Hungarian Provisional Government concludes an armistice with the USSR, US, and Britain, agree to pay reparations and to join the war against Germany.
- 1950 - Suriname becomes independent part in Realm of Netherlands.
- 1952 - British army occupies Ismailiya, Suez Canal Zone.
- 1961 - The Democrat J.F. Kennedy is inaugurated as President of the United States, the youngest ever sworn in.
- 1965 -The US Jet Propulsion Laboratory proposes modified Apollo flight to fly around Mars & return.
- 1972 - Six oil exporting countries conclude meetings with Western oil companies; an agreement is reached to raise the price of crude.
- 1981 - The US diplomats and citizens held hostage at the US embassy in Tehran begin their journey home.
- 1986 - 1st federal holiday honoring Martin Luther King Jr.
- 1989 - George H. W. Bush inaugurated as 41st US President & Dan Quayle becomes 44th Vice President.
- 1990 - US 64th manned space mission STS 32 (Columbia 10) returns from space.
- 1991 - US Patriot missiles begins shooting down Iraqi missiles.
- 1991 - Sudan's government imposes Islamic law nationwide, worsening the civil war between the country's Muslim north and Christian south.
- 2009 - Barack Obama, inaugurated as the 44th President of the United States of America, becomes the United States' first African-American president.
- 2009 - Joe Biden assumes the office of the Vice President of the United States.
- 2014 - Credit cards of at least 20 million South Koreans are hacked

From KO Archives

US Officials May Hold Talks With APHC

New—A team of five or six officials from the US state department is expected to visit New Delhi to speak to leaders of the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference before their likely departure for Pakistan, highly placed government sources said. There was, however, no independent confirmation of this from the United States embassy or the Indian government. The Hurriyat office in New Delhi too said it had no information about the meeting. Syed Ali Shah Geelani, the only senior Hurriyat leader in New Delhi, was unavailable for comment as he is undergoing treatment. The Americans were expected to reach New Delhi at the weekend. The meeting is being facilitated by influential Kashmiri leaders in the US.

KASHMIR OBSERVER, 20 January, 2001)

KASHMIR

OBSERVER

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K O V I E W

Weakened Militancy?

Ever since the revocation of Article 370 in August 2019, Kashmir has witnessed an uneasy calm. The protests and the stone-pelting incidents have gradually tapered off. But the militancy has so far held out. That too, despite the killings of a large number of militants. Last year a total of 171 militants were killed, out of whom 19 were Pakistanis and 152 local. In addition, 44 security personnel and 34 civilians also lost their lives.

According to a police estimate, there are now around 150 active militants in Kashmir, the lowest such number in the last seven years. This has, for once, created a distinct possibility that the militancy could very well end in the next few months or over the course of this year if there is no replenishment of the ranks in the form of local recruitment or influx from across the border. Contrary to the apprehensions, the foreign presence in the Valley's militancy has only increasingly diminished over the years. The Kashmir militancy is now mainly composed of the local youth who are untrained in armed combat and have fewer weapons to use. So, they have posed little challenge to the security forces beyond some occasional attacks on the policemen.

The militancy in the union territory apparently looks on a shaky wicket. But it is premature and also risky to make predictions about Kashmir. The situation in Kashmir remains far too complex to lend itself to linear analysis. A case in point can be the sudden heightened violence in Jammu in October last year, which worsened the security situation in Poonch and Rajouri. The militancy had all but ended in the twin districts since early 2000. But since the middle of 2021, the area witnessed a sharp resurgence in violence, led by the militants infiltrating from across the Line of Control. Fourteen soldiers, eight militants including one in custody, and a civilian were killed in the twin districts until October and then the peace mysteriously restored again. Kashmir could very well look forward to similar twists in the trajectory of militancy this year again.

In the past also this ebb and flow have continued. As the history of the past thirty years shows militancy has gone on. And it seems unlikely to die down until the factors underlying it are also addressed. Or if the replenishment stops, something that has never happened so far. And appears unlikely to happen in near to medium future.

O T H E R O P I N O N

Retired hurt

The captain of a cricket team is not expected to rock the proverbial boat. Yet, Virat Kohli, who stepped down as captain from the Test team, has done that very thing with his sudden announcement that he will not lead the side in any format of the game. There is speculation that Mr Kohli's decision to retire hurt as skipper may have something to do with his strained ties with the powers that be in the Board of Control for Cricket in India. The circumstances that led to his exit as captain from the T20 team remain shrouded in mystery, with Mr Kohli disputing the BCCI chief's claim of having counselled him against the decision. Whatever may be the truth, the manner in which the dispute was allowed to fester was inimical to the image of Indian cricket as well as the ambience in the dressing room. For all its patronage, the BCCI — it has a former player and successful captain at its helm — remains unschooled in the art of communicating with players in the desired manner. Mr Kohli's famed aggression — he chose to wash dirty linen in public — did not help matters either.

It is a pity that Mr Kohli has had to step down as captain amidst such acrimony. This is especially so because his record as captain remains formidable. He is India's most successful leader, having led the side to 40 victories in 68 Test matches. He, along with the management and players, helped India to the pole position in Test rankings. Most importantly, India's overseas record improved dramatically under his watch. Mr Kohli's induction of a culture that prioritized physical fitness, mental toughness as well as bowlers with the ability to bowl the Opposition out facilitated India's transformation from paper tigers to world beaters. The failure to win a major tournament of the International Cricket Council, including the ODI World Cup, is perhaps the only blemish in his sparkling career as captain. Mr Kohli may have left captaincy but his legacy of fearless competitiveness and the pursuit of excellence, at home and abroad, should, hopefully, continue under his successor. This would be consistent with the view that a captain is merely a cog in the wheel of a wider vision for success. His real achievement lies not in numbers — matches won or lost — but in his ability to inspire change in a team's belief and character. Mr Kohli has fared rather well in this regard.

Telegraph India

Education – The First Casualty

Previously Too, It Was Observed That Authorities Were Prompt And Hasty While Ordering The Closure Of Tuition Centres And The Same Haste And Half Logic Was Invoked To Justify The Move This Time



Amir Suhail Wani

IF IT IS POSSIBLE to have marriage ceremonies with a cap on the number of guests, why can't the same rules be applied to tuition centres? If transport is plying in full swing, why do tuition centres have to fuse out? The authorities holding decision making positions are well aware of the role, seminal and pivotal nature of education

Pandemics usually shatter the world order and are known for throwing life out of gear. Historical testimonies bear witness to the fact that the post-pandemic world has never been the same as the pre-pandemic world. Be it Black Death, Spanish Flu or any other pandemic, the world was shaken to its core and all facets of human life subjected to alteration. The telltale of COVID-19 which started some two odd years ago and is still wrecking large scale havoc is nothing different from previous pandemics – it is rather more grievous and detrimental.

While the global aspects of the pandemic stand thoroughly discussed and explored and its impact on economies, market structures, healthcare and many other aspects stand documented; there is a concern of a more immediate and serious nature that we shall try to engage with here.

No sooner are there any spikes observed in COVID cases that educational institutions and tuition centres become the foremost targets of lockdown imposition. Same has happened this time. The administration ordered lockdown of coaching centres in the wake of rising positivity and students were once again left resourceless. It was only after the students staged protests and expressed their concern about repeated closure of coaching centres that the state administration rolled back its decision of closing down the coaching/ tuition centres. The guideline was modified and tuition centres were allowed to operate with strict adherence to COVID Appropriate behaviour.

The episode and its precedents call for a moment of contemplation and measured reaction. Previously too, it was observed that authorities were prompt and hasty while ordering the closure of tuition centres and the same haste and half logic was invoked to justify the move this time. One is left in shock and surprise that when same administration allows marriage ceremonies with cap on number of guests, when the func-

tioning of offices with employees on rotation is seen as ok, when transport is allowed to ply at half the carrying capacity, one is but pushed to ask as to what it is that prompts the authorities to call for closure of educational institutions in particular.

When the Right to Education stands enshrined in constitution and at a time when voices are rising high to place education at par with essential services, it becomes all the more reprehensible to shut down educational institutions and tuition centres time and again. It has almost been three years now that students are away from

followed instead of calling for shutdown of tuition centres. COVID is now becoming a regular feature in our lives and sooner or later we will be obliged to live with it. It thus seems more illogical to make lockdowns a norm and in particular the lockdown of tuition centres. The move jeopardises the career and future of thousands of students who are preparing for state or national level competitive exams or are otherwise in their intermediates where they stand in dire need of conceptual clarity. If it is possible to have marriage ceremonies with a cap on the number of guests, why can't the same

THE ADMINISTRATION ORDERED lockdown of coaching centres in the wake of rising positivity and students were once again left resourceless. It was only after the students staged protests and expressed their concern about repeated closure of coaching centres that the state administration rolled back its decision of closing down the coaching/ tuition centres.

schools, colleges, universities and educational institutions. It has not only traumatised their minds but has made them pay a heavy price in terms of academic performance, curricular excellence and meeting the learning objectives of education. Some of them are already in the midst of their professional lives and others are preparing for their entry to the same. Can one imagine the loss and damage that these closing down of tuition centres is bringing about? With the closure of schools and other educational institutions, tuition centres were the sole centres of educational activity. They compensated, within their sphere of influence, the loss otherwise incurred by the closure of schools and colleges. But the administrative highhandedness and misjudged decisions which call for shutdown of tuition centres again and again is only multiplying the already existing issues and making them more chronic.

There are well defined measures and behavioural patterns which could have been

rules be applied to tuition centres? If transport is plying in full swing, why do tuition centres have to fuse out? The authorities holding decision making positions are well aware of the role, seminal and pivotal nature of education. It is only hoped that they will awaken to the grave issues rising out of the closure of tuition centres and devise some suitable alternatives, the prominent one being dividing one batch into two or more batches to avoid issues of congestion and maintain the norms of physical distancing. While we are already in the midst of a health crisis, steps like closure of tuition centres is sure to land us into a state of educational crisis – something we shall take all measures to avert and avoid.

Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer

The author is a writer and columnist

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Every Tom, Dick And Harry

COVID-19 is knocking everyone's door this time. When it enters, it spares no one. However, it seems like this unwanted guest is not as lethal as before. Kashmir is witnessing single day spikes like never before. This kind of unprecedented spike in cases wasn't even seen dur-

ing the deadly second wave. However, much to the surprise of many, this wave seems to be mild owing to the variant in action only affecting the upper respiratory tract of those infected. The symptoms seem "mild" for healthy vaccinated individuals. These include body aches, chills, fever and cough.

Some doctors have gone on to say that Omicron is good news. This may be an overestimation of the positives of this wave, however, there is some reason to believe that the pandemic might soon demote to the endemic status.

It also seems that high vaccination rates are responsible for the milder

wave. Thankfully, booster doses for those above the age of 60 and healthcare workers are now available. The CAB still works.

We just need to be alert and cautious. Hopefully, the worse seems to be over.

Masood Hussein

Innovation In Uncertainty

Todd Saxton

Madam C.J. Walker, born Sarah Breed-love, was America's first female self-made millionaire.

She pioneered a line of hair care and beauty products for people of color early in the 20th century, and the recent Netflix series "Self Made" details the story of this talented innovator and the challenges she overcame on the way to her success.

To accomplish her goals, she had to face overwhelming uncertainties. How would she finance her business? Would her partnerships fail? Would her products sell? Would ruthless competition and racism get in her way? Madame Walker's future was far from certain when she began her journey, but that did not dissuade her.

It is tempting to think that innovators are a breed apart or perhaps lucky to be in the right place and time. But research shows this is not the case. So what characteristics do innovators like Madam Walker have that lead them to the seemingly serendipitous moment? What makes for a successful innovator or entrepreneur?

I am a researcher and professor who studies strategy and entrepreneurship. I am also myself an entrepreneur, angel investor and board member for startups and innovative firms. Pop culture might have you believe it is a tolerance for or even an obsession with risk that makes great innovators. But in fact, research has for decades demonstrated that innovators and entrepreneurs are no more risk-taking than the average person.

Generally, innovators are much more comfortable making decisions under conditions of uncertainty than the average person. Additionally, innovators tend to have a set of skills that allows them to better navigate this uncertainty. My experience and research has shown that not only are these abilities effective, but they can also be learned and practiced and anyone can improve their innovation skills.

What is risk? What is uncertainty?

Risk is when the factors determining success or failure are out of your control but the odds of success are known – a game of dice, for example. You can't control whether a 2 or a 12 is rolled, but you know the odds.

Uncertainty is when the factors determining success or failure are not necessarily out of your control, but are simply unknown. It is accepting a challenge to play a game that you do not completely know the rules of. Innovators tend to be more willing to venture into the unknown, and therefore are more likely to engage in ambitious projects even when outcomes and probabilities are a mystery.

Interestingly, risk and uncertainty appear to trigger activity in different parts of the brain. Functional magnetic resonance imaging has allowed researchers to discover that risk analysis is a largely rational and calculation-driven process, but uncertainty triggers the ancient fight-or-flight part of the brain. This research would suggest that experienced innovators are better able to maintain their analytical capabilities in spite of the adrenaline and instinctual response that arises when confronting uncertainty.



“ FINALLY, INNOVATION TAKES PERSISTENCE. As Walker experienced, growing a business – even with proven products – does not happen overnight. It takes someone willing to push the boulder uphill to make it happen, and often, the more disruptive the innovation, the longer society may take to embrace it

Innovators don't ignore risk; they are just better able to analyze it in uncertain situations.

Skills of innovation can be learned

The chemical response to risk and uncertainty may be hardwired in our brains, but that doesn't mean you are either born an innovator or not. Innovative capacity can be learned.

Jeff Dyer, Hal Gregersen and the late Clay Christensen spent years investigating the characteristics of successful innovators and broadly divide the skills of innovation into two categories: delivery skills and discovery skills.

Delivery skills include quantitative analysis, planning, detail-oriented implementation and disciplined execution. These are certainly essential characteristics for success in many occupations, but for innova-

tion, discovery must come before delivery.

Discovery skills are the ones more involved in developing ideas and managing uncertain situations. The most notable are:

- The ability to draw connections between seemingly disparate ideas and contexts.
- A tendency to question assumptions and the status quo.
- A habit of looking at what is contributing to a problem before rushing to a solution.
- The frequent use of systematic experimentation to prove hypotheses about cause and effect.
- The ability to network and broaden a set of relationships, even without an intentional purpose.

Like any skills, these can be learned and cultivated through a combination of guidance, practice and experience. By asking the right questions, being observant or mindful, experimenting and networking with the right supporters, innovators will be more likely to identify opportunity and succeed.

My colleagues' and my own research and experience are summed up in our book "The Titanic Effect." We describe the PEP model of successful entrepreneurs and innovators. It stands for passion, experience and persistence.

Successful innovators are passionate about the problem they are solving and share this passion with friends and family, potential customers, supporters and other stakeholders.

Innovators also tend to have personal experience with the problem they are solving, and this yields valuable insight and firsthand knowledge.

Finally, innovation takes persistence. As Walker experienced, growing a business – even with proven products – does not happen overnight. It takes someone willing to push the boulder uphill to make it happen, and often, the more disruptive the innovation, the longer society may take to embrace it. Madam Walker amply personifies the PEP model.

Innovation now and in the future

During this pandemic, many people might be inclined to batten down the hatches, tighten their belts and ride things out by sticking to what they already know.

But uncertainty and change create opportunity and a need for innovation. The pandemic has created or exacerbated many problems that are ripe for innovative solutions.

Practices that were until recently on the fringe of acceptance – such as telehealth, food or grocery delivery, e-sports and online education – are now being accepted by mainstream society. As with anything relatively new, there is lots of room for radical improvement.

Now is not the time to put blinders on and close your eyes to uncertainty. If you build your discovery skills, you are more likely to create opportunity and persist through uncertainty. Like Walker, anyone can cultivate the abilities to navigate uncertainty and create positive change. Innovators are not a breed apart.

Todd Saxton, Associate Professor of Strategy and Entrepreneurship, IUPUI

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The Inconvenient Truth

K Nagaiah

The course of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has changed yet again, courtesy the new variant of concern (VOC), omicron. The new variant, according to preliminary reports, can evade vaccine response and is highly transmissible.

The variant hit the South African countries and has now found its way in at least 100 countries. It spread across the globe primarily due to international air travel and the lack of rigorous testing mandates at airports.

The European countries – including the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Denmark – have been facing the brunt of a raging spread.

Omicron is the third VOC that has emerged in the pandemic after the Alpha variant was first detected in the UK in December 2020, followed by Delta in India in late 2020.

South Africa was the first to report the emergence of omicron. The country has only 36 per cent of its population vaccinated. The abysmal figure is a result of the non-availability of vaccine stock as well as vaccine hesitancy among a bigger chunk of the population.

The silver lining, however, was South Africa's swift action in alerting the rest of the world of the new variant. The original SARS-CoV-2 virus has a total of 52 mutations, at least 30 of which are in the spike protein alone.

The high-income countries (HIC) have produced more vaccines than they need. They have not shared them with low- and middle-income countries (LMIC). WHO condemned the HICs unhealthy vaccine hoarding as "self-defeating" and "immoral".

The international multinational vaccine manufacturers have been unwilling to share their knowledge and technical



“ THE HIGH-INCOME COUNTRIES (HIC) have produced more vaccines than they need. They have not shared them with low- and middle-income countries (LMIC). WHO condemned the HICs unhealthy vaccine hoarding as “self-defeating” and “immoral”.

know-how to small regional manufacturers in the name of IPR / patents / royalty and monetary consideration.

Most population in Africa is young, and people mostly spend time outdoors with very limited indoor interaction. COVID-19 outbreaks, as a result, have not

been that severe. African countries have limited public health and health infrastructure as well as a biotech research sector. Human immunodeficiency virus, cholera and tuberculosis hog the health-care resources.

Viruses undergo mutations and give

“ THE PATHOGENS KNOW NO BOUNDARIES. The world must grow beyond the “polluter pays” concept that prevailed before the 1980s. Just like a harmful chemical or radiation originating from a country can harm other countries, the virus from one country can affect the entire world. A poor nation's problem with a virus is a burden for all the nations

rise to variants. If the variants are not detected on time, they may assume virulent forms.

The pathogens know no boundaries. The world must grow beyond the “polluter pays” concept that prevailed before the 1980s. Just like a harmful chemical or radiation originating from a country can harm other countries, the virus from one country can affect the entire world. A poor nation's problem with a virus is a burden for all the nations.

It is the responsibility of developed countries to ensure that poor countries get the vaccines. Only 7.5 per cent of people in poor countries have been administered one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, according to the World Health Organization.

The issue of vaccine hesitancy all over the world must be addressed with inputs from social scientists, public health experts, religious leaders, social workers and youth leaders.

The comity of countries, WHO and the Biotech companies, universities and research institutions should come together. They should rethink on intellectual property rights, patents and royalty and consider making the LMICs the knowledge partners.

The scientific and technical knowledge should be shared with LMICs. They should be given resources and the know-how to set up vaccine manufacturing units. This phase of the pandemic could have been avoided easily.

The long-term solution is not to pump boosters to those who already are fully vaccinated, but to vaccinate those who have not had both the doses yet.

Scientists believe omicron will be mild to those already infected and who have been fully vaccinated, provided they observe COVID-19 protocols. Scientific data on the same, however, is still awaited.

The most specific observation Europe is a high death rate. That has surprisingly not been the case in African countries where vaccination is far lower.

The lower mortality in Africa is due to its relatively younger population that may have recovered easily; in Western countries, a larger chunk of the population is old with co-morbidities.

Those in poorer countries spend most time outside, have ventilation inside their homes, and lesser congregation at gatherings. That is not the case in the West.

India's best bet to tide over the current crisis is to observe twice vaccination, masks, social distance and frequent washing of hands.

Dr K Nagaiah is chief scientist, CSIR-IICT, Hyderabad. G Srimannarayana works in the department of chemistry, Osmania University, Hyderabad. Phaniraj G is an IT professional, Boston, United States. The article was originally published by Down to Earth

Court orders FIR against Gurugram hospital, two doctors for leaving cotton inside women's stomach

Gurugram: A Gurugram court has ordered the registration of an FIR on the charge of medical negligence for leaving a cotton swab in the abdomen of a woman during the birth of her baby after a caesarean.

The court of Gurugram chief metropolitan magistrate gave the order on Tuesday on a complaint by the woman's husband, whose pleas earlier for the registration of a criminal case against Shiva Hospital in sector 12 was turned down by the police.

In his complaint to the court, the woman's husband Diwas Rai, a Darjeeling native living here at Sikandarpur with his wife Swastika, said his wife was found pregnant in April 2020.

There was a lockdown due to Covid and I had lost my job. In such a situation, I did not have money and took my wife to the government Anganwadi centre. The Anganwadi worker asked me to take my wife to Shiva Hospital in Sector-12, he said in his complaint to the court.

As I took my wife to Shiva Hospital, the doctors operated upon her on November 16, 2020 and a baby girl was born and the hospital charged Rs 30,000 from me, he said.

Rai alleged that right after the delivery, his wife started having



abdominal pain and swelling with red marks on her stomach following which he again took her to the hospital where doctors just gave her some vitamins and other medicines to reduce pain.

But as the medicines given by the Shiva Hospital doctors did not work, Rai took her to another hospital where doctors suspected that she might be having stomach in her stomach and began another course of treatment.

As my wife still did not get any relief and lost her weight by 16 kg while suffering all the pain that started post-delivery, I took her to a third hospital which advised a CT-Scan for my wife, following which she was found having some cotton sway

like articles in her abdomen, Rai said.

He added in his complaint that after he reported the matter to Shiva Hospital, they first ignored the findings but later sent an ambulance to my home and got my wife picked up and admitted to the hospital without my knowledge and consent.

At the hospital, they made her sign some blank forms and operated upon her and removed the swab, said Rai.

As I went to the police, they ignored my complaint, Rai added.

On the court's order, the police, however, has now lodged an FIR at the Sector 14 police station of Gurugram against Dr Poonam Yadav and Dr Anurag Yadav of Shiva hospital under sections 417 (punishment for cheating), 336 (act endangering life or personal safety of others), and 337 (causing hurt by act endangering life or personal safety of others) of the Indian Penal Code.

Other IPC sections invoked in the FIR included sections 338 (act endangering life or personal safety of others), 506 (criminal intimidation), 509 (insult to the modesty of a woman) and 34 (common intention) of IPC at Sector 14 police station.

Police said they are investigating the case.

Dera followers behind 2015 sacrilege incidents: ex-HC judge Ranjit Singh

AGENCEIS

Chandigarh: Justice (retired) Ranjit Singh, who headed a commission to probe the 2015 sacrilege incidents in Punjab, on Wednesday said it was the Dera Sacha Sauda sect followers who were behind the desecration of the Guru Granth Sahib at Faridkot.

The former judge of the Punjab and Haryana High Court also said according to the available evidence, there was an active role of the then Director General of Police Sumedh Singh Saini in the subsequent police firing on people protesting the desecration incidents.

The former judge made the revelation, lamenting that both the previous SAD-BJP regime and the Congress government could not deliver justice despite the lapse of seven years after the incidents.

Justice Singh made the revelation in his book 'The Sacrilege', based on the inquiry he conducted into the 2015 sacrilege and subsequent police firing incidents. The book was launched here on Wednesday.

The incidents related to the desecration of Guru Granth Sahib and police firing at anti-sacrilege protesters at Kotkapura and Behbal Kalan took place in 2015 in the



Faridkot district. Two persons were killed in the police firing at Behbal Kalan.

The Amarinder Singh-led government had formed the one-man commission led by Justice Ranjit Singh in 2017 to inquire into several sacrilege incidents. The report was submitted in August 2018.

Addressing the media here, Justice Singh said the commission's report was debated in the state assembly and was accepted by the House but did not come out in the public domain.

Effort has been made to bring various facts and truth before

the public which led to the sacrilege incidents hurting the sentiments of the Sikh community and the nation leaving indelible scars, he stated.

Justice Singh clarified that there was no political aim behind bringing out the book when he was asked about the release of the book just ahead of the Punjab assembly polls.

It is a coincidence that the book is being released now. I neither had any political aim when the probe began nor now. I do not belong to any political party nor do I have any interest in it, he said.

He further pointed out that the release of the book got delayed because of some administrative reasons.

My only aim in writing this book is to bring out the truth," he said.

Asked who were responsible for the sacrilege incidents at Faridkot, the former judge said, Dera 'premis' (followers) were responsible for the sacrilege incidents.

He further said during the police investigation it was found that the Dera followers were responsible for the theft of a copy of the Guru Granth Sahib, putting up hand-written sacrilegious posters and scattering the torn pages of the holy book.

To a question on police firing incidents, Justice Singh said according to the evidence available, there was an active role of the then Director General of Police Sumedh Singh Saini in it.

Sacrilege has been an emotive issue in Punjab. The ruling Congress had always slammed the Akalis over this issue as it took place during the previous SAD-BJP regime in 2015.

The delivery of justice in the 2015 sacrilege incidents was one of the important issues of the coming assembly polls in Punjab.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

5818 Test Positive

number of people infected since the outbreak of pandemic in J&K to 372669.

Pertinently, the fresh cases reported on Wednesday are the highest ever spike Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed since the outbreak of pandemic in 2020. The Union Territory had recorded 5,443 cases of virus last year in May.

In the Valley, officials said, Srinagar reported the highest 1745 new cases of Coronavirus, Baramulla 791, Budgam 594, Pulwama 230, Anantnag 217, Kulgam 162, Bandipora 130, Kupwara 93, Ganderbal 84 and Shopian 20.

In the winter capital, officials said, Jammu reported a maximum of 1131 new cases of virus, Udhampur 105, Kathua 100, Samba 89, Rajouri 85, Poonch 66, Doda 63, Reasi 56, Ramban 53 and Kishtwar 5.

"Moreover, 1255 more COVID-19 patients have recovered and been discharged from various hospitals including 592 from Jammu Division and 663 from Kashmir Division," the officials said.

Also, they said that four more people died of Coronavirus related complications in Jammu division on Wednesday, raising the death toll in the pandemic to 4579 in J&K—2232 in Jammu division and 2347 in Kashmir Valley.

The officials further said that no new cases of Mucormycosis were reported today, thus the total number of confirmed cases remains 51 across J&K.

Medical Students

fear that more health workers might be tested Covid-19 positive in the coming days.

Dr. Atif Sanae who is posted in SMHS told Kashmir Observer that since Doctors are in direct touch with the patients—thus more vulnerable to get infected.

"The Omicron spreads at a much faster rate and has a tendency to infect more and more people," he said.

Sources told Kashmir Observer that the administration has so far failed to "break the chain" in hospitals and no arrangements have been made to boost the staff.

However, Dr Mushtaq Ahmad Rather, Director, Health Services Kashmir told Kashmir Observer that they are engaging the MBBS final year students

"There is no shortage of staff and doctors as such. If a Doctor comes positive he joins back shortly," Dr. Mushtaq said.

He said the administration is going to engage final year students of MBBS and nurses shortly to be deputed in various hospitals.

He further added that the infectivity of Omicron is very high even if the "severity is less".

He said that the department is fully prepared to tackle the ongoing third wave and have enough equipment to deal with it.

LG Hails 2 Crore

with the Covid vaccine. The J&K administration, he said, achieved the completion of 1 Crore doses of Covid vaccination as early on 18th September 2021.

"Subsequently, 100% coverage of 1st dose in 18 and above age group was achieved on 14th October 2021. It was on 12th January 2022, the administration achieved 100% 2nd dose coverage

of 18 and above age group," he said.

"As on date, besides achieving 100% double dose coverage of the citizens in the 18 years & above group, the UT administration has achieved 57% coverage of 1st dose in the 15-17 age group, besides administering 1,02,020 precaution doses," he added.

According to the official spokesperson, the LG complimented the efforts of healthcare and frontline workers who battled the odds of tough geographical terrain, weather vagaries, and a host of other impediments to achieve this momentous task.

"Congratulations to the people of UT for their cooperation and resolve to unitedly tackle the public health emergency," Sinha said.

The LG, as per official spokesperson, has been personally monitoring the public health response to Covid pandemic, including the achievement of vaccination, on a weekly basis.

"Pertinently, it was under his guidance that the UT government had launched a 10-point campaign in November 2021 to raise awareness and highlight the flagship and other government schemes being implemented at the grassroots level to empower the common man," he said.

Among that 10-point campaign, he said, the 'Har Ghar Dastak' Campaign laid renewed focus on coverage of all unvaccinated cases across the UT by ensuring Door-to-Door vaccination which substantially boosted vaccination numbers in the region.

Covid Infected CRPF

A resident of Sabarkantha district of Gujarat, the CRPF man was found dead inside the RTC centre on Wednesday evening.

A local news agency KDC quoted an unnamed police officer as saying that investigation into the matter has been initiated.

J&K Bank Uri Shut

staffers, 3 3 employees of a private office at Challan Boniyar have also tested positive.

Sub-Divisional Magistrate Uri Harvinder Singh told a local news agency GNS that to check the spread of infection J&K Bank branch Chandanwari Uri and Jamkash office Challan Boniyar shall remain closed for two days—20 and 21 January.

Meanwhile all the employees of both offices have been directed to go for COVID-19 test. The authorities have also asked for fumigation of both the offices.

Int'l Flights

authority has decided to extend the suspension of scheduled international commercial passenger services to/ from India till 2359 hrs IST of February 28, 2022."

This restriction shall not apply to international all-cargo operations and flight specifically approved by the DGCA, it mentioned.

Fights under air bubble arrangement will not be affected, it noted.

The DGCA had on November 26, 2021 announced that India will resume scheduled international passenger flights from December 15, 2021.

Just a day later, Prime Minister Narendra Modi asked the Civil Aviation Ministry and the DGCA to review its decision in wake of the rising concerns of the COVID-19 variant Omicron.

On December 1, 2021, the DGCA

revoked its November 26 decision without saying how long the suspension of scheduled international flights continue.

Jammu On

has been put on high alert and security has been tightened at all vital installations in the twin border district of Kathua and Samba also along the highway, they said.

Long-range patrolling (LRP) and area domination operations are on along border areas of twin districts to keep a close vigil on suspected activities, they said.

"Tight security arrangements have been put in place, the counter-insurgency and the counter-infiltration grids have been tightened in the entire area," a senior official said.

The security personnel have been beefed up at all check posts and have been asked to remain alert, they said.

Security at vital installations in Jammu including the airport and railway stations has been increased.

BSF, which guards the International Border (IB) in the Jammu region, is maintaining a tight vigil.

In Pathankot, BSF has been deployed at HP-Pathankot check post as a beefed-up security measure, they said.

All the vehicles entering Pathankot from other areas are checked thoroughly and all details recorded, they said.

Militants Target

improved explosive device (IED) blast in Qaimoh area of the neighbouring Kulgam district.

Prior to it, militants carried out two attacks in Srinagar's Saraf Kadal and Batamalo areas on Sunday and Monday. A civilian and a policeman were injured in Sunday's grenade attack in the Old City here.

The spurt in militant attacks barely a week ahead of R-Day celebrations has prompted the government forces to intensify security arrangements across the Valley.

LG Asks JK Bank

also urged Prakash to continuously work with dedication in providing best financial services to the people of the UT and wished him a successful tenure ahead.

Meanwhile, Dr Ajay K Sood, Chief General Manager, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) also called on the LG, the official spokesperson said.

Sood, he said, briefed the LG about the various ways in which NABARD is playing a pivotal role in credit planning and strengthening of Rural Financial Institutions, besides providing valuable support to the UT Government in its assistance under Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF), promotion of Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), and other targeted interventions.

"Dr Sood also apprised the Lt Governor about the status of preparations of the upcoming 'UT Credit Seminar' for presenting the 'UT Focus Paper 2022-23' for Jammu & Kashmir, covering physical and financial potential under Agriculture & allied activities and other priority sectors, which is being organized in the UT under the overall guidance of the Lt Governor," he added.

MeT Predicts

in the plains on Wednesday, even as the minimum temperature in most parts of the valley settled above the freezing point, officials said.

Gulmarg received light fresh snowfall of about 1.2 cm, the officials said.

They said there are reports of snowfall in some other areas in the higher reaches of the valley.

Most areas in the plains of the valley were lashed by rains which continued at many places when the last reports came in, the officials said.

The overcast conditions led to an increase in the minimum temperature at most places of Kashmir, they said.

The minimum temperature in Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, settled at a low of 2.7 degrees Celsius, up from the previous night's 1.1 degrees Celsius, the officials said.

Gulmarg, the famous skiing resort in Baramulla district of north Kashmir, recorded a low of minus 6 degrees Celsius, same as the previous night.

Pahalgam in south Kashmir's Anantnag district recorded a low of minus 1.9 degrees Celsius, down from the previous night's minus 0.7 degrees Celsius, they said.

The twin tourist resorts were the only place in the valley which experienced the sub-zero night temperature last night.

The officials said Qazigund recorded the minimum of 1.3 degrees Celsius, while the nearby south Kashmir town of Kokernag recorded a low of 0.2 degrees Celsius.

The minimum temperature in Kupwara in north Kashmir settled at a low of 1.2 degrees Celsius.

The MET Office has said the weather will remain partly to generally cloudy in both regions of J-K with the possibility of light rain/snow at scattered places over the next 24 hours.

A spell of light rain or snow is likely during January 22-23, but thereafter, the weather is likely to stay mainly dry till the end of the month and there is no forecast of any major rain or snow till the end of January, it said.

Kashmir valley is currently under the grip of the 40-day harshest winter period known as 'Chilla-i-Kalan' which began on December 21 last year.

'Chilla-i-Kalan' is a period when a cold wave grips the region and the temperature drops considerably leading to the freezing of water bodies including the famous Dal Lake here as well as the water supply lines in several parts of the valley.

The chances of snowfall are the most frequent and maximum during this period and most areas, especially in the higher reaches, receive heavy to very heavy snowfall.

Jammu Bound

Jammu or Ramban or Srinagar in view of the inclement weather prediction issued by MeT department," a traffic department official here said in a statement.

"However, tomorrow (Thursday), subject to fair weather and better road condition LMVs (Passenger) / private cars shall be allowed from Srinagar towards Jammu (strictly one way) on Jammu-Srinagar highway," the official said. TCU Srinagar shall liaise with TCU Ramban before releasing the traffic, he said.

He said the cut off for LMVs and private cars from NAVYUG Tunnel (Qazigund side) is 0800 hours to 1200 hours "subject to change depending

on the road position then." "No vehicle shall be allowed before and after cut off timings," he said.

Regarding HMVs and load carriers, he said, they shall be allowed from NAVYUG Tunnel (Qazigund) towards Jammu after the tail of down LMVs crosses NAVYUG Tunnel.

Meanwhile, Mughal Road, connecting Shopian with Poonch and Rajouri districts, remained closed for vehicular movement in view of snow accumulation at Peer Ki Gali.

Also, Srinagar-Sonamarg-Gumri road remained shut for vehicular movement in view of snow accumulation on Zoji la axis and has been closed till further orders. Kishtwar-Sinthan road also remained closed in view of snow accumulation, the traffic department official said.

Kashmiri Businessmen

intervene in the matter and impress upon the Adhampur Police to nab the culprits.

A police official from Adhampur Police Station said that they have examined the CCTV footage. "A burglar can be seen leaving the room along with shawls but his face is not clear. We are investigating the incident and hopefully, culprits will be identified and booked," he said.

Lucknow Family

Sarfraz had murdered his father, mother and brother in Lucknow itself. On January 6 the body of a youth with slit throat was found Lucknow's Mall Road in the Itaunja area.

Police were unable to identify the body. After this, two more bodies with slit throats were found in the Malihabad area in Lucknow.

After the photographs of the three persons allegedly missing in J&K's Ramban area were published, police in Lucknow were able to identify all the three.

Subsequent investigation revealed that the eldest son of the family, Sarfraz had murdered them. Sarfraz has been taken into custody.

Police said other contacts of Sarfraz are also being questioned. The motive of the gruesome crime is still not known.

Kupwara Admin

in plain areas and moderate snowfall over higher reaches during 22nd to 23rd January 2022, the Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Imam Din today issued an advisory for the people of the district in general and those residing in the areas like Keran, Karnah, Machil, Budnamal, Jungum, Nowgam, Kunkadi and those living on the periphery of different Nallahs/ rivers prone to floods, sloppy areas of the district in particular and advised them to refrain from venturing in avalanche prone areas till improvement of weather, an official spokesperson said.

Further, he said, the general public have been advised to avoid travelling to these areas without proper information on weather system and in case of accumulation of snow on roads.

"The general public have been asked to contact District Administration Control Room on phone number 01955-253522 and Police Control Room (PCR) Kupwara on 01955-252451 and PCR Handwara on 01955-262295 for any information or help," he added.

Meanwhile, all District and Sectoral Officers especially the officers and officials of Irrigation & FC, PHE, PDD, R&B, Mechanical and Revenue have been directed not to leave their respective Headquarters without permission from DC office and keep their men and machinery ready to meet any exigency.

4 Held With Heroin

four grams of heroin were seized from their vehicle near Katra, a police official said.

Two other peddlers Sunil Kumar and Sandeep Singh were arrested from Malai nallah in Mahore area and 430 grams of charas were recovered from their possession, the official said.

He said the total recoveries made from the four peddlers are worth over Rs 15.50 lakh in the illegal drug market.

They were booked under Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act and further investigation is on, the official said. (PTI)

Kargil Air Service

The service will cater to passengers from far-flung areas of Ladakh on approved routes from Leh-Lingshed, Dibling, Drass, Padum, Kargil, Nubra, Nerak, Jammu, Srinagar, they said. "This year, for the first time, tickets of AN-32 Kargil courier service have been made available online, a senior official told PTI.

This facility has been introduced for the convenience of the passengers so that they can book their tickets, from the comfort of their homes, keeping in view the Covid situation, he said.

The passengers can log on to the website <http://heliservice.ladakh.gov.in/airforce-plane-booking>

The first flight has been planned on Thursday for the sector Kargil-Jammu-Kargil, subject to fair weather, officials said.

Initially, on a trial basis, booking is available for January 20, and subsequently the other flights will also be available, they said.

The land of high passes, Ladakh is renowned for its remote mountain beauty and culture. It is the highest plateau of the sub continent and is famous for its scenic beauty.

"You will face the cold desert climate, especially from October-March. In winters, temperatures are extreme in Leh, dipping below freezing point. It remains closed for more than seven months, officials said.

During winters, roads in the entire region remain cut off from rest of the country. Winters in Ladakh are very harsh and temperatures can plummet to -30 degree Celsius at night, they said.

Our aim is to meet air connectivity requirements to promote tourism for economic development and employment generation, rescue and medical evacuation purpose, they added. (PTI)

Active Covid Cases

There was no death reported from the union territory on Tuesday, they said, adding that active cases rose to 965.

A total of 43 patients were cured and discharged from hospitals in Ladakh. The total number of cured patients is 22,513, they said.

Of the total 164 fresh cases from Union territory, 118 such cases were reported from Leh district and 46 from Kargil district, they said.

A total of 672 sample reports in Ladakh were found negative, they said. (PTI)

Chairman DDC Budgam Appeals LG To Implement FRA

Observer News Service

BUDGAM: Chairman District Development Council Budgam Nazir Ahmad Khan has appealed Lt Governor Manoj Sinha to implement the Forest Rights Act 2006 (FRA) in letter spirit.

In an official communication the DDC Chairman has urged LG to make the Tribal Affairs Department as Nodal Agency for FRA implementation in J&K. Pertinently as of now the Forest Department is the nodal agency for implementation of this law in J&K.

"After abrogation of Article 370 the Forest Rights Act 2006 has been extended to J&K with effect from Oct 31st 2019. Its implementation is going at snail's pace and instead of the Tribal Affairs Department, the Forest Department has been made the Nodal Agency in J&K for its implementation which goes against the essence of this legislation. In all other states and UTs the Tribal Department is empowered to implement this act. In last more than 2 years only 5 Community Forest Rights have been given in Budgam and mere two Individual Forest Rights provided to some ST families.

The cases of Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (OTFDs) are not even taken up in spite of the fact that OTFDs are also supposed to get entitlements under the FRA 2006," reads the official letter of DDC Chairman Budgam addressed to Lt Governor Manoj Sinha.

Nazir Ahmad Khan said that there is meagre awareness about the Forest Rights Act and has suggested the LG for involvement of NGOs and community based organizations so that people are made aware about their rights under this great piece of legislation.

Khan has also raised the issue of non availability of graveyards for the forest dwellers in Nen-groo Basti Darwan Tehsil Charar Sharief in district Budgam as they are allegedly not allowed to bury their loved ones on the Govt land which is claimed by the Forest Department.

DDC Chairman has requested LG to allocate a piece of land under CFR to the residents of Nengroo Basti Darwan and also allow Gujjars, Chopans and other forest dwellers to repair their damaged Kothas in the coming summer season in upper reaches of Budgam district.

SKUAST-K Holds Webinar On Startup Ideation

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: On National Startup Day, Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir held a webinar titled, 'Startup Kashmir: Idea to Business' for agriculture students.

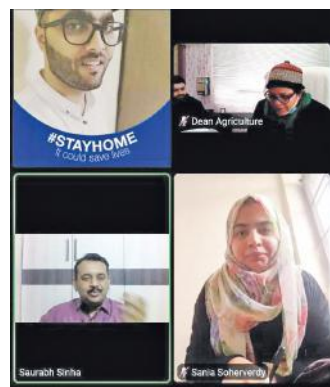
The programme was organised to acquaint the students with various concepts of innovation, startups and entrepreneurship.

The webinar was conducted by the university's Faculty of Agriculture under the World Bank-ICAR funded National Agricultural Higher Education Project (NAHEP) for the institutional development of SKUAST-K.

Startup coach and Managing Partner of REIN Labs – Mumbai-based innovation, incubation and research organisation –

Saurabh Sinha was the main expert of the webinar, who dwelled in detail about the transformation of an idea into a startup or business in particular reference with agriculture.

Sinha in his talk said that there is a need to invest in fundamental research and focus on innova-



tion as growth levers. "We need to create products, services or solutions out of our innovations that solve global as well as our local problems," he said.

He said students need to be oriented in a way that use their time during graduation doing projects, prototypes and products addressing real life social problems.

Dean Faculty of Agriculture, Prof Raihana Habib Kanth, also addressed the students.

Besides the Faculty of Agriculture staff and team IDP-NAHEP, more than 90 students participated in the webinar.

2 Leaders Rejoin Congress After Leaving Apni Party

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Two leaders on Wednesday rejoined the Congress here after resigning from the Jammu and Kashmir Apni party, a spokesperson of the grand old party said.

Pranav Shagotra and Irfan Naqib were welcomed back into the Congress fold by Pradesh Congress Committee president G A Mir and other senior leaders at the party headquarters here, he said.

Shagotra, a former president of J-K Youth Congress, had left the party sometime back and had joined the Apni party founded by former minister Altaf Bukhari. He was presently its

district president Jammu. Naqib was former district Congress president Srinagar before joining the Apni party.

The two leaders rejoined the Congress along with their supporters and were enrolled as members of the Congress by in-charge district president Jammu Yogesh Sawhney in the presence of the senior leadership, the spokesperson said.

Mir said the leaders were desirous to rejoin the Congress for quite some time.

They will work to strengthen secularism and will fight the communal, fundamentalist and opportunist forces in Jammu and Kashmir, he said.

COVID-19 SPIKE

Traders Body To Observe Voluntary Weekend Lockdown In Jammu

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: A traders body, dealing with essential supplies, on Wednesday announced its decision to observe weekend lockdown here to support the efforts of the Jammu and Kashmir administration to contain the spread of COVID-19 infection.

On January 15, the Union Territory administration imposed "complete restriction on non-essential movement" during weekends amid a surge in Covid cases.

In the highest single-day spike this month, Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday recorded 4,651 fresh cases of COVID-19, taking the total number of infections to 3,66,851 while three deaths pushed the death toll linked to the pandemic to 4,575.

We are dealing with essential supplies and hence do not come under the purview of the lockdown announced by the



administration. However, given the situation in view of the rising covid-19 cases, our advisory committee met and decided to observe the weekend lockdown voluntarily to support the efforts of the administration to contain the spread of the disease, President Traders Federation, Ware-House Nehru Market, Deepak Gupta told reporters here.

However, he said the federation would ensure regular supplies while working for five

days from Monday to Friday.

We have taken this decision in the best interest of public safety. We will make it sure that the supply chain is not affected, Gupta said.

He said like in the past two waves of COVID-19, the federation has activated the three war rooms for supply of oxygen, ration and medicines and anyone in need of these items should contact the concerned for the same.

NC Asks Govt To Frame Clear-Cut Policy For Return Of KPs

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: The National Conference said Jammu and Kashmir administration must frame a clear-cut policy and take concrete steps for return and rehabilitation of Kashmiri Pandits who marked the 32nd anniversary of their exodus from the Valley on Wednesday.

"It's been over 3 decades since Kashmiri Pandits have been living in exile, away from their birthplaces and hometowns in Kashmir. Government must frame a clear-cut policy and follow it up with concrete steps to expedite their return and rehabilitation," it said in a tweet.

Party vice president Omar Abdullah said there was also a need for improving the security

scenario as a precursor for the return of the Kashmiri Pandits. "Sadly Kashmiri Pandits are no closer to being able to return to the valley than they have been in the recent past. Along with a clear-cut policy, a greatly improved security environment would be essential precursors to facilitate a return. We hope & pray that day is not far," Omar tweeted.

Over 5,000 Hectares Degraded Forest Area Rehabilitated In J&K

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Over 5,000 hectares of degraded forest area has been rehabilitated during the current financial year by planting about 27 lakh plants in monsoon and autumn seasons, while winter planting is in progress.

Tendering for remaining fencing, planting, soil conservation, nursery and infrastructure works approved for the current financial year has also been completed, he said.

For the next financial year, he said a detailed site-specific plan along with their location maps for rehabilitation of a total 17,715 ha of degraded forest area has been prepared using CAMPA portal.

The rehabilitation plan includes protective fencing and planting of about 120 lakh plants, Rai said, adding the plan includes broadcast of 25.18 lakh seed balls and sowing in 40.59 lakh patches and 10.21 lakh dibbles as low-cost afforestation measures.

He said soil conservation measures like dry rubble stone masonry, crates and water harvesting structures/ponds have been proposed to give a fillip to eco-restoration efforts.

For protection of forest lands from encroachment, the meeting was informed that 23,500 new boundary pillars are proposed to be erected during 2022-23.

The plan includes measures for protection of forests from fire and strengthening of infrastructure by construction of official and residential buildings for frontline staff, check posts, watch towers and other forest protection infrastructures, the spokesman said.

He said the Social Forestry Department has constituted 4289 Village Panchayat Plantation Committees for planning and implementation of works outside forests for creation of village woodlots, avenue plantation and farm forestry.

The Wildlife Protection Department has proposed measures which include improvement of wildlife habitats, soil and water conservation works, maintenance of animal rescue centres, eco-development activities and development of wildlife related infrastructure, the spokesman said.

He said the department has prepared a special project 'Mitigation Plan for Kishtwar High Altitude National Park', which is being implemented.

Proposal for modernization of the department includes use of remote sensing and Geographic Information System (GIS) tools for preparation of digital maps, equipment like, CCTV, Drones, Camera traps and GPS for more efficient functioning, the spokesman said.

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The Wildlife Protection Department has proposed measures which include improvement of wildlife habitats, soil and water conservation works, maintenance of animal rescue centres, eco-development activities and development of wildlife related infrastructure, the spokesman said.

He said the department has prepared a special project 'Mitigation Plan for Kishtwar High Altitude National Park', which is being implemented.

Proposal for modernization of the department includes use of remote sensing and Geographic Information System (GIS) tools for preparation of digital maps, equipment like, CCTV, Drones, Camera traps and GPS for more efficient functioning, the spokesman said.

JSCL Inks Pact To Construct Tawi Riverfront Dev Project

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Jammu Smart City Ltd (JSCL) on Wednesday signed an agreement with Shree Balaji Engicons Ltd for the development of right and left banks of River Tawi here on the lines of Gujarat's Sabarmati Riverfront.

The pact was signed and exchanged between JSCL Chief Executive Officer Avny Lavasa and Shree Balaji Engicons Director Vinay Agrawal, officials said.

They said JSCL has achieved a milestone after signing a contract for the development of the Tawi riverfront, which has been an ambitious project for the city of temples.

The work on the project will commence soon to enhance its overall look and open up new avenues for tourism and economic



development, the officials said. "The project will add aesthetic value to River Tawi by developing natural purification capability, besides sustainable development of environment and urban infrastructure," Lavasa said.

He asked the asked project

executing agency to expedite the work and complete the construction work in a stipulated time frame.

Agrawal said the company will commence work on the ambitious project at the earliest and will complete it within the time frame.

Under the project, a 3.5-km (both side) long riverfront is proposed to be completed in two phases. The first phase starts from 4th bridge to Tawi Bridge and Phase 2 from Tawi Bridge to Gujjar Nagar Bridge, the official said. They said the pathways will

be constructed on both sides of the river to provide easy access to the public.

The officials said the project also comprises bank protection of River Tawi with broad salient features of construction of diaphragm walls, lower promenade, retaining wall, embankment construction.

JSCL is focused on improving the quality of life of people by enabling local development and harnessing technology to create smart outcomes for citizens, they said.

The main components of the Jammu Smart City Projects are city beautification, solid waste management, IT-enabled infrastructure, road and parking improvement, disaster and emergency management, and civic infrastructure development.

Unconnected Villages To Be Digitally Connected By March: CS



Observer News Service

JAMMU: The Chief Secretary, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta on Wednesday chaired the meeting of the UT Broadband Committee to review the implementation of National Broadband Mission in Jammu & Kashmir.

Administrative Secretaries of the Forest and Information Technology Department, along with officers from LSA, Department of Telecom, GoI, and BSNL participated in the meeting.

The meeting was informed that the National Broadband Mission (NBM) is fast tracking the growth of digital communication infrastructure to bridge the digital divide and facilitate digital empowerment and inclusion, while focussing on affordable and universal access of broadband.

It was further informed that the Mission aims to connect all villages to the broadband network by 2022, with only 100 such villages left in Jammu and Kashmir. The Chief Secretary asked the Department of Telecommunications to reconcile

the data on unconnected villages with the concerned Deputy Commissioners and by referring to the village maps already uploaded on land records portal of the Union territory Government to ensure that all unconnected villages are brought on the digital network by the end of this financial year.

Moreover, to facilitate universal and equitable access to broadband services, a Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) agreement has been signed to provide mobile coverage in 88 uncovered villages in the Union territory. Dr. Mehta directed early resolution of all pending issues for expeditious coverage of these far-flung areas and asked the Power Development Department to provide reliable electricity supply to the concerned IT installations.

The Chief Secretary directed the district administrations to review the district-level progress achieved under the National Broadband Mission and resolving the pending RoW issues/cases on regular basis.

JKSSB To Conduct Tests Of Covid-19 Positive Job Aspirants On Jan 24

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Service Selection Board on Wednesday asked aspirants appearing in various forthcoming exams, who have tested covid positive, to submit their admit cards and other necessary documents alongside requisite RT-PCR report by or before January 21, 2022.

The Recruitment Board is holding Computer-based Tests for the post(s) of Junior Assistant, Cadrex Clerk, Cashier, Jr Assistant / Computer-cum-Jr Clerk/Store Attendant and Welfare Organizer, UT Cadre, Divisional Cadres and various Districts, advertised vide Advertisement Notification Nos 04, 05, 06 and 07 of 2020 and 01, 02 and 03 of 2021 with effect from January 20 to January 24, 2022.

In a notification the Board said it received representations from candidates that they have been reported positive for COVID-19 and are unable to appear in the aforesaid CBT on the scheduled date(s) and many COVID negative candidates/aspirants also have shown apprehensions of contracting the infection, in case their CBT examination is held alongwith COVID-19 positive candidates.

"JKSSB examined all such representations and after taking into consideration all relevant aspects including prevailing COVID-19 situation and applicable guidelines notified by the State Disaster Management Authority in relation thereto, deemed it appropriate and reasonable to provide due

opportunity to all such candidates who have tested positive for COVID-19, without posing any danger to health of other candidates", reads the notification as per GNS.

"Now, therefore, in view of the above, all such candidates who are scheduled to appear in the Computer Based Written Test (CBT), for the post of Junior Assistant/ Cadrex Clerk, Cashier, Assistant /Computer-cum-Jr. Assistant/Clerk/Store Attendant and Welfare Organizer and have been reported/ tested positive for COVID-19, are hereby directed to submit their admit cards alongwith necessary documents including requisite RT-PCR report, through online mode on e-mail id jkssb-covexam@gmail.com by or before 21.01.2022 upto 2:00 PM the enabling JKSSB to take suitable action in the matter. The proof / RT-PCR report submitted by the candidate(s) shall be verified from the concerned authorities in the Health Department. It is further notified that the CBT examination of those candidates who have tested positive for COVID-19 shall be held on 24.01.2022, after following all protocols/SOPs laid down in this behalf", it reads.

"The candidates are advised to submit the representations alongwith RT-PCR report and admit card through the mail jkssb-covexam@gmail.com only. Any candidate who will furnish false/fictitious RT-PCR report/wrong information shall be liable for cancellation of candidature without any notice. No request shall be entertained after the stipulated time frame", it concluded. (GNS)

CCIK Condemns Assault On 3 Kashmiri Students In Punjab

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Associated Chamber of Commerce and Industry Kashmir (CCIK) has condemned the assault on three Kashmiri students inside a housing society in Kharar area of Punjab late on Monday evening.

In a statement issued here, CCIK President Tariq Rashid Ghani said the assault on Kashmiri students is alarming and Kashmir police should immediately look into the matter and ensure their safety.

Ghani said such incidents have also happened in the past and no concrete step has been taken by the central government to ensure the safety of Kashmiri students studying outside J&K.

CCIK has sought immediate intervention from LG Administration so that speedy action is taken against the assailants.

CCIK further demanded assurances from J&K and Central

government for the safety of Kashmiris studying or working outside the UT.

According to reports, the three students, two from Budgam one from Baramulla district were allegedly beaten up on Monday for allegedly speaking loudly. The students, according to the reports were dragged out from their room by 30 members of the housing society and some goons and allegedly thrashed.

Two students are studying at Rameshwar Institute of Management and Information Technology (RIMIT) while another one is studying at Guru Gobind Singh College of Management and Technology (GSCMT).

Punjab police in a tweet said that the complaint has been forwarded to the concerned police station for the action.

"The complaint is further forwarded to Sasnagar Police station for immediate legal action," police had tweeted.

ATV Rally, Ski Show Held At Doodpathri

Destination is given special focus for winter tourism: Director Tourism



Budgam has huge potential for Tourism, need to tap it: DC Budgam

Observer News Service

BUDGAM: In a bid to promote Doodpathri as a winter tourism destination, the Director Tourism G N Itoo and Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Shahbaz Ahmed Mirza on Wednesday inaugurated a first of its kind of 'All Terrain Vehicle' (ATV) rally from TRC up to Parhaiz Maidaan at Doodpathri in Budgam.

On the occasion, a Snow Ski show was also held in which well trained skiers demonstrated their skills.

Speaking on the occasion, Director Tourism said that Doodpathri is being given special focus to be developed as best Winter Tourism spot, where activities like snow ski, snowboarding, snow cycling, ATV facility, and other snow related activities shall be held every winter.

He said that holding such activities shall not only promote the tourist footfall, but also these facilities will create employment resources for the locals.

The Director said that promotion of this destination would also facilitate hand holding of local youth who can participate and under capacity building earn their livelihood.

Emphasizing on the promotion of Doodpathri, the Director

said that it has huge potential to be developed as good as Gulmarg and Pahalgam.

"Today's event will be game changer for this destination as up to now tourists here used to get only pony ride, but from now onwards there are other activities they can participate and enjoy," said Director.

He said that a full-fledged snow sports equipments facility shall remain available for the tourists. He called for holding basic ski courses for students, tourists and other locals to promote footfall to Doodpathri during winter months.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam said that the Budgam has huge potential for tourism and Doodpathri, Yousmarg and Tosamaidan destinations can be developed as best winter tourism spots.

He said the need is to tap the tourism potential with providing all basic facilities to the tourists. The DC said that this is for the first time that road was made through up to Doodpathri during winter season.

He said that District administration shall provide all support to the Tourism department in developing and promoting tourism at Doodpathri and other tourism spots in Budgam.

The DC said that a comprehensive tourism plan shall be devised and implemented under which all facilities shall be provided to the tourists for promotion of Doodpathri.

South Africa Defeat India By 31 Runs In 1st ODI



Press Trust of India

PAARL: India's inexplicable middle-order collapse meant that fine half-centuries from Shikhar Dhawan and Virat Kohli did not count for much as the team was handed a 31-run defeat by a resolute South Africa in the opening ODI here on Wednesday.

Chasing a challenging 297, India were steady at 138 for one before wickets fell in a heap dashing the hopes of the visitors who trail 0-1 in the three-match series. India's innings ended at 265 for eight.

South Africa skipper Temba Bavuma (110 off 143) and Rassie van der Dussen (129 not out off 96) had scored contrasting hundreds en route to their 204-run stand to take South Africa to 296 for four after opting to bat.

India were comfortably placed to get home when Kohli

(51 off 63) and Dhawan (79 off 84) were in the middle but it all came crashing down with the end of their 92-run stand.

India have been guilty of relying too much on their top three in the past and once again, the middle-order could not capitalise on the platform provided by Kohli and Dhawan after they lost skipper K L Rahul (12) cheaply.

The stage was set for the likes of Rishabh Pant (16), Shreyas Iyer (17) and debutant Venkatesh Iyer (2) to get the job done but they fell in quick succession, leaving India at 188 for six from a strong 138 for one.

While Pant was stumped by a lightning quick Quinton de Kock, the shot selection of Shreyas and Venkatesh could have been better.

Shardul Thakur (50 not out off 43) tried his best towards the end but the damage had al-

ready been done.

Earlier, Jasprit Bumrah (2/48) was the stand out bowler for India in an otherwise ordinary bowling effort.

After a sluggish start, van der Dussen and Bavuma shared the second highest partnership ever against India in ODIs to ensure a competitive total for the home team.

South Africa opted to bat on a slow surface at the Boland Park.

The skipper got his hundred in the 45th over while his batting partner achieved the milestone in 48th over. It was the second ODI hundred for both the batters.

The last over bowled by Thakur went for 17 runs, taking the hosts close to 300. Thakur was the most expensive bowler, bleeding 72 in his quota of 10 overs. Venkatesh was not used as the sixth bowling option.

U-19 World Cup: England, South Africa & Afghanistan Win

Agencies

SAINT KITTS: Captain Tom Prest struck a run-a-ball 93 before chipping in with three wickets to help the former champions England register a 106-run victory over Canada in a group A league match of the ICC U-19 World Cup here.

Asked to bat first, Prest hit 10 boundaries in his entertaining innings though he missed a century by just seven runs as the 1998 edition winners England reached 320 for seven in 50 overs on Tuesday.

Alongside left-arm pacer Joshua Boyden (4/44) and fellow spinner Jacob Bathel (3/45), Prest (3/38) then produced a clinical performance as England bowled out Canada for 214 in the 49th over to register their second win of the tournament.

South Africa's Dewald Brevis smashed a century to help his side register a comfortable 121-run win over Uganda in their group A match in Port of Spain.

South Africa were restricted to 231 for nine by Uganda after skipper George Van Heerden chose to bat.

In reply, Uganda were bundled out for 110 in 33.4 overs. Only three of their batters were able to reach double digit scores. The South African bowlers performed as a cohesive unit as all seven of them picked



up at least a wicket each.

Pascal Murungi and Juma Miyaji took three wickets apiece while Yunusu Sowobi, Joseph Baguma and Edwin Nuwagaba got one each.

Last edition's quarterfinalists Afghanistan began their campaign on a winning note as they put up a superlative show to thump Papua New Guinea by 135 runs to go to the top of the group C table.

Katenalaki Singi grabbed four wickets as Afghanistan was shot out for 200 at Diego Martin but they came back strongly to bundle out PNG for 65 in 20.5 overs.

PNG, appearing at the event for the eighth time, never looked likely to chase down the target and it was downhill from the moment Peter Karoho was bowled on the first ball of the innings.

The Afghan attack excelled and emerged with remarkable figures, with Naveed Zadran taking 2/9 from five overs and Nangeyalla Kharote grabbing 2/5 from three.

Aue Oru top-scored with 13 for PNG.

Earlier, Singi (4/18) ripped through the Afghanistan middle-order after Rasan Kevau (3/23) rocked the top-order with three wickets upfront.

Opting to bat first, the Afghans suffered a batting collapse as they were reduced to 40 for three in the eighth over. A 105-run stand between captain Suliman Safi (62) and Ijaz Ahmad Ahmadzai (45) for the fourth wicket revived their innings, but the lower-order batters fell in quick succession and the team was all out in 38.2 overs.

Ticket Price Hike For World Cup Final In Qatar Reaches 46%

Agencies

DOHA: The cost of attending the World Cup final is up to 46% higher in Qatar than the previous tournament in Russia, fans discovered Wednesday as tickets went on sale.

The steep rise in the prices for the FIFA showpiece match contrasts with the group stage seeing a reduction in the cost of some tickets, which fans can apply for online. The most expensive tickets on general sale for the Dec. 18 final at Lusail Stadium are 5,850 Qatari riyals (\$1,607), up 46% from the \$1,100 for the 2018 final won by France.

Category-two tickets are 3,650 Qatari riyals (\$1,003), up 41% from \$710 for the final four years ago. Category-three tickets, the cheapest available for international fans, are 2,200 Qatari riyals (\$604), one-third more expensive than the \$455 last time. The category-four final tickets for local residents soars from the equivalent of \$110 in Russia to 750 Qatari riyals (\$206).

Ghana Sent Packing By Minnows As Morocco, Senegal Top Groups

Agencies

Four-time champions Ghana were eliminated from the Africa Cup of Nations on Tuesday in a stunning upset, while Morocco and Senegal won their respective groups but without backing up their status as pre-tournament favourites.

Just two days after Equatorial Guinea shook up the tournament by beating defending champions Algeria, equally tiny Comoros humiliated Ghana with a 3-2 win in their Group C clash in Garoua in one of the competition's biggest surprises so far.

The small Indian Ocean island archipelago are making their Cup of Nations debut and registered not only their first goal of the tournament but their first win in a stunning result.

They might even sneak into last 16 as one of the best four third-placed finishers after condemning Ghana to last place but will have to wait for the out-



come of the last group games on Wednesday and Thursday.

El Fardou Ben Mohamed scored Comoros' first ever goal at the continental finals before Ahmed Mogni added a second just past the hour-mark.

Ghana had captain Dede Ayew sent off early in the match, but goals from Richmond Boakyie and Alexander Djiku levelled the tie as they fought back, only for Comoros' Mogni to grab a winner with

Babar, Rizwan, Shaheen Named In ICC T20I Team Of The Year



Agencies

DUBAI: The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Wednesday unveiled its T20I team of the year with three players from Pakistan — Babar Azam, Mohammad Rizwan and Shaheen Shah Afridi — making the cut.

Azam, who captains the Pakistan side, has been named the skipper of the ICC team for the shortest format.

The team consists of Jos Buttler, Mohammad Rizwan (wk), Babar Azam (c), Aiden Markram, Mitchell Marsh, David Miller, Tabaiz Shamsi, Josh Hazlewood, Wanindu Hasaranga, Mustafizur Rahman and Shaheen Shah Afridi.

According to the ICC, releasing a team of the year is a way to recognise 11 "outstanding individuals who have impressed one and all — be it with the bat, the ball or their all-around exploits in a calendar year".

Praising skipper Azam for his outstanding display with the bat in the shortest format in 2021,

the ICC said the batsman was at his "classy best" in the format last year, during which he was also the leading run-scorer at the T20 World Cup.

Azam played 29 matches and aggregated 939 runs at an average of 37.56 with one century and nine half-centuries, the ICC said.

The cricket body also hailed Rizwan for his consistent performance last year.

"Aggregating a staggering 1,326 runs in only 29 matches, Rizwan struck at an average of 73.66 and a strike-rate of 134.89." The ICC also recognised the Pakistani gloveman for his contributions behind the stumps.

Afridi's "brilliant movement with the new ball and reversing it with the old" in matches last year was among notable highlights for the ICC.

The pacer picked up 23 wickets in 21 matches at an average of 26.04 and an economy of 7.86, the ICC said, adding that "he will undoubtedly prove to be a fearsome prospect."

Sania Mirza To Retire After 2022 Season, Says Body 'Wearing Down'

Agencies

MELBOURNE: Indian former doubles world number one Sania Mirza said on Wednesday she will retire from tennis at the end of this season with injuries taking their toll.

It came after the 35-year-old, regarded as her country's greatest women's tennis player, bowed out of the Australian Open in the first round with her partner Nadiia Kichenok of Ukraine.

"I have decided this will be my last season. I'm taking it week by week, not sure if I can last the season, but I want to," she told the press in Melbourne, in comments later confirmed to her father.

"I still feel I can play well, go deep in tournaments and that. But beyond this season, I don't see my body doing it either. It's

beat."

Mirza, who has won six Grand Slam doubles titles, is paired with America's Rajeev Ram in the mixed doubles at the Australian Open. They play on Thursday in the first round.

Mirza, who is married to former Pakistan cricket captain Shoaib Malik, last won a women's doubles title at the Ostrava Open in September, with China's Zhang Shuai.

But Mirza admits that injuries and a young family is drawing a curtain on her career.

"I do feel my recovery is taking longer. I'm putting my three-year-old son at risk by travelling so much with him, that's something I have to take into account. I think my body is wearing down," she said.

"My knee was really hurting today and I'm not saying that's the reason we lost, but I do think that it is taking time to recover as I'm getting older."

Mirza became the first Indian to win a WTA singles title, in 2005, in her hometown Hyderabad. She reached the fourth round of the US Open the same year and by 2007 was among the women's top 30.

But a wrist injury caused her to concentrate on doubles, forging a partnership with Swiss great Martina Hingis which produced three Grand Slam titles.

2 Indian Players Test Covid Positive On Eve Of Asian Cup

India is set to play debutants Iran today



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: COVID-19 breached the Indian women's football team's bio-security bubble here on Wednesday ahead of the AFC Asian Cup with two players testing positive for the virus, forcing the organisers to shift them to a medical facility for isolation.

"Two members of the Indian Women's Senior National Team for the AFC Women's Asian Cup India 2022 have tested positive for COVID-19, and are currently in isolation at a designated medical care facility," the All India Football Federation (AIFF) tweeted.

"The AIFF prioritises the health and safety of its players, and are following all," the organising federation wrote in another tweet.

One of the players would have featured in the starting XI in the campaign opener against Iran, a source close to the AIFF said.

The two positive cases will not threaten the tournament as AIFF president Praful Patel on Monday said that matches will not be cancelled if 13 players are available in each of the two competing teams.

Patel, who is also the chairman of the Local Organising Committee (LOC), said that contingency plans have been

put in place to deal with any situation in case participating team members are infected by the virus.

"The affected player or players will be isolated but the teams will be fielded as long as 13 players (in each team) are available," said Patel.

All the 12 participating teams have named 23-member squads for the tournament.

The tournament assumes significance as the top-five finishers will book a place in the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup. India are grouped with China, Chinese Taipei and Iran in Group A.

Due to the ongoing pandemic, strict health and safety protocols have been put in place for the tournament. All the 12 participating teams are staying inside a strict bio-bubble and everyone involved in the tournament, including all players and officials are required to undergo regular COVID-19 tests.

All the staff working in the team hotels will also be in the bio-bubble and will not physically interact with anyone outside the bubble. Same goes for the bus drivers who will ferry the teams for training and matches. They have also been provided accommodation inside the bubble.

opening match of the round of 16 where they will take on Burkina Faso in Limbe.

Senegal finished top of Group B earlier on Tuesday, ahead of Guinea, but it was after yet another unconvincing performance despite the return from COVID-19 quarantine of captain Kalidou Koulibaly and goalkeeper Edouard Mendy.

They were fortunate not to concede a penalty in a 0-0 draw with unfancied Malawi on Tuesday and have still only scored one goal — a stoppage time penalty by Sadio Mane — after three games.

Malawi were left fuming when Cameroon referee Blaise Ngwa cancelled a late penalty he initially awarded them in Bafoussam, after Gomezzani Chirwa was brought down in the box by defender Bouna Sarr.

The decision was overturned on review, but Senegal can regard themselves as fortunate as there was both a pull of the shirt and contact.