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# Centre asks States, UTs to enhance COVID testing

### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Flagging a decline in the number of COVID-19 tests in many states and union territories, the Centre has asked them to enhance testing so that an effective track of the spread of the pandemic can be kept and immediate citizen-centric action can be initiated.

In a letter to states and UTs on Monday, Additional Secretary in the Union Health Ministry Arti Ahuja advised them to pay attention to this aspect immediately and increase the testing in a strategic manner keeping in view the trend of case positivity in specific areas.

She highlighted that Omicron, which has been designated by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a variant of concern, is currently spreading across the country.

Referring to the ministry's earlier letters and the Home Ministry advisory of December 27 last year laying



out the broad framework of pandemic management in the context of Omicron, Ahuja said testing remains a key and crucial component.

"However, it is seen from the data available on the ICMR portal that testing has declined in many states and union territories," she wrote.

She said in all advisories on testing issued by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), including the latest on January 10, the basic objective remains early detection of cases for quick isolation and care.

In addition, testing

remains a key strategy for pandemic management as it helps in identification of new clusters and new hotspots of infection which can in turn facilitate immediate action for containment such as setting up of containment zones, contact tracing, quarantining, isolation and follow-up.

This can enable the state and district administrations to curb the spread of infection. Also this will ensure reduction in mortality and morbidity.

"Progression of disease to a severe category can be avert-

ed by strategic testing of those who are at high risk and more vulnerable, as well as in areas where the spread is likely to be higher," Ahuja said.

Reiterating the advisory on purposive testing strategy issued by the ICMR on January 10, she said in community settings all those who are symptomatic must be tested and all at-risk contacts of laboratory confirmed cases must also be tested.

This advisory needs to be read in conjunction with the earlier guidelines and advisories of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, wherein it has been recommended that strategic and focused testing should be done of people who are vulnerable, living in closed surroundings, in densely populated areas in emerging new clusters and new hotspots of positive cases, etc., Ahuja said. "In order to ensure that an effective track of

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## Sanjeev Gupta appointed Registrar General J&K & Ladakh High Court

### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: As per an order issued here on Tuesday, Sanjeev Gupta has been appointed as new Registrar General Jammu & Kashmir & Ladakh High Court.

According to order No 39/2022 dated January 18, 2022, "Pursuant to the High Court order No. 19 of 2022/RG dated 14.01.2022 and approval accorded by the Chief Justice, Sanjeev Gupta, District Judge (Super-Time Scale), is appointed as Registrar General

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## IED blast in Kulgam; no casualties reported

### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: An improvised explosive device (IED) blast took place in Kulgam district on Tuesday, officials said. No injuries or casualties were reported in the incident, they added. The IED blast took place on a road near a shrine in the Qomoh area of the district, the officials said.

# J&K logs 4,651 fresh COVID cases, 3 deaths

5 more areas declared Micro Containment Zones in Jammu; CBT rescheduled; 80 doctors, medics test +ve in GMC Sgr in single day

### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: In the highest single-day spike so far 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 were reported in 24 hours, officials said.

Of the fresh cases, 1,546 were from Jammu division and 3,105 from Kashmir, the officials said.

They said Srinagar district recorded the highest number of 957 cases followed by 919 cases in Jammu district.

There are 21,677 active cases in the union territory, while the number of recoveries so far was 3,40,599, the officials said.

With three fresh deaths, the death toll in the union territory went up to 4,575, they said.

With the detection of more COVID-19 positive patients, District Magistrate, Jammu, Anshul Garg today declared



A health worker collecting swab sample for COVID-19 testing.

five more location as Micro Containment Zones.

District Magistrate Jammu declared Lane near BSNL Tower, Baba Fareed Nagar Kunjwani; Lane near Yogananda Dhyan Kendra, Green Park Officer's Enclave, Muthi; Lane near Bharat Shiv Ashram, Panjgrain, Nagrota; Lane near H No 105 B, near Alpha Collection, Basant Nagar, Janipur and Lane near H No 52, Sector 7, near J&K Bank, Trikuta Nagar as Micro Containment

Zones. "The aforesaid areas shall be under strict lock down and tight perimeter control, except for essential needs. There shall be no movement, whatsoever, in and out of the Micro Containment zones," reads an order issued by DM Jammu.

According to by Jammu and Kashmir Service Selection Board (J&K SSB), 'Computer Based Written Test (CBT) Examination for the posts of Junior Assistant,

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## Unvaccinated but certified: J&K Admn launches drive to fix error

### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Jammu & Kashmir Health Department has started a special drive to identify people who have received the COVID vaccination certificate despite being administered with only one dose. In each case, authorities are collecting inputs from such beneficiaries and ensuring actual administration of vaccines to each at the earliest. At the same time, the Department has issued strict and necessary instructions in this manner to avoid such incidents in future.

During campaign mode of covid vaccination such isolated incidents of unintentional

wrong entries have happened because of the sudden increase in data uploads into the Covin portal and unintentional mistakes by support staff. It may be mentioned that Jammu and Kashmir has administered close to 2 crore doses and is the forerunner in the country in vaccinating its eligible population. Such cases constitute a microscopic minority, maybe in single digits.

In a recent incident, it was noticed that two beneficiaries aged 51 and 49, belonging to Block Sogam, District Kupwara, were inadvertently marked as vaccinated

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## Man arrested for abducting, raping minor in Reasi

### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: A man was arrested for allegedly kidnapping and raping a minor girl from Reasi district, police said on Tuesday.

While the 14-year-old girl was rescued from the house of her abductor in Poonch district, the accused was arrested from a locality in Jammu within three weeks of the incident, a police spokesperson said.

He said the father of the minor had lodged a complaint at the Reasi Police Station on December 28 last year stating that her minor daughter went outside to buy milk from a shop but did not return, suspecting that she might have been kidnapped.

A case was registered and investigation started which revealed that the minor was kidnapped by Shakeel alias Sonu, a resident of Poonch, the spokesperson said.

Senior Superintendent of Police, Reasi, Shalinder Singh constituted a

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## Centre proposes new rules to ensure availability of sufficient number of IAS officers for deputation

### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The Personnel Ministry has decided to amend existing service rules to ensure the availability of a sufficient number of IAS officers for central deputation, officials said on Tuesday.

The proposal which will give greater say to the Centre came as various state/joint cadres were found to be not sponsoring an adequate number of Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers as part of the central deputation reserve even though the ministry had flagged the issue several

times.

As a result of this, the number of officers available for central deputation is not sufficient to meet the requirement at Centre, the Personnel Ministry said in the proposal seeking changes in the IAS (cadre) Rules, 1954.

The move has evoked sharp criticism from West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee who has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi urging him to roll back the proposal claiming it will affect states' administration.

"I express my strong reservations to the approach fol-

lowed by the central government in proposing such amendment to the Cadre Rules which unilaterally mandates the state government to make such a number of officers available for deputation as prescribed under (the) central deputation reserve," Banerjee wrote to Modi on Tuesday evening.

Seeking to change the rules, the Centre has proposed that each state government shall make available for deputation to the central government such a number of eligible officers of various levels to the extent of

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## Army rescues civilians stuck in avalanche in Kupwara

### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: The Army rescued around 30 civilians after their vehicles came under an avalanche triggered by recent snowfall in border district of Kupwara in Jammu and Kashmir, officials said on Tuesday.

A vehicle carrying civilians got stuck on the Tangdhar-Chowkibal axis on Monday, following which the nearest Army unit was alerted and a rescue operation launched, they said.

"The civilians, including a child, were evacuated to safety by the Army rescue team," the officials said.

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## Super Specialists, Specialists' services extended for evening hours in GGN Hospital

### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: In the interest of better patient care, Directorate of Health Services Jammu has extended the services of Super Specialists and Specialists at Govt. Hospital Gandhi Nagar Jammu during the evening hours also from 7 pm to 10 pm.

This shall be in addition to the daily evening rounds of consultants on their emergency days.

The Gandhi Nagar Hospital though presently a Non-Covid hospital, is carrying out Dialysis of Covid positive patients under Pradhan

Mantri National Dialysis Program in a separate block of the hospital.

As per an order, the deployments include Dr. Mahesh C. Gupta (Sr. Consultant Pediatrics) at Room No. 40 near Ward 11, Dr. Dev Rah Thapa (Sr. Consultant Surgery) at Surgical Theater, Dr. Manjusha Bajaj (Consultant Gynae) at Gynae MO Room and Kamal Gupta (Consultant Ophtho) Doctor's Room in Eye Theater on January 12, 18, 24 and 30, 2022.

Dr. Rakesh Verma (Sr. Consultant Medicine) at Room No 6, Dr. Neerupama

Dogra (Sr. Consultant Ophtho) Doctor's Room in Eye Theater, Dr. Nareesh Khajuria (Consultant Gynae) at Gynae MO Room and Dr. Sudhir Sabharwal (Neuro Surgeon) at Surgical Theater on January 13, 19, 25 and 31, 2022.

Dr. Surinder Sharma (Consultant Medicine) at Room No 6, Dr. Mamta Kalsi (Consultant Gynae) at Gynae MO Room, Dr. Kanav Padha (Consultant Ortho) at Room No. 22 and Dr. Rohit Lahori (Pain Specialist) Surgical Theater on January 14, 20 and 26, 2022.

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## Won't let in leaders who left party & now willing to return: PDP Chief

### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti on Tuesday said she is not taking back those leaders who have deserted the party even though many of them are willing to return.

Dozens of senior PDP leaders including former ministers and legislators left the party after the BJP withdrew its support to the Mehbooba-led coalition government in July 2018 and most of them joined the Apni Party led by Altaf Bukhari or the Peoples Conference led by Sajjad Lone.

"I have made it a principle that those who have left us will not be taken back. Many of the leaders who deserted the party are eager to return but I am not going to take



them back," Mehbooba said addressing a function at party headquarters here.

The function was organised by the PDP to welcome dozens of new entrants including supporters of Bushan Lal Dogra, a former minister who rejoined the PDP last month. Launching a scathing attack on

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### WEATHER

**Temperature (Jammu)**  
Max: 12.0°C Min: 9.3°C

**Humidity**  
Max: 95 Min: 92

**Temperature (Srinagar)**  
Max: 6.5°C Min: 1.1°C

**Humidity**  
Max: 95 Min: 81

Sunset : 17:51 Hours  
Sunrise : 07:33 Hours



approximately 5,000-8,000 due to the ongoing COVID-19 wave.

Nearly 25,000 people were allowed to attend the last year's parade, compared to around 1.25 lakh people in

2020, due to the pandemic.

A decision on whether chief guests will be there for the Republic Day parade 2022 (RDP-2022) is yet to be taken by the Ministry of External

Affairs, the officials mentioned.

There was no chief guest at the parade last year.

This year, as a special endeavour, seats have been reserved for autorickshaw drivers, construction workers, sanitation workers and frontline health workers for the parade as well as for the Beating the Retreat ceremony that takes place on January 29, they said.

Officials said the aim of inviting fewer people this year is to maintain social distancing at all times due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Therefore, the numbers have been significantly curtailed, they added.

While the exact number is yet to be decided, it would be anywhere between 5,000-8,000 people this year, they mentioned.

People would be encouraged to watch the parade on TV and through the live

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