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J&K sees Jan's highest single-day COVID spike with 5,818 cases, 4 deaths

Traders body to observe voluntary weekend lockdown in Jammu; 2 more areas declared micro zones in City

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU/LEH: In the highest single-day spike so far this month, Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday recorded 5,818 fresh cases of COVID-19, taking the total infections to 3,72,669, while four deaths were reported in 24 hours, officials said.

Of the fresh cases, 4,066 were from the Kashmir division and 1,752 from Jammu, the officials said.

They said Srinagar district, with 1,745 cases, recorded the highest number followed by 1,131 cases in Jammu district.

With the surge in COVID-19 positive patients, District Magistrate, Jammu, Anshul Garg has declared Lane near H No 305, Sector E, near J&K Bank, Sainik Colony and Lane near H No 122, Sector 2, Indira Vihar, Old Janipur as Micro Containment Zones.



A health worker taking nasal swab sample for COVID-19 testing in Jammu.

There are 26,236 active cases in the union territory, while 3,41,854 patients recovered so far since the pandemic struck, the officials said.

With the four fresh deaths in the Jammu Division, the toll went up to 4,579 in the

Union Territory.

The officials said, there were 51 confirmed cases of Mucormycosis (black fungus) in the union territory.

Meanwhile, a traders' body, dealing with essential supplies, this afternoon 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.

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, Warehouse Nehru Market,

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Modi to virtually host first India-Central Asia Summit on Jan 27

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will host the first India-Central Asia Summit in a virtual format on January 27 during which the leaders are expected to deliberate on steps to take forward relations to newer heights as well as the evolving regional security situation.

The virtual summit will be held with the participation of the five presidents - Kazakhstan's Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Uzbekistan's Shavkat Mirziyoyev, Emomali Rahmon, of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan's Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov and Sadyr Japarov of Kyrgyz Republic.

This will be the first engagement of its kind between India and the Central Asian countries at the level of leaders, the Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement.

The summit will be held a day after the Republic Day and sources said this

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High alert along Jammu-Pathankot highway ahead of Republic Day

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Security forces are on high alert along the Pathankot-Jammu National Highway to keep a vigil on any suspected movement to foil the designs of terrorists ahead of Republic Day celebrations, officials said.

Border Security Force (BSF) troops have been deployed at Himachal Pradesh-Punjab checkpoint as a beefed-up security measure on the highway, they said. The security setup along the highway is on high alertness and checkings have been intensified as a measure to foil any design of anti-national elements, they said.

The security grid 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



Security personnel carrying out vehicle checking on Jammu-Pathankot NH near Samba.

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.

Merger of J&K cadre in AGMUT cadre MHA classifies J&K, Ladakh UTs as 'hard areas' for transfers

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Union Government has classified Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh Union Territories as "hard areas" in joint AGMUT cadre.

In a communique, the Ministry of Home Affairs has informed all states and UTs who are part of the AGMUT cadre- that J&K and Ladakh UTs have been categorized as hard areas in joint AGMUT 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 categorized as Category B (Hard Areas) in the Joint AGMUT Cadre," reads the letter issued by Rakesh Kumar Singh, Under Secretary to MHA, Govt of India.

Accordingly, the letter stated, 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: As per categorization done

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J&K achieves milestone of over 2 Cr COVID vaccinations: LG lauds healthcare, frontline workers

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Jammu & Kashmir on Wednesday achieved the landmark of administering over 2 crore COVID-19 vaccine doses in the ongoing Covid vaccination campaign across the country.

On the occasion, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has 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 unite to tackle the public health emergency," he added.

J&K has been a front runner among the States/UTs in vaccinating the eligible population with the Covid vaccine.



The J&K administration 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.

The Lt Governor 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.

Among that 10-point campaign, the 'Har Ghar Dastak' Campaign laid renewed focus

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Frame clear-cut policy for return of KPs to Valley: Omar

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: The National Conference on Wednesday 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.

"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

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JSCL inks pact to construct Tawi Riverfront Development Project

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

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 Arun 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 stipu-

lated 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.

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Ladakh Admn sets-up facility for online tickets for Kargil air service

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

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. 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

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Channi should quit for being hand-in-glove with sand mafia: Chugh

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

CHANDIGARH: BJP national general secretary Tarun Chugh today demanded resignation of Punjab chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi for patronizing his family members in clandestine sand mining in the state.

In a statement Chugh said the ED raids have established the Congress has been running sand mafias in the state under the nose of the chief minister.

Chugh debunked the chief minister's argument that it was Centre's vendetta saying that the case was registered in 2018 after due inquiry

when the Congress was in power at the Centre. The ED has only completed investigation in a long-standing case.



Chugh said recovery of Rs 10 crore from CM's nephew clearly proved that he continued recklessly in illegal sand mining for so long. He said it was known all over

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7-year-old buried alive under snow

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: A 7-year-old boy was buried alive under snow in Kishtwar district, officials said on Wednesday.

According to Bashir Ahmed, his child Mutarif Bashir had gone missing in Tilar village of Madwa area Monday evening.

Deputy Commissioner Ashok Kumar Sharma said the child was playing outside his house when snow accumulated on the roof rolled down and buried him.

The body was recovered from near the house, the officer added.

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Al-Qaida's links with Pak-based terror groups like LeT, JeM continue to strengthen: India at UN

■ AGENCY

NEW YORK: Al-Qaida's linkages with UNSC proscribed Pakistan-based terror groups like LeT and JeM has continued to strengthen, India's envoy to the UN has said, underlining that the recent developments in Afghanistan have only served to re-energise the terrorist group.

India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador T S Tirumurti told the International Counter-Terrorism Conference 2022 organised by the Global Counter-Terrorism Council on Tuesday that the Islamic State (ISIS) has changed its modus operandi with its core focus is now on regaining ground in Syria and Iraq,

and its regional affiliates are strengthening their expansion, especially in Africa and in Asia.

Similarly, al-Qaida remains a major threat and recent developments in Afghanistan have only served to re-energise them. Al-Qaida's linkages with Security Council proscribed terrorist entities like Lashkar e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed has continued to strengthen. Its regional affiliates in Africa continue to expand, he said. Tirumurti, who is also the Chair of the UNSC Counter-terrorism Committee for 2022, said that in the global counter-terrorism domain, the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001 had proved to be a turning point in

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WEATHER

Temperature (Jammu)

Max: 11.4°C Min: 9.1°C

Humidity

Max : 95 Min : 95

Temperature (Srinagar)

Max: 4.6°C Min: 2.7°C

Humidity

Max : 90 Min: 88

Sunset : 17:52 Hours

Sunrise : 07:32 Hours



Dense fog engulfs Jammu city on Wednesday morning amid rains.

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, which serves as the base camp for the annual Amarnath yatra, recorded a low of minus 1.9 degrees Celsius, down from the previous night's minus 0.7 degrees Celsius, they said.

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