

02 Husband of Sarpanch arrested for duping man

03 People of areas outside Kashmir Valley may not be again denied due status in Legislature & Administration

10 Three-day J&K UT Power Lifting & deadlift championship concludes

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First 3 Omicron cases confirmed in Jammu; UT reports 104 COVID infections

Three Jammu areas declared Micro Containment Zones

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Three cases of Omicron variant were confirmed here, Jammu and Kashmir's Health and Medical Education Department said on Tuesday, adding that 104 fresh Covid cases have also been reported across the Union Territory.

Officials said the three have no foreign history and their condition is stable.

"Three Omicron cases confirmed by NCDC, Delhi from a cluster in Jammu. Sample taken on 30th November. RTPCR testing of the entire locality ordered," the department wrote on its official Twitter handle.

It asked people to observe COVID-appropriate behaviour for their safety.

Principal Government Medical College, Jammu, Shashi Sudan said two of the patients were from Talab Tiloo and another is a resident of Ban Talab area in

'Activate' war rooms, emergency centres: Govt to states, UTs

NEW DELHI: Asserting that the Omicron variant is at least three more transmissible than Delta, the Centre Tuesday asked states and union territories to "activate" war rooms, strict regulation of large gatherings, curtailing numbers in marriages and funerals besides increasing testing and surveillance.

In a letter to the states and union territories, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan advised implementing strategic interventions for containment like imposition of night curfew, strict regulation of large gatherings, curtailing numbers in marriages and funerals besides increasing testing and surveillance. The letter highlights measures that need to be taken in view of initial signs of surge in cases of COVID-19 as well as increased detection of the variant of concern Omicron in different parts of the country.

"At the district level there should be constant review of emerging data regarding the population affected by COVID-19, geographical spread, hospital infrastructure and its utilization, manpower, notifying containment zones, enforcement of perimeter of containment

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Jammu.

"The condition of all the three patients is stable," she said, adding that they have

no travel history abroad.

The officials said all the close contacts of the three Omicron patients were iden-

tified and tested over the past three weeks.

They asked the people to observe Covid-appropriate behaviour.

Meanwhile, Jammu and Kashmir recorded 104 fresh Covid cases, taking the infection tally to 3,40,036, while one fresh fatality due to the virus was reported from the Union Territory in the past 24 hours, officials said.

Out of the fresh cases, 26 were from the Jammu division and 78 from the Kashmir division of the Union Territory, the officials said.

Srinagar district recorded the highest of 40 cases followed by 18 cases in Jammu district.

There are 1,327 active cases in the Union Territory, while the number of recovered patients was 3,34,195, the officials said. The death toll in the Union

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Six SHOs among eight police personnel transferred

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

RAJOURI/SAMBA: Senior Superintendent of Police Rajouri, Mohd Aslam on Tuesday transferred five Station House Officers (SHOs) among six police personnel. As per order, Inspector Mohd Showket has been transferred from DPL Rajouri and posted as SHO Thannamandi vice Insp Fareed Ahmad, who has been posted as SHO Rajouri. Insp Sameer Jeelani has been transferred from Police Station Rajouri and posted to DPL Rajouri; Insp Rajesh Jasrotia has been transferred from Kalakote and posted as SHO Nowshera and Insp Deepak Pathania has been transferred from DPL Rajouri and posted as SHO Kalakote.

Meanwhile according to another order issued by Senior Superintendent of Police Samba Dr Abhishek Mahajan, Insp Deepak Jasrotia has been transferred from DPL and posted as SHO Samba vice Inspector Sudhir Sadhotra, who has been relieved and posted to Doda-Kishtwar-Ramban (DKR) Range.

Delimitation panel's recommendations unacceptable; will stage protest on Jan 1: PAGD

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The recommendations of the Delimitation Commission on Jammu and Kashmir are "divisive and unacceptable", the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) said on Tuesday and announced a peaceful protest in Srinagar on January 1.

The Delimitation Commission, set up to redraw the assembly seats of the union territory, is learnt to have proposed six additional seats for the Jammu region and one for the Kashmir Valley in its 'Paper 1' discussed with its five associate members three parliamentarians of the National Conference (NC) and two of the BJP from Jammu and Kashmir - in New Delhi on Monday.

"We want peace and do not want any confrontation with any institution or government. However, we will raise our voice for the defence of legitimate rights of the people in a peaceful manner and



PAGD members briefing media in Jammu on Tuesday.

have decided to hold a peaceful demonstration in Srinagar on January 1 against the proposal put forward by the Delimitation Commission as in our view, the draft is unacceptable to the people and all communities," PAGD chief spokesperson and CPI(M) leader M Y Tarigami told reporters here.

This was the second meeting of the PAGD in Jammu since the five-party amalgam was formed in 2019 to seek the restoration of special status of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir that was revoked by the Centre in

August that year.

On the Delimitation Commission's recommendations, Tarigami said, "We are firmly of the opinion that it (proposal) is divisive and will further deepen the divide in Jammu and Kashmir."

"It will also deepen the alienation of the people and will create a much bigger void which is also detrimental to the interests of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh as well and will also damage the interests of the country as a whole," he said after the over an

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Brief exchange of fire between terrorists, SFs in Srinagar; no casualties



■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: A brief exchange of firing took place between terrorists travelling in a vehicle and security forces guarding a check point in Soura area of the city on Tuesday, but there were no casualties reported, officials said. A team of security forces signalled a car to stop at a

mobile vehicle check point in Soura at around 6.45 pm, the officials said. "The driver, however, did not stop and the terrorists in the car opened firing on the party, which was retaliated by the security forces," one of the officials said. The officials said no casualties were reported in the incident so far.

Reject those doing politics on basis of religion: Azad

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

GANDOH/JAMMU: Senior Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad exhorted people on Tuesday to reject those doing politics on the basis of religion and said Jammu and Kashmir as well as the entire country are going backwards instead of moving ahead in the past seven years.

Targeting the BJP government, he said those treating people on the basis of religion or party affiliation and are unable to provide justice equally have no right to remain in power.

"India did not remain as it was seven years before and likewise, J&K did not remain the way it was some three or



Senior Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad addressing a rally at Gandoh in Doda.

four years ago. We are witnessing a lot of changes.... We are heading backwards," Azad said.

Addressing a large public meeting at Bhallesha village of Gandoh in Doda district, the Congress leader, without

naming the BJP, said people across the country are suffering due to joblessness, inflation and poverty.

"In our times, the change was development and prosperity oriented. We constructed roads, schools, hos-

pitals and brought smiles on the faces of people, including those living in far-flung areas. We did not discriminate against people on the basis of religion and community and worked for

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Power employees call off strike in J&K

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Protesting employees of the Power Development Department in Jammu and Kashmir have called off their strike after written assurance from the administration to put on hold the proposed merger of PDD with Power Grid Corporation of India (PGCI).

An official team led by Divisional commissioner Ragav Langar and ADGP Mukesh Singh held fresh talks on the intervening night of Monday-Tuesday with the PDD employee's association led by its general secretary S Tickoo and

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LG calls for close surveillance on vital installations



GOC 15 Corps, Lt General D P Pandey calling on LG Manoj Sinha in Jammu.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday advised security forces to keep heightened surveillance on vital installations while maintaining close

synergy with the civilian administration to effectively deal with any emergency situation.

The LG conveyed this to General Officer Commanding (GOC) 15 Corps, Lt General D P

Pandey, who called on Sinha at Raj Bhavan here.

The GOC briefed the Lt Governor about the prevailing security scenario in the Union Territory, an official spokesman said.

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Bill to increase marriageable age of women to 21 years introduced in LS

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: A bill that seeks to fix 21 years as the uniform age of marriage for women and men was introduced in Lok Sabha on Tuesday with Union Minister Smriti Irani terming it a "decisive step" in the country's history, while some experts stressed that legislative changes alone will not solve the problem of early marriages unless its root causes are addressed.

The introduction of the Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2021 was opposed by some members who contended that

it infringed upon several personal laws and was in violation of fundamental rights. The bill was referred to a parliamentary panel for greater scrutiny.

Experts are divided on the issue of raising the age of marriage for women with some saying it will go a long way in empowering women and some others laying emphasis on addressing the root causes behind early marriages such as lack of education and poverty.

Addressing a rally in Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, "We are trying to

increase the age of marriage of women to 21 years so that they can have time to study and progress. The country is taking this decision for its daughters. Everyone is seeing who is having problems with this."

Soon after the introduction of the bill, Women and Child Development Minister Irani urged the Chair to refer it to a standing committee.

The bill seeks to increase the legal age for women to marry to 21 years, bringing it at par with those of men.

It seeks to amend seven personal laws -- the

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Kashmiri opposition to Delimitation Panel proposal shocks Jammu

■ PROF HARI OM

Justice (Retired) Ranjana Prakash Desai-headed Delimitation Commission met five associate members - three from NC (Farooq Abdullah, MA Lone and Hasnain Masoodi) and two from BJP (Mos in PMO Jitendra Singh and Jugul Kishor Sharma) -- on December 20 in New Delhi and shared its proposal with them. The proposal provided for 47 seats for Kashmir in the 90-member assembly of UT of J&K, as against 46 seats the highly biased Justice KK Gupta-headed Delimitation Commission allotted to the Valley in 1995. As for Jammu, the Delimitation Commission proposed 43 seats, as against its share of 37 seats under the 1995 Delimitation Commission. In other words, the new panel proposed six out of seven additional seats for Jammu, one each in Kathua, Samba, Udhampur, Rajouri, Doda and Kishtwar districts, and one for Kashmir in the Kupwara district. In the erstwhile J&K assembly, Kashmir and Jammu province returned 83 members (Kashmir 46 and Jammu 37). The

new panel didn't propose any change in the existing share of SCs in the assembly. They had seven reserved seats before and they will continue to have seven seats - all in Jammu province. The panel also proposed nine seats (10%) for the STs and it happened for the first time. The STs inhabit many areas both in Jammu province and Kashmir.

The new panel, in addition, explained the criteria adopted by it while drafting the proposal. It, inter-alia, said that it proposed 47 seats for Kashmir and 43 for Jammu taking into consideration the 2011 census data and geographical factor (area, nature of terrain and accessibility) and means of communication.

Jammu feels betrayed The people of Jammu province wanted the new panel to delimit assembly constituencies on the basis of the 2021 census figures and four other factors - land area, nature of terrain, accessibility and means of communication. Their age-old grouse was that the 2011 census figures were manipulated in favour of Kashmir. Their

view was that they would have got no less than 50 seats, had the 2011 census was a fair exercise and the 1995 Commission taken into consideration the other factors. That the new panel considered the 2011 census data as envisaged by the J&K Reorganization Act of 1919 has only disappointed the people of Jammu province.

The disappointment and unhappiness of the people of Jammu could not be dismissed as silly and preposterous. They do make a valid point by bemoaning that they again were denied due share of representation in the assembly, which discusses and decides questions of supreme importance to the happiness and well-being of the people. Remember, Jammu has all along been superior to Kashmir both in terms of population and land area and inferior to Kashmir in terms of nature of terrain, accessibility and means of communication. It also needs to be underlined that Kashmir will have four seats more than Jammu and as a result, it will continue to dominate the state polity and economy to the disadvantage of Jammu as

before. Opposition in Kashmir

It must remain a matter of concern that all Gupkaris and others in Kashmir, including Omar Abdullah (NC), Mehbooba Mufti (PDP) and MY Tarigami (CPI-M) - all Gupkaris -, Altaf Bukhari (JKP Apni Party), Sajjad Lone (PC) and G N Monga (Congress), all in one voice denounced the Delimitation Commission and the BJP Government at the Centre. The Gupkaris accused the Delimitation Commission of promoting the "political agenda of the BJP and serving BJP's political interests"; termed the proposal anti-Kashmir, "unacceptable" and "divisive"; declared that "they will not sign the Delimitation Commission report"; and reiterated their demand seeking delimitation of the constituencies only on the basis of the 2011 census data. "This commission has been created simply to serve BJP's political interests by dividing people along religious & regional lines. The real game plan is to install a Government in J&K which will legitimize the illegal &

unconstitutional decisions of August 2019," one of the Gupkaris also said. The refrain of the Gupkaris, in short, is that the whole delimitation exercise is aimed at "dis-empowering Kashmiris (read Muslims) politically" and helping the BJP (read Jammu) establishing its rule in the UT of J&K.

The NC, which heads the Gupkar gang, also took on the associate members belonging to the BJP. They particularly targeted Jitendra Singh, who while speaking to media persons in New Delhi after the meeting with the Commission had claimed that all the associate members from the NC were satisfied with the working of the Delimitation Commission. The NC vice-president Omar Abdullah, in fact, termed as "misleading" the statement of Jitendra Singh that "the associate members regardless of their party and political affiliations not only appreciated the work done by the Delimitation Commission but also committed that they would in the future also extend their cooperation for the rest of the

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WEATHER

Temperature (Jammu)
Max: 18.1°C Min: 5.6°C

Humidity
Max: 88 Min: 69

Temperature (Srinagar)
Max: 12.4°C Min: -2.8°C

Humidity
Max: 94 Min: 59

Sunset : 17:31 Hours
Sunrise : 07:30 Hours