

## !! Continuations from Page 1 !! Why there was...

was initial silence but then they said on video conference they would have been killed. Then I asked whom did Modiji save by imposing curfew. They said they were saved. Then I said the people of the country have to decide what do people, who oppose curfew, want," he said.

On the demand of J&K political parties that elections should take place after statehood is restored, Shah said Parliament has passed the act that elections will be followed by delimitation exercise.

"First delimitation will take place, then elections will be held then the process to restore statehood will begin. I have said this many times. Now they know that this will be the chronology so they want to create political dispute by demanding the opposite," he said.

Shah said the kind of development that is taking place under the lieutenant governor's administration, the improvement in the law-and-order situation, influx of tourists, improvement of the union territory in social sector schemes show that a lot of things have changed for good in a small time frame.

"I am hopeful that the people of Kashmir welcome this change and I appeal to all political parties to be part of the political and democratic process," he said.

Shah said world will now be distinguished pre-Covid and post-Covid era with big changes coming in all the areas globally.

"In India, it is crucial for us to think if we are ready for these changes. World is watching closely. Are we ready for the preparation needed for us as a Nation -- people, government, economic segments," he said.

The Home Minister said it was a good fortune that India received a form of stability after decades of coalition politics at the centre in 2014.

"For a long time there were coalition governments with no party enjoying clear majority. My own party was in government for six years and we too had to take along a number of political parties. The ill-effects were visible on administration, economy and future. Ten years before 2014 were like a bad dream when country was battling 'policy paralysis' at the centre. There was corruption and lack of decision-making," he said.

Without taking name of the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Shah said he headed a Cabinet in which the prime minister was not treated as a PM and every minister thought he was the prime minister.

"Like this, PM office was also compromised and the prestige of the country went down in the world. That time, Indian people elected NDA government with clear majority under Prime Minister Narendra Modi," he said.

## Vaishno Devi pilgrims...

Reasi district. SMVDSB chief executive officer Ramesh Kumar has appealed to the pilgrims to carry RT-PCR report obtained less than 72 hours ago.

While face masks are mandatory, pilgrims are also scanned for high body temperature at the entry points, an SMVDSB spokesperson said.

Announcements at regular intervals are also being made the multipurpose audio system and hi-tech video walls on the track to create awareness, he said.

The board is also sanitizing its premises to ensure safety of the pilgrims, staff and the public at large, the spokesperson said.

## LG directs health...

the analysis of Covid-19 situation, District-wise threat level, testing, contact tracing and vaccination across the UT, besides vaccination stock position and proportion of RAT/RT-PCR testing and Covid Appropriate Behavior enforcements.

Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar, Advisor to the Lt Governor; Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary; Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary, Finance Department; Shaleen Kabra, Principal Secretary to the government, Home department; Shailendra Kumar, Principal Secretary to the Government, Public Works (R&B) Department; Nitishwar Kumar, Principal Secretary to the Lt Governor; Pandurang K Pole, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir; Mukesh Singh, ADGP Jammu; Dr Raghav Langer, Divisional Commissioner Jammu; Vijay Kumar, IGP Kashmir; Deputy Commissioners and SPs, attended the meetings, in person and through virtual mode.

## J&K among 6...

at bay, the Centre has advised them to undertake enhanced surveillance of international travellers and also monitor emerging COVID hotspots.

The Union health ministry, meanwhile, wrote to the governments of Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Jammu and Kashmir, Odisha and Mizoram to take necessary steps to the 'Test-Track-Treat-Vaccinate-Covid Appropriate Behaviour' strategy to control the spread of COVID-19 and reduce fatality.

The move comes in view of rising cases of the infection, weekly positivity rates and weekly deaths in some districts.

Referring to a letter sent to all states/UTs on November 27 in the context of the new Omicron variant, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan on Saturday said all states have been advised to undertake enhanced surveillance of international travellers, monitor emerging hotspots, prompt contact tracing of positive people, besides sending all positive samples for genome sequencing, early identification of cases and review of health infrastructure preparedness, and most importantly to focus on IEC and community sensitisation.

While Gujarat's Commissioner of Health Jai Prakash Shivhare confirmed that the elderly Non-resident Indian from Jammager city has tested positive for the Omicron variant, Maharashtra health department director Dr Archana Patil confirmed that a man from Kalyan Dombivli municipal area near Mumbai was found infected by the potentially contagious variant. It was the first cases of Omicron of variant for the two western states.

The country's first two cases of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 were reported on Thursday in Karnataka--in a 66-year-old South African flyer and a 46-year-old Bengaluru doctor with no travel history and both men fully vaccinated.

The NRI man had arrived in Gujarat from Zimbabwe on November 28 and had tested positive for coronavirus on December 2, after which his sample was sent for genome sequencing, officials said. He was fully vaccinated against COVID, they said.

The man, who hails from Jamnagar, has been living in Zimbabwe since the last

many years. He arrived in the state to meet his father-in-law. After he got a fever, his doctor advised him to get an RT-PCR test done. The private laboratory on Thursday informed the civic authorities that his report has come out positive for COVID-19, Jammnagar municipal commissioner Vijaykumar Kharadi said.

After that, the man had been shifted to the isolation ward at the Guru Gobind Singh Government Hospital, Kharadi said.

The district authorities had already started his contact tracing as per protocols, officials said.

Officials in Mumbai said the man from Kalyan Dombivli municipal area near Mumbai had arrived at the Delhi airport from South Africa via Dubai before flying to the western metropolises.

The 33-year-old man had arrived in Delhi on November 23 and had given his samples for COVID-19 testing at the Delhi airport. He had then taken a flight to Mumbai, official sources said in Delhi.

"After he tested positive, the sample was sent for genomic sequencing and has been found to have the Omicron variant of coronavirus on Saturday," the sources said, adding he has been isolated and all his contacts have been traced and are being managed as per protocol.

A man from Kalyan Dombivli municipal corporation area has tested positive for the Omicron variant of COVID-19. He is the first official case in the state, Maharashtra health department director Dr Archana Patil told PTI in Mumbai.

He came with a group of four people. We are tracing and tracking them. Their RT-PCR test as well as genome sequencing will be done as well, she said. More details are awaited but officials said the affected man had not received any vaccine dose against COVID.

As a debate rages over whether India should roll out the booster shots against COVID, scientists say that the country should prioritise double vaccinating its eligible population given the large number of people still to get the base layer of protection against the infection.

Concerns over the Omicron variant and waning vaccine-induced protection against the infection have highlighted the need for boosters to protect the most vulnerable. And while many countries have already started giving booster shots, several experts in India said the priority in the country has to be different given that large-scale immunisation programme began only six-eight months ago.

In advocating putting boosters on the back-burner for the moment, the experts' opinion runs counter to the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Sequencing Consortium (INSACOG) that has recommended a booster dose for those above 40 years in high-risk and high-exposure populations. The INSACOG is a network of national testing labs set up by the government to monitor genomic variations of COVID-19.

We have a large proportion of our population in the below 18 age-group. Until that is achieved, a uniform policy for second booster, or a third dose, is not advisable, immunologist Vineeta Bal told PTI, pointing out that large-scale vaccination in India began only in March 2021.

What we should focus on, she said, is fully vaccinating all the eligible population in India and pushing for vaccination of the under 18 age group on a large scale.

Vasant Nagvekar, a consultant on infectious diseases at a Mumbai-based hospital and a member of the Maharashtra government's COVID-19 task force, on Thursday said a booster dose of vaccine, even if it works, is just a temporary fix and the emphasis should instead be on mask use.

Amid growing concerns over the Omicron variant of SARS-CoV-2, a Parliamentary panel has recommended that the efficacy COVID vaccines must be evaluated and the government conduct more research to examine the need for booster doses to contain the new strain.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health in its report to Parliament also said that concerns with regard to the new strain developing immunoescape mechanism should be critically addressed.

Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Friday told Parliament that the Centre will move forward on the rollout of the booster shots only on the basis of scientific recommendations of its two expert groups on vaccine administration. The decision will not be based on economic or financial considerations, he said.

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), meanwhile, has mandated seven-day home quarantine of the passengers arriving in the city from "at-risk" countries.

In an order issued on Friday, the civic body said that during the home quarantine period, the staff from its ward-level COVID-19 war rooms would call these foreign returnees five times a day to ensure that they are following the protocols.

According to the Centre, the countries designated as "at-risk" are European nations, including the UK, and South Africa, Brazil, Botswana, China, Mauritius, New Zealand, Zimbabwe, Singapore, Hong Kong and Israel.

## CB presents charge...

lodged by one Yogesh Kumar, son of Kalu Ram, resident of Ward No. 02, Mohalla Kamsar, Tehsil Haveli, District Poonch to the effect that accused, who is working as a Government teacher and has obtained job on the basis of 12th pass qualification having scored 370 marks out of 600, since eligibility for 12th class students at that time was having secured a minimum of 50 per cent of marks in examination, whereas accused had actually scored 274 marks out of 600 which were quite less than required percentage.

The official further said, "During the course of investigation, documents were obtained from the Board of school Education, SSB J&K, CEO Poonch, ZEO Kanuayan (Mandi) and Distt Employment & Counselling Centre, Poonch, besides oral as well as scientific evidence was also collected which proved that the accused in connivance with co-accused Mohd Sajjad hatched a criminal conspiracy and committed the offence to obtain benefit by submitting a fake and forged document which amounts to commission of offences punishable under the relevant sections of law. The charge-sheet has been produced in the Court of Chief Judicial Magistrate Poonch for judicial determination."

## Restore J&K's statehood...

reformer as I believe there is a need for reforms to end the evils of discrimination and maltreatment. There are some who are dividing the people on the basis of religion, which I view as a mental sickness. I, as a chief minister of J-K, never differentiated the people on the basis of religion and region and treated everyone equally, Azad said, adding the people are precious to him and he was ready for any sacrifice for them.

Azad claimed the present government is not treating everyone equally and is taking anti-people steps like evicting people from their land which they have been possessing for decades together.

The Congress leader said the people of J&K are suffering as there is no alternative to the democratic government.

The bureaucracy is no substitute for the popular government. We cannot hold them responsible for their failure to mitigate the sufferings of the public. They are not meant to visit far-off places and listen to the public as they are constitutionally assigned the job of working in offices, Azad said.

Raising the demand for early restoration of statehood followed by assembly elections, the Congress leader said the people of J-K need a democratic government and not central rule, which is going on after the fall of the previous government in 2018.

## Over 1 crore...

South Africa reported the new variant which has been designated as a variant of concern by WHO.

More than one crore vaccine doses have been administered till 8.15 pm on Saturday.

"India achieves another 1,00,00,000 #COVID19 vaccinations today! With the #HarGharDastak campaign in full swing, the world's #LargestVaccinationDrive is touching new heights & accomplishing new feats under PM @NarendraModi ji's leadership," Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya tweeted.

The daily vaccination tally is expected to increase with the compilation of the final reports for the day by late Saturday night.

According to the government data, 59.32 lakh vaccine doses on an average were administered per day in November compared to 19.69 lakh doses per day in May this year. Besides, 55.77 lakh doses on an average were administered per day in October, 78.69 lakh in September and 59.29 lakh in August.

Officials said around 84.8 per cent of the adult population in India has been given the first dose of the Covid vaccine, while 50 per cent has received the second dose.

The countrywide vaccination drive was rolled out on January 16 with healthcare workers (HCWs) getting inoculated in the first phase. The vaccination of frontline workers (FLWs) started from February 2.

The next phase of COVID-19 vaccination commenced from March 1 for people over 60 years of age and those aged 45 and above with specified co-morbid conditions. The country launched vaccination for all people aged more than 45 years from April 1. The government then decided to expand its vaccination drive by allowing everyone above 18 to be vaccinated from May 1.

## ACB present charge...

village Dwara Jammu; (12) Mohd Aslam, son of Wazir Mohd, resident of village Dwara Jammu; (13) Rashid Ali, son of Sahib Din, resident of village Dwara Jammu and (14) Habbu, daughter of Fateh Mohd, resident of village Dwara Jammu.

The official further said that instant case was registered on the outcome of a verification conducted into allegations of encroachment over the forest land in Khasra no 59/41 situated at village Dwara tehsil & district Jammu. Verification has revealed that Mohd Bashir Patwari Halqa Dwara, Malook Ali Forest Guard of the area and some unknown officials hatched a criminal conspiracy among themselves and in pursuance thereof the accused public servants dishonestly, fraudulently and by abusing their respective official positions manipulated the revenue records and facilitated illegal encroachment of State Forest land in favour of various private beneficiaries thereby causing wrongful loss to the Govt and corresponding wrongful gain to the accused persons. "During the course of investigation, it has been established and proved that accused Bashir Ahmed and Altaf Hussain Malik remained posted as Patwari Patvar Halqa Bain Bajalta during the period 2008-2012 and in that capacity they in furtherance of criminal conspiracy with beneficiaries, dishonestly and illegally manipulated revenue record. The accused public servants in connivance with the beneficiaries, have altered the revenue record i.e. Girdawaris by overwriting or inserting the names/figures to give undue benefits to the beneficiaries and which resulted in loss to the state property thereby committing the offences under section 5 (1) (d) read with section 5 (2) J&K Prevention of Corruption Act Svt. 2006 and Section 467, 468, 420 and 120-B of RPC. After receiving sanction from Government in respect of in-service accused persons, a charge-sheet of the instant case FIR was produced against the above mentioned persons in the Special Anti-Corruption Court, Jammu for judicial determination," said official, adding that next date of hearing has been fixed for December 30, 2021.

## LeT terrorist arrested...

were recovered from his possession, he said. According to police records, Nath was an active terrorist since February 2021, the spokesman said. A case has been registered and investigation initiated, he added.

## Over 202 new...

at 3,31,436, the officials said.

The death toll from the pandemic remained unchanged at 4,479, they said. Meanwhile, Ladakh has reported 27 fresh cases of coronavirus and one death due to it in last 24 hours, officials said.

The fresh cases pushed the overall virus tally in the Union Territory (UT) to 21,669 and active cases to 311.

The sole death was reported from Leh district on Friday, which took the overall death toll in the region since the outbreak of pandemic to 215, the officials said.

Leh has recorded 157 deaths for its 18,014 cases. The rest 58 deaths have been reported from Kargil, which has logged 3655 cases till date.

Officials said a total of 2024 persons were tested for COVID in the UT on Friday. Among the positive, 26 were reported from Leh and one from Kargil.

Leh in particular has witnessed a spurt in coronavirus cases since the beginning of November, registering seven deaths and 671 cases prompting the authorities to reimpose various measures including night curfew and banning gathering of five or more persons. Schools have also been closed.

On Friday, nineteen patients were discharged from a hospital in Leh and two others in Kargil, taking the number of recovered patients in Ladakh to 21,143, which is 97.6 per cent of the total caseload. There are 311 active cases - 286 in Leh and 25 in Kargil, the officials said.

## CRIME REPORT

### Rs 28,000 fine recovered from SoPs violators in Ramban

#### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

RAMBAN: Continuing enforcement drive to implement COVID protocol across district Ramban, the Enforcement teams on Saturday fined scores of violators for roaming without wearing face masks and not maintaining physical distance.

The enforcement teams, during inspection in their respective jurisdictions, recovered a fine of Rs 28,000 taking the total amount fined since April 1, 2021 to Rs. 69, 90,700. The Enforcement officers urged the people to wear face masks and maintain physical distance besides taking COVID vaccination doses at their nearest CVC.

District Immunization Officer, Ramban, Dr Suresh informed that as many as 1236 persons were administered first and second COVID vaccine doses across Ramban district. As per daily bulletin issued by the Chief Medical Officer, Ramban, Dr Mohammad Fareed Bhat, the Health Department has collected 2,465 samples including 630 RT-PCR and 1,835 RAT samples besides administering COVID vaccines to 1,236 persons at dedicated Vaccination Centres in the district

### Theft case solved; 2 arrested, stolen motor-bike recovered

#### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

KATHUA: Police on Saturday solved a theft case by arresting 2 thieves and recovered stolen motorbike (spare parts/items) from their possession.

As per details, on Nov 25, 2021 a case was registered at Police Station Rajbagh in connection with theft registered vide FIR No. 242/2021 under sections 379 of IPC. Acting on the same, a party from Police Station Rajbagh led by SHO Rajbagh Insp Amit Sangra under the supervision of SDPO Border Sahit Mahajan arrested two suspected thieves on Saturday who were evading their arrest. During sustained questioning of accused, they confessed their involvement in crime and on their disclosure stolen Motorcycle (PB35-9557) was recovered from the possession of Puran Chand, son of Tilak Raj, resident of Karandi Kalan Rajbagh and George, son of Manohar Lal, resident of Hardomuthi Rajbagh. Further investigation of case is going on and their involvement in any other case cannot be ruled out.



## Man arrested with intoxicants, pistols, sharp-edged weapon, cash

#### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

KATHUA: Intensifying its action against drug menace within District, Kathua Police under the overall supervision of SSP Kathua, R C Kotwal on Saturday arrested a man and recovered 11 bottles of 'Cadizrex Cough Syrup' like contraband, 35 SPR-PRX intoxicating capsules, 2 Pistols, one Sharp-edged Tokka along with cash amount of Rs. 81,800 from his possession.

As per details, a team of Police Station Kathua led by Insp O P Chib under the supervision of DySP Headquarters Kathua Shammi Kumar during patrolling duty at Changran, Chak Desa Singh area, when reached near Panchayat Ghar Badala, Kathua noticed a suspect namely Kuldeep Singh, son of Puran Chand, resident of Changran Kathua who tried to hide himself after seeing police. On physical checking, 2 Pistols, one Tokka, polythene containing 11 bottles of Cadizrex Cough Syrup (100ml each), 35 SPR-PRX intoxicating capsules along with cash amount of Rs. 81,800 were recovered from his possession. The accused was arrested and FIR No. 509/2021 under sections 8/21/22 of NDPS Act, 4/7/25 of Arms Act was registered against him at Police Station Kathua.



## Gang of burglars busted; 7 arrested, stolen property worth lakhs recovered

#### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

BUDGAM: Police on Saturday solved a burglary case by arresting seven accused persons involved in crime besides, recovered stolen property worth lakhs.

As per details, on December 01, 2021, Police Station Magam received a complaint from Mansoor Ahmad Sheikh, son of Ghulam Nabi Sheikh, resident of Batpora Kanihama regarding burglary at his workshop 'Mansoor Automobiles' located



at Agrikalan Magam. Accordingly, FIR No. 254/2021 under relevant sections of law was registered at Police Station Magam and a special team headed by SHO Magam was constituted to investigate the case.

During the course of investigation, the special team zeroed in on some suspects who were called for questioning. During questioning, one of the suspects namely Imran Hassan Mir, son of Manzoor Ahmad Mir, resident of Kakarpora, Mirgund Pattan confessed his involvement in commission of crime. The team also recovered stolen property from his house which he had concealed in a tin-shed. He also confessed the role of his two more accomplices who had hatched criminal conspiracy and actively participated in the crime. Both the accused persons identified as Yawar Abbas Malik, son of Ashiq Hussain Malik, resident of Lashkar Mohalla Nishat and Aijaz Ahmad Malla, son of Ghulam Mohammad Malla, resident of Devar Parihaspora were arrested.

The investigating team also learnt about involvement of another accused namely Syed Akther Shah, son of Syed Mustafa Shah, resident of Parihaspora Pattan and on his disclosure stolen property which he had concealed at his workshop near Shadipora Crossing was recovered.

Following more leads, the investigating team arrested two more accomplices of the burglary gang identified as Pervaiz Ahmad Guroo, son of Ab. Ahad Guroo resident of Narayan bagh, Ganderbal and Irfan Hussain Sofi, son of Muzafar Ahmed Sofi, resident of Dabb Ganderbal and recovered stolen property which they had concealed at their workshop at Dub Ganderbal.

Furthermore, the team arrested one more accused identified as Zulfkar Ahmad Dar, son of Gh. Hussain Dar resident of Chenabul Mirgund Pattan who was also a part of crime and had used his vehicle Maruti-800 (PB10AG-9210) for commission of crime.

The vehicle was also seized from Wushan Kangan Ganderbal. All the accused were shifted to Police Station where they remained in custody. Stolen property recovered by Police included 32 Clutch Plates, 16 Axle's, 28 bearings, 17 desk pad's, 8 batteries & other accessories worth about Rs 5 lakh while further investigation is under progress.

## Two drug peddlers nabbed with Charas

#### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

RAJOURI: Continuing its strong action on Anti-Narcotics front, police on Saturday nabbed two peddlers and recovered 590 gm Charas like substance from their possession.

As per details, a team of Rajouri Police Station headed by SHO Sameer Jillani and assisted by police team of Chingus headed by PSI Sahil Chowdhary laid a surprise Naka at Kote Dhara bridge and intercepted two persons moving towards bridge. On their frisking, 30 rolls (Challis) of Charas like substance weighing 590 gm were recovered and seized. Both drug peddlers, identified as Ibrar Ahmed, son of Mohd Afzal, resident of Kote Dhara and Mohd Qasim, son of Abdul Qadir, resident of Kote Dhara were arrested and FIR No 721/21 under sections 8/20 of NDPS Act was registered against them in Police Station Rajouri.