

# Khaplu Palace & Shigar Fort bring cash returns for public welfare projects

Serena Hotels set an example in community service and welfare projects by sharing the profits earned from the operations of Serena Shigar Fort and Serena Khaplu Palace with the communities of Shigar and Khaplu.

Similarly, the revenue of Serena Altit Fort Residence is to be shared with Support Fund to Women Enterprise CIQAM for their partnership at Serena Altit Fort Residence. In this regard Aga Khan Cultural Service Pakistan (AKCS-P) and Tourism Promotion Services (Pakistan) Limited Owner and Operator of Serena Hotels held an event at Islamabad Serena Hotel.

Ambassador of the Royal Norwegian Embassy Per Albert ILsaas was the Chief Guest. Chairman Aga Khan Cultural Service Pakistan, Mr Akbar Ali Pesnani and Chief Executive Officer, Serena Hotels Mr Aziz Boolani also attended the event.

The Community representatives of Town Management Societies of Shigar, Khaplu and Head of CIQAM Green Solutions Ms Aqeela Bano and officials from the Royal Norwegian Embassy and Serena Hotels also participated in the event.

In his opening remarks Tausif Ahmad CEO Aga Khan Cultural Service welcomed the guests and said that it’s the moment to cherish the long relationship with the communities that restoration and reutilization of model got disrupted due to the pandemic, is being revived. He said that the unique Khaplu Palace & Shigar Fort has brought cash returns for the community for its public welfare projects.

Mr Aziz Boolani said that Serena Hotel’s management of these projects was indeed an extension of its Corporate Social Responsibility which not only provides the jobs to the local community but has created a value chain for its operations, benefiting the locals in all possible ways.

Akbar Ali Pesnani thanked the Royal Norwegian Embassy for their consistent support to AKCS-P for its interventions in Gilgit Baltistan and Punjab on various Heritage Restoration Projects.

He reiterated AKCS-P’s commitment to communities in its areas of operations and shared some of the plans in various parts of Pakistan.

Community representatives thanked AKCS-P and Serena Hotels for their continues support to the local communities enabling them to improve their quality of life.

Later, mementos were distributed to all the stockholders in supporting restoration and reutilization of Khaplu, Shigar and Altit Fort.

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# Ban on indoor dining, weddings in cities with over 10pc positivity rate

The National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) Wednesday banned indoor gatherings, weddings and dining in districts and cities with Covid-19 positivity rate exceeding 10 percent as part of new curbs meant to tackle the pandemic’s fifth wave being driven by the Omicron variant.

A press release issued from the forum said the decision will remain in effect from Jan 20 to 31, adding that a review will be held on Jan 27 to assess the situation. The ban on indoor dining, however, will go into effect from Jan 24.

Indoor gatherings allowed up to 300 individuals, outdoor up to 500 for districts with positivity up to 10pc. Indoor gatherings banned, outdoor up to 300 for districts with positivity rate more than 10pc (with effect from Jan 24)

Indoor weddings allowed up to 300 individuals, outdoor up to 500 for districts with positivity rate up to 10pc. Indoor weddings banned, outdoor up to 300 for districts with positivity rate more than 10pc (with effect from Jan 24 and will remain effective till February 15). Indoor and outdoor dining both allowed for districts with positivity rate up to 10pc

Indoor dining banned (with effect from Jan 24), outdoor allowed for districts with positivity rate more than 10pc

Education activities will continue for those under and over 12 in districts with positivity rate up to 10pc

Education activities will continue with staggered attendance at 50pc capacity for those under 12 and 100pc attendance for those over 12 in districts with positivity rate more than 10pc

Those over 12 will need to be fully vaccinated in both situations

Vaccination will be mandatory (at least one dose) for those over 12 from Feb 1

Aggressive sentinel testing to be carried out for targeted closures in institutes with high disease prevalence Federating units in consultation with health authorities will decide limits for closure of educational institutions

Gyms, cinemas, shrines, amusement parks: Indoor activities allowed for districts with positivity rate up to 10pc

Indoor activities allowed at 50pc capacity for districts with positivity rate more than 10pc. All sports activities allowed for districts with positivity rate up to 10pc

Ban on contact sports (karate, boxing, martial arts, rugby, water polo, wrestling and kabaddi) for districts with positivity rate more than 10pc

The NCOC decided that markets and business activities will continue without any restrictions and normal working hours with 100pc employee attendance will be followed, provided that they are fully vaccinated. However, it did add that work from home was encouraged.

Occupancy in public transport was set at 70pc and 80pc in railways, with continuous mask-wearing throughout journeys.

The ban on serving of meals was also maintained for public transport and domestic air travel.

The curbs come as the country is in the grip of the fifth wave which is being driven by the highly transmissible Omicron variant.

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**Winter Tourism Resume in Galiyat**

ABBOTTABAD: Winter tourism resumed in Galiyat area on Tuesday after a break of 10 days. The tourism-related activities had come to a halt in the entire region after 22 tourists lost life in Murree hill station for being stuck in their vehicles due to heavy snowfall.

The Galiyat Development Authority and district administration allowed the entry of tourists to the area following improvement in weather conditions.

The spokesman said the Met Office had forecast another spell of snowfall in Galiyat from Wednesday, so the GDA and local administration had decided to restrict the movement of tourists within a 25km area between Bagnotar and Dongagali over fears of landslides and avalanches.

He said the access to the area beyond Dongagali to Bariyan would remain restricted. The spokesman said all roads, including 49.9km long main artery of Bagnotar to Bariyan, Ayubia-Khanaspur Road and six residential areas roads that were under the domain of the GDA were cleared of snow making the road travel hassle-free.

He said for the facility of tourists, the GDA had deployed 60 helpers on the main Bagnotar to Bariyan Road at every 5 km distance for the assistance of tourists, while the officials of traffic police and Rescue 1122 were posted to key points for early response. Mr Hameed said the entry of tourists to the region was discouraged from Bariyan side and it was allowed from Abbottabad side with their number restricted to 20,000-25,000 for safety reasons.

Meanwhile, Galiyat additional assistant commissioner Aminul Hasan said there were a total of 45 link roads with a total length of 437km in the area and of it, 237km area was snow-bound. He said snow had been cleared from 38 of the 45 roads, while the other roads would be reopened in a couple of days.

Mr Hasan said snow was cleared from the main road between Abbottabad and Bariyan, but four points within a strip of 12km in Toheedabad, Kundla, Moorti and Darwazakass were vulnerable to avalanches and landslides.