

Dear All

Novak, the Serbian tennis superstar was in the news for the last fortnight, for all the wrong reasons. His case has sparked off many issues of covid and vaccination in particular.

Here's what I see:

1. The Australia government has always been tough on people not wanting to vaccine or unvaccinated people going out. Australia has seen many strikes in the last few months when the government has imposed vaccination, masks and curfew rules.
2. The Australian government warned the Pakistan cricket team when they were in Australia a year ago, they threatened to offload the full team if they didn't follow the rules.
3. Novak tested positive a few weeks ago and went out for a media interview and photoshoot.
4. He sought an exception on the basis of having had covid, but he was not vaccinated.
5. His travel papers were wrongly entered, there was a mistake from his travel agent.
6. When Novak landed, the border control refused to let him in. He went to court and won a court battle.
7. The Australian Immigration Minister Alex Hake, then used his prerogative and decided to deport Novak.
8. Novak has won the Australian Open 9 times and he has a total of 20 grand slam titles, tied with Rafa Nadal and Roger Federer. If he took part this time and won, he would have been the best grand slam winner at 21 titles, alas, that was not to be.
9. Novak has always taken a stance against mandatory vaccination, and this is well known. In a sense this was a red flag to the Australian authorities.
10. Tennis tournaments are promoted individually. The Australian Open is promoted by the Tennis Federation of Australia, for them it was important to have Novak take part this year. Australia is a sports loving nation with Tennis being a leading sport. Australia has produced some great men and Women champions in the past and they take pride in their tennis.
11. This became a political battle between Serbian politicians and Australian politicians, the Serbians saw a darker motive in the decision.
12. This case was so popular that the court live proceedings were streamed live and was seen by 85,000 people, in Australia more than the stadium capacity in Melbourne.
13. The tennis players have been silent, they know the rules were clear and the messaging sharp, but Djokovic didn't want to follow the rules.
14. This brings into question the issue of open borders and what's going to happen in the coming days. When states in a country have put strict border rules for their own citizens, then how can one challenge Australia for its border rules?
15. There is news that the French Open authorities might also not allow Novak in if he doesn't vaccinate.
16. Many companies – Citibank, Google have said that if you don't vaccinate, then you cannot work in the company. Who gives the company the right? They are doing it to protect their employees. This decision from Australia will give rise to many companies taking the same route.

It's not game set and match as yet, lot of action to follow!!

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