

## Rajnath Singh to arrive on 5th Jan on a two-day visit of A&N Islands



PORT BLAIR, JAN 4/--/Raksha Mantri, Mr. Rajnath Singh will be visiting Andaman & Nicobar Command (ANC) from 5th to 6th Jan 23. During the visit, the Defence Minister will review the operational preparedness of the Command and infrastructure development of the operational areas of the Command and outlying units. The Union Defence Minister will also visit ANC units at Campbell Bay, Carnic and Diglipur where he would be interacting with troops.

**Defence Minister to review operational preparedness of the ANC**

**KURMA RAO**  
MAYABUNDER, JAN 4/--/ The 3rd Gram Sabha meeting of Gram Panchayat Ramnagar was held under the Chairmanship of Mr. Mithun Das, Pradhan, Ramnagar on 2nd Jan 2023, at Zilla Parishad Community hall, Ramnagar. During the meeting, a host of issues pertaining to various villages under the Panchayat and ways to

resolve the issues were discussed threadbare. The Pradhan informed the Gram Sabha members that the PMGSY works namely 'Rural road from Govt. Primary School to K.K. Baidya's at Ramnagar at Ward-No.-6, rural road from main road to Anil Samaddar house via Gour Paul house and rural road from Zilla Parishad to Silas Kujur house at Ramnagar at Ward No-3 has been hand over to APWD. However, the road works cannot be carried out until the Ministry hands over the same to the Administration. All the



members of the Gram Panchayat highlighted the difficulties faced by the villages due to non repair of the PMGSY road resulting in the Panchayat unable to take up the allied works connected to PMGSY

works. The Pradhan informed that the Gram Panchayat has made several correspondence regarding PMGSY roads to all higher authority, including PMO Office. The Pradhan sought suggestions from the Gram Sabha

members on this issue and after lengthy discussion, the Gram Sabha members unanimously agreed to boycott the upcoming MP election. They also agreed that they will request all the voters of the village to boycott the election.

## Angry over non-construction of PMGSY roads, PRIs, villagers of GP Ramnagar to boycott Lok Sabha election

## MP demands release of stipends for students of Andaman Law College

PORT BLAIR, JAN 4/--/ The Member of Parliament, Mr. Kuldeep Rai Sharma has requested the Chief Secretary to release stipends for students of Law College, who have come to Port Blair for higher education from far flung Islands. In a letter addressed to the Chief Secretary of Andaman and Nicobar Administration, the Member of Parliament mentioned that from the beginning, students coming to Port Blair for the purpose of higher studies are being given



stipends by the Administration to cover their basic expenditure at Port Blair and also to encourage them to continue higher education. He pointed out that the Andaman Law College has stopped giving stipends to the deserving students since the beginning COVID-19 pandemic. While all other colleges have resumed giving stipends to college students after reopening of college post COVID-19 lockdowns, the Law College has not resumed dispersal of the same, he added.

## Encroachments removed at Ferrargunj Tehsil, 3800 sq meters of govt land restored



Govt. land. In case of any inquiries or information regarding such illegal activities and encroachment, the general public can communicate with the District Control Room at the following nos. 03192-240127/1077.

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11.	AIRFARE & TICKETING	6 MONTHS	10 <sup>TH</sup>
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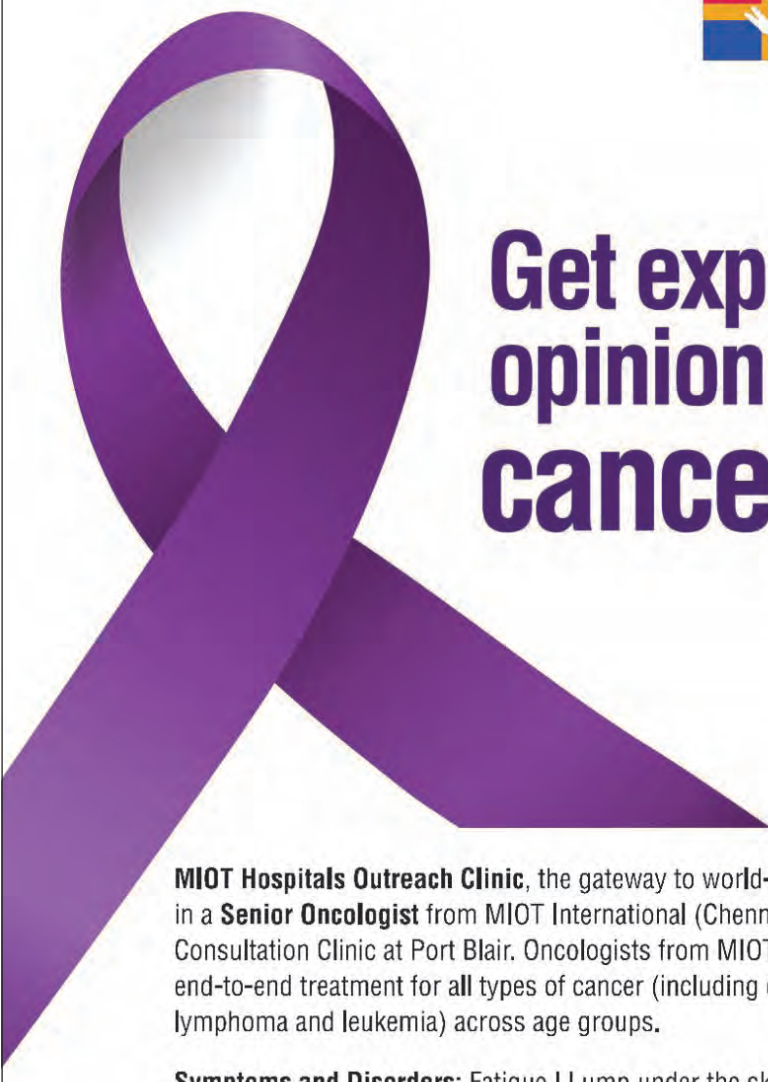
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# Bilkis Bano case: Justice Bela M Trivedi recuses herself from hearing, again

**NEW DELHI, JAN 4 /--/** Supreme Court judge Justice Bela M Trivedi Wednesday recused herself from hearing a batch of pleas challenging the remission of sentence of 11 convicts in the Bilkis Bano case in which she was gang-raped and seven members of her family were killed during the 2002 Gujarat riots. A bench of Justices Ajay Rastogi and Bela M Trivedi took up the pleas by CPI(M) leader Subhashini Ali, journalist Revati Laul, former vice-chancellor of the Lucknow University Roop Rekha Verma and Trinamool Congress (TMC) MP Mahua Moitra against the premature release of the convicts. Advocate Rishi Malhotra, appearing for one of the convicts, insisted the petitioners have to prove their locus standi in the case. Advocates Vrinda Grover and Aparna Bhat, representing the petitioners, opposed the contention, saying the stage

of maintainability has long been crossed after the court issued notice on their plea. Bhat said pleadings in the matter are over and the court may keep its pleas for February for a final hearing. The bench agreed to Bhat's request and said it will list the petitions for February. Advocate Shobha Gupta, the counsel for Bilkis, pointed out at this juncture that Justice Trivedi has recused herself from hearing the victim's plea challenging remission of the sentence of the convicts and their premature release from jail. Justice Rastogi, then had a brief conversation with Justice Trivedi and said, "Since my sister judge has already recused from hearing the victim's plea, she would like to recuse from hearing this matter also." Justice Rastogi said now that the victim has approached this court challenging the remission, her plea will be taken up as

the lead matter and the rest of the writ petitions would be tagged along when the bench sits in a different combination of judges. "We will list all the matters on the next date and tag along all the petitions. All the



Bela M Trivedi

pleadings should be complete by then," the bench said. Senior advocate Siddharth Luthra and Malhotra requested the bench that whatever rejoinder affidavits are being filed by the petitioners be served upon

them. Justice Rastogi said everything should be shared among the parties and once the matter has been tagged, the court will start hearing the issue on merits. On December 13 last year, Justice Trivedi had recused herself from hearing a writ petition filed by Bilkis Bano in which she challenged the remission of sentence of 11 convicts by the Gujarat government. Like the previous occasion, no reason was assigned for recusal. In her writ petition against the grant of remission, which had led to the release of the convicts on August 15 last year, she said the state government passed a mechanical order completely ignoring the requirement of law as laid down by the Supreme Court. On the same day, the top court had also dismissed a plea filed by Bilkis Bano seeking a review of its May 13 verdict by which it had said the state of Gujarat was

"appropriate government" competent to examine the application for premature release filed by a convict in the gang-rape and murder case. "In our opinion, there appears no error apparent on the face of record, which may call for review of the judgment dated May 13, 2022 and as regards the judgments on which the reliance has been placed, none of the judgments are of any assistance to the review petitioner," the top court had said in its order. "In our opinion, no case for review is made out. The review petition is accordingly dismissed," it had said, while also rejecting the application for listing the petition in the open court. In its May 13 order, the apex court had asked the state government to consider the plea of a convict for premature release in terms of its policy of July 9, 1992, which was applicable on the date of

conviction, and decide it within a period of two months. Bilkis Bano was 21 years old and five-month pregnant when she was gang-raped while fleeing the riots that broke out after the Godhra train burning incident. Her three-year-old daughter was among the seven family members killed. Investigation in the case was handed over to the CBI and the trial was transferred to a Maharashtra court by the Supreme Court. A special CBI court in Mumbai had on January 21, 2008 sentenced the 11 convicts to life imprisonment. Their conviction was later upheld by the Bombay High Court and the Supreme Court. The 11 men walked out of the Godhra sub-jail on August 15 last year after the Gujarat government allowed their release under its remission policy. They had completed more than 15 years in jail. (PTI)

## SC stays Allahabad HC order asking UP gov't to hold urban local body polls without OBC quota

**NEW DELHI, JAN 4 /--/** The Supreme Court on Wednesday stayed the Allahabad High Court order directing the Uttar Pradesh government to hold urban local body polls without reservation for the OBCs. A bench comprising chief justice D Y Chandrachud and Justice P S Narasimha took note of the submissions of Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the state government, and directed that a panel appointed by the state government will have to decide the OBC quota related issues for the local bodies poll by March 31, 2023. The top court permitted the state government to appoint administrators to run the affairs of the local bodies after the expiry of the tenure of the elected representatives. It, however, said the administrators will not be empowered to take major policy decisions. The top court had earlier agreed to hear the Uttar Pradesh government's appeal challenging the high court order quashing its draft notification on urban local body elections and directing it to hold the polls without reservation for other backward classes. The Lucknow bench of the high court had ordered that the state government notify the polls "immediately" as the term of several municipalities would end by January 31, while annulling the December 5 draft notification. The court had directed the state election commission to hold the elections by January 31 after transferring the OBC seats in the draft notification to the general category. (PTI)

## Mehrauli killing case: Hair, bones recovered by police confirmed to be of Shradha Walkar

**NEW DELHI, JAN 4 /--/** Hair and bone samples sent for DNA mitochondrial profiling by police have been confirmed to be of Shradha Walkar who was killed by her 28-year-old live-in partner Aaftab Amin Poonawala, a senior official said here on Wednesday. The bones and hair were recovered during searches from forest areas of Delhi NCR including Gurgaon and Mehrauli, the police said. Special Commissioner of Police (Law and Order) Sagar Preet Hooda said the bone and hair samples from which DNA could not be extracted were sent to the Centre for DNA Fingerprinting and Diagnostics (CDFD) Hyderabad for 'DNA Mitochondrial profiling'. "On Wednesday, we received the result of the examination. One piece of bone and bunch of hair purported to be of deceased have matched with that of her father and brother which establishes the identity of the bone and hair to be that of Shradha Walkar," he said. The bones will now be sent for autopsy which will be conducted by a medical board at the AIIMS, he added. The gory details about Walkar's murder shook the entire nation after the Delhi Police on November 12 arrested Poonawala who is currently in judicial custody. After allegedly strangling Walkar on May 18, Poonawala sawed her body into 35 pieces and kept them in a 300-litre fridge for almost three weeks at his residence before dumping them across the city over several days. (PTI)

## Govt health facilities in Lucknow run out of Covid doses amid fresh virus scare

**LUCKNOW, JAN 4 /--/** The four government Covid-19 vaccination centres in the state capital have run out of vaccines, making it difficult for people to get a precautionary dose, an official said on Wednesday. Health department officials expect the a new lot of vaccines to arrive by next week, he said. At present four government facilities -- SPM Civil Hospital, Lokbandhu hospital, Balrampur hospital and NK Road Community Health Centre -- are offering free Covid-19 vaccination in the city. The district immunisation officer MK Singh said the Covid-19 vaccines are not available at these centres since Monday and the government has been asked to send fresh supply of the vaccines. Deputy chief minister Brajesh Pathak who also holds the portfolio of Health in Uttar Pradesh said that arrangements are being made for the availability of vaccines. "More than 10 lakh vaccines will be arriving in the state shortly to fulfil the demand across the state. We are also monitoring the Covid-19 situation," he said. This comes amidst the state government heightened preparedness for Covid-19 following the central government's directives in wake of the rise in new cases abroad. Meanwhile, people reaching government centres for vaccination had to return disappointed because of the vaccine shortage. Chandan Singh Rawat who came with his wife to SPM Civil hospital for a booster dose said the doctors told him that the vaccine is out of stock. "I asked them if I can get vaccinated at any other hospital but they told me that the vaccine is not available in the entire city," Rawat said. (PTI)



Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann calling on Vice President Jagdeep Dhankar, in New Delhi

## Bandh in Poonch over Rajouri killings enters 2nd day

### Protests in Kathua, Jammu

**JAMMU, JAN 4 /--/** The bandh against the twin terror attacks in Rajouri that killed six people and injured 11 others entered its second day in the border town of Poonch on Wednesday while protests were held across the Jammu region. Security was beefed up in the border districts of Poonch and Rajouri in view of the bandh, officials said. Shops and business establishments remained closed in the district as hundreds of people, braving cold weather, came out to hold protests. Raising anti-Pakistan slogans, the protestors burnt tyres and demanded enhancement of security in and around minority places in districts of the Jammuregion. In Kathua, protestors assembled on the highway at Kalibari and

blocked it, thereby disrupting the movement of the traffic for an hour. Led by local BJP leaders, the protestors demanded action against Pakistan for fomenting trouble in Jammu and Kashmir and burnt an effigy of the neighbouring nation. "We held protests against the killing of the minority community by Pakistan-sponsored terrorists and called for a surgical strike against the country to dismantle terror infrastructure there," a BJP leader said. Kashmiri Pandit employees who have been demanding relocation away from the Valley following the selective killings, took out a candle march in Jammu to protests against the twin attacks in Rajouri. "We took

out a candle march to protest against the killings. Hindus are not safe in J-K. Government should ensure the safety of the people," a protestor said. Yuva Rajput Sabha held a candle march here to express heartfelt sympathies to the families whose kin were killed in the Rajouri terror attacks. Hitting out at the BJP, a leader of the Sabha said that they were always out to call for a Jammu bandh during every killing in the past but today they are silent. "It has exposed the LG administration's claim of stamping out terrorism in J&K and but the situation is akin to 1990 when Kashmiri Pandits were forced out of the valley due to killings," he said. (PTI)

## Elgar case accused Surendra Gadling seeks bail from Bombay HC

**MUMBAI, JAN 4 /--/** Advocate Surendra Gadling, an accused in the Elgar Parishad-Maoist links case, has moved the Bombay High Court seeking 'default' bail or bail on technical grounds. A division bench of Justices A S Gadkari and P D Naik on Wednesday asked the National Investigation Agency (NIA) to file its response to Gadling's plea. He moved the high court through advocate Yashodeep Deshmukh after the special NIA court rejected his bail application in June 2022. He had originally filed an application for default bail in 2018 in the Pune sessions court when the case was being probed by

Pune Police. The 90-day extension granted by the sessions court to the police for filing charge sheet was "illegal", and hence the accused were entitled for bail under the Code of Criminal Procedure, the application said. In his petition before the HC, Gadling claimed that the special court did not consider the fact that the Pune court had "no jurisdiction to extend the time for completion of investigation". The NIA court also failed to take into consideration the effects of the HC judgment which granted bail to co-accused Sudha Bharadwaj even when the facts were similar, it said. A total of 16

persons were arrested in the case including Jesuit priest Stan Swamy who died at a private hospital while in judicial custody. Activist Gautam Navlakha was the first one to be granted regular bail. Telugu poet-activist Varavara Rao is out on medical bail. The case relates to alleged inflammatory speeches delivered at the Elgar Parishad conclave held in Pune on December 31, 2017, which the police claimed triggered violence the next day near the Koregaon-Bhima war memorial in Pune district. The Pune police also claimed that the conclave was backed by Maoists. The probe was later transferred to the NIA. (PTI)

## Separatism can't be jailed; has to be addressed through dialogue, reconciliation: PDP

**SRINAGAR, JAN 4 /--/** Separatism is an idea which cannot be confiscated or jailed and has to be addressed through dialogue and reconciliation, the PDP has said. It also said the Centre's current approach is only "serving to further alienate" Kashmiris and strengthen the separatist sentiment. In the January edition of its monthly newsletter 'Speak Up', which was released here on Tuesday, the party said the gulf of "mistrust" between Kashmiris and other Indians is now "wider than ever". "That is why on top of Aadhar and other mandatory ID documents, Kashmiris will now be required to have a 'JK

family ID' that ties individuals to their families so they can avail social benefits. This unique family ID will be just another way for the government to tighten its iron grip around us so they can profile and surveil Kashmiris wherever they go," the PDP said. The party, led by Mehbooba Mufti, said Kashmiris were nothing more than the inhabitants of a coveted piece of land - a fact that is made evident by the different land laws that are thrown us at every few months. "The latest of these is the Land Grant Rules-2022 under which leased land will have to be surrendered to the government. This is

another land grab by GOI that will uproot local businesses, hotels and other establishments," it said. The land will eventually be taken over by "their corporate friends" just like many airports, railways stations, LIC and other national assets, it claimed. "These drastic changes to our land laws in the name of reforms that end owners' rights to their properties is another attempt to disempower our citizens and take away their land," the newsletter said. The PDP said the figures presented in Parliament about the actual investment in Jammu and Kashmir after 2019 have "called off GOI's bluff" about the deluge of investments

that Kashmir received post the abrogation of Article 370. "The figures for the last year were less than half of what we received in 2017-18. Contrary to GOI's false assertions, the abrogation was not the panacea to our problems. Despite leaving no stone unturned, having unleashed every government agency and using every anti-terror law possible, GOI's thirst for vengeance has not been quenched," it claimed. The party said the measures to deal with Kashmir are only becoming more stringent with time as properties worth hundreds of crores that belonged to Jamaat-e-Islami have been seized by the State

Investigation Agency (SIA) on the pretext of cracking down on separatism. "But separatism is an idea and it can't be confiscated or jailed," the PDP said. The party said separatism has to be addressed through dialogue and reconciliation. "However, through their current approach, GOI is only serving to further alienate Kashmiris and strengthen the separatist sentiment," it added. While the Centre claims to be following former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's footsteps in Kashmir, "this statement couldn't be further from the truth", it charged. "Unfortunately, the chances of this government

realizing Vajpayee's vision for Kashmir and engaging in dialogue are about the same as the dog eating your homework," the party said. Referring to the recent encounter in Sidhra area of Jammu in which four militants were killed, the PDP said it has "exposed false claims" of end of militancy in Jammu and Kashmir. "The recent encounter in Sidhra, if it was an encounter at all, has exposed false claims of the end of militancy in J-K which has now spread to the Jammu region that was relatively more peaceful. And now another heartbreaking incident at Dongri where six people including two children were killed," it said. (PTI)

## Prez gives assent to Gujarat bill that gives police power to take action against protesters

**NEW DELHI, JAN 4 /--/** A Gujarat bill facilitating registration of criminal cases against persons who stage protests in violation of Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) has received Presidential assent, officials said Wednesday. The Code of Criminal Procedure (Gujarat Amendment) Bill, 2021, was passed by the State Assembly in March last year. The bill seeks to make any violation of prohibitory orders issued under Section 144 CrPC a cognisable offence under Indian Penal Code Section 188 (disobedience to an order duly promulgated by a public servant). It amends Section 195 of the CrPC which states that no court shall take cognisance of any criminal conspiracy for contempt of the lawful authority of public servants, except on the complaint in writing of the public servant concerned. The Code of Criminal Procedure (Gujarat Amendment) Bill, 2021, has been assented to by the President, a home ministry official said. According to the statement and objects of the bill, the Gujarat government, police commissioners and district magistrates are empowered to issue prohibitory orders under CrPC Section 144, directing any person to abstain from a certain act or to take certain order to prevent disturbance of public tranquillity or a riot or an affray to maintain public order on various occasions. It said the police officers while deployed on such duties come across incidents of violation and need to take appropriate legal action against the violators under Section 188 of IPC. However, Section 195 of the CrPC, 1973, makes it mandatory for the public servant issuing such orders to be the complainant against the violators thereby creating an impediment to taking cognizance of violations... Section 195 (1) (a) (ii) CrPC prohibits the jurisdictional courts from taking cognisance of the offences except on the complaint in writing of the public servant concerned, the statement and objects said. The maximum punishment under the Section 188 of the IPC is six-month imprisonment. (PTI)

## Maharashtra: RPI's Kawade group joins hands with CM Shinde-led Shiv Sena

**MUMBAI, JAN 4 /--/** The ruling Eknath Shinde faction of the Shiv Sena and Jogendra Kawade-led People's Republican Party of India on Wednesday announced an alliance ahead of civic and local body elections in Maharashtra. The alliance could bring in Dalit votes for the Chief Minister Shinde-led party which is seeking to consolidate its base after splitting the Shiv Sena last year and toppling the Uddhav Thackeray government. Speaking at a press conference with Shinde, Kawade said he was forming alliance only with the 'Balasahebanchi Shiv Sena' (the official name of the Shinde group) 'Maharashtra has got a very daring chief minister. There is a feeling that this is a government of everyone. We are very impressed by him," said Kawade, a veteran Dalit leader. The main ideological thrust of the alliance would be the reformist ideals of Jyotiba Phule, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, Dr B R Ambedkar and 'Prabodhankar' Thackeray (Sena founder Bal Thackeray's father who was a well-known reformer), Kawade said. Notably, the tie-up was announced when talks are ongoing between the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena and the Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi of Prakash Ambedkar, an influential Dalit leader. The Ramdas Athawale faction of the Republican Party of India (RPI) has been an ally of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) for a long. Kawade, a prominent member of the Ambedkarite movement in Maharashtra, is the founder of the People's Republican Party of India and also a former Lok Sabha MP. The RPI, which has roots in Dr B R Ambedkar's Scheduled Castes Federation, later fragmented into a number of factions. (PTI)



## Additional ferry service between PB & ShaheedDweep

PORT BLAIR, JAN 4/--/In view of celebration of Vivekananda Mela at ShaheedDweep, to facilitate the commuters, the Directorate of Shipping Services has arranged additional ferry service between Port Blair & ShaheedDweep from 12th to 19th January, 2023. In this connection, this is to inform that the additional ferry services may be availed by the intending passengers as per the schedule promulgated. Tickets for the same may be obtained from STARS Ticketing Counters. The ferry services will be operated as per the following schedule:

DATE	ARRIVAL	PORT	DEPARTURE
12.01.2023 to 19.01.2023		Port Blair	1300 Hrs.
	1445 Hrs	ShaheedDweep	1500 Hrs
	1645 Hrs	Port Blair	

## IGNOU entrance test for B.Ed, Ph.D and B.Sc. Nursing(PB) hall tickets uploaded

PORT BLAIR, JAN 4/--/ Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) is conducting Entrance Tests for B.Ed, Ph.D and B.Sc.Nursing (PB) Programme on Sunday, 8th January, 2023. The Entrance Test is being organized at Examination Centre-0201, JNRM, Port Blair. The Hall-Tickets have already been uploaded on the

University website [www.ignou.ac.in](http://www.ignou.ac.in). The candidates are advised to download the hall ticket by visiting the IGNOU website. For more details, visit IGNOU Website - [www.ignou.ac.in](http://www.ignou.ac.in) or contact IGNOU Regional Centre, Port Blair over Phone: 03192-242888, 03192-230111 or Email: [reportblair@ignou.ac.in](mailto:reportblair@ignou.ac.in).

## Crackdown on illicit liquor, handia & ganja by N&MA District Police continues

PORTBLAIR, JAN 4/--/ Continuing its crackdown on the illicit liquor, Handia, illegal sale of IMFL & illicit Ganja, the District Police of North & Middle Andaman with the help of local informers conducted regular raids and searches in jungles. During the month of December-2022, the teams of various Police Stations, headed by SHOs and Sub-Inspectors conducted raids & massive jungle search operation. In these search operations, around 1400 litres of Lehan & 43 Kg Handia was destroyed and also 173 Nos. IMFL bottles of different

quantities have been seized under Excise Regulation. All the History Sheeters are regularly being checked by the beat staff, making it hard for them to be involved in any illegal activity. Moreover, the District Police has registered 02 cases under NDPS Act, in which 01 Kg of illicit ganja and 2 cannabis plants have been seized. The general public is requested to pass and share any credible information pertaining to any crime or illegal activities to their nearest Police Station or over phone No. 100, 112 & 03192-273203. The

identity of the informers will be kept secret and will also be suitably rewarded.

MAYABUNDER, JAN 4/--/ A day-long Entrepreneurship Awareness Programme (EAP) under Entrepreneurship Skill Development Programme (ESDP) scheme was organised by Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India, Ahmedabad supported by Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprise, Govt. of India at Kausalyanagar Panchayat community hall. Various Self Help Groups participated in these programmes.



## 67th Police Constable Batch receives Award from PBMC



PORT BLAIR, JAN 4/--/ The 67th Police Constable Batch of Andaman & Nicobar Police has received an award for cleanliness drives by PBMC in association with GIZ. In

this regard, Smti. U. Kavitha Uday Kumar, Chairperson PBMC has given memento to the 67th Police Constable Batch of Andaman & Nicobar Police on 03rd January 2023, in

connection with Swachh Sarvekshan-2023. This Police batch is always involved in conducting various kinds of social activities, which includes organizing cleanliness drives, giving assistance

to medically needy people by Fundraising, arranging blood for needy people, providing meals to orphanages etc.

On 10th December 2022, this 67th PC batch donated an amount Rs. 21,750/- (Twenty One Thousand Seven Hundred Fifty Rupees Only) towards treatment

of girl child D/o Shri. G. Kodanda Rao R/o Haddo, Port Blair who is suffering from health issues. The 67th Police Constable Batch is performing duty with utmost devotion and sincerity as well as making all efforts for the welfare of humanity and for the Civic society.

### TO LET

Andaman Moplah Service Organization (AMSO) invites applications and proposals from individual/groups/companies/societies for renting out of space available for rent in the newly constructed administrative building of AMSO, having an area 2280sqft (Apprx) of the organization situated at Kanyapuram, Wimberlygunj under South Andaman.

For more information and collection of application, please contact:-

N. Yousuf (president) - 9434281211/9933261441

Abdul Siddique (General Secretary) - 9434283333/9932084444.

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Image showing a woman in a black dress.



*The whole problem with the world is that fools and fanatics are always so certain of themselves, but wiser people so full of doubts*

*Bertrand Russell*

## China fumes over curbs on its travellers

The restrictions imposed by the US, Australia, Canada, India, Israel, Malaysia, Morocco, Qatar, South Korea, Taiwan, Japan and several EU countries on Chinese travellers have not gone down well with Beijing. These countries have asked travellers from China to take a COVID-19 test prior to boarding their flights, while Morocco, which attracts a large number of Chinese tourists, even banned Chinese travellers from entering the country. Sore over these curbs, Beijing has said the restrictions are discriminatory and warned of reciprocal countermeasures. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning minced no words when he said at a media briefing that Beijing did not believe that the entry restriction measures some countries have taken against China are based on science. "Some of these measures are disproportionate and simply unacceptable. We firmly reject using COVID measures for political purposes and will take corresponding measures in response to varying situations via the principle of reciprocity," she said. She also hastened to add that health experts from many countries have said that the main variant, now spreading in China, has previously been found elsewhere already, and that a new variant can emerge anywhere on the planet, which means entry restrictions targeting China are unnecessary.

Starting from January 8, China will practically abandon its three-year-old stringent zero-Covid policy and its international isolation by fully opening its airports and ports for travel and trade, amidst the current massive coronavirus outbreak in the country. The development comes at a time when China is grappling with a sudden spurt in infections fuelled by the Omicron variants after the Xi Jinping regime relaxed its stringent zero-Covid policy following a wave of anti-government protests. While the announcement of scrapping all quarantine rules was widely welcomed at home, the timing of the opening also fuelled concerns abroad as it comes ahead of the country's annual Spring Festival on January 22 during which millions of Chinese will travel to destinations all over the world. It was the spring festival travels by Chinese in 2020 specially from Wuhan where the coronavirus broke out that was largely blamed for its massive spread in the world, causing death and devastation unseen in the century. The spring festival holiday will last over a week and the travel-starved Chinese are already gearing up to move in big numbers abroad considering that they don't have to quarantine on return. Previously, passengers coming from abroad had to mandatorily stay in over two weeks of quarantine in government accommodations, which was gradually reduced to five days with three days of home observation. Several cities, including Beijing, suffered a massive wave of Omicron last month during which millions were infected. While Omicron was regarded as less harmful compared to Delta, official reports here acknowledged overcrowding of hospitals as well as mortuaries. President Xi Jinping on Saturday acknowledged that the current wave of COVID-19 sweeping across the country has entered a new phase and tough challenges remain. At least 30 known Omicron sub-variants have been detected in Shanghai in recent days. These samples randomly collected from COVID-19 patients in Shanghai between November 23 and December 22 in 2022 showed that apart from the BA.5.2 variant spreading in the southern China and the BF.7 variant spreading in the northern region, Omicron subvariants BQ.1 and XBB widely spread in some overseas countries have also been found in Shanghai.

# State Assembly Elections in 2023 will prove Rahul's mass acceptance

## REFLEX ACTION

Tirthankar Mitra

India will witness a slew of elections in 2023 together with the answer to the so far unanswered question whether Rahul Gandhi can rediscover leadership initiative in search of which he has failed and faltered in the last eight years of Narendra Modi's rule

For 2023 is dotted with elections which inarguably pen the political script of 2024 Lok Sabha polls. Even as Rahul Gandhi continues to march in his Bharat Jodo Yatra it needs to be seen whether his walk revives Congress as the election results will reveal and pose a challenge to the popularity of Narendra Modi who is nearing the end of his second term in May 2024. Elections are scheduled to be held in Tripura, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Mizoram and Telangana. With BJP and Congress as the principal political protagonists and Aam Aadmi Party and Trinamool Congress pitching in, the outcome of the elections will be a pointer which way the political wind is blowing. Alliances will be cobbled up and party policies redrawn as the key players have tested the water for the big fight next year. The last thing that BJP can do is to rest on its laurels resounding victories in Gujarat, UP, Uttarakhand, Goa and Manipur notwithstanding. Come 2023 elections, the Congress fancies it's chances in Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh. It's leadership feels it will be entrenched in Chhattisgarh. The biggest challenge to the Opposition leadership and of course, the Congress is

how effectively it counters politics of polarisation. It is likely to worsen in the poll season. For the fate of more than 100 Lok Sabha seats will be linked to the electoral success or failure of the elections in the nine states. Though it has to be taken in consideration that these results will not be the final word as BJP having lost to Congress in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, a year later defeated its opponent in the Lok Sabha polls. The AAP has bigger areas of influence in its sight as it has ambitions of becoming a national level political player. Its success in Punjab and small but significant forays in Goa and Gujarat has made AAP a bankable participant in 2023 poll race. Now is the time now for Rahul Gandhi to identify himself as a match winner for his party after having criss crossed the country. Of course, he is far from stepping into the shoes of the great man who stirred his countrymen through his Dandimarch, time is nigh for the Gandhi scion to display his leadership acumen. Having stayed away from the 2022 assembly elections in the later part of the year as he was in BJJ, the 2023 state elections are an acid test for him. For they pose a challenge and offer an opportunity. The

Congress tasted success in Himachal Pradesh election after a four year drought. But having faced humiliating defeats in Punjab and Gujarat it is back to a square one Triumphant return of Congress to national politics as principal challenger to BJP is to be scripted in these 2023 elections. Therein lies the Yatra's success as it would otherwise be dubbed a journey, without political dividends in terms of power.

Uniting the people has been stated to be the goal of BJJ which many has derided as a maverick's meanderings. Success in these state elections will see Rahul Gandhi as an astute leader with his finger on the people's pulse. Even as Rahul Gandhi is between the poles of revive or perish, another challenge lies ahead of him. In the event of an electoral success it has to be viewed as the triumph of his party and not his person as personality cult has been the bane Congress since the days of his grandmother, Indira Gandhi. BJJ aimed to address citizens. Electoral success or the lack of it in the coming elections will spell out whether Rahul Gandhi has been able to reach out to larger number of the voters than Prime Narendra Modi or fallen short of it.

The response of other Opposition parties to join BJJ has been lukewarm to say the least. They will flock to the Congress following a resounding electoral success in 2023 state election but otherwise the grand old party will be no match compared to the BJP on Lok Sabha eve. (IPA)



A roadside food stall prepares handmade bread for office goers on Tuesday at Dalhousie -----Arijit Ganguly

## Akhilesh Yadav still lacks that political skill of his father

Sons of the illustrious fathers are often evaluated into the backdrop of the long-drawn-out shadows of their dads. This is the common perception. The people expect same nature and dimension of performance as what their fathers have achieved. While indulging in this nature of appraisal they tend to conveniently forget that two individuals cannot be the same. They will act and behave differently.

There are number of such cases. But I am choosing three examples: first Akhilesh Yadav son of Mulayam Singh Yadav, Tejashvi Yadav son of Lalu Prasad Yadav and Abhishek Bachchan son of Amitabh Bachchan. The three fathers of the three sons are the consummate masters of their professions. People also compare the shows of the sons with their fathers. Nevertheless a closer look would make it clear that Abhishek as an actor and Tejashvi as the politician have managed to perform quite well stepping out of the shadow of their respective fathers.

Abhishek is undoubtedly a no less mature performer than Amitabh, but people still look at him as his carbon copy, they are reluctant to repose their trust in him. Same is the case with Tejashvi. He has a broader outlook and political vision but people are not willing to accept him as the new trend setter. People still try to find him in the frame work of Lalu. In 2021 assembly election, the young heir without so

called traditional expertise and experience succeeded in presenting the RJD as the major challenger to the political hegemony of Narendra Modi. No doubt Lalu was projected as the messiah of the poor on the strength of his Muslim and Yadav political blend, but Tejashvi nevertheless managed to add a section of upper caste to become the part of the political fulcrum of the party. This he could achieve on his own. But unfortunately the political success continues to evade Akhilesh Yadav, notwithstanding being the claimant of legacy of Mulayam Singh Yadav. Ever since Akhilesh took command of the Samajwadi Party he has not launched a visible and comprehensive movement against the BJP. Only he knows the reason for his reluctance.

While Mulayam did not miss any situation to embarrass his opponents he always looked forward to embrace the splintered forces. He was not arrogant and usually come out of his office chamber and sit in open so that the people could meet him or have his glimpse. But Akhilesh has refused to follow in his political line and strategy. The latest political development is the most glaring example. As the Congress

has been doing in the case of other anti-BJP parties, it also extended invitation to Akhilesh Yadav to join the Yatra on January 3, the it would enter Uttar Pradesh. He not only refused to extend his moral support but even came out with the observation; "The Congress and the BJP are one and the same." He even said that the Congress and the BJP are ideologically the same. This leaves little to make out about his understanding of the prevalent political situation in the country. Shockingly how could Akhilesh could absolve BJP and especially Narendra Modi of destroying the democracy.

A media report mentioned that Akhilesh supported the Yatra in spirit but "Our principles are different". Of course he ought to have an independent and different view, but his equating Congress with BJP does against his own stand. If the Congress is akin to BJP hew at the outset should have refused. His exonerating BJP speaks of his approach towards the damages inflicted by the BJP on the body politic. In fact the Congress communications chief Jairam Ramesh was absolutely right in telling a newspaper: "Laughable. If he can't or doesn't want to join the Bharat Jodo Yatra, he should

find better reasons for not joining."

It is an open secret that Akhilesh does not have a harmonious relation with the Congress leadership. True speaking he does not have a good fraternal relation with any of the opposition party and its leadership. He appears to be living in a political island. The electoral defeat of 2017 and 2022 assembly polls continues to haunt him. But in politics past events are not remembered and treaded. Interestingly Mayawati would not join, but she did not equate Congress with BJP.

However a senior UP Congress leader Lallu said: "The Congress tried its best to forge Opposition unity over the last many years but these parties are not honest about their tactics and approach. They are scared of the BJP... jail bhejdenge agar Congress kesaathgaye to".

The reluctance of Akhilesh to take the BJP head on is certainly opaque. Mishandling of backwards quota issue for civic polls by BJP has provided an opportunity to Akhilesh to hit the streets. But he did not show much enthusiasm. The only exception has been Mayawati. Only a week back the Allahabad High Court had directed UP government to conduct Civic polls without backward quota. The court issued the directive after the BJP government had issued the notification for holding civic polls without setting up backward commission and three phase survey. (IPA/To be continued)

Conventional Crossword							
1	2	3	4	5		6	7
9						10	
11						12	
				13		14	
15	16		17				
						18	19
21		22		23			20
24				25	26		27
28				29			
30				31			

ACROSS				DOWN			
1	Marsh	6	Spirit	1	Stubborn animals	2	Unique
9	Combine	10	Large volume	3	Waterway	4	Consumed
11	Even	5	Vend	6	Farm animal	7	Obstruct
12	Copy	13	Elevated	8	Require	14	Nourished
15	Certain	18	Exploit	16	Invisible	17	Flightless bird
21	Guarantee	24	Insect	19	Best part	20	Garment
25	Dwell	28	Fasting period	21	Qualified	22	Transmit
29	Locations	30	Finish	23	Comfort	26	Container
31	Replenishes			27	Early freshness		

## SUDOKU:3747

	2						5	
4		9	5				8	2
7		1			2			
	7			4	3			
		2	6		9	4		
			1	5			9	
		9			7		1	
1	9				6	5		8
	8						4	

## Yesterday's Solution 3746

9	1	6	2	8	4	3	7	5
4	3	5	1	6	7	2	9	8
8	7	2	9	3	5	1	6	4
3	8	1	6	7	9	4	5	2
7	5	4	8	2	1	6	3	9
2	6	9	5	4	3	7	8	1
6	9	7	4	1	8	5	2	3
5	4	3	7	9	2	8	1	6
1	2	8	3	5	6	9	4	7

## Yesterday's Cross Word Solution 1755

F	O	A	L		P	O	S	Y
R		C				L	I	E
A	Z	U	R	E		A	D	D
C		M	E	N	D	S		I
A	M	E	N	D		T	I	N
S	E	N	D		N	U	D	G
	N		E	L	I	T	E	
S	T	A	R		L	E	A	S
P	O	P						
A	R	E	A					

## DISCLAIMER

The views in the articles published here are absolutely the views of the author and The Echo of India does not stand liable for them.



SEVASUCHNAYEIN

ALL THE SAILINGS ARE SUBJECT TO WEATHER CONDITIONS IN-TER ISLAND SECTOR: ? MV Bharat Seema will sail for Car Nicobar via Little Andaman on 06.01.2023 (Fri) at 0700 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on 07.01.2023 (Sat) at 1600 Hrs from Car Nicobar via Little Andaman.

. Nalanda will sail for Campbell Bay via Nancowry on 08.01.2023 (Sun) at 1000 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on 10.01.2023 (Tue) at 0900 Hrs from Campbell Bay via Nancowry.

Passenger tickets for the above sailing will be issued to the general public from 06.01.2023 (Fri) onwards at STARS Ticketing Counters.

LITTLE ANDAMAN:

. MV Bharat Seema will sail for Little Andaman on 09.01.2023 (Mon) at 0900 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 2100 Hrs from Little Andaman. . MV Bharat Seema will sail for Little Andaman on 11.01.2023 (Wed) at 0900 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 2100 Hrs from Little Andaman. Note: Passenger tickets for the above sailings i.e. (for 9th & 11th Jan., 2023) will be issued to the general public from 06.01.2023 (Fri) onwards at STARS Ticketing Counters.

DIGLIPUR & MAYABUNDER:

MV Dering will sail for Diglipur via Mayabunder on 04.01.2023 (Wed) at 1900 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on 05.01.2023 (Thu) at 1230 Hrs from Diglipur via Mayabunder. MV Dering will sail for Diglipur via Mayabunder on 07.01.2023 (Sat) at 1900 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on 08.01.2023 (Sun) at 1230 Hrs from Diglipur via Mayabunder. Passenger tickets for the above sailing will be issued to the general public from 05.01.2023 onwards at STARS Ticketing Counters.

FORESHORE SECTOR:

Note: Passenger tickets for the Foreshore Sector vessels will be issued to the general public at STARS Ticketing Counters two days prior to her scheduled departure date.

05.01.2023 (THU)

SHAHEED DWEEP & SWARAJ DWEEP

MV Bambooka will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 05.01.2023 (Thu) at 0630 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 0900 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep.

MV Chouldari will sail for Shaheed Dweep on 05.01.2023 (Thu) at 0630 Hrs. from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 0845 Hrs from Shaheed Dweep.

MV Chouldari will sail for Shaheed Dweep on 05.01.2023 (Thu) at 1100 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 1600 Hrs from Shaheed Dweep.

MV Chouldari will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 05.01.2023 (Thu) at 1300 Hrs from Shaheed Dweep Jetty and will sail back to Shaheed Dweep on the same day at 1430 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep.

MV Bambooka will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 05.01.2023 (Thu) at 1400 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 1630 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep.

MV Baratang will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 05.01.2023 (Thu) at 1700 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail back to Port Blair on 06.01.2023 (Fri) at 0600 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep.

06.01.2023 (FRI)

SHAHEED DWEEP & SWARAJ DWEEP

MV Bambooka will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 06.01.2023 (Fri) at 0630 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 0900 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep.

MV Kamorta will sail for Shaheed Dweep on 06.01.2023 (Fri) at 0630 Hrs. from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 0845 Hrs from Shaheed Dweep.

MV Baratang will sail for Shaheed Dweep on 06.01.2023 (Fri) at 1100 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 1600 Hrs from Shaheed Dweep.

MV Baratang will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 06.01.2023 (Fri) at 1300 Hrs from Shaheed Dweep Jetty and will sail back to Shaheed Dweep on the same day at 1430 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep.

MV Bambooka will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 06.01.2023 (Fri) at 1400 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 1630 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep.

MV Kamorta will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 06.01.2023 (Fri) at 1700 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail back to Port Blair on 07.01.2023 (Sat) at 0600 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep.

RANGAT MV Chouldari will sail for Rangat via Swaraj Dweep & Long Island on 06.01.2023 (Fri) at 0615 Hrs. from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 1300 Hrs from Rangat via same route.

07.01.2023 (SAT)

SHAHEED DWEEP & SWARAJ DWEEP

MV Bambooka will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 07.01.2023 (Sat) at 0630 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 0900 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep.

•MV Chouldari will sail for Shaheed Dweep on 07.01.2023 (Sat) at 0630 Hrs. from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 0845 Hrs from Shaheed Dweep.

MV Chouldari will sail for Shaheed Dweep on 07.01.2023 (Sat) at 1100 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 1600 Hrs from Shaheed Dweep.

MV Chouldari will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 07.01.2023 (Sat) at 1300 Hrs from Shaheed Dweep Jetty and will sail back to Shaheed Dweep on the same day at 1430 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep.

MV Bambooka will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 07.01.2023 (Sat) at 1400 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 1630 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep.

MV Kamorta will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 07.01.2023 (Sat) at 1700 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail back to Port Blair on 08.01.2023 (Sun) at 0600 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep. RANGAT MV Baratang will sail for Rangat via Shaheed Dweep, Swaraj Dweep, Strait Island & Long Island on 07.01.2023 (Sat) at 0700 Hrs. from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on 08.01.2023 (Sun) at 0700 Hrs from Rangat via same route.

08.01.2023 (SUN)

SHAHEED DWEEP & SWARAJ DWEEP

MV Bambooka will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 08.01.2023 (Sun) at 0630 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 0900 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep. •MV Chouldari will sail for Shaheed Dweep on 08.01.2023 (Sun) at 0630 Hrs. from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 0845 Hrs from Shaheed Dweep.

MV Chouldari will sail for Shaheed Dweep on 08.01.2023 (Sun) at 1100 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 1600 Hrs from Shaheed Dweep.

MV Chouldari will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 08.01.2023 (Sun) at 1300 Hrs from Shaheed Dweep Jetty and will sail back to Shaheed Dweep on the same day at 1430 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep.

MV Bambooka will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 08.01.2023 (Sun) at 1400 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 1630 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep.

MV Baratang will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 08.01.2023 (Sun) at 1700 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail back to Port Blair on 09.01.2023 (Mon) at 0600 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep.

09.01.2023 (MON)

SHAHEED DWEEP & SWARAJ DWEEP

MV Bambooka will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 09.01.2023 (Mon) at 0630 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 0900 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep.

MV Kamorta will sail for Shaheed Dweep on 09.01.2023 (Mon) at 0630 Hrs. from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 0845 Hrs from Shaheed Dweep. MV Baratang will sail for Shaheed Dweep on 09.01.2023 (Mon) at 1100 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 1600 Hrs from Shaheed Dweep.

Vigilance Bureau to launch crackdown against corrupt officials in Haryana

PANCHKULA, JAN 4 /--/ The Vigilance Bureau in Haryana is preparing to launch a big crackdown on corrupt officials by attaching their "ill-gotten property", in line with the BJP-led state government's "zero tolerance policy" against corruption, an official said on Wednesday.

"We are preparing to launch a big crackdown on corrupt officials this year by attaching their ill-gotten properties...", "Vigilance Bureau Director General Shatruijet Kapur told reporters here. The VB registered a record number of graft-related cases in the previous year, enabling the state government to check "corrupt practices" in its offices. The Vigilance Bureau registered 246 cases, including 170 traps, in 2022 -- the highest during the last 10 years, he said. "The (Vigilance) Bureau conducted 170 raids in 2022 and recovered Rs 6,21,70,230 (approx Rs 6.21 crore) on the spot and arrested 193 government servants, including 27 gazetted officers, 166 non-gazetted officials and 27 private individuals, during the last year," Kapur said.

During its crackdown on corruption in 2022, the Vigilance Bureau registered 65 enquiries against 22 gazetted officers, 23 non-gazetted officials and 12 private persons on the state government's direction.

Ninety enquiries were finalised during the year, he added. "Of the 90 enquiries completed during 2022, the Vigilance Bureau has recommended registration of criminal cases against 27 gazetted officers, 32 non-gazetted officials and 23 private persons," he said. In addition, during the year, 19 technical reports were sent to the government in which the Bureau recommended departmental action against 28 gazetted officers and 13 non-gazetted officials, Kapur said. "The Vigilance Bureau is committed to intensifying the drive against corruption and all cases of bribery have been dealt with strictly and more crackdowns will follow," Kapur said. The Vigilance Bureau chief added that it had also urged the people to fight against corruption and report complaints of bribery on its toll-free helpline 1800-180-2022 and 1064 and WhatsApp number 9417891064. (PTI)

Cabinet approves over Rs 2,500 cr scheme for upgrading infra of DD, AIR

NEW DELHI, JAN 4 /--/ In a bid to upgrade Prasar Bharati's broadcast infrastructure and network, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) on Wednesday approved a scheme worth more than Rs 2,500 crore for Doordarshan and All India Radio.

Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur announced the Central Sector Broadcasting Infrastructure and Network Development (BIND) scheme with an outlay of Rs 2,539.61 crore up to 2025-26, which was approved by the CCEA. "The BIND scheme is the vehicle for providing financial support to Prasar Bharati for expenses related to expansion and upgradation of its broadcasting infrastructure, content development and civil work related to the organization," the I&B Ministry said in a statement. "Prasar Bharati, as the public broadcaster of the country, is the most important vehicle of information, education, entertainment and engagement for the people especially in the remote areas of the country through Doordarshan and All India Radio (AIR). "Prasar Bharati played a stellar role in communicating health messages and awareness to the public during the Covid pandemic," the statement said.

The BIND scheme will enable the public broadcaster to undertake a major upgradation of its facilities with better infrastructure which will widen its reach, including in the LWE (Left Wing Extremism), border and strategic areas and provide high quality content to the viewers.

Another priority area of the scheme is the development of high-quality content for both domestic and international audiences and ensuring availability of diverse content to the viewers by upgradation of capacity of the DTH platform to accommodate more channels, the ministry said. Purchase of OB vans and digital upgradation of DD and AIR studios to make them HD ready will also be done as part of the project. Thakur said that the scheme envisions how Doordarshan should be 20 years from now. "Prasar Bharti is the public broadcaster... it is not just about profit making. The aim is to ensure information regarding government's work and schemes reaches people. Different reports have pointed at the quality of content, whether it is Doordarshan or AIR," said Thakur, adding both DD and AIR are also available on mobile phones. "We are planning how DD should look 20 years from now," he said.

According to the I&B Ministry, at present, Doordarshan operates 36 TV channels, including 28 regional channels, and AIR operates more than

500 broadcasting centres. The BIND scheme will increase coverage of AIR FM transmitters in the country to 66 per cent by geographical area, up from current 59 per cent, and 80 per cent by population, up from present 68 per cent coverage. Under the scheme, eight lakh DD Free Dish DTH set top boxes (STBs) will also be distributed to people living in remote, tribal, LWE, border areas and 'aspirational' districts. In addition to enhancing the scope of public broadcasting, the project for modernization and augmentation of broadcast infrastructure also has the potential to generate indirect employment by way of manufacturing and services related to supply and installation of broadcast equipment.

According to the statement, content generation and innovation for AIR and DD has the potential of indirect employment of persons with varied experience of different media fields in the content production sector, including TV/Radio production, transmission and associated media related services.

The project for expansion of the reach of DD Free Dish is also expected to generate employment opportunities in the manufacturing of STBs. "The government reiterates its commitment to the development, modernization and strengthening of Doordarshan and Akashvani (Prasar Bharati) infrastructure and services, which is a continuous process," the ministry added. (PTI)

National Conference of Heads of Police

Investigation Agencies to begin in Jaipur today

JAIPUR, JAN 4 /--/ The third National Conference of Heads of Police Investigation Agencies, hosted by the Bureau of Police Research and Development, will begin in Jaipur on Thursday. The two-day conference is being held here at the Central Intelligence Training Institute, Jaipur. Bureau Director Amandeep Kapoor said Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai will inaugurate this national conference. Rajasthan Governor Kalraj Mishra will be present in the closing session on Friday evening. He said in a



Minister of State for Home Affairs, Nityanand Rai at the inauguration of Trainee Hostels and Family Residential Buildings at CTC, ITBP, in Rajasthan

Delhi logs season's lowest of 4.4 deg C; Orange warning for next 2 days

NEW DELHI, JAN 4 /--/ Delhi's minimum temperature on Wednesday morning plunged to 4.4 degrees Celsius - the season's lowest -- making the national capital colder than Dharamsala, Nainital and Dehradun. A dense layer of fog lowered visibility to 200 metres, affecting the movement of road and rail traffic. At least 19 trains to Delhi were delayed by one-and-a-half to four-and-a-half hours due to the foggy weather, a Railways spokesperson said. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) shared satellite images that showed a thick layer of fog over the Indo-Gangetic plains and adjoining central and eastern parts of the country. The Palam observatory at the Indira Gandhi International Airport logged a visibility level of 200 metres at 5.30 am. According to the weather office, 'very dense' fog is when visibility is between 0 and 50 metres, 51 and 200 metres is 'dense', 201 and 500 metres 'moderate', and 501 and 1,000 metres 'shallow'. With frosty winds from the snow-clad Himalayas barreling through the plains, the Safdarjung obser-

vatory, Delhi's primary weather station, saw the minimum temperature plummet to 4.4 degrees Celsius from 8.5 degrees a day ago. Delhi's minimum temperature was lower than that of Dharamsala (5.2 degrees), Nainital (6 degrees) and Dehradun (4.5 degrees). The Delhi Ridge weather station near Delhi University recorded a cold wave with a minimum temperature of 3.3 degrees Celsius, the lowest in the capital on Wednesday. "A cold wave is prevailing in Delhi and maximum temperatures are also low, leading to cold day conditions. Most places are likely to record maximum temperatures between 13 degrees and 15 degrees Celsius," Senior IMD Scientist RK Jenamani said. However, there has been an improvement in Delhi's fog condition, he said. "Cold wave and cold day conditions are predicted to continue for the next 24 to 48 hours though there will be some improvement under the influence of a fresh Western Disturbance, which is likely to affect north-west India starting January 7," Jenamani said. The senior meteorologist

said similar conditions persist across north India, including Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Day temperatures in these states are likely to remain much below normal. Cold day and severe cold day conditions are predicted to wallop Uttar Pradesh. Maximum temperatures in the state will remain 10 to 12 degrees Celsius below normal, the IMD official said. North Rajasthan is reeling under severe cold wave conditions, with Churu recording a minimum temperature of minus 0.9 degrees Celsius. The Met office has issued a red alert for Uttar Pradesh for Wednesday and Punjab and Haryana for Wednesday and Thursday. An orange alert has been issued for Delhi-NCR for the next two days.

The IMD uses four colour codes for weather warnings--green (no action needed), yellow (watch and stay updated), orange (be prepared) and red (take action). The cold snap is expected to strain power grids and pose challenges to homeless people. 'Cold day' conditions had gripped Delhi on Tuesday with the maximum tempera-

ture dropping five degrees below normal at many places in the national capital, including Lodhi Road, Palam, Jafarpur and Mayur Vihar. A cold day is when the minimum temperature is less than or equal to 10 degrees Celsius below the normal and the maximum temperature is at least 4.5 degrees Celsius below the normal. A severe cold day is when the maximum is 6.5 degrees Celsius or more below the normal. The IMD has predicted dense to very dense fog and cold day conditions over northwest India during the next four to five days. Cold wave conditions are likely to continue over northwest India during the next two days and the intensity will decrease thereafter, it said. In the plains, the Met office declares a cold wave if the minimum temperature dips to four degrees Celsius or below and is 4.5 notches below normal. A severe cold wave is when the minimum temperature dips to two degrees Celsius or the departure from the normal is more than 6.4 degrees Celsius. (PTI)

Delhi woman gets 'acid attack' threat from neighbour, DCW seeks action-taken report

NEW DELHI, JAN 4 /--/ A 19-year-old woman has accused her neighbour in east Delhi's Pandav Nagar here of threatening her with "acid attack" if she did not marry him, police said on Wednesday. The matter came to light on Sunday after the victim filed a complaint, they said, adding efforts are on to nab the accused. In her complaint, the victim alleged that Yagvender Yadav Yadav (27), who runs a grocery shop with his father in the area, had threatened her that he will throw acid on her if she does not marry him, they said. The accused and the victim are known to each other, police said.

On Sunday, Yadav asked the victim to come along with him but when she refused, he threatened her by saying that he was carrying acid with him, police said. A case was registered against the accused under sections 341 (wrongful restraint) and 506 (criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code, Deputy Commissioner of Police (East) Amrutha Guguloth said. Subsequently, after the victim's statement was recorded by the magistrate, sections 354B (assault or use of criminal force to woman with intent to rob) and 354D (stalking) were added to the

FIR, the DCP said. Taking suo moto cognizance of the matter, the Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) chief Swati Maliwal issued a notice to the DCP of the east district. The Commission has sought a copy of the FIR along with details of arrests made in the matter along with the details of security provided to the woman. The panel has also sought an action-taken report in the matter by January 6. "We are receiving such types of cases on a daily basis. I do not know when this brutality against women and girls will stop! We need to make our system more effective to deal with such cases. The accused should be arrested and strict action should be taken against him. The girl must be provided security as he has threatened an acid attack on her!" Maliwal said.

In December last year, two motorcycle-borne masked men flung acid on a 17-year-old girl who was attacked minutes after she left

her west Delhi home for school. As outrage spread over the acid attack, women's groups and others, including Lt Governor V K Saxena, raised questions on the availability of acid in markets despite a ban and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal asked how the accused could have gathered so much courage. The attack took place at Mohan Garden near Uttam Nagar and the girl suffered eight per cent facial burns. Later, the same evening, three men including the victim's neighbour were arrested in connection with the incident. The main accused had procured the acid through Flipkart following which police sent a notice to the e-commerce platform in this regard.

The girl had been a friend of the main accused for a long time but they had a breakup two-three months ago and she stopped talking to him. He planned the attack to take revenge. (PTI)



**Greater Kolkata Region**  
3rd Floor, Baroda Tower, GN 38/2, Sector V, Salt Lake, Kolkata-700 091

**PREMISES REQUIRED FOR DIGITAL BANKING UNIT**


Bank of Baroda invites proposals / offers in two bid systems from the Owners/Power of Attorney Holders / Builders/Developers of premises having clear and marketable titles over the offered/proposed premises on Ground Floor. (Area required-800-1200 sq. ft.) for Digital Banking Unit at under mentioned location with all the facilities including adequate power.


**Any prominent place at Brichgunj preferably near Military Station Brichgunj, Port Blair, 744103.**


Sealed offers are to be submitted in two bid system viz., **Envelop No. (1) Marked "Technical Bid"** TB- Envelop should contain full technical details viz. Location of premises with detailed address, plan drawing to scale with completion / occupation certificate, carpet area of each portion to be acquired, specification of internal finishes, amenities, car parking and space for V-SAT facility, MPLS. No indication as to price aspect to be given in Technical Bid (For details please log in to tender section of our website [www.bankofbaroda.com](http://www.bankofbaroda.com)) **Envelop No. (2) Marked "Financial Bid"** (FB) - Envelop should contain strictly financial details like rate per sq.ft./mtr on carpet area, details of municipal Tax and lease expenses. Carpet area (as per IScode3861-2002) shall exclude staircase, corridor and passage, porch, shaft and machine rooms for lifts, air conditioning ducts, lofts, build-in wardrobe and shelf, intermediate pillars / columns, partition and wall and other obstruction, verandas, balcony, bathroom and lavatories etc. (For details please log in to tender section of our website [www.bankofbaroda.com](http://www.bankofbaroda.com) and also download TB and FB). Offer should be valid for minimum period of 120 days from the date of submission of offer. No brokerage shall be paid. Both the sealed covers marked as **TB and FB** super scribing advertisement reference and applicants' name and address be put in one sealed cover and submitted to Regional Head, Bank of Baroda, Greater Kolkata Region 3rd Floor GN 38/2, Sec-V, Salt Lake, Kolkata 700091 within-21-days from the date of publication of this advertisement. Any decision taken by bank at any point of time in connection with this process shall be final and conclusive and no claim or dispute from any quarter in that regard shall be entertained.

**Date:** 05.01.2023  
**Place:** Kolkata

**Regional Head**  
Greater Kolkata Region







**FOOD SAFETY AND STANDARDS AUTHORITY OF INDIA**

**Eastern Regional Office, Kolkata**

**General Information**

All food business operators are hereby informed that it is mandatory to display the 14-digit FSSAI License/Registration Number on cash receipts/invoices/cash memo/bills of your establishment for sale of any kind of food items. FSSAI has ensured its compliance from 01.01.2022, but it is not being followed yet by the food business operators especially the hotels/restaurants. Therefore, it should be ensured that the mandatory declaration of 14-digit FSSAI License/Registration Number on cash receipts/invoices/cash memo/bills are immediately complied with, failing which appropriate action shall be initiated. The general public is requested to check the presence of the 14-digit FSSAI License / Registration number on cash receipts/invoices/cash memo/bills etc of Food Business Operators.

**CBC 17192/12/0001/2223**

**Regional Director, FSSAI,**  
Eastern Region, Kolkata



## Centre clears Rs 19,744-cr National Green Hydrogen Mission

### Initiative to attract investment of Rs 8 lakh cr

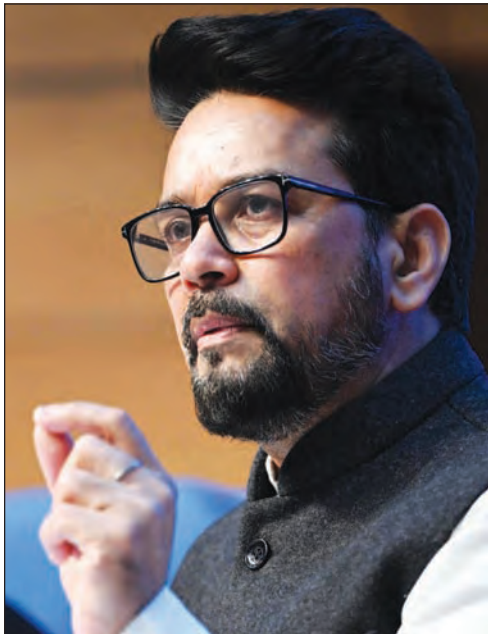
**NEW DELHI, JAN 4 /--/** Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Cabinet on Wednesday approved a Rs 19,744 crore incentive plan to promote the manufacturing of green hydrogen in the country in a bid to cut emissions.

Union information and broadcasting minister Anurag Thakur said the Cabinet approved the National Green Hydrogen Mission which is expected to attract Rs 8 lakh crore of investment in the green hydrogen chain. India aims to produce 5 million tonnes of green hydrogen per annum in the next five years and the incentives would help bring down the cost. "The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved National Green Hydrogen Mission," Thakur said while briefing reporters about the Cabinet decisions. Carbon-free hydrogen, which can be used as fuel in automobiles and as an energy source in industries such as oil refineries and steel plants, is produced by splitting water. When electricity generated from renewable sources such as the sun is used to split water through electrolysis, green hydrogen is produced. Oxygen is a by-product of such a process. The initial outlay for the mission will be Rs 19,744 crore, including an outlay of Rs 17,490 crore for the SIGHT programme, Rs 1,466 crore for pilot projects, Rs 400 crore for R&D, and Rs 388 crore towards other mission

components. The ministry of new and renewable energy (MNRE) will formulate the scheme guidelines for implementation. The mission seeks to promote development of green hydrogen production capacity of at least 5 MMT (Million Metric Tonnes) per annum with an associated renewable energy capacity addition of about 125 GW in the country by 2030. It envisages an investment of over Rs 8 lakh crore and creation of over 6 lakh jobs by 2030. It will also result in cumulative reduction in fossil fuel imports of over Rs 1 lakh crore and abatement of nearly 50 MMT of annual greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. Commenting on the move, Rajat Seksaria, CEO of ACME Group, said it offers a great opportunity for India to become a global export hub of green hydrogen and ammonia. Seksaria further said "the incentive program makes the green molecule from India competitive. This is required for the initial few projects and create green hydrogen hubs, which will allow supply chains to be established and scale of production to increase." Several nations have already come up with green hydrogen subsidy and support programs. Recently, the US announced a big support plan for clean hydrogen through Inflation Reduction Act. Germany, UK and Japan are also providing support to clean hydrogen through state support programs, he

added. The Mission will have wide ranging benefits -- creation of export opportunities for green hydrogen and its derivatives; decarbonisation of industrial, mobility and energy sectors; reduction in dependence on imported fossil fuels and feedstock; development of indigenous manufacturing capabilities; creation of employment opportunities; and development of cutting-edge technologies, an official statement said.

The Mission will facilitate demand creation, production, utilisation and export of green hydrogen. Under the Strategic Interventions for Green Hydrogen Transition Programme (SIGHT), two distinct financial incentive mechanisms -- targeting domestic manufacturing of electrolyzers and production of green hydrogen -- will be provided under the Mission. The Mission will also support pilot projects in emerging end-use sectors and production pathways. Regions capable of supporting large scale production and/or utilisation of hydrogen will be identified and developed as Green Hydrogen Hubs, the minister added. An enabling policy framework will be developed to support establishment of the green hydrogen ecosystem. A robust standards and regulations framework will be also developed. Further, a public-private partnership framework for R&D (Strategic



**Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Anurag Thakur briefing newsmen on the Cabinet decision, in New Delhi on Wednesday**

Hydrogen Innovation Partnership - SHIP) will be facilitated under the Mission. R&D projects will be goal-oriented, time bound, and suitably scaled up to develop globally competitive technologies. A coordinated skill development programme will also be undertaken. All concerned ministries, departments, agencies and institutions of the central and state governments will undertake focussed and coordinated steps to ensure successful achievement of the Mission objectives. The ministry of new and renewable energy will be responsible for overall coordination and implementation of the Mission, he stated.

Avaada Group Chairman Vineet Mittal said: "It will provide a much-needed boost to encourage the green hydrogen industry. This intervention is even more significant because it comes at a time when India has the G20 presidency, clearly showcasing India's commitment to lead the global energy transition." Indian hydrogen demand is anticipated to see a five-fold jump to 28 MT by 2050, along with tremendous opportunities that exist for exports, he noted. This intervention will help Indian developers cater to the requirement and augment the ongoing efforts to reach the target of 500 GW of renewable energy by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2070, he opined. (PTI)



**Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee at Kapil Muni temple during her visit to Gangasagar on Wednesday — Photo: Shyamal Maitra**

## Mamata demands national status for Gangasagar Mela

**SAGAR ISLAND, JAN 4 /--/** Chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday demanded that the Centre accord national status for the annual Gangasagar Mela which will be held next week here in the state's South 24 Parganas district. Stating that the Centre has not paid any heed to her repeated requests to build a bridge over the Muri Ganga river to help pilgrims reach Sagar Island easily, Mamata said her government is preparing a detailed project report (DPR) to construct it. "The Central government has been providing huge funds to the Kumbh Mela. But it is not providing anything to Gangasagar Mela. That is the reason that I will request them to declare it as a national fair so that we can get some funds," she told reporters. The chief minister said this is not the first time that she is making this request to the Centre. Mamata reached Sagar Island on Wednesday afternoon to review the preparations for the upcoming Gangasagar

Mela to be held between January 8 and 16. She also inaugurated three helipads. Gangasagar is "a unique fair" as the only mode to reach Sagar Island, the venue of the Mela, is by crossing waterways, the chief minister said.

"Kumbh Mela is well connected by air, rail and roads. But for Gangasagar, people have to take the waterway, which is very difficult," she said. "We have told the Central government several times to build a bridge, but they have not taken it seriously. So, we decided to construct it on our own. We are preparing a DPR for that," the chief minister said. The project will take some years to complete and may cost Rs 10,000 crore but "we will not beg (to the Centre)," Mamata stated. Lakhs of Hindu pilgrims gather in Sagar Island from different parts of the country and outside to take a holy dip at the confluence of the sacred Ganga and the Bay of Bengal on the occasion of 'Makar Sankranti'. (PTI)

### NEWS BRIEFS

#### **BIND scheme will augment broadcasting infra, says PM**

**NEW DELHI, JAN 4 /--/** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said the Broadcasting Infrastructure and Network Development (BIND) scheme will augment the broadcasting infrastructure, particularly in the remote areas. This will also help in diverse sectors like health, education and entertainment, Modi tweeted. In a bid to upgrade Prasar Bharati's broadcast infrastructure and network, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) on Wednesday approved the scheme worth more than Rs 2,500 crore for Doordarshan and All India Radio. (PTI)

#### **Sonia admitted to hospital with viral infection**

**NEW DELHI, JAN 4 /--/** Former Congress president Sonia Gandhi was admitted to Sir Ganga Ram Hospital here on Wednesday for treatment of viral respiratory infection. Sonia Gandhi's daughter Priyanka Gandhi Vadra accompanied her to the hospital in the morning, sources said. The hospital issued a health bulletin later. "Mrs. Sonia Gandhi, chairperson, UPA has been admitted to our hospital today. She has been admitted in Department of Chest Medicine under the care of Dr. Arup Basu and his team. (PTI)

## Over 2,000 CRPF personnel being deployed in Rajouri, Poonch

**JAMMU, JAN 4 /--/** In a bid to enhance security setup in the twin border districts of Rajouri and Poonch, authorities on Wednesday are deploying more than 2,000 CRPF personnel to secure minority areas in the region, officials said.

The development comes in view of twin terror attacks in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district in which six people of a minority community including two children were killed and 11 others were injured. Over 20 CRPF companies comprising more

than 2,000 personnel are being deployed for strengthening security in Rajouri and Poonch districts, an officer told news agency PTI. Inspector General of CRPF and other top officers are supervising the deployment of the troops, he said. The security deployment is going on. It is being done for the security of minority areas in Rajouri and Poonch, the officer added. There is a huge cry from the minority community people over the security of their areas in border districts after the Rajouri attack. Two children were killed and six people were injured in an IED explosion on Monday near the house of one of the victims in Dangri village, officials said. Meanwhile, the bandh against the twin terror attacks in Rajouri entered its second day in the border town of Poonch on Wednesday while protests were held across the Jammu region. Security was beefed up in the border districts of Poonch and Rajouri in view of the bandh, officials said. Shops and business establishments remained closed in the district as hundreds of people, braving cold weather, came out to hold protests. Raising anti-Pakistan slogans, the protestors burnt tyres and demanded enhancement of security in and around minority places in districts of the Jammu region. (PTI)



## NCW asks Air India chairperson to intervene in matter of drunken man urinating on woman co-passenger

### Delhi Police launches manhunt to nab accused

**NEW DELHI, JAN 4 /--/** The National Commission for Women (NCW) has written to Air India chairman N Chandrasekaran to intervene in the matter of a drunken man allegedly urinating on a woman co-passenger in a flight and take appropriate action.

The NCW said the horrendous behaviour of the man to the elderly woman violated her right to live a life of dignity and safety. The NCW said it has come across several media reports wherein it has been alleged that a drunken man urinated on a woman co-passenger in an Air India flight in

sought a report from the airline on the incident and will "take action against those found negligent". The airline said it has filed a police complaint about the incident, but did not specify when the 30-day ban came into effect. Meanwhile, Delhi Police registered an FIR and formed several teams to nab the passenger who urinated on a co-passenger onboard an Air India flight from New York to Delhi, officials said. A senior police officer said based on the complaint of the victim given to the Air India, a case has been registered under the Indian Penal Code and the



Aircraft Rules. The IPC sections included in the case are 294 (obscene act in public place), 354 (assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty), 509 (word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman) and 510 (misconduct in public by a drunken person), he added. "We have formed multiple teams to keep a track of the accused passenger and he will be arrested soon," the officer said. (PTI)

## Purpose of 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' is to remove fear from people's minds: Rahul

**BAGHPAT, JAN 4 /--/** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday said the purpose of party's 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' is to remove fear from the people's minds and highlight issues like price rise and unemployment. Amid raging talks about his wearing T-shirt in the winter during the yatra, Rahul said the media is highlighting his attire but "taking no notice of the poor farmers and labourers walking along with him in torn clothes". Addressing a 'nukkad sabha' (street corner meeting) at Baraut on Baghat-Shamli border during the yatra, the Congress leader said despite covering a distance of more than 3,000 kms on foot in 110 days, he is neither feeling tired nor sizzling in the cold in T-shirt. Taking potshots at the media, he said, "I call them 'mitra' (friend) but they are not performing the duty of a friend as they do not raise the real issues out

of fear of their bosses." "Since the media is not highlighting the issues of people, we thought of raising matters relating to demonetisation, wrong GST, price rise, unemployment in the Parliament, but there the mike



was switched off. So we thought let's walk from Kanyakumari to Kashmir, listen to the people," the former Congress chief said. He said the focus of the 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' is to remove 'dar' (fear) from the people's minds and raise the issue of price rise and unemployment. After a brief address at the meeting, Rahul left for Delhi. The UP leg of 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' will resume Thursday morning from Shamli from where it will enter Haryana. The Bharat Jodo Yatra, which started from Kanyakumari on September 7, will end with the hoisting of the national flag by Gandhi in Srinagar on January 30. Over the 108 days, the march has covered 49 districts in nine states and one Union Territory -- Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana, and Delhi. (PTI)



# Biden renominates Eric Garcetti as envoy to India

WASHINGTON, JAN 4 /--/ US President Joe Biden has renominated Eric Garcetti as his envoy to India, with the White House exuding confidence that the former Mayor of Los Angeles would be confirmed by the Senate this time. Garcetti, 51, is a close aide of President Biden. He has been Mayor of Los Angeles since 2013. "Eric M Garcetti, of California, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of India," the White House said after sending the nomination to the Senate. The move came as the White House began renominating candidates who were not confirmed in the last Congress. "As Secretary (of State,



Antony) Blinken said very recently, our relationship with India is crucial and it's consequential, so we see this as a very important nomination," White House

Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre told reporters on Tuesday at her daily news conference. In July 2021, President Biden nominated Garcetti as his

Ambassador to India. His nomination was initially blocked by Republican Senator Chuck Grassley because of allegations of inappropriate behaviour by

one of his senior staffers. Though the hold on his nomination had been lifted, he could not be confirmed by the last Congress. "We will continue to seek the confirmation of Mayor Garcetti, who has - who was voted out of committee unanimously and with strong bipartisan support to serve as ambassador to India," Jean-Pierre said. "And that's important, as we're talking about bipartisanship, as we're talking (about) how we're going to move forward. And this is what you saw with his particular nomination," she said. "So, we see this as he is well qualified Mayor Garcetti to serve in this vital role. And we're hopeful that the full Senate will confirm him promptly," she added. (PTI)

## In 2023, US will continue to enhance its strategic position: White House

WASHINGTON, JAN 4 /--/ In 2023, the United States will continue to enhance its strategic position over the long haul, the White House said Tuesday. "This is a decisive decade, and we are focused on how we compete vigorously to advance our interest while building diverse coalitions to address the biggest challenges of our time," White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre told reporters at her daily news conference. In 2022, US President Joe Biden hosted and met with leaders of the Americas, of Africa, of Southwest Asia, the Middle East, and the Pacific Islands. That is something that the President did in just one year alone. "He has attended very consequential: the G7, the G20, and NATO summits," she said. "This year, you will continue to see us enhance our strategic position over the long haul by doing a couple of things here that I'll list out: making significant investment in the sources of America's domestic strength; standing with Ukraine and standing up for the principles of an international order that protects sovereignty and territorial integrity and rejects aggression in Europe and also around the world; protecting Americans from threats at home and around the world as well, whether it's terrorism or cyberattacks; and building flexible coalition worldwide on food security,

climate, technology, and other key issue," Jean-Pierre said. "So, this is how the President sees his foreign policy moving forward. This is what we've been able to do in the first two years. So, this is incredibly important to the President," she said. Responding to a question on peace prospects, the press secretary said nothing about Ukraine without Ukraine. "That's how we see this approach. And that is the consensus of this administration. We all support a just peace. That is something that we all support," she said. "You heard the President say those very words at the press conference -- the 2+2 that he did when President Zelenskyy made his first trip in 300 days since the Russian aggression started," she noted. "But when we talk about just peace, that must include UN principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, as I just laid out as we look at our 2023 goals. It's a hard to take seriously the idea that Russia is prepared for good-faith diplomacy when they are doubling down," she said. "They are doubling down on annexing Ukrainian territory and insisting they get to keep it. And that's what they're doing. So that's not a basis for real diplomacy at all. Our job is to keep supporting Ukraine on the battlefield so that they're in the best position to negotiate at the table when that does occur," Jean-Pierre said. (PTI)

## Russia says phone use allowed Ukraine to target its troops

KYIV, JAN 4 /--/ Unauthorised use of cell phones by Russian soldiers led to a deadly Ukrainian rocket attack on the facility where they were stationed, according to the Russian military, as it raised the death toll from the weekend attack to 89. Gen. Lt. Sergei Sevrjukov said in a statement late Tuesday that phone signals allowed Kyiv's forces to "determine the coordinates of the location of military personnel" and launch a strike. The Russian military is taking unspecified measures to "prevent similar tragic incidents in the future," Sevrjukov said, and promised to punish officials responsible for the blunder. The attack, one of the deadliest on the Kremlin's forces since the start of the war over 10 months ago, occurred one minute into the new year, according to Sevrjukov. It was the latest blow to the Kremlin's military prestige as it struggles to progress with its invasion of its neighbour, and stirred renewed

criticism inside Russia of the way the war is being conducted amid a successful Ukrainian counteroffensive. Ukrainian forces fired six rockets from a US-provided HIMARS multiple launch system at a building where the soldiers were stationed. Two rockets were downed but four hit the building and detonated, prompting the collapse of the structure. Details of the strike have trickled out in recent days. UK intelligence officials said Wednesday that Moscow's "unprofessional" military practices were likely partly to blame for the high casualty rate on the troops. "Given the extent of the damage, there is a realistic possibility that ammunition was being stored near to troop accommodation, which detonated during the strike, creating secondary explosions," the UK Defence Ministry said in a Twitter post. In the same post, the ministry said that the building struck by Ukrainian missiles was little more than 12 kilometres (7.5 miles) from the front line, within "one of the most contested areas of the

conflict," in the Donetsk region. "The Russian military has a record of unsafe ammunition storage from well before the current war, but this incident highlights how unprofessional practices contribute to Russia's high casualty rate," the update added. Meanwhile, the Kremlin-appointed leader of the Donetsk region, one of four that Moscow illegally annexed in September, on Wednesday praised the "courage and true heroism" of the dead Russian soldiers. Denis Pushilin said in a Telegram post that some of those killed tried to pull their comrades from the burning building. In Samara, in southwestern Russia, locals on Tuesday gathered for an Orthodox service in memory of the dead. The service was followed by a minute's silence, and flowers were laid at a Soviet-era war memorial, the state RIA Novosti agency reported. Unconfirmed reports in Russian-language media said the victims were mobilised reservists from the region. (AP)

## Islamic State claims Afghan airport checkpoint bombing

ISLAMABAD, JAN 4 /--/ The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for a bombing near a checkpoint at the Afghan capital's military airport that killed and wounded several people. IS said in a statement late Tuesday that Sunday's attack on the checkpoint in Kabul was carried out by the same member who took part in an assault on a hotel in the capital in mid-December. The regional affiliate of the Islamic State group known as the Islamic State in Khorasan Province has increased its attacks in Afghanistan since the Taliban takeover in 2021. Targets have included Taliban patrols and members of Afghanistan's Shiite minority. IS published a photo of the attacker identifying him as Abdul Jabbar, saying he withdrew safely from the attack on the hotel after he ran out of ammunition. It added he detonated his explosives-laden vest targeting the soldiers gathered at the checkpoint. The military

airport is around 200 meters from the civilian airport and close to the Interior Ministry, itself the site of a suicide bombing last October that killed at least four people. Interior ministry spokesman Abdul Nafi Takor said after the attack that the blast left "several" people dead and wounded. He gave no exact figures or further information about the bombing, saying details of an investigation will be shared later. Takor and Khalid Zadran, spokesman for the Kabul police chief, didn't respond Wednesday to requests for casualty figures. Although Taliban security forces prevented photography and filming directly at the blast site, the checkpoint appeared damaged but intact. It is on Airport Road, which leads to high-security neighbourhoods housing government ministries, foreign embassies and the presidential palace. (AP)

## Pakistani Taliban threatens to target top leaders of PML-N and PPP

ISLAMABAD, JAN 4 /--/ The banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) on Wednesday threatened to target the top leaders of the two major political parties in the ruling coalition if they continued to support tough measures against the militants. The TTP, which is believed to be close to al-Qaeda, has warned Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari led Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) - the two major parties of the ruling coalition. "If these two parties remain firm on their position and continue to be slaves of the army, then action will be taken against their leading people," a statement issued by the militant group said. The group warned that "people should avoid getting close to such leading people." It claimed that the TTP was only waging what it called "jihad" in Pakistan and "our target is the security agencies occupying the country". It especially warned Foreign Minister Bilawal, whose mother former prime minister Benazir Bhutto was killed in a terrorist attack in 2007. "Although Bilawal is still young, this poor man has not yet witnessed the state of war," the statement said, adding that the PPP leader had declared an open war on TTP.

The group also said that it had not taken action against any political party for a long time but "unfortunately Bilawal Bhutto Zardari gave the US the status of mother to quench the thirst of his mother's love". The terrorist outfit also said that Prime Minister Sharif had committed the support of his entire party in the war against TTP to please the US. The TTP spared the religious political parties, saying there is no scope for action against them in TTP's policy. However, it said that "we also request you (religious parties) to refrain from activities against us." The warning comes just days after the civil-military leadership of the country met under the banner of the National Security Committee and vowed to show "zero tolerance" for terrorism in the country. "NSC reiterated its resolve to have zero tolerance for terrorism in Pakistan and reaffirmed its determination to take on any and all entities that resort to violence. This will be dealt with full force of the state. Pakistan's security is uncompromisable and the full writ of the state will be maintained on every inch of Pakistan's territory," said a statement issued by the PM Office after the meeting.

Prime Minister Sharif chaired the meeting while Bilawal, who had advocated a new policy against the rebels, also participated. The NSC is the highest body to finalize decisions about key security and strategic matters relating to national security.

The foreign minister earlier also opposed talks with the militants, saying the government would not follow the policy of appeasement. In November, the TTP called off an indefinite ceasefire agreed with the government in June and ordered its militants to carry out attacks on the security forces. The TTP, also known as the Pakistan Taliban, was set up as an umbrella group of several militant outfits in 2007. Its main aim is to impose its strict brand of Islam across Pakistan. Pakistan had hoped that the Afghan Taliban after coming to power would stop the use of their soil against Pakistan by expelling the TTP operatives but they have apparently refused to do so at the cost of straining ties with Islamabad.

The TTP has been blamed for several deadly attacks across Pakistan, including an attack on army headquarters in 2009, assaults on military bases and the 2008 bombing of the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad. In 2012, Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai was attacked by TTP. She suffered bullet injuries and was admitted to the Military Hospital (CMH) Peshawar and then taken to London for further treatment. The TTP claimed responsibility for the attack, saying that Yousafzai was a "Western-minded girl". (PTI)

## British PM wants all pupils to study maths to age 18

LONDON, JAN 4 /--/ British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is looking at plans to ensure all pupils in England study maths in some form until the age of 18, according to a media report on Wednesday. In lines briefed to journalists ahead of his first speech of 2023, the Indian-origin prime minister is expected to say the UK must reimagine its approach to numeracy, the BBC News reported. "In a world where data is everywhere and statistics underpin every job, our children's jobs will require more analytical skills than ever before," he will say. "And letting our children out into the world without those skills, is letting our children down". Just half of 16 to 19-year-olds in the UK study maths, according to Sunak - but this figure includes pupils doing

science courses and those who are already doing compulsory GCSE resits in college, the report said. It is not clear what the plans will mean for students who wish to study humanities or creative arts qualifications, including BTecs and no new qualifications are immediately planned and there are no plans to make A-levels compulsory. The government is instead exploring expanding existing qualifications as well as "more innovative options", a Downing Street spokesperson said. The idea appears to be an aspiration rather than a fully developed policy, with the precise mechanics for how it would work not set out. The government acknowledges it would not

## Pope praises 'gentle' Benedict ahead of funeral

VATICAN CITY, JAN 4 /--/ Pope Francis praised Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI's "acute and gentle thought" as he presided over a packed Wednesday general audience in the Vatican, while thousands of people paid tribute to the former pope on the final day of public viewing in St. Peter's Basilica.

Francis was greeted by an enthusiastic crowd in the Paul VI auditorium and shouts of "Viva il papa!" or "Long live the pope" as he arrived for his weekly appointment with the faithful. This week's audience was conducted as tens of thousands of people continued to flock to St. Peter's Basilica to pay their respects before Benedict's body, lying in state. The first two days of viewing drew a total of 135,000 people. Wednesday's viewing began before dawn and was set to end in early evening. Francis is due to preside over the late German pope's funeral on Thursday, an event that is drawing heads of state and royalty despite Benedict's requests for simplicity and Vatican efforts to keep the first Vatican funeral for an emeritus pope in modern times low-key.

Francis drew applause when he opened his remarks by noting all those who were outside paying tribute to Benedict, whom he called a "great master of catechesis." "His acute and gentle thought was not self-referential, but ecclesial, because he always wanted to accompany us in the encounter with Jesus," Francis said. Later Wednesday, Vatican officials were to place Benedict's body in a cypress coffin the first of three coffins along with a brief, written summary of his historic papacy, the coins minted during his pontificate and his pallium stoles.

After the funeral, the retired pontiff's remains will be carried back into the basilica, where the coffin will be placed inside a zinc one, and then finally into another made from oak.

In keeping with Benedict's wishes, his



example that he gave in his resignation, that he more or less said, 'Look, I'm not in this for the prestige, the power of the office, I'm in it for service, as Jesus taught,'" recalled Cardinal Timothy Dolan, whom Benedict named archbishop of New York in 2009 and cardinal in 2012. Dolan came to Rome for the funeral. Thursday's rite takes into account the unusual situation in which a reigning pope will preside over a funeral for a retired one, making important changes to a funeral ritual for popes that is highly codified. Two key prayers, from the diocese of Rome and the Eastern rite churches, that were recited during John Paul's funeral, for example, will be omitted because Benedict wasn't pope when he died and because both branches of the Catholic Church still have a reigning pope as their leader: Francis. While the funeral will be novel, it does have some precedent: In 1802, Pope Pius VII celebrated the funeral in St. Peter's of his predecessor, Pius VI, who had died in exile in France in 1799 as a prisoner of Napoleon, the Vatican noted Wednesday. (AP)

## Lanka election commission to accept nominations for local polls from Jan 18-21

COLOMBO, JAN 4 /--/ Sri Lanka's top election body announced on Wednesday that it will accept nominations from January 18 to 21 for the local council polls, which have been postponed since March amid the prevailing economic crisis.

Notices calling for nominations for 340 local government bodies were also released by district secretaries on Wednesday. The nominations would be accepted between January 18 and 21, the National Election Commission said. A date for the polls would be announced a week thereafter. The elections for local councils in the country have been postponed since March last year as the government grappled with the economic crisis and the political upheaval which led to street protests. Sri Lanka's local government elections have been mired in controversy with

Opposition parties accusing the government of delaying the polls because the ruling Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) fears an embarrassing defeat. The announcement of nomination dates came as Opposition parties expressed doubts over the government's intention to hold the election. "The government is trying their best not to hold it. But a postponement can only be done through a referendum," GL Peiris, an opposition parliamentarian, told reporters. The ruling SLPP controls the majority of local councils after they won the 2018 local election. The Opposition thinks that the SLPP's chances to win the next election are slim given the ongoing economic crisis. Sri Lanka, a country of 22 million people, plunged into financial and political turmoil earlier this year as it faced a shortage of foreign

currencies. The worst economic crisis since its independence in 1948 was triggered by a severe paucity of foreign exchange reserves. The main Opposition SJB (Samagi Jana Balawegaya) has been pressing for the polls, saying the government is fearful of losing the elections due to large-scale dissatisfaction among the people. The ruling SLPP has made public statements that they are ready to face the election. President Ranil Wickremesinghe has cited the need to reform the local councils' system. He claimed that the current councillors numbering over 8,000 must be halved before holding the elections. However, the Opposition claimed it was only an excuse to postpone the elections. Election monitoring groups and opposition parties vowed they would petition the court against the government's designs to postpone the election. (PTI)



plan in this parliament, the report said. The Association of School and College Leaders, however, said there was a "chronic national shortage of maths teachers" in the UK. And Labour's shadow education secretary Bridget Phillipson called on

Sunak to "show his working" on how greater participation in maths will be funded. "He cannot deliver this reheated, empty pledge without more maths teachers, yet the government has missed their target for new maths teachers year after year," she said. Liberal Democrat education spokesperson, Munira Wilson, called the aim "an admission of failure from the prime minister on behalf of a Conservative government that has neglected our children's education so badly". "Too many children are being left behind when it comes to maths, and that happens well before they reach 16," she added. Tory MP Robin Walker, who is chair of the

education committee, urged the prime minister to focus on childcare. "It's great to hear the prime minister today committing to maths beyond 16," he told BBC Radio 4's Today programme. "But if we don't get the right approach to stimulating and supporting children early on, they won't have the opportunities to thrive in the school system." Sunak became prime minister towards the end of a turbulent political year which saw his two predecessors - Boris Johnson and Liz Truss - brought down by Conservative backbenchers. Sunak faces the challenge of keeping his own MPs happy, while dealing with the rising cost of living and strikes in several sectors, including nursing and the rail industry. (PTI)



# Ligue 1: Messi leaves hometown to return to PSG

**BUENOS AIRES, JAN 4 /--/** Argentina captain Lionel Messi finally left for Paris in a private jet late on Monday after an extended period celebrating last month's World Cup victory in his home town of Rosario. Messi left with his wife Antonela Rocuzzo and sons Mateo, Thiago and Ciro at 10:00 pm (0100 GMT) according to local newspaper La Capital de Rosario. The seven-time Ballon d'Or winner arrived in Rosario, around 310 kilometers north of Buenos Aires, two days after his two goals helped Argentina beat France in the World Cup final in Qatar on December 18. The private jet is due to arrive in Paris at around 1400 GMT on Tuesday. Last week, PSG coach Christophe Galtier had said he expected Messi, who spent Christmas and New Year in his family home, to return on "January 2 or 3." The 35-year-old thus missed the Ligue 1 leaders' first two post-World Cup matches. He should, however, be available for PSG's French Cup clash with Chateauroux on Friday, where he would link up once again with French teammate Kylian Mbappe, who finished on the losing side despite scoring a hat-trick in that World Cup final, which Argentina won on penalties following a 3-3 draw. Many fans saw Messi off at the international airport in Rosario, where there was a large security presence keeping them away from the forward and

his family. December's victory was Argentina's third World Cup success and first since late icon Diego Maradona led them to glory in 1986. Lionel Messi returned to Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) training on Tuesday after winning the World Cup with Argentina. Messi, who was given a 10-day break by the club following his exploits in Qatar, joined his teammates ahead of their Coupe de France clash against Chateauroux on Friday. Messi scored twice in the final as Argentina defeated Kylian Mbappe's France on penalties at Lusail Stadium following a 3-3 after extra-time. Earlier, PSG coach Christophe Galtier had said he expected Messi, who spent Christmas and New Year in his family home, to return on "January 2 or 3." The 35-year-old thus missed the Ligue 1 leaders' first two post-World Cup matches. He should, however, be available for PSG's Coupe de France clash with Chateauroux on Friday, where he would link up once again with French Kylian Mbappe, who finished on the losing side despite scoring a hat-trick in the World Cup final, which Argentina won on penalties following a 3-3 draw. Many fans saw Messi off at the international airport in Rosario, where there was a large security presence keeping them away from the forward and first since late icon Diego Maradona led them to glory in 1986. (AFP)



## Losing a game is alright, key is to get feel of difficult situations: Pandya



**MUMBAI, JAN 4 /--/** India T20I captain Hardik Pandya has said he will not get unduly perturbed if his side loses a match here and there, adding that the most important thing was to be in "difficult situations", which helps the team prepare for bigger challenges. Pandya also allayed fears about his fitness, saying he had to leave the field for a brief while due to cramps as he didn't have a sound sleep the previous night and didn't drink enough water. India defeated Sri Lanka in the opening T20I by just two runs at the Wankhede Stadium, with unbeaten knocks from Deepak Hooda (41) and Axar Patel (31) giving the hosts a decent target to defend after they were in trouble at 94 for five. "We might lose a game here and there but it's alright. I want to put this team in difficult situations because it will help us in big games. Bilaterals we are very good at and this is how we are going to challenge ourselves. To be honest, all the young guns got us out of the situation today," said Pandya. Hardik had to leave the field for a brief while after taking a catch, and the skipper joking said he likes to scare people. "It is just cramps. Now I have tendency to scare people. I did not sleep well, did not drink enough water and hence the glutes were stiff. I was unwell and I had my fluids down," said Pandya at the presentation ceremony. One of the youngsters who shone bright on the night was debutant pacer Shivam Mavi. The skipper was full of praise for the fast bowler, who picked up 4/22 in his first T20 outing. "The conversation was very simple, I have seen him (Mavi) bowl well in the IPL and I know what are his strengths, just back yourself and don't worry about getting hit. 'I just told him to simply bowl. I told him, 'I am backing you. Even if you get hit, it's fine.' If the same situation is there, I will take the new ball." He added, "I have been bowling in the nets with the new ball since I returned in the IPL. I have learnt how to swing it back." Sri Lanka captain Dasun Shanaka said the visitors ought to have won the game. "It was (our game to lose). Really disappointing with the way we finished. In Wankhede you need the batsmen to help you cross the line. (PTI)

## 2nd T20I: Focus on Gill's Powerplay approach, Chahal's form as India aim to clinch series

**PUNE, JAN 4 /--/** Shubman Gill will be aiming to up the ante in the Powerplay overs to keep his nearest competitor Ruturaj Gaikwad at bay as a buoyant India team aims to come all guns blazing against Sri Lanka in its bid to clinch the series in the second T20I here on Thursday. India won a last-ball thriller by two runs in the opener at Wankhede while defending a below-par score and skipper Hardik Pandya spoke about the benefits of overcoming difficult situations as the team moves forward. While T20Is aren't of highest priority in an ODI World Cup year, Gill will not like to repeat the mistakes of his predecessors while aiming to cement his place in the T20I side after making a reputation for himself in the longer versions. Gill's career strike-rate after playing 96 T20 games

(mostly IPL and Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy) is a modest 128.74 and, even on debut, he looked like a shaky starter. While Gill has opened a lot for KKR and even was an integral part at the top of the order for Gujarat Titans, his game is primarily based on consolidation and then going for the kill. However, this is the identical approach that had cost KL Rahul a place in the T20 squad. While skipper Pandya, like every other Indian captain in the recent past has promised a fearless approach at the top, he would need each of his player to walk the talk. The Indian T20 cupboard is brimming with talent with players likes Ruturaj and Rahul Tripathi cooling their heels in the dugout. It is expected that both Gill and Ishan Kishan will get all three games in the series and the impactful Powerplay will also give the batters coming down the

order more confidence to play fearless cricket. The batting unit will like to score more runs in the second game and a lot will depend on the manner in which new vice-captain Suryakumar Yadav does what is known as "front-loading" (heavy-duty hitting in the first 10 overs) in cricketing jargon. Surya was dismissed cheaply, one of his rare T20 failures after a golden 2022 but it was more to do with a bit of less pace off the surface unlike Australia and New Zealand where the 'blind scoop' over '45', would normally go for a six. But the smart operator that he is, Surya will find a way to manoeuvre against a Sri Lankan bowling attack which is more dependant on spinners Wanindu Hasaranga and Mahesh Theekshana who accounted for two wickets, giving away only 51 runs in their cumulative eight overs. Deepak Hooda and Axar Patel's batting effort was lauded by one and all and their utility is there to be seen. Shivam Mavi's dream debut is certainly a big relief for skipper Pandya, who could be lauded for taking the new ball and bowling an incisive first spell alongside the newcomer. Mavi (4/22), with his ability to swing the ball, and Umran Malik's (2/27) raw pace is welcome addition to this T20 playing XI and seem to be long-term investments going into the 2024 T20 World Cup. However the worry will be leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal, who must have lost a bit of confidence after being ignored during the T20 World Cup. In fact, Chahal went for 26 in his first two overs and the skipper couldn't let him complete his spell. (PTI)



Shubman Gill during a training session

**India:** Hardik Pandya (Captain), Ishan Kishan (wk), Ruturaj Gaikwad, Shubman Gill, Suryakumar Yadav (VC), Deepak Hooda, Rahul Tripathi, Sanju Samson, Washington Sundar, Yuzvendra Chahal, Axar Patel, Arshdeep Singh, Harshal Patel, Umran Malik, Shivam Mavi, Mukesh Kumar.  
**Sri Lanka:** Dasun Shanaka (C), Pathum Nissanka, Avishka Fernando, Sadeera Samarawickrama, Kusal Mendis (VC for ODIs), Bhanuka Rajapaksa (only for T20Is), Charith Asalanka, Dhananjaya de Silva, Wanindu Hasaranga (VC for T20Is), Ashen Bandara, Maheesh Theekshana, Jeffrey Vandersay (only for ODIs), Chamika Karunaratne, Dilshan Madushanka, Kasun Rajitha, Nuwan Fernando (only for ODIs), Dunith Wellalage, Pramod Madushan, Lahiru Kumara, Nuwan Thushara (only for T20Is).

**MATCH STARTS 7 PM.**

### GAME NOTES

#### Pele gets resting place in world's tallest vertical cemetery

**SANTOS, JAN 4 /--/** Pele was a footballer like no other, and his final resting place will be exceptional, too: a large replica stadium complete with artificial turf inside the world's tallest vertical cemetery. The Brazilian football great, whose funeral was held Tuesday after his death last week at age 82, bought his mausoleum 19 years ago inside the Memorial Ecumenical Cemetery, a veritable high-rise that holds the Guinness World Record for the tallest cemetery on Earth. Located in Santos, the southeastern port city where "The King" played most of his storied career, the cemetery has a total area of 40,000 square meters (430,000 square feet) and features a 24-hour restaurant, a chapel, an automobile museum, a small fish pond and an aviary. Located on the first floor, Pele's 200-square-meter mausoleum will be decorated like a football stadium, with his embalmed body resting in a coffin displayed in the middle of the artificial turf, surrounded by gilded images from his glory days, a spokesman for the cemetery said.

#### My main agenda is to bowl in powerplay, take early wickets: Mavi

**MUMBAI, JAN 4 /--/** Fresh from a hugely successful India debut, pacer Shivam Mavi has made his intention clear of becoming the country's strike bowler, saying he wants to take early wickets in powerplays by targeting the stumps. Playing in his maiden T20I at the Wankhede against Sri Lanka on Tuesday, the 24-year-old Mavi took two wickets in powerplay to dismiss dangerous opener Pathum Nissanka (1) and Dhananjaya de Silva (8), reducing the visitors to 51/4 in the ninth over. Mavi had match figures of 4/22, which will warm the hearts of the selectors, who are looking for someone to pair with Jasprit Bumrah in white-ball cricket. Following India's two-run win in the opening game of the three-match T20I series, the team's bowling coach, Paras Mhambrey, asked the young Mavi what went through his mind when skipper Hardik Pandya handed the new ball to him. "My main agenda is to attack first in the powerplay as I always go for lbw bowled... whether the boundaries happen or not, my mindset is to get wickets," said the Noida cricketer, who had been waiting for the India debut for the last six years.

#### Copa del Rey: Rodrygo pays tribute to Pele as Real Madrid advance to last-16

**MADRID, JAN 4 /--/** Rodrygo scored the only goal and celebrated by paying tribute to Pele as Real Madrid advanced to the Spanish Cup last 16 on Tuesday with a hard-fought 1-0 win over fourth-tier Cacereno. The Brazilian broke the deadlock after 69 minutes beating two defenders to fire in and celebrated by jumping with an upward fist, the way football great and compatriot Pele used to celebrate his goals. Pele's funeral was held Tuesday in Brazil after his death last week at age 82. Madrid made their Cup debut in the round of 32 and coach Carlo Ancelotti rested star players including Karim Benzema for the trip to the western Extremadura side who had ousted top flight Girona in the previous round. On Tuesday, Valencia, Villarreal and Espanyol also advanced to the last 16. Espanyol eliminated Celta Vigo 3-1 after extra time in the only top-flight duel, after the match ended 1-1 following regular time. Sergi Darder scored Espanyol's second with Nico Melamed bagging the winner with two minutes to go after Celta lost Argentine goalkeeper Agustin Marchesin to a second yellow card. . (AFP)

#### When you are batting at No. 6, you need to be ready for collapse: Hooda

**MUMBAI, JAN 4 /--/** Deepak Hooda understands the difficulties of batting at tricky No. 6 position in T20Is and has conditioned himself for any sort of collapse like it happened in India's narrow win against Sri Lanka in opening game. Hooda came in with India precariously placed at 77 for 4 and his 23-ball-41 with four sixes got India to a defendable total of 162. His effort earned him the 'player-of-the-match' award. Asked if there was pressure on him when he came in to bat during a crucial part of the innings with India having lost the top and middle order, Hooda said, "I was pretty clear in my mind that if we lose early wickets we have to build a partnership and when you are batting lower down the order at No.6, for a situation like that, being a cricketer, you have to be ready for that. A collapse can happen at any time. (But) I don't think it was a collapse in the true sense as we were in a good position. Yes, we lost one or two extra wickets but I think that is the role of a No. 6 and No. 7 batter (to come and bat with confidence) be it the first or the second match. It's a good win," added Hooda at the post-match press conference. Hooda feels he had to respect the situation and play accordingly but at the slot he is batting, more often than not he would need to be a good finisher.

## Rishabh Pant airlifted to Mumbai, set to undergo surgery: BCCI

**NEW DELHI, JAN 4 /--/** Star India batter Rishabh Pant is all set to "undergo surgery for ligament tears", the BCCI stated on Wednesday, effectively ruling him out of competitive cricket for an indefinite period. Pant has been airlifted from a Dehradun hospital to Mumbai where he will undergo extensive treatment for ligament injuries in the knee and ankle which he had sustained during a car crash on December 30, BCCI secretary Jay Shah said in a press release. The BCCI decided to shift Pant to Mumbai by air ambulance since he is not in a position to fly by a commercial airline. "Rishabh, who is currently receiving treatment for his injuries at Max Hospital, Dehradun following a car accident on 30th December, will be brought to Mumbai in an air ambulance," Shah said in the release. As reported earlier by PTI, Pant will be treated by noted sports orthopaedic surgeon Dinshaw Pardiwala. "He will be admitted to Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital and Medical Research Institute and will be under the direct supervision of Dr Dinshaw Pardiwala, Head - the Centre for Sports Medicine, and Director - Arthroscopy & Shoulder Service at the hospital," Shah said. "Rishabh will undergo surgery and subsequent procedures for ligament

tears and will continue to be monitored by the BCCI Medical Team throughout his recovery and rehabilitation. "The Board will make every effort to aid and expedite the recovery process of Rishabh and will provide him with all the support he needs during this period," he added. Pant, 25, survived a horrific car accident when he was driving from Delhi to his hometown Rourkee but lost control on the NH-58 highway before hitting the divider. Pant sustained cuts on his forehead, have a severely bruised back along with injuries on his knee and ankle. While most injuries are superficial, the worrying factor will be the ankle and knee. Being a centrally-contracted cricketer, his treatment is the board's prerogative. The MRIs of his injured knee and ankle couldn't be performed as there was extensive swelling and hence the degree of tear is yet to be ascertained. However, it is understood that any sports-related injury diagnosis and prognosis for a centrally-contracted cricketer will be done by the BCCI's panel of doctors and the rehabilitation and recuperation will be managed by the Sports and Medical Science team at NCA, led by Dr Nitin Patel. Pant will now be missing the Test series against Australia and also the cash-rich Indian Premier League. (PTI)



**Members of hospital staff push a stretcher carrying Indian cricketer Rishabh Pant to an ambulance in Dehradun on January 4, 2023. – Pant will be airlifted to Mumbai for surgery, the country's cricket board said on January 4, nearly a week after he suffered several injuries in a road accident.**

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