

# THE ECHO OF INDIA

PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM KOLKATA, SILIGURI, GANGTOK, GUWAHATI and PORT BLAIR

VOL XV ISSUE NO 248

PAGES 8

PORT BLAIR • TUESDAY • DECEMBER 20, 2022

Rs 3.00

## PROTHRAPUR COMMUNITY HALL SUFFERS IGNOMINY

### RELEGATED TO ROT IN A STATE OF NEGLECT



KARTIC

PORT BLAIR, DEC 19/--/ Crumbling walls, broken window, no tap connection, toilets in unusable condition, hanging electric wires: These are the scenes at the community hall at Prothrapur. Constructed about 18-19 years ago, lack of repair and renovation for the

past many years has led to this community hall, used by the local residents for organizing social gatherings in dire straits. This community hall was constructed in the year 2003 by the Zilla Parishad of Prothrapur constituency. After extension of the municipal wards, the community hall has become

**Current Status:**  
Crumbling walls,  
broken window,  
no tap connection,  
toilets in unusable  
condition, hanging  
electric wires

a property of the Port Blair Municipal Council. According to sources, at the time of construction of the community hall, the plumbing work was not carried out; as a result the toilet blocks remaining blocked. Locals at the time of organizing social events had to arrange water on their own. For the past 19 years, due to lack of repair and renovation work, people using this community hall have had to face a lot of difficulties in conducting functions and social events. (contd. on page-6)

## Water ATMs installed under MPLADS fund at burning ghatatJunglighat, Dairy Farm inaugurated



PORT BLAIR, DEC 19/--/ The RO Plant (Water ATM) installed at burning ghat at Ward No.7 under MPLADS fund of 16th Lok Sabha has been inaugurated by Mr. Bishnu Pada Ray, Ex-Member of Parliament in the presence of Mr. Kuldeep Rai Sharma, Member of Parliament of Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Smti. Ms Smitha R, Secretary of Port Blair Municipal Council today on 19th December 2022.

During the inauguration function, Smti. Amar Devi, Councillor, Ward No.7 of Port Blair Municipal Council, Smti. Asha, Executive Engineer (Water), PBMC, other prominent residents of the area and a large number of the general public were also present. Similarly, the another RO plant (Water ATM) installed at Dairy Farm junction, near Lord Ganesh Temple, Ward No.9 under MPLADS fund of 16th Lok Sabha also been inaugurated by the Ex-Member of Parliament Shri Bishnu Pada Ray in the presence of Shri Kuldeep Rai Sharma, Member of Parliament of A&N Islands and Ms Smitha R, IAS, Secretary, Port Blair Municipal Council on 19th December 2022.

In the inauguration function at Dairy Farm, Shri B. Padmanabhan, Councillor of Ward No. 15, Shri Y Joga Rao, Councillor of Ward No.14, Shri V Ravichandran, Councillor Ward No.9 of Port Blair Municipal

Council, Smti. Asha, Executive Engineer (Water) PBMC, officials of PBMC besides other prominent residents of the area and a large number of the general public were present. Addressing the

gathering the Member of Parliament Mr. Kuleep Rai Sharma said that there was a demand for making availability of safe drinking water for the commuters in these locations. (contd. on page-6)



H.E. Jatmiko Heru Prasetyo, Director for South & Central Asian Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia with delegates from Indonesia & Shri Vishvas Sapkal, Joint Secretary (South), Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi along with Central Ministry Officers of India to attend 2nd Joint Task Force Committee meeting to be held at A&N Islands, met Admiral D K Joshi, PVSM, AVSM, YSM, NM, VSM (Retd.), Hon'ble Lt Governor, A&N Islands and Vice-Chairman, Islands Development Agency at Raj Niwas. Discussed actions taken subsequent to 1st Joint Task Force meeting and way forward. Chalked out plans to enhance connectivity between A&N Islands and Aceh Province in various sectors viz. Trade and investment, connectivity, direct flights, development of Port related infrastructure, sustainable harvesting of Marine resources & Fisheries, Tourism & Cultural Exchanges, Academic, Science and Technology.

**NEW Arrival**

- ✓ PVC DOORS
- ✓ WPC DOORS
- ✓ HDF SKIN DOORS
- ✓ SOLID PVC DOORS
- ✓ MEMBRANE DOORS
- ✓ WOODEN MAIN DOORS
- ✓ WPC DOOR FRAMES

by **SRG** **hari dwar**

A HOUSE OF EXCLUSIVE DOORS AND WINDOWS

A UNIT OF SRINATHJI INDUSTRIES

OPP. BHATU BASTI SR. SEC. SCHOOL, PORT BLAIR, ANDAMAN

Ph: +91-8001 322444 / +91-9434 281641

## Natural River Sand

### Now Available For Construction Of Your New Projects

**A&N Seaways & Project Pvt. Ltd.,**

**Pristine Quality    Affordable Price    Accurate Quantity**

**18 HSKP Building, Gurudwara Line, Port Blair, Andaman, India - 744 101**

**Contact: +91 86910 78775, +91 96795 93111**

## TEXTILE LAXMI NEERAJ TEXTILE

### EXPLOSIVE Christmas Collection

## YESHUVA TRAINING ACADEMY Pvt. Ltd

NEAR MUBARAK MALL, JUNGLEGHAT, PORT BLAIR. 744 103

Ph. No. 9476092535; 9933274252; 9476060793

Admission Starts For Following Skill Courses Offered by NDA Govt. of India & All India Paramedical Council

S.No	COURSE NAME	DURATION	QUALIFI
1.	AIRPORT MANAGEMENT	1YEAR	10 <sup>TH</sup> / 12 <sup>TH</sup>
2.	AIR & SEA CARGO MANAGEMENT	1YEAR	10 <sup>TH</sup> / 12 <sup>TH</sup>
3.	AIRHOSTESS TRAINING	1YEAR	10 <sup>TH</sup> / 12 <sup>TH</sup>
4.	CABIN CREW MANAGEMENT	1YEAR	10 <sup>TH</sup> / 12 <sup>TH</sup>
5.	PRE - PRIMARY EDUCATION	1YEAR	10 <sup>TH</sup> / 12 <sup>TH</sup>
6.	PRIMARY EDUCATION	1YEAR	10 <sup>TH</sup> / 12 <sup>TH</sup>
7.	X - RAY TECHNOLOGY	1YEAR	10 <sup>TH</sup> / 12 <sup>TH</sup>
8.	SANITARY INSPECTOR	1YEAR	10 <sup>TH</sup> / 12 <sup>TH</sup>
9.	MEDICAL LABORATORY TECHNICIAN	2YEARS	12 <sup>TH</sup>
10.	OPERATION THEATER ASSISTANT	2YEARS	12 <sup>TH</sup>
11.	AIRFARE & TICKETING	6MONTHS	10 <sup>TH</sup>
12.	AIRPORT GROUND STAFF TRAINING	6MONTHS	10 <sup>TH</sup>

➤ **ADMISSION GOING ON JAUNARY - 2023 BATCH.**

➤ **ADMISSION FORM SUBMISSION LAST DATE 28/12/2022.**

➤ **FOR INTER ISLAND STUDENTS ONLINE CLASSES ALSO AVAILABLE**

## MONDAL JEWELLERS

916 BIS HALL MARK GOLD ORNAMENTS

### New Collections Arrival for Merry Christmas and New Year

**CELL: 9434281991, PH: 234778**

48 Shastri Road, Aberdeen Bazar, Port Blair-744101

12/370 R.P. Road, Near Jama Masjid, Aberdeen Bazar, Port Blair



# Himachal CM Sukhu tests positive for Covid, Assembly session postponed

# State taking steps to reform transport sector, to introduce new EV policy: Deputy CM

**SHIMLA, DEC 19** /--/ Himachal Pradesh chief minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu has tested positive for Covid-19, a state government spokesperson said here on Monday.

Sukhu said the chief minister was scheduled to call on Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on Monday but the meeting had been postponed. Sukhu returned a positive result in the national capital during the mandatory test before meeting the Prime Minister, the spokesperson added. The three-day session of the Himachal Vidhan Sabha, scheduled to take place in Dharamshala from Thursday, has been postponed and will be

rescheduled depending on Sukhu's health, an official told PTI. The schedule for the three days included administering of oaths to



Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu

newly elected MLAs, election of the Speaker and the Governor's address in the 14th Vidhan Sabha's first session. Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar had

allocated portfolios to newly elected Sukhu and his deputy Mukesh Agnihotri and the Cabinet expansion, which was

asymptomatic and has quarantined himself at Himachal Sadan (New Delhi) as a precautionary measure. All his engagements have been postponed, the spokesperson said and added that the chief minister would be tested again after three-four days. Sukhu, Agnihotri, Congress state unit chief Pratibha Singh and 38 newly elected MLAs, had joined Rahul Gandhi on his Bharat Jodo Yatra in Rajasthan on December 16. In New Delhi, Sukhu met several Congress leaders, including party chief Mallikarjun Kharge, AICC Himachal Pradesh in-charge Rajiv Shukla and former Haryana chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda, over the last few days. (PTI)

**SHIMLA, DEC 19** /--/ Himachal Pradesh is taking steps to reform the state's transport sector with innovative ideas and will shortly introduce a new electric vehicle policy, deputy chief minister Mukesh Agnihotri said on Monday.

Agnihotri test-drove an electric vehicle from the Secretariat and inquired about its technical aspects. He said positive efforts would be made to radically change the transport sector. Discussions are being held at various levels to introduce the new policy, he said. "Initially, the operation of electric vehicles will be promoted at the Secretariat. Thereafter, their use will be increased in public transport," the minister stated. Environmental

protection and promoting electric vehicles in the state, a popular tourism destination, are the priorities of the government. A decision will soon be taken about the purchase of electric vehicles, Agnihotri said. According to the deputy chief minister, the state government will take appropriate steps to provide charging facilities.

"In the initial phase, this facility will be provided in various government institutions, including the Secretariat and at Himachal Sadan and bhawans outside the state," he said. A fleet of electric vehicles will be inducted in the Transport department soon and necessary instructions have already been issued to the transport director. The

minister added that an electric vehicle was provided to the chief minister during the previous government as well. However, it was later handed over to the General Administration department.

Agnihotri said after discussions with chief minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, the policy will be placed before the Cabinet. Talks will also be held with the Centre. Appropriate steps will also be taken to set up new driving test tracks to ensure compliance with road safety standards, he said. The Himachal Road Transport Corporation has about 1,000 vehicles of zero book value and these will be replaced by electric vehicles in a phased manner. Electric buses will

also be included in the fleet in the new policy. "The electric vehicle policy will prove fruitful in reducing this loss. It will also reduce the daily expenditure of about Rs 1.5 crore incurred by the corporation," he said. The state government, in the initial phase, aims to reduce the corporation's losses so that it can be brought to a "no profit no loss" position.

Its fleet of long-distance buses will also be strengthened. Around 125 long-distance buses ply outside the corporation's purview daily and the Transport department has been instructed to submit a report regarding their operation and registration. (PTI)

## UP: 5 killed in accidents due to fog, CM instructs officials to implement inter-departmental action plan

**AURAIYA/ALIGARH, DEC 19** /--/ Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath on Monday instructed officials to implement an action plan with inter-departmental coordination for road safety to prevent accidents. Adityanath also appealed to the people to follow traffic rules and stressed that it was essential to check accidents, especially due to the winter fog. The chief minister's directive comes after five people were killed and 33 others injured in separate accidents due to dense fog on the Agra-Lucknow Expressway in Auraiya district and the national highway in Aligarh. In Auraiya, three people were killed and nine others injured when a Lucknow-bound bus rammed into a truck on the Lucknow-Agra Expressway, police said. Due to dense fog, some other vehicles were also affected. In Aligarh, two people were killed and 24 others injured in accidents on National Highway 91 due to heavy fog, they said.

More than a dozen vehicles, including a police patrol car, were damaged in the subsequent pile-up. According to a state government statement released in Lucknow, Adityanath said the possibility of road accidents increased due to the outbreak of fog in winter. Therefore, everyone should follow traffic rules for safe travel. The chief minister also instructed the officials to conduct extensive public awareness programmes regarding road safety. Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, on the other hand, accused the state's BJP government of neglecting "the best expressway" "Country's best Agra-Lucknow Expressway victim of neglect of BJP government, danger of accidents in dense fog.

The government should make proper arrangements for security on the expressway..." Akhilesh said in a tweet in Hindi. He also appealed to the people to provide all possible help to accident victims in their regions. (PTI)

## India's expectation from Pak never very high: Jaishankar on Bilawal Bhutto's personal attack against PM Modi

**NEW DELHI, DEC 19** /--/ India's level of expectation from Pakistanis is "never very high", external affairs minister S Jaishankar said on Monday, in his first comments over the personal attack made by his Pakistani counterpart Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari against Prime Minister Narendra Modi. On Friday, the ministry of external affairs (MEA) described



S Jaishankar

Bhutto-Zardari's remarks as "uncivilised" and said they were a "new low" even for Pakistan. "I think my ministry has said very clearly what we think about what he (Pakistan foreign minister) said. We said what we had to say," Jaishankar said during India Today's India-Japan conclave. When pressed further on whether he was upset over the remarks against the Prime Minister, Jaishankar said: "Our expectation levels with the Pakistanis are never very high." In a strong condemnation of Bhutto-Zardari's remarks, MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi on Friday said the Pakistan foreign minister's "frustration" would be better directed towards the masterminds of terrorist enterprises in his own country" that has made terrorism a part of their "state policy".

"Pakistan is a country that glorifies Osama bin Laden as a martyr, and shelters terrorists like Lakhvi, Hafiz Saeed, Masood Azhar, Sajid Mir and Dawood Ibrahim. No other country can boast of having 126 UN-designated terrorists and 27 UN-designated terrorist entities," Bagchi said. The Pakistan foreign minister resorted to a personal attack on Prime Minister Modi and slammed the RSS after external affairs minister Jaishankar told the UN Security Council that the "contemporary epicentre of terrorism" remains very much active and called for collective action to tackle them.

Though Jaishankar did not name any countries, it was apparent that he was making a veiled reference to Pakistan. Later, the EAM told reporters in New York that the world sees Pakistan as the epicentre of terrorism and recalled US leader Hillary Clinton's blunt message to Islamabad in 2011 that snakes in one's backyard will eventually bite those who keep them. (PTI)



Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge (C), Rahul Gandhi and Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot at a party rally in Alwar during the ongoing 'Bharat Jodo Yatra', on Monday

## Law must not be used as tool to harass accused, says SC

**NEW DELHI, DEC 19** /--/ The law must not be used as a tool to harass the accused and courts must always ensure that frivolous cases do not "pervert" its sacrosanct nature, the Supreme Court has said.

The apex court, which quashed the criminal proceedings pending at a Chennai court against two people, said law is meant to exist as a shield to protect the innocent rather than being used as a sword to threaten them. A bench of Justices Krishna Murari and S R Bhat delivered its verdict on an appeal against the August last year judgement of the Madras High Court which had dismissed a plea seeking quashing of a criminal complaint regarding alleged contravention of the provision of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940. The apex court noted there was a gap of over four years between the initial investigation and filing of the complaint, and even after the lapse of substantial amount of time, no evidence was provided to sustain the claims in the complaint.

It said while inordinate delay in itself may not be a ground for quashing a criminal complaint,

"unexplained inordinate delay" of such length must be taken into consideration as a very crucial factor as grounds for quashing it. "At the cost of repetition, we again state that the purpose of filing a complaint and initiating criminal proceedings must exist solely to meet the ends of justice, and the law must not be used as a tool to harass the accused," the bench said in its verdict delivered on December 16. The apex court said while it is true that quashing of a criminal complaint must be done only in the rarest of rare cases, it is still the duty of the High Court to look into each and every case in great detail to prevent miscarriage of justice. "The law is a sacrosanct entity that exists to serve the ends of justice, and the courts, as protectors of the law and servants of the law, must always ensure that frivolous cases do not pervert the sacrosanct nature of the law," it said, while setting aside the High Court order.

The bench noted that one of the appellants before it is the proprietor of a firm, a trader of raw material and chemicals used in food, food supplements, medicinal preparations etc. In November 2013, the drug

inspector had inspected his premises and alleged contravention of the provision of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940. The drug inspector had issued a show cause memo in March 2016 and the appellants submitted their reply to the same, the bench noted. It also noted that in August 2017, a complaint was filed against the appellants. The High Court had dismissed the plea filed by the appellants seeking quashing of the complaint on the ground that a trial was necessary to ascertain the facts of the case.

The apex court observed it is apparent from the record that even though the complaint was made by the drug inspector, no evidence was provided by the officer to sustain the complaint. "In the present case, the respondent has provided no explanation for the extraordinary delay of more than four years between the initial site inspection, the show cause notice, and the complaint. In fact, the absence of such an explanation only prompts the court to infer some sinister motive behind initiating the criminal proceedings," the bench said, while allowing the appeal. (PTI)

## Gujarat Assembly: 182 newly-elected MLAs take oath

**AHMEDABAD, DEC 19** /--/ The 182 MLAs elected in the recent Gujarat polls took oath in the Assembly on Monday. The newly-elected legislators, including chief minister Bhupendra Patel, were administered oath by Proteem Speaker Yogesh Patel, who is the senior-most Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLA in the House, officials said. The elections, if needed, to choose the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the state's 15th Assembly will be held on Tuesday, with the BJP nominating Shankar Chaudhary and Jethabhai Bharwad, respectively, for the two posts, the officials said. Chaudhary and Bharwad filed nomination forms at the Assembly Secretariat on Monday, while the Congress, which has just 17 seats in the Assembly, has not declared any candidate for the two posts. With a record 156 Legislators in the 182-member House, the election of Chaudhary and Bharwad is a formality, in keeping with the tradition of speakers getting elected unopposed. Elections to the Assembly were held on December 1 and 5, while the results were declared on December 8. The BJP got 156 seats in its seventh straight win, followed by 17 for the Congress and five seats for the new entrant Aam Aadmi Party. (PTI)

## JD-S gives tickets to 'first family' in 1st list of candidates for 2023 Karnataka polls

**BENGALURU, DEC 19** /--/ The Janata Dal-Secular (JD-S) on Monday released its first list of its 93 candidates on Monday who will contest the upcoming Karnataka Assembly election, due by May next year. The list was released after taking consent from former prime minister and JD-S supremo H D Deve Gowda, party state president C M Ibrahim said in a statement. The JD-S handed tickets to the party's 'first family' in Gowda's son and grandson - H D Kumaraswamy and Nikhil Kumaraswamy, respectively. H D Kumaraswamy, former chief minister, will contest from Channarayana where he had won the election defeating local heavyweight C P Yogeshwar in 2018. Kumaraswamy's son Nikhil will contest from the party bastion Ramanagara. He had unsuccessfully contested the Mandya Lok Sabha election in 2019 and lost to the BJP-backed independent candidate Sumalatha Ambareesh.

The party is also rewarding sitting MLA G T Devegowda by not only giving him a ticket from Chamundeshwari constituency but also to his son Harish Gowda who will fight from Hunsur. "We are giving ticket to all the 32 sitting MLAs," a JD-S media team in charge told PTI. The party had won 37 seats in the 2018 Assembly polls. However, five of them resigned from the Karnataka assembly staging a coup against the Kumaraswamy-led coalition government of the JD-S and Congress in July 2019. These five MLAs were among the 18 MLAs disqualified by then Assembly Speaker K R Ramesh Kumar. After disqualification, the coalition government collapsed and the BJP came to power.

A majority of the disqualified MLAs joined the BJP, contested the by-polls in 2019 December, won the election and became ministers in the new government. For next year's polls, the list released by the JD-S includes candidates from almost all the districts of Karnataka from Khanapur in Belagavi in north Karnataka to Hanur in Chamarajanagar district of southern Karnataka. The party will release the remaining 131 candidates in the coming days, party sources said. The Karnataka Assembly has a total of 224 MLAs. (PTI)

## Chidambaram asks in RS if India-China border situation figured in Modi-Jinping exchange in Bali

**NEW DELHI, DEC 19** /--/ The Congress and treasury benches were engaged in a verbal spat in the Rajya Sabha on Monday after ex-finance minister P Chidambaram sought to know if the border situation figured during the brief exchange Prime Minister Narendra Modi had with Chinese President Xi Jinping in Bali. As the senior Congress leader referred to a video of Modi's brief chat with Jinping in Bali during the G20 summit last month, treasury benches raised a protest, alleging he was deviating from the discussion on supplementary grants. Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Thakur asked Chidambaram to place the video on the table of the House later in the day. Chidambaram said: "I just want to know, without going into details, was the border situation discussed? Don't tell me what you discussed." The BJP's G V L Narasimha Rao objected to Chidambaram's demand through a point of order under Rule 110 which stipulates that discussion on a motion that a bill be passed shall be confined to submission of arguments either in support of the bill or for its rejection and a member shall not refer to the details of the bill further than necessary for the purpose of arguments, which shall be of general character. Chidambaram, however, asserted that he was within his rights as the Supplementary Demands for Grants included Rs 500 crore for defence capital expenditure for strategic and border roads in the North-East. "These are strategic and border roads in the northeast... We know who is the threat in the country's North-Eastern, northern and eastern parts. (PTI)

## Maharashtra should stand firmly behind people from Marathi-speaking areas of Karnataka: CM amid boundary dispute

**NAGPUR, DEC 19** /--/ Maharashtra chief minister Eknath Shinde on Monday said the state should stand firmly behind people in the Marathi-speaking areas of neighbouring Karnataka and appealed to political parties not to behave in a way that would hurt them.

Maharashtra deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnis said the state government will initiate a special programme for the development of villages located along the border and resolve their pending issues. The Maharashtra government was making efforts for the release of the

people and leaders detained in Karnataka, he said amid the ongoing boundary dispute between the two states. Raising the issue in the Assembly on the first day of the state legislature's winter session in Nagpur, Leader of Opposition Ajit Pawar said Shiv Sena MP Dhairyasheel Mane (of the Shinde faction) was stopped from entering Belagavi in Karnataka, despite the intervention of Union home minister Amit Shah in the boundary dispute.

Mane was recently appointed as the chief of an expert committee formed by the Maharashtra

government regarding a writ petition in the Supreme Court on the border dispute with Karnataka. He had



Eknath Shinde

requested the Belagavi administration to make

arrangements for his visit to the city. However, the district authorities banned his entry, saying a "possible inflammatory speech" by him might create law and order problems. "When it was decided before Amit Shah ji that they (people) will not be stopped, how can a district collector stop the MP (Mane) from entering there. We should not tolerate this high handedness. The CM and DyCM should take a firm stand. When (Karnataka Chief Minister B S) Bommai had accepted it then the collector did not listen to Bommai," Pawar said. Responding to it,

Shinde said there can be no dispute over the fact that the issue raised by Pawar is important in terms of Maharashtra.

"For the first time, the Union home minister intervened in the matter and mediated. He called a meeting and this has happened for the first time. He has taken the matter seriously," the chief minister said. "We should stand by the people residing in border areas, back their struggle and act in a way that doesn't hurt them," he added. Shinde said the state government urged the Centre that this issue is

related to the self-respect of Maharashtra and that it should take a firm stand in the favour of Maharashtra and people residing in the border areas. "We said vehicles from Maharashtra are vandalised and attacked. This is not in sync with law and order and democracy. Such things should not happen because there could be a reaction to an action," the chief minister said.

The Union home minister also gave instructions that such things should not happen since the matter is (pending) before the Supreme Court, Shinde said. (PTI)



# Subsidy for deep sea fishing

**PORT BLAIR, DEC 19/--/** The Department of Fisheries, A&N Administration proposes to implement the components 'Support for Acquisition of Deep Sea Fishing Vessels (FRP/Steel) for Traditional Fishermen' of A & N Islands during the year 2022-23 under PMMSY.

The component on Assistance for acquisition of Deep Sea Fishing (FRP/ Steel) for Traditional Fishermen envisages subsidy @ 40% of the unit cost (120 Lakh.) with a ceiling of Rs.48.00 lakh for General Category and @60% with a ceiling of Rs.72.00 lakh for Schedule Tribe / Women and their Cooperative Societies towards support for acquisition of Deep sea fishing (FRP/ Steel) vessels for traditional fishermen.

Applications in prescribed format including Self Contained DPR (Two sets) have been invited from Traditional/ Artisanal Fishermen/ Fisher Women and their Societies/ Associations/ SHGs/ FFPOs for 'Support for Acquisition of Deep Sea Fishing (FRP/ Steel) vessels for traditional fishermen' in A&N Islands.

The Applicants who have already submitted the applications for 'Support for Acquisition of Deep Sea Fishing Vessels' may again re-submit the application in the prescribed format along with the self contained DPR (2 sets). The applicant should be

a Traditional / Artisanal fishermen and their Societies/ Associations / SHGs / FPOs. Beneficiary should possess valid ownership certificate, Registration Certificate under the ReAL Craft, Fishing License and Biometric ID cards of Fishers/QR coded Aadhaar card.

The Governmental assistance is restricted to 1 unit per individual beneficiary; 2 units per group/society (of at least 10 members) in case of Groups of Traditional/Artisanal Fishermen i.e. Traditional/Artisanal Fishermen SHGs/Joint Liability Groups (JLGs)/ Traditional/ Artisanal Fisher Cooperatives etc. or those undertaken in a cluster/area approach. However, a cluster/area may have multiple groups/societies. As far as FFPOs/Cs are concerned, the modalities of implementation and upper ceiling on the total units eligible for support would be decided by the CAC.

The vessel should have onboard machineries/fishing equipment including refrigerated storage facilities for undertaking deep sea tuna long lining and gill netting. Appropriate communication systems, AIS/transponders and other navigation equipment for safe navigation etc., as per the relevant regulations/guidelines are mandatory onboard the vessels.

Deep sea fishing vessel should be considered as an alternative for

replacement of the existing bottom trawler and the State/UT shall ensure suitable disposal of old fishing boat (against which new one is replaced).

Beneficiaries will submit Self Contained Proposal (SCP) with relevant techno-financial details of the vessel. Installation of Bio-toilet shall be mandatory within the project cost.

The selected beneficiaries should construct Deep Sea Fishing Vessel (FRP/Steel) only through the boat building yards empanelled by Department of Fisheries , A & N Administration and Ministry of Fisheries& Animal husbandry & Dairying, Department of Fisheries, Govt. of India i.e. M/s Samundra Ship Yard Pvt. Limited for FRP DSFV and Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) for Steel DSFV respectively.

Interested applicants may contact the Directorate of Fisheries, Port Blair, Zonal Fisheries offices, South Andaman/N&M Andaman and Nicobar or nearest Fisheries Sub Stations for detailed terms & conditions of the scheme and design, drawing FRP/ Steel Deep Sea Fishing Vessel. They should submit the applications in prescribed format along with relevant documents to the respective Zonal Offices/Sub Stations. The completed applications in all respect should reach the nearest Fisheries Zonal Office / Sub-Stations on or before 31st December, 2022.

# NGGOA delegation interacts with govt employees

**PORT BLAIR, DEC 19/--/** A delegation of Non-Gazetted Govt. Officers' Association led by the General Secretary, Mr..Rajendran recently visited the Mayabunder area and met with the government employees working in various offices and schools. During the interaction with the government employees, it was found that there are several long pending issues in the area which is not being heard by the authorities of district administration and the employees are facing lot of hardship. The delegation noticed that several government quarters are lying in dilapidated condition in the Headquarter area for several years without proper maintenance while the government servants especially women employees are forced to stay in rented accommodation by paying higher rent. The roads coming

under National Highway and other interior areas are in worst condition which needs special attention for its urgent repair. It was also reported that the District Hospital at Mayabunder is functioning without sufficient doctors and other supporting staff, due to which the patients including govt. servants are suffering for good medical facilities. A General Body meeting of Mayabunder Branch was held on 15.12.2022 which elected Mr. M.C.Prasanna as Vice President, Jagat Ram Baraik as Secretary and Mr. K.S.Sunish as Treasurer. Besides, other office bearers and executive members were elected in the meeting. Mr. S.L.Vinjit, Asst. General Secretary and Shri P.Jay Murthy, Secretary, South Andaman Teachers' Branch also addressed the meeting on various issues of employees. Several resolutions are adopted.

# 35th National U-13 Chess Championship concludes

**PORT BLAIR, DEC 19/--/** The 35th National Under-13 Chess Championship 2022 which began on 11th December 2022 at Vanarapet, Pondicherry concluded yesterday evening successfully.

Altogether 504 players across India took part in the prestigious event in which 5 young budding chess players (three boys and two girls) from Andaman & Nicobar Islands have participated and done reasonably well.

In Boy's sections, M ADinakar of Kamaraj E M School & Yuvan Singh of Carmel Sr. Sec. School Port Blair scored 5 points each with two wins & six draws and four wins & two draws respectively and V Yashwant of Govt. Model Sr. Secondary School Port Blair scored 4 points with two wins and four draws.

Similarly, in girl's section Kavya Raj of VKV Lambaline Port Blair scored 5 points with four wins and two draws and Tanisha Raj of VKV Lambaline Port Blair scored 4 points with three wins and two draws.

# SC directs Centre, IITs to follow quota law in recruitment of faculty

**NEW DELHI, DEC 19 /--/** The Supreme Court has directed the Centre to follow the reservation policy for admission in research degree programmes and recruitment of faculty members at IITs as provided under the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Teachers' Cadre) Act, 2019.

The top court was hearing a plea filed by a man named S N Pandey seeking direction to the Centre and the IITs to follow the reservation policy with regard to admissions in research programmes and recruitment of faculty members, claiming the guidelines were being violated.

The matter came up before a bench of Justices M R Shah and C T Ravikumar and it was informed that the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Teachers' Cadre) Act, 2019 stipulates such reservation and it is being implemented.

"Counsel appearing on behalf of the respondent has pointed out that now in view of the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Teachers' Cadre) Act, 2019, the reservation is provided with respect to all the Central Educational Institutions including the IITs. "The concerned respondents are hereby



directed to follow the reservation and act as per the reservations provided under the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Teachers' Cadre) Act, 2019," the bench said.

The Act provides for quotas in teaching positions in central institutions for persons from Scheduled Castes/Tribes, socially and educationally backward classes, and those from economically weaker sections. Pandey, in his plea filed through advocate Ashwani Kumar Dubey, had also sought directives for creation of a mechanism for resolving harassment complaints by students/ scholars related to research

work and to constitute a committee of technical experts to review the performance of the existing faculty. He had sought cancellation of the appointment of non-performing faculty due to violation of reservation norms and formulation of a transparent recruitment policy. "It is submitted that the process of taking admissions in the research program and appointment of faculty members by the respondents (IITs) are c o m p l e t e l y unconstitutional, illegal and arbitrary. The respondents are not following the guidelines of reservation as per the constitutional mandate," the plea said.

It claimed the IITs were not following a transparent process of recruiting the faculty members which opened up a window for non-deserving candidates to enter the prestigious institutions through connections that increased the chances of corruption, favouritism and discrimination, affecting internal ranking and technological growth of the country. "The respondents (IITs) are completely violating the reservation policies that provide for reservation to socially marginalised communities belonging to the SC (15 percent), ST (17 per cent) and OBCs (27 per cent)," the plea said. (PTI)

# Nine J&K students participated in global asteroid search campaign as part of NASA project

**JAMMU, DEC 19 /--/** In the first, nine students of a private school in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district participated in a global asteroid search campaign as part of NASA's citizen science project.

The campaign was organised by Delhi-based Homi Lab in association with the International Astronomical search collaboration (IASC) from October 21 to November 15, Homi Lab said in a press release here. A spokesperson of the lab said this was the first time that a school from the Kathua district has participated in the NASA Campaign. It said Shrnaya, Abhay Pratap Singh, Divum Bharti, Rashi Sharma, Alyssa Sardhalia, Samar Pratap Singh Bhadwal, Mehul Sharma, Mrigan Kamouli Vaishisth and Pranaya Mahajan from Spring Dales English School Kathua participated in the Kalam Asteroid Search Campaign.

"As part of NASA's citizen science project that is conducted by Hardin Simmons University, USA,

under this programme, IASC and Homi Lab deployed a unique platform that gave selected participants a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to discover real near-Earth objects and Main Belt asteroids. Outreach and training support was extended by Kalam Centre, Delhi," the release said.



It said a total of 105 participants from nine countries were selected across the globe through a rigorous screening process and were later trained to analyse data and spot potential asteroids close to the earth. "At the end of the campaign, young minds made path-breaking contributions to NASA's Near-Earth Object (NEO) Programme and discovered three preliminary asteroids. Preliminary discoveries are the first observations of asteroids found in the main belt located between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter which need further confirmation to go to provisional status," the release said.


It said this usually takes up to

five years after which the asteroid can be officially catalogued by the Minor Planet Center, International Astronomical Union (IAU). The release said selected participants were provided highly specialised training in order to operate the advanced astronomical software, Astrometrica.

This software is used to analyse images from the Pan Starrs' (The Panoramic Survey Telescope and Rapid Response System) telescope, located in Hawaii, USA. It uses a 1.8 m (60 inch) telescope to survey the sky to look for asteroids, comets, and Near-Earth Objects (NEO).

Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Homi Lab, Srijan Pal Singh, congratulated the students and said "these discoveries are crucial contributions to our knowledge of the cosmos around us. "Knowing the asteroids around and mapping them is an important element in our bid to understand and monitor these travelling rocks from distant worlds around our planet," he said. (PTI)





# FROZEN SHOULDER

WHAT IS IT & HOW CAN IT BE RELEASED?

**APOLLO CLINIC**  
#192, GARACHARMA MAIN ROAD, PORT BLAIR, SOUTH ANDAMAN -744105,  
L/INE: 03192 252 052 / 522, MOB : 9531807777



# Shyam N Shyam

*Festive Collection*  
**NAYRA - CUT**  
**STRAIGHT PANT SETS**  
**SHARARA & PLAZZO**  
**CROP-TOP LEHENGAS**  
*Special Plus Size Collection. Sizes Upto 3XL*

**Aberdeen Bazaar, Port Blair, Andamans**





# Festival Sale

*Free 32" Smart TV*  
*Offer Valid on Limited Stock*



**Preeta Cars India Pvt Ltd | Renault Port Blair**  
Phoenix Bay, South Andaman-744102 | email : [gecsalespb@gmail.com](mailto:gecsalespb@gmail.com)  
Contact Us: 9564783849 | 9564783856



**Equal opportunity means everyone will have a fair chance at being incompetent**  
**Laurence J. Peter**

## Sufficient food grains in stock

The Government of India has sufficient food grains in stock under Central Pool to meet the requirement of National Food Security Act and its Other Welfare Schemes as well as for additional allocation of PMGKAY. About 159 LMT of Wheat and 104 LMT of Rice will be available as on 1st of January 2023, which is well above the respective buffer norms requirement of 138 LMT of Wheat and 76 LMT of Rice as on 1st of January. As on 15.12.2022, around 180 LMT of Wheat and 111 LMT of Rice are available in the Central Pool. Buffer norms requirements have been envisaged for particular dates of the year as on 1st of April, 1st of July, 1st of October and 1st of January. The stock position of Wheat and Rice under Central Pool have always remained well above the buffer norms. Around 227 LMT of Wheat and 205 LMT of Rice were available as on 1st of October, 2022 against the respective buffer norms requirements of 205 LMT of Wheat and 103 LMT of Rice as on 1st of October.

Adequate quantity of food grains will be available as on 1st of January, 2023 well above the buffer norms requirement of 1st of January. Though procurement of Wheat during last season was on lower side due to lesser production coupled with selling by farmers at prices higher than MSP in the open market consequent to geo-political situation, yet enough stock of Wheat will still be available in Central Pool to cater to the needs of the country till the time next Wheat crop arrives. Further, the allocations under NFSA as well as PMGKAY have also been revised in favour of Rice for having sufficient Wheat in stock in Central Pool to cater to the requirements of Welfare Schemes. The Government of India has, thereby, ensured that sufficient stock of food grains are available in the Central Pool to meet the requirement of all the Welfare Schemes across the country and prices remain under control.

The Centre recently enhanced the MSP of Wheat crop this year to Rs. 2125/ qtl against the last year MSP of Rs. 2015/ qtl for RMS 2022-23. Thus, increase in MSP of Rs. 110/ qtl coupled with fairly good climatic conditions, it is expected that the production and procurement of Wheat during next season shall remain normal. Procurement of Wheat next season would commence from April 2023 and as per initial assessment there has been a fair increase in the sowing of Wheat crop as compared to last year. In May this year, the government banned exports of wheat to boost domestic supplies and control prices. Wheat procurement by state-owned FCI fell to 187.92 lakh tonne in 2022-23 marketing year from 434.44 lakh tonne due to fall in domestic output and aggressive purchase by private parties.

# 97pc Afghan population languishing in poverty under Taliban

## REFLEX ACTION

Sankar Ray

The Emirate of Afghanistan under the Taliban is in a deepening existentialist crisis due to continuity of economic blockade and diplomatic impasse. Till date, excepting Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and UAE, the ultra-Islamic government is yet to be accorded diplomatic recognition, even after 16 months of capture of power in Kabul, despite appeals to regional global powers. Even Qatar which carried on a protracted attempt for a mutual and peaceful settlement among warring political groups of the troubled-ridden state, hasn't recognized the new regime that imbibes Political Islam.

The USA, yet to get out of shock of humiliating experience of over two decades of trying to tame the Taliban militarily, resorts to a shot-back policy of retaliation through economic blockade and other means of financial strangulation against the Taliban rule. Washington has taken up an aggressive and non-cooperative post-withdrawal policy. The US President Joe Biden's refusal to release any amount from the \$7 billion parked in Afghanistan's central bank reserves, currently in US possession, has accentuated the crisis. The USA pulled out of talks with the Taliban on the plea that the assassinated al-Qaeda leader Adnan al-Zawahiri was allowed to stay near a house owned by Taliban interior minister Sirajuddin Haqqani. With the Taliban recalcitrance to strike a compromise with the western powers, Afghanistan has plunged into an unprecedented penury. The concerns about coping with the humanitarian crisis in the approaching winter have been growing. According to a report by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 97 percent of the Afghan population languishes under the poverty line as Afghanistan confronts one of the world's worst humanitarian crises.

Islamabad's civil-military elite has, along with China, Russia and Iran, emphasized on an "inclusive" political setup comprising inter alia representatives from different ethnicities. An inclusivity-oriented approach would, arguably, help Pakistan prove its readiness to encourage a pluralist stance while reflecting its non-reliance on solely one Afghan

stakeholder. The Taliban leadership is yet to reflect their willingness to accept the regional and international input meaningfully. The Taliban representatives in talks with China, Russia and the US focused on establishing an inclusive government. The Biden administration is believed to have urged Taliban to fulfill their commitments they agreed in the deal with the US in February 2020. For instance, the Taliban are still disingenuous in keeping up the promise of treating women and minorities in equitable terms. They keep going back on establishing effective law and order that includes letting a non-state actor like as ISIS to plan terror attacks on unarmed and innocent civilians, both local and foreign.

Relations between Islamabad and Kabul are all of a sudden under strain after shelling by the Afghan forces along the Chaman border, known as Friendship Gate, where 'unprovoked and indiscriminate fire' killed six civilians recently. It is Pakistan's main frontier with Afghanistan through which the two countries trading operations continue. The firing caused backfire from the Pakistan side. According to the Dawn, Pakistan's most well-known English morning, local authorities were compelled to shut the Chaman border crossing the principal border region.

A well-known Lahore-based political commentator and academic said that the exchange of fire in Chaman caused skyrocketed tensions between Pakistan's federal government and Afghanistan's Taliban rulers. Condemning the incident, the Prime Minister of Pakistan Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif tweeted stating bluntly that the interim government in Kabul must ensure that such incidents are not repeated in the future. A senior bureaucrat of Islamabad is on record, "it was unprovoked and indiscriminate gunfire which continued for a while and this included

artillery shelling by Afghan Border forces."

Insiders are in increasing agony as the Talibanism remains unchanged. The Taliban stepped up imposition of strict Islamic punishments across Afghanistan such as publicly flogging of dozens of men and women in several provinces for crimes such as theft and adultery. In mid-November this year, the Taliban's supreme court revealed that more than two dozen people were publicly flogged for "committing adultery, theft, or eloping from home" in the southern province of Kandahar, the central province of Bamiyan, and the northern Takhar Province. These atrocities were seen days after the Taliban's supreme leader, Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzada, ordered the Afghan judiciary to implement Hudood as part of the Taliban's overall drive to enforce the strict implementation of Islamic Shari'a law, which the extremist group has long touted as its main objective. For the Taliban the Shari'a law imposes an imperative to Muslim rulers on imposing penalties like flogging for drinking, stoning for adultery, amputation of limbs for theft, crucifixion for robbery, and death for rebellion. These offenses are considered a violation of the boundaries set by God, or Hudood, and thus require public corporal punishments. However, responsible international opinion has very serious reservations about the medieval barbarism under the Emirate in Kabul. Filippo Grandi, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, speaking at the gathering of "Afghanistan, Finding a Way Forward", under the aegis of the Nobel Peace Prize Forum in the Norwegian capital Oslo stated unambiguously that the international community would be left with no choice other than interacting with Afghanistan, and adding that if interaction does not take place, the Afghan people will suffer more and more people will be forced to leave their homes.

The UN data disclose that, Afghans now constitute the largest number of immigrants, refugees and internally displaced people in the world. Immigrants, refugees and internally displaced people now are a total of 6.5 million. Political Islam now hits a hardened road block as never before. (IPA)



Silver screen lovers throng Nandan to watch world-class movies at the ongoing 28th Kolkata International Film Festival on Monday---Arijit Ganguly

## Centre's Proposed Amendment Bill for Cooperative Societies is ominous

The tendency to centralise administration and power – and thereby weaken the federal structure of the constitution – is a hallmark of the Narendra Modi government's policy. One of the important ways in which the Modi government attempted to violate the constitutional powers of the states was by forming a ministry of cooperation and installing none other than Amit Shah as its minister.

Soon after the formation of the ministry, the Supreme Court of India gave a judgement that partly limited the adventurism of the BJP government. In 2011, the 97th constitutional amendment had inserted Part IXB into the constitution and specified several conditions for state-level laws related to cooperative societies. In October 2022, the court ruled that the 97th amendment would not be applicable to local cooperative societies but only multi-state cooperative societies. The judgement was a setback to the government, which was planning to use the 2011 amendment to intrude into local cooperative societies registered under state cooperative laws.

It was then that the Modi government decided to use the multi-state cooperative society route to intervene in the states. Using the same 2011 constitutional amendment, it has

now introduced the Multi-State Cooperative Societies (Amendment) Bill, 2022 to amend the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002.

The proposed 2022 Bill is a dangerous legislation. It is a blatant attempt to thrust the decisions of the central government on to cooperative societies functioning under state laws. As per the amended Clause 6, any cooperative society may, empowered by a resolution passed by majority of not less than two-thirds of the members present and voting at the society's general meeting, decide to merge into an existing multi-state cooperative society. As per the amended Clause 13, any redemption of shares of multi-state cooperative societies cannot be undertaken without the centre's approval. As per the amended Clause 17, a Central Election Authority will be appointed by the central government. As per the amended Clause 45, the central government can override a board of directors and appoint an administrator. All these amendments are explicitly intended to insert multi-

state cooperative societies into the cooperative structures of states. This will allow the central government to strain and strangle local cooperatives and take control of the whole cooperative structure in states through penal actions, mergers, board takeovers, and interventions in elections.

The "logic" offered to amend the 2002 Act is, purportedly, to enhance transparency and accountability, and improve the ease of doing business in cooperatives. However, this "logic" is quite illogical; there is no assurance that if a cooperative society moves from state control to central control, its transparency, accountability, and performance will improve. In fact, multi-state cooperative societies are in a crisis all over India. In December 2021, Amit Shah informed the parliament that 44 multi-state cooperative societies in nine states and UTs are being wound up due to financial mismanagement or inefficiency. Evidence also shows that many state-level cooperatives, such as in Kerala, function more efficiently and profitably than many multi-state

cooperative societies. There is more. Under the central government's directions, AMUL is either joining hands, or being merged, with five local cooperatives to form a multi-state cooperative society. This society would be engaged in certification of products of "natural farming" and export of milk. Such politically motivated steps will only weaken state-level dairy cooperatives as well as a professionally run cooperative like AMUL.

In what makes its intentions further clear, the Modi government is also infusing money into defunct multi-state cooperative societies based in Gujarat and Maharashtra and sending them to establish new bases in faraway states like Kerala. The intent is to weaken the operations of local cooperative societies in Kerala, takeover their business, and expand the political capital of BJP in the state.

The very spirit of cooperation in India is premised on regional diversity. Neoliberal policies in the banking sector have already pushed cooperative societies in states into a crisis. With centralisation, as attempted in the proposed 2022 Bill, the objective appears to be to undermine and destroy them. States must join hands – both politically and legally – to rebuff this unconstitutional step. (IPA)

## FOCUS

Ram Kumar

Conventional Crossword												
1		2	3		4		5					
		6			7		8					
9					10							
		11										
12	13				14		15			16		
17				18	19			20				
				21			22					
23		24					25					
26							27					
							28					

ACROSS						DOWN					
1	Regretted	2	Vigour	3	Location	1	Scoundrel	2	Happenings	3	Dreadful
6	Prophet	7	Automaton	8	Himalayan state	4	Curved bone	5	Wager	6	Alone
10	Perform	11	Subject of discourse	12	Speech defects	7	Poisonous	8	Rodent	9	Smokers' favourite
13	Top card	14	Of the moon	15	Heaven	10	Conditional release	11	Join firmly	12	Scheme
16	Eternal City	17	Country	18	Lubricant	13	Heavenly body	14	Dry	15	Fastener
19	Dexterous	20		21		16	Joke	17		18	

SUDOKU: 3731												
					2	7	5	8				
				4								
					8	1	6					
6		7		2			8					
		5	3		7	4						
	4			6		3		9				
	8	3	9									
				7								
4	5	9	2									

Yesterday's Solution 3730												
1	6	4	3	5	9	7	8	2				
7	3	2	6	1	8	9	5	4				
9	8	5	7	2	4	3	6	1				
8	1	3	5	4	7	6	2	9				
5	7	6	9	3	2	1	4	8				
4	2	9	8	6	1	5	3	7				
3	4	1	2	7	6	8	9	5				
2	5	8	1	9	3	4	7	6				
6	9	7	4	8	5	2	1	3				

Yesterday's Cross Word Solution 1739												
B	E	R	A	T	E		S	I	P			
A			A	N	Y		E					
R	E	T	I	N	A		R	O	T			
W			M	E	R	G	E		R			
M	E	S	A		M	A	N	S	E			
I	R	A	T	E		R	E	E	L			
N		P	E	T	A	L		E				
G	A	P			A	L	A	R	M	S		
L	E				O	N	E		U			
E	N	D			M	E	D	D	L	E		

### 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.



SEVA SUCHNAYEIN

All the sailings are subject to weather conditions

**INTER ISLAND SECTOR:**  
· MV Bharat Seema will sail for Car Nicobar via Little Andaman on 19.12.2022 (Mon) at 0700 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on 20.12.2022 (Tue) at 1600 Hrs from Car Nicobar via Little Andaman.  
· Nalanda will sail for Campbell Bay via Nancowry on 21.12.2022 (Wed) at 1000 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on 23.12.2022 (Fri) at 0900 Hrs from Campbell Bay via Nancowry. Passenger tickets for the above sailing will be issued to the general public from 19.12.2022 (Mon) onwards at STARS Ticketing Counters.  
· MV Bharat Seema will sail for Car Nicobar via Little Andaman on 23.12.2022 (Fri) at 0700 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will now sail for Port Blair on 24.12.2022 (Sat) at 1200 Hrs directly from Car Nicobar. Passenger tickets for the above sailing will be issued to the general public from 21.12.2022 (Wed) onwards at STARS Ticketing Counters.  
· MV Campbell Bay will sail for Campbell Bay via Nancowry on 27.12.2022 (Tue) at 1000 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on 29.12.2022 (Thu) at 0900 Hrs from Campbell Bay via Nancowry. Passenger tickets for the above sailing will be issued to the general public from 23.12.2022 (Fri) onwards at STARS Ticketing Counters.  
· MV Bharat Seema will sail for Car Nicobar via Little Andaman on 28.12.2022 (Wed) at 0700 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on 29.12.2022 (Thu) at 1600 Hrs Car Nicobar via Little Andaman. Passenger tickets for the above sailing will be issued to the general public from 26.12.2022 (Mon) onwards at STARS Ticketing Counters.

**LITTLE ANDAMAN:**  
· Nalanda will sail for Little Andaman on 18.12.2022 (Sun) at 2100 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on 19.12.2022 (Mon) at 0800 Hrs from Little Andaman.  
· Campbell Bay will sail for Little Andaman on 21.12.2022 (Wed) at 0900 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 2100 Hrs from Little Andaman.  
· MV Campbell Bay will sail for Little Andaman on 23.12.2022 (Fri) at 0900 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 2100 Hrs from Little Andaman.  
· Nalanda will sail for Little Andaman on 26.12.2022 (Mon) at 0900 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 2100 Hrs from Little Andaman.  
· Nalanda will sail for Little Andaman on 29.12.2022 (Thu) 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 23rd, 26th & 29th Dec., 2022) will be issued to the general public from 20.12.2022 (Tue) onwards at STARS Ticketing Counters.

**DIGLIPUR & MAYABUNDER:**  
· MV Dering will sail for Diglipur via Mayabunder on 21.12.2022 (Wed) at 1900 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on 22.12.2022 (Thu) at 1230 Hrs from Diglipur via Mayabunder. Passenger tickets for the above sailing will be issued to the general public from 19.12.2022 onwards at STARS Ticketing Counters.  
· MV Dering will sail for Diglipur via Mayabunder on 23.12.2022 (Fri) at 1900 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on 24.12.2022 (Sat) at 1230 Hrs from Diglipur via Mayabunder. Passenger tickets for the above sailing will be issued to the general public from 21.12.2022 onwards at STARS Ticketing Counters.  
· MV Dering will sail for Diglipur via Mayabunder on 28.12.2022 (Wed) at 1900 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on 29.12.2022 (Thu) at 1230 Hrs from Diglipur via Mayabunder. Passenger tickets for the above sailing will be issued to the general public from 26.12.2022 onwards at STARS Ticketing Counters.  
· MV Dering will sail for Diglipur via Mayabunder on 31.12.2022 (Sat) at 1900 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on 01.01.2023 (Sun) at 1230 Hrs from Diglipur via Mayabunder. Passenger tickets for the above sailing will be issued to the general public from 29.12.2022 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.

**18.12.2022 (SUN)**  
**SHAHEED DWEEP & SWARAJ DWEEP**  
· MV Bambooka will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 18.12.2022 (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 Strait Island will sail for Shaheed Dweep on 18.12.2022 (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 18.12.2022 (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 18.12.2022 (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 18.12.2022 (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 Strait Island will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 18.12.2022 (Sun) at 1700 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail back to Port Blair on 19.12.2022 (Mon) at 0600 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep.

**19.12.2022 (MON)**  
**SHAHEED DWEEP & SWARAJ DWEEP**  
· MV Bambooka will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 19.12.2022 (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 19.12.2022 (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 19.12.2022 (Mon) 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 19.12.2022 (Mon) 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 19.12.2022 (Mon) at 1400 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 1630 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep.

Punjab and Haryana HC quashes departmental action against retired Haryana cop, says should be allowed to live in peace

**CHANDIGARH, DEC 19 / --/** The Punjab and Haryana High Court has quashed departmental proceedings against a retired police inspector, citing rules that don't allow such action against a superannuated official once four years have passed since the alleged misconduct.  
"Let bygones be bygones" for the retired employees appeared to be the rationale for the rules, the court said in its December 7 order. "The apparent object behind these rules seems to be that a retired employee, after the statutory period of four years, should be left to live in peace in the twilight zone of his life.  
The alleged misconduct on his part should be allowed to settle with the efflux of time," Justice

Deepak Sibal said. The Haryana government had ordered departmental proceedings against the petitioner, observing that he had passed an LLB course from Rajasthan while he was posted in Karnal in 1986-88. It argued that the inspector could not be present at two places at the same time. Inspector Raj Pal's counsel submitted that he retired on June 30, 2019 and that even the extension of his service for one year ended on June 30, 2020.  
The charge sheet was issued against him on October 5, 2021. Justice Sibal said a harmonious reading of Haryana Civil Services Rules 12.2 (b) and 12(5)(a) leads to "only one irresistible conclusion".  
After an employee has retired from service, "there

is a complete embargo on the initiation of departmental proceedings against him in respect of event(s) which may have taken place more than four years prior to the initiation of the departmental proceedings," the order said.  
The judge said the apparent rationale for the rule was to allow the retired employee live in peace.  
"The rationale also appears to be based on the phrase 'let bygones be bygones' for retirees and because memory fades with age as also for the reason that it is not easy for a retiree to have access to the relevant record or his colleagues, who may have also retired and settled elsewhere, making it difficult for him to effectively defend himself," he said. (PTI)

SC directs Centre, IITs to follow quota law in recruitment of faculty

**NEW DELHI, DEC 19 / --/** The Supreme Court has directed the Centre to follow the reservation policy for admission in research degree programmes and recruitment of faculty members at IITs as provided under the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Teachers' Cadre) Act, 2019.  
The top court was hearing a plea filed by a man named S N Pandey seeking direction to the Centre and the IITs to follow the reservation policy with regard to admissions in research programmes and recruitment of faculty members, claiming the guidelines were being violated. The matter came up before a bench of Justices M R Shah and C T Ravikumar and it was informed that the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Teachers' Cadre) Act, 2019 stipulates such reservation and it is being implemented. "Coun-

sel appearing on behalf of the respondent has pointed out that now in view of the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Teachers' Cadre) Act, 2019, the reservation is provided with respect to all the Central Educational Institutions including the IITs. "The concerned respondents are hereby directed to follow the reservation and act as per the reservations provided under the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Teachers' Cadre) Act, 2019," the bench said.  
The Act provides for quotas in teaching positions in central institutions for persons from Scheduled Castes/Tribes, socially and educationally backward classes, and those from economically weaker sections. Pandey, in his plea filed through advocate Ashwani Kumar Dubey, had also sought directives for crea-

tion of a mechanism for resolving harassment complaints by students/scholars related to research work and to constitute a committee of technical experts to review the performance of the existing faculty. He had sought cancellation of the appointment of non-performing faculty due to violation of reservation norms and formulation of a transparent recruitment policy. "It is submitted that the process of taking admissions in the research program and appointment of faculty members by the respondents (IITs) are completely unconstitutional, illegal and arbitrary. The respondents are not following the guidelines of reservation as per the constitutional mandate," the plea said.  
It claimed the IITs were not following a transparent process of recruiting the faculty members which opened up a window for non-deserving candidates to enter the prestigious institutions through connections that increased the chances of corruption, favouritism and discrimination, affecting internal ranking and technological growth of the country. "The respondents (IITs) are completely violating the reservation policies that provide for reservation to socially marginalised communities belonging to the SC (15 percent), ST (17 percent) and OBCs (27 percent)," the plea said. (PTI)

Delhi HC rejects plea to prohibit affixing images of deities on walls to prevent public urination



**NEW DELHI, DEC 19 / --/** Delhi High Court on Monday dismissed a PIL seeking to prohibit the practice of putting up images of deities on walls to prevent people from urinating, spitting or littering in public places.  
A bench of Chief Justice Satish Chandra Sharma and Justice Subramonium Prasad, which had earlier reserved its order on the plea, rejected it.  
The petition said the common practice of affixing photographs of deities on walls to prevent urination, spitting and throwing garbage in public places had created a serious menace in society as these pictures did not guarantee the prevention of such acts.

and throwing junk violated sections 295 (injuring or defiling place of worship with intent to insult the religion of any class) and 295A (deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs) of the Indian Penal Code as it hurt the religious sentiments of the general public.  
The plea said the high court, in an earlier case, had acknowledged the menace of open public urination and, in its order, noted that religious sentiments of people were getting hurt due to the practice of affixing photographs of deities on walls. (PTI)

Instead, people publicly urinate or spit on the "sacred images", the petition said. "This seriously denigrates and disparages the sanctity of the sacred images... Fear is used as an element to stop people from urinating or spitting and littering. These things cannot be permitted over the element of pure devotion borne out of faith and freedom to practise and profess one's religion," petitioner and advocate Gorang Gupta said. The plea said affixation of sacred images of deities on walls to prevent urination in public and spitting

Dengue tally this year crosses 4K-mark in Delhi, over 500 cases in Dec

**NEW DELHI, DEC 19 / --/** More than 250 dengue cases have been reported in the national capital in December, taking the infection tally of the vector-borne disease past the 4,000 mark so far this year, according to a civic report issued on Monday.  
In November, 1,420 cases were logged, while 1,238 cases were recorded in October. The dengue infection tally stood at 3,857 till December 9, and 257 more cases have been recorded since then till December 16. The city has also recorded 251 cases of malaria and 45 cases of chikungunya this year, according to the report released by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD). Of the total of 4,114 reported cases, 693 were logged in September. In 2017, the city logged 4,711 cases in the January 1-December 16 periods, the report stated. No death has been reported so far this year due to the dis-

ease while in 2021, dengue claimed 23 lives, the report said. In 2015, the city witnessed a massive dengue outbreak, with the number of cases crossing 10,600 in October. It was Delhi's worst dengue outbreak since 1996.  
According to the MCD report issued on Monday, the city recorded 23 dengue cases in January, 16 in February, 22 in March, 20 in April, 30 in May, 32 in June, 26 in July, and 75 in August. Cases of vector-borne diseases such as dengue and malaria are usually reported between July and November, sometimes stretching till mid-December. According to the officials of the MCD's health department, symptoms of vector-borne diseases include high fever, headache, rash, muscle, and joint pain, which are quite similar to that of COVID-19 which also include fever or chills, muscle or body aches, fatigue and headache among

others. Last year, 9,613 dengue cases were recorded in the city, the highest since 2015, along with 23 deaths -- the highest since 2016. In 2018, Delhi reported 2,774 dengue cases during the January 1-December 16 periods, according to the report. The corresponding figures in 2019, 2020, and 2021 were 1998, 1062, and 9,414. Ten deaths each were reported due to dengue in 2016 and 2017, four in 2018, and two in 2019.  
The official data showed that 4,431 dengue cases were recorded in Delhi in 2016, 4,726 in 2017, 2,798 in 2018, 2,036 in 2019, and 1,072 in 2020. The MCD report stated that breeding of mosquito larvae has been found at 1,70,538 households this year till December 16. Authorities have issued 1,20,907 legal notices for mosquito-genic conditions, and 45,868 prosecutions were launched so far. (PTI)



The CEO of Google and Alphabet Sundar Pichai called on President Droupadi Murmu to Rashtrapati Bhavan on Monday

Maharashtra: BJP MLA demands probe into illegal excavation, demands compensation for landowners

**AURANGABAD, DEC 19 / --/** At least 80 to 90 acres land was dug up illegally during the construction of the Mumbai-Nagpur Samruddhi Expressway in Maharashtra's Aurangabad, a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLA has claimed.  
BJP MLA Haribhau Bagde has written to the administration regarding illegal digging carried out in his constituency Phulambri. "The Deogiri Cooperative sugar factory has around 135 acres of land at Sawangi in Phulambri. While 20 acres had been acquired Mumbai-Nagpur Samruddhi Expressway project, illegal excavation was carried out on the

remaining land, which has been left unleveled," Bagde told reporters on Saturday. An inquiry should be conducted by the collector and administration into the illegal digging and land owners must be given compensation, he said. "Illegal excavation was carried out in

nearly 80-90 acres of land. The authorities should find out if the excavated soil was used for the expressway project or elsewhere," he added. A 54-km stretch of 701-km long Mumbai-Nagpur Expressway will pass through Aurangabad district. (PTI)

**AFFIDAVIT**

I, RENUKA DEVI, W/o. P SELVARAJ, R/o. Dairy Farm village under Port Blair Tehsil, South Andaman District do hereby solemnly affirm and declare as under:-

1. That I am the permanent resident of these Islands.

2. That my name and my father name was erroneously recorded in Passport as S RENUKA DEVI instead of RENUKA DEVI.

3. And my father MUTHAIAH instead of MUTTAIYAH which was recorded in all document.

4. That my actual name and correct name is RENUKA DEVI and my father name MUTTAIYAH.

5. That S RENUKA DEVI, D/o. MUTHAIAH and RENUKA DEVI, D/o. MUTTAIYAH is the same and one identical person.

6. P SELVARAJ but in passport his name POOMANSELVARAJ, POOMAN SELVARAJ.

7. That I am swearing this affidavit to declare that the above name is the same and one identical person and having no any differences, which is required for Passport, hence this Affidavit.

That above statement are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

**DEPONENT**

**MUTHOOT FINCORP LTD. | GOLD AUCTION NOTICE**

**Regd. Office:** Muthoot Centre, TC No 27/3022, Punnem Road, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India - 695001.  
**CIN :** U65929KL1997PLC011518, Ph: +91 471 4911400, 2331427

Notice is hereby given for the information of all concerned that Gold ornaments pledged with under mentioned branches of the company for the period upto 31.12.2021 & MSGL, SPL-16, One plus, Guide Prepaid, Super value, ADGL and all other 6 months tenure Gold loans up to 31.03.2022 and MSGB, SME Savarna & EMI due up to 10.10.2022 which were overdue for redemption and which have not been redeemed so far inspite of repeated notices, will be auctioned on 28.12.2022 to 30.12.2022 from 10 am onwards.

**AUCTION DATE: 28.12.2022 - BATHU BASTI** ( First Floor, Door No. C-168, Atr Road, Bathu Basti, Opposite Axis Bank, Garacharma (Post), Port Blair, South Andaman District, Andaman & Nicobar Islands - 744105): F1572, F4192, F4287, F5028, F6439, F6445, F6449, F6456, F6553, F6554, F6557, F6592, F6642, F6733, F6756, F6784, F6805, F6827, F6854, F6865, F6879, F6911.

**ABERDEEN BAZAR - ANDAMAN** (First Floor, Door No. 11, Sy.No.84, Shastri Road, Aberdeen Bazar, Portblair, South Andaman - 744101): F5752, F6024, F6065, F6079, F6633.

**AUCTION DATE: 29.12.2022 - HADDO** (First Floor, No:32, J.N Road, Opposite Vanavikas Bhawan, Ward No:2, Port Blair, Haddo, Andaman And Nicobar Islands - 744102): F9337, F9361, F9381, F9406, F9503, F9521, F9534, F9536, F9568, F9571, F9575, F9576, F9577, F9583, F9589, F9593, F9594, F9600, F9612, F9633, F9638, F9639, F9657, F9667, F9669, F9854.

**AUCTION DATE: 30.12.2022 - JUNGHIGHAT** (First Floor, Basanthi Nivas, Door No: 362, MG Road, Above Chennai Stores, Port Blair, Junglighat, Andaman & Nicobar Islands - 744103): F1214, F15977, F16042, F16111, F16224, F16262, F16263, F16336, F16344, F16347, F16362, F16378, F16386, F16398, F16416, F16417, F16478, F16482, F16489, F16540, F16563, F16603, F16607, F16611, F16613, F16634, F16637, F16642, F16653, F16662, F16679, F16749, F16750, F16759, F16761, F16766, F16773, F16776, F16812, F16865, F16941, F16996, F17781, F17962, F17980, F17982, F18026, F18119, F6293.

Auction will be conducted at respective branches. Please note if the auction does not get completed on the same day due to any reasons, the same will be conducted on 31.12.2022 at 10.00 am at Muthoot FinCorp Ltd., Door No: 362, First Floor, M.G.Road, Junglighat, Port Blair, South Andaman, Andaman and Nicobar Island - 744103. The bidders are requested to produce Photo Id card, Pan Card. The successful bidder should transfer the money through RTGS.

**Muthoot FinCorp Ltd.**



**IndianOil**

**Eastern Regional Office**

**EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**

**Public Tender for Empanelment of BTL Agencies**

Eastern Regional office of Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. wishes to empanel "Below the Line" (BTL) agencies having capability of designing, fabrication of trade shows and publicity vehicles, handling any event, launch programme, sales campaign, designing and printing of corporate/prestigious publications, event-specific brochures, leaflets, pamphlets, banners, hoardings, poster, merchandise, giveaways, T- shirts, caps, etc. Interested agencies having a minimum average turnover of Rs. 20 lakhs over the last three financial years, are invited as per following details:

**Tender Ref No: ERO/CC/Empanelment of BTL Agencies/2022**  
**e-Tender ID: 2022\_ERO\_160432\_1**  
**The last date for submission of the application form is 11.01.2023 till 16:00 hrs.** For the application format and other terms & conditions, you may kindly visit our e-tender site (<https://iocletenders.nic.in>).  
For any clarification, interested Agencies may contact Sri Tapan Kumar Pradhan, Manager (Corporate Communications), Eastern Regional Office, 2, Gariahat Road (South), Dhakuria, Kolkata-700 068, Ph No: (033) 24145444 during office hours (09:45 AM to 05:30 PM) on any working day (Monday to Friday).

**Bidders can download the document from IOCL e-procurement site: (<https://iocletenders.nic.in>) and participation will also be through the same website only. Corrigendum/addendum, if any, shall be published in the above-tender website only.**



## Google to spend USD 75 mn on women-led India startups: Pichai

**NEW DELHI, DEC 19** /--/ Google is building voice and text search for over 100 Indian languages and will spend USD 75 million to support women-led startups in the country, said its CEO Sundar Pichai at the start of his visit to India - a nation that he saw as a big export economy.

India, he said, will be a big export economy and it needs to create a balance between safeguarding citizens and enabling companies to innovate with its framework. Pichai first met telecom and IT minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and spoke at a Google for India 2022 event before calling on Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "Thank you for a great meeting today PM @narendramodi. Inspiring to see the rapid pace of technological change under your leadership. Look forward to continuing our strong partnership and supporting India's G20 presidency to advance an open, connected internet that works for all," he tweeted after the meeting. While the company did not disclose what was discussed during the meeting, Pichai in a blog to mark start of the visit stated that he would be discussing with Modi how Google is "supporting small businesses and start-ups, investing in cybersecurity, providing education and skills training, applying AI in sectors like agriculture and healthcare, and other priorities". Prime Minister Modi's Digital India vision has helped to accelerate the progress we're seeing across India, and I'm



*Given the scale and technology leadership it (India) will have, it's important to make sure you are balancing, putting in safeguards for people. You're creating an innovative framework, so that companies can innovate on top of a certainty in the legal framework. I think it is an important moment in time. India will also be a big export economy*  
—Google CEO Sundar Pichai

excited for India to share its experience with the world as it takes over the G20 presidency in 2023," he said. While speaking at Google for India 2022 event, he said a part of India Digitisation Fund (IDF) is increasingly focussing on startups from India and one-fourth amount of USD 300 million from the fund will be invested in entities that are led by women.

In July 2020, Google had announced plans to invest USD 10 billion in India over next five to seven years as the search giant looks to help accelerate adoption of digital services in the key overseas market. The India-born CEO said that the technology is working at a big scale and touching lives of people around the world, which calls for framing responsible and

balanced regulation. "Given the scale and technology leadership it (India) will have, it's important to make sure you are balancing, putting in safeguards for people. You're creating an innovative framework, so that companies can innovate on top of a certainty in the legal framework. I think it is an important moment in time. India will also be a big export economy. It will benefit from an open and connected internet and getting that balance right will be important," Pichai said. The Google CEO is on his visit to India after a gap of around three-and-a-half years. He met President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and held a joint session with Union IT and telecom minister Ashwini Vaishnaw. Pichai said during each visit he notices that the sophistication of the Indian startup ecosystem is measurably improving and Indian startups like Glance are getting noticed worldwide. "There is no better time to do a start-up than the current moment. Even though we are working through a macro-economic moment like this. Companies like Google were created in moments of downturn. I think I am very bullish about it over time," Pichai said. According to him, India offers an opportunity to scale up their solutions and implement them across the country. In his blog, Pichai said Google is working on making text and voice internet search available in over 100 Indian languages. Google announced a collaboration with Bengaluru-based Indian

Institute of Science to collect speech data from 773 districts across India to fine-tune its language translation and search technology. Google announced a grant of USD 1 million to set up India's first responsible AI (Artificial Intelligence) centre at IIT Madras and USD 1 million grant via Google.Org to Wadhvani AI towards using advanced technology for better agricultural outcomes. Pichai said the pace of technological change in the country has been extraordinary and Google is supporting small businesses and startups, investing in cybersecurity, providing education and skills training, and applying AI in sectors like agriculture and healthcare.

"I'm here to see progress being made from our USD 10 billion, 10-year India Digitization Fund (IDF), and share new ways. We're helping to advance India's digital future at our Google for India event. Through Google IDF, the company bought a 7.73 per cent stake in Jio for USD 4.5 billion and a 1.2 per cent stake in Bharti Airtel for USD 700 million. Google at the event announced a collaboration with the National eGovernance Division (NeGD) to enable people with easy access to their authentic digital documents, directly from the Files by Google app on Android. "Very soon, the DigiLocker app will become part of the Android ecosystem. All phones with Android have DigiLocker in-built with them," NeGD president Abhishek Singh said. (PTI)

## Govt to take view on privatisation of PSBs after consultation with dept, regulator

**NEW DELHI, DEC 19** /--/ The Union government on Monday said it will take a view on privatisation of public sector banks (PSBs) after consultation with the concerned department and regulator. Consideration of issues related to disinvestment and decision on selection, terms and conditions, etc. in case of strategic sale is entrusted to the Cabinet committee designated for this purpose under the Government of India (Transaction of Business) Rules, 1961, minister of state for finance Bhagwat Karad said in a written reply to Lok Sabha. "Before such consideration for decision thereon, consultation is undertaken with the ministries and departments concerned and, where necessary, with the regulator concerned," Karad said. In the Union Budget for the financial year (FY) 2021-22, he said, the government's intent to take up privatisation of two PSBs and approval of a policy of strategic disinvestment of Public Sector Enterprises (PSEs) was announced. The objectives of the policy include enabling growth of public sector enterprises through infusion of private capital, thereby contributing to economic growth and new jobs, and financing of social sector and development programmes of the government, he said. A bank is classified as a Public Sector Bank (PSB) or a Private Sector Bank (PVB) by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Karad in reply to another question said the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has registered 102 cases during the years 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 (up to 30.11.2022) involving 135 private companies or firms or individuals in the country for trapping people on the pretext of doubling/increasing their money. Replying to another question, the MoS finance said, the gross NPAs of public sector banks had peaked to Rs 8,95,601 crore (Gross NPA ratio of 14.58 per cent) in 2018 primarily as a result of the asset quality review undertaken by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). However, the stressed assets transparently recognised as NPAs have since declined to Rs 5,40,958 crore (Gross NPA ratio of 7.28 per cent) as on March 31, 2022, consequent to the government's strategy of recognition, resolution, recapitalisation and reforms, he said. Decline in NPAs can be due to upgradation of NPA accounts, recoveries in NPA accounts and lower slippages, Karad said. In the last five financial years, he said, PSBs have made an aggregate recovery of Rs 4,80,111 crore from NPA accounts and upgradation of NPAs of Rs 1,45,356 crore. (PTI)

## Centre has burdened state govts by reducing funding of schemes: Derek

**NEW DELHI, DEC 19** /--/ The Centre has burdened the state governments by cancelling several necessary schemes and reducing its share in many jointly funded schemes, said TMC member Derek O'Brien in the Rajya Sabha on Monday.

O'Brien said the ruling BJP had promised in its 2019 election manifesto to pursue federal governance by ensuring greater involvement of the states in all aspects of policy making, but the Union government failed to do so. "When the BJP came into power in 2014, the states were spending 46 per cent more than the Union government on various schemes, but in 2021-22, states spent 150 per cent more than the Union government," the Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader said. Moreover, 29 of the 98 Bills passed between 2014 and 2021 were "anti-federal in nature", he said and accused the Centre of acting as the "economic blockade" of the state governments.

"States have been burdened because the Centre cancelled schemes seven years ago and one of the schemes was the backward region grant funds," he said, adding that "it was so important for the states that they have to continue the scheme". The Centre also reduced its fund share in many schemes such as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. While speaking on FRBM (Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management), O'Brien said: "You took it up from 3.5 per cent to four per cent and now this year, you have brought the state borrowing down to 3.5 per cent." According to him, when this limit was increased to four per cent, some conditions were imposed on the state governments such as the privatisation of electricity. "Please take it back to 4 per cent and this should be unconditional," he added. The Upper House was having a debate on the Appropriation Bills (Nos. 4 and 5), 2022. Over GST, the TMC leader said now cess goes directly to the Centre and states are being deprived. (PTI)



Argentina captain Lionel Messi poses for a photograph holding the FIFA World Cup trophy alongwith her wife Antonela Rocuzzo at the Lusail Stadium

## Water ATMs installed under MPLADS fund at burning ghatatJunglighat, Dairy Farm inaugurated

From page-1

Now with the installation of these Water ATMs, these will be of great use to the people visiting these areas. However, ShriKuldeepRai Sharma, MP requested the Secretary, PBMC and Executive Engineer (Water) PBMC present in the functions that the PBMC need to ensure proper upkeep and maintenance of these assets created out of public fund so that the basic objective for providing safe drinking water to the general public would be fulfilled in real manner.

Both the works were carried out by the Port Blair Municipal Council being the executing agency of MPLADS work for which the long pending demand of the general public for having safe drinking water facilities at both the locations have been fulfilled.

## RELEGATED TO ROT IN A STATE OF NEGLECT

From page-1

A resident told EOI that the repair and renovation work of this community hall has not been carried out for the past 19 years due to funds crunch. While the PBMC has been charging Rs 4500 from the people hiring this community hall for organizing social events, the civic body has been running away from taking-up the mandatory repair and renovation of this community hall. Sources told EOI that during the financial year 2017-18, a special fund was sanctioned by the then Chief Secretary to the Municipal Council for taking up repair work of a couple of community halls like Shadhipur, Haddo and Junglighat. But unfortunately, the renovation work of the Prothrapur community hall was not done.

## Kerala celebrates Argentina's win; fans indulge in violence

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM/ KOCHI, DEC 19** /--/ The streets of Kerala resembled that of Argentina on Sunday night when the Latin American nation lifted the football World Cup while fans indulged in violence during the celebrations in some parts resulting in the arrest of six persons.

The old and young, children and women, soccer fans were out screaming out of joy, bursting firecrackers, shouting the name of Lionel Messi, blowing trumpets and horns, celebrating Argentina's win over France in the final by dancing on the streets. The East Fort area and Vanchiyoor in Thiruvananthapuram, the state capital, were literally crowded at midnight with fans wearing Argentina jerseys celebrating the victory. Various parts of Kochi city also witnessed huge celebrations with firecrackers, and trumpets blowing when Messi lifted the World Cup for Argentina. Television channels showed the celebrations on the streets of several towns, cities and villages of the southern state as the South American team defeated France in the penalty shootout after 120



Football fans in Kochi celebrate Argentina's win over France in the WC final on Sunday

minutes of play resulted in a 3-3 stalemate. "Vamos," fans, donning the Argentina jersey, were seen shouting as they jumped up and down and danced around with each other unable to contain their joy. Some were too excited to even answer reporters' queries on how they were feeling and just responded with screams and incoherent shouts. Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan, Leader of Opposition V D Satheesan, various State Ministers M B Rajesh, MLAs, movie stars including Mammootty and Mohanlal shared their excitement over Argentina's triumph. In a Facebook post, Vijayan congratulated Argentina for the World Cup victory. "Congratulations to Argentina who won the football World Cup. Lionel Messi led Argentina to victory -- the most precious

achievement of his career," he said. He said unique expressions of the beautiful game of football were witnessed throughout the tournament.

Mammootty and Mohanlal, the two big stars of Malayalam movie industry were at the Lusail stadium in Qatar to witness the title clash between Argentina and France. "What a Night !!! What a Game !! Absolute Goosebumps !! Thrilled to have witnessed probably one of the greatest ever football match. Congrats Argentina and Magical messi on conquering the world. Well Played #France and Kylian Mbappe," Mammootty posted on Facebook. Mohanlal, who also posted a picture of himself at the stadium, said it was a glorious final in which two worthy opponents played their hearts out and gave millions of football fans a "nerve-wracking match".

"Congratulations Argentina on a hard won victory. 36 years of toil and the cup is once again yours. Leo Messi has kept his date with destiny and will bow out in glory. A glorious last dance...Kudos to Kylian Mbappe and the French team for being such worthy opponents and for the great fight they put up till the end. Well done Qatar," Mohanlal said.

Former state minister and senior Left leader M M Mani, MLA, who is a die-hard Argentina fan, watched the match on a big screen at his constituency in Idukki district. "There will be people who attack us...there will be people who criticise us...None of that concerns us. What a final... Both are great teams. Thanks to the critics, you are our energy...It was a great match. France was a good opponent. Mbappe is good," Mani said. (PTI)



**Congratulations to Argentina who won the football World Cup. Lionel Messi led Argentina to victory -- the most precious achievement of his career**  
—CM Pinarayi Vijayan's tweet



**"What a Night !!! What a Game !! Absolute Goosebumps !! Thrilled to have witnessed probably one of the greatest ever football match. Congrats Argentina and Magical messi on conquering the world. Well Played #France and Kylian Mbappe"**  
—Actor Mammootty



# CIA chief praises Modi, Prez Xi for raising nuke use concerns in Russia-Ukraine conflict

WASHINGTON, DEC 19 /--/ Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping raising concerns about the use of nuclear weapons had an impact on Russia, which has indulged in "nuclear sabre-rattling" over its war with Ukraine, CIA chief William Burns has said. "I think, very dangerous nuclear sabre-rattling that (Russian President Vladimir) Putin and others around him have done," Burns said. He said the sabre-rattling was meant to intimidate. "We don't see any clear evidence today of plans to use tactical nuclear weapons," he said. The US has made very clear to the Russians what the serious risks of that (nuclear threat) would be, Burns, the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency told the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), an American public broadcaster. "I think it's also been very useful that Xi Jinping and

Prime Minister Modi in India have also raised their concerns about the use of nuclear weapons as well. I think that's also having an impact on the Russians," he said. The US has repeatedly highlighted remarks made by Prime Minister Modi during his bilateral meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin on the margins of the SCO summit in September. It also acknowledged the essential role played by India in negotiating the G20's Bali Declaration that included Prime Minister Modi's message on the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Chinese President Xi has also warned against the use of nuclear weapons



over Ukraine. When asked about the comments by the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Mark Milley, that winter may be a time for negotiations between Ukraine and Russia, Burns said, "Most conflicts end in negotiations, but that requires seriousness on the part of the Russians in this instance that I don't think we see." When asked about the concern about cooperation between the Russians and the Chinese, he said: "I think Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin have formed a pretty close partnership over recent years." "So, it turns out that there actually are some limits to that partnership, at least in terms of President Xi's reluctance to supply

the kind of military assistance to Putin that he's asked for in the course of the war in Ukraine," Burns said. Burns said he would not underestimate for a moment the commitment between the Chinese and Russian leaderships to that partnership. "But it's been interesting to watch the Chinese leadership's reaction to the war in Ukraine. I don't think any foreign leader has paid more careful attention to that war and Russia's poor military performance than Xi Jinping has, as he thinks about his own ambitions in Taiwan and elsewhere," he said. China views Taiwan as a rebel province that must be reunified with the mainland, even by force. China apprehends that the US is stepping up its engagement with Taipei with military and political assistance. (PTI)

## Nighttime drone attack hits Kyiv as Putin heads to Belarus

KYIV, DEC 19 /--/ Multiple explosive drones attacked Ukraine's capital before dawn Monday, local authorities reported, as Russian President Vladimir Putin prepared to visit ally Belarus, which provided the Kremlin's forces with a launch pad for Russia's invasion of Ukraine almost 10 months ago. The drone attack came three days after what Ukrainian officials described as one of Russia's biggest assaults on Kyiv since the war started and as Moscow presses on with its effort to torment Ukraine from the air amid a broad battlefield stalemate. Russia launched 23 self-exploding drones over Kyiv while the city slept, but Ukrainian forces shot down 18 of them, the Kyiv city administration said on Telegram. No major casualties were reported from the attack, although the Ukrainian president's office said the war killed at least three civilians and wounded 11 elsewhere in the country between Sunday and Monday. The drone barrage caused emergency power outages in 11 central and eastern regions of the country, including the capital region, authorities said. Monday was St. Nicholas Day, an occasion that marks the start of the Christmas holidays in Ukraine and is when children typically receive their first gifts hidden under pillows. "This is how Russians congratulated our children on the holiday," Serhii Kruk, the head of Ukraine's State Emergency Service, wrote on Telegram, attaching photos of firefighters barely distinguished amid the flames of an infrastructure facility that got hit. "In the night when everyone is waiting for a miracle, the terrorist country continues to terrorise the peaceful Ukrainian people," Ukraine's human rights chief, Dmytro Lubinets, said. Bits of wreckage from the downed drones damaged a road in the central Solomianskyi district and broke windows in a multi-story building in the Shevchenkyvskyi district of Kyiv, city officials said. One drone struck the home of Olha and Ivan Kobzareno, ages 84 and 83, in the outskirts of the capital. Ivan sustained a head injury. Their garage was completely destroyed and their dog, Malys, was killed. Olha, speaking in her bedroom where shattered glass and blood covered the floor, said the blast flung the front gate into the couple's house. "I know that I am not alone," Olha said. "Everyone is suffering. Everyone." Nina Sobol, a 59-year-old clerk working at one of the city's power companies, was on her way to work when the strikes happened. Like many of her colleagues, she waited outside while emergency services inspected damage. "I feel really anxious," she said. "Anxious because you never know at which moment there will be an incoming missile." Authorities said a critical infrastructure point was also hit, without giving more details. Although the capital appeared to be the main target of the latest Russian attack, the armed forces said other places in the country were also targeted. Kyiv region Gov. Oleksii Kuleba said on Telegram that some infrastructure facilities were damaged across the Kyiv region, as well as private houses, and at least two people were injured. (PTI)

## Jan 6 panel pushes Trump's prosecution in forceful finish

WASHINGTON, DEC 19 /--/ The House Jan 6 committee is wrapping up its investigation of the violent 2021 US Capitol insurrection, with lawmakers expected to cap one of the most exhaustive and aggressive congressional probes in memory with an extraordinary recommendation: The Justice Department should consider criminal charges against former President Donald Trump. At a final meeting on Monday, the panel's seven Democrats and two Republicans are poised to recommend criminal charges against Trump and potentially against associates and staff who helped him launch a multifaceted pressure campaign to try to overturn the 2020 election. While a criminal referral is mostly symbolic, with the Justice Department ultimately deciding whether to prosecute Trump or others, it is a decisive end to a probe that had an almost singular focus from the start. "I think the president has violated multiple criminal laws and I think you have to be treated like any other American who breaks the law, and that is you have to be prosecuted," Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., a member of the panel, said Sunday on CNN's "State of the Union." The panel, which will dissolve on Jan. 3 with the new Republican-led House, has conducted more than 1,000 interviews, held 10 well-watched public hearings and collected more than a million documents since it launched in July 2021. As it has gathered the massive trove of evidence, the members have become emboldened in declaring that Trump is to blame for the violent attack on the Capitol by his supporters almost two years ago. After beating their way past police, injuring many of them, the Jan. 6 rioters stormed the Capitol and interrupted the certification of President Joe Biden's win, echoing Trump's lies about widespread election fraud and sending lawmakers and others running for their lives. (AP)



## Saudi-Iran talks said to have stalled over protests in Iran

BAGHDAD, DEC 19 /--/ Baghdad-mediated diplomatic talks between regional rivals Iran and Saudi Arabia have come to a halt, largely because of Tehran claims the Sunni kingdom has played a role in alleged foreign incitement of the mass anti-government protests underway in Iran, multiple Iraqi officials said. The talks had been lauded as a breakthrough that would ease regional tensions. Iraq's new Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani said last month after taking office that Iraq had been asked to continue facilitating the dialogue. However, an anticipated sixth round of talks, to be hosted by Baghdad, has not been scheduled because Tehran refuses to meet with Saudi officials as protests in Iran enter a fourth month, according to the Iraqi officials. "The Iranian-Saudi negotiations have stalled, and this will have a negative impact on the region," said Amer al-Fayez, an Iraqi lawmaker and member of the parliamentary Foreign Relations Committee. On his first official visit to Tehran in November, al-Sudani inquired about resuming the talks and mentioned he would be travelling to the Saudi capital of Riyadh soon. But the Iranians told him they would not meet with Saudi counterparts and accused the kingdom of supporting country-wide protests in Iran through Saudi-funded media channels, according to an official who is a member of Iraq's ruling Coordination Framework coalition, an alliance of mostly Iran-backed groups. The details were confirmed by five Iraqi officials, including government officials, Iran-backed militia groups and Shiite Muslim political party figures. All spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to discuss the subject with the media. Iran's UN mission confirmed the talks had halted but did not

provide an explanation. "The talks between Iran and Saudi Arabia ceased before the recent developments in Iran, for a variety of reasons. It might be worth asking Saudi Arabia about them," the mission said in a statement. The kingdom did not respond to requests for comment. Iran's apparent refusal to continue with the talks is a setback for al-Sudani, who had hoped an ongoing Saudi-Iran dialogue would enable Iraq to buttress its role as a regional mediator. Halting the talks could have regional repercussions as well, with the two nations supporting opposing forces in several conflicts across the Middle East, including in Syria and Yemen, where Iran backs Houthi rebels fighting against the kingdom. Iran accuses Saudi Arabia of funding the London-based Iran International, a news channel which has been reporting extensively on the protests that erupted in Iran in mid-September. The channel is owned by Volant Media UK, which includes Saudi shareholders with ties to the Saudi royal family. Tehran was also irked by a joint statement issued after an Arab-China summit in Riyadh last week, according to an Iraqi official in the Foreign Ministry. In the statement, Saudi Arabia and China said they agreed to "strengthen joint cooperation to ensure the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme," while also calling on Iran to respect "principles of good neighbourliness and non-interference in internal affairs of states." China has been a longtime economic partner to Iran, with bilateral relations centred on Beijing's energy needs but also including arm sales. The deepening ties between the countries are also seen as strategic regional counterweight to the United States and its allies. Tehran is worried that improved economic ties between Beijing and Riyadh could unravel this status quo, Iraqi officials said. (AP)



Heavy snow falls as pedestrians cross a street in Vancouver, Canada

# Historic biodiversity deal approved at COP15 summit in Canada

MONTREAL, DEC 19 /--/ After four years of fraught negotiations, nearly 200 countries, including India, approved a historic "Paris-style" deal to protect and reverse damage to global biodiversity following an intense final session of negotiations at the UN COP15 summit early on Monday. Amid loud applause from assembled delegates, the president of the COP15 biodiversity summit, Chinese Environment Minister Huang Runqiu, declared the Kunming-Montreal Agreement adopted. The chair overruled Congo which had refused to back the text and demanded greater funding for developing countries as part of the accord. The Chinese-brokered deal is aimed at saving the lands, oceans, and species from pollution, degradation, and climate change. One of the most contentious issues in the negotiations was the finance package to support conservation

efforts globally, particularly in developing countries. The deal commits to progressively increase the level of financial resources from all sources by 2030, mobilising at least USD 200 billion per year. This represents roughly a doubling from a 2020 baseline. A major achievement is also the commitment to USD 20 billion in international finance flows by 2025 and USD 30 billion by 2030. The 23 targets in the accord also include cutting environmentally destructive farming subsidies, reducing the risk from pesticides, and tackling invasive species. The deal is being compared by many to the landmark plan to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius under the Paris Agreement. While environment groups welcomed the potentially transformative impacts the new agreement could have, many still feel that crucial details around finance and conservation are

missing. "Agreeing on a shared global goal that will guide collective and immediate action to halt and reverse nature loss by 2030 is an exceptional feat for those that have been negotiating the Global Biodiversity Framework, and a win for people and planet," said Marco Lambertini, Director General, WWF International. "It sends a clear signal and must be the launch pad for action from governments, business, and society to transition towards a nature-positive world, in support of climate action and the Sustainable Development Goals," Lambertini said. "It is the equivalent to 1.5 degrees Celsius in climate and vital to catalysing action toward a nature-positive world and holding everyone accountable," he added. Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, the CEO and Chairperson of the Global Environment Facility, said the agreement reached is a

significant breakthrough for biodiversity. "It reflects never-before-seen recognition from countries at all income levels that biodiversity loss must be stopped through high-ambition changes to our society's relationship with nature and the way our global economy operates," Rodriguez said. "It also reflects a determination from political leaders around the world to make this happen," he added. The UN Development Programme (UNDP) welcomed the agreement reached at the UN Convention on Biological Diversity to agree on a new plan to preserve and protect nature with the new Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). "This agreement means people around the world can hope for real progress to halt biodiversity loss and protect and restore our lands and seas in a way that safeguards our planet and respects the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities,"

UN Development Programme Administrator Achim Steiner. Nearing the conclusion of a sometimes fractious two-week meeting from December 7 to December 19, nations agreed on a historic package of measures deemed critical to addressing the dangerous loss of biodiversity and restoring natural ecosystems. Convened under UN auspices, chaired by China and hosted by Canada, the 15th Conference of Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity adopted the "Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework" (GBF), including four goals and 23 targets for achievement by 2030. Among the global targets for 2030 are the effective conservation and management of at least 30 per cent of the world's lands, inland waters, coastal areas, and oceans, with emphasis on areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functioning and services. (PTI)

## Lahore HC seeks details of Toshakhana gifts obtained by politicians and bureaucrats since Pakistan's founding



LAHORE, DEC 19 /--/ A top court here on Monday directed the federal government to submit details of Toshakhana gifts received by politicians and bureaucrats from foreign dignitaries since the creation of Pakistan in 1947 by January 16. The Toshakhana department of the Pakistan government became prominent after the controversy around former Prime Minister Imran Khan who allegedly sold the state depository gifts valued at around Rs 108 million for Rs 21.5 million. The direction came as Justice Asim Hafeez of the Lahore High Court took up a plea seeking court orders for making public the details of Toshkhana (state depository) gifts, as well as information about persons/officials who have obtained the assets after making a payment. Established in 1974, the Tosha khana is a department under the administrative control of the cabinet division and stores precious gifts given to rulers, parliamentarians, bureaucrats, and officials by heads of other governments and states and foreign dignitaries. According to Toshakhana rules, gifts and other such materials received by persons to whom these rules apply shall be reported to the cabinet division. During Monday's hearing, the government's lawyer, Sheraz Zaka, contended that details related to Toshakhana were classified and could not be made public. The court then enquired how the details could not be disclosed. "Submit the details to the court and the court will decide whether or not they are classified," the judge directed, seeking a report from the federal government by January 16. Pervez Khattak, a top leader from Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, after the hearing, tweeted that the high court had sought the entire record of

Toshakhana gifts and said: "What's there to hide in it? Why different standards for yourself?" According to the petitioner, people at large were entitled to know the details of every public transaction and acquire information on all matters of public importance. The plea urged the court to order the respondents to make public the details of assets gifted to rulers as well as bureaucrats and also provide the names, documentation, and materials in respect of the persons/officials who have obtained the assets by making the payment. The petitioner also sought details of the methodology used to determine the price of the Toshakhana articles. The Ministries of Parliamentary Affairs and Interior and the Pakistan Information Commission have been arrayed as respondents in the petition. Criminal proceedings were initiated last month against 70-year-old Khan for "not sharing details" of Toshakhana gifts and proceeds from their alleged sale and his eventual disqualification for making "false statements and incorrect declaration". The cricketer-turned-politician purchased from the Toshakhan an expensive Graff wristwatch from the Saudi royals which he received during a visit in 2018 as well as several other gifts and sold them in Dubai for profit. He was later disqualified by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) from the National Assembly for not revealing the proceeds of the sale in his annual wealth statement provided to the commission. Khan was ousted from power in April after losing a no-confidence vote in his leadership, which he alleged was part of a US-led conspiracy targeting him because of his independent foreign policy decisions on Russia, China, and Afghanistan. (PTI)

## Four security personnel injured in suicide attack in Pak's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

PESHAWAR, DEC 19 /--/ At least four security forces personnel were injured in a suicide attack on a military vehicle in restive northwest Pakistan on Monday, security forces said, a day after militants attacked and killed four policemen at a newly-constructed police station in the province. A suicide bomber hit the vehicle of the security forces on the Thall bridge in the North Waziristan tribal district of Pakistan, a source said. The forces have cordoned off the area and started a search operation to nab the culprits. No group has yet claimed responsibility for the attack. The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) militant group, which has been fighting to bring the law of Sharia across the Muslim-dominated country, mostly carries out attacks on

security forces. On Sunday, heavily-armed militants attacked the newly-constructed Burgai police station in Lakki Marwat bordering the South Waziristan tribal district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, leaving four policemen dead and as many injured, officials said. Last month, militants attacked a police patrol vehicle, killing all six policemen in the same area. The Pakistani Taliban claimed responsibility for the ambush. The TTP, set up as an umbrella group of several militant outfits in 2007, last month called off a ceasefire agreed upon with the federal government in June and ordered its militants to stage terrorist attacks across the country. The group, which is believed to be close to al-Qaeda, 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". In 2014, the Pakistani Taliban stormed the Army Public School (APS) in the northwestern city of Peshawar, killing at least 150 people, including 131 students. The attack sent shockwaves across the world and was widely condemned. (PTI)





# Mission accomplished: Messi's as well as the world's



**NEW DELHI, DEC 19 /--/** Lionel Messi wanted it, football needed it. And the world just went with the flow. As the ball fell asleep on his toe, all went to sleep relieved in the knowledge that his once-in-a-generation career will now include a gleaming FIFA World Cup trophy.

The manner in which congratulatory messages poured in from all over the world after Sunday's title triumph, and the way in which half of the world prayed for a Messi victory, in the lead-up to the 2022 World Cup final against reigning champions France, it seemed like he belonged to the whole world and not just Argentina. But then, when it comes to Messi certain things defy logic, as well as physics. Like his left foot that makes the ball defy the laws of physics. Like his relationship with the world, which defies logic. People are just relieved, as much as Messi and his teammates are, that the monkey is off his back, 6029 days after making his World Cup debut. To realise his ultimate dream, Messi did not need to get Maradonaised. The man from Roasrio did it in his own way, in his own method, employing ways that suit his game, adopting approaches that suit his persona, which is a far cry from the late great from the dead slums of Buenos Aires. After he made his strongest case yet to be considered football's greatest player of all time, his legions of fans all around the world stayed late into the night to rejoice, romanticise, discuss, analyse, watch, to talk about Messi. For, he has just inspired a team far from world beaters to a World Cup win. "It's just crazy that it became a reality this way," Messi said. "I craved for this so much. I knew God would bring this gift to me. I had the feeling that this was the one." Kylian Mbappe was in no mood to make it easy for Messi, but it was the Argentine's night and his World Cup. "It took so long, but here it is," Messi said. "We suffered a lot, but we managed to do it." Like the Diego Maradona-led batch of 1986, Messi's outfit was also not teaming with the stars. However, like Maradona had men like Jorge Burruchaga and Jorge Valdano to lean on in 1986, Messi was helped by the likes of Julián Álvarez, Emiliano



Martínez and Enzo Fernández in his quest. It was written in stars, they said, appropriately summing up Messi's biggest moment of glory in the greatest ever final of the tournament's 92-year history. Football unites the world, so does Messi, and people the world over like him, love him, adore him. Else how does one explain a late-night brawl outside a bar tucked away in the Indian capital's eastern corner, after excited fans of the Argentine went overboard. Havans were organised, puja's were performed, cutouts and murals were put up on the roads of not just the working-class Buenos Aires, Cordoba and Rosario but also on the streets of Kolkata and the towns of Kerala. If Messi is not loved by the majority, how else does one explain a group of Chinese travelling to Qatar, only to cheer on the 35-year-old Paris Saint-Germain superstar. In the aftermath of the penalty shootout, in which the Argentines prevailed 4-2, after France rallied twice in the regulation and extra time, crackers were burst in places that were least expected to. (PTI)

## Messi plans to play on for Argentina after World Cup win

**DOHA, DEC 19 /--/** Lionel Messi is not ready to walk away from Argentina yet, despite ending his pursuit of a World Cup winner's medal. The soccer great secured the one major trophy that has eluded him in his storied career as Argentina beat France 4-2 on penalties in the final at Lusail Stadium on Sunday. The match finished 3-3 through extra time with Messi scoring twice and converting his penalty in the shootout. At 35, this is likely his last appearance in soccer's biggest tournament, but he confirmed after the match that he intends to play. "Obviously, I wanted to complete my career with this, (I) can't ask for more," Messi said. "Finishing my career this way is impressive. After this, what else? I have a Copa América, a World Cup. Almost at the very end." "I love soccer, what I do. I enjoy being part of the national team, the group. I want to enjoy a couple of more matches being a world champion." Messi has won the Ballon d'Or award for the best player in the world on seven occasions. He has also won the Champions League four times with his former club Barcelona, but the World Cup is the biggest prize in the sport. "If he wants to keep playing, he can be with us, he is more than entitled to decide if he wants to stay with us," Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni said. (AP)

## 'Diego is smiling now': Pele congratulates Messi and Argentina after FIFA World Cup win

**SAO PAULO, DEC 19 /--/** Brazil great Pelé congratulated Lionel Messi and Argentina for winning the World Cup and Kylian Mbappé for his goal-



scoring exploits in Sunday's final. Pelé, who won a record three World Cups as a player, has been in the hospital to treat a respiratory infection. He posted his message on Instagram after Argentina beat defending champion France 4-2 in a penalty shootout following a 3-3 draw at Lusail Stadium in Qatar. "Today, football continues to tell its story, as always, in an enthralling way," Pelé wrote in his post. "Messi winning his first World Cup, as his trajectory deserved. My dear friend, Mbappé, scoring four goals in a final. What a gift it was to watch this spectacle to the future of our sport." (AP)



## "WE WILL RETURN": Kylian Mbappe's post after World Cup final heroics for France is viral

**DOHA, DEC 19 /--/** Kylian Mbappe couldn't possibly have done more for France against Argentina in the final of the 2022 FIFA World Cup. After his side was trailing 2-0 till the 80th minute, Mbappe struck home twice to take the match into extra-time. Then, in the extra-time too, he scored to make it 3-3 for France after Lionel Messi had given Argentina the lead. Mbappe thus became only the second player in history after England's Geoff Hurst to score a hat-trick in a FIFA World Cup final. Mbappe ultimately won the Golden Boot for being the top-scorer of the event with eight goals. However, it was not enough for the 2018 champions to defend their title. On Monday, Mbappe posted a heartfelt tweet, which has gone viral. "Nous reviendrons (We will return)," Mbappe wrote.

## Karim Benzema confirms France retirement after World Cup final defeat



France footballer Karim Benzema has hinted at retirement from international football with his latest tweet. Benzema, who came into the FIFA World Cup 2022 as the reigning Ballon d'Or champion was forced out of the tournament due to an injury suffered right ahead of the competition. There were reports from the France squad during the tournament, that Benzema was not welcomed back despite being fit during the World Cup, which made him leave and join Real Madrid, his club in Spain. Benzema even played a friendly game with the club while France were in the knockout stages in the tournament.

## Chants Of 'Messi, Messi' As Bangladeshis Celebrate Argentina's World Cup Triumph

**DHAKA, DEC 19 /--/** Bangladeshi football fans chanted "Messi, Messi," shedding tears of joy and dancing in the streets to celebrate the triumph of Argentina -- a country half a world away -- over France in the World Cup final Sunday. According to police, hundreds of thousands of people defied chilly temperatures to watch the match on giant screens set up in the capital Dhaka's key squares, roads and football grounds. Many wore Argentina's sky blue and white national colours and sported Lionel Messi's iconic number 10 jersey. "I don't know why I am crying, but I am crying for him," Nafiun Rahman Zian, an 18-year old Messi fan, told AFP. "Years of wait (is over) to see the love of my life, the little magician, hold the most prestigious trophy which he desired so much," he said. Bangladesh, a Muslim-majority country of 170 million people, is cricket mad, with its



national team one of the best in the world. It is, however, ranked among the bottom in global football. But every four years during the World Cup, the country renews its love affair with the sport, as many young people divide themselves largely into two rival groups -- one supporting Argentina, the other Brazil. Sunday's biggest crowd gathered at the Dhaka University campus at the heart of the city, as many people painted the Argentinian flag on their cheeks to watch the proceedings from Qatar. The crowd became ecstatic when Messi scored the first goal of the game, with a penalty. "I just can't express how happy I am," said Imon Gazi, wiping his eyes after Argentina's Angel Di Maria scored to make it 2-0. The throng fell into an eerie silence as a brace from France's Kylian Mbappe took the match into extra time at 2-2.

Join our Team

WE'RE AVAILABLE

FOR printing Job

For Newspaper (Daily/Weekly/Fortnightly/Monthly)

please contact

ECHO PRINTING PRESS

KOLKATA

81, Nilgunj Road, Kolkata-700 109, Cell: 98307 64546/98301 34580

GUWAHATI

Gorchuk, Near Katabari Masjid, Guwahati- 781 035

Cell: 94350 44633/98307 64546

SILIGURI

Jaduvita, P.O.: Champasari, PS:Pradhan Nagar, Siliguri-734 003

Cell: 98307 64546/98301 34580

PORT BLAIR

Dollygunj, Port Blair- 744 103, Cell: 99332 260853