

THE ECHO OF INDIA

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

VOL XV ISSUE NO 249

PAGES 8

PORT BLAIR • WEDNESDAY • DECEMBER 21, 2022

Rs 3.00

Labour department at N&M Andaman becomes non-functional identity

KARTIK

MAYABUNDER, DEC 20/-/The Labour Commissioner Office at Rangat which looks after the duties of the Rangat, Mayabunder and Diglipur in North & Middle Andaman is functioning without the Assistant Labour Commissioner for more than 4 months now. Absence of the Assistant Labour Commissioner for the past many months has hampered various functional works in this region. Labourers from Diglipur to Baratang approach the Labour Commissioner Office at Rangat for making Labour Cards which is mandatory for availing various benefits of Labour welfare schemes implemented by the government.

Absence of the Assistant Labour Commissioner has brought a full-stop in execution of activities like trade license, labour insurance, getting No Dues Certificates, the submission of which is a must for private Contractors for releasing their bills.

According to sources, the Assistant Labour Commissioner Office is functional with only one DRM staff member. Shortage of staff in this office has almost halted activities like renewal of trade license, labour cards. The entire Assistant Labour Commissioner office is managed by the lady DRM. Right from opening of the office door to collecting office daks, cleaning of the office premises and all the clerical works are performed by the DRM. Now everybody knows that in government services, DRMs cannot be held responsible for major mistakes. In such a scenario, tasking such vital official works to a DRM can lead to major problems for the



Labour department.

Earlier, the Labour Commissioner office at Rangat used to be run by as many as four staff. But in due course, some staff retired from service while few were transferred to other departments without providing their replacement. Now what is left is a DRM running the entire office of Assistant Labour Commissioner.

The Contractors of this region are facing hardship

as they are unable to get the mandatory No Dues Certificate for the clearance of their final bills. Non-clearance of bills is leaving private labourers not getting their salaries on time. Sources added that the Assistant Labour Commissioner who is also in-charge of Mayabunder and Diglipur Labour Commissioner offices is clearing the office files from Port Blair. The main job of the Labour Department is to

***DRM running the show at ALC Office at Rangat**

**** Various activities hampered as a result**

provide job securities, good hygienic conditions and safety measures at work sites, welfare and beneficial wages to workers in time and compensation in case of accidents, medical facilities, provisions for future etc, with the larger motive to improve the socio-economic condition of the working class. Apart from providing various administrative service support to the workers, the Labour Department also educates the workers regarding their rights and their duties by conducting seminars and other educational programmes on worker education, workers awareness, Welfare, Safety, Hygiene, awareness towards the provisions of Labour Laws.

MP seeks reconstruction of entire stretch of road from Wimberlygunj to Wright Myo

PORT BLAIR, DEC 20/-/The Member of Parliament, of Andaman, Mr. Kuldeep Rai Sharma has requested the Lt. Governor of Andaman and Nicobar Islands to reconstruct the entire stretch of road from Wimberlygunj to Wright Myo for the larger interest of the people of the area.

In a letter, Mr. Sharma said that during his recent visit to the South Andaman region he has observed that the road from Wimberlygunj to Wright Myo is in very pathetic shape.

He mentioned that the road stretch has



become almost un-motorable and after even a moderate spell of rain, the road, full of potholes, becomes too

risky for two and three wheelers.

The Member of Parliament mentioned that in the last few months several accidents have also taken place in the region due to the pathetic condition of the road.

He added that a large number of students, patients, old people and ladies cross the road on a daily basis from whom the road has become a constant source of agony. Not only this, vehicle owners are complaining that their vehicles are getting heavily damaged due to such bad roads, he pointed out.

CS directs senior officers to fix public hearing timing

PORT BLAIR, DEC 20/-/The Chief Secretary, A & N Administration has ordered that all the Senior Officers i.e. PCCF, DGP, Commissioner-cum-Secretaries, Secretaries, Heads of Departments, all field officers (DCs/SPs/ACs / SDPOs / DFOs / Tehsildars/BDOs etc.) and all other Government Officers to fix the time between 3 pm & 4 pm on all working days for meeting with general public to redress their grievances.

MORE LOCAL NEWS ON PAGE -3

Goenka's
MERRY CHRISTMAS
NEW COLLECTION
AVAILABLE NOW IN SHOP ONLY
ABERDEENBAZAR | BHATUBASTI | BAMBOOFLAT DIGLIPUR
CUSTOMER CARE NO : 7695072472

TEXTILE LAXMI NEERAJ TEXTILE
EXPLOSIVE Christmas Collection

A&N Seaways & Project Pvt. Ltd.,
Natural River Sand
Now Available For Construction Of Your New Projects
Pristine Quality | Affordable Price | Accurate Quantity
18 HSKP Building, Gurudwara Line, Port Blair, Andaman, India - 744 101
Contact: +91 86910 78775, +91 96795 93111

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

YESHUVA TRAINING ACADEMY Pvt. Ltd
NEAR MUBARAK MALL, JUNGLEHAT, 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 TH / 12 TH
2.	AIR & SEA CARGO MANAGEMENT	1YEAR	10 TH / 12 TH
3.	AIRHOSTESS TRAINING	1YEAR	10 TH / 12 TH
4.	CABIN CREW MANAGEMENT	1YEAR	10 TH / 12 TH
5.	PRE - PRIMARY EDUCATION	1YEAR	10 TH / 12 TH
6.	PRIMARY EDUCATION	1YEAR	10 TH / 12 TH
7.	X - RAY TECHNOLOGY	1YEAR	10 TH / 12 TH
8.	SANITARY INSPECTOR	1YEAR	10 TH / 12 TH
9.	MEDICAL LABORATORY TECHNICIAN	2YEARS	12 TH
10.	OPERATION THEATER ASSISTANT	2YEARS	12 TH
11.	AIRFARE & TICKETING	6MONTHS	10 TH
12.	AIRPORT GROUND STAFF TRAINING	6MONTHS	10 TH

➤ **ADMISSION GOING ON JAUNARY - 2023 BATCH.**
➤ **ADMISSION FORM SUBMISSION LAST DATE 28/12/2022.**
➤ **FOR INTER ISLAND STUDENTS ONLINE CLASSES ALSO AVAILABLE**

PM asks BJP Parliamentarians to make popularising millets 'jan andolan'

NEW DELHI, DEC 20 /--/ Good health associated with millets and sports took centre stage in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address at the BJP parliamentary party meeting here on Tuesday as he asked MPs to promote them and even joined lawmakers for a special millet lunch.

Making millets, grown by most small farmers in the country, popular amounts to serving the country, Modi told BJP MPs, according to Union minister Pralhad Joshi who briefed reporters. This should be made a "jan andolan" (people's movement), Joshi said while quoting the Prime Minister. Modi noted that the UN has declared 2023 as the International Year of Millets

on his government's request as he called for making the bouquet of grains high on nutrition a popular choice of food for people. With tens of thousands of foreign delegates expected to attend a large number of meetings associated with the G-20, now being chaired by India, Modi said millets will be on the menu. Highlighting the high nutritional value of these grains, Modi said these can be used in anganwadis, schools, homes and government meetings as well.

Awareness about the grains could be spread by hosting debates in schools and colleges, the Prime Minister said and noted that food items whose high nutritional values are shared with people are also

consumed more. MPs can use millet items in meetings they host, he added. As over 85 per cent of Indian farmers falling in the category of small farmers grow millets in large numbers, a rise in the consumption of these grains will help them financially, he noted.

Incidentally, the government hosted a lunch for all MPs on Tuesday in which food items prepared from millets were on the menu. The Prime Minister tweeted: "As we prepare to mark 2023 as the International Year of Millets, attended a sumptuous lunch in Parliament where millet dishes were served. Good to see participation from across party lines."

Modi shared a picture where Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankar, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, defence minister Rajnath Singh and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla were seated alongside him during the lunch. The Prime Minister also asked MPs to promote sports meets with a special focus on Indian games like kabaddi. Hosting such events has been a BJP initiative in the last few years. In the meeting, external affairs minister S Jaishankar gave a presentation on India's presidency of the G-20, a grouping of the world's major 20 economies, and how the MPs can contribute, with the country hosting a large number of events. (PTI)



Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankar and other leaders attend a lunch Programme where millet dishes were served in Parliament to mark 2023 as 'International Year of Millets', in New Delhi

Naxal violence reduced by 77 per cent in 11 years, Govt tells Lok Sabha

NEW DELHI, DEC 20 /--/ The incidents of Naxal violence have reduced by 77 per cent from the high of 2,213 in 2010 to 509 in 2021, Union minister of state for home Nityanand Rai said in Lok Sabha on Tuesday.

Similarly, resultant deaths (civilians and security forces) have reduced by 85 per cent from the high of 1,005 in 2010 to 147 in 2021, Rai said, adding that the declining trend continues in 2022. "Steadfast implementation of the national policy has resulted in consistent decline in violence in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected areas. Incidents of LWE violence have reduced by 77 per cent from the high of 2,213 in 2010 to 509 in 2021," he said replying to a written question.

The minister said geographical spread of the violence has also significantly reduced and only 191 police stations of 46 districts reported LWE related violence in 2021 as compared to high of 465 police stations of 96 districts in 2010. Rai said decline in geographical spread is also reflected in the reduced number of districts covered under Security Related Expenditure (SRE) scheme and the number of SRE districts reduced from 126 to 90 in April, 2018 and further to 70 in July, 2021.

Similarly, Rai said the number of districts contributing approximately 90 per cent of the LWE violence, categorised as most LWE affected districts, came down to 30 from 35 in 2018 and further to 25 in 2021. (PTI)

Govt hospitals in NC have to treat patients irrespective of residence, can't insist on voter ID: Delhi HC

NEW DELHI, DEC 20 /--/ Medical treatment has to be provided to all citizens by government hospitals in the national capital irrespective of the patient's place of residence, the Delhi High Court said on Tuesday, observing hospitals cannot insist on "voter ID".

Justice Prathiba M Singh, while hearing a petition by a Bihar resident who alleged the city government-run Lok Nayak Hospital provided free MRI test facility only to the residents of Delhi, said hospitals cannot deny treatment to those coming from outside.

The Delhi government assured there was no discrimination by the hospital on the basis of a patient's place of residence as alleged by the petitioner. "They (hospital) can't insist on voter ID here. For hospitals, either AIIMS or any other hospital in Delhi, you cannot stop citizens from outside coming (and seeking treatment)," the court said. "A perusal of the judgement of this court makes it very clear that insofar as health treatment is concerned, the treatment has to be provided to all citizens without any consideration as to their place of residence," added the court.

Delhi government counsel Satyakam said there was nothing on record to show that the petitioner was asked to furnish his voter ID, adding the dates for MRI were given as per the status of availability. He also said the MRI scan of the petitioner's left knee will also be conducted. The court took on record the stand of the Delhi government and directed that the petitioner's MRI shall be conducted on December 26 at 11 am. The petitioner, represented by lawyer Ashok Agarwal, contended the hospital adopted a "discriminatory approach" against those who did not belong to Delhi and so the petitioner was given a date in July 2024 for the MRI scan of his knee.

The petitioner claimed although all state funded hospitals are obliged to provide free treatment to any person approaching them, people possessing voter ID cards of Delhi were given "quick treatment" and outsiders were handed "long dates for check-up" at the hospital in question. "The respondent hospital has given 15.07.2024 date for MRI (L) Knee test because the petitioner is resident of Bihar and not of Delhi. It is done under written or unwritten policy of the respondent Government of NCT of Delhi," the petition claimed. The petition said the patient again went to the OPD at the hospital on November 21 and December 5, 2022 with his X-Ray report. After seeking the report, the doctor advised him to get an MRI of the knee done outside the hospital.

"It was also informed by the Doctor that free of cost MRI test facility is available to resident of Delhi only who possess voter Id Card of Delhi and others have to take the test at their own cost," the petition claimed. It said the action of the hospital authorities was "totally arbitrary, discriminatory, without authority in law and violated the Constitution of India". (PTI)

Union minister Irani questions WEF's gender gap assessment which ranked India at 135th place

GANDHINAGAR, DEC 20 /--/ Union women and child development minister Smriti Irani on Tuesday questioned the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index assessment which ranked India at 135th place in terms of gender parity.

Irani said the Index failed to take into account the political empowerment and financial inclusion of women at the grassroots level. The Union minister interacted via video link with the audience during a seminar organised at the Rashtriya Raksha University at Lavad in Gandhinagar district of Gujarat. She was asked questions related to the empowerment of women and gender equality. "It is time to challenge what the Global Gender Gap Index has done in the way India has challenged the Global Hunger Index. This measurement has been done through the western standards," Irani said. She said when it comes to marks of political empowerment, the Index does not take into account women who serve across panchayats and

municipalities as district panchayat presidents, sarpanchs, mayors and councillors.

"If we may just take into account women who are



Smriti Irani

serving across all the political systems in our country, our number would go up. They do not have grassroots democratic systems in their countries, hence they would like to measure us through western standards," the Union minister said. In the WEF's report released in July 2022, India was ranked low at

135th place in terms of gender parity despite an improvement of five places since last year on better performance in areas of economic participation and opportunity.

Iceland retained its place as the world's most gender-equal country, followed by Finland, Norway, New Zealand and Sweden, as per the annual Gender Gap Report 2022 of the World Economic Forum (WEF) released in Geneva. Irani said women are serving the country in various capacities including in the administrative system as collectors, superintendents of police, and paramilitary forces.

There are crores of women serving as ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activist) workers and anganwadi workers, she said. "They do not count our political intervention, they do not take into consideration our administration offices. The minute we start counting women in political offices at the grassroots level in India, the minute we start counting women in administrative

offices in India, India's rank will shoot up in the top 20," she said. Irani said the Index also did not take into account the women who have been financially empowered through Central schemes like Mudra Yojana and Stand Up India etc. "If we do not count 22 crore women as empowered who are financially transacting every day if we do not count 1.90 crore women in administrative offices if we do not count over 20 lakh women who serve in panchayats across the country, then honestly the question before us, is the index fair in its assessment," she asked. Irani said her ministry has worked to secure women by using Nirbhaya Fund up to Rs 9,000 crore, which was otherwise lying unused.

"Projects worth Rs 9,000 crore have been evaluated across all state governments and all ministries of the Government of India. Fiscal support worth Rs 5,000 crore under such projects has already been obtained by various state governments and Union ministries," she added. (PTI)

Delhi LG directs chief secy to recover Rs 97 cr from AAP for 'political advertisements'

NEW DELHI, DEC 20 /--/ Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena has directed the chief secretary to recover Rs 97 crore from the AAP for political advertisements it published in the guise of government advertisements in 2016, official sources said on Tuesday.

The development comes days after the AAP wrested power from the BJP in the MCD polls. The AAP alleged that the LG gave the order on the saffron party's directions and claimed that Saxena has no power to issue such a directive. The Opposition BJP in Delhi welcomed the LG's directions and claimed that the amount to be recovered from the ruling party will rise to Rs 400 crore. At a press conference held here, Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri alleged an "advertisement scam" and demanded a CBI inquiry into it.

The LG in his orders to the chief secretary also directed that all advertisements since September 2016 be referred to the Committee on Content Regulation in Government Advertising (CCRG), set up by the ministry of information and broadcasting for vetting and ascertaining if they are in consonance with Supreme Court guidelines.

The Delhi government's Directorate of Information and Publicity (DIP), acting on a 2016 directive from the CCRGA, had notified that Rs

97.14 crore (Rs 97,14,69,137) had been spent or booked on account of "non-conforming advertisements", the sources said. "Of this, while payments amounting to over Rs 42.26 crore had already been released by the DIP, Rs 54.87 crore for advertisements published were still pending disbursement," a source said. Asked to recover the amount, the DIP had in 2017 directed the AAP to pay over Rs 42.26 crore to the state exchequer immediately and directly pay the pending amount of Rs 54.87 crore to the advertising agencies or publications concerned within 30 days, the sources said.

"However, even after the lapse of five years and eight months, the AAP has not complied with the DIP order. Such defiance of a legitimate order by a registered political party is not only contemptuous of the judiciary, but also does not augur well for the health of good governance," the source added. The Directorate of Vigilance (DoV) also inquired into complaints and found that not only did the DIP not recover amounts worth Rs 42.26 crore but it also proactively paid the pending amount of Rs 54.87 crore, rather than getting the AAP to pay it, a source said.

"In eight cases, payment of Rs 20.53 crore was made, falsely attributing it to court/arbitration orders."

The DoV found that deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia had approved the payment of another Rs 27 crore (approximately) by entering into fraudulent "compromise deed or settlement", despite the fact that there was no litigation nor there were any directions from the Supreme Court or the Delhi High Court, the source claimed.

The DoV also said that such advertisements that are "prima facie and blatantly violative of the Supreme Court order" have been continuously issued by the DIP on direction of the ministers. Citing an example, it said that the entire cost for the bio-decomposer project was Rs 41.62 lakh but the expenditure incurred for advertising it was Rs 16.94 crore, which is 40 times higher than the project cost. The DoV also called it a 'grossly illegal move' by the AAP dispensation to put in place a committee of its own to look into violations of the Supreme Court guidelines. Former LG Anil Baijal too had dismissed the constitution of the committee.

LG Saxena has even asked that the money spent on functioning of the committee be recovered. "He has additionally asked for Shabdarth the public agency formed by the Kejriwal government currently manned by 35 individuals on contractual or outsourced basis to be

manned by government servants instead. The finances of Shabdarth ever since it came into being shall also be audited," the source added. In 2015, the Supreme Court had postulated guidelines to regulate government advertising and eliminate unproductive expenditure. Following this, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting formed the three-member Committee on Content Regulation in Government Advertising (CCRG) in 2016. The CCRGA investigated advertisements published by the DIP and issued an order in September 2016, identifying those which were in "stark violation of the guidelines" set by the apex court.

Addressing a press conference here, AAP chief spokesperson Saurabh Bharadwaj, however, termed the LG's direction a "new love letter" and said that as Valentine's Day nears, the frequency of such love letters is only going to increase. "The BJP is flustered that we have become a national party and wrested power from it in the MCD.

LG sahab is doing everything in accordance with the BJP's directions and that is troubling the people of Delhi. The more worried Delhi's people are, the happier the BJP gets," Bhardwaj claimed. He further said that the LG's directions would not stand in the eyes of law. (PTI)

Oppn targets Karnataka govt in Maharashtra Assembly over 'ill-treatment' to Marathi people

NAGPUR, DEC 20 /--/ Opposition parties in Maharashtra on Tuesday targeted the Karnataka government in the state Assembly here over the alleged ill-treatment being meted out to Marathi-speaking people in the neighbouring southern state.

Raising the issue in the Lower House, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) MLA Jayant Patil said a lathi was raised at his party colleague and legislator Hasan Mushrif on Monday who had gone to Belagavi to meet the Marathi-speaking people. Leader of Opposition Ajit Pawar said the issue is very sensitive to everyone. Replying to the issue, chief minister Eknath Shinde said for the first time the Centre has intervened which is a positive step. Speaker Rahul Narvekar said it has already been decided the matter will be discussed in detail and agreed to by the treasury and Opposition benches. The long-pending border dispute between the two states flared up again on Monday when members of Opposition parties- Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray), Congress, and Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) - from Maharashtra were stopped from entering Karnataka by the police.

They were scheduled to attend a gathering organised by the pro-Marathi group Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti (MES), an Opposition leader from Maharashtra's Kolhapur district had said. "These leaders, including NCP MLA Hasan Mushrif, were on their way to participate in a 'maha melava' (mega gathering) organized by the MES in the adjoining state. Leaders alleged they were lathi-charged by the Karnataka Police at the border, while the Maharashtra police detained them and later released them. However, the Kolhapur district police refuted the claim of detention. (PTI)

Uddhav visits office allotted to his faction of Sena in Assembly complex in Nagpur

NAGPUR, DEC 20 /--/ Former Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray on Tuesday visited the new office allotted to his faction of the Shiv Sena in the Legislative Assembly complex in Nagpur and consoled staffers loyal to him who broke down when asked to vacate the old office a day earlier by the rival camp.

Asked about the MLAs of the rival faction led by chief minister Eknath Shinde telling the staffers, including two women, to vacate the old party office on Monday, Thackeray said he consoled the employees who are attached to the Shiv Sena Bhavan Mumbai and come to Nagpur during the winter session of the state legislature to help in managing legislative work. "This is called loyalty. These employees have been working for the Sena for the past thirty years. Tears rolled down from their eyes today," he said. The Shiv



Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) leader, who was accompanied by his MLA-son and former minister Aaditya Thackeray, garlanded a bust of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in the office. The Balasahebanchi Shiv Sena faction, led by chief minister Shinde, took possession of the existing office of the Shiv Sena in the Nagpur Legislative Assembly complex on Monday, the first day of the winter session. The MLAs of the faction led by Thackeray were allotted another office in the premises, a Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) leader had said.

Workers of both factions of the party were engaged in a war of words on Monday afternoon over possession of the office which had been used by the Shiv Sena for three decades. Portraits of Uddhav Thackeray and his son Aaditya were removed from the office by the Shinde faction workers, who put up a photo of the CM's political mentor late Anand Dighe. Employees of the Shinde-led faction asked the existing staffers, including two women, working for the Shiv Sena (UBT) to shift to the new office, a Thackeray camp leader had claimed. Some of the existing staffers at the old Sena office broke down when asked to vacate the place. Shiv Sena (UBT) leader and Mumbai MLA Ravindra Waikar on Monday said: "These employees have done the legislative work of all Shiv Sena MLAs, including Eknath Shinde, for the past 30 years. Now, CM Shinde has shown them the door." (PTI)

No cyber attack on census data centre, multi-layered security put in place: Govt

NEW DELHI, DEC 20 /--/ A multi-layered security approach has been adopted for the safety of census data and there has been no cyber attack or data hacking incident in the system, Union minister of state for

home Nityanand Rai said Tuesday.

Rai said the intent of the government for conducting Census 2021 was notified in the Gazette of India on March 28, 2019, but due to the outbreak of the Covid-

19 pandemic, the census and related field activities have been postponed until further orders.

"Multiple layered security approach has been adopted for security and safety of census data. Data

is encrypted at the data collection device, during the transmission and at servers and storage.

"Advisories from National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIIPC)

and Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) are implemented to make the data centres secure," Rai said in Lok Sabha.

Replying to another question, the minister said

attack or data hacking incident has been observed in the data centre or its disaster recovery sites of the office of Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India." (PTI)

Regional level red ribbon club quiz competition



PORT BLAIR, DEC 20/--/ Ms. Jace Jackson & Ms. Meharpreet Kaur Bijjan of ANIMS represented Andaman & Nicobar Islands in the Regional Level Red Ribbon Club Quiz competition and won the Second place out of the total 8 team from other States & Union Territories. The other teams were from Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana.

Dr. Munni Singhania, Director of Health Services congratulated the students for their good performance and encouraged them for participating in more such programmes.

Regional Level Quiz Competition was conducted by National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO), Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, GoI organized at Pondicherry on 16th December 2022.

Counseling for one BAMS seat on Dec 22

PORT BLAIR, DEC 20/--/ All concerned candidates who have applied for allotment of various Professional/ Technical/ Non-Technical courses reserved at mainland institutions for the academic session 2022-23 have been informed that the counseling for BAMS-1 seat (reserved at MMM Govt. Ayurvedic College, Udaipur, Rajasthan) course will be held on Dec.22, 2022 at 3.30 pm in the Chamber of Assistant Sec-

retary (HrEdn), A&N Administration, Secretariat, Port Blair. All the interested candidates whose names have appeared in the merit list of above course have been directed to appear in person with all educational qualification certificates/ testimonials in original along with five passport size photographs and 2 permanency certificates for sureties and other documents in support of their category for counseling on the date, time

and venue as specified above. If the seat still remains un-utilized from the respective category, the same may be allotted from Category-V as per merit. No subsequent claim will be entertained or considered from any candidate, irrespective of his merit, fails to appear in person or does not produce necessary certificates in original at the time of counseling/selection.

ANTCC President seeks special ship for Chennai for Ayyappa devotees

PORT BLAIR, DEC 20/--/ The ANTCC President, Mr. Rangala Halder has demanded the Administration for a Special Ship to Sail at Chennai from 3rd to 4th January 2023 for the Devotees of Ayyappa Puja. In his letter addressed to the Chief Secretary, he said that around 1000 no's of Ayyappa Devotees are likely to attend the mass Gathering Puja at Sabarimala Temple, Kerala to extend their beliefs and worship towards the Lord. Mr. Halder Said that as the Flight Fare is much higher which cannot be affordable by the Ayyappa Devotees and most importantly the Flight Schedules are not very operational as the Construction work of the Airport is in Process. He further requested the Administration to kindly make necessary arrangements for the Special Sailing from Port Blair to Chennai on 3rd to 4th January 2023 for the Devotees welfare and Considerations.



Narcotic Cell unit seizes drugs from two air passengers

PORT BLAIR, DEC 20/--/ Acting on a specific intelligence input received from reliable source, Police team from Narcotic Cell of CID Unit consisting of SI M. A Rasheed, Head Constable Sanjay Kujur, Constables K. Rajendran & Raja Rao intercepted two persons namely Kamal Das S/o Late Jeevan Das R/o Kamrajnagar & Sujit Biswas S/o Shri Ravi Biswas R/o Calicut at VSI Airport who had arrived at Port Blair from Kolkata on 19/12/2022 by flight. During checking of their personnel belongings, 12 bottles of Codeine base syrup, 200 tablets of Nitrazepam (0.5 mg), 50 tablets of Nitrazepam (10 mg), 75 tablets of Alprazolam (0.5 mg) and 915 grams of Ganja which was clandestinely concealed in the bags were seized and accused persons were arrested observing all codal formalities.

N&M Police conducts jungle search, seizes illicit liquor

PORT BLAIR, DEC 20/--/ The District Police of North & Middle Andaman have been conducting intensive jungle search and combing operations to crackdown on manufacturing of illicit Liquor. Adding to the spree of crackdown on illicit liquor manufacturing in the district, Police team headed by SI Deva Raju, ASI Sanjay Yadav, PC Anirudh Das, PC Mohd Safique and PC Sudash Lall conducted combing in Shyam Kund jungle under the jurisdiction of OP Bakultala. The team recovered a total of 60 tins in a total of 04 bhattis containing about 600 ltrs of fermented illicit liquor (lehan) and other bhatti materials at different location within the jungle and destroyed the same in the jungle. The team searched for the miscreants in the jungle who had fermented the illicit liquor in bhattis but in vain.

CCS seizes illegal drugs, two nabbed

PORT BLAIR, DEC 20/--/ Acting on a specific intelligence input received from reliable source, Police team from Narcotic Cell of CID Unit consisting of SI M. A Rasheed, Head Constable Sanjay Kujur, Constables K. Rajendran & Raja Rao intercepted two persons namely Kamal Das S/o Late Jeevan Das R/o Kamrajnagar & Sujit Biswas S/o Shri Ravi Biswas R/o Calicut at VSI Airport who had arrived at Port Blair from Kolkata on 19/12/2022 by flight. During checking of their personnel belongings, 12 bottles of Codeine base syrup, 200 tablets of Nitrazepam (0.5 mg), 50 tablets of Nitrazepam (10 mg), 75 tablets of Alprazolam (0.5 mg) and 915 grams of Ganja which was clandestinely concealed in the bags were seized and accused persons were arrested observing all codal formalities.

A case under relevant sections of NDPS Act-1985 has been registered at PS CCS and investigation is being carried out. The general public is requested to inform about any credible information pertaining to sale or possession of contrabands or any other illegal activity on the following telephone numbers- 100, 232586, 233307, 9474290250. The identity of the informer will be kept secret.

ICAR-CIARI conducts training, distributes inputs to augment production and management of livestock



PORT BLAIR, DEC 20/--/ A three-days training programme entitled "Training cum Field day on Scientific Livestock Management" was organised by ICAR-Central Island Agricultural Research Institute, Port Blair at Harminderbay village, Little Andaman during 10th-12th December, 2022. The training was organized by the Scientists of Division of Animal Science of ICAR-CIARI namely, Dr. K. Muniswamy, Dr. P. Perumal, Dr. Arun Kumar De, and Dr. P.A. Bala, along with Dr. Ashish Kumar, Senior Veterinary Officer, Department of Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Services, Hut Bay. A total of 80 tribal farmers rearing different livestock species participated in the training. The Captain Mr. Andrew Mosses and the Secretary Mr. Festus of Harminderbay graced




the occasion and were the ice-breaker, they translated the gist of the programme in their native language and encouraged the participants to interact with the Scientists. On the first day, Dr. A. K. De and Dr. P. Perumal lucratively explained about scientific management of pigs and bovines, respectively, later Dr. K. Muniswamy explained about the scientific rearing of backyard chicken farming. Finally, the day ended after the visit of the farmer's field and collection of biological samples. The next day training was started with Dr. P.A. Bala's sumptuous deliberation on strategies to feed different livestock with local feed ingredients. Later, Dr. P. Perumal explained about sustainable goat farming. On the final day, Dr. P. Perumal briefed about the management of reproductive

health of different livestock; later Dr. K. Muniswamy and Dr. P. Perumal demonstrated the deworming procedure for various livestock species with anthelmintics. Finally, the training programme ended with distribution of inputs like pig feed (concentrate mixture), feed supplements and health tonics after explaining them about how to use these inputs. Mr. Andrew Mosses and Mr. Festus thanked the scientists for their efforts and urged to conduct more programmes with distribution of various inputs. They also thanked the village farmers for their active participation. The training and input distribution was done under the guidance of Dr. E. B. Chakurkar, the Director and Dr. D. Bhattacharya, the Head of Animal Science Division, ICAR-CIARI, Port Blair.

Sailing of MV Campbell Bay postponed

PORT BLAIR, DEC 20/--/ Due to technical reasons, the scheduled sailing programme of the vessel MV Campbell Bay for Little Andaman on 21st & 23rd December, 2022 from

Port Blair and her return voyage from Little Andaman has been postponed till further notice. However, fresh date of sailing of the vessel will be announced in due course.



Are You Having Any Signs Of

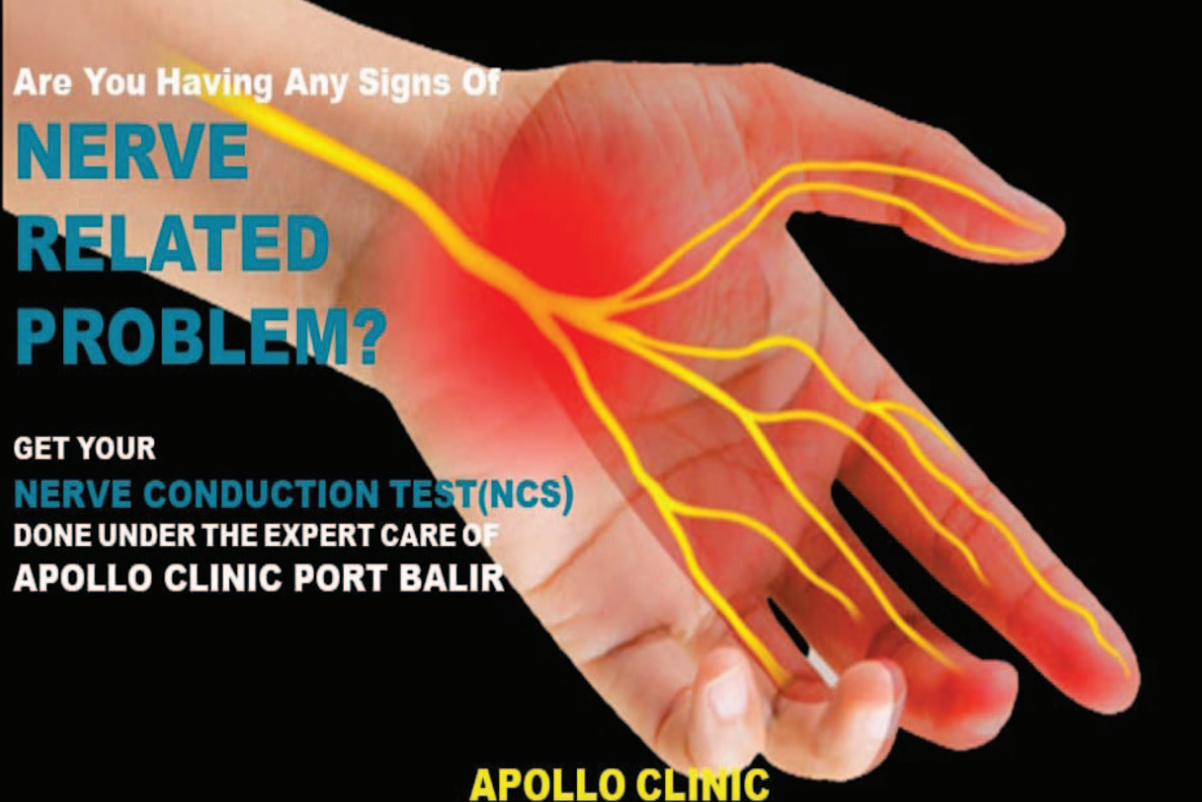
NERVE RELATED PROBLEM?

GET YOUR

NERVE CONDUCTION TEST (NCS)

DONE UNDER THE EXPERT CARE OF

APOLLO CLINIC PORT BLAIR



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



Shyam N Shyam

DISCOUNT

Festive Collection

NEW ARRIVALS

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



CLIMBER

Preeta Cars India Pvt Ltd | Renault Port Blair

Phoenix Bay, South Andaman -744102 | email : geccsalespb@gmail.com

Contact Us: 9564783849 | 9564783856

People demand freedom of speech as a compensation for the freedom of thought which they seldom use

Soren Kierkegaard

Bihar hooch tragedy: Prohibition goes for toss

The latest hooch tragedy in Bihar that claimed dozens of lives once again proves that alcohol abuse has terrible social consequences. Every time a liquor tragedy takes place, be it in any part of the country, a hue and cry breaks out with stereotyped demand for a national-level liquor policy to reduce consumption of spurious liquor. Once the tragedy fades out from public memory, the matter gets shelved, at least till another tragedy is reported. The World Health Organization (WHO) says unrecorded alcohol represents about 46 per cent of all alcohol consumption in India, indicating the need for better regulation in the sector. Based on latest available data, of the 947 deaths due to spurious liquor in 2020, a majority were in Madhya Pradesh (214), Jharkhand (139), and Punjab (133). The National Crime Records Bureau show that deaths due consumption of illicit liquor declined from 1,510 in 2017 to 947 in 2020. In 2018 and 2019, they were seen at 1,365 and 1,296, respectively. The five major states that reportedly banned liquor are Gujarat, Bihar, Nagaland, Mizoram, and Manipur. But, that pertained to the supply side, nothing on consumption. Experts are of the firm belief that prohibition alone will not work unless there's a national alcohol policy in place. There is demand and therefore, supply. Prohibition should remain, but it should not be the only answer. There should be an alcohol demand reduction policy. Another WHO data indicates that India's per capita alcohol consumption has increased from levels of 2.2 litres in 2000 to 5.61 litres in 2019. The large number of deaths in Bihar's Saran district allegedly happened due to the consumption of spurious liquor and the highest death toll since liquor prohibition in Bihar in 2016. The Nitish Kumar government has put at 38 the number of people who died in the Saran hooch tragedy. Higher death figures quoted by various quarters were "misleading", the CM said after BJP leaders claimed that "more than 100 people" have died. Most media reports put the death toll at 50 plus. In the case of Bihar, most of the liquor comes from neighbouring Uttar Pradesh and even Nepal, or it is manufactured locally through illegal means.

Hooch tragedies happen when alcohol unfit for human consumption is drunk, leading to death or permanent disability such as blindness. When alcohol is manufactured, it is of two types. One is potable alcohol suited for human consumption and can have 96 per cent strength in its purest form. When the same is denatured (taking away the natural qualities by adding an extraneous substance), it becomes unfit for human consumption and is referred to as non-potable alcohol. Denaturing is done to use alcohol for industries such as paints, varnishing, and shoe polish. All denaturants are not poisonous but some, like methyl alcohol, when used for denaturing, make the drink poisonous and fatal. It is this denatured alcohol when consumed that triggers deaths. There are various reports and studies on adulteration in Indian liquor, with some saying that nearly 20 per cent of all spirits sold in India are adulterated, while others peg it at 40-50 per cent.

China's interest in Tawang Buddhist Monastery is for internal reasons

REFLEX ACTION

Anjan Roy

China appears to have made a planned and heavy intrusion in the areas close to Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh last week, which were repulsed by the Indian army forthwith. The Chinese have repeatedly forayed into the area to make gains in Arunachal Pradesh near Tawang.

This is critical for China because Tawang is the seat of one of the most revered monasteries in Tibetan Buddhism. As a result, Tawang monastery plays a critical role in Tibetan internal politics. Therefore, China's efforts are to get control of the area and the Tawang monastery to control more effectively Tibet's internal politics. One has to remember that the Tibetan religious head, Dalai Lama, had come to Tawang and sought his first refuge in the monastery. Ever since, Dalai Lama is a continuing pain in China's neck. Now that Dalai Lama is getting old and a new spiritual head will have to be sworn in after the present Dalai Lama, China is seeking to ensure that its nominee becomes the new Dalai Lama. Getting control of the Tawang monastery before that could give some legitimacy for China's selection of the next spiritual head for Tibetan Buddhists.

These issues apart, China has been nibbling at the line of actual control—the so-called LAC—off and on and has already claimed some victories. China has thus sliced away from India's part of the border over the years through these small incursions. It is only now that that the India aide has reacted vigorously to the Chinese tactics. The Galwan valley incident, in which 20 Indian soldiers had died and some unknown numbers of the Chinese, was the biggest incident recently. But, last week's Chinese attempt to capture some high grounds in the areas, only 25 kilometres from Tawang, is the most ambitious and determined

attempt.. This time, when the winter had set in, the sudden sweep was meant to take possession of grounds to set up an observation post, according to some reports. In Galwan valley as well, China was seeking to acquire lands on Indian side to set up observation posts. Chinese have already setup some villages in the areas adjoining the border, which can quickly be turned into supply bases for the Chinese army.

In Yangtze area near Tawang, the Chinese were working with the same objective in mind. With the observation posts the Chinese could better monitor the Indian positions as well as movements. They are interested in tracking Indian preparations in the border areas. The Chinese have so far downplayed the incident apart from a brief mention in the Chinese foreign ministry briefing. This they did only after the statement of the defence minister, Rajnath Singh, in parliament subsequent to the incident.

The Chinese foreign ministry is seeking to pass this off as incursions by the Indian army personnel across the LAC. This is understandable since the Chinese are seeking now to modify their image. Chinese threats to south east Asian countries and the entire South China Sea has sent alarm bells across the region. Its earlier practice of "world warriors", who were the hostile diplomats belching fire over alleged insults to China, had given a very unwelcome picture of the country. After election of Xi Jinping at the 20th

party Congress in November, it appears China is taking some care to project a more favourable picture of the country. The release of the details of last week's incidents by India, has been to vindicate government's claims of wrong handling of all border incursions. India seems to be taking the Chinese threats seriously and expects these to continue in future as well. It appears the political circles deliberately highlighted the episode as the Indian army had acted swiftly and gained the upper hand over the Chinese. The Indian opposition parties had all along criticised the government for its lukewarm responses to Chinese incursions.

This time the political set up had some advantages in showing off the robust responses to the incursions. The Indian army was better prepared for the sudden eruption of violence. Along with this incidence, some videos have gone viral in the social media, depicting some face-offs between Indian soldiers and the Chinese. The videos depict the two sides fighting with lathis and rods in the hills, surrounded by green forests around. The videos show Indian soldiers beating the Chinese who then retreat followed by the Indian army personnel. Thereafter, the Indian roar in victory and some structures are demolished. The videos have now gone viral in the international media and showing the apparent victory of the Indian side. The videos had made first appearance in Indian social media.

For whatever reasons and results, border clashes with China are expected to continue. The silver lining is that these have remained confined to local levels. Eruption of these on a larger scale could make things rather difficult to control, as has been seen in the disastrous Russian campaign in Ukraine. (IPA)



Customers evaluate new year calendars for sale at Esplanade on Tuesday--Arijit Ganguly

India's next IT boom may be in AI, related sciences

A global survey of companies has revealed a serious shortage of tech talent when it comes to artificial intelligence, which is threatening to slow down the shift towards the new productivity tool.

A majority of respondents in the survey, carried out by management consultancy McKinsey, have reported difficulty in hiring for each AI-related role in the past year, and most say it either wasn't any easier or was more difficult to acquire this talent than in years past. AI data scientists remain particularly scarce, with the largest share of respondents rating data scientist as a role that has been difficult to fill, out of the roles we asked about.

The findings are particularly relevant to India, which boasts the world's biggest talent pool, and have lessons for the country's education system. India has been one of the biggest beneficiaries of the IT boom, triggered by the highly feared Y2K problem at the turn of the new millennium, which ultimately turned out to be a non-issue. But it had opened up a new world of opportunity for India's human resources pool. AI may well become another such opportunity. According to UNESCO's State of the Education Report for India 2022, India has an advantage of having an

advanced IT sector and a large number of young people who will join the labour market in the near future.

There is of course concern that even as additional jobs will be created for AI-literate people, many other jobs may be lost due to AI-based automation. But a McKinsey had projected that while 57 million jobs would be eliminated in India due to AI and automation, 114 million or twice as many new jobs will be created due to AI technologies.

According to the Artificial Intelligence Index Report 2021, India had the world's second highest growth in AI hiring from 2016 to 2020, behind Brazil and ahead of Canada, Singapore and South Africa. Analyst India magazine as well Jigsaw Academy also reported that there were almost 91,000 AI-related staff working in India, with 16,500 job openings as of July 2020. The median salary was Rs 14.7 lakh, with the highest median salary of Rs 16.7 lakh being paid in Mumbai. The AI market in India is expected to reach \$7.8 billion by 2025 at the rate of 20.2 percent compound annual growth rate. It is also

predicted that the AI software market itself will grow to \$6.4 billion in 2025. According to NAASCOM, AI will add between \$450 billion and \$500 billion to India's GDP by 2025. Similarly, a survey of over 3,000 stakeholders, conducted by Intel and the Indian School of Business on the suitability of machine learning showed 80 percent of the respondents expected their staff to undergo significant training over the next two years owing to the advent of AI in their businesses.

In 2018, NITI Aayog recognized the importance of AI in education, which is reflected in the National Education Policy 2020. The National Education Policy of 2020 has, accordingly, highlighted several important areas in which the application of AI is mentioned. It recommends introducing courses related to AI at all levels of education to develop the skills required to meet the current demands of industry.

In this regard, the policy recommends introduction of computational thinking (CT) at a

foundational stage of children's education so that India plays a leadership role in the fields of AI, machine learning and data science.

NEP advocates the development of hardware and software that use AI, machine learning, learning analytics, big data, blockchain, smart boards, adaptive systems etc to improve students' learning and to identify their learning paths. It goes on to advocate the development of AI-based software to track students through their years in school, based on their learning data to provide information about their strengths weaknesses and areas of interest and thus help them make decisions about the careers they want to choose.

According to UNESCO, India is well advanced in terms of AI literacy compared to other countries, which is illustrated by the fact that the country has the highest relative AI skill penetration rate worldwide. At the same time, it highlights two important issues that require attention, one of which is that women and girls as well as other disadvantaged socio-economic groups often have fewer opportunities to become AI literate and the other is the human dimension if AI literacy, which is often overlooked compared with its technological dimension. (IPA)

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				29		

- ACROSS**

 - 1 Colour
 - 3 Playing cards
 - 8 Musical instrument
 - 9 Be indebted
 - 10 Brasslike alloy
 - 11 Tarry
 - 14 Deposit
 - 17 Used up
 - 20 Come forth
 - 24 Array
 - 26 And not
 - 27 Wise man
 - 28 Arranged
 - 29 Young goat
- DOWN**

 - 1 Actual
 - 2 Soft feathers
 - 3 Part of a shoe
 - 4 Concretion of nacre
 - 5 Was weakminded
 - 6 Female sheep
 - 7 Sanity
 - 12 Little devil
 - 13 Weapon
 - 15 Lyric poem
 - 16 Band's engagement
 - 17 Graceful birds
 - 18 Additional
 - 19 Concise
 - 21 Honey drink
 - 22 Emit fumes
 - 23 Observed
 - 25 Small drink

SUDOKU:3732							
5	8	4	1				6
		2		6			
3	1		9	5			
		7				3	9
			7		5		
	2	9				8	
			1	9		8	2
			4		1		
4				8	9	5	7

Yesterday's Solution 3731							
3	6	4	1	9	2	7	5
8	7	1	6	4	5	2	9
5	9	2	7	3	8	1	6
6	3	7	4	2	9	5	8
9	1	5	3	8	7	4	2
2	4	8	5	6	1	3	7
7	8	3	9	5	4	6	1
1	2	6	8	7	3	9	4
4	5	9	2	1	6	8	3

Yesterday's Cross Word Solution 1740											
R	U	E	D			R		B			
A		V	I	M		S	I	T	E		
S	E	E	R			R	O	B	O	T	
C		N	E	P	A	L		X			
A	C	T				T	O	P	I	C	
L	I	S	P	S				A	C	E	
G			L			L					
P	A	G	A	N			R	O	M	E	
I	R	A	N				O	I	L	N	
N		G						D	E	F	T

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.

MESSAGE



The MoHFW, Govt. of India has initiated a program on "Community Support to TB Patients – NikshayMitra (Donor)" under PradhanMantri TB MukT Bharat Abhiyaan with the objectives to provide additional patient support to improve treatment outcome of TB Patients, augment community involvement to eliminate TB by 2025 and leverage the avenues for Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR). The TB MukT Bharat Abhiyaan was launched by the Hon'ble President of India on 09/09/2022.

In order to facilitate effective implementation of the Abhiyaan, Ni-kshay 2.0, an exclusive web portal for registration of Ni-kshayMitra (Donors) has been developed. Ni-kshayMitra for this program can include individuals, co-operative societies, corporates, elected representatives, institutions, non-governmental organizations, political parties and partners who can support by adopting consented TB patients in the peripheral health facilities/blocks/urban wards/districts/states. Under this initiative, nutritional support, diagnostic support and vocational support can be provided from 6 months to 3 years to all consented TB patients by Ni-kshayMitra.

CSR support has also been mobilized by the Health Department to help the TB patients. The Canara Bank, Port Blair has come forward to become a donor to support the TB patients under the scheme and assured to donate Rs.1.90 lacs. The Hon'ble Prime Minister in his vision, has asked all the officers to register as NikshayMitra. The Hon'ble PM urged every person, every organization and representatives associated with the Civil Society to takeup this resolution for playing an active role in building TB Free India. Accordingly, 20 Senior Officers and Doctors of Health Department have registered as NikshayMitra.

To attain the call of Hon'ble President of India, the A&N Administration has registered 59 NikshayMitras, who are providing nutritional support to 206 TB patients. The TB patients' notification rate for the year 2022 is 101% and success rate is 86%, which is more than the national average. The Health Department is conducting active case finding for early diagnosis of TB patients and also doing follow-up management of all diagnosed cases. I look forward to the active support of all serving Officers/Staff Associations to come forward and become Ni-kshayMitras. The interested officials/organizations can register themselves as Ni-kshayMitra by visiting <https://communitysupport.nikshay.in>. Necessary support would be provided to all willing officers to register, by the State TB Officer & District TB Officers.

(Keshav Chandra)
Chief Secretary
Andaman & Nicobar Administration

NCW summons Cong leader over 'misogynistic' remark against Smriti Irani

NEW DELHI, DEC 20 /--/ The National Commission for Women on Tuesday summoned Congress leader Ajay Rai over his "misogynistic" and "derogatory" remark against Union minister Smriti Irani. The Uttar Pradesh Congress leader had on Monday said Irani only comes to her constituency Amethi to show "latkas" and "jhatkas", an unflattering reference to dance moves that provoked a sharp response from the BJP. "The National Commission for Women has come across several media reports on a controversial remark made by Congress leader Ajay Rai against Union Minister Smriti Irani," the NCW said.

"The Commission has taken cognizance of the misogynistic remark made by Mr Rai. The remarks are outrageous and extremely derogatory and the Commission strongly condemns such statements." "The Commission has scheduled a hearing in the matter and sent a notice to Mr Rai to appear before it on 28.12.2022 at 12 PM," the NCW said in a statement. Asked if Gandhi will contest the 2024 Lok Sabha elections from Amethi, Rai had told reporters, "It has been the seat of the Gandhi family. Rahul ji has been the Lok Sabha MP from there. So has been Rajiv (Gandhi) ji and Sanjay (Gandhi) ji, and they have served it." "Most of the facto-

ries in Amethi are on the verge of closure. Half of the factories in Jagdishpur industrial area are lying shut. Smriti Irani only comes, shows 'latka-jhatka', and leaves," Rai, who is a regional chief of the party had said. Currently, Amethi is represented in Lok Sabha by Union Minister for Women and Child Development Irani. Responding to the statement, Irani said Rahul Gandhi and his mother Sonia Gandhi needed a new scriptwriter. "You and Mummy ji need to get your mysoginistic (misogynist) goons a new speechwriter," the Union Minister for Women and Child Development had said. (PTI)

Delhi's winter power demand can go up to record 5,500 MW this year

NEW DELHI, DEC 20 /--/ The national capital's peak power demand this winter can go up to a record 5,500 MW, officials said on Tuesday. The power demand peaked at 5,104 MW last year and 5,021 MW in 2020. The peak winter power demand in BRPL and BYPL discom areas reached 2,140 MW and 1,122 MW, respectively, during the last winter. This year, Delhi's peak power demand during winter can go up to 5,500 MW. It is expected to reach 2,289 MW and 1,159 MW for BRPL and BYPL respectively, a BSES spokesperson said. He said BSES discoms are geared to ensure adequate power availability

for its around 47 lakh consumers (around two crore residents) during the winter months. BSES discoms will also bank surplus power with other states, which need additional power during the winter months. This banked power will be available during the summer months. BRPL will bank up to 415 MW with states like Himachal Pradesh, Goa, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. BYPL is expected to bank up to 300 MW with states like Meghalaya, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The backbone of BSES' power-supply arrangements during the winter months includes long-term agreements from power

plants, including hydro and Delhi-based gas-fuelled generating stations. Additionally, BSES is also receiving 840 MW of solar power from Solar Energy Corporation of India, 439 MW of wind power, and around 25 MW from waste-to-energy plants. It is also being helped by more than 127 MW of solar power installed on roof-tops in south, west, east and central Delhi. In case of any contingency, BSES discoms will buy short-term power from the exchange which is available at economical rates. Advanced load-forecasting statistical and modelling techniques will help them accurately forecast the power demand. (PTI)

Ex-gratia of Rs 50,000 approved for next of kin of Covid-19 victims: govt

NEW DELHI, DEC 20 /--/ The Centre has allowed the states to use the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) to provide ex-gratia assistance of Rs 50,000 to the next of kin of those who have succumbed to Covid-19, Lok Sabha was informed on Tuesday. Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai said as per the national policy on disaster management, the primary responsibility for the disaster management, including disbursement of relief assistance to the affected people, rests with the state governments concerned. He said the state governments undertake relief measures

in the wake of natural disasters with help from the SDRF, already placed at their disposal, in accordance with the Government of India's approved norms. Rai said keeping in view the spread of coronavirus in India and the declaration of Covid-19 as pandemic by the World Health Organisation (WHO), by way of a special onetime dispensation, the central government has allowed the states to use SDRF towards containment measures for the financial years 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22. "Further, based on the guidelines issued by National Disaster Management Authority

(NDMA), under section 12(iii) of the Disaster Management Act, 2005, on September 11, 2021, the central government had allowed the states to use the SDRF to provide ex-gratia assistance of Rs 50,000 to the next of kin of the deceased due to Covid-19," he said replying to a written question. (PTI)

CHANGE OF NAME
I, Hasem Ali S/o Late Madar Ali R/o Chhoto Finga, P.O. Nimta, 24 Pgs (N), Kolkata-700049, W.B. shall henceforth be known as Hasem Ali Eslam by virtue of affidavit sworn before the Notary Public Kolkata on 19-12-2022.

Six lakh cyber crime complaints registered on govt portal since 2019, says MoS Home Ajay Mishra

NEW DELHI, DEC 20 /--/ Six lakh complaints of cyber-crime have been registered at the Citizen Financial Cyber Fraud Reporting and Management System since its inception in 2019, Union Minister of State for Home Ajay Kumar Mishra said on Tuesday.

Mishra said the Citizen Financial Cyber Fraud Reporting and Management System, under the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C), has been launched for immediate reporting of financial frauds and to stop siphoning off funds by fraudsters. The toll-free helpline number '1930' has been operationalised for assistance in lodging online cyber complaints. "Since the inception of Citizen Financial Cyber Fraud Reporting and Management System,



Ajay Kumar Mishra
more than six lakh complaints have been registered till December 12, 2022, and in more than 1.11 lakh complaints, so far, financial amount of more than Rs 188 crore have been saved," he said in Lok Sabha during Question Hour. The minister said the states and Union Territories are primarily re-

sponsible for the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of crimes including cyber crimes through their Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs). The LEAs take legal action as per the provisions of the law against persons involved in cyber crime.

The Central Government supplements the initiatives of the states and Union Territories through advisories and financial assistance under various schemes for their capacity building, he said. Mishra said the I4C has been set up to deal with all types of cyber crime in the country in a coordinated and comprehensive manner.

The National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (www.cybercrime.gov.in) was launched on August 30, 2019, as a part of the I4C, to

enable people to report incidents of cyber crimes with a special focus on cyber crimes against women and children.

"Cybercrime incidents reported on this portal, their conversion into FIRs and subsequent action thereon are handled by the state and UT LEAs concerned as per the provisions of the law," the minister said. He said more than 27,900 police officers from states and Union Territories are registered and over 7,300 certificates issued through the portal. The Ministry of Home Affairs has provided financial assistance to states and Union Territories under the Cyber Crime Prevention against Women and Children (CCPWC) scheme for their capacity building such as setting up of cyber forensic-

cum-training laboratories, capacity building and hiring of junior cyber consultants, Mishra informed the Lok Sabha. He said cyber forensic-cum-training laboratories have been commissioned in 30 states and Union Territories.

These are Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Mizoram, Odisha, Sikkim, Telangana, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Goa, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, Punjab, Tripura, Puducherry, Chandigarh, Jammu and Kashmir, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Delhi and Jharkhand. (PTI)

Road closed

PORT BLAIR, DEC 20 /--/ The road portion from Teal House Jn. to Chatham Fore-shore Road will be closed for all the vehicular movement for 10 days w.e.f. 21.12.2022. Hence, all the vehicles will be diverted through Haddo and Chatham Road.

One killed, 14 injured in road accidents due to dense fog in UP

BULANDSHAHR, DEC 20 /--/ One person was killed and 14 were injured in separate accidents amid low visibility due to dense fog in Uttar Pradesh's Bulandshahr and Sitapur districts on Tuesday morning, police said.

In Bulandshahr, a truck driver was killed and six people were injured in a pile-up involving several vehicles on Bulandshahr-Aligarh road under Arnia police station area, they said. The injured were rushed to the hospital and the damaged vehicles were removed from the road with the help of cranes, they said. At around 6 am, the driver of a mini-truck lost control of the vehicle after one of its tyres burst. As a result, a roadways bus, a canter and some other small vehicles behind the mini-truck collided with each other. Additional Superintendent of Police, (Rural) Bajrang Bali Chaurasia said. A truck driver was seriously injured in the incident and later died in hospital, he said. Two of the injured are undergoing treatment in Aligarh and Bulandshahr, the ASP said, adding that a few others who sustained minor injuries proceeded on their onward journey. In Sitapur, eight people were injured when the van in which they were travelling hit a stationary truck due to low visibility, the police said.

Four of the passengers sustained serious injuries in the accident that occurred near Kalli village under Misrikh police station area, they said. Due to dense fog and reduced visibility on the road, the van rammed into the truck, which was parked on the roadside, from behind, the police said. (PTI)



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other leaders attend a lunch programme in Parliament to mark 2023 as the "International Year of Millets" in New Delhi

CMFRI signs MoU to launch product from seaweeds to combat fatty liver disease

KOCHI, DEC 20 /--/ The Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) here has signed an MoU for production of Cadalmin Liv Cure extract, a patent-protected nutraceutical product from seaweeds, to combat non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD).

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was inked with Emineotech, a private limited company dealing with health products, for commercial production and marketing, CMFRI said on Tuesday. Dr A Gopalakrishnan, Director of CMFRI signed a license agreement with Evanjalist

Pathrose, the Managing Director of Emineotech. The product, made using an eco-friendly green technology to improve liver health, is the ninth nutraceutical developed by CMFRI and is claimed to be a unique blend of 100 per cent natural bioactive ingredients extracted from select seaweeds. "CMFRI has already commercialised nutraceuticals to combat lifestyle diseases such as type-2 diabetes, arthritis, cholesterol, hypertension, hypothyroidism and osteoporosis besides an immunity booster," it said in a release. Gopalakrishnan said

there was an increasing demand for natural remedies against lifestyle diseases. "Commercialisation of the product will be greatly beneficial to a large number of people suffering from non-alcoholic fatty liver disease as it helps improve liver health, reduce disposition of fatty substance and maintain other liver/ lipid parameters within the clinically acceptable limits," he said. The nutraceutical does not have any side effects as established by detailed pre-clinical trials, CMFRI said. Dr Kajal Chakraborty, Principal Scientist at the Marine Biotechnology, Fish Nutri-

tion and Health Division of the CMFRI led the research works to develop the product. The product would hit the market within four months and would be made available on Amazon, Flipkart and other leading e-commerce platforms for online sale, apart from physical market networks across the country, Pathrose said. He further said that the company would also introduce initiatives for creating community awareness of the potential risk of non-symptomatic fatty liver disease and the benefits of natural cures, including lifestyle changes. (PTI)

CHANGE OF NAME
I, Mohammad Sattar by virtue of affidavit sworn before first class Magistrate at Alipore bearing No. 2871 dated 07/12/2022, declare that my father's name is MD Alauddin and my permanent address is Vill-Basti Patti, Ward 14, PO and Panchayet- Hardia, PS and Anchal-Singhai, Dist. Samastipur, Bihar- 848209, which will be recorded in my driving license bearing No. WB-0120190011392.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, Mohammad Sabir, by virtue of affidavit sworn before first class Magistrate, Alipore bearing No. 2870 dated 07/12/2022, declare that my father's actual name is Mohammad Ismail and my permanent address is Vill-Dahiya, PO-Ranna, Anchal-Shivajinagar, PS-Hathauri, Dist-Samastipur, Bihar-847105, which will be recorded in my driving license bearing No. WB022016017478.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, Mira Paul, W/o Basudeb Paul, R/o 49/97, Masjidhati Road, Madhurerati, P.O. Kazipara, North 24 Parganas, 711124 W.B. declare that I have change my name Mira Rani Paul to Mira Paul. As per affidavit before the Notary Public at Kolkata on 20 Dec 2022.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, Shama Praween (old name) D/O Sagir Hasan, W/O Jamal Ahmed Presently residing at N-141/A, Mudiali 1st Lane, P.O.- Garden Reach, P.S.- Metiabruz, Kolkata- 700024, West Bengal, INDIA I have changed my name to (shall henceforth be known as) Shama Parveen (new name) vide an affidavit sworn before Notary public at Kolkata on 20/12/2022.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, Jasimuddin Khan, S/o Late Karamddin Khan, R/o Flora Fountain BL-1, 19FR, FL-19B, 45, Christopher Road, P.O.- Gobinda Khatick Road, P.S. Topsis, Dist- Kolkata, Pin-700046, W.B. declare that I have change my name Jassmuddin Khan to Md. Jasimuddin Khan. As per affidavit before the Notary Public at Kolkata on 15 Dec 2022.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, Manas Kumar Das, S/o Late Brindaban Das, R/o Vill. Kaliara, P.O. Noapara, P.S. Singur, Dist- Hooghly-7171136 W.B. declare that I have change my name Manas Das to Manas Kumar Das. As per affidavit before the Notary Public at Kolkata on 20 Dec 2022.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, MD KAUSAR (old name) S/O MD ILIAS Presently residing at RAJBATI MAJHER PARA, DEARARAJARHAT, BARASAT, NORTH 24 PARGANAS-700135, West Bengal, India, have changed my name to (shall henceforth be known as) MD KAVSAR (new name) vide an affidavit sworn before Notary public at Kolkata on 20/12/2022.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, Tanusaree Chakraborty, W/o JC-680218P Ex Sub Babu Lal Chakraborty, resident of Vill-Manirampur Mannapara, PO & PS-Barrackpore, Dist-North 24 Parganas (WB) have changed my name from Tanusaree Chakraborty to Tanusree Chakraborty vide Affidavit dated 15.12.2022 before the Ld Notary Public at District Judges Court, Barasat, Dist.-North 24 Parganas (WB).

CHANGE OF NAME
I, JC-680218P Ex Sub Babu Lal Chakraborty, presently residing at Vill-Manirampur Mannapara, PO & PS-Barrackpore, Pin-700120, Dist-North 24 Parganas (WB) is hereby declare that I have changed my surname spelling from Babu Lal Chakraborty to Babu Lal Chakraborty vide Affidavit No. 94 dated 16 Dec 2022 in the Court of Ld. Judicial Magistrate (1st Class) at Barrackpore, Dist.-North 24 Parganas (WB).

CHANGE OF NAME
I, Rabia Tabussum (old name) W/O Neshar Kadir Presently residing at 73/H/4, Dr. Sudhir Basu Road, P.S.- Watgunge, Kolkata- 700023, West Bengal, INDIA have changed my name to (shall henceforth be known as) Rabia Tabasum (new name) vide an affidavit sworn before Notary public at Kolkata on 20/12/2022.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, Naushin Shuiab, W/o Md. Shuiab Shamsi, and D/o, Mohammed Nasim Shamsi R/o.- 30/1, Phears Lane, PO.- Chittaranjan Avenue, Kolkata -700073, WB. Will henceforth be known as Naushin Shamsi. Vide an Affidavit before the Notary Public Kolkata at CMM'S Court on dated 20-12-2022. Both Naushin Shuiab and Naushin Shamsi are the same and one identical person.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, Sanjoy Tamang (old name) S/O Bhalu Tamang Presently residing at Faratbad Main Road Near Om Apartment, P.O.-Garia, Kolkata- 700084, WEST BENGAL, INDIA have changed my name to (shall henceforth be known as) Sanjay Tamang (new name) vide an affidavit sworn before Notary public at Kolkata on 20/12/2022.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, Smt Sutapa Panda, spouse of JD-255490H Sub (Hony Sub Maj) Nabendu Sekhar Panda, resident of Vill-Nandanayakbar, P.O & P.S.- Nandigram, Dist.-Purba Medinipur, Pin-721631 (W.B.) have changed my name and date of birth from Sutapa Rani Panda (DOB: 29.06.1962) to Sutapa Panda (DOB: 10.06.1963) vide Affidavit No. 3025/22 dated 12 Dec 2022 before Notary Public, Haldia, Purba Medinipur, W.B.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, Smt Pushpa Rani, Spouse of NO JC-186376X Ex Sub Late Mrinal Kanti Panda, resident of Vill-Binandapur, PO-Nilpur, P.S.-Nandigram, Dist.-Purba Medinipur, Pin-721631 (WB) have changed my name and date of birth from Pushpa Rani (DOB: 29.01.1959) to Pushpa Panda (DOB: 18.08.1957) vide Affidavit No. 3024/22 dated 12 Dec 2022 before Notary Public, Haldia, Purba Medinipur, WB.



PM Narendra Modi and Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankar during lunch programme at the celebration of 'International Year of Millets 2023', in New Delhi on Tuesday

Increase genome sequencing of positive samples: Centre to states amid Covid surge in China, US

Health minister Mandavia to review pandemic situation today

NEW DELHI, DEC 20 /--/ Amid a sudden spurt in Covid-19 cases in Japan, South Korea, Brazil, China and the US, the central government on Tuesday urged all states and Union Territories to gear up the whole genome sequencing of positive samples to keep track of emerging variants.

In a letter to states and UTs, Union health secretary Rajesh Bhushan said such an exercise will enable timely detection of newer variants, if any, circulating

in the country and will facilitate undertaking of requisite public health measures. Bhushan highlighted that India with its focus on the five-fold strategy of test-track-treat-vaccination and adherence to Covid-appropriate behaviour has been able to restrict the transmission of the coronavirus and is having around 1,200 cases on a weekly basis. Public health challenge of Covid-19 still persists around the world with around 35 lakh

cases reported weekly, Bhushan said.

In his letter, he also referred to the operational guidelines for revised surveillance strategy in context of Covid-19 issued by the ministry in June this year. It calls for early detection, isolation, testing, and timely management of suspected and confirmed cases to detect and contain outbreaks of new SARS-CoV-2 variants. "Therefore, monitoring the trends of existing variants is of

crucial importance," he said. "In view of the sudden spurt of cases being witnessed in Japan, United States of America, Republic of Korea, Brazil and China, it is essential to gear up the whole genome sequencing of positive case samples to track the variants through Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG) network," he said.

"In this context, all states are requested to ensure that as far as possible samples of

all positive cases, on a daily basis, are sent to the designated INSACOG Genome Laboratories that are mapped to states and UTs," he added. Later in the day, official sources said that Union health minister Mansukh Mandaviya will review the pandemic situation on Wednesday. Mandaviya will review the Covid-19 situation at 11:30 am on Wednesday considering the international scenario, they said. (PTI)

State's 'Duare Sarkar' scheme wins Centre's Digital India Award

KOLKATA, DEC 20 /--/ West Bengal's flagship 'Duare Sarkar' or government at doorstep scheme won the Platinum Award at the Digital India Awards 2022, an official said on Monday.

The scheme was awarded by the Union ministry of electronics and Information Technology in the 'Public Digital Platforms -- Central Ministries, Departments and States' category, he said. President Droupadi Murmu will give the award to the state on January 7 at a function in Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi, he added.

Since its rollout in December 2020, 'Duare Sarkar' has been held in five phases and over 6.6 crore services have been successfully delivered to the citizens through 3.61 lakh outreach camps, the official said. (PTI)

Over 25k people will join Bharat Jodo Yatra in Delhi on Dec 24: Congress

NEW DELHI, DEC 20 /--/ The Bharat Jodo Yatra led by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi will enter the national capital via the Badarpur border on December 24 morning, the party's Delhi unit president Anil Chaudhary said Tuesday.

Chaudhary said more than 25,000 people have signed up for the Delhi leg of the foot march. "Not just workers and party members, there are several people who will join the yatra for a day or two to show their support for this initiative. The manual registration process was on till December 18 and we received an overwhelming response from the public," the Congress leader said at a press conference here.

The online registration process will continue until December 23 and a link will be shared by the party for the same, he said. "Those planning to join the yatra need to click on the link that we share, fill up the form and submit it. Scrutiny of forms usually takes an hour or so and accordingly, an e-pass will be issued," the Delhi Congress chief said.

Chaudhary further said that the Delhi Congress held multiple meetings regarding the yatra and that the party is aiming to circulate information about the event at block level. "We held multiple meetings regarding this yatra and our aim is to reach out to people at every block. We will use social media platforms, posters and hoardings to circulate the message," he said. People who wish to participate can also give a missed call on 9625777907 issued by the Congress party and as soon as someone dials the number, a link will be provided to them via which they can fill the form for the yatra and get an e-pass issued for themselves. Meanwhile, senior Congress leader Ajay Maken said the Bharat Jodo Yatra will enter Delhi on its 108th day. Maken said

that the yatra will enter through Badarpur border, then proceed to Ashram, Nizamuddin, India Gate, ITO, Daryaganj and Red Fort.

"On December 24, the yatra will arrive at Badarpur metro station at 6 am and thereafter, we will move to Ashram. It will further move towards Red Fort from where everyone will proceed towards Rajghat, Veerbhumi and Shantivan," he said. The

Oppn targets Govt in RS over inflation, unemployment, GST dues to states

NEW DELHI, DEC 20 /--/ Opposition parties on Tuesday targeted the Union government on several issues, including inflation, unemployment, non-payment of GST dues to the state governments and the plight of farmers, while discussing the Appropriation Bills in the Upper House.

Congress and Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) MPs in the Rajya Sabha slammed the government for "gross miscalculation of expenditure" in the Budget and sought to know whether there was any "misplaced focus" when the funds were allocated. During the discussion on the Supplementary Demands for Grants, which Lok Sabha passed last week authorising the government to spend an additional Rs 3.25 lakh crore in the current financial year, Ameer Yajnik of the Congress said it was a big amount for which Parliament's approval is being sought. "The moot question that arises is how come there is so much error in planning? I would like to know from the honourable finance minister was it devoid of any priorities or was there any misplaced focus when the monies were allocated," Yajnik asked.

"Whatever it is or whatever it may be, it definitely indicates a gross miscalculation of expenditure," Yajnik added. K Keshava Rao of the BRS said this could be due to a "lack of control in preparing the Budget". Welcoming the additional demand, stating it deals with subsidies, Rao, however, said there were about 75 supplementaries and six appropriations. In a Rs 400 lakh crore Budget "10 per cent is coming as supplementaries", he said. "I want the minister to revisit the figures. Ten per cent coming as supplementary demand is something which is not palatable," Rao said. Taking part in the discussion, Trinamool Congress' Dola Sen lamented that India's "AER (agriculture expenditure ratio) of crop husbandry has dropped from 4.2 per cent to 2.8 per cent in the

last few years". Sen also asked the Centre not to discriminate against non-BJP-ruled states in fertilizer allocation. Defending the additional demands, BJP MP Arun Singh said it has been made to benefit farmers and poor people. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, several steps have been taken such as increasing the minimum support price to enhance farmers' income while keeping prices of fertilisers under check despite a rise in global gas prices, he said.

Participating in the debate, RJD's Manoj Kumar Jha demanded special category status for Bihar, saying Goa is like southern

Europe and Bihar is like Sub-Saharan Africa. CPM member John Brittas brought the attention of the House towards high inflation in the country and stated it was "loot in broad daylight". He also pointed towards the rise in the currency to Rs 29.17 lakh crore at present from 17.74 lakh crore in 2016. Congress' G C Chandrashekar said the central government had promised to double the farmers' income by 2022 but "unfortunately the problem of farmers has doubled". Mentioning the Crop Insurance scheme, he said the government has several schemes but many of them are not benefitting half of the farmers. Jose K Mani of

Kerala Congress(M) raised concerns over the fall in the price of rubber that has been hurting the farmers in the state. "In 2022, the global price of one kg of natural rubber was Rs 129. The rubber and tyre industry imported natural rubber with a 25 per cent import duty at Rs 161," he said.

Though the Kerala government has put a minimum support price of Rs 170 per kg, that is not enough to meet the farmer's expenses. "This should be at least Rs 250 per kg, Mani said and suggested the government pass on the import duty collected from rubber to the domestic rubber farmers. Anil Sukhdeorao Bonde of the

BJP supported the Appropriation Bills, saying the supplementary demand has been sought for spending on the welfare of the farmer and poor people. Bonde, in his maiden speech in the House, alleged the previous governments ignored farmers of western Vidarbha. The region witnessed higher numbers of farmers' suicide because of the fewer means of irrigation, he said. The BJP member also suggested the government get approved the detailed project report for connecting the rivers of eastern Vidarbha, a water surplus area, with western Vidarbha, a water-deficit region. (PTI)

BJP, Oppn exchange heated words in Upper House over Kharge's remarks

NEW DELHI, DEC 20 /--/ Ruling and Opposition members in Rajya Sabha on Tuesday sparred over "foul" remarks made by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge in Rajasthan's Alwar, with treasury bench members seeking an apology from him.

However, Kharge refused and insisted that the remarks were made outside Parliament and should not be discussed in the House. At a rally in Rajasthan on Monday, Kharge claimed that while the Congress stood for the country and helped attain Independence after its leaders gave supreme sacrifices, "not even a dog of the BJP was lost" for the country. He had also alleged that the BJP government "talks like a lion but acts like a mouse" as it is not taking on China for indulging in incursions along the border and is running away from a debate on the issue in Parliament. Soon after papers were laid in the Upper House and the chairman announced that YSRCP leader V Vijay Sai Reddy and nominated member P T Usha have been nominated on the panel of vice chairman of the house, treasury bench members were up on their feet demanding an apology from the Congress leader.

Chairman Jagdeep Dhankar urged protesting treasury bench members to resume their seats and even asked Leader of House (LoH) Piyush Goyal to persuade the members to maintain

decorum in the House. As protests continued, the Chairman said he does not "appreciate such unruly scenes and chaotic behaviour" in the House. "This House, either side, is a platform of expression. This House has to reflect and take note of everything that happens outside. ... everything spoken here carries a great weight. Anyone wants to take anything should take recourse to rules," he said and asked the LoH to present the point the Treasury members

that his party is not being accepted by people. Use of such foul language is an insult of this House and all citizens," Goyal said. He further said that after the country's Independence Mahatma Gandhi had said that the Congress should be disbanded, and Kharge's behaviour shows what the Father of the Nation had said was true. Kharge does not even know how to give a speech. Till he seeks apology he has no right to stay in the House, he added. As

Treasury members continued to demand an apology, the chairman asked the LoH to control members and maintain decorum. Kharge said there was no need to discuss the issue as the remarks were made in Alwar during the Bharat Jodo Yatra.

"What I had said politically was outside the House and not in the House. There is no need to discuss here," he said while maintaining that the BJP did not have any role during the country's freedom movement. Kharge's statement evoked unruly scenes in the House and the Chairman asked the members not to set a bad example. "We are setting a very bad example. ... This kind of conduct gives a bad name. ... Even the observations of the chair that are wholesome are indigestible. What a painful scenario we are having. Trust me, 135 crore people are laughing at us. They are concerned and thinking that we cannot listen to each other," the chair said. (PTI)



TV grab picture showing Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge speaking during the ongoing Winter session of Parliament

want to make in the House. Goyal said: "Yesterday, Opposition leader Mallikarjun Kharge used foul language in his speech at Alwar. He made baseless remarks and tried to keep truth before the nation. I strongly condemn it and demand an apology from him." Kharge should seek an apology from the BJP and the House which has the maximum members from the saffron party, he said. "The way he has used the foul language reflected his thinking and jealousy. He (Kharge) may be jealous



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and others during party's 'Bharat Jodo Yatra', in Alwar district near Haryana Border on Tuesday

yatra, which was launched on September 7 in Kanyakumari, has traversed Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. It completed 100 days on December 16. The yatra will enter Delhi on December 24, and after a break of about eight days, move on to Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab and finally, Jammu and Kashmir, Congress leaders said. (PTI)

Stop favouring friends, start serving people reeling under inflation: Rahul's dig at PM

NEW DELHI, DEC 20 /--/ Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Tuesday asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to stop "favouring friends" and start serving people reeling under high inflation.

Rahul highlighted that the Congress government in Rajasthan is providing gas cylinders at less than half the price provided by the Centre. Rajasthan chief minister

Ashok Gehlot on Monday announced at a rally in Alwar that the state government will provide Rs 500 subsidy on every LPG gas cylinder to the poor people of the state under the Ujjwala scheme. "Rajasthan's Congress government's big announcement of providing gas cylinders for Rs 500 -- less than half the price of the Central government. Mr

prime minister, stop favouring your 'friends' and serve the people hit hard by high inflation," the former Congress president said in a tweet in Hindi.

Rahul and his party have been attacking the prime minister and his government over the rise in prices of essential commodities, saying they are hurting the poor. (PTI)

US wants constructive dialogue not 'war of words' between India, Pak

WASHINGTON, DEC 20 / --/America shares multifaceted relationships with India and Pakistan and does not want to see a "war of words" but a constructive dialogue between the two nations for the betterment of their people, a top US official has said. Relations between India and Pakistan have often been strained over the Kashmir issue and cross-border terrorism emanating from Pakistan. "We have a global strategic partnership with India. I have also spoken about the deep partnership we have with Pakistan. These relationships in our mind are not zero-sum. We do not view them in relation to one another," US State Department spokesperson Ned Price told reporters at his daily news conference

on Monday when asked about the recent outburst against Prime Minister Narendra Modi by Pakistani Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari in New York. Price said each of these relationships is indispensable to the US and to the promotion and pursuit of the shared goals that the US has with India and Pakistan. "The fact that we have partnerships with both countries leaves us not wanting to see a war of words between India and Pakistan. We would like to see a constructive dialogue between India and Pakistan. We think that is for the betterment of the Pakistani and Indian people. There is much work that we can do

together bilaterally," Price said in response to the question. "There are differences that, of course, need to be addressed between India and Pakistan. The United States stands ready to assist as a partner to both," he asserted. The ties between India and Pakistan nosedived after India abrogated Article 370 of the Constitution, revoking the special status of Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcating the State into two Union Territories on August 5, 2019. Pakistan foreign minister Bhutto-Zardari last week resorted to a personal attack on Prime Minister Modi and slammed the RSS after External Affairs Minister S 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, he 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. "The US has a global strategic partnership with India. These relationships stand on their own; it is not zero-sum. "We see the importance the indispensability really of maintaining valuable

partnerships with both our Indian and Pakistani friends. Each of these relationships also happens to be multifaceted," Price said. "So even as we deepen our global strategic partnership with India, we also have a relationship in which we can be candid and frank with one another. Where we have disagreements or concerns, we voice those just as we would with our Pakistani friends as well," he said. Responding to another question, Price said countries the world over welcomed when Prime Minister Modi told Russian President Vladimir Putin this summer that this is not the era of war. "I think it is notable that the communicative emanating from the G20 also had very similar language I think a

testament to the fact that this was language and this was a call that resonated in this country, in South Asia, in Europe, and around the world. The United States certainly welcomes it," he said. The top US official said it was also important because India has a relationship with Russia that the US does not have. For decades, Russia was prepared to be a partner to India in a way that the US at the time was not. Of course, that has changed in recent decades, Price said. It is a bipartisan legacy of the last several administrations, perhaps starting most notably with the administration of former US President George W Bush that the US is now a partner of "first resort" for India, he said. (PTI)

North Korea threatens strong military step against Japan

SEOUL, DEC 20 / --/North Korea threatened Tuesday to take a "resolute and decisive military step" against Japan while it slammed Tokyo's adoption of a national security strategy as an attempt to turn the country into "an offensive military giant."

The North's statement came four days after Japan announced a security strategy that includes a counterstrike capability against enemy targets and doubles its military spending to gain a more offensive footing against threats from China and North Korea. The North's Foreign Ministry said in a statement that Japan's push to acquire counterstrike capability has nothing to do with self-defence but is a clear attempt to acquire "preemptive attack capability meant to launch strikes on other countries' territories."

"Japan's foolish attempt to satiate its black-hearted greed the building up of its military invasion capability under the pretext of (North Korea's) legitimate exercise of the right to self-defence -- cannot be justified and tolerated," an unidentified ministry spokesperson said in a statement carried by state media. The statement accused the United States of supporting and instigating the Japanese military ambitions and undermining regional peace. It said that such U.S. moves are forcing North Korea to work hard to complete its plans to develop new strategic weapons to thwart enemy attempts to invade it.

The statement said North Korea wants to make sure it can take "a resolute and decisive military step" to protect its sovereignty and national interests in the wake of the complexity of regional security caused by the Japanese strategy. "Our country will continue to take actions to show how much we are concerned and displeased with Japan's unjust, greedy attempt to realise its wild ambitions," the statement said. Like in some other Asian countries, anti-Japanese sentiments still run deep in North Korea because of Japan's wartime atrocities.

The Korean Peninsula was under Japanese colonial rule from 1910-1945 before it was split into a capitalist, U.S.-backed South Korea and a socialist, Soviet-supported North Korea at the end of the World War II. North Korea's state media routinely criticize Japanese colonial past. Its statement Tuesday called Japan "a war criminal state which inflicted untold misfortune and sufferings upon the Korean people."

North Korea's pursuit of nuclear-tipped missiles is a major security concern for Japan, which sits in their range together with South Korea and the mainland U.S. In October, North Korea fired an intermediate-range missile over Japan, forcing Tokyo to issue evacuation alerts and halt trains. On Tuesday, Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno accused North Korea of posing "serious and pressing threats" to Japanese and regional security with its unprecedented pace of missile tests this year. He said Japan will cooperate with the United States and South Korea to achieve North Korea's denuclearisation.

The Japanese strategy names China as "the biggest strategic challenge" before North Korea and Russia to Tokyo's efforts to ensure peace, safety and stability. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said last week that "hyping up the so-called China threat to find an excuse for (Japan's) military buildup is doomed to fail." (AP)

Pak's Army special forces storm counter-terrorism centre to free hostages

PESHAWAR, DEC 20 / --/Pakistani Army's special forces on Tuesday stormed a counter-terrorism centre in the restive Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province to free hostages taken by the Taliban militants after negotiations between the government and the militants failed to resolve the more than 40-hour long standoff.

The government tried to negotiate with the militants to end the hostage crisis at the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) police station inside the Bannu Cantonment but after failed efforts, commandos from the Pakistan Army's Special Services Group (SSG) stormed the compound, officials said. All terrorists were killed in the operation that lasted for 15 minutes, officials said. Nine special forces personnel, including a Major, were injured in the operation and taken to a nearby hospital, they said. Forces are, however, further combing the area to search for and neutralise any threats still hiding out there. Footage aired on TV on Tuesday showed plumes of smoke rising in the air from the CTD compound.

The standoff began on Sunday when an arrested Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) militant, who was being interrogated at the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) police station inside the Bannu Cantonment, snatched an AK-47 from the police and opened fire. He then freed other



wanted militants being held at the building and together they took control of the compound. They also took several policemen as hostages. The TTP demanded safe passage for its militants either to South or North Waziristan tribal districts. The situation in Bannu remained tense as police and security agencies have asked residents to remain indoors. A security alert was issued earlier and all schools and colleges in the Bannu district remained closed on Tuesday. Mobile services in the cantonment area and the surrounding areas were also suspended, officials said.

On Monday, TTP spokesman Muhammad Khurasani said that militants from his group seized the compound after reports of inhuman treatment of prisoners in the CTD police station by security personnel. 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. (PTI)

Absolutely don't believe Britain a racist country: Rishi Sunak

LONDON, DEC 20 / --/Britain's first Indian-origin Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has defended the UK's record on race amid a brewing row over controversial remarks by a columnist attacking Prince Harry's wife Meghan Markle, who is of African-American heritage.

Sunak was addressing questions posed by reporters during a visit to the Latvian capital of Riga on Monday when he spoke out against racism and highlighted his own heritage as carrying some weight on the subject. "I absolutely don't believe that Britain is a racist country. And I'd hope that as our nation's first British Asian Prime Minister when I say that it carries some weight," he told reporters. "You know, I'm really proud of our country, its



Rishi Sunak

culture, its resilience, its beauty. And actually, it's an enormous privilege to champion Britain and indeed, its institutions like the monarchy when I'm out and about on the world stage as I am here today," said the UK-born politician, who has his family roots in Punjab.

Sunak was reacting to an ongoing row over former television presenter and columnist Jeremy Clarkson writing in 'The Sun' about loathing Meghan Markle, the Duchess of Sussex, "on a cellular level", in the wake of the controversial Harry and Meghan' documentary being aired on Netflix recently. Clarkson's column received over 6,000 complaints to the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO), resulting in an apology from the writer and the newspaper removing the column from its website. "For everyone in public life, language matters," said Sunak, when asked about the furor. Meanwhile, more than 60 cross-party British MPs have written to the editor of 'The Sun', Victoria Newton, to demand action be taken against Clarkson.

In a letter, they said Meghan Markle had received credible threats to her life and that columns such as Clarkson's contributed to an "unacceptable climate of hatred and violence". The letter, coordinated by the Conservative Party Chair of the Women and Equalities Select Committee in the House of Commons, Caroline Nokes, was signed by fellow Tory MPs as well as Opposition MPs from Labour, Lib Dem, Green and SNP. "We cannot allow this type of behaviour to go unchecked any longer. We welcome the Sun's retraction of the article and we now demand action is taken against Mr Clarkson and an unreserved apology to Ms Markle immediately," they write. (PTI)

Power crisis: Pak plans to shut markets by 8 pm, put curbs on weddings

ISLAMABAD, DEC 20 / --/Markets and restaurants across Pakistan will have to pull down their shutters by 8 pm while wedding halls will be limited till 10 pm, as the cash-strapped country on Tuesday unveiled a desperate plan to conserve energy. Pakistan is in the midst of an acute energy crisis, high inflation and depleting remittances. The ongoing Russia-Ukraine war and the catastrophic floods in June have only compounded the country's energy woes. The national energy-conservation programme was launched by Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif, and it comes a day after Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif directed authorities to reduce circular debt in the energy sector. Asif said the federal government will approach provinces for the implementation of this nationwide scheme. Briefing the media after the cabinet meeting, the minister said a final decision will be taken by Thursday. "In the next few days, we will be approaching all the provinces with this national project and then on Thursday the final approval of the conservation policy will be given," Asif said. (PTI)

LAHORE, DEC 20 / --/The governor of Pakistan's Punjab has asked chief minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi to seek a vote of confidence from the provincial Assembly on Wednesday, hours after a no-trust move was submitted against him by the Opposition to foil ex-premier Imran Khan's plan of dissolving the House. Pakistan's ousted prime minister Khan on Saturday made the much-awaited announcement that his governments in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will dissolve their provincial assemblies on December 23 to push the PML-N-led coalition government in the Centre to call for fresh

elections. In an address to the nation via a video link from his Lahore residence where the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief ministers were also present by his side, the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) chairman said only fresh elections can steer the country out of the economic crisis. According to a notification issued late on Monday night, Punjab governor Baligur Rehman summoned the Assembly session on Wednesday at 4 pm (local time), directing chief minister Elahi to obtain a vote of confidence in terms of Article 130(7) of the Constitution.

The governor's announcement came immediately after a delegation of opposition lawmakers submitted the no-trust motion against Elahi. Elahi has to make sure that he manages to secure 186 votes in the House on Wednesday to secure his position. If he fails to secure the vote of confidence, he would lose the power to dissolve the assembly. The document submitted by the opposition lawmakers stated that "members of the PPP and the PML-N of the provincial assembly have lost confidence in CM Pervaiz Elahi's ability to lead the house as per the

Constitution". It added that Elahi had "massacred democratic traditions" and thus he had lost the confidence of the majority of members of the House, the Dawn newspaper reported. Separately, a no-trust motion has also been submitted against PA Speaker Sibtain Khan under Article 53 of the Constitution, it said. "The chief minister has stated in a TV programme on Dec 4 that he is not going to dissolve the provincial assembly until March 2023, a position which is completely at odds with the PTI's public opinion on the issue," it said. (PTI)

UN chief Guterres to convene 'no-nonsense' climate summit in September

UNITED NATIONS, DEC 20 / --/Vowing to make 2023 a year for peace, UN chief Antonio Guterres has said he will convene a "no-nonsense" climate summit next year where countries will have to come up with credible and new action plans, with no room for "greenwashers" and "blame-shifters" or repackaging of announcements of previous years.

Addressing journalists at his end-of-year press conference here on Monday, he said climate change is an area where good news can be hard to find. "We are still moving in the wrong direction. The global emissions gap is growing.

The 1.5-degree goal is gasping for breath. National climate plans are falling woefully short," he said. Guterres said that going forward, he will keep pushing for a Climate Solidarity Pact, in which all big emitters make an extra effort to reduce emissions this decade in line with the 1.5-degree goal and ensure support for those who need it. "There is no doubt that without it, the 1.5-degree goal will soon disappear. I have pulled no punches on the imperative for all of us to confront this existential threat," he said.

Promising that he will not relent on climate action, Guterres said he

will convene a Climate Ambition Summit in September 2023. He noted that while the invitation to the summit is open, there will be a "non-negotiable" price of entry to the summit,

He called on every leader to step up from governments to businesses, cities and regions, civil society and finance. "They must come with new, tangible and credible climate action to



Antonio Guterres

which is credible, serious and new climate action and nature-based solutions that will move the needle forward and respond to the urgency of the climate crisis must be presented. Asserting that it will be a "no-nonsense summit", with no exceptions and no compromises, Guterres cautioned that there will be "no room for backsliders, greenwashers, blame-shifters or repackaging of announcements of previous years."

accelerate the pace of change," he said. Guterres said the Climate Ambition Summit will be convened alongside a crucial gathering of world leaders to accelerate action at the mid-way point of the Sustainable Development Goals. "I am more determined than ever to make 2023 a year for peace, a year for action. We can't accept things as they are. We owe it to people to find solutions, to fight back and to act," he said. (PTI)

Lanka to set up institute to educate MPs on economic management

COLOMBO, DEC 20 / --/Sri Lanka has approved a proposal to set up an institute aimed at educating parliamentarians and officials to help them make informed decisions on economic and trade affairs, a senior official said on Tuesday. Cabinet spokesman Bandula Gunawardena told reporters that the cabinet approved the proposal of

President Ranil Wickremesinghe to set up the Sri Lanka Economic and Trade Institute. "This will help them to make informed decisions on policy formulation," he said. The legal draftsman would begin work to compile a draft bill, he said. Sri Lanka plunged into its worst economic crisis with the country declaring its first-ever sovereign debt default

early this year. Analysts said the crisis could have been averted if informed decisions had been taken around 2020. Current foreign minister Ali Sabry recently said the parliamentarians had not been adequately aware of the looming crisis despite warnings from many quarters. The political authority and senior fiscal officials have faced

accusations of ignorance which prevented them from taking informed decisions such as making a timely approach to the IMF for a bail out. The cabinet also approved changes to the laws governing the Central Bank of Sri Lanka to make it more independent. Sri Lanka, a country of 22 million people, plunged into financial and political turmoil earlier this year as it

faced a shortage of foreign currencies. The worst economic crisis since its independence in 1948 was triggered by a severe paucity of foreign exchange reserves. In mid-April, Sri Lanka declared its international debt default due to the forex crisis. The island nation is currently negotiating a bailout with the IMF. A staff-level agreement reached in

August led to a USD 2.9 billion assistance package over 4 years. The release is currently on hold due to the need to restructure debt.

Sri Lanka is talking to creditors to meet the IMF condition for the facility. Due to this, the island nation has been unable to afford key imports, including fuel, fertilisers and medicines, leading to serpentine queues. (PTI)

World Cup winners Argentina return ahead of welcome home party

BUENOS AIRES, DEC 20 --/ Argentina's World Cup winners led by captain Lionel Messi returned home from Qatar in the early hours of Tuesday morning ahead of a welcome home party in the nation's capital.

Having beaten France in Sunday's thrilling final, the players will now spend the night at the Argentine Football Association (AFA) training complex near the Ezeiza airport where they arrived in Buenos Aires and where thousands of supporters were waiting to greet them. They will then begin a tour of the Buenos Aires city centre from midday on Tuesday with millions expected out in the streets on what is a public holiday.

"Crowned with glory," read a banner on a newspaper kiosk in Buenos Aires on Monday, while Clarin and La Prensa dailies both sent a huge "Thank you" to Messi and his team-mates for winning the country's third world title, and first in 36 years. Argentina won the final in Qatar 4-2 on penalties after a rollercoaster 3-3 draw over 120 minutes of unparalleled drama. Messi, who scored twice in the final, was the first player to emerge from the plane, holding the World Cup aloft, with coach Lionel Scaloni right behind him. Forward Julian Alvarez, a revelation in Qatar with his four goals, was one of the next players to emerge. A picture of Messi was emblazoned on the plane's tail with the words: "one team, one country, one dream" on its



Argentina coach Leonel Scaloni and Lionel Messi with the trophy during the team's arrival at Ezeiza International Airport

The players made their way from the plane along a red carpet straight to an open top bus as their World Cup theme song "Muchachos" by ska band La Mosca blared out. Excitement had been brewing since the party that began after Sunday's

final ahead of the players' arrival.

"I'm going to greet them at the airport. Now that they have been crowned we have to greet them and thank them," Jose Luis Quinoga, 56, told AFP at the Obelisk memorial in central



Argentina's players are travelling through the streets of Buenos Aires in an open-top parade

Buenos Aires, where the night before more than a million people celebrated. A private reception at a VIP suite in the airport had been arranged to greet the returning players and the AFA said they will celebrate with fans at the Obelisk on Tuesday.

"I will leave work and the first thing I will do is come here," Julieta Rosel, 23, told AFP at the monument. Messi finally crowned his record-breaking career with football's biggest

prize as he produced one of the greatest World Cup final performances, scoring a first-half penalty and netting again in extra time. In doing so he emulated his predecessor as Argentina's idol, Diego Maradona who inspired the country to their second world title with a series of match-winning displays at Mexico 1986.

"I remember '86 but this victory yesterday was much more emotional and much more

stressful," architect Ricardo Grunfeld, 65, told AFP.

"I don't know if there's any difference with '86 but this comes at a good time," added Zulema Guereri, 80. Argentina had led 2-0 with 10 minutes of normal time left and 3-2 with only two minutes of extra-time to go but Kylian Mbappe completed only the second World Cup final hat-trick in history to take the gripping final to penalties, before Gonzalo Montiel swept home the

decisive spot kick. Despite the huge numbers of revelers during Sunday's festivities "people acted in a very positive way," a spokesperson for the municipality said. Fewer than 20 people were arrested for isolated incidents of violence or theft. France's beaten players were given a rousing reception by fans in central Paris on Monday after their return from Qatar. They appeared on the balcony of the Crillon Hotel overlooking the Place de la Concorde.

"Frankly, it's magnificent, it warms the heart, it's a great pleasure to see that we were able to make so many French people proud and happy," forward Marcus Thuram told TF1 TV. They landed at Paris's Charles de Gaulle airport just before 8:00 pm (1900 GMT) where a caravan of coaches took them straight to the centre of Paris. Goalkeeper and captain Hugo Lloris told TF1 that it was a chance to "greet them (the fans), to thank them for their support and, after yesterday's pain, to seek their consolation." The captivating final rounded off one of the most controversial World Cups in history. Qatari organisers faced persistent questions about the country's treatment of migrant workers and its laws on homosexuality. Football's world governing body FIFA said the cumulative stadium attendance was 3.4 million spectators and that more than one million visitors travelled to Qatar to watch the matches. (AFP)

It does take a while to get used to: Ash Gardner on noisy crowds in India

MUMBAI, DEC 20 --/ Australian all-rounder Ashleigh Gardner is getting used to the noise generated by the fanatical fans of Indian cricket in the ongoing T20 series against the hosts and feels the loud roars can put extra pressure on the away team even if it is doing well in the middle. Gardner has contributed with both bat and ball to help Australia take an unassailable 3-1 lead in the five match series. The final T20 will be played on Tuesday night.

"It does take quite a while to get used to," she told the '100% cricket' podcast.

"Sometimes you feel like you are under the pump because obviously the crowd isn't on your side, so they are hitting dots and there's ones and twos that you actually think are boundaries being hit or they are right on top of the game. So we try to take the emotion out of that, knowing that they are going to be supporting the other side and being okay with that. So it's probably not listening to the crowd too much even though obviously it is very loud." The Australian is also excited about the inaugural U-19 World Cup for women.

"We were actually talking about that the other day," she said of a chat in her team camp in India. (PTI)

Jubilant welcome for French team on return as runners-up

PARIS, DEC 20 --/ Supporters packed a square in central Paris on Monday to give a rousing welcome to the French football team despite their loss to Argentina in a nail-biting World Cup final. Fans filled the Place de la Concorde in central Paris to welcome the team who were driven straight to the square from the airport after touching down from Qatar. They appeared on the balcony of the Crillon Hotel overlooking the square to a rousing welcome, AFP correspondents said. Despite their disappointment, all 24 French players, including striker Kylian Mbappe whose hat-trick failed to bring France glory, appeared on the balcony in regal style to acknowledge the applause.

"Frankly, it's magnificent, it warms the heart, it's a great pleasure to see that we were able to make so many French people proud and happy," forward Marcus Thuram told TF1 TV.

"We wanted to see them (the fans) on our return from Doha because I think it's the least we can do to come and see them and thank them for their support," he added. Goalkeeper and captain Hugo Lloris told TF1 that it was a chance to "greet them (the fans), to thank them for their support and, after yesterday's pain, to seek their consolation." Supporters had been kept guessing for most of the day about whether the disappointed players would travel to central Paris to meet them. Sports Minister Amelie Oudea-Castera had said early Monday that the team planned to go to the place de la Concorde. But within hours, the French Football Federation (FFF) president contradicted the minister,



France's players wave to fans from the balcony of the Crillon Hotel in Paris

saying the players would head home straight from the airport.

"When you don't win you don't feel like wandering down the Champs Elysees or anywhere else," Noel Le Graet told the BFMTV broadcaster, in reference to the glamorous avenue running from Concorde to the Arc de Triomphe. But the FFF then confirmed that the event would take place. France lost on penalties on Sunday after the match ended 3-3 following extra time, but French commentators still heaped praise on the defeated side, while highlighting the crucial role of Argentinian captain Lionel Messi.

"Invited to the coronation of Lionel Messi, Les Bleus were heroic," said L'Equipe sports newspaper. The match was dominated by Argentina for the first 80 minutes before a

quickfire double by Mbappe ignited France. Mbappe went on to score a third goal, becoming only the second player in history to grab a hat-trick in a World Cup final.

"Proud of our Bleus," read a headline on the front page of Le Parisien newspaper with a picture of the team standing together during the penalty shootout.

"Football is often more than a sport. In the run up to Christmas, this World Cup has been a magnificent present," the right-wing newspaper Le Figaro said in an editorial. A total of 24.08 million people watched the match on Sunday on TF1 television, an all-time record audience for a French network, the channel said. The interior ministry said that 227 people were arrested in France after the game, with 47 in Paris. (AFP)

Rohit Sharma ruled out of second Test against Bangladesh

MIRPUR, DEC 20 --/ India skipper Rohit Sharma will miss the second Test against Bangladesh, starting here on Thursday, as he has not made a full recovery from a thumb injury.

Rohit had flown back to India to see a specialist after injuring his left thumb while fielding in the second ODI against Bangladesh here on December 7. He is under the care of the BCCI medical team following his left thumb injury, which he sustained during the second ODI against Bangladesh in Dhaka. Pacer Naveep Saini, who had made a comeback into the Test team, is also out of the game with an abdominal muscle strain.

"The medical team is of the opinion that the injury needs some more time to heal completely before the Indian captain can bat and field with full intensity. He will continue his rehab and will not be available for the second and final Test against Bangladesh.

"Navdeep Saini is also ruled out of the second Test owing to an abdominal muscle strain. The fast bowler will now report to the NCA for further



management of his injury," said the BCCI in a statement. It is understandable why the management did not want to risk playing Rohit. India have a busy home season lined up with Sri Lanka and New Zealand visiting for a limited overs tour next month and that will be followed by the high-profile Test series against Australia. Saini's injury does raise a few questions on his fitness. He represented India A in the two games in Bangladesh ahead of the Tests and was deemed fit. He did not play the first Test, though. Saini's last Test appearance came in Brisbane in January last

year when India pulled off a win for the ages. KL Rahul will continue to lead the side in Rohit's absence with Cheteshwar Pujara being his deputy. India lead the two-Test series 1-0 after a convincing win in Chattogram. (PTI)

India's updated squad for 2nd Test against Bangladesh: KL Rahul (C), Shubman Gill, Cheteshwar Pujara (VC), Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer, Rishabh Pant (WK), KS Bharat (WK), Ravichandran Ashwin, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Shardul Thakur, Mohd. Siraj, Umesh Yadav, Abhimanyu Easwaran, Saurabh Kumar, Jaydev Unadkat.



Sports & Power Minister Arup Biswas inaugurating the Kanyashree Cup organized with 32 clubs including East Bengal, Mohammedan Club at Rabindra Sarovar Stadium on Tuesday. Photo: Arijit Ganguly

Sandhya Gurung lead Sikkim to the 6th Elite National Women Boxing Championship

GANGTOK, DEC 20 --/ Guru Dronacharya Awardee, Sandhya Gurung lead Sikkim to participate the 6th Elite National Women Boxing Championship at Bhopal. Sikkim Amateur Boxing Association (SABA) has selected the five Women Boxers based on their performance in selection trial to represent the 6th Elite Women National Boxing Championship to be held on 19th to 27th December;

2022 at Tanta Tope Stadium, Bhopal. This is the calendar event of Boxing Federation of India (BFI) in association with the Madhyapradesh Boxing Association. The list of selected Women Boxers is Ms. Yasika Rai D/o Shri Mahesh Kr. Rai in 48 kg, Ms Pamlaki Bhutia D/o Shri Kami Bhutia in 57 kg, Ms. Purnima Subba D/o Shri C.B. Subba in 54 kg and Ms. Sharmila Rai



D/o Shri Sridhoj Rai in 66 kg. Dronacharya Awardee in Boxing, Mrs. Sandhya Gurung will escort the Sikkim Team as Women Coach and Ms. Gracey Rai as Team Manager. Sikkim team has reached the venue on yesterday. SABA extends best wishes to the Sikkim team for safe journey and best performance in the championship. It was informed by Dr. R. B. Biswakarma. (EOIC)

ICC gives below average rating to Gabba pitch

BRISBANE, DEC 20 --/ The International Cricket Council on Tuesday gave a below average rating to the Brisbane pitch after the first Test between Australia and South Africa ended in two days. Australia won the game by six wickets after South Africa managed 152 and 99 in their two innings. Australia made 218 in their first innings. ICC match referee Richie Richardson said: "Overall, the Gabba pitch for this Test match was too much in favour of the bowlers. There was extra bounce and occasional excessive seam movement.

"The odd delivery also kept low on the second day, making it very difficult for batters to build partnerships. I found the pitch to be 'below average' as per the ICC guidelines since it was not an even contest between bat and ball." Richardson's report has been forwarded to Cricket Australia. The second Test of the three-match series will be played at MCG from December 26. (PTI)

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 Maszid, 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