

MP calls on Hon'ble Union Home Minister

Highlights host of crucial issues of A&N Islands

PORT BLAIR, JAN 9/--/ Mr. Kuldeep Rai Sharma, Member of Parliament called on Union Home Minister, Mr. Amit Shah at New Delhi on Monday and highlighted some of the most crucial issues of Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Notable issues highlighted by Mr. Kuldeep Rai Sharma includes centpercent job reservation for local youth, Chatham to Bambooflat bridge, central university for islands, creation of Andaman & Nicobar Public Service Commission, IT Park, Laying of 2nd OFC line from Diglipur to Puri, Odisha, air subsidy for islanders and a host of other issues concerning the people of the islands.

100% job reservation for domicile of the Islands in Government appointment under UT Administration: The Member of Parliament informed the Home Minister that in Andaman & Nicobar Islands, one of the major concerns for the Islanders, particularly for the youth is lack of sufficient employment opportunities in the region especially given the high literacy rate among the Islands' population. He said that there are around 10,000 vacant posts in Andaman & Nicobar administration which needs to be filled-up as early as possible. He mentioned about the very recent decision of the Central Government to extend 100% job reservation in public appointments to the local residents of the newly created Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and that of Ladakh in their respective Union Territories. For the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir the reservation has been

implemented by an order of MHA issued on April 3, 2020, which provides protection to the domiciles of the UT of Jammu and Kashmir to "any post" in the government, including senior level positions in Group 'A' and Group 'B' category. A similar order for public appointments in the Union Territory of Ladakh was issued through its Lieutenant Governor on 08.06.2021 stating that "No person shall be qualified for appointment to the service unless the person is a resident of the Union Territory of Ladakh."

Taking into cognizance of the above made submission, the Member of Parliament requested to grant 100% job reservation for the domiciles of Andaman & Nicobar Islands in public appointments for jobs meant for the Union Territory of Andaman & Nicobar Islands in the manner similar to the decision taken in respect of the newly created Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh. Alternatively 100% job reservation for the domiciles of A & N Islands may be enacted under "The Public Employment (Requirement as to Residents) Act 1957. Construction of bridge connecting Chatham and Bambooflat: The Member of Parliament informed the Union Home Minister that there is an eminent need for construction of a bridge from Chatham Island to Bambooflat to facilitate uninterrupted and fast movement of men and materials through road transport which is presently being carried out by means of boats and vehicle ferries. Construction of the bridge will also save the recurring expenditure now

being incurred on operation and maintenance of the boats/vehicle ferries and port infrastructure. Setting up of Central University in A&N Islands: Presently, the Institutions of higher education in the Islands are affiliated to the Pondicherry Central University. Increase in number of higher educational institutions from the lone Jawaharlal Nehru RajkeeyaMahavidyalaya (JNRM) to 06 (six) numbers consisting of Degree Engineering College, Medical College and Law College, besides 02 (two) Degree Colleges has necessitated the need to have a separate Central University for Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Upgrading Medical Science Education and treatment facilities: He informed the Home Minister that the present medical treatment facilities in Andaman & Nicobar Islands are far below average and the Islanders have to travel either to Chennai or Kolkata for treatment of major ailments which is beyond the reach of economically weaker sections of the society. The Member of Parliament requested the Home Minister to set up AIIMS in Andaman & Nicobar Islands so that the Islanders can avail top class medical science education and medical treatment facilities. Moreover, ANIIMS which is imparting UG courses in medical science needs to be upgraded to PG level. Setting up of Women College in A & N Islands: As there is no women college in the Islands, setting up of women college will also add to higher education among women. Setting up of Women Commission in A&N Islands: As there is no Women Commission in Andaman



& Nicobar Islands, setting up of Women Commission will also add to the empowerment of women in the Islands. Creation of Andaman & Nicobar Public Service Commission: Presently, direct recruitment to all gazetted posts belonging to the UT Administration of the A&N Islands are filled by the UPSC on all India selection basis which has been depriving the educated youths of the Islands of their legitimate right to serve the Islands. Candidates from mainland India selected to the posts of UT Cadre of the A&N Administration consider their postings as stepping stones in their career advancements and relinquish the job as soon as they get postings in mainland India. Hence, creation of Andaman & Nicobar Public Service Commission will put an end to this fiasco and will provide opportunity to well educated youths of the Islands in the UT Civil and Public Service, Medical Services, Engineering Services etc. Establishment of IT park in A&N Islands: Unemployment is the major concern for the Islanders, hence to solve the unemployment

problems of the youth of the Islands and also to protect the environment, it is proposed to make Andaman and Nicobar Islands an Information Technology hub with the development of Business Process Outsourcing (BPOs) / Call Centres/ Software Park under schemes like Digital India, Scheme for promotion of IT & ITes industries. Andaman and Nicobar Islands will be conducive for fast pace development as an IT Hub/IT Park due to its strategic location and proximity to several South East Asian countries like Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Myanmar etc. Such a step will be a big boost to employment generation, revenue generation and holistic development of Andaman and Nicobar Islands and will also aid the Act East Policy of the Government of India. He demanded that for this purpose approximately 3000 Acres of land may be earmarked with a budgetary provision of Rs.10,000Crores for the project which will solve unemployment issues and generate revenue. Laying of 2nd OFC line from Diglipur to Puri, Odisha: At

present the internet facilities in Andaman & Nicobar Islands are provided through the Submarine Optical Fibre Cable System (CANI) laid between Chennai and Port Blair which has facilitated high speed and reliable connectivity in the Islands. But he said that even a single day of breakdown of CANI OFC would prove costly for the industry against temporary outages and connectivity failures. In view of the above, if a parallel net connectivity to Andaman & Nicobar Islands through undersea OFC cable between Diglipur Islands in North Andaman and Puri in Odisha is provided, it will ensure uninterrupted connectivity even if the other grid fails due to any reason.

Subsidy in airfare for Islanders between mainland and A&N Islands: The Andaman & Nicobar Islands being distantly located from the mainland of India and situated in the Bay of Bengal is circumstanced with various limitations and one such being the mode of transportation/ communication between Island and mainland and its high cost. The Member of Parliament requested the Home Minister to extend subsidies in the airfare on the lines of North East India to residents of Andaman and Nicobar Islands and also to the tourists visiting the Islands to promote tourism. Ideally, airfare of Rs.5000 for Port Blair- Chennai/ Kolkata/ Visakhapatnam would be reasonable for the Islanders and justified for the Airlines too. Setting up of Fisheries College in A&N Islands: The Andaman & Nicobar Islands have vast potential for fisheries development in view of its coastal length of about 1,962 km which is approximately 1/3rd of total coastal length of India and Continental shelf area of 35,000 Sq Km. The Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) around these islands is about 6,00,000 Sq Km with an estimated Fishery potential is 2.43 lakh MT which is around 6% of our Country's total Fishery Potential. Of this 2.43 lakh MT, the coastal Tuna has the potential for the harvest upto 1 (one) lakh MT and Oceanic tuna and Tuna like fishes upto 0.82 lakh MT per annum. (Contd. on page-6)

NEW PONGAL Collection.

Choose from wide variety of traditional Indian wear collection of Designer Pongal Sarees, Dhotis & Kids wear for Pongal 2023 from Goenka's.

Happy Pongal

Aberdeen Bazaar

+91 96095 73939

Bathu Basti

+91 96091 44003

Bambooflat

+91 96090 17300

Diglipur

+91 96091 33009

Customer Care

+91 7695072472

YESHUVA

TRAINING ACADEMY Pvt. Ltd

NEAR MUBARAK MALL, JUNGLGHAT, 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 16/01/2023.**

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

TEXTILE LAXMI

NEERAJ TEXTILE

wishes

Happy Pongal

Exclusive **Pongal** Sale is live Today!

Visit your nearest showroom

Aberdeen Bazaar | Bathu Basti

Natural River Sand

Now Available

For Construction Of Your New Projects

A&N Seaways & Project Pvt. Ltd.,

Pristine Quality **Affordable Price** **Accurate Quantity**

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

Contact: +91 86910 78775, +91 96795 93111

'Make in India' initiative neither 'isolationist' nor meant for country alone: Rajnath

NEW DELHI, JAN 9 --/ India does not believe in a "hierarchical" world order where few countries are considered superior to others and its ties with other nations are based on sovereign equality and mutual respect, defence minister Rajnath Singh said on Monday amid growing global concerns over China's muscle flexing.

In an address at an ambassadors' roundtable on the upcoming Aero India exhibition, Singh said India's international relations are guided by the very essence of human equality and dignity and it does not believe in making or becoming a client or satellite state. The defence minister said India's national efforts towards 'Make in India' are neither "isolationist" nor are they meant for the country alone as he made an open offer of partnerships with New Delhi for production of various military equipment. The 14th edition of 'Aero India', billed as Asia's largest aerospace exhibition, will be held in Bengaluru from February 13 to 17. "We do not believe in making or becoming a client or satellite state, and so, when we partner any nation, it is on the basis of sovereign equality and mutual respect," he said while inviting the ambassadors to the mega event.

There have been mounting global concerns over China's military muscle flexing in the South China Sea, East China Sea and the Indo-Pacific. The defence



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh addressing at the Ambassadors Roundtable conference for Aero India 2023, in New Delhi

minister said "partnership and joint efforts" are the two key words that differentiate India's defence industry cooperation with other nations. "India does not believe in a hierarchical conception of world order, where few countries are considered superior to others." Underlining that the 'make-in-India' programme encompasses make-for-the-world, the defence minister asserted that the self-reliance initiative is the beginning of a "new paradigm of partnership" with India's partner countries. "Within the domain of defence research and development and manufacturing, it translates into an open offer to you all, for joint efforts

and partnerships in defence R and D and production," he said. "When we are procuring defence equipment from our valued partner nations, very often, they are sharing the technical know-how, setting up manufacturing plants in India, and working with our local firms for various sub-systems," Singh said. The defence minister noted that it is India's endeavour to "transcend the relation of buyer and seller to that of a co-development and co-production model, irrespective of whether we are a buyer or a seller". "I would like to emphasise that our national efforts towards 'Make in India' are neither isolationist, nor

are they just meant for India alone," he said. Showcasing the growth of India's defence manufacturing sector, Singh especially spoke about the indigenously developed Light Combat Aircraft (LCH) and the Light Utility Helicopter (LUH). "Our large population and abundant skilled work-force has led to the creation of a thriving innovation ecosystem, led by start-ups in high technology areas. I believe that the Indian Aerospace and Defence manufacturing sector is well prepared to take up the future challenges and capitalise on emerging opportunities," he said. Singh also noted that India's defence exports have grown by eight times in the last five years and now the country is exporting to more than 75 nations. "India has been working towards enhancing its defence manufacturing capabilities, particularly in the emerging areas of drones, cyber tech, AI, radars and other equipment," Singh said. "When we are exporting our defence equipment to our friendly nations, we offer our full support towards the capability development of the buyer through sharing of technology, training, co-production," he said. Touching upon India's G-20 presidency, the defence minister said its endeavour is to build consensus within the grouping and shape the agenda for a "more secure, prosperous, sustainable and just world". (PTI)

Switzerland, India working to create innovation platform; seeks to accelerate bilateral ties: Swiss Ambassador

NEW DELHI, JAN 9 --/ Switzerland is keen to accelerate bilateral ties with India by tapping more trade and investment opportunities, and both countries are also working to create an innovation platform, according to Swiss Ambassador to India Ralf Heckner.

Emphasising that his "expectations are very high", Heckner said innovation and a free trade agreement can take the bilateral relations to the next level. In an interview with news agency PTI on Monday here, Heckner said he sees a lot of convergence between both countries when it comes to innovation. "Switzerland being the most innovative country and more innovations (are) being created in India, what I would like to see is the most strategic innovation relationship. We are working with the Indian government to create an innovation platform that will bring the best universities, IITs and federal institutes of technology in Switzerland together with very innovative Swiss and Indian businesses," he said.

The idea of creating an innovation platform is at an initial stage, and in this regard, a pilot project that is focused on anti-microbial resistance is in progress. "By the end of the year, we will be presenting our first results when it comes to the pilot project," the Ambassador said, adding that there is also convergence in terms of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). "The more innovative India becomes, India will have an interest in IPR. Switzerland attaches a lot of importance to IPR and I see India moving into that space. That will also open up quite some interesting cooperation," he noted. In the Global Innovation Index 2022, India's ranking improved to the 40th position and the list was topped by Switzerland. On the trade front, negotiations between India and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) have been going on for some time. EFTA is

an inter-governmental organisation of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

Against the backdrop of India recently concluding trade deals with Australia and the UAE, Heckner said that he would like to see the negotiations on a free trade agreement between India and EFTA moving forward at a quick pace. "I feel that the Indian government is now open for trade deals...The proof of the pudding is already there, because of trade deals that India has signed with Australia and the UAE. "The next important visit will be that of the State Secretary for Economic Affairs to Delhi in the beginning of February. If we are able to move our negotiations forward, that would take our relations to the next level," he said.

In 2020 to 2021, bilateral trade between Switzerland and India stood at around 11 billion Swiss francs. "In 2023, I would like to see our bilateral relations accelerating... we are not only celebrating 75 years of India's independence but also 75 years of friendship. "It is so important that countries that are friendly work together. So, we would like to celebrate our friendship, and we expect high-level visits to India and from India also," Heckner said. "Switzerland is economically an important country. We are an innovative country and among the biggest investors...There is the potential for our trade relations. There are around 330 Swiss companies located in India, and in China, it is around 1,000. The potential is we could triple the number of Swiss companies in India," Heckner said.

Further, the Ambassador said that Swiss investments are about USD 300 billion in the US, the world's biggest economy. "So, USD 300 billion (was) invested in the US and USD 10 billion invested in India from Switzerland. That gives you an idea of the potential we have when it comes to trade relations between Switzerland and India," he added. (PTI)

Union home secy reviews security at airports

NEW DELHI, JAN 9 --/ Union home secretary Ajay Bhalla on Monday reviewed security at airports and issues related to logistics and infrastructure, amid several complaints of unruly travellers creating nuisance on flights, officials said.

Top officials of the Ministry of Civil Aviation, Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), and Airports Authority of India (AAI), among others, attended the meeting. The home secretary reviewed security at airports and issues related to logistics and infrastructure, a government official said. Bhalla was given a detailed briefing about various aspects of the security in airports and the additional steps taken in view of recent incidents aboard aircraft involving unruly passengers, the official said. An inebriated man allegedly urinated on a female co-passenger, a senior citizen in her seventies, in the business class of Air India New York-New Delhi flight on November 26 last year. The



Ajay Bhalla

accused, Shankar Mishra, was arrested by the Delhi Police from Bengaluru on Saturday. Ten days after the November 26 incident, another episode of a drunk male passenger allegedly urinating on a female passenger's blanket was reported on the Paris-Delhi sector but there was no penal action after he gave a "written apology". This incident happened on December 6 on Air India flight 142 and the pilot of the aircraft reported the matter to the Air Traffic Control (ATC) at the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport about it, following which the male passenger was apprehended.

Mishra was, however, later allowed to leave after the two passengers had a "mutual compromise" and the accused tendered a "written apology". Two persons were arrested upon arrival in Patna from Delhi on Sunday night following a complaint from the airline they were flying on that they were under the influence of alcohol. Both the accused Nitish and Rahul were subjected to breath analyzer test after landing. (PTI)

Separate road accidents on Agra- Lucknow Expressway claim 7 lives

UNNAO/KANNAUJ, JAN 9 --/ Seven people, including three Nepalese citizens, died in separate incidents after their vehicles met with an accident on the Agra-Lucknow Expressway amid dense fog, police said on Monday.

In the first incident, a Nepal-bound bus rammed into a truck on the expressway in Uttar Pradesh's Unnao on Monday, leaving the driver and three Nepalese citizens dead, officials said. Six other passengers, four of them also from Nepal, got injured in the incident and have been hospitalised, they said. Additional superintendent of police Shashi Shekhar Singh said the bus carrying 60 passengers was going from Rajkot in Gujarat to Nepal. The accident occurred in the Auras area of Unnao. Singh added three male passengers of the bus died on the spot, while one woman succumbed to her injuries on the way to the hospital.

Hasanganj sub-divisional magistrate Ankit Shukla said the deceased have been identified as Chandra Saud (50), Lalit Saud (35), and Nirmala (25), all residents of Kailali district of Nepal. The fourth deceased is Sajid, the bus driver. (PTI)

Priests criticise Rahul over remarks on 'pujaris'

NEW DELHI, JAN 9 --/ Several priests on Monday accused Congress leader Rahul Gandhi of "insulting" those engaged in worship with his comment that India is a country of "tapasvis" not "pujaris".

Rahul had recently said in Haryana that the Congress believes in 'tapasya', while the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is an organisation of 'pooja'. The BJP-RSS force people to worship them, he had alleged, adding that India is a country of 'tapasvis' (ascetics) and not 'pujaris' (priests).



Ujjwal Pandit of Yuva Teerth Purohit Mahasabha alleged that Gandhi had insulted India's ancient cultural traditions in which priests have played a central role. It is clear that the Congress leader wore 'janeu' (holy thread) and tilak on his head for show, he alleged in a statement, claiming that Gandhi's remarks are against Brahmins.

Swami Dipankar noted that the Gandhi scion had described his Bharat Jodo Yatra as his "mohabbat ki dukan" (place for love), but was now talking about "hate". The Congress leader should think before speaking as he, on one hand, is working to unite people and on the other hand, is making this kind of statement. Should priests be then thrown into sea, he asked. "He has undertaken such a glorious journey. I am shocked that he has made such a statement," Dipankar said.

Rajnikanth Semwal of Gangotri Dham said priests have had a key place in the land of 'sanatan dharma'. Pujaris have been following an ancient tradition, he said, urging Gandhi to study the same. At some places, including Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh, priests carried out protests and burnt Gandhi's effigies. In the temple town of Deoghar in Jharkhand, priests demanded an apology from the Congress leader for insulting their tradition. (PTI)

PM holds talks with Prez of Suriname and Guyana



Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a bilateral meeting with the President of Guyana, Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali

INDORE, JAN 9 --/ Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday held separate bilateral talks with Surinamese President Chandrikapersad Santokhi and President of Guyana Mohamed Irfaan Ali, focusing on bilateral cooperation in areas of defence, digital technology and capacity building.

The meetings took place on the sidelines of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD). Santokhi and Ali are attending the mega event as the chief guest and special guest of honour. About Modi's meeting with Santokhi, the ministry of external affairs (MEA) said the talks focused on cooperation in areas of mutual interest including hydrocarbons, defence and maritime security. "In their meeting, both leaders held discussions on cooperation in areas of mutual interest including hydrocarbons, defence, maritime security, digital initiatives and ICT, and capacity building," it said in a statement.

"Suriname appreciated restructuring by India of Suriname's debt arising from Lines of Credit availed by Suriname," it said. After the conclusion of the PBD, Santokhi will visit Ahmedabad and New Delhi. On talks between Modi and Ali, the MEA said they held comprehensive discussions on a wide range of issues including cooperation in energy, infrastructure development, pharmaceuticals, healthcare, technology and defence cooperation. "Both leaders recalled the 180 year old historical bonds of friendship between the people of India and Guyana and agreed to deepen them further," it said. President Ali will also visit Delhi, Kanpur, Bengaluru and Mumbai. (PTI)

SC grants Centre time till March 15 to pay arrears of OROP to pensioners of armed forces

NEW DELHI, JAN 9 --/ The Supreme Court on Monday granted time till March 15 to the Centre for payment of arrears of One Rank-One Pension (OROP) to all eligible pensioners of the armed forces.

A bench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justice PS Narasimha asked the Centre to ensure that all arrears are paid expeditiously to the pensioners of the armed forces and that there is no further delay.

The apex court granted liberty to ex-servicemen association to file an application, if they feel aggrieved by any action of the Centre on payment of arrears of the OROP. Attorney General R Venkataramani, appearing for the Centre, said the tabulation process has been completed by the Comptroller General of Defence Accounts (CGDA) and now the tables have been sent to the ministry of defence for final



approval. "By March 15, the money will start flowing into the accounts of 25 lakh pensioners of armed forces", Venkataramani said.

Last month, the government has moved the top court seeking extension of time till March 15, 2023 for payment of arrears of OROP scheme to all eligible pensioners of the armed forces.

This is the second extension given by the apex court to the Union government to pay the arrears after it had first moved the top court in June, last year and sought three months to compute and make payments in accordance with the March 16, 2022 verdict of the top court. The apex court's 2022 verdict came on the plea filed by the



Delhi HC asks PFI leaders to wait for trial court order on plea for interim bail in PMLA case

NEW DELHI, JAN 9 --/ The Delhi High Court on Monday disposed of the pleas of two leaders of the banned outfit Popular Front of India (PFI) for interim bail in a money laundering case, saying they should wait for the trial court's order in the matter.

Mohd Perwez Ahmad, who was the president of PFI's Delhi unit, and its office secretary Abdul Muqet had sought interim bail in the case registered by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) as the agency failed to file a charge sheet within the stipulated period of 60 days from arrest which expired on November 21, 2022. Their counsel Mujeeb Ur Rehman submitted before the high court that on December 17, 2022, they approached the trial court for the grant of default bail and, during the pendency of the plea, they should be released on interim bail. He said that on January 2, the prosecution failed to file a reply to the bail applications and the trial court is scheduled to hear the matter on Tuesday. Noting the submissions, Justice Anish Dayal disposed of the two petitions saying that let the trial court first adjudicate the matter. The High Court granted liberty to the petitioners to approach the court in case any grievances are left. The ED, however, claimed that it has filed the

charge sheet within the statutory time period and cognisance on it has been taken by the trial court. In the petition before the High Court, the accused alleged that their fundamental right to a speedy trial was violated as the trial court has not disposed of the bail applications within two weeks as directed by the Supreme Court. "The applicant is in judicial custody and is innocent as police officials falsely implicated him in a fabricated case while acting against the very settled principles of law and violated the fundamental rights of the applicant," Ahmad alleged in the plea. The agency had earlier submitted before the trial court that the accused along with other members of PFI collected funds through donations, hawala, banking channels, etc and used the funds for unlawful activities and commission of scheduled offences.

It had alleged that over the years, the transfer of funds was even being done

from abroad through a clandestine or illegal channel under a conspiracy hatched by office bearers of PFI. A large number of alleged PFI activists were detained or arrested in several states during the massive raids preceding the nationwide ban imposed on September 28, 2022. The government banned the PFI and several of its associate organisations on September 28, 2022 for five years under the stringent anti-terror law UAPA, accusing them of having "links" with global terror groups like the ISIS. In near-simultaneous raids across the country as part of a multi-agency operation spearheaded by the NIA, PFI activists were detained or arrested in 11 states for allegedly supporting terror activities in the country. The arrests were made in states and union territories including Kerala, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Assam, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Puducherry, Delhi and Rajasthan. (PTI)

Indian Ex-servicemen Movement (IESM) through advocate Balaji Srinivasan against the Centre's formula.

It had said in terms of the communication dated November 7, 2015, the benefit of OROP was to be effected from July 1, 2014 and the communication states that "in future, the pension would be re-fixed every five years".

"Such an exercise has remained to be carried out after the expiry of five years possibly because of the pendency of the present proceedings," the bench had said, adding: "We accordingly order and direct that in terms of the communication dated November 7, 2015, a re-fixation exercise shall be carried out from July 1, 2019, upon the expiry of five years." "Arrears payable to all eligible pensioners of the armed forces shall be computed and paid over accordingly within a period of three months," it had said. (PTI)

Sans AE past six months, residents at LA denies new electric connections

PORT BLAIR, JAN 9/--/ Mr. P K Halder, President, Andaman Nicobar Democratic Congress has drawn the attention of the Chief Secretary towards the problems faced by the residents of Little Andaman in getting new electric connections. In a letter to the Chief Secretary, Mr Halder has mentioned that due to not posting of an Assistant Engineer, Electricity department, Hut Bay for the past six months, the residents of Little Andaman region are not provided with new electric connections. He has urged the Chief Secretary to issue directions to the Electricity department to depute an Assistant Engineer to mitigate the problems of the residents of this region.

IGNOU invites admission for MBA specialization prog

PORT BLAIR, JAN 9/--/ The School of Management Studies, Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), New Delhi is inviting for admission for MBA specialization programmes like; Master of Business Administration in Financial Management (MBAFM), Human Resource Management (MBAHM), Marketing Management (MBAMM) and Operations Management (MBAOM). Further IGNOU has also launched 4 PG Diploma Programme in Management. Interested students can enroll for PG Diploma in Specializations in Human Resource Management (PGDHRM), Financial Management (PGDFM), Marketing Management (PGDMM) and

Marketing Management (PGDOM). The programmes are offered in English Medium only and the eligibility for enrolling the course is bachelor degree with at least 50 % marks (45% in case of candidates belonging to reserved category). The Admissions for above programmes are going now for January 2023 session and the application form is to be filled through online mode only. Interested candidates can register for the programme at the official website <https://ignouadmission.samarth.edu.in> or contact IGNOU Port Blair Regional Centre, Port Blair over phone: 03192-242888/03192-230111 or Email: rcportblair@ignou.ac.in for further assistance.

Selection test for admission to Class VI in JNV

PORT BLAIR, JAN 9/--/ The online registration of candidates for the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya Selection Test for admission to Class VI for the next academic year 2023-24 in JNV, Chouldari has already started. The last date for the submission of application online is 31st January, 2023 and the test is tentatively scheduled on 29th April, 2023. JNVs are progressive Co-educational & residential Vidyalayas run

by Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti under the Ministry of Education spread over 649 districts across the country, providing quality education especially to the rural talented students. Since the admissions are purely on the basis of the selection test, eligible and talented students studying in Class V in recognized schools in the district are advised to take the test. The application forms are to be submitted online only

through the Website <http://navodaya.gov.in>. Students should have Aadhaar Card/ Residence Certificate and Study Certificate duly signed by the Headmaster, photograph of the candidate, signature of the candidate and the parent for uploading the application. In case of any difficulty in uploading the applications, parents can contact JNV Chouldari over phone to the helpdesk numbers 7018283450, 9580455683 and 8900970775.

Training prog of Aapda Mitra Volunteers



RANGAT JAN 9/--/ A training programme of Aapda Mitra Volunteers under up-scaling of Aapda Mitra Scheme organized by Directorate of Disaster management, A & N Administration in coordination with District Disaster Management Authority, A&N Islands in association with National Disaster Response Force (04 Bn, Arrakonam, TN) & Indian Coast Guard at Zilla Parishad hall, Rangat, Middle Andaman. About 45 volunteers were present in the training programme. —SUBRATA

Motivational lecture & sports day during NCC camp



PORT BLAIR, JAN 9/--/ The combined annual training camp for Senior Division/ Senior Wing Army and Naval NCC cadets is in progress at JNRM, Port Blair since 04 Jan 23. A lecture was conducted by Advocate Priyadharshni Rahul on 06 Jan 22. She is a member of NCC Alumni Association and practices at

the Supreme Court of India. Ms. Priyadharshni briefed the cadets about the merits of being associated with NCC and gave a brief overview on 'Politics as a Career'.

The cadets participated in a variety of games during the Annual Sports Day which was celebrated on 07 Jan at JNRM. The events

included track and field games, tug of war, kho-kho and volleyball. On Monday, a lecture was conducted by A&N Forest Department, during which the cadets were briefed about precautions and first aid associated with snake bites. The cadets also had a practical exposure to handling live snakes.

J&K: Army hospital saves life of boy facing life threatening condition

JAMMU, JAN 9 --/A 12-year-old boy, suffering from intestine perforation, was successfully operated by doctors at Army's Command Hospital in Jammu and Kashmir's Udhampur district, a defence spokesman said on Monday. The boy, hailing from Maror village, was recently brought to the emergency department of the Command Hospital Northern Command (CHNC) with sudden onset of severe abdomen pain and vomiting associated with dehydration, he said.

The spokesman said the boy was initially examined at district hospital Udhampur and was being planned to be referred to Jammu. However, after receiving a request from the office of the deputy commissioner, Udhampur, the patient was brought to CHNC for further management and was immediately attended to by a team of specialist medical officers and surgeons, he added. "Initial evaluation revealed features of

perforation in intestine which were confirmed by CECT abdomen. Being in a life threatening situation, the child was immediately wheeled into the operation theatre for conducting a life-saving surgery," the spokesman said. He said the surgery revealed perforated small intestine leading to collection of pus and intestinal contents inside. The definitive surgery was performed successfully by the expert team of surgeons, he added. Throughout the procedure,

the anesthesia team provided expert intensive care, the spokesman said, adding after the procedure, the boy was shifted to state-of-the-art intensive care unit and was monitored for any complications. The child is recovering and is in a stable clinical condition, he said. The CHNC has also added another feather in its cap by starting Interventional Radiology services for the armed forces personnel and the civil populace at the facility for the first time, the spokesman said. (PTI)

'Entry of foreign varsities in India will lead to healthy competition,' say private universities

NEW DELHI, JAN 9 --/Foreign universities setting up their campuses in India will offer healthy competition to leading private universities in the country, according to several Vice Chancellors, even as they maintained that the "devil lies in the details." The University Grants Commission (UGC) last week unveiled draft norms for allowing, for the first time, foreign universities to set up campuses in India with autonomy to decide the admission procedure, fees structure, and even repatriate funds back home. According to Dr Aman Mittal, Vice President, Lovely Professional University, Punjab, the foreign universities setting up their campuses in India will offer healthy competition to top private universities here. "India is a very large country with a very large number of students who are pursuing their higher education dream. The existing leading universities need not worry as it will be a healthy competition. "That being said, competition improves the ecosystem in a better way in that sector and we have seen that in the case of the airlines, banking, and telecom sector where a lot of foreign players have come in, and the Indian institutions and various organisations have ramped up their level," he told PTI. "On the whole, the consumer gets benefited from that. In the near future when the foreign institutions come, institutions here which are already doing a great job would be very happy to play in that ecosystem where everybody is providing quality education," he added. As per the draft norms, foreign universities

with campuses in the country can only offer full-time programmes in offline mode and not online or distance learning. Such universities, termed Foreign Higher education Institutions (FHEIs) in the draft, will need a nod from the UGC to set up their campuses in India. The initial approval will be for 10 years which will be renewed in the ninth year subject to the meeting of certain conditions. These institutions will not be allowed to offer any programme which jeopardises the national interest of India or the standards of higher education here, the commission has said. While these universities will have the freedom to decide their admission criteria and fee structure, the commission has advised them to keep the fees "reasonable and transparent." "The devil really lies in the details. The draft regulations are silent on many issues which will need further clarifications in the final regulations. Investment in Greenfield projects will need huge investment and prolonged gestation period. Working with existing universities and HEIs in India will have challenges of cultural fit or misfit," said Dr Raj Singh, Vice Chancellor, JAIN (Deemed-to-be-University), Bengaluru. "Students who study abroad look not only for better quality education but also exposure to a multicultural environment. "These universities, which will be required to offer the same quality of education as in the parent campus, may not be able to do so during the initial years and they will have to create global communities on Indian Campuses to ensure exposure," he said. (PTI)

Sailing timing of MV Swaraj Dweep revised

PORT BLAIR, JAN 9/--/ Due to administrative reasons, the scheduled departure time of the vessel MV Swaraj Dweep for Chennai on 10th January 2023 has been revised. Now the vessel will sail for Chennai on the same day at 1600 Hrs instead of 1000 Hrs from Haddo Wharf.

MSME loan mela on Jan 10

PORT BLAIR, JAN 9/--/ Br. MSME-DFO, Port Blair will be organizing MSME Loan Mela on Jan. 10 from 10 am to 12 noon at Br. MSME-DFO office, Industrial Estate, Dollygunjto create awareness among MSMEs/ Individuals on proper procedure & documentation for availing loans, availability of various loan facilities for self-employment, one to one interaction etc. A similar mela will also be organized at Gram Panchayat Office Wimberlygunjon Jan. 12 from 10 am to 12 noon.

24x7 SERVICE

FROZEN SHOULDER

WHAT IS IT & HOW CAN IT BE RELEASED?

APOLLO CLINIC

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

All New Collection 3XL-5XL SIZES

BEST PRICES

Shyam N Shyam

Wish You A Very Happy Pongal

Partywear Kurtis Sharara-Gharara Palazzo-sets Nayra Cut Kids Wear Mens Wear

ABERDEEN BAZAR | PORT BLAIR

HAPPY NEW YEAR! 2023

MONDAL JEWELLERS

916 BIS HALL MARK GOLD ORNAMENTS

NEW COLLECTIONS ARRIVAL FOR PONGAL

CELL: 9434281991, PH: 234778

48 Shastri Road, Aberdeen Bazar, Port Blair-744101 12/370 R.P. Road, Near Jama Masjid, Aberdeen Bazar, Port Blair

The aim of life is self-development. To realize one's nature perfectly - that is what each of us is here for

Oscar Wilde

SC ousts eviction order from land

Supreme Court has stayed the removal of encroachment on land in Haldwani, Uttarakhand. The order to evict thousands families from their homes in the name of eviction has been overruled. This decision is a big relief for those thousands of people who were protesting in the bitter cold to save their homes. The decision also reminds us that the administration only follows the text written in the book but it cannot and should not walk blindly. The administration must take legal and human rights issues in consideration while arrival to a decision.

The High Court in this case had ordered in December that 28 acres of land under encroachment should be removed. But the properties are not just brick and stone constructions. There are several houses, government schools, private schools, Mosques etc.

According to the results this land belongs to him. Nainital High Court was told that any encroacher has any legal document to claim that land could not be present. There are thousands of people in these settlements who have been living for many generations, sources claimed.

There are many people living here who came to Haldwani in search of livelihood and stayed here. These thousands of families have supported themselves with their hard earned money and arranged a roof over their head.

In this area of Haldwani, children, women, elders all sit on the streets day and night to save their homes asking answers to what will happen to their future. These people sit on the streets carrying placards with slogans, so that bulldozers should not run on their houses. Anyway the bulldozer has become a new symbol of justice.

If the sword of homelessness hangs over 50,000 people at once, then the government should first reach out to those people and give relief to them. But the people of this area say that the representatives of the state government did not defend their rights in the court. People say that it is completely wrong to call it encroachment because here they have been living for years and will save their homes at any cost.

The displeasure with the government is justified because thousands of houses, schools and religious sites have not come up overnight when all these were being built, then why the administration remained silent, this question will arise.

There is a danger of action, because despite the rules being made in 2016, any there was no regularization of settlement. At that time, before the elections, the government issued strict guidelines to regularize slums.

Most of the settlements were built on river-river or forest land, so they were not regular encroachers. The people have definitely got immediate relief from the order of the court. And for the time being this matter has calmed down for a few days, but the issue persists as to what will be the final outcome.

To glorify myths as facts bode ill for knowledge

REFLEX ACTION

Dr Arun Mitra

had to face many hardships. She was ridiculed and even stones were thrown so as to stop her from pursuing education. Social reformers, Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Swami Dayananda Saratwati did a lot for the education of women. After independence, many girls' schools and colleges were opened in the government sector to encourage education among women.

In the same speech, the Prime Minister goes on to say that the new education policy will produce new type of ideal citizens. But when we take a look at the new education policy, we find that this will lead to complete privatization of education further increasing inequality in education. This will also deprive large part of the society of quality education. Presently only about 2% of the GDP is spent on education as against the required 10%. Such type of education is intended to prepare a class of specially educated persons to serve the corporate sector as was done by the education system introduced by the British in our country to produce 'BhadraLok' to serve the masters.

Similar is the story of health services. India has to its credit the contribution in medical science by Charaka, a great physician of the time around 300BC. Accordingly, the Charaka Samhita mandates the physician to lead a life of celibacy, grow beard and hair, pray for cows and Brahmins. It forbids the doctor from treating those who are in opposition to the King or whom the physician or society may despise. But that was the period of Kings where Brahmins were at the top in the social Hierarchy. The modern oaths, belonging to the present, with tremendous advances in modern science bind that every human shall be treated equally and the physicians must be committed to treat fellow humans to the best of their abilities under any circumstances.

The health policy 2017 promotes insurance-based healthcare system. This far from universal healthcare system as envisaged by several health experts. Because of exorbitant cost, quality health care is getting out of reach of people. Government

expenditure on health is only 1.28 percent of GDP, while according to the World Health Organization it should be 5%. Ironically health and education are taken as liability not as an asset by our policy makers. Both health and education should be fundamental right of every Indian citizen. No wonder we are at a rank of 107 out of 121 in Hunger Index as a result of the exclusive policies. Our dismal performance in managing COVID Pandemic is not an old story.

I have given these two examples because there is persistent attack not only in the political and economic sphere but all the aspects of life. There has developed strong linkage between forces of obscurantism and the corporate sector. There is concentration of wealth in few hands while vast majority is deprived of basic needs. The ruling clique use coercion, oppress people and try to divide the people through false propaganda. The Prime Minister had in 2014 said that in ancient times science in our country was so much advanced that the head of an elephant could be transplanted on a man's head and also that genetic science was so developed in our country that Karan could be born without mother's womb. Many scientists also started expressing similar views. The Vice Chancellor of Andhra Pradesh University G. Nageswara Rao said in the Indian Science Congress at Jalandhar that the Kauravas who numbered 100 were born due to advanced stem cell research and technology in our country. Recently, the Indian Space Research Organization - ISRO and the Indian Council for Historical Research - ICHR have started working together on how to integrate ancient science with modern science.

When the forces in power fail to act in the interests of the common people, then they try to highlight the achievements of the society in the past in such a way that the people forget the failures of the ruling circles and are obsessed with the glory of the achievements of the past.

It is time we understand how such forces thrive on concocted stories and false propaganda. A lie spoken time and again appears to be truth and becomes part of people's psyche. The struggle against the forces of obscurantism is not only political or economic but there is a need to struggle at every level including developing scientific outlook in education and healthcare based on present day developments in medical science. (IPA)



A Gangasagar bound sadhu blesses a woman and child at Babughat on Monday--Arijit Ganguly

BJP will fight Karnataka Assembly Poll with Narendra Modi as face

Some time back Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, executive chairperson of Biocon Ltd, had also urged Basavaraj Bommai to resolve the "communal exclusion" and "growing religious divide" in the state. She had said that the state's global leadership in the ITBT (information technology and business transformation) sector was at stake.

One of the reasons for Bangalore losing its sheen for investors is the dismal infrastructure - broken sewage lines, erratic power supply, congested industry clusters. The political leadership is left with no time and energy to take care of these needs. According to industry groups, Bengaluru's crumbling infrastructure has caused millions in productivity losses locally. According to Outer Ring Road Companies Association (ORRCA), representing major IT and banking companies, IT companies in the city lost over \$28 million (INR 225 crore) in a single day on August 30, 2022, as the employees were stuck in traffic jams for over five hours.

Recently the industry in a letter to chief minister Basavaraj Bommai expressed its concerns. "ORR IT generates revenue of \$22 billion per annum (32 per cent of Bengaluru's revenue) and is the highest tax contributor. However, the lack of focus on development of the infrastructure in this corridor is appalling".

Some companies have transferred

critical work to locations outside of Bengaluru and Karnataka, causing reputational and economic damages to the city and the state. It is also alleged that nearly 300 foreign companies operating in Bengaluru have shifted to other states, especially to other southern states.

Incidentally the ORRCA had made this request in 2019 to the chief minister. But it is lying unattended. It had urged the chief minister to improve 19 ORR sub arterial roads, which were supposed to ease traffic on ORR during the construction phase. The quality of roads was very poor, making them non-motorable.

"All of this is impacting brand Bengaluru as there is a growing sense that Bengaluru is at risk with inadequate infrastructure vis-a-vis other destinations; with increasing social media coverage, the situation is being closely monitored by CEOs—many of whom sit in other parts of India or elsewhere in the world," said the president of ORRCA, in a letter to development commissioner in 2017. However, despite its worldwide fame as a hub of the IT industry, Bengaluru's poor infrastructure has often been its

black spot. The craze of Bengaluru being the most fabulous wage earning city has turned it into the most favoured destination for migration. Lakhs of people belonging to upper class and high earning groups from other states are migrating to Bengaluru. According to the BBMP Commissioner Gupta nearly 5 million (50 lakh) people have been added to the city population in the last 10 years, taking the city's population to 13.5 million (1.35 crore) people.

Situation which had emerged during the rule of S M Krishna some thirty years back has surfacing once again. The existing infrastructure is unable to cope with the modern challenges. In her tweet Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, Executive Chairperson and founder, Biocon, says she has not been pleased with the infrastructure.

Former president, Federation of Karnataka Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FKCCI), D Muralidhar, who has served as member of city's planning commission and member of the board of governors at Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Bangalore is not a happy person. He says, "Bengaluru has

attracted investments worth lakhs of crores over a period of time. A large chunk of investments, up to a quarter of the \$88 billion in FDI, come to Bengaluru. But there is a marked deterioration in the quality of lower bureaucracy as there is rampant corruption."

It is really a sad experience that India's Silicon Valley is facing stiff competition from unexpected quarters as the country's hottest IT destination. Notwithstanding Bangalore is still the number one IT/ITeS location, the bare fact is no longer the natural or the top choice of IT entrepreneurs. They are looking elsewhere to start their IT ventures and to their happiness are finding choices in various parts of the country.

The educational and entrepreneurial institutions are also facing probable threat. This may not happen immediately. The threat looms. Bengaluru is recognised as the educational hub. Just imagine what will happen when other cities turn to the preferred destination for IT sector. Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai recently dismissed the attempts to compare Bengaluru and Hyderabad as a 'joke'. But to really let it be joke he has to ensure that politics of hate and communalisation have no place in Karnataka. He has to eliminate the fear of uncertainty from the minds of the industry. (IPA/Concluded)

FOCUS

Arun Srivastava

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				DOWN			
1	Favourite	1	In addition	1	In addition	1	In addition
3	Natural gift	2	Group of three	2	Group of three	2	Group of three
8	Quantity of paper	3	Domesticated	3	Domesticated	3	Domesticated
9	Sheltered side	4	Wrongly	4	Wrongly	4	Wrongly
10	Very small	5	Escape artfully	5	Escape artfully	5	Escape artfully
11	Tallies	6	Meshed fabric	6	Meshed fabric	6	Meshed fabric
14	Meat dishes	7	Swarms	7	Swarms	7	Swarms
17	Flowed back	12	Male swan	12	Male swan	12	Male swan
20	National song	13	Fish eggs	13	Fish eggs	13	Fish eggs
24	Mad	15	Make lace	15	Make lace	15	Make lace
26	Become firm	16	Tiny	16	Tiny	16	Tiny
27	Grotto	17	Have being	17	Have being	17	Have being
28	Seesaw	18	Beat with a stick	18	Beat with a stick	18	Beat with a stick
29	Small spot	19	Social event	19	Social event	19	Social event
		21	At hand	21	At hand	21	At hand
		22	Pay attention	22	Pay attention	22	Pay attention
		23	Trading centre	23	Trading centre	23	Trading centre
		25	Born	25	Born	25	Born

SUDOKU:3752								
3	2	9			1			
	1			4				
	4	8				7		
6		4	3	7				
2	3						7	8
				8	5	3		4
		7				2	4	
			9			1		
			1			8	5	3

Yesterday's Solution 3751								
6	5	7	1	9	3	4	2	8
9	3	2	8	7	4	6	5	1
1	8	4	5	2	6	7	3	9
8	7	6	2	1	5	3	9	4
2	1	9	3	4	7	5	8	6
3	4	5	6	8	9	1	7	2
5	2	3	4	6	8	9	1	7
4	9	8	7	5	1	2	6	3
7	6	1	9	3	2	8	4	5

Yesterday's Cross Word Solution 1760								
S	U	E	S			W		Y
T		R	U	M		F	A	C
A	J	A	R		F	A	D	E
T		S	E	V	E	R		D
I	R	E			N	E	P	A
C	U	R	E	S		A	R	E
	R		D	O	N	O	R	A
S	A	V	E	S		M	O	O
E	L	A	N		N	I	L	E
C		N				T	E	A

DISCLAIMER

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

SEVA SUCHNAYEIN

All the sailings are subject to weather conditions

INTER ISLAND SECTOR:

· MV Bharat Seema will sail for Car Nicobar via Little Andaman on 15.01.2023 (Sun) at 0700 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on 16.01.2023 (Mon) at 1600 Hrs from Car Nicobar via Little Andaman. Passenger tickets for the above sailing will be issued to the general public from 13.01.2023 (Fri) onwards at STARS Ticketing Counters.

· Nalanda will sail for Campbell Bay via Nancowry on 17.01.2023 (Tue) at 1000 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on 19.01.2023 (Thu) at 0900 Hrs from Campbell Bay via Nancowry. Passenger tickets for the above sailing will be issued to the general public from 13.01.2023 (Fri) onwards at STARS Ticketing Counters.

LITTLE ANDAMAN:

· Nalanda will sail for Little Andaman on 13.01.2023 (Fri) at 0900 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 2100 Hrs from Little Andaman.

· Nalanda will sail for Little Andaman on 15.01.2023 (Sun) at 0900 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 2100 Hrs from Little Andaman.

Note: Passenger tickets for the above sailings i.e. (for 13th & 15th Jan., 2023) will be issued to the general public from 11.01.2023 (Wed) onwards at STARS Ticketing Counters.

DIGLIPUR & MAYABUNDER:

· MV Bharat Seema will sail for Diglipur via Mayabunder on 12.01.2023 (Thu) at 1900 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on 13.01.2023 (Fri) at 1230 Hrs from Diglipur via Mayabunder.

Passenger tickets for the above sailing will be issued to the general public from 11.01.2023 (Wed) onwards at STARS Ticketing Counters.

FORESHORE SECTOR:

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

10.01.2023 (TUE)

SHAHEED DWEEP & SWARAJ DWEEP

· MV Bambooka will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 10.01.2023 (Tue) at 0630 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 0900 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep.

· MV Baratang will sail for Shaheed Dweep on 10.01.2023 (Tue) at 0630 Hrs. from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 0845 Hrs from Shaheed Dweep.

· MV Baratang will sail for Shaheed Dweep on 10.01.2023 (Tue) at 1100 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 1600 Hrs from Shaheed Dweep.

· MV Baratang will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 10.01.2023 (Tue) at 1300 Hrs from Shaheed Dweep Jetty and will sail back to Shaheed Dweep on the same day at 1430 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep.

· MV Bambooka will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 10.01.2023 (Tue) at 1400 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 1630 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep.

· MV Chouldari will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 10.01.2023 (Tue) at 1700 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail back to Port Blair on 11.01.2023 (Wed) at 0600 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep.

11.01.2023 (WED)

SHAHEED DWEEP & SWARAJ DWEEP

· MV Bambooka will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 11.01.2023 (Wed) at 0630 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 0900 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep.

· MV Kamorta will sail for Shaheed Dweep on 11.01.2023 (Wed) at 0630 Hrs. from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 0845 Hrs from Shaheed Dweep.

· MV Chouldari will sail for Shaheed Dweep on 11.01.2023 (Wed) at 1100 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 1600 Hrs from Shaheed Dweep.

· MV Chouldari will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 11.01.2023 (Wed) at 1300 Hrs from Shaheed Dweep Jetty and will sail back to Shaheed Dweep on the same day at 1430 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep.

· MV Bambooka will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 11.01.2023 (Wed) at 1400 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 1630 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep.

MV Kamorta will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 11.01.2023 (Wed) at 1700 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail back to Port Blair on 12.01.2023 (Thu) at 0600 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep.

RANGAT

MV Baratang will sail for Rangat via Shaheed Dweep, Swaraj Dweep, Strait Island & Long Island on 11.01.2023 (Wed) at 0700 Hrs. from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on 12.01.2023 (Thu) at 0700 Hrs from Rangat via same route.

12.01.2023 (THU)

SHAHEED DWEEP & SWARAJ DWEEP

· MV Bambooka will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 12.01.2023 (Thu) at 0630 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 0900 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep.

· MV Chouldari will sail for Shaheed Dweep on 12.01.2023 (Thu) at 0630 Hrs. from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 0845 Hrs from Shaheed Dweep.

· MV Chouldari will sail for Shaheed Dweep on 12.01.2023 (Thu) at 1100 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 1600 Hrs from Shaheed Dweep.

· MV Chouldari will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 12.01.2023 (Thu) at 1300 Hrs from Shaheed Dweep Jetty and will sail back to Shaheed Dweep on the same day at 1430 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep.

· MV Kamorta will sail for Shaheed Dweep on 12.01.2023 (Thu) at 1300 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 1500 Hrs from Shaheed Dweep. (It is an additional ferry service between Port Blair & Shaheed Dweep in connection with Vivekananda Mela at Shaheed Dweep and will be available from 12th Jan., to 19th Jan., 2023)

· MV Bambooka will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 12.01.2023 (Thu) at 1400 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 1630 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep.

· MV Baratang will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 12.01.2023 (Thu) at 1700 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail back to Port Blair on 13.01.2023 (Fri) at 0600 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep.

Speculation on Kishor's political plunge gains currency as supporters pitch for fighting LS polls

NEW DELHI, JAN 9/--/Political strategist-turned-activist Prashant Kishor, currently on a padayatra in Bihar, has so far shied away from making a definite assertion about whether he or his organisation will contest elections. However, the outcome of an opinion poll among his supporters - more than 95 per cent of whom in one district backed participation in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls -- has strengthened the view that Kishor may take the political plunge as he has often said the campaign participants will have the final say on the issue.

Jan Suraj Padayatra, as the foot march has been named, hosted on Sunday its first poll among its followers on whether it should contest the parliamentary elections, organisers said, adding that participants were those who had joined the exercise in East Champaran district.

In November last, it had conducted a poll among its followers in West Champaran district on whether the campaign should take the form of a political party and 2,808 of 2,887 persons (over 97 per cent) had supported it.

Going a step ahead, the organisers took the campaign's followers' view on whether it should now fight the Lok Sabha polls, in an indication that the I-PAC founder may be warming up to the idea of throwing his hat in next year's polls.

Its organisers said more than 98 per cent of the followers in East Champaran supported the formation of a political party, while 3,515 of 3691 persons, over 95 per cent, wanted it to fight the next Lok Sabha elections.

Nearly 50 per cent of the respondents described unemployment and migration as two biggest problems of Bihar while 33 per cent said corruption was the most serious problem. More than 17 per cent of them chose the poor state of farmers as the biggest problem facing the largely poor state.

Kishor has maintained that it is for the people associated with the campaign to decide whether the ongoing exercise should take a political turn and fight elections.

Associated with a number of successful campaigns of different political parties, mostly regional and against the BJP, in his capacity as a strategist, he has been vocal in his criticism of the Chief Minister Nitish Kumar-led grand alliance government throughout the yatra that started from Bettiah on Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary on October 2.

He had asserted after the West Bengal assembly polls in 2021 that he will no longer be part of election management of any political party. Kishor had a brief career as a politician in Kumar's Janata Dal (United) before he was sacked in January 2020 for his vocal stand against the party's support to the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, a legislation hewed to the BJP's ideological project. Kumar was then a BJP ally. (PTI)

Traffic snarls witnessed in parts of Delhi due to Urs-e-Mubarak

NEW DELHI, JAN 9/--/Traffic remained affected in parts of the national capital on Monday owing to a procession taken out on the 811th Urs-e-Mubarak of Sufi Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti in Ajmer Sharif.

The Delhi Police had on Sunday issued an advisory informing commuters about the likely traffic congestions.

Heavy traffic snarls were witnessed on Aurobindo Marg from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) to Lado Sarai, Anuvrat Marg due to the procession which started at 10 am and will end by 6 pm, the police said.

"Traffic congestion was witnessed on Aurobindo Marg, AIIMS to Lado Sari and Anuvrat Marg due to the procession. But we had already issued an advisory in this regard urging commuters to take alternative routes and plan their journey accordingly. We have also deployed extra traffic personnel on ground who are taking stock of the situation," a senior traffic police official said.

According to the advisory issued on Sunday, traffic restrictions, regulations or diversions may be imposed on

Lodhi Road, Safdarjung Road, INA Market, Aurobindo Marg via Hauz Khas IIT up to Qutub Minar Mehrauli where the procession will be taken out during the day.


The route of procession on Monday is Lodi Road, Safdarjung Road, INA, Green Park, Hauz Khas-IIT Gate, Adhchini Village, Dargah Mai Sahiba -- two hours rest on Mai Sahiba Major stop on the day at Dargah Qutubuddin Rahmatullah, it stated.

People are advised to avoid the above mentioned roads, stretches and the area where the procession will be taken out, it said.

The commuters going to railway stations, ISBT and IGI airport should leave before sufficient time, the advisory said.


Avail public transport to help decongestion on roads, it said.

"Park your vehicles only at designated parking lots. Avoid roadside parking as it causes hindrance to normal flow traffic. In case any unusual/unidentified object or person is noticed in suspicious circumstances, information should be given to the police," it added. (PTI)



Unleashing

बहिराज (विद्युत) लिमिटेड
IREL (India) Limited
(A Govt. of India Undertaking - Department of Atomic Energy)
Mansarovar, Tandi Nadi, e-mail : panchamank@irel.co.in
आइसो 9001, 14001 & 45001 Compliant, Phone: 94051-30942
CIN : U15100MH1950GO1008187



अमृत महोत्सव

MKPP: ADVT/2022-23/10

TENDER NOTICE


IREL, MKP invites Request For Proposal for the following items / job descriptions:
Bids may download tender document from <http://irel.co.in> or CPPP website. Any corrigendum / extension to above

Tender No.	Description
GEM/2022/0830518	Installation of 22.0 TPH FBO with Dual Fuel (LPG/FO) Burner
GEM/2022/08281514	LT ACB Panels
GEM/2022/08202531	Manpower outsourcing
IREL/Kanyakumari/22-23/ET58	Excavation, loading, transportation of mineral bearing inland deposit
GEM/2022/081201127	Furnace Oil
GEM/2022/082081977	Submersible Pump


ender shall be hosted in above websites only.

Sig:
CBC-48129/12/0078/2223

General Manager & Head, MKP / राधानाथ एवं चक्रवर्ती



NATIONAL INLAND NAVIGATION INSTITUTE
(Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Govt. of India)
Gaighat, Patna - 800 007. Tel- 0612-2311200



ADMISSION NOTICE

"RESIDENTIAL COURSE"
(10th PASS STUDENT)

Inland Vessel General Purpose Rating Course as per New Inland Vessel Act 2021

Eligibility

: 10th Pass, from recognized board

Age Limit

: Between 18 years to 25 years as on 31.01.2023
(Relaxation up to 5 years for SC/ST , 3 years for OBC candidates)

Physical Standards

: Physically & Medically Fit. Eyesight should be 6/6 and no color blindness

Course Duration

: 3.5 months

Course Fee

: ₹35,200/-


Seat Reservation 15% for SC, 7.5% for ST, 27% for OBC & 10% for EWS

Last date for Submission of Application Form is 31.01.2023. The qualifying test will be held on 05.02.2023. For shortlisted candidates Interview will be held on the same day. Application form may be downloaded from www.niniedu.in or collected from NINI Office. Eligible candidates should send their application form with relevant documents to "The Principal, National Inland Navigation Institute, Gaighat, Patna-800007" or e-mail the same to info@niniedu.in.
Note: Apart from the above course, the Institute is also conducting other courses such as Preparatory Courses, Revalidation Courses & Customized Courses for IWT Sector as per latest Inland Vessel Act 2021. For more information about the Institute and details of courses, please visit the Institute's website www.niniedu.in.

Principal

NINI, Patna

A SAILING CAREER ON INLAND VESSELS



NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS

The Executive Engineer, Panchayati Raj Institution, South Andaman Division-I on behalf of *Pradhan, Gram Panchayat, Shyam Nagar, Swaraj Dweep* invites online item rate tender (in CPWD form-8) from bonafide and experienced contractors of appropriate class of APWD, MES, ALHW & P&T for the below mentioned work.

1. NIT NO. EE/PRI/SAD-I/RR/2022-23/101

Name of Work: - Repair and Maintenance of existing Rural Road from main road to Shredding unit under SLWM Cluster Radha Nagar village under Shyam Nagar Gram Panchayat, Swaraj Dweep.

Estimated Cost Rs: - 41, 02,085/- **Earnest Money Deposit:** - 82,042/- **Time of Completion:** - Ten (10) Months, Tender Fee: - ₹.500/- & last date & time of submission of bid: - 16/01/2023 (1500 hrs)

The tender forms and other details can be obtained from the website <https://eprocure.andaman.gov.in>.

Tender ID: - 2023_RDPRI_8794_1

Executive Engineer,
Panchayati Raj Institution,
South Andaman Division-I
Junglighat, Port Blair
South Andaman

9540/23

ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ADMINISTRATION
Dr. B R Ambedkar Institute of Technology
Pahargaon, Port Blair

RECRUITMENT NOTICE FOR CONTRACT

Name of the Post : Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor and Assistant Librarian

Nature of appointment : On Contract basis

Period of appointment : For 11 months (excluding vacation)

It is for the information of all interested candidates that Andaman & Nicobar Administration decided to recruit Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor and Assistant Librarian on **CONTRACT BASIS** for the establishment of Dr. B R Ambedkar Institute of Technology, Port Blair for UG programs. The details along with the application proforma may be downloaded from [url:https://erecruitment.andama.gov.in](http://erecruitment.andama.gov.in) for the following posts.

Sl.No.	Name of the post	Department	Total Post	No. of Post
1.	Professor	Civil, CSE, ECE	03	01 in each dept.
2.	Associate Professor	Civil, CSE, ECE	03	01 in each dept.
3.	Assistant Professor	Civil, CSE, and Humanities & Science	06	Civil – 01 CSE- 01 Humanities & Science- 04
4.	Assistant Librarian	-	01	01 no.

The last date of submission of application is 24.01.2023 (12 midnight) from the date of publication of recruitment notice.

9531/23 **Administrative Officer**

e-TENDER NOTICE

No. DB-Tender/Elect/WSD/2022-23/92dt.06/01/2023

The Executive Engineer, Workshop Division, APWD, Port Blair invites on behalf of President of India, online Item Rate tenders from the approved and eligible Enlisted Electrical Contractors of the **Andaman PWD and Non APWD Contractors** irrespective of their enlistment subject to the condition that they have experience of having successfully completed of work dealing with Electrical works in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands with Govt. Organizations & do not have any adverse remarks, for the work mentioned below.

- Name of Work:-**Construction of Security type Compound wall at Raj Niwas along with outer and inner Periphery Footpath around the Compound wall. SW:- Providing illumination in the outer and inner periphery footpath of the newly constructed Compound wall.**Estimate Cost Put To Tender:- ₹.19,59,607/- Earnest Money:- ₹.39,192/- Time of Completion:- 02Months****TENDER ID:2023_APWD_8840_1**& last time & date of Submission of bid: **16/01/2023 (10:00 hrs).**

The Tender forms and other details can be obtained from the web site eprocure.andaman.gov.in.

Executive Engineer
Workshop Division
APWD, Port Blair

9549/23

PAID INTERNSHIPS

WORK BASED LEARNING PROGRAMME (Physical mode)
C-DAC, CERT-IN, CMET, ERNET, NIELIT, SAMEER, & STQC (PAN India)

Technology Areas

AI, ML, BDA, Machine vision, RPA, AR/VR, Block chain, CPU Design, Wireless Networks, IoT, Edge Computing and Cloud Computing, Cyber Security and Cyber Forensics, Health Informatics, Software- Defined Radio, Silicon Photonics, Smart City, Quantum Computing, Materials: Electronic Packaging, Batteries, Additive manufacturing, Renewable Energy & other technological areas.

Funded by MeitY

Here's an opportunity to enhance professional skills by acquiring hands-on practical experience, technical knowledge: analytical thinking, real-time working, problem solving, reasoning, ideation skills, etc. by working on real-world cutting edge national projects centered around niche technologies in premier organisations of MeitY, Government of India.

Registration for Jan 2023 Batch

Duration - 6 months

Stipend - Rs. 10,000/month

Last Date - 15 Jan 2023

Eligibility

- Engineering Students of 7th or 8th semester
- Passed out B. Tech./B. E./MCA/M.Sc. (Relevant disciplines)
- SC, ST & EWS category Students
- Women Students

Participating Institutes

wblp@cdac.in

8360392076

सी डेक CDAC

समय CMET

certin

ERNET

NIELIT

SAMEER

STQC

Apply Now - <https://internship.aicte-india.org/ernet.php>

PMU

सी डेक CDAC

CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF ADVANCED COMPUTING, MOHALI
A Scientific Society of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Govt. of India,
A-34 Ind. Area, Phase 8, Mohali, Punjab, India | Fax :+91-172-2237050-51 | www.cdac.in

CBC-06134/12/0003/2223

We believe in giving humane face to development: Mamata at G20 meet

KOLKATA, JAN 9 /--/ Chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday said her government works to give a humane face to the development that it brings about in the state, as she addressed a G20 meeting attended by delegates from across the world. Mamata said her government's welfare programmes, including those on women empowerment, have been designed to push for digital and financial inclusion of the poorest sections of society. "We believe in giving a humane face to development," said the chief minister, pointing out that her state's development programmes helped increase Bengal's GDP four-fold since she took over in 2011. The chief minister, who won a third term last year, said that despite the economic turmoil caused by Covid-19 pandemic, the state managed to create 12 million jobs, mostly in the MSME sector. "We managed to create jobs, grow our GDP four-fold, mainly because we empowered women, small industries, farmers and youth. We are fighting against hunger and

have provided free food to the poor," she said. Mamata pointed out that her government had ensured financial inclusion of women and people of vulnerable sections through digital transfers. "For women's empowerment, we give them money through digital transfers some USD 1.5 billion have been spent on this programme," the chief minister pointed out, adding that self-help groups, comprising 1.2 million women, have been created in Bengal. "We launched the 'government at your doorstep' (Duare Sarkar) programme to ensure that people get the benefits of our development initiatives. The programme won a national award," Banerjee said here at the first 'Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion' meeting of the G20. The CM also said India has remained united, notwithstanding the differences in religion, caste and languages. Welcoming the delegates, Mamata said Bengal is a significant state geographically as it is the gateway to several other states and countries,



Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee during the first 'Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion' meeting of the G20, at New Town — Photo : EOI

including the North-East, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Thailand and Myanmar.

"All the world is our motherland people here don't discriminate among countries... The guests present at this event are our family members," she said. The first day of the G20 event featured an exhibition on digital innovations for advancing financial inclusion, and sessions on the role of digital public infrastructure in financial inclusion and productivity gains, among others. The three-day event will also focus on remittance costs and SME finance availability, officials said. Twelve international speakers will be attending the G20 meeting, including senior officials from the World Bank, Monetary Authority of Singapore, France and Estonia.

Unique Identity Authority of India (UIDAI) CEO Saurabh Garg and National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) MD and CEO Dilip Asbe were among those who addressed the sessions on Monday. (PTI)

MP calls on...

From page-1
Augmentation of Fish production and to harvest the untapped fishery resources is possible by setting up a Fisheries college in Andaman & Nicobar Islands which can produce professionals having knowledge in fish harvesting, processing, production, marketing and other fishing practices in the field of capture fishing and aquaculture. Shipbuilding/ Ship Repairing yard in A&N Islands: Unemployment is the biggest issue of Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Shipping is one of the most natural sectors. Hence clubbing both will mutually resolve issues. Setting up of shipbuilding/ Ship repairing yards in Andaman and Nicobar Islands will generate employment and revenue. Promotion of tourism with innovation: The Andaman and Nicobar Islands are heavily dependent upon tourism because of its scenic beauty and geographical location. Unfortunately, A & N Islands have half-year tourism as the remaining half-year is monsoon season. Hence introducing and promoting monsoon tourism will not only provide a unique tourism experience to the tourists but will also extend half-year tourism to full-year tourism. Also needed to promote tourism through Marine, Adventure, Culinary, Eco, World War II Tourism and Cultural Tourism along with establishment of Freedom Struggle Tourism at various places in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Creation of Assembly for the A&N Islands: The people of Andaman and Nicobar islands, various political parties, associations and civil societies are continuously demanding for full-fledged democratic rights for the Islanders as being enjoyed by the people in other parts of India. The Member of Parliament requested the Home Minister to recommend the Government of India to enact an appropriate legislation to constitute a Legislative Assembly on the lines of Puducherry with the Council of Ministers so that hopes, aspirations and democratic rights of the people of Andaman and Nicobar Islands are fulfilled. In the interim as stop-gap measures, the Pradesh Council which used to function in these Islands may be restructured with executive powers.

Other crucial issues highlighted by Mr. Sharma in front of the Home Minister were regularisation of excess land of Pre 1961, Old inhabitants, settlers and providing land to landless Islanders and regularise encroachment prior to 2012. Resettlement of Tamil Settlers of Katchal Island. Relief to Tsunami affected farmers. Grant 1/30th Pay + DA to the left out 3000 DRMs out of 7000 DRMs under the concept of "Equal Pay for Equal Work. Regularisation of services of DRM/ Casual/ Adhoc and Contract employees working under A&N Administration for more than 10 years. Enhancement of pension/ Allowances for Old Age/ Widows/ Destitute women/ Divyang to Rs.5000/- per month. Grant of Unemployment Allowance to the Unemployed youths. To extend Minimum Support Price (MSP) for Arecanut (supari) and paddy. Resumption of air services between Port Blair and Car Nicobar. International flights from Veer Savarkar International Airport, Port Blair and increase in payment of Anganwadi and ASHA workers.

Every minute is important, says Uttarakhand chief secy as more houses in Joshimath develop cracks Cong demands situation be declared national calamity

DEHRA DUN, JAN 9 /--/ Every minute is important, the Uttarakhand chief secretary said on Monday as more houses, buildings and roads developed cracks in the sinking town of Joshimath, red crosses came up on hundreds of unsafe structures and many residents stayed on despite the imminent danger.

The number of subsidence-affected homes rose to 678 while 27 more families were evacuated to safety, a bulletin from the Disaster Management Authority in Chamoli said, adding so far 82 families have been shifted to safe locations in the town. Chief secretary S S Sandhu held a meeting with officials at the state secretariat to review the situation in Joshimath and asked them to speed up the evacuation exercise to ensure the safety of residents as "every minute is important". The district administration had put red cross marks on more than 200 houses in the sinking town that are unsafe for living. It asked their occupants to either shift to the temporary relief centres or rented accommodation for which each family will get assistance of Rs 4000 per month for the next six months from the state government. Personnel of the National Disaster Response Force and State Disaster Response Force have been deployed for the relief and rescue efforts. Even those who have shifted to temporary shelters keep returning to their abandoned houses in the danger zone, unable to overcome the pull of home. Parmeshwari Devi, an elderly resident of Marwari ward which is one of the worst-hit in the town, said she spent her entire savings on having a house of her own and now she is being asked to leave it and shift to a relief camp. "I would

the courtyard and keeps staring at its walls riddled with cracks. Rama Devi's family was forced to sleep on the inner verandah of their home after the rooms developed cracks but then had to finally leave the house in a panic. The Congress on Monday demanded that the land subsidence situation in Uttarakhand's Joshimath should be declared a national calamity and all developmental projects in the area halted till a report by experts and environmentalists is submitted on the issue. The Opposition party described it as a man-made disaster and sought enhanced compensation for each house affected due to the "unbridled development" in the area. It asked the government to preserve the old Joshimath town and develop a new town to rehabilitate the residents. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said: "Protect nature. The whole country is worried and is with the people of Joshimath, where unbridled development has created cracks in Uttarakhand's Devsthal." "We have three demands from the Modi government - The Joshimath tragedy should be declared a 'national calamity'. "Stop all new projects, including of railways and hydel power, until a newly appointed high-level committee of experts, scientists, environmentalists and local people submits its report," Kharge said in a series of tweets in Hindi. "The oustees of Joshimath be given adequate compensation from PM CARES fund, instead of only Rs 5000," the Congress leader also said. Former chief minister Harish Rawat has also demanded that the compensation be increased to Rs 50,000 per victim and a 'new Joshimath' be established while preserving the old town. Congress leader Manish Khanduri said the first cracks in Joshimath had appeared in 2019 but the response of the BJP government in the state has been "shoddy and inadequate" and the chief minister was "found lacking". The Supreme Court, meanwhile, has asked a petitioner who has sought the court's intervention to declare the crisis in Uttarakhand's Joshimath as a national disaster to mention his plea

Tuesday for urgent listing. Locals and the opposition Congress held the building of the NTPC tunnel and the construction of the Char Dham all-weather road responsible for the aggravation of the land subsidence problem in the town. However, Director of Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology Kalachand Sain said: "Though we cannot rule it out, we cannot say this categorically as the NTPC tunnel is far from the affected area. However, a detailed analysis of the problem alone can ascertain its causes." (PTI)



Wide crack on the floor of a house at Joshimath

prefer dying where I belong rather than going anywhere else. Where will I get the comfort of my own home," Devi told a private news channel. Suraj Kaparwan, a resident of Manoharbagh in Joshimath, has a similar story. The family is still trying to make up its mind to leave their home. The house of Rishi Devi, a resident of Singdhar, is caving in gradually and she has had to shift along with her family to a safe location but she returns to her home every day despite her kin stopping her from doing so. Devi now sits in

TN Guv stages unprecedented walkout from Assembly after face-off with CM

Ravi skips portions from govt's draft, Stalin moves resolution

CHENNAI, JAN 9 /--/ Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi on Thursday staged an unprecedented walkout from the state Assembly following a face-off with chief minister MK Stalin over the former's customary address to members of the House in its first session of the year.

In his address, Ravi skipped a few portions of the draft prepared by the state government, prompting Stalin to move a resolution to expunge from records all such comments made by the Governor that didn't conform to the draft. It is customary that the Governor adheres to the draft of his speech prepared by the government. The incident on Monday marked yet another low point in an already tenuous relationship between the Governor and the political executive in the southern state. The high drama on the floor of the House soon snowballed into a heated debate online between the supporters and critics of the ruling DMK, even as "#GetOutRavi" trended on Twitter, with many calling for the ouster of Ravi from the gubernatorial post. However, the state BJP threw its weight behind Ravi, describing as "disrespectful and amateurish," Stalin moving a resolution against the Governor whilst Ravi was still seated in the House. The DMK-dominated House had convened for the first session of the year with the Governor's customary address to the members, which the main Opposition AIADMK dubbed as a "disappointment," and said it was "indecent" on the part of the CM to have "spoken" when the Governor was seated, alluding to the resolution moved by Stalin. Earlier, Ravi began his address amid slogan shouting against him by MLAs belonging to allies of the ruling DMK. As soon as he began his address in Tamil, greeting members on the New Year and the harvest festival 'Pongal,' legislators raised slogans including 'Tamil Nadu Vazhgave' (Long live Tamil Nadu) and 'Engal Nadu Tamil Nadu' (Our land is Tamil Nadu). The slogans later ceased. The Governor made a reference to Swami Vivekananda, much to the indignance of the treasury benches, skipping certain portions from his customary speech. He omitted the names of Dravidian stalwarts including the late EV Ramasamy 'Periyar' and CN Annadurai. From the commencement of his speech, Ravi encountered opposition from the DMK's allies, which attempted to



Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin (L) and Governor RN Ravi (extreme right) at TN Assembly on Monday

disrupt his speech by rushing to the well of the House and raising slogans against him. But an unruffled Ravi continued his speech, sticking to major portions of the text on the initiatives of the State government, especially the "Illam Thedi Kalvi" and "Makkalai thedi maruthuvam," in the Education and Health sectors. He skipped the 65th point of the speech which says the government is founded on the ideals of social justice, self-respect, inclusive growth, equality, women empowerment, secularism and compassion towards all. 'Dravidian model' were among the words skipped by the Governor and he also spoke on his own on certain aspects. "Following the principles and ideals of stalwarts like Thanthai Periyar (EV Ramasamy), Annal Ambedkar, Perunthalaivar Kamarajar (K Kamaraj), Perarignar Anna (CN Annadurai) and Muthamizh Arignar Kalaigarnar (M Karunanidhi), the government has been delivering the much-acclaimed Dravidian model of governance to its people," the text containing 67 points in all, had read. Also, he omitted portions of the 12th point which talks about the State taking all necessary measures to ensure that it continues to be a haven of peace and tranquility, free from any form of violence. Ravi concluded his speech by uttering "Vazhiya Senthamizh! Vazhga Natramizhar! and Vazhiya Bharatha Mani Thiru Nadu!" After the Governor's speech was read out in Tamil by Speaker M Appavu, the chief minister stood up and moved a resolution against Ravi seeking to reject the deviation that he made and to declare as valid only the prepared text of the Governor's address tabled in the House. Before Stalin could conclude his remarks,

Ravi got up and walked out of the House, before the national anthem was played to signify the conclusion of the day's proceedings. Speaker Appavu expressed regret that the Governor had skipped the names of iconic leaders. Speaking to reporters after the proceedings of the day, he expressed regret that Ravi did not "even utter" the name of BR Ambedkar, who framed the Constitution. Later, reacting to the developments in the Assembly, industries minister Thangam Thenarasu said Ravi had deviated from the customary tradition of the House. "His speech was prepared by the government and sent to him for approval. We consider it as an insult to the national anthem as he walked out even before it was played," he alleged. Leader of the Opposition AIADMK K Palaniswami claimed the chief minister piloting a resolution against the Governor went against tradition. It did not have announcements on any major government projects and therefore was a disappointment, he told reporters. The BJP came out in support of the Governor and lashed out at the ruling DMK and Speaker M Appavu. BJP state president K Annamalai charged that DMK and its alliance partners acted like "fringe elements" on Monday. "For petty political gains, the @arivalayam govt brought shame to the house by disrupting the speech of the Honourable Governor, Thiru RN Ravi avargal. Thiru Appavu, the speaker of the house, did not maintain neutrality," he alleged. Intervening in the Governor's address with a motion when he was still in the Assembly is "disrespectful and amateurish," Annamalai said in a series of tweets. (PTI)

Internal migration, apathy among youngsters major reasons for low voter turnouts: EC

NEW DELHI, JAN 9 /--/ Inability to vote due to internal migration, along with "urban apathy and youth apathy", is contributing to low voter turnouts, the Election Commission (EC) told a parliamentary panel on Monday while discussing the feasibility of remote voting, sources said.

Senior officials of the EC and the Department of Legislative briefed the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice, chaired by senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and former Bihar chief minister Sushil Modi. Stating that it has always been concerned about the issue of "about 30 crore electors not exercising their



franchise" and a differential voter turnout in different states, the EC said there are multifarious reasons for a voter not exercising his right to vote. "Amongst the many reasons like urban apathy and youth apathy, inability to vote due to internal migration (domestic migration) is also one prominent reason contributing to low voter turnouts," the poll panel said during the presentation. Discussing remote voting, especially for migrant voters, with the panel, the EC said it entails a host of legal, statutory, administrative and technological interventions on a spectrum of issues, requiring wider consultations with all stakeholders. Describing remote voting

as a "matter of importance", the poll watchdog said it is actively deliberating on the matter. "It is important that any system of remote voting has to take into account the confidence and acceptability of all stakeholders of the electoral system -- voters, political parties and election machinery," the EC said. The poll panel said in its view, the technology for remote voting should be standalone like electronic voting machines (EVMs) and should not be connected to any network in any form to rule out any transmitting data. Accordingly, the EC said it is working with a committee of technical experts, Electronics Corporation of India Limited (ECIL) and Bharat Electronics Limited. (PTI)

First female Sikh judge in US swears in

HOUSTON, JAN 9 /--/ Indian-origin Manpreet Monica Singh has been sworn in as a Harris county judge, becoming the first female Sikh judge in the US.

Singh was born and raised in Houston and now lives in Bellaire with her husband and two children. She was sworn in as a judge of the Harris County Civil Court at Law No. 4 in Texas on Friday. Singh's father immigrated to the US in the early 1970s. A trial lawyer for 20 years, she has been involved in numerous civil rights organizations at the local, state, and national levels. "It means a lot to me because I represent H-town (a nickname of Houston) the most, so for it to be us, I'm happy for it," she said at the oath ceremony. Indian-American Judge Ravi Sandill, the state's first South Asian judge, presided over the ceremony, which took place in a packed courtroom. "It's a really big moment for the Sikh community," Sandill said. "When they see someone of colour, someone a little different, they know that possibility is available to them. Manpreet is not only an ambassador for Sikhs, but she's an ambassador for all women of colour," he said. There are an estimated 500,000 Sikhs in the US, with 20,000 Sikhs living in the Houston area. Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner said: "It was a proud day for the Sikh Community, but also a proud day for all people of Colour who see the Diversity of the City of Houston in the Diversity of the Court". (PTI)

Monica Singh

American Judge Ravi Sandill, the state's first South Asian judge, presided over the ceremony, which took place in a packed courtroom. "It's a really big moment for the Sikh community," Sandill said. "When they see someone of colour, someone a little different, they know that possibility is available to them. Manpreet is not only an ambassador for Sikhs, but she's an ambassador for all women of colour," he said. There are an estimated 500,000 Sikhs in the US, with 20,000 Sikhs living in the Houston area. Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner said: "It was a proud day for the Sikh Community, but also a proud day for all people of Colour who see the Diversity of the City of Houston in the Diversity of the Court". (PTI)

Kishida highlights security concerns on trip to Europe, US

TOKYO, JAN 9 /--/ Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida begins a weeklong trip Monday to strengthen military ties with Europe and Britain and bring into focus the Japan-U.S. alliance at a summit in Washington, as Japan breaks from its postwar restraint to take on more offensive roles with an eye toward China. Kishida's talks with U.S. President Joe Biden on Friday will highlight his five-nation tour that also takes him to France, Italy, Britain and Canada some of Group of Seven nations with which Japan has stepped up defence ties. His first stop is Paris on Monday. Kishida said his summit with Biden will underscore the strength of the Japan-U.S. alliance and how the two countries can work more closely under Japan's new security and defense strategies. Japan in December adopted key security and defense reforms, including a counterstrike capability that makes a break from the country's exclusively self-defense-only postwar principle. Japan says the current deployment of missile interceptors is insufficient to defend it from rapid weapons advancement in China and North Korea. Kishida said he will explain to Biden the new strategy, under which Japan is also reinforcing defences on its southwestern islands close to Taiwan, including Yonaguni and Ishigaki, where new bases are being constructed. "Will will discuss further strengthening of the Japan-U.S. alliance, and how we work together to achieve a fee and open Indo-Pacific," Kishida told a NHK national television talk show Sunday, referring to a vision of national and economic security cooperation the two countries promote to counter China's growing military and economic influence. Under the new strategies, Japan plans to start deploying in 2026 long-range cruise missiles that can reach potential targets in China, nearly double its defense budget within five years to a NATO standard of about 2 per cent of GDP from the current 1 per cent, and improve cyberspace and intelligence capabilities. The idea is to do as much as possible in a short time as some experts see growing risks that Chinese President Xi Jinping may take action against self-ruled Taiwan, which Beijing claims as part of its territory. Japan's new strategy has been well received by the Biden administration and some members of the Congress. Experts say it would also widen cooperation with their main regional partners Australia and possibly South Korea. "This is an opportunity to rethink and update the structure and the mechanisms of the alliance to reflect a much more capable partner that's coming," said Christopher Johnstone, senior adviser and Japan chair for the Centre for Strategic and International Studies. He said, however, that Japan's focus on the strike capability and budget is a welcome but "a daunting agenda" that will require a lot of cooperation with the United States. Paving the way for the summit, Japanese Defense Minister Yasukazu Hamada and Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi will fly to Washington to meet their American counterparts, Lloyd Austin and Antony Blinken, on Wednesday, followed by separate defence ministers' talks Thursday. The Biden administration, which also adopted its security strategy in October, expects Japan to assist in the supply and storage of fuel and munitions in case of a Taiwan emergency, experts say. (AP)

Aid chief: Taliban decrees against women paralysing NGO work

KABUL, JAN 9 /--/ The Taliban's "internal debates and extreme decrees" are paralysing humanitarian work in Afghanistan, the head of a major aid agency told The Associated Press on Sunday, after he arrived on a week-long trip to talk to Taliban leaders about reversing a ban on women working for national and international non-governmental groups. Jan Egeland, the secretary-general of the Norwegian Refugee Council, is the first NGO chief to visit Afghanistan for talks with the Taliban since the ban came into effect more than two weeks ago. Authorities have barred Afghan women from working at NGOs, allegedly because they weren't wearing the Islamic headscarf correctly.

The ban follows a slew of moves that have severely limited or suspended women's rights and education. Aid groups, foreign governments, and the United Nations say women are vital for the delivery of lifesaving assistance in Afghanistan and are calling for the ban's reversal. Many groups have

suspended their operations, warning of dire and deadly consequences for a population already battered by decades of war, deteriorating living conditions and the economic hardship. The Norwegian Refugee Council says it has worked in Afghanistan since 2003 and employs 470 women. It helped more than 840,000 people last year and was intending to help 700,000 this year, the group said.

Egeland said that he was meeting Taliban leaders in the capital of Kabul and in the southern city of Kandahar, the birthplace of the Taliban movement and the base of the group's supreme leader Hibatullah Akhundzada. Egeland has already met the economy minister, who initially announced the ban, and other Taliban officials. Egeland indicated that those in Kabul were more willing to contemplate women returning to work because of their crucial role in delivering humanitarian aid.

"They all say that they want us to continue work and hope we will continue without females,"

Egeland said in an interview Sunday at his group's Kabul office. "But when I say we're not willing or able to work with males only, they (Taliban officials) realize that the population is totally dependent on international assistance at the moment, food, shelter, sanitation." Women are needed to contact women, including female-headed households and widows, he said. Aid agencies say it is impossible for men to do this work because of Afghanistan's social and cultural norms as well as the Taliban's own prohibitions against the mixing of genders.

Separately, two aid officials have told the AP that they were given the impression by Taliban ministers in Kabul that they want women to resume their work at NGOs but that this decision lies with the leadership in Kandahar. Egeland said the economy minister "sent us the message given by the supreme leader that we had to discontinue all work." He said he is traveling to Kandahar because "it is there that the ideological and religious decrees come from." "The

(Taliban's) internal debates and extreme decrees have paralyzed our work," Egeland said. The NRC chief said it was impossible to meet the supreme leader in Kandahar but hoped to influence those around him. Two weeks after the ban, it remains unclear how comprehensive it is, and some groups have reported that they are able to continue their work.

Egeland said this raises further questions. "Can this be a religiously activated ban if some (women) are working and some are not? It's not thought through at all," Egeland said. "We can't work with males only because we can't follow their (the Taliban's) rules and regulations." The Norwegian aid chief said the group's female staff have complied with the Taliban's dress codes, gender segregation rules and even the need to have a male chaperone on certain occasions. The damage caused by the ban will become worse the longer it continues, he warned, saying malnutrition and death is rising and maternal health is plunging. (AP)

Biden flies in to Lopez Obrador's new airport for summit

MEXICO CITY, JAN 9 /--/ One of the most important diplomatic decisions by President Joe Biden at the gathering this week of North American leaders might have been his choice of airport.

Biden arrived in Mexico City on Sunday evening via Mexico's newest hub, the Felipe Angeles International Airport, a prized project by Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador. The hub was christened last year with much fanfare, though it's located more than an hour's drive north of the city centre, has few flights and until recently lacked consistent drinking water. Biden and Lopez Obrador, whose relationship is transactional at best and absent the warmth and camaraderie Biden has with other world leaders, shook hands and walked together down a long red carpet on the tarmac, flanked by soldiers. The two then took the long drive into the city centre together. Along with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who arrives on Monday, the trio will spend the next two days discussing climate change, manufacturing, trade, the economy and the potential global

clout of a more collaborative North America. "This gathering will deepen our coordination and advance our shared priorities for North America," Biden tweeted on Sunday after his arrival.

Migration will also be discussed, but ahead of the summit Biden announced a major US-Mexico border policy shift, with Mexico's blessing, that will result in the United States sending 30,000 migrants from four other countries per month back across the border. The US will accept 30,000 people per month from the four nations Cuba, Nicaragua, Haiti and Venezuela for two years and offer the ability to work legally. On Sunday, Biden's spent roughly four hours in El Paso, Texas, his first trip to the border as president and the longest he's spent along the US-Mexico line. The day was highly controlled and seemed designed to showcase a smooth operation to process migrants entering legally, weed out smuggled contraband

and humanely treat those who have entered illegally, creating a counter-narrative to Republicans' claims of a crisis situation equivalent to an open border. But it was likely do little to quell



critics from both sides, including immigrant advocates who accuse the Democratic president of establishing cruel policies not unlike those of his hard-line predecessor, Donald Trump, a Republican. Biden encountered no migrants except when his motorcade drove alongside the border and about a dozen lined up on the Ciudad Juarez side in Mexico. His visit did not include

time at a Border Patrol station, where migrants who cross illegally are arrested and held before their release. Elsewhere in El Paso where Biden did not visit, hundreds of migrants were gathered outside the Sacred Heart Catholic Church, where they have been sleeping outdoors and receiving three meals a day from faith groups and other humanitarian organisations. The group of migrants had several pregnant women, including 26-year-old Karla Sainz, who is eight months along. She was travelling in a small group that included her 2-year-old son, Joshua. Sainz left her three other children back home in Venezuela with her mother. "I would ask President Biden to help me with a permission or something so we can work and continue," she said.

Noengris Garcia, also eight months pregnant, was travelling with her husband, her teenage son and the small family dog from the

tiny state of Portuguesa, Venezuela, where she operated a food stall. "We don't want to be given money or a house," said Garcia, 39. "We just want to work." Asked what he's learned by seeing the border firsthand and speaking with the officers who work along it, Biden said: "They need a lot of resources. We're going to get it for them." The number of migrants crossing the US-Mexico border has risen dramatically during Biden's first two years in office. There were more than 2.38 million stops during the year that ended Sept. 30, the first time the number topped 2 million. The administration has struggled to clampdown on crossings, reluctant to take measures that would resemble those of Trump's administration.

From Texas, Biden headed south to Mexico City. Lopez Obrador will formally welcome Biden at the Palacio Nacional on Monday, the first time since 2014 Mexico has hosted a US president. The two will meet before Trudeau joins them for dinner. Biden and Trudeau will hold talks Tuesday, and then the three will gather for discussions. (AP)

Prince Harry accuses royals of complicity in Meghan's pain

LONDON, JAN 9 /--/ Prince Harry has accused the royal family of being complicit in his wife Meghan's anguish, claiming his stepmother Camilla, the queen consort, had leaked private conversations to the media in order to burnish her own reputation.

In interviews broadcast on Sunday, Harry accused members of the royal family of getting "into bed with the devil" to gain favourable tabloid coverage, singling out Camilla's efforts to rehabilitate her image with the British people after her longtime affair with his father, now King Charles III. "That made her dangerous because of the connections that she was forging within the British press," he told CBS. "There was open willingness on both sides to trade information. And

with a family built on hierarchy, and with her, on the way to being queen consort, there was gonna be people or bodies left in the street." Harry spoke to Britain's ITV and CBS's "60 Minutes" to promote his book, "Spare", which is due to be widely released on Tuesday. It has already generated incendiary headlines with its details of bitter family resentments. He repeated his claim on ITV that there was "concern" in the royal family about his unborn child's skin colour after he married biracial American actress Meghan Markle.

Harry and Meghan first mentioned the incident during an interview with Oprah Winfrey in 2021, but they haven't identified the family member who expressed concern. Harry insisted the family wasn't racist, but said the episode was an example of unconscious bias, adding

that the royal family needed to "learn and grow" in order to be "part of the solution rather than part of the problem". "Otherwise unconscious bias then moves into the category of racism," Harry said. He said that "especially when you are the monarchy you have a responsibility, and quite



rightly people hold you to a higher standard than others." "Spare" explores Harry's grief at the death of his mother in 1997, and his long-simmering resentment at the role of royal "spare", overshadowed by the "heir" older brother Prince William. He recounts arguments and a physical altercation with William, reveals how he lost his virginity and describes using cocaine and cannabis.

He also says he killed 25 Taliban fighters while serving as an Apache helicopter pilot in Afghanistan a claim criticised by both the Taliban and British military veterans. "Spare" is the latest in a string of public pronouncements by Harry and Meghan since they quit royal life and moved to California in 2020, citing what they saw as the media's racist treatment of Meghan and a lack of support from the palace. It follows the

Winfrey interview and a six-part Netflix documentary released last month. In the ghostwritten memoir, Harry, 38, describes the couple's acrimonious split from the royal family after their request for a part-time royal role was rejected. The television interviews are just two of several given by Harry that are set to pile more pressure on the royal family. He is also appearing on "Good Morning America" and "The Late Show with Stephen Colbert". Royal officials haven't commented on any of the allegations, though allies have pushed back on the claims, largely anonymously. Harry has defended the memoir describing it as his effort to "own my story" after years of "spin and distortion" by others. In the "60 Minutes"

interview, Harry denied said his book wasn't intended to hurt his family. Omid Scobie, author of "Finding Freedom," a book on the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, said Harry is offering the look behind the palace walls that the public has always desired. "Of course, that does come with some downsides for those who have been part of his journey," Scobie told the BBC. "We heard some sort of really startling confessions and stories about members of the royal family, particularly when it comes to Camilla and her relationship with the press." While Harry said that he hadn't spoken with his father or brother in a while, he hopes to find peace with them. Harry told ITV that he wants reconciliation with the royal family, but "the ball is in their court". "They've shown absolutely no willingness to reconcile," he said. (AP)

Plane prepares to take off for 1st UK satellite launch

LONDON, JAN 9 /--/ Engineers are making final preparations for the first satellite launch from the UK later Monday, when a repurposed passenger plane is expected to release a Virgin Orbit rocket carrying several small satellites into space.

If successful, the mission will mark the first orbital space launch from UK soil and the first international launch for Virgin Orbit, founded by British billionaire Richard Branson. The company, which is listed on the NASDAQ stock exchange, has already completed four similar launches from the US. The latest mission will see a repurposed Virgin Atlantic Boeing 747 aircraft carrying a rocket take off from Cornwall in southwestern England from around 10.15 pm on Monday. Around an hour into the flight, the plane will release the rocket at 35,000 feet (around 10,000

metres) over the Atlantic Ocean to the south of Ireland. The rocket will then take several small satellites for mixed civil and defence use into orbit, while the plane returns to Cornwall. It will be the first commercial satellite launch from Western Europe, Virgin Orbit said. In the past, satellites produced in the UK had to be sent to spaceports in other countries to make their journey into space.

Ian Annett, deputy chief executive at the UK Space Agency, described his "immense excitement" Sunday and said it was "a new era for space in the UK". The mission is a collaboration between the UK Space Agency, the Royal Air Force, Virgin Orbit and Cornwall Council. The launch was originally planned for late last year, but it was postponed because of technical and regulatory issues. (AP)

India vs Sri Lanka

GUWAHATI, JAN 9 /--/ India were left with a mixed feeling on the eve of their ODI series against Sri Lanka as on one hand they will have stalwarts Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli returning to the side while on the other, unfit pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah will yet again miss the action. Bumrah was expected to bolster the bowling attack in the three-match series commencing here on Tuesday, but his return has been delayed further after he failed to recover completely from the stress fracture in the lower back, which has seen him miss several assignments including the Asia Cup and the T20 World Cup.

There is now a question mark over whether the pace spearhead will be available for the white-ball home series against New Zealand beginning on January 18, and whether he will be in contention for the four-Test Border-Gavaskar series commencing on February 9. With India set to host the ODI World Cup in October-November this year, Bumrah's last-minute exclusion is only adding to the mystery surrounding the pace bowler's recovery and rehabilitation process. The return of old guards Rohit, Kohli and KL Rahul and also Shreyas Iyer, though, will give the hosts a huge boost as they eye the series after clinching the T20Is against Sri Lanka. India have a packed ODI calendar -- 15 matches excluding the Asia Cup -- in the 10-month window in the build-up to the World Cup in October-November and the key will be to not just get the balance right but also manage the workload in the midst of the Indian Premier League and the highly-anticipated Australia Test series. But another injury scare to Bumrah has thrown

Sindhu returns from injury as Indian shuttlers look to shine in season-opening Malaysia Open



KUALA LUMPUR, JAN 9 /--/ PV Sindhu will face a tough test on her return from a five-month injury lay-off as top Indian shuttlers, including HS Prannoy and Lakshya Sen, will aim to start the year on a positive note at the Malaysia Open from Tuesday. Following a highly-successful 2022, India's star shuttlers will hope to raise the bar further in 2023, during which the Paris Olympic qualification period will start in May. With plenty of ranking points at stake, Indian shuttlers will join the other big stars such as World No.1 Viktor Axelsen, Malaysia's Lee Zii Jia, Akane Yamaguchi, Tai Tzu ying as they aim for a good show in the USD 1,250,000 Super 1000 tournament here. Double Olympic medalist Sindhu, who is returning from an ankle injury, begins her campaign against former World Champion Carolina Marin of Spain. Sindhu last played at the Commonwealth Games in August and it will be an interesting battle against Marin, who has won the last three encounters against the Indian and also boasts of a better 9-5 head-to-head record. In the men's singles, World No.10 Sen, the only seeded Indian player, will engage in a round of one-upmanship against compatriot and world no. 8 Prannoy in the opening round. Meanwhile former world no. 1 Kidambi Srikanth will open his campaign against Japan's unseeded Kenta Nishimoto. A win is likely to put Srikanth up against fifth seed Jonatan Christie with defending champion Axelsen also placed in the same quarter. (PTI)

Messi vs Mbappe Part II: World Cup stars chase Ballon d'Or at PSG

PARIS, JAN 9 /--/ Lionel Messi finally has something Kylian Mbappe already had with a World Cup winners' medal. Now Mbappe wants what Messi has won many times: the Ballon d'Or. After their fascinating duel in a wild World Cup final, the tournament's best player Messi and its top scorer Mbappe are firm front-runners to win the next men's Ballon d'Or. Call it Messi vs. Mbappe part II, and it continues Wednesday when the Paris Saint-Germain teammates face Angers in a French league game. Messi was given an extended break back home in Argentina after the World Cup, but has resumed full training and PSG coach Christophe Galtier hopes he'll be ready to play. Because they play for the same team, their rivalry could intensify over the rest of this season. The 35-year-old Messi has won a record seven Ballon d'Or trophies given to the best player in Europe. Only five Frenchmen -- including Zinedine Zidane and Karim Benzema -- have won it but the 24-year-old Mbappe has never been on the podium. Mbappe made his goals clear while at the ceremony when Benzema won: "For me, of course it's an objective to win one or many of them. But of course there's a process to reach that. I think I'm on the right track." A challenger this time could be prolific Manchester City striker Erling Haaland, but he didn't play at the World Cup -- let alone star in it -- after Norway failed to qualify. Mbappe won the 2018 World Cup with France when he was just 19. Messi waited agonisingly long to get his hands on the trophy, losing in the 2014 final. He did so in style last month when Argentina beat France to win its third World Cup title

in arguably the most intense final in the tournament's 92-year history. Messi's two goals in the final capped a remarkable tournament where he scored seven times, finished as the best player, and reached a whopping 98 goals overall for Argentina. The good news for Argentina fans is that he wants to play a little while longer wearing the Albiceleste jersey. Mbappe, meanwhile, became only the second player to score a hat trick in a World Cup final and finished one ahead of Messi on eight goals as



tournament's top scorer -- the first to reach that haul since Brazil's Ronaldo in 2002. Mbappe's overall tally of 12 World Cup goals puts him level with Brazil great Pele -- and one behind Messi and Frenchman Just Fontaine, the single-tournament record holder with 13 in 1958. Former West Germany striker Gerd Mueller (14), Ronaldo (15) and record holder Miroslav Klose of Germany (16) are well within Mbappe's sights considering the young Frenchman may have three more World Cups ahead of him. By the 2026 World Cup, Mbappe should also be well in front as France's all-time leading men's scorer. He currently has 36 goals and World Cup

teammate Olivier Giroud leads Les Bleus with 53. By the time the next World Cup comes around, Messi will be nearly 39 and perhaps retired from soccer altogether.

So the coast is clear for Mbappe to pulverise World Cup scoring records. But before he starts thinking about that he has the pressing matter of a first Ballon d'Or to win, and it's a tall order with Messi as his main rival. But what a treat in store for French soccer fans if they both keep raising their game. Mbappe played for PSG

10 days after losing the final in Qatar, showing great determination to put that defeat behind him. The Ballon d'Or race has the makings of a classic contest between the teammates, since they were both in fine form for PSG before heading to the World Cup. Mbappe tops the league scoring charts with 13 goals and Messi is tied with PSG teammate Neymar for the most assists (10). Mbappe is co-top scorer in the Champions League with seven goals, while Messi again heads the assists chart with four. Messi won the Champions League four times with former club Barcelona, where he became a superstar and scored 672 goals before joining PSG last season. PSG has never won the Champions League and this could prove a key factor in Ballon d'Or consideration -- especially if Mbappe leads the French giant to the European title. If Messi doesn't play Wednesday at home, PSG's next game is at Rennes on Sunday. "He had an extraordinary World Cup with a lot of physical effort and challenges," Galtier said. "We hope he's ready for (Angers)." (AP)

Bumrah's injury tempers return of stalwarts for ODIs against Sri Lanka



the spanner in the works of the team management. There also lies the problem of plenty in picking the top-five batters. Opener Rohit and No. 3 Kohli pick themselves, while on form, it will be tough to drop Ishan Kishan and Iyer.

Kishan played a sensational knock in his last ODI in Bangladesh recently when he scored a career-best 210. The youngster could be in a direct clash with Shubman Gill

to open with Rohit. While Gill did not play the Bangladesh series in December last year, he has proved his worth as an ODI format player. Iyer had a dream run in ODIs last year and scored 724 runs at an average of 55.69 in 15 innings. He was the backbone of India's batting with his ability to rotate the strike and tackle spin in the middle overs -- a key skill on sub-continent tracks. Then there's the phenomenon named Suryakumar

Yadav, whose T20 exploits have forced the management to explore his utility in the 50-over format. The middle-order batter is fresh from a 51-ball unbeaten 112 in their 91-run win over Sri Lanka in the third and final T20I at Rajkot. It was Surya's third century in the format in seven months, making him the first player in the history of the game to score three T20I ton while not opening the batting. However, his ODI career hasn't really taken off so far. Surya has scored 384 runs in 16 matches with just two half-centuries but he could get full backing from the team management to improve on his 50-over numbers in the lead-up to the World Cup. With veteran quick Mohammed Shami also back in the ranks, he too should be in the playing XI along with either of Mohammed Siraj, Arshdeep Singh and Umran Malik. (PTI)

Teams (from) India: Rohit Sharma (c), Hardik Pandya (vc), Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, Suryakumar Yadav, Shreyas Iyer, KL Rahul (wk), Ishan Kishan (wk), Washington Sundar, Yuzvendra Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav, Axar Patel, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami, Mohammed Siraj, Umran Malik and Arshdeep Singh.

Sri Lanka: Dasun Shanaka (c), Kusal Mendis (vc), Pathum Nissanka, Avishka Fernando, Sadeera Samarawickrama, Charith Asalanka, Dhananjaya de Silva, Wanindu Hasaranga, Ashen Bandara, Maheesh Theekshana, Chamika Karunaratne, Dilshan Madushanka, Kasun Rajitha, Nuwanidu Fernando (ODIs), Dunith Wellalage, Pramod Madushan, Lahiru Kumara. Match starts: 1.30pm IST.

GAME NOTES

Bumrah ruled out of ODI series against Sri Lanka after failing to recover from back injury

GUWAHATI, JAN 9 /--/ Jasprit Bumrah's return to action has now been delayed further after failing to recover fully from his lower back stress fracture as the senior India pacer was on Monday ruled out of the ODI series against Sri Lanka. Bumrah was named in the squad for the three-match series against Sri Lanka, starting Tuesday, but BCCI's support staff and medical team have collectively decided that his "return to play" will be delayed, keeping the all-important Border Gavaskar Trophy in mind. "Bumrah hasn't travelled with the team to Guwahati. He still needs some more time to get back to full fitness as he will be needed during the Australia Test series," a senior BCCI source told PTI on conditions of anonymity. It will be interesting to see if Bumrah recovers to compete against New Zealand for the ODI series, starting January 18 and is fielded without playing even one domestic game. "The committee under MSK Prasad and earlier team management had made a rule that a player in order to return from injury must play at least one or if possible two domestic games before being termed ready for international comeback," a former office bearer recalled. (PTI)



Star India asks BCCI for discount in current deal, exiting Byju's wants board to encash bank guarantee

NEW DELHI, JAN 9 /--/ India's home season media rights holder Star India has asked the BCCI for a Rs 130 crore discount in the existing deal while jersey sponsor Byju's, which is on its way out, wants the board to encash bank guarantee worth an estimated Rs 140 crore to honour the current agreement. The BCCI top brass deliberated on the two subjects for more than an hour in the emergent meeting of the Apex Council on Monday. It was a virtual meeting. In November, Byju's had communicated to the BCCI that it wants to exit as the jersey sponsor of the Indian cricket team but the board asked the edtech company to continue until at least March 2023. However, in June, BYJU's had extended its jersey sponsorship agreement with the BCCI until November 2023 for an estimated USD 35 million. While an approximately Rs 140 crore will be paid to the BCCI through bank guarantee, the remaining, around Rs 160 crore, will be paid via installments. "Only Byju's and Star India issues were discussed in the meeting but that also took well over an hour. It was a serious matter involving millions of dollars so naturally it took time," a BCCI source told PTI. (PTI)

Pretorius retires from international cricket to focus to T20s

JOHANNESBURG, JAN 9 /--/ South Africa all-rounder Dwaine Pretorius has retired from international cricket with immediate effect to shift "focus on T20 and other shorter formats". The 33-year-old has represented South Africa in 30 T20Is, 27 ODIs and three Tests since making his debut in 2016. He holds the record for the best bowling figures for South Africa in men's T20Is with his 5-17 against Pakistan in 2021. "A few days ago, I made one of the toughest decisions of my cricketing career. I have decided to retire from all forms of international cricket," Pretorius wrote said in a statement posted by Cricket South Africa (CSA) on Monday. "I am shifting my focus to T20 and other shorter formats for the rest of my career. "Growing up, my only goal in life was to play for the Proteas. I didn't know how it was going to happen, but God gave me talent and a serious will to succeed. The rest was in his hands." The all-rounder said by retiring from the national team will be able to balance his career and family life better as he can freelance across the globe in best T290 leagues.

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