

CBSE exams toppers felicitated



PORT BLAIR, OCT 19/--/ The top rank holder students of Class 10th & Class 12th for the academic year 2021-22 were felicitated at an event held at Raj Niwas on Wednesday. The Lt Governor, Admiral (Retd) DK Joshi felicitated the top rank holder students. Mr. Keshav Chandra, Chief Secretary, along with the parents and others graced the event. During the occasion, the best Schools of Administration were also presented with trophies and certificates. Govt SSS Oralkatcha, Baratang in N & Middle Andaman, GSSS Swaraj Deep in South Andaman and GSSS Sawai, Car Nicobar received the best administration School award.

In his address to the students, Retd Admiral Joshi motivated the students to strive for excellence in their studies with a vision to achieve their goals in life. In order to motivate students to do well in their academic examination, the Department of Education has been felicitating the topper students and the best schools.

IWC, Arora Dental Clinic conducts dental checkup camp at Khalsa Public School

PORT BLAIR, OCT 19/--/ A free dental check up camp was held at Khalsa Public Senior Secondary School, Port Blair on 18th and 19th October respectively. The camp was organized by Inner Wheel Club in collaboration with Dr. Poonam Arora (Arora Dental Clinic), Port Blair. Alongwith the other members present, Mrs Raj Mahajan, Charter President and Mrs Satinderpal Kaur, President, Inner Wheel club graced the inaugural session on 18th October 2022. The dental checkup was conducted for around 155 Senior Secondary students. The team of dentists led by Dr Sharmila Patil, Dr Diksha, Dr Kavi Malar consecutively examined the students and apprised them of their dental problems and gave relevant solutions. All the students screened during the camp were gifted with toothbrushes. Two students K Karthika and Aastha Singh of class IX were rewarded for their excellent Dentition health. Mrs Rita Devi, Protection Officer, Social Welfare Department was the guest of honour for the closing



ceremony on Thursday. She appreciated the effort of doctors creating dental hygiene awareness and holding extensive dental examination for the students. She also motivated Inner Wheel club members to include students and teachers in their endeavour for exemplary health awareness camps across other schools and colleges too. On behalf of the Management Committee of KPSSS, Principal, Dr S K Jagpal thanked the members of Inner Wheel Club and doctors of Arora Dental Clinic for their relentless efforts in smooth conduct of this camp over two days.

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MP seeks release of adequate compensation to fire victims



PORT BLAIR, OCT 19/--/ Expressing his dismay and concern on the Aerial Bay fire accident, the Member of Parliament, Mr. Kuldeep Rai Sharma on Thursday requested the Chief Secretary to send a team to Aerial Bay, Diglipur to assess the damages and release adequate compensation to the fire victims as early as possible. The Member of Parliament also requested to make temporary arrangements for shop owners to run their business, who have lost their shops in the fire accident.

In Today's Paper...

- DC(SA), team visit areas inhabited by Ranchi Community - PAGE 3
- President, Nicobar Youth Association writes to CS - PAGE 3
- Kharge elected Cong president, first non-Gandhi to head party in 24 years - PAGE 6

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Six months jail for bursting firecrackers on Diwali: Delhi environment minister

NEW DELHI, OCT 19 /--/ Bursting of firecrackers on Diwali in Delhi will attract a jail term of up to six months and a fine of Rs 200, Environment Minister Gopal Rai said on Wednesday.

Production, storage and sale of firecrackers in the capital will be punishable with a fine of up to Rs 5,000 and three years in jail under Section 9B of the Explosives Act, the minister told a press conference here. In September, the city government re-imposed a complete ban on the production, sale and use of all types of firecrackers till January 1, including on Diwali, a practice it has

been following for the last two years. Rai said a public awareness campaign -- Diye Jalao Patakhe Nahi (light diyas, not firecrackers) -- will be launched on October 21.

The Delhi government will light 51,000 diyas at the Central Park in Connaught Place on Friday. "The purchase and bursting of firecrackers in Delhi will be punishable with a fine of Rs 200 and six months in jail under the Indian Penal Code," the minister said. Rai said 408 teams have been set up to implement the ban.

The Delhi Police has set up 210 teams under assistant commissioners of police, while the Revenue

Department has constituted 165 teams and the Delhi Pollution Control



Gopal Rai
Committee 33. The minister said 188 cases of violations

have been detected and 2,917 kg firecrackers seized till October 16. The air quality in Delhi and neighbouring areas start worsening in October due to unfavourable meteorological factors such as low temperatures and wind speed, which do not allow dispersion of pollutants. A cocktail of emissions from firecrackers and stubble burning in neighbouring states further dent the air quality. "Pollution levels rise around Diwali every year. The major reason is the bursting of firecrackers. Emissions from firecrackers are extremely dangerous especially for kids, women

and the elderly." Therefore, the Delhi government has imposed a complete ban on the production, sale and use of all types of firecrackers this year too. The ban covers online delivery of firecrackers," the minister said.

Rai urged Union Environment Minister Bhopender Yadav to ensure the ban on firecrackers is strictly implemented in the entire NCR "as the smoke from firecrackers burst in the region impacts the people in Delhi also". Besides Delhi, Haryana had also imposed a ban on the sale and use of all kinds of firecrackers in 14 of its districts in the National

Capital Region last year, while Uttar Pradesh had allowed the use of green crackers on Diwali just for two hours in areas with moderate or better air quality. Despite the restrictions, people burst firecrackers till late night in Delhi, Noida, Faridabad and Gurugram. Fireworks had led to major changes in PM10 and PM2.5 concentrations in Delhi on Diwali night (November 4), according to the DPCC.

Emissions from firecrackers and farm fires had pushed the capital's 24-hour average air quality index for the day after Diwali to 462, the highest in five years. (PTI)

Modi to unveil 108-feet statue of Kempegowda on Nov 11: Karnataka minister

BENGALURU, OCT 19 /--/ The 108-feet bronze statue of Bengaluru's founder Kempegowda will be unveiled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on November 11 near the international airport here, Karnataka minister CN Ashwath Narayan said on Wednesday. The statue weighing 220 tonne is being installed at the Kempegowda International Airport here at an expense of Rs 85 crore. Renowned sculptor and Padma Bhushan awardee Ram Vanji Sutar has designed the statue. Sutar had built the 'Statue of Unity' in Gujarat and the statue of Mahatma Gandhi in Bengaluru's Vidhana Soudha. Besides Kempegowda's statue, there will also be a heritage park in an area covering 23 acres dedicated to the 16th century chieftain.

Narayan, who is also the Vice-Chairperson of the Kempegowda Heritage Area Development Authority, said a campaign for collecting sacred mud from across the state to be used for the development of Kempegowda theme park at the international airport, will be flagged off by Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on October 21 in front of Vidhana Soudha here. "The campaign will run till November 7 and during this period, vehicles named as 'Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Ratha' will collect the sacred mud across all the districts of the state. The sacred mud thus collected will be used during the unveiling of the 108-feet statue of the Bengaluru founder by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on November 11," he said. To ensure the success of the campaign, committees have been formed at the district level, the minister said; CEOs of zilla panchayats in each district will be the nodal officer of the committee.

Religious leaders, elected representatives, writers, progressive farmers, members of self-help groups, senior citizens, milk producers' federations and industrial associations will be involved in the campaign, he added. Later, Narayan visited the residence of former Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda and invited him to participate in the inaugural event of sacred mud collection on October 21. (PTI)

Conversion, 'infiltration' causing population imbalance, says RSS leader Hosabale

PRAYAGRAJ, OCT 19 /--/ RSS leader Dattatreya Hosabale on Wednesday said religious conversion and migration from Bangladesh are causing population imbalance and called for strict implementation of anti-conversion laws. Addressing reporters after a four-day all-India working committee meeting of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh here, the RSS general secretary said the organisation is trying to create awareness on conversions. He said as a result there has been a favourable outcome of 'Ghar Wapsi' -- the Sangh Parivar effort to bring back to the Hindu fold people it says converted to faiths like Islam and Christianity. He said the existing laws to prevent religious conversion need to be implemented strictly. The apparent reference was to laws in some states, including Uttar Pradesh, that prohibit conversion by force or allurements, particularly through marriage. RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat too attended the meet in Prayagraj from October 16 to 19.

Hosabale claimed that after conversion, infiltration was the second biggest cause of population imbalance. "Population imbalance caused by infiltration from Bangladesh has been seen in districts of north Bihar, including Purnia and Katihar, and in other states, he said at the press conference in Gohania, 25 km from the district headquarters. Hosabale said those who changed their religion should not get the benefit of reservation. He referred to the committee formed under former Chief Justice of India KG Balakrishnan to examine whether communities that adopted other religions should get the Scheduled Caste status. Hosabale said the meeting also discussed increasing the participation of women in social activities of the Hindu community. "Women are entering every sector. Their role in decision making in social work must also increase," he said. (PTI)

Bombay HC dismisses plea of Uddhav-led Sena faction members seeking nod for Diwali musical event in Thane

MUMBAI, OCT 19 /--/ The Bombay High Court on Wednesday dismissed a petition filed by three members of the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena faction seeking permission to hold their annual 'Diwali Pahat', a musical programme, in Maharashtra's Thane district. A division bench of Justices R D Dhanuka and Kamal Khata said the plea was "devoid of merits" and hence dismissed. The Thane Municipal Corporation (TMC) has given permission to

members of another group which is part of the Sena camp led by chief minister Eknath Shinde to hold this programme at the same location in the city neighbouring Mumbai. The petition, filed by Mandar Vichare, Sudhir Belose and Janak Sanghvi through their Anand Charitable Trust, challenged an October 13 order of the TMC granting permission to the Shinde faction for erecting a pandal and stage in Thane, after a preliminary permission was granted to the petitioners on

October 10. The impugned order is ex-facie illegal and abuse of process of law, nullity, void, against the principles of equity and natural justice, a gross abuse of the powers and jurisdiction, a gross misuse of the process of law, arbitrary and unlawful," the petition said. It claimed the permission to the other faction was granted surreptitiously.

The petitioners said they were getting permission to organise 'Diwali Pahat' at the location in question since 2016-17,

therefore they had every right to do it at the same place because a large number of Thane residents attend it. They also claimed that the TMC was acting at the behest of the ruling Sena faction of Shinde and the BJP. The entire exercise done by the authorities is completely motivated to harass the petitioners and out of political rivalry, the plea said. The other group members who were granted permission told the HC that they have been conducting the musical event for the last 10 years and the

permission they had received was in their individual capacity. TMC's counsel Ram Apte, meanwhile, pointed out that as per provisions of the Maharashtra Municipal Corporation Act, the application for conducting the programme was required to be submitted 30 days prior to the event.

The permission would then be considered once the requisite no objection certificates (NOCs) received from fire, traffic and police departments are submitted. Apte told the court that the

persons who have been granted permission applied on September 19 and their application included NOCs from all the departments concerned. The Thackeray faction members had applied on October 3 and their application included only one NOC, the TMC's counsel said. The high court bench after perusing all the documents submitted before it said it does not find any malafide on the TMC's part while granting permission (to the other group) and dismissed the petition. (PTI)

Delhi HC to hear pleas challenging Centre's Agnipath Scheme on Nov 18

NEW DELHI, OCT 19 /--/ The Delhi High Court Wednesday listed for hearing on November 18 several pleas challenging the Centre's Agnipath scheme for recruitment in the armed forces.

A bench of chief justice Satish Chandra Sharma and Justice Subramonium Prasad granted two weeks' time to the petitioners to respond to the Centre's stand on the matter. In a "consolidated" reply filed in response to several petitions against the Agnipath scheme as well as those concerning the recruitment processes for the armed forces under certain previous advertisements, the Central government has there is no legal infirmity in the scheme. The government submitted the Agnipath scheme was introduced in exercise of its sovereign function to make national security and defence more "robust, "impenetrable" and "abreast with changing military requirement". "Reply has been filed by the Union of India. Petitioner prays for time to file rejoinder. Petitioners are granted 2 weeks' time," said the court.

The Agnipath scheme, unveiled on June 14, lays out rules for the recruitment of youths in the armed forces. According to these rules, those between 17-and-a-half and 21 years are eligible to apply and they would be inducted for a four-year tenure, and 25 per cent of them will be granted regular service subsequently. After the scheme was unveiled, protests erupted in several states against the scheme.

Later, the government extended the upper age limit to 23 years for recruitment in 2022. On Wednesday, the counsel for one of the parties informed the court that there are two categories of cases concerning the Agnipath scheme -- one that assails the scheme while the others pertain to recruitment in the armed forces under certain earlier advertisements -- and they should be heard separately.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre, submitted that all the cases are essentially against the scheme and some "additionally" raise the issue of right to appointment under earlier advertisements, and, therefore, all the cases must be heard together.

The court, during the hearing, also questioned the petitioners if any right with respect to appointment was created in their favour on account of their participation in the recruitment process.

"Employer has the right to curb process at any time. There is a Supreme Court judgement. What is the right created?," asked the court.

One of the petitions before the high court has sought a direction to the armed forces to resume the recruitment process which have been cancelled due to the introduction of the Agnipath scheme and prepare the final merit list after conducting a written examination within a stipulated time.

A petitioner, named Rahul, has submitted he had applied for the post of soldier (general duty) and his physical and medical examinations were conducted which he cleared successfully, and was waiting for the written examination. However, he said, he found on the official website that consequent to the implementation of the Agnipath scheme, the ministry has stopped and cancelled all pending processes including the Common Entrance Examination (CEE) of Indian Army recruitment for the previous recruiting years. He said there were several candidates like him who applied for other posts in the armed forces but their respective processes were also cancelled. Another petition, seeking that the recruitment process in the Indian Air Force as per a 2019 notification be completed without being affected by the scheme, is also pending in the high court.

Besides the pleas filed before it, the high court is also hearing those transferred to it. Earlier, the Supreme Court had asked the high courts of Kerala, Punjab and Haryana, Patna and Uttarakhand to transfer the PILs against the Agnipath scheme pending before them to the Delhi High Court or keep it pending till a decision from the Delhi High Court is delivered, if the petitioners before it so desire. (PTI)

Kharge will consult everyone, give preference to party workers, says his son

BENGALURU, OCT 19 /--/ Priyank Kharge on Wednesday said his father Mallikarjun Kharge, who was elected as the Congress President, will strengthen the outfit by consulting everyone and give preference to the party workers. Addressing reporters in New Delhi, the Congress MLA said, "We have to build the party at the grassroots level,



Priyank Kharge

encourage our cadre and have to work beyond our capacities to ensure that the governments are formed in various states. Challenges are very clear and his directions are very clear. The process of building the party will be consultative and the workers will get the preference." Priyank Kharge was replying to a query on the challenges before the new party President in the context of the crucial Assembly elections in Karnataka, Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh. He said collective effort will be made to win the elections. On BJP's charge that Mallikarjun Kharge will be a puppet at the hands of Gandhi family, the Chittapur legislator wondered why the J P Nadda-led party was so keen about the internal matters of Congress.

The BJP said that their party president J P Nadda was re-elected. Let them clarify first whether it is re-election or re-selection. Let them share their voters' list. Wasn't our election process open to all? The internal democracy is quite visible in our party, he said. Regarding Shashi Tharoor's defeat, the former State Minister said he led a good campaign with good election publicity in the social media. Tharoor spoke to the delegates and youth in the party, he added. People blessed Mallikarjun Kharge because someone had to win the election. However, Tharoor is an important part of the party. We will involve him in the party building process, Kharge said. (PTI)

DC(SA), team visit areas inhabited by Ranchi Community

Interacts with residents and assured early disposal of their grievances

PORT BLAIR, OCT 19/--/The Deputy Commissioner, South Andaman, Mr. Suneel Anchipaka, along with Mr. Dilkhush Meena, Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SA), Mr. Rahul Dev Boora, (Probationer), Mr. Vinayak Chamadia (Probationer) and Tehsildar, Port Blair visited the areas predominantly inhabited by Ranchi community such as Ranchi Basti, AttamPahad, Mahaveer Nagar. The Chairperson, Port Blair Municipal Council and concerned Ward Councillors also accompanied.

During the visit, the DC (SA) interacted with the residents at Lambaline village. Various issues were raised such as construction of new community hall, construction of black top road connecting VKV Nagar Palikaschool and Jawahar Colony, School Line village, Renovation of Balwadi, Maintenance of community toilets, trimming of trees nearby VKV Nagar Palika school. DC (SA) inspected all the spots and gave a



patient hearing to all their grievances and assured them of its early disposal. DC (SA) has requested the ward councillor to put forth a proposal for construction of black top road under the Central Road Fund (CRF). At AttamPahad village the residents raised issues related to non functioning of street lights, widening of footpaths, allotment of land for playground, replacement

of old pipelines. DC (SA) issued directions to the revenue field staff to identify suitable land for the playground along with youths of the village and to put forth a proposal of road under CRF and pipeline under AMRUT 2.0. Thereafter, DC (SA) visited BirsaMunda memorial at AttamPahad and requested the ward councillor to place a signage board depicting the memorial.

Thereafter, DC (SA) visited the low lying area of Mahaveer Nagar, Prothrapur and interacted with the general public, the residents raised issues related to drinking water, electricity, surrender of land for road, proper maintenance of drainage, bus connectivity for school going children, construction of Anganwadi and construction of drains to which DC (SA) assured them to sort out the issues at the earliest. It is pertinent to mention that special focus was given to all the above mentioned areas during COVID times for ration disbursal and a few months back DC (SA) along with SDM (SA) had visited the localities with regards to complaints received regarding LPG distribution.

The District Administration is committed for the welfare and overall development of South Andaman District and the District Administration requests the public to come forward with genuine issues related to development of their area.

APWD workers begin indefinite mass demonstration



PORT BLAIR, OCT 19/--/The Andaman Sarvajanik Nirman Vibhag Mazdoor Sangh (ASNVMs), affiliated to CITU, has conducted a territory-wide mass demonstration in front of the offices of the APWD on Wednesday, demanding implementation of High Court order on grant of 1/30th of pay plus DA Scheme of Govt. of India, implementation of High Court order on grant of Bonus to all daily rated mazdoors and regularisation of services of DRMs. At Port Blair, hundreds of APWD workers assembled in front of the Chief Engineer's office and held a mass demonstration.

Addressing the gathering, Mr. B. Chandrachoodan, President of the ASNVMs said that despite High Court orders, the A & N Administration is not implementing the Office Memorandum of 1988 issued by Govt. of India granting 1/30th of pay plus DA to the daily rated mazdoors. He further said that even after the favourable orders, the daily rated mazdoors of APWD are not being paid the Bonus. He further said that contempt petition against the Officers of Administration including Chief Engineer

is pending in the High Court for their failure to implement the High Court order on grant of bonus. Mr. R. Surendran Pillai, President, CITU, Mr. SP Kalairajan, General Secretary, ASNVMs, Shri SB Bhattacharjee and Shri AnandRajan, Treasurer, ASNVMs led the mass demonstration.

At Digliur, the APWD workers held a mass demonstration in front of the Executive Engineer's office which was led by Mr. N. Murthy, Vice President, North Andaman Public Works Union. Large number of workers participated. At Mayabunder a large number of workers participated in the mass demonstration held in front of the office of Executive Engineer, APWD, Mayabunder. At Rangat, the mass demonstration was led by Mr. Karuppaiah, Secretary, Rangat Branch of ASNVMs, At Baratang, Shri Jayakumar led the mass demonstration in front of the office of the Asst Engineer, Baratang. At Hut Bay, a large number of workers participated in the mass demonstration held in front of the office of the Executive Engineer, Hut Bay. Mass demonstration by APWD workers was held at Neil Island also. The mass demonstration will continue till the demands are settled.

Isles' Bengali poet honoured in West Bengal

PORT BLAIR, OCT 19/--/In a cultural programme organised by VISH Little Magazine in association with the SahityaAkademi (Ministry of Culture, Government of India) in the premises of Ajodhya Jamidarbari, Bishnupur, Mr. Anadiranjan Biswas was honoured with Billwamangal Goswami Sahitya Samnanana 2022 (by Maniklal Singha Sanskriti Gabeshana Parishad). Two organisations of Dhaka, Bangladesh, namely, Biggyan Kabita Andolon (Science Poetry Movement) represented by its President Mr. Hasnain

Sajjadi and Biswa Bangali Sansad (World Bengalee Council) represented by its



President Lokman Hosen Pola felicitated Shri Biswas on the occasion for his significant contributions to Bengali literature.

Cleanliness drive at Burmanallah



PORT BLAIR, OCT 19/--/The Yuva Bharat Samaj Seva Charitable Trust organized a cleanliness drive at Burmanallah on 16th October 2022 in collaboration with local fishermen and volunteers. 15 bags of garbage were collected which includes solid waste, polythene bags, plastic bottles, glass bottles, and food wrappers, and proper disposal of the said waste was ensured with the support of Gram Panchayat from the seashore.

It was a worthwhile cleanup and YBSCT took pleasure in what we were doing. It was surprising to see the huge heap of garbage collected from a small area of the beach. The main reason for the cleanup drive was to have an immediate positive impact on our environment by removing trash and making our surrounding a better place to live in.

Odisha officials hold business summit with Indian ambassadors

BHUBANESWAR, OCT 19/--/The Odisha government held a business summit with a few ambassadors of India in a bid to boost the state's presence in the global market, an official release said on Wednesday. Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mohapatra met with Dinesh Patnaik and Manoj Mohapatra, the Indian ambassadors to Spain and Guatemala, respectively, at the State Convention Centre in Bhubaneswar on Tuesday evening, it said. During the deliberations on the growth of industries in Odisha, Mohapatra expressed hope that the Indian missions would adequately present the state at international business forums. "Odisha is emerging as a major industrial hub in eastern India. We have attracted investments in the mineral, metallurgy, chemicals, petrochemicals, textiles, apparel, food processing, IT and ITeS sectors," he said. The chief secretary said with the involvement of the Indian missions in different countries, "we can increase our presence in the global market". (PTI)

President, Nicobar Youth Association writes to CS

Raises healthcare related grievances of tribal people of Nancowry group

PORT BLAIR, OCT 19/--/ Mr. Rayhaan Pasha, President of Nicobar Youth Association brought to the notice of the Chief Secretary grievances relating to the healthcare system at Nancowrie Tehsil. In a letter, he apprised the Chief Secretary about major challenges that the Nancowry's tribal community faces is access to a full-fledged hospital. He mentioned that in case of a serious health condition that requires advanced medical treatment, for residents of the southern group of islands, the closest full-fledged hospital is BJR hospital located at Car Nicobar. When the Community Health Center/PHC's fails to serve (due to various reasons including the absence of specialist, medical equipment, treatment facility, or trained personnel), the patients are further referred to GB Pant Hospital in Port Blair or BJR Hospital, Car Nicobar.

One can only imagine the exhaustive and clobbered state of the medical patients who even dare to undertake an unforgiving sea commute to Car Nicobar or Port Blair in their already struggling physical condition. In addition to the inconvenience, the journey is expensive, especially for the poor tribal people of the Nancowry group. More often than not, they end up getting stuck in either Port Blair or Car Nicobar for prolonged periods of time. This only enhances their misery. As the geographic complexity of these islands further adds to the problem. The Nancowrygroup of Islands consists of 7 islands inhabited by the tribal population. These islands are Chowra, Teressa, Katchal, Kamorta, Trinket, Bambooka, and Tellingchong. These islands are composed of 39 villages, with Kamorta being the most populous with 11 villages (there are few villages which are still not connected by Road).

Despite the best and undeniable efforts

of the Andaman and Nicobar Administration to provide regular ferry service to connect these islands, the connectivity is hindered occasionally due to various logistical issues like lack of fuel that must be transported from Port Blair, and other unforeseen/unplanned issues. In the past, such connectivity impediments has proved to be fatal to patients who need immediate medical attention. He also brought into kind attention to the fact that the specialists from Port Blair rarely visit the Nancowry group of islands and the lack of medical equipment make their not-so-often visits almost void. There is a significant number of medical patients who suffer from chronic medical conditions and require continuous treatment. An example of such a condition is kidney-related health issues where patients require periodic dialysis and many other chronic diseases. He emphasizes that all the difficulties faced by the tribal community laid out above are just the tip of the iceberg. Citing all the reasons above, it is clear that the health services in the Nancowry group of Islands urgently need a massive upgrade. Unfortunately, with the current state of the health system in these geographically distant islands, seriously ill patients who require advanced or immediate treatment have a low likelihood of survival.

Given the remoteness of these islands and the inter-island distance, it is crucial to upgrade the health facilities in the Nancowry group of Islands. On behalf of the tribal residents of the Nancowry group of islands, Rayhaan Pasha had requested the Chief Secretary to kindly consider that the Community Health Centre (CHC) at Nancowry be upgraded to a full-fledged hospital as per the norms and facilities laid down by the Government of India.

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Debate over language back in focus

The Madhya Pradesh government deciding to launch Hindi instruction for the medical course in the state, with Home Minister Amit Shah releasing in Bhopal Hindi texts of three subjects taught in the first year of the MBBS programme, has brought back to limelight the debate over language. This has come around the time when the Committee of Parliament on Official Language headed by the Union Home Minister recommended that Hindi should be the medium of instruction in all technical or non-technical educational institutions in Hindi-speaking states, including central universities. The recommendations of the panel have triggered angry reactions in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and other southern states. But, for students whose medium of instruction in school was Hindi, the unveiling of MBBS Hindi textbooks is a positive development. Students schooled in their mother tongue have a disadvantage in higher education where English is usually the medium of instruction and examination. Flexible language policies can greatly benefit such students, which is why this reform should be extended to other languages and disciplines too. But it's important to ensure that local language books maintain the quality standards of the source books. The corpus of local language texts must also expand so that a student who opts to study in the local language isn't left behind by others. Language flexibility in higher education should include students having room to improve their English skills too. This will open up more opportunities for them in the global knowledge economy.

There is nothing new about the opposition to Hindi in the south, where the first anti-Hindi imposition agitation was launched in 1937. This time too the situation is no different. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin has written to the Prime Minister that the "aggressive attempts of the Union government" to 'impose' Hindi are "impractical and divisive in character", putting non-Hindi speaking people in a disadvantageous position. The DMK youth wing has held protests in the state and is threatening a massive demonstration in Delhi. Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has also termed the committee's recommendations as an assault on federalism and the very essence of India's unique unity in diversity.

It may be recalled that under the Left rule, West Bengal paid a heavy price for curbing English to promote the local language. India's workforce, from IT to nursing, is prized everywhere because of familiarity with English. Parents, across classes, seek English medium education for their wards for this reason. A recent learning survey actually found children displaying more proficiency in English than their mother tongues. Let all languages flourish. Let parents and students choose what's best for them.

Political parties a bridge between electorate & govt

REFLEX ACTION

Mayuri Gupta

Consolidated Fund of the state (Article 266 read along with Article 162) via Article 282 of the Constitution. Concerns surrounding the uninhibited use of Article 282 to effectuate centrally sponsored schemes have persisted for several years.

Article 282 is now in question for channelling grants for state welfare schemes, christened as "freebies." Article 282 enables the Union and the state to make discretionary grants (expenditures) on any subject for "public purpose," even if the Union or the state is not empowered to make laws for such a public purpose under the scheme of the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution. Thus, for an Article 282 expenditure to be good in law (presumably, a warranted welfare expenditure), it must strictly be for a "public purpose."

The Constitution, however, does not provide an explanation for the term "public purpose". In 2010, a five-judge Constitution bench of the Supreme Court in Bhim Singh versus Union of India gave the term a broad interpretation to mean anything designed to promote the purpose underlying the Directive Principles of State Policy ('DPSPs') and the Preamble of the Constitution. Following from this, any welfare scheme designed by the Union or the states which furthers the DPSPs and the Preamble could be said to further a public purpose, and expenditure to that end could be termed rational. The issue of their unrestricted use was first brought before the Supreme Court in 2013.

In S. Subramaniam Balaji versus State of Tamil Nadu, a division bench of the Supreme Court heard a challenge to the practice of promising and distributing freebies (like colour TV sets, grinders, mixies, fans, laptops, cash, and so on) by political parties in Tamil Nadu. The court held that such promises in an election manifesto could not be construed as corrupt practices under Section 123 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951. The court linked

"State largesse" to the DPSPs, and ruled that it is for the elected government to decide on the policy to implement these principles. It maintained that it could not interfere in policy decisions unless there was a clear violation of some statutory or constitutional provision, or the policy in question was shockingly arbitrary in nature. Notably, in Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay, this division bench judgment in Subramaniam Balaji is under reconsideration before a three-judge bench of the Supreme Court. Interestingly, and as mentioned above, the five-judge Constitution bench ruling in Bhim Singh also linked "public purpose" to the DPSPs. In Bhim Singh, the Supreme Court also maintained that judicial interference is permissible only when the actions of the government are unconstitutional, and not when such actions are not wise or that the extent of expenditure is not for the good of the State. All such policy questions must be debated and decided in the legislature instead of the court.

In Subramaniam Balaji, the court, however, agreed that freebies alter the level-playing field for candidates contesting the election and, in the absence of any enactment governing election manifestos, directed the Election Commission of India ('ECI') to frame guidelines to regulate election promises. These guidelines now form part of the Model Code of Conduct ('MCC') for the guidance of political parties during elections. Following the decision in Subramaniam Balaji, the ECI has already framed guidelines for election manifestos in the MCC to be followed by political parties. Strict implementation of these guidelines would perhaps resolve a few concerns around election promises.

Political parties are a bridge between the electorate and the government. Although one of the most important institutions of Indian democracy, political parties remain largely unregulated. Thus, a necessary first step toward attaining a better democratic order in India could be to have a framework for the regulation of political parties for securing transparency and accountability in electoral democracy. Their regulation would also ensure that such matters concerning the regular operation of political parties do not have to end up at the doorstep of the judiciary, and could perhaps be resolved through other means. (IPA)



A woman potter colouring earthen lamps ahead of Diwali at Ultadanga Das Para in East Kolkata--Arijit Ganguly

Panchayat polls in Bengal will be a fight between TMC & BJP

FOCUS

Tirthankar Mitra

Panchayat elections scheduled to be held in West Bengal early next year will be in stark contrast to the rural polls held five years ago. But the CPI-M has little reason to be upbeat about its chances of surging past the BJP which many voters opposed to Trinamool Congress feel is a better choice than CPI-M to support.

Absence of a level playing field led to Opposition namely BJP, Left Front and Congress withering away in Birbhum, Burdwan (East) and Midnapur (East) and (West) in the last rural polls. The other district where this phenomena was found to be present was Nadia district at Nakashipara and Chapra. There will be marked differences in the campaigning and the polling day scenarios between 2023 Panchayat polls and the one held in 2018 in which more than 35 per cent of the seats went uncontested in the ruling party's favour. Charges of intimidation of voters and Opposition candidates which marred the 2018 rural polls in the state are likely to be absent in next year's election.

The change of heart and thinking process of some of those who chalked out plans of cornering the Opposition in the last rural polls is likely as they found to their dismay the voters' ire rebounding in 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

For the BJP had benefitted from an outpouring of votes from those who could not exercise their franchise in 2018 rural elections. The rural voters disenchantment with the ruling dispensation in 2019 Lok

Sabha polls coupled with an anti-incumbency factor and Prime Minister, Narendra Modi and Union home minister, Amit Shah hitting the campaign trail almost daily was a wakeup call for Trinamool Congress in 2021 assembly polls and the polling was done comparatively in a peaceful manner compared to the 2018 rural polls.

The CPI-M continues to be hamstrung by organisational weakness which is now all the more visible sans any tilt of the police administration which was a boon to it during the Left Front regime. Moreover, the public memory need not be refreshed about the incidents of Singur, Nandigram and Netai to name a few. The veterans still remember the unalloyed politicalisation of the every institutions to favour the CPI(M) nominees and supporters.

On the other hand, the BJP, even though it is a house divided is an almost untested entity in this state and voters will be prone to give it a chance. Many of the rural voters who are angry with Trinamool are unlikely to be swayed by reports of its alleged misrule in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. In rural Bengal, it is mostly between Trinamool and the BJP. A "silent

voting segment" continues to support the saffron camp nominees in successive elections. The reasons behind their allegiance which is yet to be laid threadbare may vary from a charismatic prime minister to the so called achievements of the NDA government or the state of affairs nearer home being unsatisfactory.

The BJP having polled nearly 38 per cent votes in the Assembly election last year sans any significant support from a minority community speaks volumes about its core vote bank's faith on it. The Trinamool polling 49 per cent votes. While the Left's vote share being a mere eight percent highlight the extent of their respective support bases in rural and urban areas.

Though there has been an improvement in the morale of the CPI-M's rank and file in the state post 2021 elections and capturing a greater percentage of votes than BJP in Ballygunge by-election last year the success is of a flash in the pan variety. Out of five wards mostly populated by minority community voters, the Trinamool nominee won in three and CPI-M candidate in two wards in this by-election is a clear pointer

to the support base of the ruling party though it's candidate had defected from BJP not too long ago. Yet a section of state CPI-M leadership is nursing a hope of relegating the BJP to the third position in the rural polls next year. It has been buoyed by a marked spurt in the sale of books from CPI-M stalls during the pujas and attacks on them.

The book stalls selling party literature and ideology had been decked up by placards of "Najare Panchayat" in rural areas with a phone number given to register complaints and others in Kolkata with "ChorDharo, Jail Bhoro". If the attack on the stalls located. At Dinhat in north Bengal, Chatterjee hat in Howrah and Rashbehari in south Kolkata. are interpreted by some party faithfuls and fellow travellers to be signs of some turn around.

A week is a long time in politics and a few months are to go of this year following which Panchayat elections are scheduled to be held in the state. But given the state of its preparation in the run up to the elections, even some of the most hard core supporters of CPI-M won't predict that it will unseat the BJP to the third position. From all indications, the CPI(M) is still not in the radar of the rural Bengal as a viable opposition to Trinamool Congress, it is still BJP and that too far ahead of the CPI(M) led Left Front. The CPI(M) can only fight to improve its voting percentage by one or two points, still remaining at distant third in the political landscape of Bengal. (IPA)

Conventional Crossword						
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28						29

ACROSS				DOWN			
1	Not bright	1	Percussion instrument	2	Factory	3	Fashion
3	Threat	2	Factory	4	Select group	5	Highly skilled
8	Worshipped image	3	Fashion	6	Long-leaved lettuce	7	Go in
9	Spanish nobleman	4	Select group	12	Flying Saucer	13	Fate
10	Abstract	5	Highly skilled	15	Mineral spring	16	Slippery catch
11	Fish	6	Long-leaved lettuce	17	Alloy	18	Exterior position
14	Chemical compound	7	Go in	19	Glossy fabric	21	Tear
17	Footwear	12	Flying Saucer	22	Prime	23	Direction
20	Capable of producing crops	13	Fate	25	Become firm		
24	Shrewd	15	Mineral spring				
26	Look at	16	Slippery catch				
27	Taverns	17	Alloy				
28	Bring into helpless position	18	Exterior position				
29	Make lace	19	Glossy fabric				

SUDOKU:3671							
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Yesterday's Solution3670							
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5	7	1	2	9	8	3	4 6
6	2	8	4	1	3	5	7 9
9	3	4	5	6	7	8	2 1
4	9	3	1	7	6	2	8 5
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Yesterday's Cross Word Solution 1679							
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R	A	N	G	E		A	C
M		A	M	B	E	R	M
D	I	A	L	S		V	A
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DISCLAIMER

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Vishal Jolly seeks compensation for fire victims of Aerial Bay

PORT BLAIR, OCT 19/--/ Mr. Vishal Jolly, BJP's National Executive Member has requested the Chief Secretary for grant of compensation to the fire accident victims of Aerial Bay, Diglipur, North& Middle Andaman District.

In his letter, Mr. Jolly has mentioned that 09 shops belonging to few poor shopkeepers were gutted in a fire accident that took place at Aerial Bay, Diglipur. Some of them were vegetable vendors and few were running ration shops, hotels, phone recharge shops etc. As the fire was intense all the nine shops were gutted in fire & nothing could be saved.



Further he added that the shop vendors have lost their livelihood completely as reportedly they had these shops being their only sources of income. The fire

victims are Tapan Das- Clothes Store, AlokBaroi- Cool drink & Snacks shop, Parakhit Das - Phone recharge shop, Sukumar Das - Vegetables shop, SubalKirtonia - Hotel, Sailen Das - Ration & Hardware shop, Pradip Das- Hotel, Ravi Biswas - Ration shop and K. Srinivasan - Ration shop.

Considering the apparent damages that have been caused and also considering the losses they have suffered due to this unfortunate & disastrous tragedy, he requested an early assessment of damages caused due to the fire and grant them adequate compensation.

Awareness prog on Successful Cooperative Business Model by NCUI

PORT BLAIR, OCT 19/--/ With the aim to create awareness among the School and college students about the concept and importance of cooperatives, the National Cooperative Union of India, Education Field Project (Ministry of Cooperation) A & N Islands Unit has organized a awareness program on 'Successful Cooperative Business Model' at Govt. Senior Secondary School, Tusbabad on Thursday. Mr. Mohammed Hanifa, Principal, Govt. Sr. Secondary School, Tusbabad was the chief guest on the occasion.

Addressing the gathering, the chief guest said that the concept of cooperation is very important as it can play a vital role for socio-economic upliftment of people. He expressed his happiness towards the efforts of National Cooperative Union of India, Coop. Education Field Project, A&N Island unit for creating awareness among the

students about this valuable concept.

Welcoming the gathering, Mr.SurendraNath Singh, Project Officer, National Coop Union of India, Cooperative Education Field Project A &N Island unit said that the platform of cooperative is very much powerful where members can work together for their common interest of socio-economic reforms. He urged the senior students of the school to: choose cooperative as their carrier. Miss NilimaRari, Faculty member, Rajiv Gandhi Cooperative Training Centre, Teylerabad briefed the students about cooperative formation and its principles. The officials from Animal Husbandry and Health department also highlighted various developmental programs being implemented by their department. 85 senior students and staff of Govt. Senior Secondary School attended the program. Vote of thanks proposed by ShriNaresh Ram, Coop. Education Instructor, NCUI Field Project. Port Blair.

Stop reservation benefits to Hindus who convert to Christianity, VHP urges Centre

JAIPUR, OCT 19 /--/ The Vishwa Hindu Parishad on Wednesday demanded from the Centre to withdraw the benefit of reservation to the Hindus who convert to Christianity. VHP's national spokesperson Vijay Shankar Tiwari said those who have become Christian after conversion are still using their Hindu names and credentials in

documents and getting the benefit of reservation given to Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST). The central government should make a plan and do a survey to ensure that those people who are from the SC and ST community and adopted Christianity don't get the reservation benefits, he said. Tiwari said his organisation will undertake

an awareness campaign on the issue in the coming days. Prabhat Sharma, a local spokesperson of the VHP, said there are many cases where people belonging to SC and ST categories adopted Christianity but did not change names and other credentials. Based on these documents, they are getting reservation, he said. (PTI)



Water resource Minister Pijush Hazarika, MP Dilip Saikia attending the Kamalpur in an awareness meeting organised by Senior Citizens' Welfare Council under the aegis of Social Empwt. & Justice Dept

1997 Uphaar cinema fire: HC asks police to reply to plea by convict in evidence tampering case

NEW DELHI, OCT 19 /--/ The Delhi High Court Wednesday sought the response of the city police to a plea by a former employee of the Ansal family seeking setting aside of his conviction and sentence for tampering with evidence in the 1997 Uphaar cinema fire tragedy case.

Justice Purushendra Kumar Kaurav issued the notice and asked the Delhi Police to respond to the plea by P P Batra. Batra has already completed his jail term in this case which pertained to the fire incident on June 13, 1997 that left 59 people dead. Besides Batra, 83-year-old Sushil Ansal of the Ansal family that owned the

theatre, had also approached the high court seeking to set aside his conviction and sentence. On October 11, the high court had issued bailable warrant against Batra as neither he nor any lawyer on his behalf was present in the court during the hearing on the victims' plea to enhance punishment of the convicts in the evidence tampering case. A magisterial court had on November 8, 2021 awarded seven-year jail term to the real estate barons. The District Judge had on July 19 modified the magisterial court's order on the sentence and ordered the release of Sushil and Gopal Ansal, former court staff Dinesh Chandra

Sharma and Ansal's then employee Batra against their already undergone jail term.

It imposed a fine of Rs 3 crore each on Sushil and Gopal Ansal, Rs 30,000 on Batra and Rs 60,000 on Sharma. Batra, in his criminal revision petition challenging the trial court's judgement, contended that the order was passed in a mechanical manner, in clear lack of appreciation of both the law and the facts of the instant case. He said there was not even an iota of evidence to show his complicity in the alleged conspiracy. While upholding the conviction of the Ansal brothers, the trial court had acquitted co-

accused Anup Singh. The case is related to tampering with the evidence in the main fire tragedy case in which the Ansals were convicted and sentenced to a two-year jail term by the Supreme Court. The apex court, however, released them taking into account the prison time they had done on the condition that they pay a Rs 30 crore fine each, to be used for building a trauma centre in the national capital.

According to the charge sheet, the documents tampered with included a police memo giving details of recoveries immediately after the incident, Delhi Fire Service records pertaining to repair of

transformer installed inside Uphaar cinema, minutes of Managing Director's meetings, and four cheques. Out of the six sets of documents, a cheque for Rs 50 lakh, issued by Sushil Ansal to himself, and minutes of the MD's meetings, proved beyond doubt that the two brothers were handling the day-to-day affairs of the theatre at the relevant time, the charge sheet had said. The tampering was detected for the first time on July 20, 2002, and a departmental enquiry was initiated against Dinesh Chandra Sharma. He was suspended and terminated from service on June 25, 2004. (PTI)

Punjab not taking adequate steps to prevent stubble burning: Centre

NEW DELHI, OCT 19 /--/ The Centre on Wednesday said incidents of stubble burning have started increasing rapidly, especially in Punjab, and the state government has not taken adequate steps to prevent farm fires.

At an inter-ministerial meeting on the issue of crop residue burning in Delhi-NCR, Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav expressed concern that the Punjab government has not been able to take coordinated actions to contain farm fires in the state. Union Agriculture and

Farmers Welfare Minister Narendra Singh Tomar mentioned that the status of paddy straw management in Haryana is "significantly better than that in Punjab", the environment ministry said in a statement. "Till October 15, the trend of fire events was less as compared to last year but now it has started growing rapidly, especially in Punjab," the statement read.

The ministers noted that the Pusa bio-decomposer - a microbial solution which turns stubble into manure in 15-20 days - was being sprayed in a lesser area in

Punjab and its application needs to be promoted and enhanced.

M M Kutty, the chairman of the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM), said Punjab has taken "inadequate" steps in spite of several meetings and efforts by the statutory panel.

The Punjab chief secretary was asked to control the increasing rate of fire events in Amritsar and to ensure a 50 per cent reduction in cases of farm fires in the state in comparison to last year. It

was mentioned in the meeting that one of the main concerns is the delayed delivery of crop residue management machines in Punjab and Haryana.

Along with unfavourable meteorological conditions, paddy straw burning in adjoining states is a major reason behind the alarming spike in air pollution levels in the national capital in October and November. Farmers set their fields on fire to quickly clear off the crop residue before cultivating wheat and

vegetables. Government data shows Punjab and Haryana generate around 27 million tonnes of paddy straw a year, of which around 6.4 million tonnes is not managed.

According to the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, Punjab reported 71,304 farm fires between September 15 and November 30 last year and 83,002 farm fires in the corresponding period in 2020.

Last year, the share of farm fires in Delhi's PM 2.5 pollution peaked to 48 per cent on November 7. (PTI)

Cop dad drowns after rescuing his 2 children from river

JAMMU, OCT 19 /--/ A policeman lost his life on Wednesday while saving his two children from drowning in a river in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district, officials said.

The two children had slipped into the Ujh river while taking a bath in Jasrota area on Wednesday, they said. As father Seshipal Singh saw them

drowning, he jumped into the river and rescued them, the officials said. But he could not save himself from strong currents of the river. The locals and cops took him out of the river and shifted him to hospital in Kathua, where doctors declared him brought dead, they said.

Singh was posted in Doda and was on leave for the past few days. (PTI)



Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma, for their participation in the Meghalaya Youth Survey 2022 and Soft Skills Training interventions under Aspire Meghalaya, The East Khasi Hills chapter of the Meghalaya's District Talent Events 2022 at U Soso Tham Auditorium, Shillong

CPI (M) seeks compensation, temporary shed for fire victims

PORT BLAIR, OCT 19/--/ The Communist Party of India (Marxist) has demanded adequate compensation to all the fire victims at Aerial Bay Market, Diglipur, North Andaman. In a letter sent to the Lt. Governor, Andaman & Nicobar Islands on Thursday, Mr. D. Ayyappan, Secretary, CPI (M) A & N State Organising Committee has said that in the fire broke out at Aerial Bay, Diglipur on 18th October, 2022 afternoon, about 9 shops have been gutted. Except one or two, all these shopkeepers are staying in the same building. The cause of fire is yet to be revealed by the authorities concerned. Mr. Ayyappan stated in the letter that the shopkeepers who have lost everything they earned during their life time in the fire accident have no other source of income. He informed the Lt. Governor that as per the information he received from Party workers at Diglipur, these poor shopkeepers sustained loss of lakhs of rupees.

Mr. Ayyappan further brought to the notice of the Lt Governor that the fire could not be controlled immediately as

reportedly it took more than one hour for the fire tenders to arrive at the scene. He further said that even when the fire tender arrived, reportedly there was not sufficient water in the fire tender and other operational problems. The coast guard and general public also tried to control the fire from further spreading, but could not save the shops which had already gutted in the fire. In this connection, it is also not out of place to mention here that the road leading to the Aerial Bay is in a pathetic condition as the authorities have failed to maintain it properly.

CPI (M) Secretary requested the Lt. Governor to sanction adequate compensation to all the affected shopkeepers taking into account the huge loss they sustained in the fire accident. He requested the Lt. Governor that these affected shopkeepers may be provided with the temporary shed near the accident site to run their business as almost all of them fully depend on the business they were running at Aerial Bay. He urged upon the Lt. Governor to cause an inquiry into the reported failure of the Fire Unit at Diglipur to control the fire so as to take further course of action in the matter.

DU announces 1st list of admissions to undergraduate programmes

NEW DELHI, OCT 19 /--/ Delhi University announced on Wednesday the much-awaited first list of seat allocations for admission to undergraduate programmes. This marks the commencement of the third and last phase of the admission process. The list was initially slotted to be announced on October 18. However, it was deferred to Wednesday. "The first round of the Common Seat Allocation System (CSAS) of the University of Delhi has been released today," said DU Dean of Admission

Haneet Gandhi.

The list has not been issued in the public domain and the candidate will only be able to see the college and courses allotted to them on their dashboard. The candidate will have to click on "Accept Allocation" under user action tab. "On receiving the 'Approval from the College Principal', student will proceed to pay the fee to confirm the admission. The candidate should take a printout of the acknowledgement receipt," the university said in a statement. The university

has advised candidates to ensure that they secure their admission to the seat allocated to them, whenever offered. "Only candidates who are admitted to a programme in a college will be able to opt for upgradation in subsequent rounds," the statement said.

"Candidates are advised not to be in a haste and, at the same time, not to wait for the deadlines. Sufficient time has been provided for processing the applications," the varsity added. (PTI)



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Unleashing
/Inns

Ref: ADVT-NO.22-23/13
IREL, OSCOM invites request for proposal for the following items / job descriptions:
Bid No. 2022_IREL_131948_1
Engagement of an Agency for up keeping and maintenance of OSCOM Guest house.
Engagement of Manpower for MSP Operation.
Bidder may download tender document from <http://irel.co.in> or <http://bids.msp.gov.in> or CPPP website.
Any corrigendum / extension to above tenders shall be hosted in above websites only.

Date: 20-10-2022
Job / Item Description
-Sd/- Executive Director, OSCOM

GIA-48129/12/0050/2223

Urgent Requirement

Btech EEE or Mech.

Mob.

08590604775.

hr@gvrtechno labs.com

CPM drove away Tata from Singur, we returned land to people: Mamata



SILIGURI, OCT 19 /--/ Chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday claimed that it was not her but the CPM which drove away Tata Motors from Singur. Addressing a 'Bijaya Samilani' or post-Durga Puja meeting in Siliguri, Mamata said she only returned the land to the people that was forcibly acquired by the former Left Front government for the Tata Motors' Nano factory in Singur in Hooghly district. "There are people who are spreading canards that I have driven away the Tatas from West Bengal. I did not force them away, but it was the CPM which drove them

away," she said at the government function, adding that she thought of not making any political statement at the programme.

"You (CPM) forcibly took land from the people for the project, we returned that land to the people. We have done so many projects, but never taken any land forcibly from anybody. Why should we take land forcibly? There is no dearth of land here," Mamata stated. The TMC supremo is often criticised by her opponents, especially the CPM, for the movement against the acquisition of land at Singur in the mid-2000s, which forced the Tata group to abandon its

ambitious car manufacturing project, which could have created thousands of jobs, even after completing a significant part of it. The movement fuelled her rise to power in the state as she routed the Left Front government of 34 years in 2011. The then CPM-led Left Front government had acquired around 1,000 acres of farmland for the project, which was taken back from the Tatas following a court order after Mamata became the chief minister. Her government partly returned the land to its owners. "There is no discrimination in Bengal. We want each and every industrialist to invest here," she said,

referring to the Tajpur port project of the Adani group and the Deucha Pachami coal mine project.

In an apparent reference to the ongoing agitation for school jobs in Kolkata, the chief minister said her government would continue providing jobs to the people though there were forces who create hindrances. "I want massive employment opportunities to be generated here. There are forces that do not want people to get jobs. They are causing hindrances for them. We will not stop employing people. We will employ them regularly and not take away jobs," Mamata said. (PTI)

Kharge elected Cong president, first non-Gandhi to head party in 24 years

PM wishes him 'fruitful tenure', Tharoor camp flags polling irregularities in UP

NEW DELHI, OCT 19 /--/ The Congress on Wednesday elected Mallikarjun Kharge as its president, the first non-Gandhi to head the party in 24 years at a time the 137-year-old party is struggling to reverse its slide in the country's electoral politics. A staunch Gandhi family loyalist from Karnataka, the 80-year-old leader defeated Shashi Tharoor in an electoral contest by bagging nearly 84 per cent of votes in the party presidential election. Kharge got 7,897 votes and Tharoor 1,072 votes, while 416 votes were declared invalid. Congress' central election authority chairman Madhusudan Mistry said at a press conference at the AICC headquarters here. Kharge said he will formally take charge on October 26. Though a late entrant in the Congress' internal elections, held to choose Sonia Gandhi's successor, Kharge's victory was almost certain as he was considered a 'family-approved' candidate. The last non-Gandhi Congress president was Sitaram Kesri, who was unceremoniously removed in 1998 just after two years into his five-year term. While former Congress president Rahul Gandhi said the president was the "supreme authority" and would decide on the way forward for the party, it will be a challenge for Kharge to send a clear message that he is the one in the driving seat and not a proxy of the

Gandhis. Kharge's election also comes at a time the party is reeling under internal rumblings and high-profile exits after a series of electoral debacles and has been reduced to a shadow of its former formidable self. The upcoming assembly elections in Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat will be among the first challenges, Kharge will face as the party president. Conceding his defeat, Tharoor congratulated Kharge and said the "democratic contest" has galvanised vibrancy at all levels and has prompted a healthy and constructive discussion on change, which will serve the party in good stead in the future. Tharoor also claimed that the Congress' revival has begun. In a statement, the Congress MP from Thiruvananthapuram said the Nehru-Gandhi family has held, and will always hold, a special place in the hearts of Congress party members. Outgoing Congress president Sonia Gandhi also visited Kharge at his residence here soon and congratulated him. She was accompanied by Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra. In his congratulatory message, Rahul Gandhi said Kharge represents a "democratic vision" of India. "The Congress President represents a democratic vision of India. His vast experience and ideological commitment will serve the party well as he takes on this historic

responsibility," Rahul said on Twitter. A festive atmosphere prevailed at the Congress headquarters with party workers carrying flags and posters, which prominently carried the pictures of Rahul Gandhi, moved around joyously beating drums. There was also a sizeable crowd of party supporters in anticipation of the announcement of the organisation's next helmsman. However, the campaign team of Tharoor, had written to the party's chief election authority, flagging "extremely serious irregularities" in the conduct of the election in Uttar Pradesh, sources said. Besides demanding that all votes from Uttar Pradesh be deemed invalid, Tharoor's campaign team had also raised "serious issues" in the conduct of the election in Punjab and Telangana. In his letter to party's central election authority, Tharoor's chief election agent Salman Soz has said the facts are "damning" and the election process in Uttar Pradesh is "devoid of credibility and integrity", they said. He said that after a detailed discussion with polling agents, Tharoor's team is constrained to report "disturbing facts". Prime Minister Narendra Modi greeted Mallikarjun Kharge on his election as party president on Wednesday and wished him a fruitful tenure. "My best wishes to Shri Mallikarjun Kharge Ji for his new responsibility as President of @INCIndia. May he have a fruitful tenure ahead," Modi tweeted. (PTI)



Newly elected Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge being greeted by Sonia Gandhi, in New Delhi on Wednesday

PM Modi asks people to teach lesson to those who 'abuse and insult' Gujarat, Gujaratis

JUNAGADH, OCT 19 /--/ Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday slammed those who constantly 'abuse and insult' Gujarat and asked people to teach them a lesson.

Without naming anyone, Modi urged the people of the state, where Assembly elections are due by December end, to stay away from "pessimists" and those who "dish out lies". He was speaking at a rally in Junagadh city in Saurashtra region after launching development works worth Rs 4,155 crore. "If anybody from India achieves something or is successful in something, as an Indian you will be filled with pride or not? If scientists from South India become successful in ISRO you will be happy or not? If a youth from Haryana bags a gold medal in the Olympics, you will be happy or not?" Modi asked the crowd. "Of course, any Indian will be happy with the achievements of any other Indian living anywhere in the country," he added. "For the last two decades, we have seen that people with distorted mentality do not like it whenever something good happens for Gujarat or a Gujarati achieves something. They insult Gujarat and abuse Gujarati people," the Prime Minister went on to say. Some political parties believe that "their ideology is incomplete" if they did not abuse Gujarat and Gujarati people, he further said. "Don't you think time has come to teach a lesson to those who abuse and insult Gujarat and its people day and night? Should we tolerate those who defame Gujarat?" Modi further said.

People of any state must not be subjected to abuse and insult, the Prime Minister added. "We all must work to maintain the spirit of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat'. People of Gujarat need to remain wary of pessimists as well as those who dish out lies," Modi added. His comments came days after a video of Gujarat AAP president Gopal Italia purportedly mocking Modi's mother was



Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the launch of Mission Schools of Excellence at Adalaj in Gandhinagar on Wednesday

released by the ruling BJP. In the past, the prime minister had also lashed out at Congress leaders for targeting him. During the day, Modi laid the foundation stone for a project for the improvement of a coastal highway and construction of missing link roads. The first phase of the highway project, which will connect Umargam in Valsad with Lakhpat in Kutch district, will cover a distance of more than 270 km across 13 districts. The Prime Minister also laid foundation stone for two water supply projects and construction of a godown complex for agricultural products. Modi also laid the foundation stone for a project for holistic development of the famous Shri Krishna Rukshamani Temple in Madhavpur village of neighbouring Porbandar district and launched maintenance dredging work at Porbandar Fishery Harbour. Foundation stones were also laid for the development of a fishing port at Madhwa in Gir Somnath district. (PTI)

NEP will pull country out of English 'slave mentality': PM

ADALAJ, OCT 19 /--/ Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said the 5G telecom service would take the education system in the country to the next level as the latest technology will go beyond "smart facilities, smart classrooms, and smart teachings". Modi also asserted that the New Education Policy (NEP) will pull the country out of the "slave mentality" surrounding the English language. The Prime Minister was speaking after launching the Gujarat government's Mission Schools of Excellence initiative at Adalaj town in Gandhinagar district. He pointed out that knowledge of English was considered as the mark of being intellectual even though the English language is just a medium of communication. The Mission will help strengthen education infrastructure in Gujarat by setting up new classrooms, smart classrooms, computer labs and overall upgradation of the infrastructure of schools in the state. (PTI)

New Cong president will decide my role: Rahul

ADONI, OCT 19 /--/ MP Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday said the president was the supreme authority in the Congress and whoever got elected to the post would decide on the way forward (for the party). Responding to a query during his brief interaction with media during the Bharat Jodo Yatra here, Rahul Gandhi said the new president would decide on what my role and how I will be deployed. Obviously, Rahul replied when asked if he would be reporting to the new president. President is the supreme authority in the Congress and everyone reports to him. My role I am very clear Congress president will decide what my role is and how I will be deployed, he remarked. At one point, Rahul said, It is for Kharge to decide but later corrected himself to whoever gets elected, that gentleman will decide. Rahul observed that Kharge and Tharoor are people with experience and understanding. They do not need my advice, he added. Questioned about Shashi Tharoor's allegation of irregularities in the Congress president election in Uttar Pradesh, Rahul said the party had an institutional framework to deal with it. We are the only party that has an election commission inside it with a TN Seshan-type of person. Mistry is an absolutely fair person. Our EC will take a decision on the irregularities, he said. (PTI)

All have to work together as karyakartas to strengthen Cong: New party chief

NEW DELHI, OCT 19 /--/ Congress president-elect Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday said no one in the party is big or small and he will work as a true Congress soldier to strengthen the organisation. Addressing a press conference after he was declared elected as the party's president, Kharge said for him every Congress worker is equal and all have to work together to fight the fascists forces threatening democracy and the Constitution. Kharge defeated Shashi Tharoor in the electoral contest by polling 7,897 of 9,385 votes. Tharoor got 1,072 votes, while 416 votes were declared invalid. He said by holding organisational elections, the Congress has shown the country how internal democracy is strong in the organisation. "No one is small or big and we have to all work like karyakartas (workers) to strengthen the organisation," Kharge said. "We have to together fight the threat to democracy and the Constitution. We have to fight the fascist forces... who are attacking democracy and the people of the country," Kharge said, assailing the forces "wearing the garb of communalism". All Congress workers feel that the country cannot be sacrificed for a "tanashah" and "we have to together fight "these 'vinaashkari' (destructive) forces", he said. Kharge said that former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi had called him an hour ago and congratulated him and said that together "we all have to work towards

strengthening the Congress organisation".

The 80-year-old Dalit leader from Karnataka also appealed to all Congress workers and people of the country to join Rahul in his Bharat Jodo Yatra which is a 'jan andolan' from Kanyakumari to Kashmir against price rise, unemployment and against those who are creating hatred and division in society. Kharge also lauded Sonia Gandhi's leadership, saying "her tenure will be remembered for a long time". "I thank Sonia Gandhi ji who made personal sacrifice as she steered the party for 23 years," he said. Gandhi along with Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra had visited Kharge's residence and congratulated him. He also thanked all those who participated in the organisational elections and made it happen, and also he gave best wishes to Tharoor. The Thiruvananthapuram MP had earlier met Kharge at his residence and congratulated him on his victory. A leader with more than 50 years of experience in politics, Kharge is also the second AICC President from Karnataka after S Nijalingappa and also the second Dalit leader after Jagjivan Ram to hold the post. Kharge was elected MLA for nine times in a row, seeing a steady rise in his career graph from humble beginnings as a union leader in his home district of Gulbarga (renamed as Kalaburagi). He joined the party in 1969 and went on to become President of the Gulbarga City Congress Committee. (PTI)



Need to revisit parameters for assessment of democratic indices used by global organisations: CEC

NEW DELHI, OCT 19 /--/ Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar on Wednesday questioned rating a country's democratic index based on "unilaterally devised and unvalidated parameters", saying it often tends to cause more harm to the cause of democracy.

In his address at the opening ceremony of the 5th General Assembly of the Association of World Election Bodies (AWEB) in Cape Town, South Africa, he also said that leveraging of social media for voter connect has been a positive feature, but "misuse of social media platforms for disinformation is a real challenge" before the election

management bodies and across the world. Addressing the gathering in the presence of South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, CEC Kumar said "delivering judgements on election process of a country through ratings against unilaterally devised and unvalidated parameters often tend to cause more harm to the cause of democracy."

The CEC underlined the need to "revisit the parameters for assessment of democratic indices" being used by certain international organisations. His remarks come against the backdrop of certain reports claiming that India's score declined in recent years in Democracy Index. The

government has already rejected the reports. Today democracy and election management bodies (EMBs) face challenges both around the globe and at home, Kumar said. The challenges, he said, emanate from overcoming polarisation, populism and its consequences, economic inequality, immigration and the challenge of sustaining multiethnic democracies. Independent functioning of EMBs with full empowerment is critical to free and fair elections, he said stressing that "it is essential that the EMBs are equipped and empowered to handle unforeseen situations through provision for Plenary Powers." (PTI)

'Eager' to secure trade deal with India, says UK's Home Secretary Suella Braverman

LONDON, OCT 19/--/Home Secretary Suella Braverman has said the UK is "eager" to secure a trade deal with India to boost both economies and that Brexit has meant that Britain no longer has a Eurocentric mindset towards trade or visas, days after she caused a stir with her "concerns" over what she feared could be an "open borders" approach in the ongoing trade talks with India. Addressing a Diwali event organised by UK-based India Global Forum (IGF) here on Tuesday evening, the Indian-origin Cabinet minister spoke of being a proud member of the British Indian community and hailed the contribution made by the Indian diaspora to British life. In an apparent effort to override her recent controversial remarks about Indians forming the largest group of visa overstayers, the minister said the UK's villages, towns and cities have been profoundly enriched by immigration from India .

"Naturally, there is an economic imperative for our countries to work together, which is why we are so eager to secure a trade deal," said Braverman. "But the boost to our economies is not the only virtue in making our friendship even stronger. We have a shared vision that by 2030 we will enjoy an even stronger partnership As Home Secretary, I particularly value the cooperation on security matters between our two countries. This is vital, on a domestic level in India and in the UK but also more broadly on an international scale, especially in the Indo-Pacific," she said. With Diwali no longer the target deadline for a draft free trade agreement (FTA), Braverman sought to reiterate that the Liz Truss led government remains determined to build on the momentum set by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and former UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

"Candidly, leaving the European Union (EU) means the United Kingdom is better placed to think outside of the Eurocentric mindset, look to every horizon and cherish and nurture relationships with old friends like India. The points-based immigration system means that we no longer favour people from Europe over people from elsewhere. Meanwhile, around a quarter of all foreign students in the UK are from India," she noted.

Dressed in a lehenga for the Diwali celebrations attended by other senior parliamentarians, business leaders and diplomats, the 42-year-old minister also reflected upon her very personal connect with India and spoke of being struck by how "fresh and vibrant" the India-UK relationship always feels on her travels "from Kerala to Bihar, from Delhi to Calcutta". "India is in my heart, she's in my soul, she's in my blood. I'm very proud that my father has his roots and his family home in Goa and my mother can trace her ancestral origins to Madras," she said.

"India is part of my own heritage, I'm Indian on both sides of my family. My mother came here from Mauritius and my father came here from Kenya. They felt a deep connection and love for Britain even before they came here. It is a love that I share. And, I have never seen any inconsistency in that, for no inconsistency exists," she added. The UK-born member of Parliament for Fareham in southern England also referenced her upbringing in the north-west London Indian diaspora hub of Wembley, "the home of the Asian community here" in her Diwali message.

The minister said she wanted British people to be able to "drink deeply of Indian culture", through visiting, studying and working in India and by throwing themselves into it in the UK, where entry must be based on merit, not the ability to pay people smugglers, whose wicked lethal trade we have to smash .

"We consume food, music, movies and art from each other's countries voraciously. The story of India and the story of the UK are so intimately linked that they are to a great extent the same story, she declared. The UK and India launched the Free Trade Agreement negotiations on January 13. India's exports to the UK stood at USD 10.5 billion in 2021-22, while imports aggregated at USD 7 billion.

India's main exports to the UK include ready-made garments and textiles, gems and jewellery, engineering goods, petroleum products, transport equipment, spices, pharmaceuticals and marine products. Imports from Britain include precious and semi-precious stones, ores and metal scraps, engineering goods, chemicals and machinery. In the services sector, the UK is the largest market in Europe for Indian IT services. (PTI)

Putin declares martial law in annexed regions of Ukraine

MOSCOW, OCT 19/--/Russian President Vladimir Putin declared martial law Wednesday in the four regions of Ukraine that Moscow annexed and gave additional emergency powers to the heads of all regions of Russia.

Putin didn't immediately spell out the steps that would be taken under martial law, but said his order was effective starting Thursday. His decree gives law enforcement agencies three days to submit specific proposals and orders the creation of territorial defense forces in the four annexed regions.

We are working to solve very difficult large-scale tasks to ensure Russia's security and safe future, to

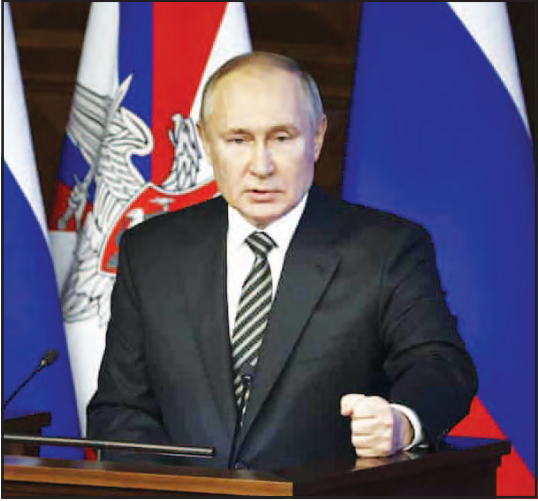
protect our people, Putin said in televised remarks at the start of a Security Council meeting. Those who are on the frontlines or undergoing training at firing ranges and training centers should feel our support and know that they have our big, great country and unified people behind their back.

The upper house of Russia's parliament was set to quickly seal Putin's decision to impose martial law in the annexed Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia regions. Draft legislation indicates it may involve restrictions on travel and public gatherings, tighter censorship and broader authority for law enforcement agencies. Putin also

didn't provide details of the extra powers the heads of Russian regions will have under his decree.

In a signal his moves could have broad restrictions for people living in Russia, his decree states that the types of measures envisaged by martial law could be introduced in Russia.

The Russian leader also ordered the establishment of a Coordination Committee to increase interactions between government agencies in dealing with the fighting in Ukraine that he continued to call a special military operation. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Putin's order doesn't anticipate the closure of Russia's borders, state news agency RIA-Novosti reported. (AP)



Embattled UK leader Liz Truss says she's 'not a quitter'

LONDON, OCT 19/--/British Prime Minister Liz Truss described herself as a fighter and not a quitter Wednesday as she faced down a hostile opposition and fury from her own Conservative Party over her botched economic plan. Truss attended her first session of Prime Minister's Questions since newly appointed Treasury chief Jeremy Hunt ripped up the tax-cutting package unveiled by her new government less than a month ago. She apologized to Parliament and admitted she made mistakes during her short tenure as the U.K.'s head of government. Some lawmakers shouted Resign! as she spoke. Asked by the opposition Labour Party's leader, Keir Starmer, Why is she still here? Truss retorted: I am a fighter and not a quitter. I have acted in the national interest to make sure that we have economic stability. A package of unfunded tax cuts Truss' government announced Sept. 23 sparked turmoil on financial markets, hammered the value of the pound and increased the cost of U.K. government borrowing. The Bank of England was forced to intervene to prevent the crisis spreading to the wider economy and putting pensions at risk.

Under intense political and economic pressure, Truss last week fired her ally Kwasi Kwarteng as Treasury chief, replacing him with Cabinet veteran Hunt. On Monday Hunt scrapped almost all of Truss' tax cuts, along with her flagship energy policy and her promise of no public spending cuts. He said the government will need to save billions of pounds and there are many difficult decisions to be made before he sets out a medium-term fiscal plan on Oct. 31. Foreign Secretary James Cleverly urged Conservatives to give Truss another chance, saying mistakes happen. "What you've got to do is recognize



when they've happened and have humility to make changes when you see things didn't go right, he said. Official figures released Wednesday showed U.K. inflation rose to 10.1% in September, returning to a 40-year high first hit in July, as the soaring cost of food squeezed household budgets. While inflation is high around the world - driven

up by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and its effect energy supplies - polls show most Britons blame the government for the country's economic pain. With opinion polls giving the Labour Party a large and growing lead, many Conservatives now believe their only hope of avoiding electoral oblivion is to replace Truss. But she insists she is not stepping down, and legislators are divided about how to get rid of her.

Truss faces another test in Parliament later when lawmakers vote on an opposition Labour Party motion seeking to ban fracking for shale gas - a policy Truss recently greenlit. Conservative Party whips said the vote would be treated as a confidence motion in the government, meaning the government would fall if the motion passed. The Conservatives' 70-plus majority makes that unlikely, but the vote will be closely watched for signs of dissent about Truss' leadership. Under Conservative Party rules, Truss is safe from a leadership challenge for a year, but the rules can be changed if enough lawmakers want it. Some Conservative legislators also believe Truss could be forced to resign if the party agrees on a successor. As yet, there is no front-runner. Truss' defeated Conservative leadership rival Rishi Sunak, House of Commons leader Penny Mordaunt and popular Defense Secretary Ben Wallace all have supporters, as does Hunt, who many see as the de facto prime minister already. (AP)

UK inflation accelerates to 40-year high as food prices rise

LONDON, OCT 19/--/British food prices rose at the fastest pace since 1980 last month, driving inflation back to a 40-year high and heaping pressure on the embattled government to balance the books without gutting help for the nation's poorest residents. Food prices jumped 14.6 per cent in the year through September, led by the soaring cost of staples such as meat, bread, milk and eggs, the Office for National Statistics said on Wednesday. That pushed consumer price inflation back to 10.1 per cent, the highest since early 1982 and equal to the level last reached in July. The figures immediately fuelled demands that the government do more to help families and retirees as it struggles to regain credibility after an ill-fated package of tax cuts roiled financial markets.

Treasury chief Jeremy Hunt ditched the package after he took office last week, but he has warned that this will be a difficult winter and spending reductions also will be needed. Glenn Sanderson, head teacher at St. Aidan's Catholic Academy in Sunderland, said schools across the country are finding it difficult to feed needy children, with many diverting money from textbooks and classroom teaching to subsidise meal programs. The suggestion of government budget cuts in this environment is appalling, he said.

Parents are having to make difficult decisions do they pay the bus fare to send their child to education or do they use that money to feed their child, Sanderson told the BBC. In today's society, I find that completely



unacceptable. Hunt this week told the House of Commons that the government would prioritise help for the most vulnerable while delivering wider economic stability. But he also backed away from Prime Minister Liz Truss' previous commitment to increase pensions in line with inflation.

Downing Street spokesman Max Blain said no decisions have been made on pension guarantees. We are very aware of how many vulnerable pensioners there are, but the government is not making any commitments on any particular policy areas at this point," he said.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has boosted food and energy prices around the world, with shipments of natural gas, grains and cooking oil disrupted. That added to price rises that began last year as the global economy started to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. While the jump in food costs took

the biggest bite out of household budgets in Britain last month, prices are rising across the board. Transportation costs jumped 10.9 per cent, furniture and households goods rose 10.8 per cent, and clothing was up 8.4 per cent. Housing costs rose 9.3 per cent, driven by the rising price of energy. The government has sought to shield consumers from the impact of rising energy prices by capping the cost of electricity and natural gas. But Hunt has now limited the price cap to six months, instead of the two years originally promised. That means inflation is likely to stay higher for longer than previously forecast, said Jack Leslie, senior economist at the Resolution Foundation, a think tank that focuses on improving living standards for low- and middle-income people. This bleak outlook means that family incomes will continue to fall sharply again next year, especially as support with

energy bills is withdrawn, Leslie said in a statement. That is the context of debates within government about whether previous commitments to uprate benefits or pensions in line with prices should be the next U-turn to be announced. Faster inflation also fuels expectations that the Bank of England will raise interest rates further and faster as it struggles to return inflation to its 2 per cent target.

The central bank is trying to slow inflation without tipping Britain into recession. The British economy shrank an estimated 0.3 per cent in August after growing just 0.1 per cent in July, according to ONS figures. Today's hotter-than-anticipated inflation reading paves the way for another aggressive interest rate increase from the Bank of England at its next meeting in early November, said Victoria Scholar, head of investment at Interactive Investor.

However, the central bank is between a rock and a hard place as it looks to curb price pressures without inadvertently adding to the risk of recession." It's the same calculation going on in other countries, but the US Federal Reserve has signalled it will continue its rapid rate hikes to combat inflation that is at a decades-high 8.3 per cent. The European Central Bank at its meeting next week is expected to make another big increase to curtail record inflation in the 19 countries that use the euro currency. The EU's statistics agency, Eurostat, on Wednesday adjusted eurozone inflation for September down slightly to 9.9 per cent. (AP)

North fires more shells toward inter-Korean sea buffer zone

SEOUL, OCT 19/--/North Korea fired about 100 more artillery shells toward the sea Wednesday in response to South Korean live-firing drills at border areas as the rivals accuse each other of dialing up tensions on the Korean Peninsula with weapons tests. The drills conducted by both sides come amid heightened animosities over recent North Korean missile tests that it calls simulated nuclear attacks on South Korean and U.S. targets.

South Korea's military detected the artillery being fired from a western North Korean coastal town, the Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement. On Tuesday night, North Korea fired about 100 shells off its west coast and 150 rounds off its east coast, the Joint Chiefs of Staff said earlier.

Both days, the North Korean shells landed in the northern parts of the maritime buffer zones the two Koreas created off their eastern and western coasts as part of agreements they made in 2018 to reduce tensions, according to the South's Joint Chiefs of Staff. North Korea also fired hundreds of shells at the buffer zones Friday in its most significant direct violation of the 2018 agreement. North Korea's military said the launches were a warning against what it called provocative South Korean artillery firing drills along the border earlier this week. Our army strongly warns the enemy forces to immediately stop the highly irritating provocative act in the frontline areas, an unidentified spokesperson at the General Staff of the North's Korean People's Army said in a statement Wednesday.

South Korea's Defense Ministry said it conducted artillery drills at land border areas as part of its annual military exercises. But it said its drills didn't violate the 2018 accord because its shells didn't land in the buffer zones. South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff warned North Korea to immediately stop provocations that threaten peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. It added that it is boosting its military readiness and, in coordination with the United States, is closely monitoring North Korea's moves.

There were no reports of violence between the two Koreas. But animosities could persist as North Korea will likely react to South Korea's ongoing annual Hoguk field exercises with its own weapons tests. South Korean officials said the Hoguk

drills are aimed at improving a military readiness against North Korean nuclear and missile threats and involve an unspecified number of U.S. troops. North Korea views regular South Korea-U.S. military training as an invasion rehearsal. It said its recent barrage of missile tests were meant to issue a warning to one of the allies' earlier exercises involving a U.S. aircraft carrier.

In parts of the Hoguk drills open to the media, South Korean and U.S. troops built floating bridges on a river southeast of Seoul to let tanks and other armored vehicles move over them. South Korea's army said Wednesday's training was meant to deal with a hypothetical enemy attack that would leave some of the bridges over the river destroyed. It's so far been extremely successful and demonstrated the strength of the ROK-U.S. alliance, said Capt. Sean Kasprisin, a company commander at the U.S. military, using the initials of South Korea's official name, the Republic of Korea. We are definitely stronger together with the two nations. From Oct. 31 to Nov. 4, South Korea and the United States will also hold combined air force drills involving some 240 warplanes, including F-35 fighters operated by both nations. The drills are designed to inspect the two countries' joint operation capabilities and improve combat readiness, the South Korean military said Tuesday. China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Wang Wenbin, said at a briefing Wednesday that Beijing hopes all relevant countries would keep trying to look for a political settlement to ease tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

North Korea has test-launched 15 missiles since it resumed testing activities Sept. 25. One of them was an intermediate-range ballistic missile that flew over Japan and demonstrated a range capable of reaching the Pacific U.S. territory of Guam and beyond. Some foreign experts say North Korean leader Kim Jong Un would eventually aim to use his expanded weapons arsenal to pressure the United States and others to accept his country as a legitimate nuclear state and lift economic sanctions on the North. The North's artillery tests draw less outside attention than its missile launches. But its forward-deployed long-range artillery guns pose a serious security threat to the capital, Seoul, about 40 to 50 kilometers (25 to 30 miles) from the border with North Korea. (AP)

Indian-American couple gives USD 1 million to US university

HOUSTON, OCT 19/--/A prominent Indian-American entrepreneur couple has donated USD 1 million to fund the manufacturing lab equipment at the University of Houston.

Brij Agrawal, an alumnus of the varsity, and his wife Sunita are funding manufacturing lab equipment at the University of Houston (UH) College of Technology building in Sugar Land, a suburb of Greater Houston.

The entrepreneur couple is helping to fund the colleges' manufacturing laboratory equipment,

including the latest 3D printers, machine tools, and measuring test equipment, and the creation of an advanced manufacturing design center focused on small and medium scale industry.

I would not have graduated from college if it wasn't for the UH System. That is why I am so passionate about supporting UH," Agrawal said.

"I live in Sugar Land and that makes me more attached to the UH at Sugar Land campus," he said.

The Agrawals' total impact could reach USD 3.5

million after matching gifts from the George Foundation, which will match USD 1 million, and the Texas Research Incentive Program, the university said in a statement.

The varsity will name the building's ground floor auditorium, the Brij and Sunita Agrawal Auditorium, in the couples' honour. Originally from Lakhapur in (Punjab) India, Agrawal moved to Houston at 17 and attended night school at UH while working full-time.

He credits his experience at the varsity for providing him the foundation to launch and sustain a successful career as the CEO and President of VKC Group.

This is not the first time the Agrawals have put their money into the school. The couple was involved financially during the construction at UH in Sugar Land's beginnings. They also established a Presidential Endowment to fund scholarships for UH engineering students. (PTI)



GAME NOTES

Harmanpreet Kaur withdraws from WBBL due to back injury

MELBOURNE, OCT 19 /--/ India captain Harmanpreet Kaur was on Wednesday ruled out of the ongoing Women's Big Bash League due to a back injury according to her side Melbourne Renegades. Harmanpreet, the reigning WBBL player of the tournament had missed her side's opening two matches due to international commitments as she led India at the Asia Cup, winning the title. English batter Eve Jones might play in place of Harmanpreet in the squad. "Harmanpreet was fantastic for us last season and we were looking forward to having her as part of our squad again this year, but unfortunately she has been ruled out through injury," Melbourne Renegades General Manager, James Rosengarten said in a statement. "Eve will stay on with our squad for at least the next couple of matches, as we work through the best strategy for our squad for the remainder of the tournament." (PTI)

T20 World Cup: Brilliant Campher helps Ireland beat Scotland to keep hopes alive

HOBART, OCT 19 /--/ Curtis Campher struck his maiden half-century after a fine show with the ball to guide Ireland to a six-wicket win over Scotland and keep their T20 World Cup Super 12 stage hopes alive here on Wednesday. Campher bailed out Ireland from a spot of bother while chasing a challenging 177-run target and took his side home with one over to spare in the first round Group B match. The win infused a fresh lease of life to Ireland's T20 World Cup campaign, which had a stuttering start as they lost by 31 runs to Zimbabwe in the opener. In trouble at 61 for 4 in the 10th over, Campher (72 not out) joined hands with George Dockrell (39 not out) as the duo shared 119 runs for the unbroken fifth-wicket stand to chase down the target comfortably in the end. Campher decorated his quick fire 32-ball knock with seven fours and two sixes, while Dockrell hit four boundaries and one maximum. Lorcan Tucker (20), captain Andy Balbarinie (14) and Harry Tector (14) were the other notable scorers for Ireland. Campher's exploits with the bat came after the all-rounder turned out to be the pick of bowlers for Ireland with figures of 2/9 from his two overs of right-arm medium fast bowling. (PTI)

Bhanwala becomes first Indian to win medal at U23 Worlds, takes bronze

PONTEVEDRA (SPAIN), OCT 19 /--/ Sajjan Bhanwala became the first Indian Greco Roman wrestler to win a medal at the Under-23 World Championship when he edged past Ukraine's Dmytro Vasetskyi on 'criteria' to emerge winner in the bronze play-off, here. It was the Ukrainian who pulled off a four-pointer on the edge of the circle for a solid start but Bhanwala bounced back immediately with a strong move that got him into a position from where he could pin his rival. Though he could not pin his rival, it was good enough to earn four points. Bhanwala lost two more points and got into defensive mode. For staying passive, Bhanwala put on 'Par Terre' position, something Indian wrestlers are very poor at defending and the Ukrainian pulled off another four-pointer from the ground position for a handsome 10-4 lead. Bhanwala scored two points with a take-down move and with 35 seconds left in the bout, managed to push his rival on the back to level the scores. The bout ended at 10-10 but since the Indian had scored the last point he was declared winner on criteria. (PTI)

LaLiga: Radamel Falcao penalty snatches Rayo a draw at Atletico Madrid, Sevilla hold Valencia

MADRID, OCT 19 /--/ Former Atletico Madrid striker Radamel Falcao earned Rayo Vallecano a 1-1 draw against his old side in LaLiga with a 92nd minute penalty on Tuesday. Alvaro Morata's first-half strike seemed poised to help Atletico strengthen their grip on third place and keep close to leaders Real Madrid and Barcelona, but Rayo snatched a deserved draw. After the break the hosts had their backs to the wall at the Metropolitano and weren't able to finish their chances on the break. The pressure eventually told when Jose Gimenez handled in the box. "We had good chances to score the second and kill the game off, but we didn't score," Atletico coach Diego Simeone told Movistar. "We've dropped two important points." The Rojiblancos broke the deadlock in the 20th minute when Antoine Griezmann won the ball high up the pitch and crossed for his strike partner Morata to finish consummately. The France forward was impressive again and seems to be returning to his best level. Pathe Ciss headed wide from six yards early in the second half as Andoni Iraola's team battled to find the equaliser, and substitute Sergio Camello flashed a shot just past the post.

The lively striker, on loan from Atletico, nearly set up Falcao to score but Ivo Grbic saved and Gimenez managed to hack the ball away. Griezmann fired home at the other end but the goal was disallowed for a tight offside and Matheus Cunha had a shot saved from a tight angle as Atletico rediscovered some attacking impetus. However, when Gimenez handled a Rayo header in stoppage time they surrendered the three points. Falcao, who played for Atletico between 2011-2013, slammed the penalty into the top corner: "It leaves a bad taste in the mouth," grumbled Morata, after the referee checked the penalty incident on the pitchside VAR screen. "I don't understand anything. When things happen to us, they don't look at it and when we're defending in our box they look at everything." Elsewhere Ernesto Valverde's Athletic, now sixth, were unable to pull themselves back into the top four as they drew 2-2 at Getafe. Valencia captain Jose

Gaya missed a late penalty amid a chaotic finale as Sevilla held the visitors to a 1-1 draw. Erik Lamela's 86th minute strike earned Jorge Sampaoli's side a creditable draw against Gennaro Gattuso's relentless Los Che, in a pulsating clash at the Ramon Sanchez Pizjuan. Sampaoli was not able to build on his first win since replacing Julen Lopetegui at the helm, but will be happy with a point as Valencia blew the chance to snatch all three in stoppage time. Edinson Cavani sent the visitors ahead with a firm header from Dimitri Foulquier's deep cross in the sixth minute. Valencia goalkeeper Giorgi Mamardashvili made two stunning saves in quick succession to deny Rafa Mir, first twisting to tip over a vicious strike, then clawing away a header. Sevilla kept pushing in the second half and Nemanja Gudelj headed against the crossbar. Both sides were guilty of heavy challenges but it created a chaotic, aggressive contest, amid which Sevilla eventually found a leveller through Lamela. (AFP)

PCB says Jay Shah's statement can 'split' cricketing communities, requests ACC to call emergency meeting



BCCI secretary Jay Shah and vice-president Rajeev Shukla

India, was moved to the UAE after the BCCI couldn't procure clearance from government security agencies to host Pakistan. India and Pakistan only play each other in Asian and ICC events due to the political tensions between the two countries. India last toured Pakistan in 2008 while Pakistan's last series in India came in 2012-13. The PCB said Shah's statement was surprising and disappointing at the same time. "The PCB has noted with surprise and disappointment of yesterday's comments made by the ACC President Mr Jay Shah with regards to shifting of next year's Asia Cup to a neutral venue. "The comments were made without any discussion or consultation with the Board of the Asian Cricket Council or the Pakistan Cricket Board (event host) and without any thoughts

towards their long-term consequences and implications. "After having presided over the ACC meeting during which Pakistan was awarded the ACC Asia Cup with an overwhelming support and response from the ACC Board Members, Mr Shah's statement of shifting of the ACC Asia Cup has clearly been made unilaterally," the PCB said. The officials from both the PCB and BCCI will be confronted with the issue at the International Cricket Council's board meeting in Melbourne next month. The ICC is yet to comment on the matter. A top official from an Asian cricketing nation hoped the matter would be sorted amicably and said there is no Asia Cup without India or Pakistan. "It is the biggest match of the Asia Cup and with either team missing, the tournament doesn't make

sense. There is a lot of time left, but I hope the issue is sorted. The neutral venue is the best option if the BCCI decides against sending its team to Pakistan," the official told PTI. The PCB is also irked because international cricket has resumed in the country with all top nations like England, Australia, West Indies travelling there to play Test and white-ball series in recent years. "This is contrary to the philosophy and spirit for which the Asian Cricket Council was formed in September 1983 a united Asian cricket body to safeguard the interests of the its Members and organise, develop, and promote the game of cricket in Asia," the PCB added. A PCB source told PTI that the board is ready to play hard ball with the BCCI this time around and will approach the ICC during the meeting in Melbourne. The PCB has also threatened to pull of the ODI World Cup in India if the Asia Cup matter is not resolved.

"It would be wrong to say that only Pakistan will be impacted if India and Pakistan don't play each other in Asia or ICC events. The marquee match creates a sizeable revenue for the ICC and if that doesn't happen, the other cricketing nations (including the associates) also suffer," the source said. The ICC tends to put India and Pakistan in the same group in world events, with the game between the two teams drawing a massive television audience and full house at the stadium. Both teams open their T20 World Cup campaign against each other on Sunday. (PTI)

India beat Kuwait 2-1 but fail to qualify for AFC U-20 Asian Cup 2023

KUWAIT CITY, OCT 19 /--/ Skipper Taison Singh and Gurkirat Singh struck in either half as India edged past hosts Kuwait 2-1 in their final qualification match but the third-place finish in Group H was not good enough to qualify for the next year's AFC U-20 Asian Cup. India finished ahead of Kuwait but behind toppers Australia and second-placed Iraq at the qualification event, which identified participants for next year's tournament in Uzbekistan. Top teams from all the 10 groups and the five best runners-up qualified for the final tournament, with Uzbekistan getting a direct entry as hosts in the 16-team continental event to be held from 1 to 18 March in 2023. India had lost 2-4 and 1-4 to Iraq and Australia respectively in their previous group matches. In the match against Kuwait on Tuesday night, Taison and Gurkirat scored for India while Saleh Almehtab pulled one back for the hosts at the Ali Sabah Al-Salem Stadium. India started on the front foot, and in the very first minute, a long throw hurled into the box caused some confusion in the Kuwait defence, resulting in an Indian corner. Himanshu Jangra made a fine run at the near post onto a Vibin cross, but his effort went over the cross-bar. India goalkeeper Zahid Bukhari had to make a crucial save a minute later off a shot by Fahad Alazmi. However, Taison gave India the early lead in the eighth minute when he burst into the box, skipped past his marker and laced a powerful shot into the top corner. Kuwait pounced on the

attack soon and Jarah Alheleeli struck the Indian cross-bar from a free-kick. Kuwait continued to attack in search of the equaliser, while the Indians tried to hit their opponents on the break. Jangra broke free on the left, cut in and tried his luck but his shot was blocked. Jangra had another opportunity in the 19th minute when a Vibin corner found the former, who nodded it into the ground but Kuwait goalkeeper Bader Alajmi was up to the task. With around five minutes from half time, Abhishek Tekcham was released down the right by Taison, as the former beat his marker, entered the box, and sent in a low cross but nobody could get onto the end of it. India went into the break with a goal lead. Kuwait came out with more impetus after the change of ends with Yosef Alshammari looking to make a few darting runs. (PTI)



Akeal Hosein and Rovman Powell added 49 runs off 35 balls against Zimbabwe in T20 World Cup

ICC T20 World Cup 2022

West Indies beat Zimbabwe by 31 runs to keep super 12 hopes alive

HOBART, OCT 10 /--/ West Indies kept alive their hopes of reaching the Super 12 stages of the ICC T20 World Cup 2022 with a comfortable 31-run win over Zimbabwe in Hobart on Wednesday. Described as a must-win game by skipper Nicholas Pooran after their shock defeat to Scotland, West Indies posted 153 for seven after opting to bat first at the Bellerive Oval. The total proved to be enough as the West Indies packed off Zimbabwe for 122 in 18.2 overs, with pacer Alzarri Joseph picking for four wickets for 16 runs in his full quota of four overs. The seasoned Jason Holder also shone with the ball, taking three wickets for 12 runs in 3.2 overs. Opener Johnson Charles top-scored for the West Indies with a knock of 45 in 36 balls. Charles came into the line-up in place of Brandon King, who is unwell. There were useful contributions from Rovman Powell (28) and Akeal Hosein (23 not out). Sikandar Raza was the most successful bowler for Zimbabwe, finishing with figures of 3/19 in four overs. In their chase, Zimbabwe were off to a flyer but lost their way after scoring 55 runs in the six powerplay overs, losing wickets at regular intervals. Following the West Indies' victory, Group B has become wide open, with all four teams currently on two points each. (PTI)

NorthEast United FC take on East Bengal FC as both sides seek first points



GUWAHATI, OCT 19 /--/ Matchweek 3 of the Hero Indian Super League (ISL) 2022-23 will kick off with NorthEast United FC taking on East Bengal FC, on Thursday, at the Indira Gandhi Athletic Stadium in Guwahati. Both sides have played two games but are yet to win a point. They currently find themselves at the bottom of the table. NorthEast United FC sit in last place because of an inferior goal difference to East Bengal FC, but will take inspiration from the fact that the visitors have never beaten them in the Hero ISL. Their first loss of the season was a tight affair against Bengaluru FC, who scored the only goal of the game in the 87th minute, missing out in the final minutes of the match. Their loss to Hyderabad FC in Matchweek 2, however, was a fairly one-sided tie, with the defending Hero ISL champions displaying their authority in a 3-0 win. NorthEast United FC are still searching for their first goal of the campaign. Their Head Coach Marco Balbul, who served a one-match suspension after picking up a red card in the opener, will be back in the dugout for this match. Despite NorthEast United FC's start to the season, Balbul was fairly optimistic about his team's chances of winning the game in his pre-match press conference. "We have a really good team that can win tomorrow. We will come with the right attitude - the right approach.

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