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WASTE SEGREGATION DONE CLOSE TO SCHOOL PARENTS, STUDENTS OF MOHANPURA SCHOOL SUFFER

ROOPA LALL

PORT BLAIR, JAN 20/--/Tamil Selvi takes her daughter Sanya, a class 8th student of Mohanpura Senior Secondary School to her school every morning. The mother-daughter duo has to put their hands on their nose while passing in this road as the entire area is filled with foul smell coming out from the waste segregation unit set up by the PBMC close to the School. Like the mother-daughter duo, scores of parents who visit the School to drop and pick up their children find it difficult to wait outside the school campus due to the terrible stench coming out of the waste segregation unit.

The stench haunts the children even when they are in the classes. Students and staff of the School have a tough time attending their classes due to the smell emanating from the waste. Parents of the kids have also

complained about the matter. But neither the area Councillor nor the



School authorities have taken any steps to resolve the issue. Teachers are forced to keep the windows of classrooms closed.

A visit to this area will reveal that trash occupies a good portion of the area in front of the School. The trash is segregated by the sanitary staff and loaded in trucks to be disposed of at Brookshabad. While segregating the waste, the entire area is filled with foul

smell making it almost impossible to stay in the area. Since the School is located in close proximity, the students and teachers have to bear the brunt.

Ranjan, a student of the school, said, "Sometimes it becomes difficult to sit in the classroom due to the stench. It becomes very hard to breathe when we try to walk on this road". Not only the parents and students of the school, local people and pedestrians who commute in this road stretch regularly also have the same complaints.

Stray cattle feeding from garbage dumps on the roadside in this place is a daily sight. The stray scrounging for food in those dumps results in scattering of garbage on the roads. During heavy rains, the entire area gets flooded and garbage kept for segregation enters into the School premises, causing more problems for the students and others, said another student.

MP seeks exemption of stamp duty/registration fee for transfer of property to family members by way of gift deed

PORT BLAIR, JAN 20/--/The Member of Parliament, Mr. Kuldeep Rai Sharma has requested the Lt. Governor to exempt the stamp duty fee and registration fee for transfer of the land by way of Gift Deed to family members in the larger interest of the Islanders.

In a letter addressed to the Lt. Governor, the Member of Parliament mentioned that the A&N Administration through an order No.274/19 F.No. 3-21/SR/Stamp Duty/2015 dated 22nd October, 2019 has fixed circle rate for per square metre of lands of different villages of South Andaman, N&M Andaman and Campbell Bay in Nicobar District for the

purpose of effecting transfer of interest of land and immovable property by way of Conveyance/Gift/ Exchange etc in various areas of this Union Territory.

He said that on this issue a large number of Islanders have approached him stating that many recorded tenants wish to transfer their share of landed property to their family members by way of executing Gift Deed.

He added that but due to imposition of stamp duty fee of 6% and Registration fee of 1% over the total valuation of landed property, Islanders are unable to bear the stamp duty/registration fee since the financial status of the recorded tenants are very weak and because of which, it would be difficult for them to bear such expenses.

"Moreover they are not going to sell or get any



profit out of the said land," the Member of Parliament mentioned.

New show room of Tata Motors inaugurated at Dollygunj

PORT BLAIR, JAN 20/--/Next Gen Automobiles Pvt, Ltd inaugurated a new Tata Motors showroom at Dollygunj junction on 19th January. Mr. Vishwendra, Secretary-cum-Director, Department of Transport was the chief guest on the occasion.

Addressing the gathering after inaugurating the showroom, the Secretary-cum-Director extended his good wishes to Mr. Sagar Khurana and his team.

Welcoming all the officials of Tata Motors, the Director of Next Gen Automobiles Pvt, Ltd, Mr. Sagar Khurana expressed his gratitude towards the chief guest and the Tata Motors officials, he said this is for the first time when majority of Tata officials are in the Islands to attend the inaugural ceremony of the new showroom. He informed that Tata Commercial vehicles showroom has two floors and the service centre is around 20,000 sq feet area. "Our efforts will be to provide the same facility and services to the commercial vehicles customers as being provided to the car customers. In the year 1968 my father started the business and as on date, we have completed 54 years in this business", he said and

expressed gratitude to the people of Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

Other officials of Tata Motors also shared their experience and appreciated the effort of Next Gen Automobiles Pvt, Ltd for his success in this business.

Officials of Tata Motors who attended the ceremony include Mr. Piyush Mitra,



State Head- WB, Sikkim, Andaman, Mr. Abhishek Ray Chaudhary, State Product Manager (SCV Passenger & Buses), WB, Sikkim, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Mr. Anindyaadeep Pal, State Project Manager (SCV Cargo), WB, Sikkim, Andaman, Mr. Anish Chakraborty, Territory Sales Manager (Govt. Sales), Mr. Rahul Kumar, Territory Sales Manager, (Service) and Mr. Sudipta Kundu, Territory Sales Manager, (SCV Cargo).

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Delhi LG accuses Kejriwal of making 'misleading, derogatory remarks'; focus on law and order, replies CM

NEW DELHI, JAN 20 /--/ In a fresh war of words, Lt Governor V K Saxena on Friday accused Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal of making "misleading and derogatory" remarks against him, prompting the AAP leader to hit back, saying he should focus on improving the law and order situation to prevent another Kanjhawla-like incident.

Noting that the sun and the moon operate in their own space for the universe to function properly, Kejriwal urged Saxena to allow him to work so that the system in Delhi functions smoothly. The fresh tussle started after Saxena shot off a letter to Kejriwal, accusing him of "political posturing" during his march to Raj Niwas on January 16 along with his deputy Manish Sisodia and AAP MLAs. The LG also invited the Delhi CM for a meeting. In response, Kejriwal thanked Saxena for the invitation and sought a meeting on Saturday, saying he would be accompanied by his ministers and MLAs. In the letter, Saxena said that he had invited Kejriwal for



meeting ahead to make a convenient political posture by saying the LG refused to meet me," Saxena said. "It has come to my notice through media reports that you have made many statements in and out of the state assembly over the past few days, which have been severally and substantively misleading, untrue and

derogatory," the LG said. "I must mention here that I was rather astounded at the fact that even as the city is grappling with several serious developmental issues, you found time to walk for long and stage a protest meant solely for posturing, rather than taking the issue to a logical conclusion by meeting me," the L-G wrote in his letter to

"Someday if the sun starts to feel that the moon is not working properly and today I will do the work of the moon, then the whole earth will see chaos. The Sun does its own work and the moon does its own work, only then the whole system runs smoothly"
---Arvind Kejriwal



Kejriwal. Referring to Kejriwal's attack on him in the Assembly two days back, Saxena said: "As to 'who is LG' and 'where did he come from', can be answered, if you were to even cursorily refer to the Constitution of India. Others do not deserve a reply, since they obviously cater to a very

low level of discourse." The LG asserted that he was not acting as a "headmaster", as the Delhi CM had said "sarcastically", but was working as a "benign yet conscientious voice" of the people derived from the Constitution of India. Saxena also pointed out several indices to flag the discrepancies in the education system in the

pandemic between March 2020- June 2022, the numbers went up to only 73.74 per cent.

"It will be educative to note here that attendance in 2009-2010 was clocked at 78.06 per cent. This clearly indicates that our government schools are not being able to ensure attendance of students effectively," the letter said. Kejriwal, however, noted in his letter how the LG had severely criticised the education system in Delhi and said that the criticism was 'duly respected'. "The people of Delhi have given us a historic majority thrice. In the eyes of public, we are doing good work. Your criticism is duly respected. No system is perfect. There have been several improvements in the education system of Delhi. But a lot needs to be done. We have a long way to go," the chief minister said. Had the Centre and different LGs not interfered, the government would have made more strides in the education sphere, Kejriwal said. In the letter to the Lt Governor, the chief

minister alleged that Saxena was seen interfering in the elected government's works rather than the city's law and order situation, that was the worst. "Every Delhiite hangs their head in shame when the entire world refers to Delhi as the rape capital. Crimes are increasing in Delhi. Women find it difficult to step out of their homes," he said. The chief minister also cited the incident in which Delhi Commission of Women chief Swati Maliwal was allegedly molested by an inebriated man and dragged by his car for 10-15 metres with her hand stuck in the vehicle window.

"Someday if the sun starts to feel that the moon is not working properly and today I will do the work of the moon, then the whole earth will see chaos. The Sun does its own work and the moon does its own work, only then the whole system runs smoothly." "Let the CM do his work, you fix the law and order of Delhi so that cases like Kanjhawla don't happen again, only then Delhi's system will be fine," he said. (PTI)

Naddacoins 'HIRA' to highlight Govt's focus on highways, internet, railways, airways

GHAZIPUR, JAN 20 /--/ BJP president J P Nadda on Friday gave a new term HIRA' to the development lexicon, highlighting that the Union government's focus has been on highways, internet, railways and airways. Nadda also said when the entire world is reeling under a financial crisis, India has become the world's fifth-largest economy, surpassing Britain. "Today, I say that development means HIRA -- H for Highway, I for Internet, R for Railways and A for Airways," Nadda said addressing a public meeting here. "Today, when I was coming (from Kashi), I saw Ghazipur has changed a lot. Earlier, it took hours to reach Ghazipur from Kashi. Today, it took just one-and-a-half-hour," he added.



The BJP president also said India's growth in electronics has been six times higher and the export is Rs 70,000 crore.

Referring to the Centre's direct benefit transfer (DBT) initiative, Nadda said: "There was a time when the country's prime minister used to say that he sends Rs 1 and only 15 paise reaches (the beneficiary). Where does 85 (paise) go? But, today, through direct benefit transfer, Rs 6,000 is transferred into the accounts of lakhs of farmers." He was apparently referring to former PM Rajiv Gandhi's remarks in 1985. The BJP national president said under the leadership of chief minister Yogi Adityanath, Uttar Pradesh is moving forward by leaps and bounds. "During the government of Akhilesh (Yadav), when we used to send money, it used to go somewhere else as there was a hole in the bowl (of the state government). No work was done on the ground using that money," he alleged.

Nadda also said during the Covid-19 pandemic, India sent vaccines to more than 100 countries. India is no longer a "taker" (lene walaa) but a "giver" (dene walaa), he added. The BJP chief asserted that the image of the villages is changing. "Under the Pradhan Mantri Gareeb Kalyan Yojana, free foodgrains are being given to the poor, oppressed, deprived (sections of the society) and Dalits". (PTI)

Snowfall, rain in Joshimath and many other places in Uttarakhand

DEHRADUN/GOPESHWAR, JAN 20 /--/ Snowfall and rain in various parts of Uttarakhand on Friday intensified the cold, adding to the woes of people from land subsidence-hit Joshimath living in temporary relief camps. Apart from Joshimath, located at a height of around 6,000 feet, many famous locations in the higher altitudes of Chamoli and Rudraprayag districts, including Badrinath, skiing destination Auli, Kedarnath, Hemkund Sahib, Nanda Devi National Park and the Valley of Flowers also witnessed snowfall, officials said. Of the 47 villages in the Chamoli district affected by snowfall, 19 are in the Ghat sub-division, 13 in Joshimath, eight in Gairsain and seven in the Chamoli sub-division, the District Disaster Management office said. Dehradun also woke to an early morning drizzle while Mussoorie, a popular tourist spot, received the season's first snowfall. The plains in the state, including Haridwar and Udham Singh Nagar districts, were enveloped in fog. Snowfall in the high-altitude areas continues and overcast conditions prevail in most of the places in the plains, officials said. Dismantling of unsafe hotels and houses in Joshimath has been temporarily halted due to bad weather; Chamoli District Magistrate Himanshu Khurana said. According to officials, as many as 849 houses in Joshimath have developed cracks following land subsidence and 258 families have been moved to temporary relief centres. (PTI)

SC to set up fresh 5-judge bench to hear pleas challenging polygamy and 'nikah halala' among Muslims

NEW DELHI, JAN 20 /--/ The Supreme Court on Friday said that it will set up a five-judge Constitution bench to hear pleas challenging the constitutional validity of polygamy and 'nikah halala' practice among Muslims. A bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justice PS Narasimha took note of the submissions of lawyer Ashwini Upadhyay, who has filed one of the PILs on the issue, that a fresh five-judge bench was needed to be constituted as two judges of the previous constitution bench -- Justice Indira Banerjee and Justice Hemant Gupta -- have retired. "There are very important matters which are pending before a five-judge bench. We will constitute one and bear this matter in mind," the CJ said. The matter was earlier mentioned on November 2, last year also by Upadhyay. On August 30, last year, a five-judge bench comprising Justices Indira Banerjee, Hemant Gupta, Surya Kant, M M Sundresh and Sudhanshu Dhulia had made the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), National Commission for Women (NCW) and the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) parties to the PILs and sought their responses. Justice Banerjee and Justice Gupta retired on September 23 and October 16 last year respectively giving rise to the need for re-constitution of the bench to hear as many as eight petitions against the practices of polygamy and 'nikah halala'. Upadhyay, in his PIL, has sought a direction to declare polygamy and 'nikah halala' unconstitutional and illegal. While polygamy allows a Muslim man to have four wives, 'nikah halala' deals with the process in which a Muslim woman, who wants to re-marry her husband after divorce, has to first marry another person and get a divorce from him after the consummation. The apex court had in July 2018 considered the plea and referred the matter to a Constitution bench already tasked with hearing a batch of similar petitions. (PTI)

BJP mocks Raut for taking part in Bharat Jodo Yatra, says move will backfire on Uddhav's outfit

MUMBAI, JAN 20 /--/ The Bharatiya Janata Party on Friday mocked Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut for taking part in the Rahul Gandhi-led 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' and said the more he walks with the Congress leader, the more the doors of victory will close for Uddhav Thackeray's outfit. Raut, who had joined Rahul after the march started its Jammu and Kashmir leg on Thursday, had told reporters he was taking part on behalf of his party as "the atmosphere in the country is changing fast and I am seeing Gandhi as a leader who is raising his voice on real issues". "He should walk fearlessly with Rahul Gandhi. The more Sanjay Raut walks with Rahul Gandhi, the more the doors of victory will get closed for Uddhavji's Sena," Mumbai BJP chief Ashish Shelar said here. Shelar said Raut was "hiding in an alley in Prabhadevi" (where the office of Shiv Sena (UBT) mouthpiece 'Saamana' is situated) when 'karsevaks' were sacrificing their lives in the Ramjanmabhoomi movement (for a Ram Temple in Ayodhya). (PTI)



Union Minister For Culture Tourism and Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), G Kishan Reddy giving appointment letters to the newly selected candidates of Telangana State at Swami Vivekanand Institute of Technology (SVIT) Auditorium, Clock Tower, in Secunderabad

Join BJP or else CM's bulldozer is ready, MP minister warns Cong members; draws Oppn party's flak

GUNA/BHOPAL, JAN 20 /--/ A Madhya Pradesh minister has stirred a controversy by reportedly asking Congress members in the state to join the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) or face the threat of demolition by the chief minister's bulldozer.

A video of panchayat minister Mahendra Singh Sisodia making the remarks at a public meeting in Ruthiyai town here on Wednesday has gone viral on social media. Like some other BJP-ruled states, the Madhya Pradesh government has been bulldozing the alleged illegal portions of the houses of people accused of various offences, a practice that has often been hailed by CM Shivraj Singh

Chouhan, popularly called 'mama', as a symbol of his government's "zero tolerance" towards crime and criminals. "Listen Congress members - join the BJP. Move towards this side (ruling party) slowly. In 2023 (when Assembly polls are scheduled in the state) too, the BJP will form a government in MP. Mama's bulldozer is ready," Sisodia reportedly said at the gathering while canvassing for Friday's Raghogarh Nagar civic polls.

Reacting strongly to his remarks, Congress's Rajya Sabha member and former chief minister Digvijaya Singh tweeted in Hindi, "People of Raghogarh are not cowards that they will get afraid of such threats. The people of Raghogarh

will vote fearlessly..." Congress MLA from Raghogarh Jaivardhan Singh said the minister's remark reflects his "negative mentality". "As BJP has nothing to highlight in terms of development, its leader makes such comments. We have always done politics of uniting people and not breaking them. The Congress will win all 24 wards of the Nagar Palika," he told reporters. Congress MLA from Chachonda and Digvijaya Singh's younger brother Laxman Singh said that even the BJP does not take Sisodia seriously. Guna district Congress chief Harishankar Vijaywargiya said the minister's remarks have sullied the image of the BJP. "He should exercise

restraint in his language. The people of Raghogarh will give a befitting reply to him on January 20 in the polls," he said. However, coming out in defence of Sisodia, state BJP spokesman Pankaj Chaturvedi said in Bhopal, "Whatever the minister had said is intended to warn those indulging in illegal activities and for them a bulldozer is always ready. The government uses bulldozers as per the legally-approved process." "Congressmen are afraid as probably they indulge in such activities where there is a possibility of bulldozer's intervention," he said. Raghogarh is the home turf of Digvijaya Singh. His son Jaiwardhan Singh is local MLA. (PTI)

Bridge collapse: Gujarat govt issues show-cause notice to Morbi municipality asking why it shouldn't be dissolved

AHMEDABAD, JAN 20 /--/ Months after a suspension bridge collapsed in Morbi town of Gujarat killing 135 people, the state government has issued a show-cause notice to the local municipality asking why it should not be dissolved for failing to discharge its duties.

The notice was issued on Wednesday by the state Urban Development Department, which directed the Morbi civic body to submit a written clarification in the form of a general body resolution by January 25. Notably, the state government had on December 13 told the Gujarat

High Court, which took cognisance of the tragedy on its own and registered a public interest litigation (PIL), that it had decided to dissolve the municipality. The suspension bridge on the Machchhu river in Morbi town collapsed on October 30 last year, killing 135 persons. The bridge was maintained and operated by Oreva Group as per an agreement signed with Morbi municipality. In the notice, the department has said that the previous contract to operate the bridge expired in 2017. Between 2018 and 2020, Oreva Group had written several letters to the Morbi municipality

warning about the dilapidated condition of the bridge and also cautioned that a serious accident may occur if the bridge remains open to the public in such a condition. However, the civic body did not take cognisance of such warnings by the company, the notice said. Moreover, the municipality did not take any concrete action to take over the bridge from the company in 2017 after the completion of the contract and remained inactive despite knowing the situation of the bridge, it said. "The company failed to hand over the bridge to the concerned authority and no

corrective action could be taken by either party to improve the condition of the bridge," the notice said citing the findings of a Special Investigation Team (SIT). It further said that several lapses on the part of Oreva Group were also found in repairs, maintenance and operation of the bridge, such as no restriction on the number of persons accessing the bridge at a given point in time, no restriction on the sale of tickets, leading to unrestricted movement on the bridge and repair being carried out without consulting competent experts. (PTI)

AAP hits back at Cong over Rahul's 'remote control' remarks

CHANDIGARH, JAN 20 /--/ The ruling AAP in Punjab has attacked Rahul Gandhi over his allegation that the government in the state was being remote controlled, saying the Congress used to summon former chief minister Charanjit Singh Channi often to Delhi.

On Thursday, Rahul at a rally in Pathankot had alleged that the Bhagwant Mann government in Punjab was being run with a remote control as he sought to point towards Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MP Raghav Chadha for calling the shots in the state. Opposition parties in the state have been attacking Mann, claiming that his government is being remote controlled by AAP national convener and Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal. "Congress' 52-year-old youth @RahulGandhi ji eats almonds, your memory has become weak!" the AAP's Punjab unit tweeted late Thursday night after Gandhi rally, which was a part of the Congress' Kanyakumari to Kashmir Bharat Jodo Yatra. The Gandhi family used to often summon the then chief minister Charanjit Singh Channi and he used to go to Delhi, the party said in its tweet in Hindi.

The Punjab Congress on Friday hit back saying, "It is not about the Delhi visits, it is about the fact that people from Delhi have offices in the Punjab secretariat and are dictating terms". "By the way, what happened to @raghav_chadha appointment letter? Him not getting any post in @PunjabGovtIndia doesn't seem to have stopped him," the party's state unit tweeted. Rahul at the Pathankot rally on Thursday had also said that he respects Chief Minister Mann but asked him that Punjab should be run from Punjab only, and not from Delhi. Referring to his public address in Hoshiarpur earlier this week, Gandhi had said, "I told Bhagwant Mann ji, do not let Punjab be run from a remote control."

Mann should not become anyone's remote control and should run the state independently, the Congress leader had said, drawing a sharp reaction from the chief minister. Mann had told Rahul that he was made the chief minister by the people and reminded him of the insult inflicted on Amarinder Singh -- a former Congress leader -- by unceremoniously removing him from the post of chief minister of Punjab. (PTI)

SantNirankari Mission come forward to help family at Chhouldari

PORT BLAIR, JAN 20/--/ SantNirankari mission in Islands has been engaged in various social welfare activities in Islands with blessings of Her Holiness Satguru Mata Sudiksha Ji Maharaj. Mission's Port Blair branch has always been at forefront when it comes to working selflessly for the Society and environment. Recently the mission once again came forward and helped a needy family to get a respectable shelter over their heads.

On 26th December, 2022 a big tree fell on the house of Mr. PremanandaBarai, a resident of BachdaPahad, Chouldari. The house was totally damaged including the roof of the house which collapsed under the tree. Family members had a narrow escape from nature's fury but seeing their hard earned small



shelter ruined by this, the poor family was left in grief and agony. They had no other way but to accept nature's anger as destiny. The news spread fast and reached nearby followers of the mission.

would live without the safety of a roof over their heads.

The mission's Chouldari branch immediately moved into action. The message was relayed to the Port Blair head office at Junglighat. The Sector In-charge, SantNirankariMandal, Mr. Satya Narayan relayed the message to all branches and individuals and reached the spot himself. Volunteers from the mission started reaching the spot at BachdaPahad, Chouldari. The branch heads of Chouldari and Brichgunj also reached. The family was assured of all out possible efforts for their help.

The Sector In-charge, SNM Port Blair after seeing the damaged house decided that only way left was to make alternate temporary shelter for the family, as the existing dwelling unit was not safe for staying. It was decided that while aid from civic authorities should be sought but it would take some time and till that time family staying in endangered home was not safe. Also considering the financial state of family the mission followers decided to pool in required money by contribution to make alternate temporary shelter for the family.

Meanwhile, SNM volunteers started the work of clearing nearby sites for construction of the temporary shelter. The hailing of Satguru Mata ji and devotional chanting by volunteers while working turned the grim scene into a devotional site. The manpower was a crucial requirement and so was the family's day to day requirement. The volunteers worked themselves. Material like beams, poles etc were also arranged from their own resources to save the money. The sewa of construction of shed which started on 28th December, 2022 was completed in record time of 14 days due to continuous work by SantNirankari Mission's volunteers. A small but comfortable temporary shelter was ready. Family was also looked after during all these days and regularly counseled for their needs.

On 14th January 2023, the SantNirankariMandal handed over the shelter to Mr. PremanandaBarai, in a simple felicitation function.

National team chess championship-2023

PORT BLAIR, JAN 20/--/ The MPL 42nd National Team Chess Championship 2023, for Men & MPL 20th National Team Chess Championship 2023, for Women will be held from 10th To 16th February 2023, in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. Each state Association can nominate one team as regular entry, each in men and women comprising of five players including one reserve player.

Interested Players who wish to participate in the National Team Chess Championship-2023, may register their names at the Office of the Andaman Nicobar Chess Association (ANCA), Dairy Farm, Port Blair, between 9.30 am & 5.30 pm on or before 25th

January 2023. For more details, one may contact B Neeliah, General Secretary, ANCA @ 9434293379 or 9679593366 or email: anchessassociation@gmail.com or visit: www.anchessassociation.com

MV SwarajDweep to arrive on Jan 22

PORT BLAIR, JAN 20/--/ The vessel MV SwarajDweep sailed from Chennai is expected to arrive at Port Blair on 22nd Jan 2023 at 0600 hrs. She has on board 239 passengers. On arrival the vessel will be berthed at Haddo Wharf and Passengers will be disembarked immediately.

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The petty economies of the rich are just as amazing as the silly extravagances of the poor
William Feather

3 NE states go to polls: The bigger picture

The polls in the three NE states marks the official start of the first round of Assembly polls in the new year, in which nine states are headed for elections, deemed crucial in the run-up to the all-important Lok Sabha contest in 2024. Starting from Tripura, Nagaland and Meghalaya, assembly polls are expected to be held in Karnataka followed by Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Mizoram in one go and then in Telangana in 2023. The three poll-bound northeastern states of Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura are expected to witness intense political activities in the coming days with key contenders set to go all out to woo voters. The EC on Wednesday announced February 16 as the date for the Tripura Assembly polls and February 27 for the elections to the Nagaland and Meghalaya assemblies. Counting of votes is scheduled for March 2. The BJP is pulling out all the stops to retain power in Tripura where the party has changed the chief minister in May last year. In the other two states, it will seek to expand its footprints. The Congress and the Left are trying to recapture their lost influence in Tripura. BJP central leaders such as Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah had visited the poll-bound states recently to assess the mood of the voters and galvanise party cadres. While Tripura has a BJP-IPFT alliance government, the Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP) has the largest number of MLAs in Nagaland in an all-party government. The National People's Party (NPP), the only political party from the northeast that has the recognition of a national party, leads the government in Meghalaya. Manik Saha, a doctor by profession, was appointed the Chief Minister of Tripura in May last year after the then CM Biplab Deb's sudden resignation. The BJP and the Indigenous People's Front of Tripura (IPFT) fought the Assembly elections together in 2018 and wrested power from the CPI(M)-led Left Front. The CPI(M) and the Congress have announced that they would fight the Tripura Assembly elections together, while the Trinamool Congress and TipraMotha till date have not announced any alliance with other parties. Tipra Motha chief Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma in an open letter on January 13 had appealed to the BJP ally IPFT for the unification of the two tribal-based parties. State BJP general secretary Papia Datta, however, said the saffron party is set to contest the Assembly election with IPFT. Trinamool Congress state president Pijush Kanti Biswas has, on the other hand, said the party is ready to contest the election with "full force" and talks are on for tie-ups with "suitable parties".

With polls slated for next month, political mega-rallies and last-minute attempts at creating electoral undertakings are being planned. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has already addressed a mega-rally in the sleepy Garo hills where she launched a blistering attack on the BJP which rules neighbouring Tripura in alliance with a small tribal party and is part of the Conrad Sangma-led alliance which rules Meghalaya. The current strength of the Meghalaya Assembly is 42 mainly because of resignation of MLAs ahead of the election. NPP president Conrad Sangma is the chief minister of the state where TMC became the main opposition following the defection of former CM Mukul Sangma and several other Congress legislators. Hectic parleys are also on in Nagaland to get Naga civil society eschew its demands for a halt to the polls till the Naga peace talks are finalised.

BJP National Executive is only concerned about Opposition ‘Maligning’ Modi

REFLEX ACTION

Sushil Kutty

Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s kilometre-long roadshow in the heart of the national capital with PM Modi hanging out of the black SUV’s front-door! If anybody missed Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, fret not. He was at the BJP national executive discussing the health of the Bharatiya Janata Party’s election-preparedness along with the election-winning negative campaigns against Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Did Mandaviya write a letter to the Prime Minister on mask and social distancing while showing off the BJP’s electoral prowess on the move? Even a one-km stretch of choc-a-bloc could be a feast for the novel coronavirus. Rahul Gandhi got the Mandaviya letter, why wasn’t Prime Minister Narendra Modi honoured with a similar gesture? That said, the January 16 roadshow paved the way to the two-day BJP national executive at which the ruling party discussed how to win 2024 after making a clean sweep of 2023! The BJP’s Delhi roadshow was to honour Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the BJP’s stupendous Gujarat victory.

The Congress called it a “joke of a roadshow”, the Bharatiya Janata Party’s rattled response to Rahul Gandhi’s ‘Bharat Jodo Yatra’. The idea was to hold the Modi roadshow on the second day of the BJP national executive. Second thoughts, however, moved it up to January 16. More proof of a rattled BJP? Why should the BJP be scared? Is the Himachal Pradesh loss eating into the BJP’s confidence? The BJP blames BJP rebels for the Himachal loss. What if there would be BJP rebels in all the “nine states”? Think of the havoc visited on the BJP!

Over and above the anti-incumbency dogging the BJP, forcing the party to drum up confidence with outlandish vows, top of which, the promise to sweep all nine states going to polls this year. The day before

Union Home Minister Amit Shah had showcased the Gujarat victory as a message for what’s to come. “Narendra Modi will be re-elected as the prime minister in 2024,” he said. If there was doubt, he covered it up well. The point is, take Gujarat out and will Modi not be Prime Minister again?

Both AAP, and the Congress, worry the BJP. Top of the BJP’s wish-list is the fervent desire that opposition parties keep insulting Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Some or the other opposition party/leader should keep calling Modi ‘neech’ and ‘mautkasaudagar’, any lousy name that comes to mind, and the BJP will win 2024. Every time an opposition party or opposition politician calls Modi a “good-for-nothing liar”, Modi and BJP win. Amit Shah spelled it out when he said “the people have responded with victory for BJP whenever somebody defamed PM Narendra Modi.”

It was almost like Shah wanted the defamation of Narendra Modi made a template by the Opposition. The people vote for the BJP when Modi is insulted, so bring it on! For the BJP, the Gujarat result is also important for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The country should be prepared to make Narendra Modi prime minister again, is the BJP’s resolve. This is the topmost resolution of the BJP national executive. And every speaker at the national executive stressed on the Opposition defaming and insulting Modi. From Amit Shah to Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju, Union Finance Nirmala Sitharaman made the insult of Modi the centrepiece of her presser. The Opposition’s

continued “insult” of Narendra Modi was essential content in all the speeches, each one of them concluding with "Modi Saheb will again become the Prime Minister in 2024." Rijiju’s nine-point political resolution was the highlight of the first day of the national executive.

And Rijiju listed the number of times opposition parties ran a “negative campaign” against Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman spoke of the “Opposition’s derogatory remarks” on Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"The first discussion was on how opposition parties are using abusive language to attack PM Modiji," Sitharaman said. The Opposition’s “negative campaigns” against the BJP and “Prime Minister Modi again” are the winning tickets for the BJP. Every BJP heavyweight wanted the Opposition to keep running “negative campaigns” against Narendra Modi. The Supreme Court will “crush” the campaigns and the Bharatiya Janata Party will win again! That is the BJP strategy going into the 2023 nine states assembly elections, and the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The BJP doesn’t seem to have any election-winning issues other than the “Opposition’s negative campaigns” and the “abusive language to attack PM”.

The BJP intends to counter Pegasus, Rafael, misuse of EDs, Central Vista, and Demonetization with the “insult of Narendra Modi by the Opposition”; tell the people that all these allegations were fought in court and the court had given a clean chit to the Modi government, and to Narendra Modi.

The message: The Opposition played dirty with negative campaigns against Modi and the courts cleared him. With that established with the electorate, the party will win all nine 2023 state elections, and thereafter the 2024 general elections. (IPA)



Political parties must arrive at a consensus on State Governors role

FOCUS

Kalyani Shankar

Decades ago, the first DMK chief minister C.N. Annadurai compared the post of a governor to a redundant goat's beard. It was after Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru dismissed the E M S Namboodiripad government on the recommendations of the then Kerala Governor on July 31, 1959.

Once again, today, the role of the Governor has come into question with the emergence of multiple regional parties. The issues between some chief ministers and governors include: selection of the Governor and the chief minister, ‘timing for proving a legislative majority, taking a long time to give consent to bills and adverse comments on the state’s policies and the role of the chancellor of state universities is also on the list. The conflicting chemistry between the chief ministers and Governors is not new, as it has been around for a while. Political parties, mainly the DMK and the CPI-M, have even called for the abolition of the post. Some argue that they are superfluous in a democracy.

During the last few years, the governors of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, Maharashtra and West Bengal, to name a few, have not got along with the non-BJP chief ministers. That is why chief ministers like Mamata Banerjee, K. Chandrashekar Rao, M.K. Stalin and

P. Vijayan shout in a chorus for the abolition of the post. They have argued that governors function as an agent of the Centre and have no accountability except for those who appointed them. Above all, they are unelected.

Abolishing the post of Governor might be a distant dream, but the issue could be addressed. The Centre-state relationship and the role of the Governor must be further refined. The Governor is the link between the Centre and the state. He acts as a medium in a country which promotes cooperative federalism. He is a nominal head and has a five-year tenure but remains at the 'pleasure' of the President. The Governor summons and prorogues the Legislature on the advice of the Council of Ministers.

The real power rests with the elected chief minister. His other duties include giving and withholding assent to a bill. He determines the time for parties to prove their majority. The Constitution and not political considerations must guide him. The architect of the Indian Constitution, B.R. Ambedkar, had assured the Constituent Assembly that the Governor would have no powers of

his own. However, he would have duties. It is not as if all Governors were terrible, as the contribution of some governors has been good. Earlier, people of eminence occupied Raj Bhavans.

Some did stellar work, were non-controversial, and had a good rapport with the chief ministers. The truant governors include the late Ram Lal, who dismissed the NT Rama Rao government in Andhra Pradesh in 1984. Indira Gandhi had to sack Ramlal and reinstate Rao, who had a majority. Goa governor Late Bhanu Pratap Singh sacked two chief ministers and reinstated one, all within a fortnight. As a result, the Centre sacked him. The Kerala Assembly passed a resolution against Governor Arif Mohammed Khan, asking the President to recall him.

The latest row between the DMK-led government and Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi took an ugly turn on January 9 in the Assembly’s inaugural session. In an unprecedented manner, Ravi omitted references to B.R. Ambedkar, Dravidian leaders, and the Dravidian governance model in his speech. He

also suggested changing the name of Tamil Nadu to Tamizhagam. The Governor walked out of the House in a huff. Chief minister M.K. Stalin moved a quick resolution against the Governor, putting the records straight that only the written speech should go into the records.

During Prime Minister Indira Gandhi’s time, she imposed governors on various states. A healthy system of consulting the chief minister on the appointment of Governors changed. She merely informed them. She used Article 350 at least 50 times during her two stints to sack the chief ministers. The successive governments carried this forward until the Bommai judgment stipulated that the floor test should be the final for deciding on the majority of a government.

It is high time political parties reached a consensus on the appointment and role of Governors and brought back the dignity and respectability of the post. The Centre, while appointing Governors, must consult the chief minister as recommended by the Sarkaria Commission. They should be persons of eminence and not play partisan politics. They should not only be fair but also appear to be impartial. The Governors have to be fair and impartial. Trust must be the core of the relationship between Guv and the chief minister. (IPA)

Conventional Crossword

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ACROSS

1 Precious stone
6 Anger
7 Praise highly
10 Region
12 Absent
13 Glossy fabric
15 Responsibility
16 Mineral spring
18 Cricket score
20 Innermost part
22 Gourd
23 Nothing
25 Degrade
27 Henhouse
28 Metal
29 Happening

DOWN

1 Acrimonious
2 Do wrong
3 Sanity
4 Salad item
5 Present
8 Make brown
9 Source of light
11 Is able
14 Set apart
16 Governing body
17 Church period
19 Consumer
21 Plunder
22 Cow's call
24 Fish eggs
26 Wrongdoing

SUDOKU:3762

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Yesterday's Solution3761

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Yesterday's Cross Word Solution1770

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CPI (M) conducts mass dharna at Diglipur



DIGLIPUR, JAN 20/--/ CPI (M) Diglipur Area Committee has organized a mass dharna in front of the office of the Assistant Commissioner, Diglipur in North Andaman on Friday with various local demands. A large number of party workers from different parts of Diglipur Tehsil participated in the dharna. Inaugurating the Mass Dharna, Mr. D. Ayyappan, Secretary, CPI (M) A & N State Organising Committee, who was on a tour to North Andaman, said that the BJP government at the Centre has been continuously neglecting the burning issues of the islanders. He said that various local demands of the people of North Andaman are being

highlighted and taken up with the authorities in the Administration by the CPI (M) during the last one year but no action seems to have been taken to resolve the issues. The re-laying work of National Highway 4 (formerly Andaman Trunk Road) was entrusted to the NHIDCL about 7 years back but despite spending thousands of crores of rupees the work is yet to be completed because of which the people are facing difficulties to use the road especially during rainy days. ShriAyyappan said that there was massive corruption in the said work and blamed the Congress (I) and BJP for not highlighting this issue sincerely and thereby supporting the corruption in

this issue. Shri RamjibanSarkar, State Secretariat Member, Shri AVA Samad, Secretary, CPI (M) Diglipur Area Committee and Mr. Sunil Bepari and Mr. DilipKarmakar, State Organising Committee Members also addressed the meeting. Besides the NH4 work, the issues highlighted during the mass dharna were repair and completion of rural roads in North Andaman, providing piped water to all villages, supply of fertilizers and seeds to farmers, against price rise, upgradation of Diglipur CHC into Sub-District Hospital, increase in ferry services between Port Blair and Diglipur, construction of bridge connecting Kalighat and Nischinthpur, etc.

Awareness prog on domestic violence, drugs



ASHIM
BAKULTALA, JAN 20/--/A awareness programme on domestic violence and drugs was organized by the Outpost Bakultala.

The In-charge, Bakultala Police Outpost, MrDilip Kumar Singh generated awareness about domestic violence and the harmful effect of drugs. People were told to stay away from the menace of drugs.

Delhi HC stays trial court proceedings against BJP leader in defamation case by Sisodia


NEW DELHI, JAN 20 --/ The Delhi High Court Friday stayed the proceedings against BJP spokesperson and media relations incharge Harish Khurana and others before a trial court in a defamation case filed against them by Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia. The deputy chief minister had filed a defamation complaint against six people, including Khurana, for allegedly levelling corruption charges against him. Justice Dinesh Kumar Sharma issued a notice and sought Sisodia's response to a petition filed by Khurana challenging the trial court's November 28, 2019 order summoning him as an accused in the defamation case.

The High Court also issued a notice to Aam Aadmi Party leader Sisodia on the application to stay the proceedings before the trial court. "Issue notice. Respondent may file reply to the petition and the stay application. In the meanwhile, the proceedings qua the present petitioner (Khurana) be stayed," the High Court said. It listed the matter for further hearing on March 10, when the petitions by co-accused BJP leaders Hans Raj Hans and Manjinder Singh Sirsa are also listed. On January 5, the High Court had stayed the proceedings against Hans, a member of Parliament, and Sirsa, an MLA, in the case. The trial court had on November 28, 2019 passed an order summoning the six people as ac-

cused in the criminal defamation case. Sisodia had filed the complaint against BJP leaders -- Members of Parliament Manoj Tiwari, Hans Raj Hans and Praveesh Verma, MLAs Manjinder Singh Sirsa and Vijender Gupta and BJP spokesperson Harish Khurana -- for allegedly making corruption charges against him with regard to "inflated" cost of construction of classrooms in Delhi government schools. Khurana's counsel submitted before the High Court that the proceedings against Hans and Sirsa were stayed on January 5 and a similar order be passed on his petition.

Sisodia's counsel opposed the petition. The accused were earlier granted bail after they appeared before the trial court. The AAP leader had filed the complaint under section 200 of the CrPc for commission of offences under sections 499 and 500 read with Sections 34

and 35 of the IPC for making false and defamatory statements in print, electronic and social media. Sisodia had rejected the allegations made by the BJP leaders, jointly and individually, as "false, defamatory and derogatory". He claimed the accusations were made with an intention to harm and damage his reputation and goodwill. The offence of defamation entails a maximum punishment of two years. (PTI)

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CBC-32201/11/0008/2223

Monkey menace: Surgical sterilisation not possible, Delhi govt tells HC

NEW DELHI, JAN 20 --/ Surgical sterilisation is not working on monkeys and even professional monkey catchers are not coming forward to help control their menace, the Delhi government told the Delhi High Court on Friday.

The city government was making submissions on a plea seeking records from the state on the funds sanctioned by the Centre and spent to curb the monkey menace. A bench of Chief Justice Satish Chandra Sharma and Justice Subramonium Prasad asked petitioner Shashwat Bhardwaj, a lawyer, to place on record a copy of an earlier order of the high court in which certain directions were issued while dealing with the lingering problem caused by monkeys in Delhi.

The High Court listed the matter for further hearing on March 22. The petitioner has also sought setting up of a committee of senior bureaucrats, wildlife experts and members of the Bar who have extensively worked for animal rights to ensure effective implementation of the high court directions, particularly with regard to New Delhi.

During the hearing, Delhi government standing counsel Santosh Kumar Tripathi said the state has received funds from the Centre for the purpose and a tender was floated for hiring monkey catchers but nobody came forward. The counsel contended surgical sterilisation of monkeys is not possible and such endeavours have not been successful in many parts of the country.

He said oral contraceptive pills are administered to monkeys in captivity but these tablets have their own side effects. (PTI)

PMLA case: Court asks govt hospital to form medical board to examine Nawab Malik

MUMBAI, JAN 20 --/ A special court here on Friday directed the state-run JJ Hospital to constitute a medical board to examine and determine the health condition of NCP leader Nawab Malik, who is undergoing treatment at a private hospital since May 2022.

Malik was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on February 23, 2022 under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in connection with a probe linked to the activities of fugitive gangster Dawood Ibrahim and his aides. In May 2022, the special court, designated to hear cases registered under the PMLA, refused to grant bail to Malik on medical grounds, but permitted him to get admitted to a private

hospital for treatment. The ED, in September, filed an application seeking to constitute a medical board to verify Malik's health condition. Special Judge R N Rokade on Friday directed the dean of JJ hospital to constitute a medical board, comprising the head of the urology department, a nephrologist and the head of department from the general physician department.

"The board shall conduct a detailed examination and determine the health condition of the accused Nawab Malik," the court said. The board shall intimate the Arthur Road jail superintendent regarding the date and time of examination so that the jail authorities can produce Malik before the board, it said. "After examination, the accused is directed to be readmitted to Citi Care Asia private hospital until further orders," it said. (PTI)

Gala function marks National Youth Day conclusion by NYK Port Blair

PORT BLAIR, JAN 20/--/ The National Youth Day and week concluded at the auditorium of Maharashtra Mandal on 19th Jan 2023. The Nehru Yuva Kendra, Port Blair organized the programme in association with Maharashtra Mandal, Port Blair. During the week-long programmes, 8 events were organised including a rally, yoga camp, Yoga competitions, song, dance drawing (in three groups) and essay competition. About 150 youths participated in all competitions.

The Adhyaksha, Zilla Parishad South Andaman, Smt. Pramila Kumari was the chief guest at the closing ceremony. She also addressed the youth about their various development and career building, cultural significance in our countries. All the winners of the competitions were awarded trophies and certificates by the chief guest and prizes were also given by other guests present. While Mr. Aziz ul Rahman, Senior Vice President of PBMK was also present as the guest of



honour. He addressed the youth on the teachings of Swami Vivekananda and how it is relevant in today's situation.

By adopting the teachings of Swami Vivekananda in their lives, they can emerge from all situations and play their role in character building

and nation building. President of Maharashtra Mandal, Mr. Gorakh Nath Patil also spoke on the occasion.

Earlier, Mr. Sukhranjan Biswas, Deputy Director (OSD), NYK Port Blair, welcomed the guest and also inspired the youth as per the biography of

Swami Vivekananda. While Dr. Sunita Patil coordinated the programme and Mr. Gopal Ch Biswas of Nehru Yuva Kendra Port Blair proposed vote of thanks. Mr. Yogeswer Rao and Miss Raat Rani National service volunteers also extended their support for the success of the programme.

SC to hear plea of disqualified Lakshadweep MP on Jan 27

NEW DELHI, JAN 20 --/ The Supreme Court on Friday agreed to hear on January 27 the plea of Mohammed Faizal, who was disqualified as Lok Sabha MP following his conviction in an attempt to murder case, challenging the Election Commission's press note announcing conduct of by-election in his erstwhile Lakshadweep constituency. A bench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justice PS Narasimha took note of the submissions of senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Faizal, that he wanted the Kerala High Court to decide on his plea for suspension of conviction and sentence before the by-election is notified. "We filed the application before the Kerala High Court. We just want the high court to decide it soon, otherwise the by-elections will be notified," the senior lawyer said. Faizal, in his petition, said by the impugned "Press Note" the poll panel is proposing to fill the seat without awaiting the outcome of his plea for stay of conviction and sentence in the High Court. He has contended the EC's statement is "arbitrary, unlawful and mala fide". The Election Commission had said on January 18 the bypoll to the Lakshadweep Lok Sabha seat, which fell vacant following the disqualification of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader, will be held on February 27 along with the by-elections to six As-

sembly seats spread over five states.

The Kerala High Court had on January 18 called for the trial court records in connection with the conviction and 10-year sentence of the former MP and three others, including his brother, in an attempted murder case. The Union Territory (UT) of Lakshadweep had opposed the plea for suspension of the sentence of the convicts. It had contended that granting any relief to the convicts like releasing them on bail will "shake the people's faith in the judicial process". It had also said the offence committed by Faizal and his brother, who was a teacher in a government school, had shocked the society of the archipelago where very few crimes are reported.

Therefore, their release will send a wrong message to the society, the island administration had said. Faizal's brother Sayed Mohammed Nurul Ameen, according to eye-witnesses, was the one who exhorted to kill the injured Mohammed Salih, son-in-law of late Congress leader and former Union minister P M Sayeed, during the 2009 Lok Sabha polls, the UT administration had said. It had also alleged the disqualified MP had "a criminal bent of mind" and there were other criminal cases against him including two being probed by the CBI. (PTI)

Delhi Police intensifies patrolling, anti-terror measures ahead of R-Day

NEW DELHI, JAN 20 --/ The Delhi Police have deployed additional pickets, intensified anti-terror measures and enhanced patrolling ahead of Republic Day celebrations in the national capital, officials said on Friday.

All Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACsP) and Station House Officers (SHOs) have been holding meetings with members of the Residents Welfare Association and Market Welfare Associations and briefing them about security measures in place for Republic Day, they said. The police have also urged people to stay vigilant and inform them about anything suspicious. The Delhi Police has also been creating awareness on the social media, asking people to alert or inform the police about any suspicious person, activity or article, they said. Tenant and servant verifications

are being done, police said, adding that surprise checks are also being conducted at hotels, guest houses and 'dharamshalas' to ensure no suspicious or anti-social elements have occupied the space illegally, police said.

Mock drills have also been conducted by various districts to check their preparedness for anti-terror measures ahead of Republic Day, a senior police officer said. Special commissioner of police (law and order) Dependra Pathak said: "Our security checks and anti-terror measures are robust and we would not allow any mischief monger or terror criminal to function or get successful. "We are also alerting the market and resident welfare associations, organising public meetings, other initiatives to counter anonymity and create a vibrant web of human relationship focusing on security in place." According to

officials, anti-terror measures have been intensified in coordination with other security agencies since Delhi has always been a target for terrorists or anti-social elements. This year of officers are on high alert. Extra pickets have also been deployed on bordering areas to ensure no mischievous elements gain entry into the national capital, officials said. Besides, the internal meetings of Delhi Police, inter-state coordination meetings are also being held to ensure there are no lapses of security, a senior police official said. Checking have been intensified at malls, markets, railway and metro stations and bus terminus in order to ensure no untoward incident takes places, he said. Other agencies, besides the Delhi Police team, are also being deployed for anti-sabotage checks, he added. (PTI)

No. TN-DB/SAD/2022-23/176 dt.18/01/2023

e-TENDER NOTICE

The Executive Engineer, South Andaman Division, APWD, Port Blair invites on behalf of President of India, online Item Rate bid for below mentioned work from the approved and eligible Contractors of the Andaman PWD or all contractors irrespective of their enlistment in APWD or any other Govt. Department subject to the condition that they have experience on executing the relevant magnitude of work as per CPWD Works Manual and with other GOI organizations in these islands and do not have any adverse remarks for following works:-

1. NIT No.55/EE/SAD/APWD/2022-23, Tender ID: 2023_APWD_8977_1, Name of work: Construction of recording room for installation of emergency communication and GPS &. Strong motion sensors at Narcondum. **Estimated Cost:** ₹.20,76,353/- **Earnest Money Deposit:** ₹.41,527/-, **Time of completion:** 06 (Six) Months. **& Last time and date of submission of bid:** 06/02/2023 (1500 hrs).

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

Executive Engineer,
SAD, A.P.W.D., Port Blair.

9595/23

MANAPPURAM FINANCE LTD.
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GOLD AUCTION NOTICE

The pledges, in specific and the public, in general, are hereby notified that public auction of the gold ornaments pledged in the below accounts is proposed to be conducted at the following branches on 16/02/2023 from 10.00 am onwards. We are auctioning gold ornaments defaulted customers who have failed to make payment of his/her loan amount despite being notified by registered letters. Unauctioned items shall be auctioned on any other days without further notice. Changes in venue or date (if any) will be displayed at auction centre and on website without any further notice.

List of pledges:-
ANDAMAN, BABULANE
PORTBLAIR, 129170700054317,
4700, 129170700101352,
129170780000021,

Persons wishing to participate in the above auction shall comply with the following:- Interested Bidders should submit Rs. 10,000/- as EMD (refundable to unsuccessful bidders) by way of Cash on the same day of auction. Bidders should carry valid ID card/PAN card. For more details please contact 8714603282.

Authorised Officer
For Manappuram Finance Ltd

Rapid growth creating opportunities for employment, self-employment: PM

Modi electronically distributes 71,426 appointment letters to recruits

NEW DELHI, JAN 20 /--/ Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said more opportunities for employment and self-employment were being created in a rapidly growing India that is taking huge strides in the infrastructure and allied sectors.

Addressing a Rozgar Mela via video conferencing, he also said that his government had effected broad changes in the recruitment process by making it more streamlined and time-bound while boosting transparency and speed. He distributed electronically 71,426 appointment letters to recruits in different government departments, and said the ongoing 'Rozgar Mela' exercises have become an identity of his government. Modi said several states where the BJP and its allies were in power have been organising employment drives. "India is witnessing change. In a rapidly growing India, opportunities for employment and self-employment are being created continuously. When the country witnesses massive growth, innumerable opportunities of self-employment are generated. India is witnessing this today," the Prime Minister said.

Modi said extensive development of infrastructure over the past eight years has created lakhs of opportunities in the self-employment sector. "You are aware that whenever a new road is constructed, it also lays down that path for self-employment in its vicinity. New markets spring up, a range of shops are opened. The new road also makes it easier for farmers to take their produce to the markets," the Prime Minister said. "Similarly, any place is connected with new railway lines, the markets in the region prosper, tourism also expands with new means of transportation. Opportunities for employment are present in such expansion," Modi said. Addressing the recruits, he asked them to resolve to serve people and said the mantra in the administrative system should be that the citizen is always right like it is noted in business that the consumer is always right.

That is why employment in the government sector is called "government service" and not jobs, he said. The Prime Minister noted that a large

understand its benefits. This has opened a new area of entrepreneurship by providing online services in villages," Modi said. According to the Prime Minister, flourishing start up scene in tier 2 and tier 3 cities has created a new identity for the youth in the world. The PMO had earlier said the 'Rozgar Mela' is a step towards fulfilment of Modi's commitment to accord highest priority to employment generation.



PM Narendra Modi at the distribution ceremony of 71,000 appointment letters under Rozgar Mela via video conferencing on Friday

The 'Rozgar Mela' is expected to act as a catalyst in further employment generation and provide meaningful opportunities to the youth for their empowerment and participation in national development, it added. The new recruits, selected from across the country, will join various positions under the central government like junior engineers, loco pilots,

technicians, inspector, sub inspectors, constable, stenographer, junior accountant, grameen dak sevak, Income Tax inspectors, teachers, nurses, doctors, social security officers among others. The experience of newly inducted officials in learning from the 'Karmayogi Prarambh' module was also shared during the programme as Modi interacted with some of them. The module is an online orientation course for all new appointees in various government departments.

In June last year, the prime minister had directed various ministries and departments to fill up 10 lakh government vacancies in mission mode by December 2023. Friday's Rozgar Mela was the third edition of the initiative that was launched on October 22, 2022 when the prime minister handed out appointment letters to 75,000 people. On November 22, 2022 more than 71,000 job aspirants were handed over appointment letters of government jobs. The Prime Minister has handed over appointment letters to more than 2.17 lakh persons under the Rozgar Mela so far (PTI)

Delhi Police nabs 2 associates of Canada-based gangster-turned-terrorist ahead of R-Day

NEW DELHI, JAN 20 /--/ Ahead of Republic Day, the Delhi Police has arrested two alleged associates of Canada-based gangster-turned-terrorist Lakhbir Singh Landa from Punjab, officials claimed on Friday.

The two have been identified as Rajan Bhatti, a resident of Gurdapur in Punjab, and Kanwaljeet Singh alias Chinna, a resident of Firozepur in Punjab, they said. In the ongoing operations against Khalistani terror-gangster nexus, police have apprehended Bhatti. He is one of Punjab's wanted gangsters and close

associate of another fugitive Landa Harike, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) Manishi Chandra said. Bhatti was involved in over 15 cases and was wanted in a case registered in Punjab's Mohali.

The FIR was registered in connection with target killings and for disturbing communal harmony in Punjab on the instructions of Lakhbir Singh Landa and Harvinder Singh Rinda, police said. Based on disclosures made by Bhatti and technical analysis, Singh was also nabbed in a joint operation with Punjab Police, the DCP said. (PTI)

Indian security agencies have established supremacy; no one can ignore India now: Shah

NEW DELHI, JAN 20 /--/ Union home minister Amit Shah on Friday said Indian security agencies have succeeded in establishing their supremacy and no one can ignore the country any more in any field nor stop any one from moving forward.

Addressing the inaugural session of a three-day conference of the DGPs and IGP's here, he said India is now definitely safe, strong and on a good footing under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The PMO in a release said Prime Minister Modi will attend the All India Conference of Director Generals and Inspector Generals of Police being held at the National Agricultural Science Complex.

"Since 2014, the prime minister has taken a keen interest in the DGP conference. Unlike the symbolic presence of Prime Ministers earlier, he sits through all major sessions of the conference," it said. The Prime Minister not only listens patiently to all the inputs, but also encourages free and informal discussions so that new ideas can come up, the release of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said. This provides a congenial atmosphere for the top police officials of the country to directly brief the prime minister on key policing and internal security issues, and give open and frank recommendations, it said. The release said guided by the vision of the Prime Minister, the conference has started

discussions on futuristic themes in policing and security. On the first day of the conference, the home minister also distributed police medal for meritorious service and gave trophies to the top three police stations of the country. Topics such as security challenges along the land borders with Nepal and

shift in their strategy and approach. "Earlier we had single dimensional problems, but now the problems are multi-dimensional. To deal with them, we have to be two steps ahead of those who commit crimes. We have to change the method of urban policing rapidly. Even on capacity building of the police, a lot of



Myanmar, strategies to identify overstaying foreigners in India and targeting of Maoist strongholds were discussed, officials said. Over the next two days, the top police leadership of the country will deliberate on emerging security challenges and opportunities along with experts, field functionaries and academia. "Under the leadership of Modi, Indian security agencies have succeeded in establishing their supremacy. Today, no one can ignore India in any field, nor anyone can stop you from moving forward," he said. Shah said earlier the country's problems were geographical, now the problems are becoming thematic, and for this security agencies have to bring about a paradigm

attention has to be paid," he said. Shah said to make internal security impenetrable, the police have to be empowered and the Modi government and the home ministry will fully cooperate with states. Referring to the situation in Jammu and Kashmir after the abrogation of Article 370, the home minister said there was a time when children from Jammu and Kashmir used to go to study in other parts of the country due to militancy. "But today 32,000 children from other parts of the country are studying in Jammu and Kashmir," Shah said. "Similarly the amount of investment that has come in the last four years is more than what it had come to Jammu and Kashmir in the last 70 years," he said. (PTI)



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with supporter during the party's 'Bharat Jodo Yatra', in Kathua, on Friday

PM scared of 2002 riots truth coming out, blocking of BBC documentary undemocratic: Cong

NEW DELHI, JAN 20 /--/ The Congress on Friday alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is still scared of the truth of the 2002 riots coming out and the "blocking" of the BBC documentary "blaming him for the pogrom is a cowardly and undemocratic act".

The Opposition party also said that no matter how much the Modi government tries to "cover up" the truth, the world sees the truth. "Narendra Modi is still scared of the truth about 2002 coming out 21 years later. The blocking of the BBC documentary that squarely blames him for the pogrom is a cowardly, undemocratic act, one that clearly shows Modi's dictatorial attitude," AICC general secretary organisation K C Venugopal said. After British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak defended PM Modi, Congress secretary Ashish Dua asked: "Has Rishi Sunak watched the 'rigorously researched' BBC documentary on Gujarat or has the Hon. PM spoken with (former British foreign secretary) Jack Straw for the perspective put by him in public domain?"

Another Congress spokesperson Shama Mohamed said: "The BBC documentary reveals that the UK govt inquiry held

Narendra Modi 'Directly Responsible' for the 2002 Gujarat Riots." "No matter how much the BJP government may try to cover up the truth, the world sees Modi for what he truly is!", she tweeted. TMC leader Derek O'Brien shared a link of the BBC documentary on YouTube and said, "So, the BBC documentary (Part 1) which I posted has, as expected, been taken down from YouTube. Let's see how many more times BJP get it deleted." "The one-hour prog exposes Narendra Modi's hate for minorities," he said. Amid controversy over the BBC documentary on Prime Minister Modi, India had on Thursday dismissed it as a "propaganda piece", saying it is designed to push a particular "discredited narrative" and that the continuing colonial mindset is "blatantly visible" in the series. External affairs ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi also wondered about the purpose of the documentary and the "agenda" behind it and said "frankly we do not wish to dignify such efforts".

The two-part BBC documentary 'India: The Modi Question' claims it investigated certain aspects relating to the 2002 Gujarat riots when Modi was the chief minister of the state. (PTI)

WHO officials hail India's G20 Presidency; say it should be a beacon for others to learn from

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JAN 20 /--/ A WHO official on Friday termed India's presidency at the G20 Health Working Group meeting as an "exciting moment in history" and said it has bolstered the voice of the Global South.

Ayoade Alakija, Special Envoy, ACT-Accelerator, WHO said she is keen to watch the Global South collaborations which can be put together in the new world order and expressed hope that this process will surely help it. "India's G20 Presidency is an exciting moment in history, because India is going to decide the global health architecture for the next many decades to come. Because it is going to be decided in the next few months," Alakija said. She said she feels that the world is coming to India not just for discussions but also to learn from it as so much digital transformation is taking place in various sectors including health and infrastructure to finance in the country.

The ongoing meet, which would conclude today, would be a platform for how we can learn from each other in this Global South-in Africa, India, Latin America and so on, she said. "How can we share our experiences and innovate together and how can we co-create the world we want...the world that is going to be truly the world that delivers for

us...the people," Alakija further said. The official also said it has been incredible to be in the "God's own country", Kerala and see the amazing culture and the wonderful warm welcome they had in the south Indian state.

Meanwhile, Dr Alain Labrique, Director, Digital Health & Innovation, WHO, opined that India five years ago is different to India today. The same can be said for countries across the globe and in the Global South, he said. "So, we have to think about where we are today but also build solutions for tomorrow and keep in mind that everyone should benefit from this technology revolution," he added. Stating that success is built upon trust, Labrique said trust means there is a background of policy, of legislation that protects the privacy and security and builds the trust of individuals to use the systems.

"So, I think, that is the foundation of a place where I would like to see India shining as a beacon to other countries to learn from," he said. The official also explained the elements of legislation and policies that need to be in place for digital success to be possible. The first Health Working Group meeting under G20 India Presidency will conclude here on Friday. India assumed the presidency of the G20 on December 1, 2022. (PTI)

Woman naval air operations officer to lead Navy's contingent at R-Day parade

NEW DELHI, JAN 20 /--/ Lt Commander Disha Amrith, a woman naval air operations official posted at a strategic base, will lead the Indian Navy's Republic Day contingent of 144 young sailors and its tableau will showcase the 'Nari Shakti' in force.

Navy officials said three women and five men Agniveers will also participate in the parade at Kartavya Path. Besides Amrith, another woman officer -- Sub Lt Valli Meena S -- will be among the three platoon commanders of the naval contingent. A Bachelor of Engineering in Computer Science from BMS College of Engineering in Karnataka, 29-year-old Amrith was part of the National Cadet Corps's Republic Day team in 2008 and harboured the dream of being part of the

marching contingents of one of the three services at the celebrations in Delhi. "Since 2008, I was nurturing this dream of being part of the Republic Day contingent of the armed forces. It is an amazing opportunity that the Indian Navy has given me (to lead the naval contingent)," she said.

The officer, who hails from Mangaluru, got into the Navy in 2016 and has been posted at a key naval facility in the Andaman and Nicobar islands after completing her training in 2017.

"I am an aviator for Dornier aircraft and have been carrying out sorties in the plane," she told PTI. Last month, Navy Chief Admiral R Hari Kumar said the Navy is looking at opening all its branches for women from 2023. Sharing her

experience, Amrith said she always wanted to be part of the armed forces and it was partly inspired by her parents as well.

"My father also wanted to be part of the services but could not. I am proud to be part of the Navy and will continue to serve the Navy with full zeal and dedication," she said. Asked about the challenges that women face in the forces, Amrith said: "I became stronger physically, emotionally and I am now more self-driven." The renowned brass band of the Indian Navy of 80 musicians will be led by M Antony Raj, playing the Indian Navy Song 'Jai Bharti'. The theme of the naval tableau would be 'Indian Navy -- Combat Ready, Credible, Cohesive and Future Proof,' said Vice Admiral Suraj Berry, the

Controller Personnel Services (CPS). Berry also said the tableau is designed with an aim to showcase the multi-dimensional capabilities of the Indian Navy as well as highlight key indigenously designed and built platforms.

"The tableau also aims to highlight 'Nari Shakti' in the Indian Navy," he told reporters. The forward part of the tableau will showcase a woman aircrew of Dornier aircraft (flying overhead), highlighting the all-women crew of a surveillance sortie undertaken last year. The main section of the tableau will illustrate the 'Make in India' initiatives of the Navy and model of the new indigenous Nilgiri class ship with a Dhruv helicopter deploying marine commandos will take the centre-stage. On the sides of the main section,

cut out models of indigenous Kalvari Class submarine will be depicted.

In the rear section of the tableau, three models of autonomous unmanned systems being developed indigenously under IDEX-Sprint Challenge will be displayed.

The Indian Navy aims to induct at least 75 technology/product as part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav. The sprint initiative was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the Naval Innovation and Indignation Organisation Seminar in July last year. These products are being developed under the innovation for defence excellence scheme of the ministry of defence and Technology Development Acceleration Cell of Indian Navy, the official said. (PTI)



benefit from this technology revolution," he added. Stating that success is built upon trust, Labrique said trust means there is a background of policy, of legislation that protects the privacy and security and builds the trust of individuals to use the systems.

EAM meets Rajapaksa brothers; discusses challenges faced by Lanka

COLOMBO, JAN 20 /--/ Former Sri Lankan presidents Mahinda Rajapaksa and his younger brother Gotabaya Rajapaksa on Friday held discussions with external affairs minister S Jaishankar on a range of issues of mutual interest and thanked the Indian government for its steadfast commitment to assisting Colombo during its troubled times.

Gotabaya Rajapaksa, 73, fled Sri Lanka to the Maldives on a Sri Lanka Airforce plane in July last year, as the country plunged into its worst economic and humanitarian crisis since its independence from Great Britain in 1948. "Called on former President @PresRajapaksa today. Discussed the current challenges faced by Sri Lanka and India's strong support in this hour of need," Jaishankar said in a tweet. In September last year, he was given special security and a state bungalow upon his return here from Thailand. Gotabaya Rajapaksa, an ex-military officer, was appointed Sri Lanka president in November 2019. Mahinda Rajapaksa was forced to resign as Sri Lanka's Prime Minister in May last year following street protests in the country against the government led by Gotabaya Rajapaksa for mishandling the unprecedented economic crisis. "Had successful discussions with India's External Affairs Min @DrSJJaishankar & discussed a range of issues of mutual interest," Mahinda Rajapaksa tweeted.

"Also thanked the Indian govt. for its steadfast commitment in assisting #SriLanka during its troubled times & the strong ties shared between Sri Lanka & India," the 77-year-old leader tweeted. Jaishankar also met the Leader of Opposition Sajith Premadasa and exchanged views about bilateral ties. "Nice to meet leader of opposition @sajithpremadasa. Exchanged views about our bilateral ties," he tweeted. Later, Jaishankar also met Douglas Devanan, Sri Lanka's minister of fisheries. "Discussed cooperation on fisheries and stressed working together and humanitarian approach," the external affairs minister said in a tweet. Jaishankar is in Sri Lanka to meet the country's top leaders to enhance bilateral ties and finalise a debt restructuring plan to help Colombo carve out a path from its economic crisis.

The IMF facility would enable the island nation to obtain bridging finance from markets and other lending institutions such as the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank. Sri Lanka was hit by an unprecedented financial crisis in 2022 due to a severe paucity of foreign exchange reserves, sparking political turmoil in the country which led to the ouster of the all-powerful Rajapaksa family, which has dominated Sri Lankan politics for over two decades. Mahinda Rajapaksa, the patriarch of the Rajapaksa family, served as president from 2005 to 2015. He also served as the Prime Minister from 2004 to 2005, 2018, and 2019 to 2022. The Rajapaksas have dominated Sri Lankan politics for over two decades. (PTI)

Existing international order created keeping in mind West's interest; world needs new one: Pak foreign minister

DAVOS, JAN 20 /--/ The existing international order was created keeping in mind interests of the West and the world needs a new one where voice of the Global South can be heard, Pakistan's foreign affairs minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said on Friday. Speaking at a session during the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2023 here, he also favoured peace negotiations to resolve the Ukraine crisis.



Bilawal Bhutto Zardari

"Unfortunately, geopolitics is reflecting a lot of domestic politics these days. There is a hyper polarisation that is happening. Similarly the international order and institutional frameworks that held the world together, those are also being undermined by the hyper polarised times and hyper partisan," Zardari said. The minister said the old international order for dispute resolution has certainly failed and there is a need for a new and an improved rules-based international order to address the issues.

"And for building that new order, voice of Global South must be heard for it to be successful...The entire international order is structured in the interest of the western world, which may be so because it was created in a colonial world. We need to take into account the Global South, Africa and Asia," the minister said. The Pakistani leader said the Ukraine war is the first time when international order and the UN security council resolutions have been violated. "I believe that diplomacy is the key thing that is missing. I want to tell my Ukrainian friends that NATO was there in my neighbourhood too, but the Afghan tragedy finally ended when all sides sat together on a table," he added. "I fail to see why we can't have some serious international players try peace negotiations side by side. What is the worst that can happen? It will fail but still that must be tried," he added. (PTI)

Japan to lower Covid to flu status, further easing rules

TOKYO, JAN 20 /--/ Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida on Friday announced plans to downgrade the legal status of Covid-19 to the equivalent of seasonal influenza in the spring, a move that would further relax mask wearing and other preventive measures as the country seeks to return to normalcy.

Kishida said he has instructed experts and government officials to discuss the details on lowering Covid-19's status. A change would also remove self-isolation rules and other anti-virus requirements and allow Covid-19 patients to seek treatment at any hospital instead of only specialised facilities. "In order to return to our ordinary daily life in Japan while pursuing measures to adapt to living with the

coronavirus, we will study concrete measures to gradually move on to a next step," Kishida said. In Japan, Covid-19 is currently categorized as a Class 2 disease, along with SARS and tuberculosis, and is subject to restricting movements of patients and their close contacts, while allowing central and local governments to issue emergency measures. Downgrading it to Class 5 would mean scrapping those rules.

The planned change would mark a major turning point in Japan's Covid-19 policy toward normalising social and economic activities. The move, however, comes as Japan faces widespread infections and record levels of deaths in what is considered its eighth wave of outbreak since the pandemic began three years ago.

According to the health ministry, daily deaths totalled a record high of 503 last Saturday. Experts say the latest increase could be linked to worsening chronic illnesses among older patients. Downgrading the legal status of Covid-19 under the infectious disease law could remove ongoing hospitalisation and self-isolation rules and help to free up hospital beds reserved for Covid-19 patients, health minister Katsunobu Kato told newsmen.

The idea is to create a system where Covid-19 can be treated as part of ordinary medical services, he said. But he cautioned: "Changing its classification doesn't mean coronavirus is gone. We still need everyone to take voluntary measures by using masks and precautions." Kato said mask

wearing is unnecessary outdoors now and that indoor use would also be eased once the downgrade is in place. The health minister said it will require some adjustments for people, workplaces, municipalities and hospitals, and declined to set an exact timeline, other than to say it would occur in "the spring." Details are still being worked out but the cost of Covid-19 treatments and vaccinations are expected to still be covered by the government for now. Japan last fall stopped requiring Covid-19 tests for entrants who had at least three shots part of the country's careful easing of measures after virtually closing its borders to foreign tourists for about two years. Japan is now reporting known daily cases of between 100,000 and 200,000. (AP)

Defence leaders meet amid dissent over tanks for Ukraine

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, JAN 20 /--/ Defence leaders gathered at Ramstein Air Base in Germany heard an impassioned plea for more aid on Friday from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy as they struggled to resolve ongoing dissent over who will provide battle tanks and other military aid to his embattled country.

"This is a crucial moment. Russia is regrouping, recruiting and trying to re-equip," US defence secretary Lloyd Austin warned as the meeting opened. Zelenskyy, speaking live via video link, told the gathering that "terror does not allow for discussion." Austin said "the war started by Russia does not allow delays." Calling it a decisive moment for Ukraine and a "decisive decade for the world," Austin said the group's presence in Germany signalled their unity and commitment to continue supporting Ukraine. "We need to keep up our momentum and our resolve. We need to dig even deeper," Austin told the gathering of as many as 50 defense leaders who were attending in person and by video. Austin and US Army Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, were expected to discuss the latest massive package of aid the US is sending, which totals 2.5 billion and includes Stryker armored vehicles for the first time. But broader hesitation

over sending tanks to Ukraine has roiled the coalition. Germany faces mounting pressure to supply Leopard 2 tanks to Kyiv, or at least clear the way for other countries, such as Poland, to deliver the German-made Leopards from their own stocks. The US has also declined, at least so far, to provide M1 Abrams tanks, citing the extensive and complex maintenance and logistical challenges with the high-tech vehicle. The US believes it would be more productive to send Leopards since many allies have them and Ukrainian troops would only have to get trained on that one, versus needing far more training on the more difficult Abrams. The United Kingdom announced last week that it would send Challenger 2 tanks, describing it as a natural progression of military aid to Ukraine. At a Pentagon briefing Thursday, spokeswoman Sabrina Singh said the Leopard and Challenger aren't comparable to the Abrams tanks because the Abrams is much harder to maintain and wouldn't be a good fit. "It's more of a

sustainment issue. I mean, this is a tank that requires jet fuel, whereas the Leopard and the Challenger, it's a different engine." The Leopard and Challenger are "a little bit easier to maintain," Singh said. "They can maneuver across large portions of territory before they need to refuel. The maintenance and the high cost that it would take to maintain an Abrams it just doesn't make sense to provide that to the Ukrainians at this moment." The package of aid being sent by the US includes eight Avenger air defense systems, 350 Humvees, 53 Mine Resistant Ambush



Volodymyr Zelenskyy

Protected (MRAP) vehicles, more than 100,000 rounds of artillery ammunition and rockets, and missiles for the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System. It was announced Thursday by the Pentagon. Germany's new defence minister, Boris Pistorius, who took office just an hour before he met with Austin on Thursday, is among those attending the Ramstein meeting. Referring to the tanks, he told ARD television he was "pretty sure we will get a decision on this in

the coming days, but I can't yet tell you today how it will look."

During brief comments before the meeting began, Austin said: "we'll renew our united commitment to support Ukraine's self-defense for the long haul," but didn't mention any specific new equipment. Nearly 11 months into the Russian invasion, Zelenskyy has expressed frustration about not obtaining enough weaponry from the Western allies. Speaking by video link on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum's annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland, on Wednesday, the Ukrainian leader offered a veiled critique of major supporters such as Germany and the U.S. that have hesitated about sending tanks. Bemoaning a "lack of specific weaponry," Zelenskyy said, through an interpreter: "There are times where we shouldn't hesitate or we shouldn't compare when someone says, I will give tanks if someone else will also share his tanks." German officials have conveyed their hesitancy to allow allies to give Leopards unless the US also sends Ukraine the Abrams, according to a US official who wasn't authorized to comment and spoke on condition of anonymity. But there have been no signs the US is shifting its decision to not send Abrams. The issue is expected to be a key topic at Friday's meeting. (AP)

Pak govt ready to meet all IMF demands to revive bailout programme: Report

ISLAMABAD, JAN 20 /--/ The Pakistan government has requested the IMF to send its mission to the country at the earliest, preferably next week, to conclude a long-awaited agreement to revive the bailout programme, as it conveyed its willingness to accept all the four major conditions set by the global lender, according to a media report.

Cash-strapped Pakistan revived a stalled USD 6 billion International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme last year which was initially agreed upon in 2019 but is finding it hard to meet the tough conditions of the Washington-based global lender. There are reports that the IMF may not release more funds under the programme until the pledges made by the government are met. The IMF board in August approved the seventh and eighth reviews of Pakistan's bailout programme, allowing for a release of over USD 1.1 billion. "We have completed our workings on all four areas on the basis of our interactions on the sidelines of the Geneva conference," a senior member of the government told the Dawn newspaper after weeklong consultations including at least two sessions presided over by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif through a video link from Lahore. "We are ready to move ahead with reforms committed under the programme and we plan to implement all decisions during the course of talks with the proposed IMF mission," the official said.

Secretary finance Hamed Yaqoob Shaikh has formally written to the IMF mission chief to visit Pakistan. Another participant said that the IMF bailout package was a panacea for all challenges Pakistan faced today and there was no other exit route from default, which was the Fund mission had been requested to sit across the table and finalise everything. Another official said that the government had told the IMF that it was ready to implement decisions in line with Geneva discussions. "They are also expected to show some flexibility given the recent engagements and economic challenges posed by the post-floods situation," he said. The Fund had four major demands market-based exchange rate, increase in electricity and gas rates (by almost an average of Rs 7 per Kilowatt-hour and Rs 750 per Metric Million British Thermal Unit, respectively), and additional taxes to make up for the revenue slippages (by almost Rs 100 billion by one estimate and by Rs 225 billion by another estimate) so as to contain the fiscal deficit within the original programme targets with adjustments for flood expenditure.

The thrust of all these measures would not be allowed to flow down to the common people and the maximum burden would be limited to well-to-do sections of society, the government members said. "We do not have any option anymore not to satisfy the Fund. If talks fail, the mission could go back and simply report no progress, but Pakistan cannot afford this," an official said. State minister for finance Aisha Ghaus Pasha, who was part of the consultations, said Pakistan had conveyed to the IMF that it was ready to implement reforms as agreed and wanted to settle the outstanding issues. She said the government wanted to continue the IMF programme in a manner that the common people did not bear the burden of tough decisions, according to Dawn. (PTI)

TTP militants attack security checkpoint at Pak-Afghan Highway; 2 cops killed

PESHAWAR, JAN 20 /--/ Heavily-armed militants from the Pakistani Taliban attacked a security checkpoint at the Pakistan-Afghanistan Highway in northwest Pakistan's restive tribal district on Thursday and killed two policemen, authorities said. The attack at the Takhta Beg check post was carried out with heavy weapons, police officer said. In retaliatory one of the suicide bomber was gunned down inside the checkpoint, which he had entered while heavily firing on the police. The exchange of fire between the attackers and police continued for half an hour. Two police officials Yunas Afridi and Manzoor Afridi were killed in the attack while the condition of one constable has been stated to be critical. (PTI)



Church of England apologises for treatment of LGBTQI+ people

LONDON, JAN 20 /--/ The Church of England formally apologised Friday for its treatment of LGBTQI people even as it said that same-sex couples still will not be allowed to marry in its churches.

The apology from the church's bishops came in a report following five years of debate on the church's position on sexuality. The report will be delivered to the church's national assembly, the General Synod, which is meeting in London next month. "We want to apologise for the ways in which the Church of England has treated LGBTQI+ people both those who worship in our churches and those who do not," the bishops said in a statement. "For the times we have rejected or excluded you, and those you love, we are deeply sorry. The occasions on which you have received a hostile and homophobic response in our churches are shameful, and for this we repent."

Nonetheless, the Church of England's stance that matrimony is restricted to unions between one man and one woman will remain in place. It has proposed offering same-sex couples the chance to have a church service with prayers of dedication, thanksgiving or for God's blessing after they have a civil wedding or register a civil partnership. Same-sex marriage has been legal in England and Wales since 2013, but the church did not change its teaching when the law changed. (AP)

French Prez proposes increased military spending plan until 2030

MONT-DE-MARSAN, JAN 20 /--/ French President Emmanuel Macron on Friday proposed a substantial boost in defence spending through the end of



this decade and a "transformation" of France's nuclear-armed military to face evolving threats and take into account the impact of the war in Ukraine.

Macron announced a proposal for 413 billion euros in military spending for the period of 2024-2030, to ensure "our freedom, our security, our prosperity, our place in the world". That compares with spending of about 295 billion euros in a similar military plan for 2019-2025. He made the announcement in a speech to military personnel addressing new defence strategy in the wake of the Ukraine war and other threats. The President noted threats from hybrid warfare, growing cyber attacks on critical infrastructure and continued threats from terrorism.

The plan is meant to take into account the consequences of the war in Ukraine, and to boost defence spending in the coming years to reinforce France's domestic security and the country's ability to operate abroad. Macron also called for modernising France's nuclear arsenal. He wants France's military strategy to strengthen the country's role as an independent global power. Friday's speech comes as defence officials from the US and allies are meeting in Ramstein, Germany, to discuss further help for Ukraine. (AP)

Getting more opportunities to bat in last one year has helped my power game: Santner



Mitchell Santner practies vicariously as he watches Henry Shipley

RAIPUR, JAN 20 /--/ New Zealand left-arm spinner Mitchell Santner feels getting more opportunities to bat over the past 12 months has led to an improvement in his power game and helped him chip in with useful knocks.

Santner smashed his third ODI fifty on Wednesday while supporting a rampaging Michael Bracewell in a whirlwind 162-run stand for the seventh wicket against India, taking New Zealand very close to the finishing line in Hyderabad. Batting at number eight, his game plan is simple – to hit sixes from ball one – and that was amply clear in the way he batted in the centre nets of Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh Stadium here on Friday. Like the rest of the New Zealand batters, he mostly faced the spinners and tried to hit most balls out of the park.

"Being an all-rounder you need to chip in both the departments. In the last year or so, getting more opportunities to bat has helped. It can be quite challenging at times

if you are at the bottom and you have three or four overs left," he said ahead of the second ODI.

"The nature of batting at 7 and 8 is that you have to go hard from ball one and hit. You train for your role and that is what I do in the nets and try to hit some sixes. When you have more time to bat like the other night you get into your innings a bit more.

"Sometime you will come with 15 overs left and sometimes with two overs left. You have to be able to do both." Santner also gave a fitness update on leg-spinner Ish Sodhi who had a bowl in the nets. With Santner, Sodhi and off-spinner Bracewell in the squad, New Zealand have all bases "covered".

India managed to score 349 in the first ODI but Santner feels the spinners bowled alright and it was Shubman Gill who took the game away from there.

"The way Gill used his crease forward and back it is quite challenging as a spin bowler," he said. (PTI)

Indian team fined 60 per cent of match fees for slow over rate

RAIPUR, JAN 20 /--/ The Indian team has been fined 60 per cent of its match fee for maintaining a slow over-rate against New Zealand in the first ODI in Hyderabad. Javagal Srinath of the Emirates ICC Elite Panel of Match Referees imposed the sanction after India were ruled to be three overs short of the target after time allowances were taken into consideration for Wednesday's series opener.

"In accordance with Article 2.22 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which relates to minimum over-rate offences, players are fined 20 per cent of their match fee for every over their side fails to bowl in the allotted time," the ICC said in a statement. India captain Rohit Sharma pleaded guilty to the offence and accepted the proposed sanction, so there was no need for a formal hearing. On-field umpires Anil Chaudhary and Nitin Menon, third umpire K N Ananthapadmanabhan and fourth umpire Jayaraman Madanagopal levelled the charge. Riding on Shubman Gill's magnificent double hundred, India emerged winners by 12 runs to take a 1-0 lead in the three-match series. Chasing an imposing target of 350, New Zealand were bowled out for 337 in 49.2 overs in the high-scoring game. (PTI)

Bruised Ronaldo scores twice to edge showdown with Messi

RIYADH, JAN 20 /--/ Grimacing in pain from his bruised cheekbone, Cristiano Ronaldo steadied himself before scoring from the penalty spot for his first goal in Saudi Arabia against a Paris Saint-Germain team featuring old foe Lionel Messi.

Messi had already scored early in Thursday's exhibition game when Ronaldo was flattened boxing-match style by PSG goalkeeper Keylor Navas after about 30 minutes in Riyadh, the city which gained sporting prominence for hosting a world heavyweight championship boxing bout in 2019. It wasn't Anthony Joshua but Navas who caught Ronaldo flush in the face with his forearm under a high ball. Both went down like felled boxers. Ronaldo held his head, got back up, did a wide yawn as if to test his sore left cheek, and sent his former Real Madrid teammate Navas the wrong way. By the end of the first half Ronaldo's cheekbone was bright apple red but he was all smiles after netting his second goal, smashing in a rebound when his header came back off the post. Poking his tongue out, Ronaldo wheeled away in delight and was mobbed by teammates at the corner flag.



Ronaldo (C) shoots to score his team's second goal during the Riyadh Season Cup football match

When PSG star Kylian Mbappé checked on the state of Ronaldo's cheek just before the second half, Ronaldo milked the attention from France's World Cup star and pointed to the red mark. Mbappé smiled at him as if to say "You'll be fine" and Ronaldo raised his arm in triumph like a heavyweight champion. Messi's Qatar-backed PSG won 5-4 against a combined XI of Saudi Arabian teams Al Nassr and Al Hilal, captained by Al

Nasser's new signing Ronaldo, in front of 68,000 fans at King Fahd International Stadium. Although his team lost, Ronaldo edged perhaps the final instalment of Ronaldo vs. Messi as one of the greatest rivalries in soccer history resumed in an unusual location. Messi's shot led to a handball and PSG's fourth goal, scored by Mbappé from the penalty spot. Ronaldo came off to a huge ovation just after the hour mark followed by Mbappé and Argentina's

World Cup-winning star Messi, who was warmly hugged by countryman Marcelo Gallardo, coaching the combined Saudi Arabian team. Ronaldo's bruise darkened with the night sky as he collected his man of the match award. He was locked in conversation with ex-Madrid teammates Sergio Ramos and Navas before the medal ceremony. Then he spoke to Portugal teammates Renato Sanches and Danilo, who play for PSG. But Ronaldo was

nowhere near Messi, almost like they avoided each other. They couldn't do that earlier on the field, when Ronaldo tackled Messi in the second minute. Moments later, Messi smiled as he scored from Neymar's lofted pass. Ronaldo looked annoyed with his teammates for letting Messi ghost into space. Harsh, because few defenders have ever tracked Messi's runs, let alone stopped them. The World Cup proved that, if it was ever in doubt. There was scant interaction between former Madrid star Ronaldo and Messi, his arch-rival during Barcelona's glory days. It was Ronaldo who tentatively approached an impassive-looking Messi at the center circle seconds before the whistle blew to start perhaps their final game as opponents. There was a polite exchange, the briefest handshake. Messi stared at Ronaldo late in the first half, after PSG defender Juan Bernat had been sent off, and Ronaldo seemed to look away from Messi.

It was a different mood in the tunnel beforehand, when a grinning Ronaldo hugged Ramos, who now plays alongside Messi, and joked with Ramos that he'd forgotten to remove an ear stud. (AP)

Thakur or Malik? India weigh pace options ahead of Raipur's international debut

RAIPUR, JAN 20 /--/ India will be expecting more runs from the middle order and discipline in the death overs as they look for a series sealing win against New Zealand in the second ODI here on Saturday.

With the city hosting its first-ever international game, a sell out crowd of 60,000 plus is expected to cheer the home team. After being down and out at 131 for six, New Zealand were allowed to score another 206 runs in the chase of 350 and that should worry India. The visitors looked like getting a remarkable come-from-behind win but the individual brilliance of Mohammed Siraj stopped them. With the bat, Shubman Gill, who scored a scintillating double century, had singlehandedly taken India to a competitive total with the others falling by the wayside. Virat Kohli's individual effort had stood out in the previous game against Sri Lanka.

Hardik Pandya, who has not been at his belligerent best of late, will be expected to give final flourish to the innings. Accommodated in the middle-order following his double hundred performance in Bangladesh, Ishan Kishan would be itching to make the most of the opportunity after an off-



Vikram Rathour, Rahul Dravid and Rohit Sharma are in conversation

day in Hyderabad. Skipper Rohit Sharma has looked good and got starts but has not been able to convert, and Saturday could his day. However, bigger concerns lie in the bowling department after the hiding the bowlers got from Michael Bracewell, who put the Indian attack to sword on Wednesday.

India brought Shardul Thakur into the team at the expense of the super quick Umran Malik considering

his batting abilities. But the management needs to decide quickly if it wants a bowler who can bat or a specialist who can rattle the opposition with extra pace and get wickets in the middle overs.

Siraj has developed into an all phase bowler but others need to step up. Mohammad Shami was brilliant with the new ball but was taken to the cleaners by Bracewell. Hardik too was expensive.

In the spin department, Washington Sundar had a game to forget while Kuldeep Yadav continued his impressive run. The team also has the option playing Yuzvendra Chahal and Kuldeep together but it has stuck to one wrist spinner and one finger spinner policy.

New Zealand's never-say-die spirit came to the fore in the series opener and they would take a lot of heart from that. It won't be a

regular occurrence that a number seven in Bracewell and number eight in Mitchell Santner will bring back the team from a hopeless situation. Finn Allen played some bold strokes but could not make it big.

And in the absence of Kane Williamson, New Zealand need someone to anchor the innings. The pace trio of Henry Shipley, Lockie Ferguson and Blair Tuckner will be looking for more accuracy after being mercilessly attacked by Gill. It remains to be seen if Ish Sodhi regains full fitness for the must-win game for his team. (PTI)

Squads: India: Rohit Sharma (captain), Shubman Gill, Ishan Kishan (wk), Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer, Suryakumar Yadav, KS Bharat (wk), Hardik Pandya (vice-captain), Washington Sundar, Shahbaz Ahmed, Shardul Thakur, Yuzvendra Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohd. Shami, Mohd. Siraj, Umran Malik.

New Zealand: Tom Latham (captain), Finn Allen, Doug Bracewell, Michael Bracewell, Mark Chapman, Devon Conway, Jacob Duffy, Lockie Ferguson, Daryl Mitchell, Henry Nicholls, Glenn Phillips, Mitchell Santner, Henry Shipley, Ish Sodhi, Blair Tuckner.

Match starts 1.30 PM IST.

WFI chief compares wrestlers' protest with Shaheen Bagh stir, refuses to quit

NANDINI NAGAR (GONDA, UP), JAN 20 /--/ Under-fire Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh on Friday termed the protest by the country's top grapplers "dharna of Shaheen Bagh" and reiterated that he won't quit from the post. The agitating wrestlers on Friday reached out to the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), demanding formation of an enquiry committee to probe the allegations of sexual harassment against Singh, a day after threatening to lodge multiple FIRs against the WFI chief. However, Singh has stuck to his stand to not relinquish the post.

"The protest by wrestlers against me is the dharna of Shaheen Bagh," Singh, who is also a sixth-time Lok Sabha MP from UP's Kaisarganj constituency, told reporters in his native place here. Singh also termed the protest in Delhi's Jantar Mantar an attack on BJP and orchestrated by the Congress party. Earlier speaking to a TV channel, he had said, "The protesting players have



become a toy in the hands of Congress and Deepinder Hooda. This type of conspiracy was done against me by the Congress almost three decades ago. Once again the conspiracy has been repeated.

"I had earlier said that there was a conspiracy, and big powers are behind it. Now those forces are coming out in the open." He added, "The picture becomes more clear with the tweets and statements by Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Deepinder Hooda. This attack is not only on me, but on the Bharatiya Janata Party through me," Singh had said. Singh is scheduled to hold a press conference at Nandini Nagar Stadium in Gonda later in the evening. Top Indian wrestlers had on Thursday refused to back

down from their demand to disband the WFI as they met union sports minister Anurag Thakur. Celebrated Indian wrestlers, including Olympic medallist Bajrang Punia and Sakshi Malik, world championship medallist Vinesh Phogat and others have been staging a sit-in protest for the past two days at Jantar Mantar against the WFI president, accusing him of sexual harassment and intimidation. The wrestlers' meeting with Thakur remained inconclusive on Thursday. Bajrang, Ravi Dahiya, Sakshi and Vinesh were part of the meeting. Thakur flew to Delhi from Himachal Pradesh after an earlier meeting between government officials and the protesting wrestlers remained inconclusive the previous day. The ministry has asked the wrestling body for an explanation.

The WFI is yet to respond to the sports ministry, which on Wednesday gave the wrestling body 72 hours to respond to the allegations of sexual harassment. (PTI)

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