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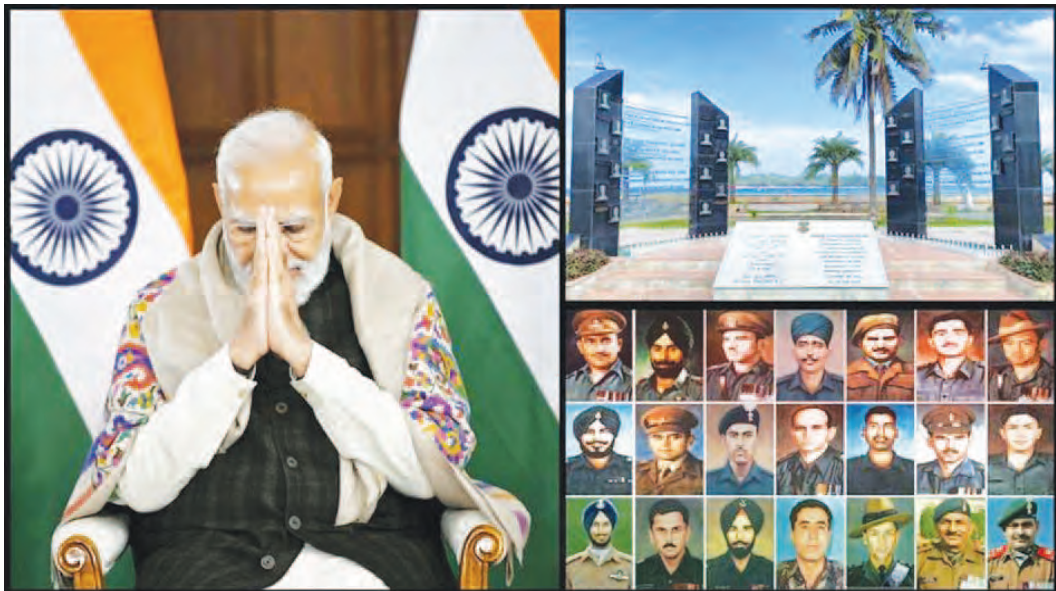
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PM Modi virtually inaugurates model of National Memorial dedicated to Netaji Renames 21 islands after 21 ParamVir Chakra awardees



PORT BLAIR, JAN 23/--/ Prime Minister, Mr. Narendra Modi on Monday named 21 largest unnamed islands of Andaman & Nicobar Islands after 21 ParamVir Chakra awardees to mark 'Parakaram Diwas', the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. At an event held at DBRAIT here this morning, the Prime Minister through video-conferencing also unveiled the model of the National Memorial dedicated to Netaji, which will be built on Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Dweep.

The proposed memorial will have a museum, a cable car ropeway, a laser-and-sound show, a guided heritage trail through historical buildings and a theme-based children's amusement park, besides a resto lounge. The 21 unnamed islands located in the

A HAPPENING DAY IN INDIA'S HISTORY

Andaman & Nicobar Archipelago will now be known by the names of ParamVir Chakra awardees and the Netaji memorial will be a site for inspiration for the future generations," said the Prime Minister while addressing the gathering. In his speech, Mr. Modi said Andaman & Nicobar Islands is the land where the Tricolour was hoisted for the first time by Netaji, where the government of independent India was formed for the first time. "Unfortunately, the sites of the Independence struggle, Andaman's identity, were tied to the reminders of colonisation. Even the names of our islands were imprinted with the past of colonisation," he said recalling his visit to the group of islands in 2018 when he renamed Ross Island as Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Dweep.

(Contd. on page-6)



Gala event marks culmination of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' Netaji's contribution in India's freedom struggle cannot be forgotten: Home Minister

ROOPA LALL

PORT BLAIR, JAN 23/--/ As part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav Iconic Events Week and celebration of 75 years of India's Independence as well as 126th birth anniversary celebration of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, a gala-cultural programme was held at the historic Netaji Stadium on Monday. Union Home, Mr. Amit Shah was the chief guest. Addressing the audience at Netaji Stadium, Mr. Amit Shah said that as part of the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', the Prime Minister has assigned every ministry of the Govt. of India to identify and assemble the history of many known and unknown freedom fighters who have fought for the cause of the motherland.

(Contd. on page-6)

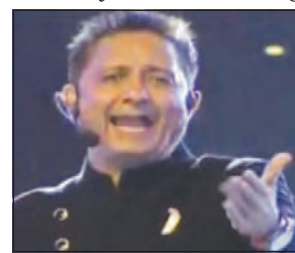
ICONIC EVENT WEEK AT NETAJI STADIUM



Sukhwinder enthralled audience at Netaji Stadium

ROOPA LALL

PORT BLAIR, JAN 23/--/ Bollywood playback singer Sukhwinder Singh had the entire Netaji Stadium dancing to his tune when he rendered some of his favourite hits like 'Check De India' and 'Desh Mere Desh Mere'. Sukhwinder is here to perform at the mega show organized by the Govt of India in association with the UT administration to commemorate the 126th birth anniversary of iconic freedom fighter Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. Sukhwinder also performed with the high voltage number 'Kar Har Maidaan Fateh' from the movie Sanju. As the evening progressed, Sukhwinder Singh had the crowd at Netaji Stadium in a spell with his mesmerising vocals, in a way that only he could. The packed audience at Netaji Stadium witnessed this legendary singer perform for over an hour, crooning one chartbuster after another.



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Radicalisation of Muslim youth a major challenge for national security: Papers submitted at meet of DGPs

NEW DELHI, JAN 23 /--/ Radicalisation, particularly of the Muslim youth, is one of the key challenges for national security and it is important to take moderate Muslim leaders and clerics into confidence to counter radical organisations, according to papers submitted at a security meet attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The papers, written by some Indian Police Service (IPS) officers and submitted at the just-concluded conference of DGPs and IGPs, noted that there is religious fundamentalism in India is primarily due to high level of indoctrination, easy availability of modern means of communication, including encrypted form, cross-border terrorism and Pakistan concentrating on encouraging these radical groups. Apart from the Prime Minister, the three-day annual conference was attended by Union home minister Amit Shah, National Security Adviser (NSA) Ajit Doval and about 350 top police officers of the country. "Radicalisation, particularly of the Muslim youth, is one

of the important challenges for national security of our country. Several radical Muslim organisations are active in India, which indulge in organised radicalisation of the Muslim youth. They have inherent tendency to corrupt minds of Muslim community, push them on the violent path and work against composite culture," the papers noted.

In view of this, tackling radical organisations become imperative and priority in the interests of social harmony and national security. These organisations are engaged in radical interpretation of Islamic scriptures and concepts.

They also create a sense of victimhood in Muslim psyche. In pursuit of puritanical Islam, their preaching goes against modern values such as democracy and secularism. In India, the papers revealed, the recently banned Popular Front of India (PFI), another banned group SIMI, Wahdat-e-Islami, Islamic Youth Federation, Hizb-ut Tahrir and Al-Ummah are some Muslim organisations, which fit in this category. "Among these



Haryana tableau rolling down the Kartavya Path during the dress rehearsal of the Republic Day Parade-2023, in New Delhi on Monday

Delhi HC grants 'last opportunity' to Centre, LG to respond to plea challenging provision of seeking permission for foreign visits

NEW DELHI, JAN 23 /--/ The Delhi High Court on Monday granted a "last opportunity" to the Centre and the lieutenant governor to respond to transport minister Kailash Gahlot's plea challenging a provision which requires state government ministers, including the chief minister, to seek political clearances from the Centre for foreign visits.

The petition was filed last year in the backdrop of Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal being denied permission for his visit to Singapore for the 8th World Cities' Summit from July 31 to August 7, 2022. At the outset, Justice Prathiba M Singh asked why replies were not filed by the authorities. The counsel for the Centre and LG said as a last opportunity, some more time be given to them to file their counter affidavits. "Why are you not filing the reply. It cannot go on like this Last and final opportunity is granted to file the counter affidavits within four weeks. List on May 22," the judge said.

The High Court had on August 29, 2022, issued notices and asked the Delhi LG and Union government through ministries of external affairs, finance and home affairs to file their counter affidavits in response to the petition. The petition said this was not the first instance of such "abuse of discretion" and mentioned that the chief minister was previously denied permission to attend the C-40 World Mayors' Summit in Copenhagen in 2019 and even Gahlot had requested for clearance to visit London on an invitation but there was no response from authorities in the Centre till the time the request became infructuous.

Gahlot, who is an Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader, has sought issuance of guidelines to channel and guide the implementation of several official memoranda issued by the Cabinet Secretariat, empowering the Centre to grant or deny permission to state government ministers for foreign visits in their official capacity.

Gahlot, in his plea, said all these visits were on invitation and were crucial for exchanging ideas on improving urban governance and showcasing Delhi's own progress in urban design. The alleged draconian manner in which the central authorities have used their discretion on travel clearances is only exacerbated further by the fact that even personal visits by state government ministers must be cleared by them, he said.

The petition sought quashing of the office memoranda (OM) to the extent that they require state government ministers to seek political clearances from the respondents for personal visits abroad. The petition also sought quashing of the undated letter sent by the LG to the Delhi government on July 20, 2022, advising against the chief minister's proposed visit to Singapore.

It said according one of the OMs issued by the Cabinet Secretariat, clearances are required from the department of expenditure in the ministry of finance, the ministry of home affairs, the ministry of external affairs and the relevant central administrative ministry and once these clearances are obtained, for visits involving a chief minister, a final clearance from the PMO is required.

"The whimsical and capricious manner in which travel clearances for Indian statespersons are treated is prejudicial not just to the interests of good urban governance in this case, but also national interests in global platforms generally.

Not only has the respondent no. 1 (LG) acted beyond his jurisdiction in advising against the Singapore visit, but the actual exercise of the powers conferred by the Office Memoranda above noted has been manifestly arbitrary and reflects unchanneled and unbridled use of discretion on part of the respondents," the plea said.

It submitted that there appears to be no prima facie reason or basis for denial of clearances for this particular visit to Singapore, making the action of the authorities manifestly arbitrary and without any evident discernible principle.

"Such arbitrary and whimsical denial of travel permissions to important constitutional functionaries is a routine matter, and is often achieved either by prima facie illogical decisions or simply by delayed decision-making serving as a pocket veto," it claimed. (PTI)

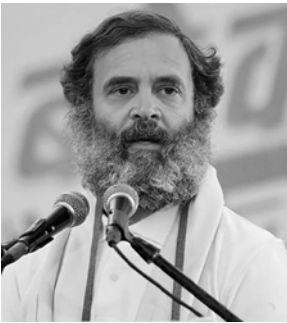
Kashmiri Pandits facing injustice, J&K LG should apologise to them for his comments: Rahul

JAMMU, JAN 23 /--/ Alleging that Kashmiri Pandits are facing injustice at the hands of the government, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday asked Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha to apologise to the community for telling the prime minister's package employees that they should not seek alms.

Rahul made the statement shortly after a Kashmiri Pandit delegation called on him during his Bharat Jodo Yatra in Samba district earlier in the day and briefed him about their various issues including "targeted killings" by terrorists and the resultant protest by those employed under the prime minister's package. "Injustice is being meted to Kashmiri Pandits by this government...this morning, a delegation of Kashmiri Pandits met me and briefed me about their issues. I was surprised to know that their delegation was told by the lieutenant governor that they should not seek alms," the Congress leader told a gathering at the end of the day's yatra at Satwari here.

Rahul said he wants to tell the lieutenant governor that they are not demanding alms but are seeking their rights. "You (LG) should seek forgiveness from them (Pandits)," he said.

Earlier, social activist Amit Koul, who was part of the delegation, said they have invited Rahul to their Jagti township along the Jammu-



Srinagar National Highway and that he is likely to visit the community on his way to Kashmir. "We had a very good interaction with Gandhi and we briefed him about the issues of the community, especially the prime minister's package employees

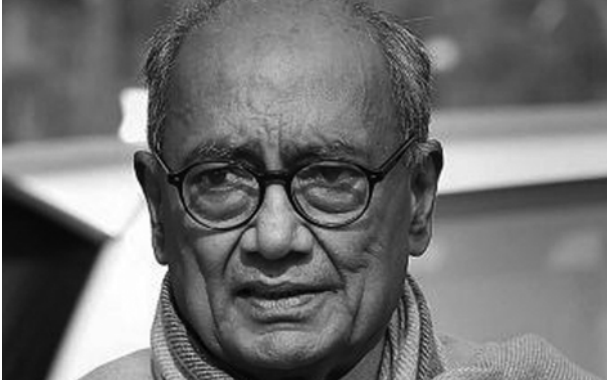
who were provided jobs by the previous UPA government led by Manmohan Singh. They are on protest over the past six months in Jammu and their salaries have been withheld," Koul told PTI after meeting the former Congress president. Nearly 4,000 Kashmiri Pandits are working in different departments in Kashmir Valley after their selection under the Prime Minister's employment package announced in 2008.

The package has two major components -- 6,000 jobs for the youth from the community and building as many accommodation units for the recruited employees. However, many of the employees fled to Jammu after one of their colleagues, Rahul Bhat, was shot dead by terrorists inside his office in Budgam district on May 12 last year in what was described as a case of targeted killing. They are on a strike demanding their relocation out of the Valley. "We also raised other issues of the community including the need for enhancement of relief. We requested him to visit our township Jagti or send a delegation but he assured that he will visit Jagti himself and raise their issues within and outside Parliament," Koul said.

Another member, Jitendra Kachroo, said he has come all the way from Uttar Pradesh, where he has settled after migrating from Kashmir, to meet Rahul with other members of the delegation. "He (Rahul) is a very nice human being and a very simple person. He patiently heard our issues and it was heartwarming that he had time to listen to us," Kachroo said. According to Kachroo, they were initially supposed to meet him as a 13-member delegation but several more joined them and "we raised issues which the community is facing". Charging the BJP with using the community to further its political agenda, Kachroo said: "They do not really mean to solve the problems of the Kashmiri Pandits because for them it is a political agenda to spread hate on the basis of religion. (PTI)

Digvijaya questions surgical strikes, BJP accuses Cong of insulting armed forces in 'hate' for Modi

JAMMU/NEW DELHI, JAN 23 /--/ Congress leader Digvijaya Singh on Monday questioned the surgical strikes and accused the Union government of peddling lies, drawing furious reaction from the BJP which said the Opposition party was blinded by its "hate" for Prime Minister Narendra Modi and has "insulted" armed forces. Addressing a public meeting during the Bharat Jodo Yatra in Jammu and Kashmir, Singh alleged that the government did not agree to the CRPF request of flying its personnel from Srinagar to Delhi and 40 soldiers sacrificed their lives in Pulwama in 2019 to a terror attack. "They talk of surgical strikes. They claim to have killed so many people but no proofs is given. They are ruling by peddling a bundle of lies," the former Madhya Pradesh chief minister, who has often courted controversy with his comments, said. The BJP launched a sharp attack on the Congress, saying that such comments show that the Rahul Gandhi-led foot march across the country is Bharat Jodo Yatra only in name while he and his party colleagues are working to "break" the country. It is essentially "Bharat Jodo Yatra", BJP spokesperson



Digvijaya Singh

Gaurav Bhatia said.

The BJP spokesperson further said: "India will not tolerate if they speak against armed forces. Rahul Gandhi and the Congress hate PM Modi but it seems they have been blinded by the hate to an extent that their dedication to the country has withered away." He said Congress leaders had raised questions about the surgical strikes soon after the Indian Air Forces said it hit terror camps in Balakot in Pakistan in retaliation to the Pulwama terror attack. "Gandhi and the Congress do not have trust in our brave armed forces. They repeatedly raise questions and insult the citizens of India and our armed forces," Bhatia claimed. The BJP leader added that Congress leaders had tried to deflect attention from Pakistan after the terror attacks as well. Randeep Singh Surjewala had then blamed "home-grown terrorism", he claimed, alleging that the opposition party tried to give a clean chit to Pakistan. Pakistan is in a lot of pain when our armed forces strike terrorists, while in India it is the Congress which is in anguish, he said. With the Pulwama terror attack and surgical strikes taking place in the run-up to the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, the issues had captured popular imagination as the BJP retained power at the Centre with a bigger mandate than 2014 by winning over 300 seats out of 543. "Nothing is bigger than people's blessings in democracy. In the 2019 polls, it became clear that people stand with the BJP and the armed forces. While those who raised questions are facing existential crisis," Bhatia said. (PTI)

Morbi bridge tragedy: Gujarat court issues arrest warrant against Jaysukh Patel of Oreva Group

MORBI, JAN 23 /--/ A Gujarat court has issued an arrest warrant against Jaysukh Patel of Oreva Group in connection with the October 30 bridge collapse in Morbi in which 135 persons were killed.

Ajanta Manufacturing Limited (Oreva Group) was responsible for the operation and maintenance of the British-era suspension bridge on the Machchu river that collapsed, with a special investigation team formed by the state government citing several lapses on the part of the firm. Morbi chief judicial magistrate MJ Khan had issued an "arrest warrant" against Ajanta

Manufacturing Limited's (Oreva Group) Managing Director, Jaysukh Patel, nearly a week back on getting an application for the same from police under section 70 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, said Dilip Agechaniya, the advocate representing the victims.

"As sought by the investigation officer of this case, chief judicial magistrate of Morbi, MJ Khan, had issued an arrest warrant against Patel under section 70 of the CrPC," said Agechaniya on Monday. The investigating officer refused to speak on the matter, while the public prosecutor and senior police officials could not be contacted. Notably, Patel, who is not named as an accused in the FIR, had moved Morbi sessions court on January 20 for anticipatory bail fearing arrest in the bridge collapse case. The hearing was adjourned till February 1 as the public prosecutor was not present.

Nine persons, including four employees of Ajanta Manufacturing (Oreva Group), have been arrested so far in the case. They include two managers and an equal number of ticket booking clerks of the Oreva Group that was managing the British-era bridge. Patel's name was not included in the first information report (FIR) filed

by the police soon after the tragedy. The suspension bridge on the Machchu river was being maintained and operated by the Oreva Group as per an agreement signed with Morbi municipality. A government-appointed special investigation team (SIT) had cited several lapses on part of the Oreva Group in repairs, maintenance and operation of the carriageway.

The lapses included no restriction on the number of persons accessing the bridge and no curb on sale of tickets, which led to unrestricted movement on the bridge, as well as carrying out repairs without consulting experts. (PTI)

Siddaramaiah won't contest Assembly polls from Kolar, claims Yediyurappa

BELAGAVI, JAN 23 /--/ Senior BJP leader B S Yediyurappa on Monday claimed that Congress leader Siddaramaiah was allegedly playing a drama by saying he would not contest the Assembly polls from Kolar segment as announced, and may go back to his home district of Mysuru instead.

Ending speculation, Siddaramaiah had earlier this month announced that he would be contesting the polls from Kolar, if the party high command agrees. "Today itself I will say one thing, don't think I'm making a prediction, Siddaramaiah will not contest from Kolar for any reason, he is playing a drama and is trying to go back to Mysuru," Yediyurappa said. Speaking to reporters here, the former Karnataka chief minister said the Congress legislature party leader is aware that he would face a defeat and have to go home, if he contests from Kolar. "He is playing political circus and drama, according to me, he will not contest from there (Kolar) and may try to go back to Mysuru, if that happens we will do the strategy we need to," Yediyurappa added.

Asked about talks that were doing rounds that Siddaramaiah may contest from two seats, Yediyurappa, who is the member of BJP's top parliamentary board, said: "I don't know about it, it is left to their party. Let him contest from two or three seats, but going home is certain."

Amid intense speculation

that he may contest from two seats like he did in 2018 Assembly polls, Siddaramaiah, a former chief minister, had recently made



Yediyurappa

Siddaramaiah

it clear that he would contest the upcoming polls from one constituency. Siddaramaiah, not wanting to contest from Badami, his current

constituency, in Bagalkote district of north Karnataka region, was looking for a "safe seat", and on January 9 had announced his willingness to chief minister, he lost the polls in Chamundeshwari (in Mysuru) to JD-S' G T Deve Gowda by 36,042 votes. He, however, won Badami, the other constituency from where he had contested and defeated B Sriramulu (BJP) by 1,696 votes.

Making his debut in the Assembly in 1983, Siddaramaiah had got elected from Chamundeshwari on a Lok Dal Party ticket. He has won five times from this constituency and tasted defeat thrice. After neighbouring Varuna became a constituency in 2008 following delimitation, Siddaramaiah represented it till he vacated the seat for his son Dr Yatindra (MLA) in the 2018 polls and went back to his old constituency of Chamundeshwari.

Siddaramaiah has made it clear several times that he would not contest from Chamundeshwari anymore, and if Yediyurappa's claims are to be believed, he may look for Varuna, in which case his son Yathindra would be left without a seat.

It is no secret that Siddaramaiah, who was Karnataka chief minister between 2013 and 2018, is nursing his ambition for a second term in office, if the party wins the next Assembly polls.

With state Congress president DK Shivakumartoo having similar aspirations, it has triggered a game of one-upmanship between the two leaders. (PTI)



General Anil Chauhan, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM, VSM, Chief of Defence Staff on visit to A&N Islands to participate in virtual unveiling of naming of 21 Islands after Param Vir Chakra Awardees at Port Blair, called on Admiral D K Joshi, PVSM (Retd.), Lt Governor, A&N Islands and Vice-Chairman, Islands Development Agency at Raj Niwas on Sunday.

MP seeks for enhancement in old-age/widow pensions, disable & destitute allowances

PORT BLAIR, JAN 23/--/ The Member of Parliament, Mr. Kuldeep Rai Sharma has requested the Lt. Governor to enhance the existing pension/allowance of Rs.2500 per month being paid to old-age, widow, destitute women and divyangs persons to Rs.5000 per month. In his letter, the Member of Parliament mentioned that presently the A&N Administration under the Social Security Schemes is paying Rs.2500 per month as Pension/Allowances to the Old-age, Widow, Destitute Women and Divyang per-



sons in order to help them financially independent and survive. He mentioned that the

Pension/Allowance has been last revised by the Administration during 2018. He pointed out that due to abnormally high cost of essential commodities in the Islands as compared to the mainland, the above mentioned categories of the persons are facing immense difficulties in sustaining their life. The Member of Parliament mentioned that many Old-age, widow and Divyang persons live alone in these Islands and it has become impossible to survive with only a Rs. 2500 pension in present day.

Zilla Sammelan by VKA, Mayabunder



KURMA RAO

MAYABUNDER, JAN 23/-/ Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram, Mayabunder organized a Zilla Sammelan for welcoming Mr. Satyendra Singh, National Vice President of Akhil Bharatiya Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram (ABVKA) and celebrated his first visit to Andaman & Nicobar Islands in a befitting manner on 20th January 2023, at Sree Hanuman Mandir, Pokkadera, Mayabunder. In this Zilla Sammelan, Mr. C. Balachandran Nair, Spiritual & Religious personality and renowned Lord Ayyappa devotee was presented as the Chief Guest. Mr. K. Shanmugam, eminent Social Worker of Mayabunder graced the occasion as guest of honour and Mr. Shiv Ram, son of Late Japsi, who has donated

the land for Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram and Hanuman Mandir was also joined the occasion as special guest during the entire programme. Mr. Jagatram Baraik, Treasurer, Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram Mayabunder welcomed the gathering and all the guests of the Sammelan by delivering welcome speech and briefed about the past and ongoing works of Kalyan Ashram. While Mr. Ram Kumar Singh, Secretary, Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram Mayabunder and State Media Incharge was hosted and coordinated the entire Sammelan. A cultural programmes was presented by the villager. Mr. Satyendra Singh, National Vice President, ABVKA, Mr. Harihar Ram, Priest of Shri Hanuman Mandir, Pokkadera informed about

the hardwork of revered Swami Ashimananda, Founder of Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram, Andaman & Nicobar to build the unity among Vanvasi Society and all the Nagarvasi through Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram. In the keynotes speech, Mr. Satyendra Singh, National Vice President, ABVKA said Vanvasi (Tribal) community has sacrificed their lives for this country and Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram is working for the overall development of these community with protecting their indigenous faith & culture, further he also urged the Vanvasi and Nagarvasi people to live with unity and harmony to protect their culture and traditions. About 1250 people from 47 villages participated in the Sammelan.

ANTCC celebrates 126th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose



PORT BLAIR, JAN 23/--/ Along with the entire Nation, Andaman Nicobar Territorial Congress Committee has celebrated the 126th

birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose on 23rd January 2023 at 11:00 AM in Congress Office, Port Blair.

ANTCC President, Mr. Rangalal Halder garlanded the portrait of Netaji followed by a floral tribute by The Chief Organizer-Con-

gress Seva Dal, City Congress President, NSUI State President, Mahila Congress, All Senior leaders and Party workers present

there. Mr. Rangalal Halder said that this day was observed so as to remember and honor Netaji's indomitable spirit and selfless service towards the Nation. Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose was a revolutionary freedom fighter who led the Indian National Congress as its President in 1938 and his contributions shall always be remembered by every Indian. He further said that Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose was a prominent leader in India during the period of British rule as he had laid various contributions and efforts to build a force known as the Azad Hind Fauj (Indian National Army) to serve the Nation.

Editor, Baakprotima participates in Literary Conference



PORT BLAIR, JAN 23/--/ Mr. Anadiranjan Biswas, Editor, Baakprotima (Bengali Little Magazine) and News Spotlight (Bilingual Fortnightly Newspaper) participated in the prestigious Literary Conference namely Biswa Bangla Sahitya O Sanskriti Utsav (World Bengali Literature and Culture Festival, 13th in series, held in Haldia Township, West Bengal from 21st to 23rd January 2023. Mr. Anadiranjan Biswas was honoured by the organisers as he was invited to chair the third session of poetry reading of the second day (22 January 2023).

Sailing of Sindhu postponed

PORT BLAIR, JAN 23/--/ Due to insufficient booking of passenger tickets, the vessel Sindhu which was scheduled to sail for Kolkata on 25th January 2023 from Port Blair and her return voyage from Kolkata to Port Blair on 31st January 2023 has been postponed till further notice. However, fresh date of sailing of the vessel will be announced in due course.

Bengal Republic Day tableau to highlight Durga Puja

KOLKATA, JAN 23/--/ West Bengal will depict the famous Durga Puja of Kolkata, which was included in UNESCO'S Intangible Cultural Heritage List, to highlight women's empowerment in its tableau at the Kartavya Path in New Delhi on Republic Day this year. The tableau will also highlight local art and culture, officials said here. There will be terracotta pieces too to showcase art and culture of the state, an official involved in the preparation of the tableau said. "The tableau will have a traditional Durga idol with

those of goddesses Lakshmi and Saraswati and gods Kartikeya and Ganesh (worshipped as her progeny). Goddess Durga is the symbol of women's empowerment," an official involved in the preparation of the tableau said. A total of 23 tableaux - 17 from states and union territories and six from various ministries and departments - depicting India's vibrant cultural heritage, economic and social progress will be part of the ceremonial parade with 'Nari Shakti' as the theme for majority of the floats. (PTI)

Advisory for fishermen

PORT BLAIR, JAN 23/--/ As per Metrological Department weather report, due to squally weather over south Andaman sea, wind speed reaching 40-50 kmph likely prevail over South Andaman Sea on 25th to 26th January, 2023. Fishermen have been advised not to venture into South Andaman sea on 25th & 26th January, 2023. For further enquiries / information contact helpline of State Emergency Operation Centre at Helpline No.1070 & District Emergency Operation Centre at Helpline No. 1077. For any emergency / assistance at sea, call Coast Guard SAR Agency at Toll Free number 1554.

MVBharat Seema to sail on 25th Jan

PORT BLAIR, JAN 23/--/ Due to administrative reasons, the scheduled sailing programme of MV Bharat Seema for Diglipur via Mayabunder on 23rd January 2023 at 2100 Hrs has been postponed by a day. Now the vessel will sail for Diglipur via Mayabunder on 24th January, 2023 at 2100 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on 25th January 2023 at 1330 Hrs from Diglipur via Mayabunder.

SRK's 'Pathaan' sets record advance booking, eyeing a bumper opening

MUMBAI, JAN 23/--/ Given the enthusiastic response of movie-goers in advance booking, industry experts are confident that Shah Rukh Khan-starrer "Pathaan" will open somewhere between Rs 45 to 50 crore at the box office. The Yash Raj Films project, which marks Shah Rukh's return to leading man roles after 2018's "Zero", is set to hit cinema halls a day before the Republic Day, which gives the Hindi film a five-day extended opening weekend. The advance bookings for "Pathaan", backed by Yash Raj Films, opened from January 20. The film is reportedly set to be released across Indian in 5,000 screens. It is a first Shah Rukh Khan film to have 6am shows. Trade expert Taran Adarsh said "Pathaan" will revive Bollywood and will mark the beginning of a fantastic 2023 for the industry, which went through a lean period during covid and in 2022. "The film is going to take a historic start at the box office with opening day collections of Rs 45 to Rs 50 cr. The box office revival will begin with Pathaan", especially looking at its advance booking, which is very rare. It is a great start to 2023 despite being a working day," Adarsh told PTI. "Pathaan" will feature Shah Rukh in the role of the titular spy agent. Sanjeev

Kumar Bijli, Joint Managing Director, PVR Limited, said they have witnessed a phenomenal advance booking at their 903 chains across India. "We have a phenomenal opening of Pathaan" with advances of close to 5 lac admissions for the first long weekend of the movie. This will be the first SRK film that will open at 6am in PVR cinemas," Bijli said in a statement. According to leading ticketing platform BookMyShow (BMS), over one million tickets have been booked. The advance sales for "Pathaan" have been opening up in phases with over 3,500 screens available on BMS so far, besides there is a surge in demand to open up early morning shows as well. "The response across India has been phenomenal with cinephiles choosing a cinematic experience as they opt for varied formats including 2D, IMAX and 4DX across cities," Ashish Saxena, COO, Cinemas, BookMyShow, said in a statement. Another leading multiplex chain INOX is optimistic that "Pathaan" will break records. "It is one of the best advances that we have had at INOX at our 722 screens across India. We have sold more than 1.5 lac tickets for Wednesday and more than 3.5 lac tickets till Sunday. (PTI)

CPI (M) holds public meeting at Kalighat



PORT BLAIR, JAN 23/--/ CPI (M) Kalighat Area of CPI (M) has organized a public meeting at Kalighat Bazar on 22nd January, 2023 on various pending demands and issues of the people of North Andaman. Addressing the meeting, Mr. D. Ayyappa, Secretary, State Organising Committee of CPI (M), who was on a visit to North Andaman, criticized the BJP-led central government for the rising unemployment in the islands and also not taking any concrete measures to

create jobs for the youth of these islands. He expressed concern over the rising prices of LPG, diesel, petrol and essential commodities and said that the BJP government has completely failed to arrest prices in the country. Mr. Ramjiban Sarkar, State Secretary Member of the Party and Ex-Pradhan, Gram Panchayat, Kalighat briefly explained the demands of the people of Kalighat area including the construction of K a l i g h a t -

Nischintpur bridge. Mr. AVA Samad, Secretary, Diglipur Area Committee and Mr. Dulal Mondal, Kalighat Area Committee Member also addressed the meeting. A large number of villagers of Kalighat and nearby areas attended the meeting. Shri Dilip Karmakar, CPI (M) SOC Member, CPI (M) Panchayat Members Shri Madhan Sarkar and Radhika Devi, former Panchayat Member Smt Pushpa Dey and Mr. Narayan Bairagi, Convener, DYFI Area Committee were also present.

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One of the symptoms of an approaching nervous breakdown is the belief that one's work is terribly important

Bertrand Russell

Climate change to hit farm output

A new study conducted by agriculture economists and scientists at Punjab Agricultural University (PAU) paints a grim picture of the harmful effects of rise in minimum temperature on the yield of rice, maize, and cotton. Besides affecting farm output, it will pose a threat to food security. One of the most intriguing findings is that changes in minimum temperature have resulted in changes in mean temperature throughout all growing seasons. It means that the minimum temperature has shown a rising trend. The climate impacts on crops will vary widely in kharif and rabi seasons. Among the kharif crops, maize yield is the most responsive to temperature and rainfall than rice and cotton. By the year 2050, maize yield would reduce by 13 per cent followed by cotton (about 11 per cent) and rice (about 1 per cent)," the report says. The negative impact would accumulate by 2080. The yield loss will increase from 13 to 24 per cent for maize, from 11 per cent to 24 per cent for cotton, and from 1 per cent to 2 per cent for rice, respectively. The yield response of wheat and potato would be pretty much the same for the year 2050. Quite interestingly, by the year 2080, with a significant change in climate, the yield of wheat and potato will be higher by around 1 per cent each. This is because, excess minimum temperature is beneficial for potato and wheat yield. The results indicate that productivity decreases with an increase in average temperature in most of the crops. The adverse impact of climate change on agricultural production indicates a food security threat to the farming community.

The findings provide credence to the claim that the future climate scenario is not very welcoming. The results indicated that the climate-smart packages must be incorporated into the agricultural development agenda at the policy level. The study suggested focusing on linking farmers with financial institutions to boost their capacity to adapt to climate-smart technologies and practices. Climate change is predicted to reduce maize and cotton yield in Punjab by 13 per cent and 11 per cent by 2050. Punjab accounts for around 12 per cent of the total cereals produced in the country.

The study published in the Mausam journal of the India Meteorological Department earlier this month used rainfall and temperature data collected between 1986 and 2020 to project the impact of climate change on five major crops -- rice, maize, cotton, wheat, and potato -- in the agrarian state. The researchers collected climate data from five weather observatories of Punjab Agricultural University, ie Ludhiana, Patiala, Faridkot, Bathinda, and SBS Nagar. The researchers said that long-term changes in climatic variables show that the rise in temperature is driving most of the changes, rather than the change in rainfall pattern.

G20 countries have differing healthcare problems

With gross differences in the health needs of the G20 countries it is to be seen how India gets its and other developing countries' concerns addressed as priority in the G20 health agenda

The first health working group meeting under India's G-20 presidency was held at Thiruvananthapuram on 18 January 2023 to discuss about the global health concerns. The focus of discussion was bound to be around Pandemic and response to it at various levels. The discussion in the meeting as reported was on Pandemic management, emergency preparedness and vaccinations. Also under discussion were the issues of increasing antimicrobial resistance, developing blue print for vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics. There was also discussion on harmonising a global network for countries through consensus on digital health and to mobilise funds for the same. In addition concerns were expressed over ensuring safe effective quality and affordable medicines and medical equipment.

The G20 is a heterogeneous group of countries at different level of economic development including Australia, Canada, United Kingdom, United States, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, European Union, Saudi Arabia, China, Russia, Argentina, Brazil, South Africa, Mexico, Türkiye, India and Indonesia. In the economic development, countries of the G-20 have different rankings. Whereas India and Indonesia belong to the Lower Middle income group countries, Argentina, Brazil, China, South Africa, Mexico, Russia and Turkey belong to Upper Middle income group of countries. Rest are from High income group countries. So the priorities in health agenda of each country are also different accordingly. This is reflected in prevailing gross inequity already existing in the healthcare delivery among the countries as well as for the different strata of population within the countries representing G-20. Health indicators among these countries also vary. For example in the Global Hunger

REFLEX ACTION

Dr Arun Mitra

Index which is based on the criteria of inadequate food supply, Child mortality and Child under-nutrition. India is at 107 out of 120 countries compared to Indonesia at 77, South Africa at 59, Mexico at 42, Argentina at 31 and Brazil at 27. Rest of the countries are among better performers with the rankings at less than 17.

Nutrition is the basic pre requisite for good health. It means to have sufficient amount of Protein, Carbohydrate and Fats as well as micronutrients like vitamins and minerals. For better health it is thus important to have sufficient food supply, sufficient remuneration, housing and good environmental conditions. It is duty of the government to ensure that all population gets its share of healthy nutrition. That 81 Crore people are being given 5 Kg of food grains free of cost which just enough for subsistence, is a matter of grave concern. How can one expect vast majority to have good health as the grains only are not sufficient to fulfil nutritional requirements for a good health and immunity from diseases?

Earlier under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) a family was entitled to get 50 Kg of grains, 25 Kg food free of cost and rest 25 Kg at Rs. 3 per Kg. This means the family was spending only Rs. Seventy five in buying this. But under the new order of the government only 25 Kg will be given free and the rest will have to be purchased at market price which is no less than Rs.20 per Kg. This will cause a burden of Rs. 500/- per month on their budget if we calculate the grain price at Rs. 20 per Kilogram. This will deprive the poor of basic food further adding to malnutrition and poor health. This is an important agenda for our country but representatives from the high income



Glimpses of Full Dress Rehearsal of Republic Day Parade 2023, at Kartavya Path, in New Delhi---PIB

group countries in the G20 may not be able to comprehend this. Moreover to have better health indicators, it is important to have more spending on health. Out of the G 20 countries India is spending 3.1% of the GDP on health. But in terms of spending on health by the government it is just 1.28%. Rest of the spending is by patients from their pocket. As a result 60 million people are pushed to poverty. In comparison Brazil spends 9.59% of th GDP on health, Argentina 9.51%, South Africa 9.11%, Indonesia 7.58%, Mexico 5.43%, China 5.35%, Turkey 4.34%. Russian expenditure is 5.65%, UK 10.15%, Germany at 11.70% and the USA at 16.77%.

Pandemic had a negative effect on the situation of jobs and livelihood. The government hardly paid any assistance to the affected 54 crore workers and MSMEs, the nutritional health status of the low income group population was affected adversely. To add to their woes budget on Poshan Abhiyan was reduced from 3700 crore to 2700 crore rupees. These are issues of little important to several G20 countries. The disease pattern is also quite variable. For example In 2021, eight countries accounted for more than two thirds of global TB cases: India (28%), Indonesia (9.2%), China (7.4%). Number of TB cases in High income group countries is minimal in comparison. Therefore focus has to be different in different countries.

The pandemic has seen gross inequity in global vaccine supply. The vaccine manufacturers in the high income countries were reluctant to supply the vaccines to small developing countries. They demanded guarantees from the recipient countries which included even property of the embassy buildings of those countries.

As is evident there are gross differences in the health needs of the G20 countries it is to be seen how India gets its and other developing countries' concerns addressed as priority in the G20 health agenda. (IPA)

Conventional Crossword							
1	2	3		4	5	6	7
9				10		11	
12						13	
						14	
		15	16	17			
18			19			20	
21	22	23					24
25				26			27
28						29	
30					31		

ACROSS				DOWN			
1	Authoritative decree	1	Reputation	1	Reputation		
4	Military trainee	2	Frozen treat	2	Frozen treat		
9	Perform	3	Top room	3	Top room		
11	Part of a church	5	Fisher	5	Fisher		
12	Measure of length	6	Small, open river	6	Small, open river		
13	Small, secluded valley	7	Level	7	Level		
14	Fasting period	8	Fraction	8	Fraction		
15	Pancake	10	Replenish	10	Replenish		
19	Presentation	16	Disconcert	16	Disconcert		
21	Camping item	17	Heaven	17	Heaven		
25	Leave out	18	Puts away	18	Puts away		
26	Humble	20	Play	20	Play		
28	Testament	22	Send out	22	Send out		
29	Mingle	23	African river	23	African river		
30	Metal	24	That following	24	That following		
31	Unightly growth	27	Knight's title	27	Knight's title		

SUDOKU:3765

1	2				7	3		6
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3	2	9					8	1

Yesterday's Solution 3764

2	5	4	7	6	3	8	1	9
7	8	9	5	1	2	4	6	3
6	3	1	8	4	9	7	5	2
4	2	3	9	8	6	1	7	5
1	7	6	2	5	4	9	3	8
5	9	8	3	7	1	2	4	6
9	1	2	4	3	5	6	8	7
8	6	5	1	9	7	3	2	4
3	4	7	6	2	8	5	9	1

Yesterday's Cross Word Solution 1773

P	R	I	M		T	E	L	L	S
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Clinton-Lewinsky scandal turns 25 years this week

This week, the Bill Clinton-Monica Lewinsky scandal turns 25. The 24-year-old White House intern who came from an affluent family in California found out President Bill Clinton claiming he did not have sexual relations with "this lady, Monica Lewinsky" in a televised White House press conference.

Later, he said the same thing under oath and was impeached for perjury, and escaped narrowly from losing his job as the US President. Lewinsky got into an immunity agreement with the prosecutors and revealed her side of the story. She stated that there were nine sexual encounters between her and President Clinton between November 1995 and March 1997.

These encounters were fellatio and did not amount to sexual intercourse. President Clinton admitted these acts were performed "on him" and "not by him." In later interviews, Lewinsky agreed that Clinton took advantage of her but the relationship was consensual.

Twenty-five years later, Monica Lewinsky recalled the incident in a January 19 tweet and shared 25 pieces of wisdom after surviving this scandal that changed her life forever though, in a piece in Vanity Fair. First the tweet: "Celebrate. It's the 25th anniversary of SURVIVOR'S DAY—the scariest + most

traumatic day of my life – when I as stung by the fbi + learned of the starr investigation that would lead to bill Clinton's impeachment. I was 24. THANK YOU to my family, friends, professionals, colleagues + people who supported me especially pre-2014."

After the much-publicized impeachment proceedings in 1998 which made Monica Lewinsky a household name in a world dominated by a blame-the-woman mindset, she took up minor media assignments and chose never to talk about the scandal prominently.

But, in 2014, she decided to take back the narrative through a Vanity Fair article titled "Shame and Survival." It was to give a purpose to her past, she told as a 40-year-old woman. Later, Vanity Fair enlisted her as a contributor to its print and web publications.

Now, Lewinsky is 49 and her bio reveals that she is an activist and writer, with a Master's degree in Psychology. She says, "Choose your friends carefully. Twenty-five years ago

I had one of the world's worst friends: Linda "Judas, hold my beer" Tripp. While I have since let go of the resentment and bitterness that surrounded her and her betrayal, it's not lost on me how very fortunate I am to have been able to trust new people. My most emotionally intimate relationships are with my incredible friends. These are the investments most worth nurturing."

Linda Tripp who died in April 2020 at the age of 70 from pancreatic cancer was a civil servant that Lewinsky met at the Pentagon where she was transferred after her seniors found that she was spending a lot of time with President Clinton during her White House internship. Lewinsky would tell Linda about her relationship with Clinton, who later began secretly and illegally recording the conversations. These recordings further strengthened the prosecutors' arguments in the Clinton Vs Jones case.

It was during the hearing of this case in which a state employee Paula Jones had charged Clinton with sexual

harassment when he was the Governor of Arkansas state that the name of Monica Lewinsky exploded on the scene. Tripp handed over the recordings of Lewinsky's conversations with her to the prosecutors who were pursuing a civil lawsuit against Clinton which said he had a pattern of sexual harassment of government employees.

"Grief reigns in the kingdom of loss. I refer to not only the loss of a loved one but also the loss of hope, a dream, or love itself. It seems we don't finish grieving, but merely finish for now; we process it in layers. One day (not today) I'm going to write a short story about a vending machine that serves up Just the Right Amount of Grief. You know, the perfect amount that you can handle in a moment to move along, but not so much that you'll be caught in an undertow," is another piece of wisdom from Lewinsky.

You can make the right decision and still have regret. Also, don't judge your insides by other people's outsides, she begins her random pieces of wisdom with. But what wins a place in the hearts of those who have followed her over the past 25 years is this: "One thing everyone has in common is that we have all made mistakes. It's inevitable. Get comfortable with the Art of the Mistake." (IPA)

FOCUS

Arun Kumar Shrivastav



Glimpses of full dress rehearsal of Republic Day Parade 2023, at Kartavya Path, in New Delhi---PIB

35 people booked for blocking road during protest against killing of minor girl in UP's Bhadohi

BHADOHI, JAN 23 --/An FIR has been registered against 35 people for allegedly blocking a road as they took out a candle march to protest the killing of a minor girl in the Suriyawan area of Bhadohi district in Uttar Pradesh, police said on Monday.

Five of the 35 people have been named in the FIR and the remaining will be identified through available video footage and photos, the police said, adding necessary action will be taken against them. A young man allegedly shot dead a 15-year-old girl when she was returning home from coaching Wednesday evening over a love affair. The accused, Arvind Vishwakarma (22) of Meehapur village in the Unj police station area, and his elder brother, Sunil, were arrested within 12 hours of the incident and sent to jail, Onj police station in-charge Chhotak Yadav said. A group of people staged a protest Saturday demanding capital punishment to the accused. They took out a candle march and blocked the Wahida-Surayawa road near the Ainch Canal culvert. In this connection, a case was registered on Sunday. (PTI)

Uttarakhand: Tiger cub goes missing in Nainital forest division

DEHRADUN, JAN 23 --/A tiger cub has gone missing from Bhowali range of Nainital forest division, officials said on Monday. It was last seen around 20 days ago between Thapli Mehar and Chunaautiya villages in the range spread over 354 hectares, they said. Camera traps were installed in the area afterwards but they have not yet spotted the tiger cub, Nainital DFO Chandra Shekhar Joshi said.

It is likely that the tiger cub got separated from its family, strayed into Bhowali range from the neighbouring Marora range which is considered a very suitable habitat for tigers and then went back, he said. However, the entire range is under surveillance and villagers in the area have been alerted, Joshi said. (PTI)

Pt. Hariprasad Chaurasia, Ustad Amjad Ali Khan to perform at Kanha Music Festival in Hyderabad

NEW DELHI, JAN 23 --/Renowned flautist Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia and Sarod stalwart Ustad Amjad Ali Khan are among the eight international artists performing at the upcoming 'Kanha Music Festival', starting Wednesday.

The week-long festival of classical music, scheduled to be held at Kanha Shanti Vanam in Hyderabad, would be attended by over one lakh participants from across the world -- with millions expected to join online. It will also mark the 150th birth anniversary celebrations of Adi Guru of Shri Ram Chandra Mission, Lalaji Maharaj.

"Our idea of bringing music maestros to the celebrations is to invoke the divine within through music. I am very happy that the government of Telangana and other partner organizations have come forward with their support in this regard and help make the event a grand success. We must create inner peace in order to bring about world peace," spiritual leader Kamlesh Patel, president of Shri Ram Chandra Mission said in a statement. Other



Ustad Amjad Ali Khan and Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia

artists performing in the event, include Santoor exponent Rahul Sharma, classical musician Ustad Rashid Khan, Carnatic vocalist Sudha Raghunathan, flautist Shashank Subramanyam, vocalists Kaushiki Chakraborty and Sanjeev Abhyankar.

Besides, the festival will also showcase an exhibit of the 'Inner Peace Museum', bringing together

professional artists from India and Germany, art students from The Dresden Academy of Fine Arts in collaboration with the City of Dresden and the Heartfulness Institute. The various bodies of work -- paintings, sculptures, installations and artworks -- in the exhibit depict glimpses of Lalaji's life and teachings, aiming to inspire inner peace. (PTI)

12 policemen booked over death of man in encounter in UP

SAHARANPUR, JAN 23 --/A case has been registered against 12 policemen on the orders of the court over the death of a man in an alleged encounter with police in the Deoband area here, police said on Monday.

According to the police, on September 5, 2021, an encounter took place between a police team and alleged cattle smugglers in Thithki village under the Deoband police station area. A "cattle smuggler" was seriously injured in police firing and he died during treatment at the district hospital later.

The death of Zeeshan Haider (42) created anger among his family members and villagers who claimed

that he belonged to a well-off family and was falsely implicated in a cow slaughter case by the police. Haider's wife Afroz filed an application in the court of chief judicial magistrate (CJM), alleging that on September 5 she was at home with her husband when police called him in the name of an inquiry. Later, it was reported that Haider suffered a bullet injury in his foot and when the family reached the hospital he had died.

Accusing the police of killing her husband, Afroz had demanded an inquiry in the matter and had also made a complaint to the chief minister's portal. Chaudhary Janisar Ahmed, Afroz's advocate, said her

complaint first remained pending in the court for almost a year and when no action was taken, she approached the high court. The high court then directed the lower court to take action in the case. As a result, CJM Anil Kumar ordered the registration of a murder case against sub-inspectors Omveer, Yashpal Singh, Asgar Ali, head constables Sukhpal Singh, Kunwar Bharat, Pramod Kumar, Vipin and constables Rajveer Singh, Devendra, Neetu Yadav, Ankit Kumar and Brajesh Kumar.

The judge also said a copy of the case should be provided to the court in 24 hours. Now Afroz has got a hope that she will get

justice, Ahmed said. Talking to PTI, Superintendent of Police (Dehat) Suraj Rai said a case has been registered against 12 policemen, including three sub-inspectors, on Sunday evening on the orders of the court.

Further legal action will be taken after the entire episode is probed, he said. After the alleged encounter in 2021, police had also claimed that around 300 kilogram of meat and some equipment were recovered from the spot. They had registered a case against half a dozen people in this connection. It was also said that one of the alleged smuggler's accomplice was absconding. (PTI)

Punjab police arrest 255 people for selling banned "Chinese manjha"

CHANDIGARH, JAN 23 --/ Punjab police have arrested 255 people in the last one month for allegedly selling banned "Chinese manjha" or synthetic kite strings.

The state police is cracking down on the sale of banned 'Chinese manjha' following a spate of unfortunate incidents during kite flying competitions. Giving details on action taken during past one month against sellers trading in the banned "Chinese manjha", Inspector General of Police (Headquarters) Sukhchain Singh Gill said on Monday that police teams have recovered 11,364 "Chinese dor bundles (kite strings)" after registering 234 First Information Reports (FIRs) and arresting 255 people who indulged in selling this fatal kite flying string.

Notably, a few days back, a four-year-old boy received more than 100 stitches on his face after

'China dor', as it is popularly known in Punjab, got entangled around his neck and caused deep cuts near Samrala, in Ludhiana district.

It happened as the kid rolled down the window pane of the car he was travelling in and stuck his head out to see kites being flown. He had to be hospitalised in Ludhiana. In Amritsar, a 28-year-old man suffered a deep cut around his neck recently because of Chinese string and had to get 20 stitches. The kite string got entangled around his neck while he was on his way to a bank on a motorcycle.

'China dor' is made of nylon or synthetic thread and is coated with powdered glass and metal dust to make it sharper, said a shopkeeper dealing in kites.

As it is sharper and cheaper than cotton strings, some kite enthusiasts prefer to buy it, ignoring the risks

involved. Meanwhile, the senior police officer said Punjab Police have arrested 241 drug smugglers/suppliers after registering 173 first information reports (FIRs) under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) act across the state in the last week. Inspector General of Police, Sukhchain Singh Gill told reporters here that police have also recovered 5-Kg heroin, 4.90-Kg opium, 5.92 quintals of poppy husk, and 1.95 Lakh tablets, capsules, injections/ vials of pharma opioids besides recovering Rs 7.89 Lakh drug money from their possession.

He said that with 13 more Proclaimed Offenders (POs) or absconders in NDPS cases arrested in the last week, the total number of arrests reached 636 since the special drive to arrest POs/absconders was started on July 5, 2022. (PTI)

Sri Ram Sene chief Pramod Muthalik to contest poll as independent from Karkala

UDUPI, JAN 23 --/Chief of right wing outfit Sri Ram Sene Pramod Muthalik on Monday said he has decided to contest the upcoming Assembly polls in Karnataka from Karkala Assembly constituency to fight against corruption and for the cause of Hindutva. The polls are likely by May.

"Under pressure from karyakartas, I decided to contest as an independent candidate from the Karkala Assembly segment. Already, I have travelled across the constituency seven or eight times, and everyone is of the opinion that Muthalik should contest from here as there have been injustice to Hindus and rampant corruption," Muthalik said. Speaking to reporters here, he said he is contesting so that he can work honestly for the cause of Hindutva and against corruption. "My contest will be with an aim to give the Hindus justice and respect," he added.

In November last, Muthalik said 25 Hinduwadis, including him, would contest the 2023 Assembly polls as independent candidates to protect Hindus, while alleging that the BJP which came to power with their support has failed to protect them and Hindutva. Karkala in Udupi district is now being represented by V Sunil Kumar (BJP), who is now Minister for Energy, Kannada and Culture in the Basavaraj Bommai-led Cabinet. He has represented thrice in the constituency and won in 2004, 2013 and 2018. Earlier a Congress bastion, former Chief Minister and ex-Union Minister M Veerappa Moily had won from there six times from 1972-1994 polls. (PTI)

Muslim clerics demand apology from SP leader, defend 'Ramcharitmanas'

AYODHYA, JAN 23 --/A section of Muslim clerics on Monday condemned Samajwadi Party leader Swami Prasad Maurya's remarks on Ramcharitmanas and demanded an apology from him. SP leader Maurya had on Sunday alleged that certain portions of the Ramcharitmanas "insult" a large section of society on the basis of caste and these should be "banned." The party distanced itself from Maurya's remark, saying it was his personal comments. All the same, the Bharatiya Janata Party in Uttar Pradesh demanded that he apologise and takes back his statement. Maurya, who is considered a prominent OBC leader in the state, said, "Religion is meant for the welfare of humanity and for the strengthening of it."

However, not many were impressed with his take on the Hindu epic. "Being Muslim and true followers of Islam and the last Prophet, we have regard and respect for Hindu dharma and its scriptures. I on behalf of Muslim community strongly oppose the comments made by Swami Prasad Maurya and demand an immediate apology," Maulana Wasif Hasan, Mutawalli of famous Tiley Waali Masjid in Lucknow tol PTI. Another local cleric said the epic was rich in moral teachings on how to



Swami Prasad Maurya

form an ideal society. "Ramcharitmanas was written in Awadhi language in the 16th century by Saint Tulsi Das. It is largely believed that this epic was written in Ayodhya during Mughal reign, the verses of Ramcharitmanas even today gives message of a moral society, an ideal family system," said Maulana Seraj Ahmad Khan, Imam of Bakshi Shaheed Mosque in Ayodhya said. "In our childhood, we too read the Ramcharitmanas and used to learn the verses. The Muslim community cannot accept any disrespect towards this book, I demand that Maurya must take his words back," he said. Maulana Liyaqat Ali, another cleric from Ayodhya, said: "Ramcharitmanas clearly reflects a secular and socialist

society of that time where there is no difference of caste and, we respect this book and oppose any disrespectful comments against it." "I demand that Akhilesh Yadav, the President of Samajwadi Party, issues a clarification," Liyaqat Ali added.

Athar Husain, President of Centre for Objective Research and Development, said "It is our humble request that those who are in public life in any form must restrain themselves from commenting on any religious book or personality." "Muslims at large have deep respect for the Ramcharitmanas as sacred literature, and we strongly condemn any such comment that disregard this religious book," he said. Maurya had on Sunday said, "If there is any insult to a section of society due to certain lines in the Ramcharitmanas on the basis of 'jaati', 'varna' and 'varg', then it is certainly not 'dharma', it is 'adharm'."

He said, "there are certain lines in which names of castes such as 'teli' and 'kumhaar' are mentioned" which hurt the feelings of lakhs of people who belong to these castes. Maurya made the demand that such portions of the book which, according to him, deprecates one on the basis of one's caste, or any such marker, should be banned. (PTI)

New monsoon research facility coming up at super site in Madhya Pradesh

BHOPAL, JAN 23 --/The centre is set to unveil a new monsoon research facility at a "super site" in Madhya Pradesh to study the monsoon phenomenon and make better seasonal forecasts by studying tropical clouds.

The Atmospheric Research Testbed-Central India (ART-CI) is shaping up at the 100-acre campus at Silkheda in Sehore district of Madhya Pradesh as a project of the Pune-based Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), after battling delays due to Covid-19 pandemic and encroachment by locals on the site. "The testbed is based at a unique location which falls under the monsoon core zone. We need to understand the monsoon process better. We need to have all the

major operations at one critical location," M Ravichandran, Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences told PTI on the sidelines of the India International Science Festival here. At least 30 instruments and numerous sensors are scheduled to be installed at the site, located away from industrial activity and the hustle and bustle of the city and in the direct path of rain-bearing weather systems such as low pressure areas and depressions emerging from the Bay of Bengal. "ART-CI is one of the super sites which will measure not only monsoon rainfall, but also give us basic parameters such as vertical profile of relative humidity, liquid water content, cloud properties, size of rain drops," a

scientist working on the project said. Instruments such as C-Band Dual Polarisation Radar, Ka-band Radars, Micro-Rain Radar, Met Tower, Microwave Radiometer, Ceilometer, Disdrometer, CCN Counter, Aethalometer have already been installed at the site. A wind profiler, a W-Band radar, radiosonde, LIDAR, sky imager, complete radiation system, Sun/Sky radiometer are some of the instruments proposed to be installed at the site. "Before the upcoming monsoon (2023) most of the acquired systems will be installed. Some observing facilities such as wind profiling radar, LIDAR needs to be procured next year and installed," G Pandithurai, Project Director of the ART-CI told PTI. (PTI)

Army Chief visits forward posts along LAC in eastern Arunachal

NEW DELHI, JAN 23 --/ Chief of Army Staff Gen Manoj Pande has carried out a comprehensive review of India's military preparedness along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Arunachal Pradesh in his first visit to the border state after last month's clash between Indian and Chinese forces in the Tawang sector. Officials said Gen Pande visited various forward posts along the de-facto border with China in the Rest of Arunachal Pradesh (RALP) as well as some other strategically key posts during his visit on Sunday. They said senior commanders in Arunachal Pradesh briefed the army chief about the overall security scenario in the border areas. "Gen Manoj Pande #COAS visited units & formations along LAC in Eastern #ArunachalPradesh & was briefed on operational preparedness & security situation. #COAS complimented troops for maintaining sharp vigil & exhorted all to continue working with same zeal & devotion," the Army tweeted.

On Saturday, the Army Chief reviewed the Army's military preparedness along the LAC in Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim during his visit to the headquarters of the eastern Army command in Kolkata.

Gen Pande's visit to the crucial command came six weeks after the clash between Indian and Chinese troops in an area along the LAC in the Tawang sector of Arunachal Pradesh. The Eastern Command takes care of the LAC in the Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim sectors. There has been a fresh spike in tensions between India and China after troops from the two sides were engaged in the clash along the LAC at Yangtse in the Tawang sector on December 9. Defence minister Rajnath Singh said in Parliament on December 13 that the Chinese troops tried to "unilaterally" change the status quo in the Yangtse area but the Indian Army compelled them to retreat by its firm and resolute response. On January 12, Gen Pande said the situation along the frontier with China



Chief of Army Staff Gen Manoj Pande

is "stable" but "unpredictable" and Indian troops are adequately deployed to deal with any contingencies. The Army Chief also said that there was a slight increase in the number of Chinese troops in their areas across the eastern sector. "But we are keeping a close watch on the movements and activities there," he said. Besides eastern Ladakh, the Indian Army has been also focusing on enhancing infrastructure along the LAC in Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim. Following the eastern Ladakh standoff, the Indian Army significantly shored up its operational capabilities along the LAC in the eastern theatre as well. The Army put into place an effective surveillance apparatus and there has been a substantial improvement in overall monitoring of the areas in the last two years, military officials said. From the construction of roads, bridges and ammunition depots to bolstering its surveillance apparatus, the Army is ramping up military infrastructure at

a rapid pace for quicker mobilisation of troops in the region. The Indian and Chinese troops are locked in an over 32-month standoff in several areas along the LAC in eastern Ladakh. India has been maintaining that its ties with China cannot be normal unless there is peace in the border areas.

The eastern Ladakh border standoff erupted on May 5, 2020, following a violent clash in the Pangong lake area. The ties between the two countries nosedived significantly following the fierce clash in the Galwan Valley in June 2020 that marked the most serious military conflict between the two sides in decades. As a result of a series of military and diplomatic talks, the two sides completed the disengagement process on the north and south banks of the Pangong lake and in the Gogra area. In September last, the Indian and Chinese militaries carried out disengagement from the Patrolling Point 15 in the Gogra-Hotsprings area. (PTI)



(L) Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee blowing a conch shell to mark the moment of birth of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose (R) the Chief Minister addressing a gathering at Mayo Road — Photo: Shyamal Maitra

Judges do not face public scrutiny, but people form opinion about them from judgements: Law minister

...as people don't elect you, they cannot replace you. But people are watching you -- your judgements, the way you deliver verdict -- people are watching and make assessment and form opinion

— Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju



NEW DELHI, JAN 23 --/ As judges are not elected, they do not face public scrutiny but people watch them and make assessment about them from the way they deliver justice, Union law minister Kiren Rijiju said on Monday.

The minister's remarks at a Republic Day function organised at the Tis Hazari courts complex here came amid a tug of war between the judiciary and the executive. Rijiju said due to social media, ordinary citizens ask questions from the government and they should do so. The government is attacked and questioned "and we face it", he said. "If people elect us again, we will return to power. If they don't, we'll sit in opposition and question the government," Rijiju stated. The law

minister said on the other hand if a person becomes a judge, he does not have to face elections. "There is no public scrutiny of judges," he said. "...as people don't elect you, they cannot replace you. But people are watching you -- your judgements, the way you deliver verdict -- people are watching and make assessment and form opinion," he said. Nothing is hidden in the era of social media, he added. Rijiju said the Chief Justice of India had requested him to do something about the attacks on judges on the social media. He wanted to know how to control the insulting language against judges. He said the judges cannot argue on a public forum as there are limitations. (PTI)

Maharashtra Guv says he has expressed desire before PM to step down

MUMBAI, JAN 23 --/ Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari, who has been in the line of Opposition fire over his remarks on Chhatrapati Shivaji, on Monday said he has expressed desire before Prime minister Narendra Modi to quit the post. The former Uttarakhand chief minister said he would like to spend the remainder of his life in reading, writing and other activities. "During the recent visit of the Hon'ble Prime Minister to Mumbai, I have conveyed to him my desire to be discharged of all political responsibilities and to spend the remainder of my life in reading, writing and other activities. I have always received the love and affection from the Hon'ble Prime Minister and I hope to receive the same in this regard," a statement from the Raj Bhavan said. The Prime Minister Modi was in Mumbai on January 19 to inaugurate and lay the foundation stone for several infrastructure projects. "It was an absolute honour and privilege for me to serve as the Rajya Sevak or Rajyapal of a great State like Maharashtra, the land of Saints, Social reformers and valiant fighters," Koshyari added. It was in September 2019 that Koshyari, 81, took charge as the Maharashtra Governor. When the Uddhav Thackeray-led Maha Vikas Aghadi was in power, he had several run-ins with the government on a range of issues including the appointment of 12 members to the state legislative council from the gubernatorial quota, which he never approved. The MVA had accused him of acting in a partisan manner. The latest controversy surrounding Koshyari was about his remarks on Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj whom he described as the "icon of olden times". The remarks triggered protests from the Opposition parties demanding that he be sacked. (PTI)

PM Modi virtually inaugurates model of National Memorial dedicated to Netaji

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The Prime Minister also spoke about the newly inaugurated statue of Netaji at New Delhi and said the statue of Netaji on Kartavya Path reminds us of our duties. "I believe these initiatives should have been taken before in the interest of the nation," the PM said, adding that those

message of 'Ek Bharat, Shrestha Bharat'; the message of the bravery of our Armed Forces. Just like an ocean connects different islands, similarly, the feeling of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' ignites the spirit of 'Bharat Mata and India First', he said. Union Home Minister, Mr. Amit Shah, who was physically present at the event said the Prime



nations that have tied their leaders to the public conscience progressed fast. The Prime Minister said the naming of 21 islands contained many messages. This includes the

Minister Mr. Narendra Modi's initiative to name islands after Param Vir Chakra awardees will ensure they are remembered forever. The islands named after the 21 Param Vir Chakra awardees are Major Somnath Sharma; Subedar and Hony Captain (then Lance Naik) Karam Singh, MM; 2nd Lt Rama Raghoba Rane; Nayak Jadunath Singh; Company Havildar Major Piru Singh; Capt GS Salaria; Lieutenant Colonel (then Major) Dhan Singh Thapa; Subedar Joginder Singh; Major Shaitan Singh; CQMH Abdul Hamid; Lt Col Ardeshir Burzorji Tarapore; Lance Naik Albert Ekka; Major Hoshiar Singh; 2nd Lt Arun Khetrapal; Flying Officer Nirmaljit Singh Sekhon; Major Ramaswamy Parameswaran; Naib Subedar Bana Singh; Captain Vikram Batra; Lt Manoj Kumar Pandey; Subedar Major (then Rifleman) Sanjay Kumar; and Subedar Major retd (Hony Captain) Grenadier Yogendra Singh Yadav.

Gala event marks culmination of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'

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This is being done to place the contributions and sacrifices of these freedom fighters before the younger generation so that they can draw inspiration from these great people. He said that today, the 126th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose is being celebrated as Parakram Divas across the country. On this occasion, it has also been decided to make a memorial for Netaji at Subhas Dweep in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, where he stayed during the freedom movement. Mr. Shah said that these two decisions taken by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi will connect the memories of the independence of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands with the whole country and through these decisions, patriotism, bravery and valor will be instilled in the young generation of India for ages. He said that the Andaman and Nicobar Islands had already become a place of pilgrimage for freedom due to the Cellular Jail, then Netaji liberated and hoisted the tricolor on this holy land. Following the footsteps of Netaji, Prime Minister, Mr. Narendra Modi named Shaheed Dweep, Swaraj Dweep

and Subhas Dweep and today, named 21 islands in the name of those who fought for the freedom and sovereignty of the country by sacrificing their lives. Mr. Shah said that today, by naming 21 islands after these brave hearts, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has honored their valor. Whenever the history of entire India will be written, then this incident will be written in golden letters. Recalling the contribution of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in the freedom of the country, Mr. Amit Shah said that Netaji made unparalleled contribution in the country's freedom struggle. He said that Cellular Jail is a great place of pilgrimage for the freedom struggle and due to Netaji's efforts to liberate the country, 'Azad Hind Fauj' honored this part of the country with freedom and Netaji hoisted the tricolor for the first time on this island. In his address, the Lt Governor, Admiral (Retd) D.K. Joshi highlighted the achievements of the UT administration in various sectors in the last few years. A cultural programme was also presented to mark the occasion. School students from Khalsa Public School and Kendra Vidyalaya presented dance and songs based on patriotism.

NEWS BRIEFS

Fire at Raj Bhawan

KOLKATA: Fire broke out on Monday evening at the second floor of Raj Bhawan. According to sources the incident occurred at a time when Governor C V Ananda Bose was having a meeting. However, no major damage due to the fire was reported. Raj Bhawan staffers managed to douse the fire. However, two fire brigade engines were rushed to the spot. According to Fire Brigade officials, some short circuit led to the incident. (EOIC)

Maldives supports India's candidature for UNSC non-permanent membership

MALE, JAN 23 /--/ The Maldives will support India's candidature for a non-permanent seat of the United Nations Security Council for the 2028-2029 term, the foreign ministry said here on Monday, citing New Delhi's strong and effective leadership in maintaining international peace and security.

India declared its candidature for non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council (UNSC) for the 2028-29 term last month.

I am glad to inform you that we have declared our candidature for our next tenure at the Security Council for 2028-29, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said at the

United Nations.

"The Government of Maldives has decided to support India's candidature to a non-permanent seat of the United Nations Security Council, for the term 2028-2029," the foreign ministry said in a statement, days after Jaishankar visited the country. The election for the non-permanent seat of the UNSC for the term 2028-2029 is scheduled to be held during the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly in June 2027.

"The decision to support India was taken following the visit undertaken by the Minister of External Affairs of India, Dr Subrahmanyan Jaishankar, from 18-19 January 2023 to the

Maldives," the statement said.

Jaishankar was on a three-day visit to the Maldives and Sri Lanka aimed at further expanding bilateral engagement with the two key maritime neighbours of India.

During his visit to the Maldives, Jaishankar called on President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih and held discussions with Foreign Minister Abdulla Shahid on wide-ranging issues related to bilateral cooperation.

He also inaugurated a number of India-supported projects and firmed up several agreements to further bolster bilateral cooperation.

"The Maldives' strong support for

India is rooted in the strong partnership and close bonds of friendship that exist between the two countries," the statement said.

India has continuously demonstrated strong and effective leadership in maintaining international peace and security, it said.

"India has also been a strong proponent of the values and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

"The Government of Maldives is confident that India will be a voice for all developing countries on the Security Council, and will continue to make meaningful contributions towards the global discourse on peace and security in the years to

come," it added.

The Indian High commission here thanked the Maldives government for its support to India's non-permanent seat of UNSC.

"We thank Government of Maldives for the decision to support India's candidature for non-permanent seat of UNSC for 2028-29. It reflects our strong bilateral partnership & the deep-rooted tradition of mutual support & coordination at international fora," the mission tweeted. India's 2021-2022 term on the Council ended on December 31. The previous eight terms that India has been in the Council are 1950-1951, 1967-1968, 1972-1973, 1977-1978, 1984-1985,

1991-1992 and 2011-2012.

On December 1, India assumed the monthly rotating Presidency of the Security Council, the second time after August 2021 that India is presiding over the Council during its two-year tenure as an elected UNSC member.

India has been at the forefront of efforts calling for urgent reform of the Security Council, which has remained deeply divisive in dealing with current challenges. New Delhi has asserted that the Council, in its current form, does not reflect today's geo-political realities and its credibility is at risk if developing powers like India do not have a permanent seat at the horse-shoe table. (PTI)

Paksuffersmajor power outage after grid failure

ISLAMABAD, JAN 23 /--/ Pakistan faced a major power breakdown on Monday due to a "frequency variation" in the national grid, leaving millions of people in large parts of the country, including capital Islamabad and financial hub Karachi, without electricity.

According to the Ministry of Energy, the system of frequency of the national grid went down at 7:34 am local time, resulting in the breakdown. "System maintenance work is progressing rapidly," it tweeted. Energy minister Khurram Dastgir said the restoration work was going on. "I can assure you that power will be fully restored across the country within the next 12 hours," he was quoted as saying by Geo News.

Explaining the failure, he said the authorities shut down the power generation system at night due to lower demand in winter to save fuel costs. But when the systems were turned on in the morning, "frequency variation and voltage fluctuation were observed in the south of the country somewhere between Dadu and Jamshoro" resulting in shutting down of power generating units one by one, he said. People in Pakistan's financial capital Karachi woke up on Monday with no electricity available anywhere in the metropolis.

According to details, the major power breakdown also hit other cities across Pakistan but Karachi was the worst affected. In Peshawar, a city of over 2.3 million people, some people were reportedly unable to get drinking water as the pumps were powered by electricity. It is not the first time that the country has faced such a crisis. Last year in October, Pakistan witnessed a 12-hour power outage due to technical glitches in the electricity distribution system. Pakistan is grappling with one of the country's worst economic crises in recent years amid dwindling foreign exchange reserves. The crisis forced the government earlier this month to order shopping malls and markets to close by 8:30 pm for energy conservation purposes. The sorry state of the country's power sector is emblematic of its ailing economy. The power outages occur frequently due to lack of funds to upgrade aging infrastructure. (PTI)

Imran Khan says he will challenge Punjab caretaker CM's appointment in SC

LAHORE, JAN 23 /--/ Pakistan's ex-premier Imran Khan said he will challenge in the Supreme Court the appointment of Mohsin Naqvi as the caretaker chief minister of Punjab, describing him an "enemy" of his party and slamming the election commission for reducing the country to a "Banana Republic".

Naqvi was sworn in as the caretaker chief minister of Punjab on Sunday night, hours after the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) unanimously decided to appoint him to the post. His appointment came after the ruling party and the opposition in the province failed to reach consensus on a name for the post. Naqvi, who was one of the two candidates suggested by ex-Chief Minister Hamza Shehbaz, is the owner of a media house and said to be very close to PPP leader Asif Ali Zardari. Khan's party Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) calls Naqvi "Zardari's front man in his corruption." "PML-N has history of selecting their own umpires but it's incredible how



Imran Khan

ECP has selected a sworn enemy of PTI as caretaker CM Punjab a post meant for a non-partisan person," Khan said in a tweet. The PTI chief posted a picture of Naqvi's plea bargain to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) requesting that he be allowed to pay Rs 3.5 million as plea bargain in the Haris Steels Mills corruption case. "Naqvi made a voluntary return deal with the anti-graft watchdog and the Supreme Court had declared in a suo motu case no. 17/2016 that a person responsible for voluntary return could not hold any public office at federal or provincial level nor in any state organisation," he said. "ECP has helped reduce Pak to a Banana Republic making our democracy a joke. I will be holding a presser tomorrow to expose this entire farce," he said on Sunday. Khan said Naqvi has been tasked with delaying the elections in Punjab and to sabotage the PTI.

Mohsin Naqvi has come with a two-point agenda extend the present set-up's tenure for a year, and do all that he can to damage the PTI," Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PMLQ) senior leader Moonis Elahi tweeted. Former chief minister of PTI Chaudhry Parvez Elahi dissolved the Punjab Assembly on January 12 on the wish of Khan to push the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) led federal coalition to call for snap polls. The PTI also dissolved the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assembly last week. However, the government and opposition reached a consensus on caretaker chief minister there. (PTI)

Turkish Muslims protest Quran-burning in Sweden

ISTANBUL, JAN 23 /--/ Outrage over a Quran-burning protest in Sweden produced a second day of protests in Turkey, reflecting tensions between the two countries. Some 250 people gathered outside the Swedish Consulate in Istanbul, where a photo of Danish anti-Islam activist Rasmus Paludan was set on fire. Paludan burned Islam's holy book outside the Turkish Embassy in Stockholm on Saturday, sparking protests in Istanbul and Ankara that night. Participants in Sunday's event carried green flags featuring the Islamic proclamation of faith and banner that said "We condemn Sweden's state-supported Islamophobia." A sign on a window of the Swedish Consulate read, "We do not share that book-burning idiot's view." The protests have renewed concerns about Turkey holding up Sweden and Finland's bid to join NATO. Turkey has not yet ratified the Nordic nations' memberships in the military alliance, saying Sweden needs to address Ankara's security concerns. Turkish officials slammed Sweden for allowing the Quran-burning protest but President Recep Tayyip Erdogan did not comment on it during his weekend speeches. Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson tweeted late Saturday that freedom of expression was crucial to democracy but added that "what is legal is not necessarily appropriate." "Burning books that are holy to many is a deeply disrespectful act. I want to express my sympathy for all Muslims who are offended by what has happened in Stockholm today," Kristersson said. Mustafa Demircan, one of the people protesting in Istanbul on Sunday, said the act of burning the Quran should not be considered an act protected by the right of free expression. (AP)

UK petition demands independent probe into BBC series on Modi

LONDON, JAN 23 /--/ A new online petition has demanded an independent probe into a "serious breach" by the BBC in its duties as a public broadcaster in the UK over the controversial documentary series on Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Call for an Independent Investigation into the BBC over Modi documentary' on Change.Org, which "strongly" condemns the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) for failing to meet the "highest standards of editorial impartiality", has attracted over 2,500 signatures since it went online on Sunday night. The petition labels India: The Modi Question', the first part of which aired last week and the second is due to be aired on Tuesday, as a piece of "sinister propaganda journalism that deliberately misinforms its viewers". "We strongly condemn the BBC for failing to meet the highest standards of editorial impartiality in its two-part documentary India: The Modi Question'," it reads. "We call upon the BBC Board to conduct an independent investigation into this serious breach of its duties as a public service broadcaster and publish the findings in full," it demands.

The petition also urges the UK's independent media watchdog the Office of Communications (Ofcom) to hold the BBC to account for what it calls "repeated failures to secure content standards which command the trust of licensees paying audiences" and to discuss necessary corrections and clarifications with the broadcaster. Under the rationale for the latest move, the organisers of the petition claim the documentary is an "example of agenda driven reporting and institutional bias that now characterises this once globally respected organisation". "The timing for airing, some 21 years later, a so-called investigative report that has nothing new in it, but only shoe-horns old allegations to fit the producers' clearly predetermined conclusions in itself speaks volumes. Inexplicably, it comes at a time when India's Supreme Court has, after a lengthy investigation and due process, completely absolved Prime Minister Modi from the very same allegations of complicity in the 2002 riots that the BBC now seeks to rake up after more than two decades," it reads.

Many of the signatories also express similar sentiments, calling it "complete propaganda" and condemning the BBC for carrying out a "malicious agenda". "BBC is creating a false narrative against the two-times democratically elected Prime Minister of the largest democracy in the world. Besides PM Modi was exonerated by the Supreme Court of India," writes Lord Rami Ranger, one of the British Indian signatories who has been very vocal over the issue. It comes as the Hindu Forum of Britain (HFB) wrote to Deborah Turness, CEO of BBC News, last week to complain against the broadcaster's "anti-Hindu bias". "This preposterous ill-advised production and airing of a Hindu hate piece could well be the ammunition thugs need to go out and target Hindus. Does the BBC not have any responsibility," its letter questions. It follows the Indian government's strong condemnation of the programme as a "propaganda piece" lacking objectivity. The BBC has defended the series as "rigorously researched according to the highest editorial standards". (PTI)

UK PM orders ethics probe into tax scandal-hit Tory chief

LONDON, JAN 23 /--/ British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak on Monday ordered an independent investigation into the tax affairs of scandal-hit Conservative Party chairman Nadhim Zahawi amid mounting pressure from the Opposition.

After days of headlines over the Iraqi-born minister without portfolio in his Cabinet's alleged penalty settlement with His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) department, Sunak said there were "questions that need answering" in the case which his independent ethics advisor will be looking into. The issue has dominated the news agenda for his government in recent days, with the Opposition Labour Party demanding that Zahawi, a former Chancellor of the Exchequer, be sacked. "Integrity and accountability is really important to me and clearly in this case there are questions that need answering," Sunak told reporters during a visit to a hospital in Northamptonshire in eastern England. "That's why I've asked our independent adviser to get



Rishi Sunak

ministerial code," he said.

In response, Zahawi said he welcomed the investigation and looked forward to "explaining the facts of this issue" to Sir Laurie Magnus the UK Prime Minister's Independent Adviser on Ministers' Interests. "In order to ensure the independence of this process, you will understand that it would be inappropriate to discuss this issue any further, as I continue my duties as

chairman of the Conservative and Unionist Party," said Zahawi. The minister has insisted he "acted properly throughout" and any tax error was due to being "careless" and not deliberate.

Labour's shadow business secretary Jonathan Reynolds said the issue undermines the public confidence in the political system. "I think the minimum the British public expect from any politician, but certainly someone who's been the Chancellor of Exchequer, is that they would have paid all their taxes without having to be prompted to do so or harassed or campaigned

against to do so," said Reynolds. "And the danger is that the public sees a case like this and they just think all politics and public life revolves in this way and it doesn't. And it undermines the probity of the country and it undermines the confidence people have in the political system," he said. Besides this row, the Sunak government is also faced with conflict of interest allegations engulfing his former boss Boris Johnson.

According to a Sunday Times' report, BBC chairman Richard Sharp was linked with helping the then prime minister secure a loan of up to 800,000 pounds. In a statement on Monday, Sharp called the row "a distraction for the organisation, which I regret" and said the BBC board will review any potential conflicts of interest he may have.

Sharp, a former Goldman Sachs banker, also happens to be Sunak's former boss during his days in the private sector. He was announced as the government's choice for the new BBC chairman in January 2021, when Johnson was Prime Minister. (PTI)

Lavrov says West prevented negotiations to end Ukraine war

PRETORIA, JAN 23 /--/ Moscow was willing to negotiate with Ukraine in the early months of the war but the US and other Western nations advised Kyiv against it, Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov said Monday.

Lavrov's remarks on a visit to South Africa were similar to those made last year by Russian President Vladimir Putin that his country was for talks but Ukraine's Western allies prevented that from happening. The U.S. and other Western nations have said that Russia is not serious about negotiations to end the war, set to mark its one-year anniversary next month. "It is well known that we supported the proposal of the Ukrainian side to negotiate early in the special military operation and by the end of March, the two delegations

agreed on the principle to settle this conflict," Lavrov said. "It is well known and was published openly that our American, British, and some European colleagues told Ukraine that it is too early to deal, and the arrangement which was almost agreed was never revisited by the Kyiv regime."

Russia has repeatedly rejected Ukrainian and Western demands that it withdraw completely from Ukraine as a condition for any negotiations. President Joe Biden has indicated he would be willing to talk with Putin if the Russian leader demonstrated that he seriously wanted to end the invasion.

Lavrov is in Pretoria for talks with his South African counterpart Naledi Pandor as Russia pushes to

strengthen ties with Africa's most developed country and an historical ally amid the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. South Africa was seen as the most significant of several African nations to take a neutral stance on the war and refuse to condemn Russia's invasion - to the disappointment of the U.S. and other Western partners who also view South Africa as pivotal to their plans to build relationships in Africa. Lavrov met with Pandor in the South African capital and is expected to visit other African countries on his trip. It's Lavrov's second visit to Africa in the space of six months as Russia seeks to rally support.

The war in Ukraine and its impact on Africa's 1.3 billion people, which includes rising global oil and food prices, is expected to

take center stage during Lavrov's talks with Pandor. "We are fully alert that conflict, wherever it exists in the world, impacts negatively on all of us, and as the developing world it impacts on us particularly as the African continent," Pandor said. "This is why as South Africa we consistently articulate that we will always stand ready to support the peaceful resolution of conflicts in the continent and throughout the globe." South Africa continues to keep strong bonds with Russia following the Soviet Union's support for the country's current ruling party, the African National Congress, when it was a liberation movement fighting to end the apartheid system of repression against South Africa's Black majority. (AP)

Third Hindu temple vandalised in Australia within fortnight: Report

MELBOURNE, JAN 23 /--/ A third Hindu temple has been vandalised within a fortnight in Australia's Victoria state allegedly by "Khalistani supporters" with anti-India graffiti, according to a media report on Monday.

The management of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) temple also known as the Hare Krishna Temple in Melbourne's Albert Park on Monday morning found the walls of the revered temple vandalised with graffiti

"Hindustan Murdabad", The Australia Today website reported. "We are shocked and outraged with this blatant disregard for respect for the place of worship," Bhakta Das, Director of Communication for ISKCON Temple, said. "A complaint has been filed with Victoria Police and CCTV footage is being provided to assist them in their pursuit of culprits." This is the third such incident in the country within a fortnight. On January 16, the historic Shri Shiva Vishnu Temple in Carrum Downs, Victoria,

was vandalised in a similar manner.

On January 12, the Swaminarayan temple in Melbourne was defaced by 'anti-social elements' with anti-India graffiti. Acting Premier of Victoria Jacinta Allan told The Australia Today, "All Victorians deserve to practice their faith free from racism, vilification and hatred." "This behaviour is not reflective of the majority of Victorians. The diversity of Victoria is one of our strongest assets, and we condemn these attacks,"

Allan added. This attack on ISKCON Temple came just two days after Victorian multi-faith leaders had an emergency meeting with the Victorian Multicultural Commission after which a statement of condemnation was issued against the spread of Hindu hate allegedly by Khalistani supporters. "This is disgusting. We must not allow this to happen," Victorian Liberal Party MP Brad Battin has told The Australia Today. Federal Member of Parliament Josh Burns also issued a

statement saying, "I was shocked today to learn of the hateful attack on the Hare Krishna temple in Albert Park." "This is the third incident of vandalism against Hindu places of worship in Melbourne in recent weeks.

Shivesh Pandey, an IT consultant and devotee of ISKCON temple said: "In the last two weeks, Victoria Police has failed to take any decisive action against the people who are running their hate-filled agenda against the peaceful Hindu community." India last week

condemned the vandalisation of Hindu temples in Australia and said that the matter has been raised with the Australian government in Canberra and asked for an expeditious investigation against the perpetrators. Australian High Commissioner in India Barry O'Farrell issued a statement after Indian intervention. He said, "We have been shocked at the vandalism of two Hindu temples in Melbourne, & Australian authorities are investigating," he tweeted. (PTI)

Middle order in focus as India eye series sweep against New Zealand

INDORE, JAN 23 --/ With a series sweep in sight, the middle order will be eager to give a better account of themselves as the Indian team management contemplates rotating its bowlers in the third and final ODI against New Zealand here on Tuesday. Opener Shubman Gill has been in excellent form, having scored a sensational double hundred in the opener, followed by a 40-run knock in the low-scoring second ODI. Skipper Rohit Sharma, too, is having a good run.

However, the home team is aware that despite enjoying an unassailable 2-0 lead in the series, Shubman and Rohit have been the only two batters among runs for the hosts. At the same time, it is also a fact that the others haven't been tested and the dead rubber will be the perfect opportunity for the likes Ishan Kishan, Hardik Pandya and Suryakumar Yadav to get some batting practice in match situations. Kohli's problem against left-arm spin has come to the fore once again as the talismanic batter has repeatedly gotten dismissed by Mitchell Santner. After notching three hundreds in four innings, the former skipper was dismissed cheaply in both the ODIs as New Zealand's star left-arm spinner exposed the chinks in Kohli's armour. With the World Cup just months away, Kohli would be keen for some much-needed course correction. In



Indian captain Rohit Sharma with teammates during a practice session ahead of the ODI cricket match against New Zealand, in Indore

Jadeja's comeback game: One hour in nets, pep talk with team after being named Saurashtra captain

NEW DELHI, JAN 23 --/ India all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja will captain Saurashtra in their final Ranji Trophy league fixture against Tamil Nadu beginning in Chennai on Tuesday, marking his comeback to competitive cricket after close to six months. Though Saurashtra are set to qualify for the knock-out phase, Jadeja's return has generated a lot of interest in the game ahead of the crucial four-Test series against the visiting



Australia next month. The four-day game will effectively be a fitness test for Jadeja, and if the net session on the eve of the match is any indication, the 34-year-old is likely to pass with flying colours. Wearing a GPS tracker that monitors all the required fitness parameters, Jadeja bowled left-arm spin for 30 minutes before spending approximately the same time with the bat. A National Cricket Academy (NCA) trainer is also in Chennai tracking the progress of Jadeja, who

had to undergo a knee surgery after playing his last competitive game in the Asia Cup in August. Speaking to PTI, Saurashtra coach Niraj Odedra said Jadeja was oozing with energy in his first training session with the squad. "He is very pumped up and it showed in the nets today. He wanted to have an even longer session but since he is coming from injury, it is important that he doesn't overdo it. "Before spending an hour in the nets, he gave a pep talk to the boys. Since he has reunited with the team after a long time, he was very keen to interact with the boys and congratulate on our recent success in white-ball cricket (Vijay Hazare triumph)," said Odedra. (PTI)

Ronaldo makes winning start to life with Al Nassr in Saudi Arabia

RIYADH, JAN 23 --/ Cristiano Ronaldo made a winning start to life in the Saudi Pro League as he led Al Nassr to a 1-0 victory over Ettifaq on Sunday in his first match since becoming the best paid footballer in history. The Portuguese superstar didn't score but there were promising signs for Al Nassr, who are eyeing domestic and continental silverware after the 37-year-old moved for deals totalling more than 400 million euros. However, Ronaldo's league debut had an anticlimactic feel in front of 22,862 fans after he scored twice in this week's lively 5-4 exhibition defeat to Lionel Messi's Paris Saint-Germain. "He's one of the best players in the history of football, so it's very important for us to do everything possible to put him in the best condition," said Al Nassr coach Rudi Garcia. "I want him to enjoy playing and tonight he was happy to play for the first time with his new team." Ronaldo, leading out Al Nassr as captain,

made a low-key start in the first half, twice losing the ball with attempted trickery as his team-mates struggled to get him on the ball. Ronaldo's early shot from the edge of the box was deflected over, and he nearly met Abdulmajeed Al Sulaiheem's cross that was headed in by Anderson Talisca for the game's only goal on 31 minutes. Shortly afterwards Ronaldo, met by shouts of "Siu!" every time he touched ball, blazed over with a free kick from an inviting position just outside the penalty area. Al Nassr's front three began to click in the second half and Ronaldo set up Pity Martinez and Talisca — after some trademark stepovers — for close chances in quick succession. A swing and a miss at a bicycle kick showed Ronaldo was warming to his task, and he then attempted a shot from a nearly impossible angle after a dribble into the box. But there was to be no goal for Ronaldo, watched by his



girlfriend Georgina Rodriguez, in a win that kept Al Nassr on top of the Saudi Pro League. Ronaldo arrived in oil-rich Saudi Arabia in early January but his debut was delayed while he served a two-match ban for knocking a mobile phone out of a fan's hand while at Manchester United. The move to Saudi is a step down for Ronaldo, an undisputable all-time great who has continually delivered on football's biggest stages and amassed an astonishing haul of team and personal honours. The five-time Ballon d'Or winner is the all-time Champions League top-scorer, collecting five titles along the way, and has won seven domestic championships with Manchester United, Real Madrid and Juventus. Ronaldo also holds the record for international goals — 118 with Portugal, with whom he won Euro 2016 — and career goals with 819. In Qatar last year, he became the first man to score at five World Cups. (AFP)

GAME NOTES

MC Marry Kom to lead Oversight Committee to probe allegations against WFI president

NEW DELHI, JAN 23 --/ Boxing great MC Mary Kom will lead a five-member Oversight Committee that will probe sexual harassment charges against Wrestling Federation of India president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh. The government-appointed Committee will also run the day-to-day affairs of WFI for the next one month. The other members of the panel are Olympic medalist wrestler Yogeshwar Dutt, former badminton player and Mission Olympic Cell member Trupti Murgunde, ex-TOPS CEO Rajagopalan and former SAI executive director - teams - Radhika Sreeman. The announcement of the panel was made by Sports Minister Anurag Thakur on Monday. Thakur had decided to form the Committee on Saturday following a three-day sit-in protest by some of the country's top wrestlers including Vinesh Phogat, Bajrang Punia, Sakshi Malik and Ravi Dahiya against WFI and Singh. (PTI)



Pakistan Cricket Board appoints Haroon Rasheed as Chief selector



KARACHI, JAN 23 --/ Pakistan's former batter Haroon Rasheed has been appointed as the chief selector of the national selection committee. Najam Sethi, the chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), told reporters in Lahore on Monday that Haroon will be heading the new selection committee but the remaining members would be decided later. Haroon, 69, was also named on the 14-member cricket management committee to run the PCB, on December 22, by the patron-in-chief of the board, Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif. "Haroon has now resigned from the management committee as we don't want a conflict of interest as he is now chief selector," Sethi said.

Martins returns to ATK Mohun Bagan

KOLKATA, JAN 23 --/ Indian midfielder Glan Martins has signed up with his former club ATK Mohun Bagan on a long term deal, the Mariners announced on Monday. "Martins will start training for the club from Tuesday," ATK Mohun Bagan said in statement. ATK Mohun Bagan have a crucial ISL home match against Odisha FC at the Saltlake Stadium here on Saturday. The 28-year-old attacking midfielder will also reunite with his former FC Goa coach Juan Ferrando as they would look to replicate their old chemistry now at ATK Mohun Bagan. From 15 matches this season, Martins had nine appearances, spending 470 minutes on the field and he's yet to score a goal. (PTI)



India writes to BWF to host Sudirman Cup, Junior Worlds

NEW DELHI, JAN 23 --/ The Badminton Association of India (BAI) has written to the sport's world body (BWF), expressing its interest to host the Sudirman Cup Finals this year. India was scheduled to host the mixed team championship in 2023, but the Badminton World Federation awarded the rights to Suzhou, China, while giving the 2026 World Championships to India. Suzhou was due to host the championships in 2021 but, due to the COVID-19 situation in China, the BWF was not able to stage any tournaments in the country and the event was shifted to Vantaa in Finland. Owing to the current COVID situation in China, there is again uncertainty regarding the Sudirman Cup, scheduled to be held there from May 14 to 21. "India is keen to host Sudirman Cup this year. We have written to BWF expressing our interest, we are expecting a positive response in a fortnight," BAI general secretary Sanjay Mishra told PTI. (PTI)

WIPL Team Bid: BCCI set for another 4000 cr windfall

NEW DELHI, JAN 23 --/ The BCCI is all set to get richer by up to Rs 4000 crore with some of the top business houses set to bid aggressively for the five Women's IPL (WIPL) teams that would be auctioned on Wednesday.

According to market experts, the teams are expected to shell out in the "range of 500 to 600 crore INR" per team in the closed-bid auction. "WIPL has huge potential but most of the legacy teams would like to mix optimism with pragmatism," an industry insider, who has previously worked on men's IPL team bid, told PTI ahead of auction.

"Expect a few bids in the range of Rs 500 crore upwards. Rs 800 crore plus could be a bit ambitious but BCCI won't complain," he added. More than 30 odd companies have bought the bid documents worth Rs 5 lakh including all the 10 men's IPL team. Well-known corporate houses such as Adani group, Torrent group, Haldiram's Prabhuji, Capri Global, Kotak and Aditya Birla Group have also shown interest in buying a team. Some of these companies were unsuccessful when BCCI invited bids for two new men's teams in 2021. Among the traditional IPL teams, Mumbai Indians, Rajasthan Royals, Delhi Capitals, KKR could seriously contemplate to add to the bouquet of their already existing men's teams across the globe. According to market insiders, there are two principles on which these bids are placed by the business houses. First one is "Return on Investment" (ROI), which is the core principal of any business. It is profit on what an entity spends.

The second one isn't a business principle as such but in business community they call it "Return of Ego". This is something where some of the biggest business names are ready to shell out any amount if they have their eyes on buying a particular property. Even if it takes five to seven years for touching breakeven point. It's about wanting to purchase something at any cost. An existing IPL franchise with its "steady revenue stream" in place can afford to "bleed" a bit more in initial years which is

imperative. A former IPL franchisee official, who had once worked on bids, explained the rationale which goes into the bidding. "Let's say, a franchise makes a winning bid of Rs 500 crore for a period of five years. Now that's Rs 100 crore committed straightaway for each of next five years," the source explained.

Now what will be source of earning for the franchises? "The BCCI distributes its media broadcast revenue which is one of the major earning chunk. The second is a share from BCCI's central pool of sponsorship. The third is



a franchisee's own set of sponsorship earnings. Fourth is gate sales, money earned from tickets," he elaborated. So what could be a franchisee's earning from WIPL's media revenue pool. "The BCCI in case of Women's IPL is going to share 80 percent of media rights money with the teams (in case of men, it's 50:50) to help them develop a sustainable model. "So what will be the mathematics over here? JIO has brought media rights for five years at Rs 950 crore (approx) which is roughly Rs 190 crore per year. So 80 percent of 190 crore is 152 crore. "Let's make it a round figure of Rs 150 crore. That's what each franchise gets over a period of five years which approximately Rs 30 crore per annum," he explained. "Now BCCI will also distribute a chunk of its central pool of sponsorship (title sponsor, co sponsors, various award sponsors) also with franchise. Add to it franchisee's own revenue pool also. So it could be anything between Rs 15 to Rs 18 crore per year. Gate sales won't earn you a great deal in first year," he said. So the per year earning for a team is expected to be Rs 50 crore. Now apart from Rs 100 crore franchisee fee per year, what will be the other expenses.

"There is a salary cap of Rs 12 crore for the squad. Add another 6 to 8 crore on salary of support staff. Let's make it Rs 20 crore. Add the hotel expenses, fees paid to state associations for stadium and other operational costs. It could be anything between Rs 6 to 8 crore. First year single city would reduce expenses. "So the cumulative expenses per year could be Rs 128 to Rs 130 crore. The earnings would be around Rs 50 crore. So there is a chance during first few years, there would be a loss of Rs 50 crore or more," he explained. Herein lies the catch. "The legacy franchises (MIPL) are better placed to offset these losses as they are already making profits after 15 years of IPL. They will club their men's and women's team together and perhaps quickly make the profit zone," the official added. The five-team WIPL will be played in the month of March in Mumbai at a couple of venues. (PTI)

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