

STANDING TESTIMONY TO OFFICIAL APATHY

Healthcare in shambles at PHC Billiground

KARTIK

MAYABUNDER, JAN 7/-- / Setup with the vision to provide better amenities and facilities to the residents of Middle Andaman, the Primary

Health Centre at Billiground stands testimony to official apathy. Lack of basic health care facilities in PHC, Billiground is generating sharp criticism from people in the region particularly

shortage of staff and amenities and specialists medical care.

The Primary Health Centre located at Billiground is catering to the health care needs of about four Panchayats

Lack of basic health care facilities in PHC, Billiground sticks out like a sore thumb

namely Shivapuram, Swadeshnagar, Harinagar and Basantipur and a population of 20,000 villagers from Panchawati to Basantipur. Taken together over 50000 villagers in this region are totally dependent on the PHC Billiground to cater to their health care requirements. According to reports, more than 300 out-patients visit the PHC Billiground on a daily basis for availing treatment, but the health care facilities have not seen improvement. Infact, health care facilities are going down from bad to worse. According to the local residents, the PHC at Billiground is functioning with acute shortage of health care staff as the PHC lacks office clerks, Lab Technicians, X-Ray Technicians etc. The old X-Ray machine of Super PHC always remains in a defunct



state and patients are forced to visit either CHC Rangat or CHC Mayabunder for getting their X-Ray reports. Residents have demanded installation of a Digital X-Ray machine on an urgent basis at this PHC, Billiground to avoid the inconvenience caused to the patients.

Villagers visiting PHC Billiground have also complained that due to

frequent power outages, the patients face a lot of hardship. A high capacity Generator set needs to be set up to ensure uninterrupted power supply. Patients have also raised the issue of the bad condition of the mortuary unit in the PHC. Patients have demanded renovation of the mortuary unit at the PHC Billiground so that

cadavers can be preserved

properly in the cold room. Like CHC Rangat and CHC Mayabunder where special medical camps by medical specialists are conducted on a regular basis, residents of Billiground and adjoining areas have demanded conducting medical camps by specialist doctors from GB Pant hospital at PHC Billiground on a time to time basis.

DC(SA) inaugurates Maternity Home at GB Pant Hospital



PORT BLAIR, JAN 7/--/ The Deputy Commissioner, South Andaman and Chairman, District Health Society (SA), Mr. Suneel Anchipaka on Saturday inaugurated the Maternity Home at campus of the G. B Pant Hospital, Port Blair in the presence of Mr. Rahul D. Boora, Director of Health Services, Director of ANIIMS, Joint MD-UTHM, MS-GBPH, along with other officials from NHM, Health & APWD Department. The DC (SA) informed that this concept is the second initiative in A & N Islands and the Maternity Home has been constructed through the District Health Society (SA) under National Health Mission to provide accommodation at minimal fee to the poor pregnant women of Inter Island for better health care services. It was also informed that this initiative has been inspired from Nicobar Birth Home, the idea of Maternity Home incorporates Traditional Gyan with Post Modern Technologies. He also informed that the motto of this initiative is to reduce the Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR), which could improve the health indicators of A & N Islands. (Contd. on page-6)

Annual Athletics Meet of Govt. Model SSS, Sita Nagar

Youth told to stay away from the grip of drugs, develop interest in sports activities

EOI CORRESPONDENT

DIGLIPUR, JAN 7/--/ The Diglipur Police has called upon the school students to stay away from the alluring grip of drug menace. The DySP of the region, Mr. Lakshya Pandey while distributing the prizes to the winners of the Annual Athletics Meet of the Govt. Model Senior Secondary School, Sita Nagar on Friday said that students should be cautious not to get trapped under the clutches of drugs of any kind. He said that the students should develop interest in sports and by adopting sports as their hobbies, not only will they remain physically fit, but they will excel in studies and other walks of life as well. Sports inculcates discipline, punctuality, and ethical values, which develops the personality of an individual, he said.

Appreciating the cultural performances of the student artists, the DySP said that Islands' students are very talented and are in no way inferior to their counterparts in mainland. Shri Lakshya Pandey had special words for the performance, depicting the concept of unity in diversity of India, and also the beautiful Rangotsav presentation done by the students of different houses. The guest of honour, the Gram Pradhan Shri Biplab Mondal, the special invitee the Zila Parishad member Smt. Aporna Biswas and the Principal of GSSS Subhas gram Shri M. Nehru also gave away the prizes to the winners of the different sporting events. Individual Championship of senior boys was bagged by Sanjay Tirkey of 'Paget

House', while Ishika Roy of 'Ross house' was declared the best athlete among girls. The 'Red'-Ross House was awarded the champion's trophy for the best all round performance.

(Contd. on page-6)





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Gateway to Badrinath on brink of disaster

JOSHIMATH, JAN 7 /--/ Joshimath, the gateway to famous pilgrimage sites like Badrinath, Hemkund Sahib and the international skiing destination Auli, seemson the brink of a disaster.

Known as the place where Adi Guru Shankaracharya subjected himself to penance centuries ago, Joshimath is sinking gradually with huge cracks developing in its houses, roads and fields. Many houses have suffered subsidence, locals said. Chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami has ordered immediate evacuation of 600 families living in houses at risk. A temple in Joshimath collapsed on Friday evening further alarming residents who have been living under constant fear amid heavily cracked walls of their houses for over a year. "The problem began 14-15 months back in Gandhinagar area and then spread to other areas like Suneel, Manohar Bagh, Singdhar and Marwari," former Joshimath municipal chairman Rishi Prasad Sati said. "Saklani family's house collapsed in Suneel but the

alarm bells went ringing when huge cracks appeared around a fortnight ago on the walls of hotels Mountain View and Malari Inn, leading to their closure," he said.

Five families who lived in houses beneath the hotels lost their homes after that, he said. "The houses of Bhagwati Prasad Kaparwan, Durga Prasad Kaparwan, Madan Prasad Kaparwan and Madhvi Sati also suffered extensive damages," Sati said. A girl named Sanjana, who stands in a room with cracks on its walls and ceilings, said, "They have been appearing since one and a half years." Vishnupuram, a posh colony for the employees of 420 MW Vishnuprayag hydel project of JP Ventures had to be vacated entirely when huge cracks appeared right in the middle of it on January three and many houses subsided, company official Col TN Thapa said. Though none of around 150 employees living in the colony was hurt as the roofs of the houses are made of time many houses in the colony, the company's guest house and canteen were damaged badly, he said.

"People are supporting their residences with the help of bamboo poles and tucking rags into chinks," Joshimath Bachao Sangharsh Samiti convenor Atul Sati said.

Joshimath is the last border town of strategic, religious and tourist importance which falls into seismic zone V, he said. If an earthquake occurs, it will cause extensive damage to life and property, Sati warned and demanded immediate rehabilitation of residents. 561 residential structures, including two big hotels here, have been damaged by landslides, according to a government survey conducted on Wednesday. However, the actual damage is estimated to be higher than the government estimate. A large part of Badrinath National Highway is in the grip of landslide. Big cracks have appeared in people's fields. These cracks are widening every day. A water stream suddenly gushed out in JP Colony near Marwari a couple of days back scaring residents. Ravigram, Gandhinagar, Manohar bagh, Singhadhar wards of

Joshimath municipality have seen maximum number of landslides.

Sofar nearly fifty families have left their homes for security reasons. Some are staying with their acquaintances while some are staying in shelters. The number of people leaving their homes and taking refuge elsewhere is likely to only go up in the coming days. Joshimath has many outstanding features. If one talks about religion and culture the famous Badrinath Dham and the penance place of Adi Guru Shankaracharya are inseparably associated with the identity of this city. It is also known as the gateway to the world-famous skiing destination Auli, Asia's longest and highest rope-way project, the 420 MW Vishnuprayag hydropower project and the NTPC's 520 MW Tapovan project under construction. Apart from being a religious and cultural city, it is one of the largest towns near the India-China border and also a very important place from the strategic point of view due to its unique location. (PTI)



President Droupadi Murmu presenting the seventh edition of the Digital India Awards, in New Delhi

CJI Chandrachud to be conferred with 'Award for Global Leadership' by Harvard Law School Center

NEW DELHI, JAN 7 /--/ Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud has been selected for the "Award for Global Leadership" by the Harvard Law School Center in recognition of his lifetime service to the legal profession in the country and around the world. The award will be presented to him at an online event on January 11. Chandrachud obtained an LLM degree and a Doctorate in Juridical Sciences (SJD) from the Harvard Law School in the United States. At the event, professor David Wilkins of the Harvard Law School will also have a conversation with the CJI. Justice Chandrachud, who was part of the apex court benches that delivered several landmark verdicts, including the Ayodhya land dispute case, was sworn in as the 50th CJI on November 9, 2022. (PTI)

Ashok Gehlot firm on Old Pension Scheme, dismisses Montek Ahluwalia's 'financial bankruptcy' remark

JAIPUR, JAN 7 /--/ Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot on Saturday said that he believes in his department's financial management as he dismissed economist Montek Singh Ahluwalia's remark that going back to the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) is a recipe to financial bankruptcy. "We believe that the management we have, the financial management that our department has done... We have sat and discussed. We believe that there is no work which cannot be done," Gehlot told reporters after launching 5G internet service here on Saturday. He said that all economists use their intellect but his government has belief in financial management done by its department. Gehlot said that if the country can progress for 60 years after implementing OPS and giving pension to employees then it can continue with it now as well, and added that employees have a right to social security after retirement.



Ashok Gehlot

The Chief minister said that the state government decided to implement OPS from the point of view of "humanity." He said that government employees work under pressure and are forced to indulge in corrupt practices to secure their and their families' future. He also accused the central government of exercising "discrimination" in providing OPS benefits to the Army and not the BSF, ITBP, and paramilitary forces, and asked why it was so. Gehlot also targeted the BJP, the main opposition party in the state, for not praising the state government's policies. (PTI)

Congress, RSS delegations meet families of terror victims in J&K's Rajouri

JAMMU, JAN 7 /--/ Members of local Congress and RSS visited Dhangri village in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district where six people were killed and several others injured in terror attacks earlier in the month.

The Congress delegation led by its spokesperson Deepika Pushkar Nath criticised Lt Governor Manoj Sinha and the Centre over their claims of restoration of normalcy in Jammu and Kashmir. The RSS delegation too demanded a probe into the disarming of village defence committee (VDC) members without any government order. "The co-ordination between the Indian Army and the police needs to be stepped up with enhanced vigilance to prevent loss of innocent lives. This (Dhangri incident) is an example of governance and administrative failure in full measure," Nath, an advocate, said on Saturday. She appealed to the central government to hold a fresh security audit of the region.

Offering her condolences to the victims' families, the Congress leader

said, "It was heartbreaking and painful to watch the families who lost their loved ones in an instance of mindless violence as a result of a monumental security breach." Nath said the tragedy could have been avoided if the authorities were vigilant enough. "This tragedy could have been avoided had the administration been a little vigilant and alert as this attack took place days after the Sidhra encounter," she said. Four heavily-armed terrorists, travelling in a truck to Kashmir after infiltrating from Pakistan, were killed in a "chance encounter" on December 28 last year. The gunfight had taken place early morning amid dense fog near Tawi Bridge in the Sidhra bypass area along the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway. "It is clear that the LG administration and BJP in an attempt to pat their own backs by selling the lies of normalcy and peace have made people of Jammu and Kashmir vulnerable to such attacks and Rajouri was one such example. "It has become a habit of the LG administration to issue ex-

gratia amount and announce jobs for the victims of terror attacks but they pay very less attention towards prevention of such dastardly attacks and protection of the citizens," she said. "I on behalf of my party appeal to the LG administration that besides being compensated these families deserve justice, those who have done this should be brought to the book," the Congress leader added.

A delegation of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh led by its J&K chief Gautam Mengi met the families of the victims on Friday and questioned the disarming of the VDCs. "Who were the people in police and civil administration who ordered depositing of the VDC weapons without any formal government order? They need to be identified and punished," Mengi said. Vishva Hindu Parishad Working president Rajesh Gupta, who also accompanied the delegation, said the incident is not the failure of the security forces but an indication of the weakness of the intelligence agencies. (PTI)

Centre willing to start 1 old age home in each district of Kerala: Union minister

KOCHI, JAN 7 /--/ Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment Ramdas Athawale on Saturday said the Centre was willing to start one old age home in each district of Kerala with the cooperation of NGOs. Speaking to reporters here, Athawale said the Union government was implementing many schemes for the welfare of all sections of the society irrespective of caste and religion. "...So far 1,658 old age homes had been established in the country with the help of the Social Justice Department and among them, nine were in Kerala. 109 of the 1,720 de-addiction centers functioning with the financial assistance of the Department of Social Justice are also in Kerala," he said. Stressing that schemes like Jan Dhan Yojana, Mudra, Ujjawala, Ayushman Bharat and PM Awas Yojana were acting as catalysts in changing the lives of people from all walks of life, the Union Minister said that the government was keen on implementing these schemes by adhering to the slogan 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas'. Talking about the implementation of various Central Government schemes in Kerala, Athawale said that under the Jan Dhan Yojana, 53.62 lakh bank accounts had been opened in the State. "1.26 crore youths had been given loans under the PM Mudra scheme. Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana has benefited 3.41 lakh people. 1.13 lakh houses had been constructed in urban areas in the State through Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana," he said. The Union Minister was here on a one-day visit to the State. (PTI)

Lot of noise, nothing on ground: BJP cites 'outcome budget' to slam Kejriwal

NEW DELHI, JAN 7 /--/ The BJP on Saturday accused the Arvind Kejriwal government of practicing "politics of advertisement and drama" and cited the Delhi government's "outcome budget" to claim that no real work related to its big projects has been executed on the ground.

The outcome budget says only 418 of the 4,470 projects linked to the development fund allocated to MLAs have been completed this year, it noted. "No work on the ground is taking place on the big ticket announcements made by Kejriwal," BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra told a press conference.

The Delhi government had announced a "rozgar budget" but its own outcome budget has said that nothing has been done on it so far, he said. Patra said chief minister Kejriwal had claimed that his government will introduce a facility on mobile that will allow women in distress to reach out to police with the mere press of a button, but nothing has happened yet. "Money is not being spent to carry out work on the ground but for Kejriwal's publicity. There is lot of sound but nothing on ground," he alleged.

Digital classrooms were promised but nothing happened and the outcome budget also says that only 37 per cent students benefited from the school uniform subsidy scheme, the BJP spokesperson said. "The government promised in the budget that homeless children will be provided shelter and education. The outcome budget says no information is available and guidelines for the scheme are yet to be finalised," he said. The outcome budget is a progress card on what various ministries and departments have done with the outlays in the previous annual budget. It captures the progress of various schemes, programmes and projects and final deliverables from the citizens' perspective. Patra noted that Kejriwal had promised massive installation of CCTVs across the city to help probe crimes but only 60 per cent of the work has been finished. And only half of the installed cameras are working, he added.

The Aam Aadmi Party government said the national capital will have food and shopping festivals, and identified five markets for promotion but the outcome is zero, Patra said. He said it has not issued notification about its promised policy to promote start-ups. The outcome budget says that only 418 of 4,470 projects linked to the development fund allocated to MLAs have been completed this year, Patra said.

"This is the truth of Arvind Kejriwal. What he says is different from what he does," the BJP spokesperson said. Nothing has happened on the promise to rejuvenate the Yamuna river while only 159 of the 1,708 road projects are nearing completion, he said. Patra said Kejriwal has spoken a lot about curbing air pollution in Delhi, but nothing has been done. (PTI)

Financial aid in case of death due to natural calamity to be released in 24 hours in Himachal: Order

SHIMLA, JAN 7 /--/ An assistance of Rs 25,000 will be given to kin of the deceased within 24 hours in case of death due to natural calamity in Himachal Pradesh, an official order said on Saturday.

Sudesh K Mokhta, Director-cum-Special Secretary (Revenue), said the step has been taken after sensing the plight of family members who have to run from pillar to post to get the ex gratia released. "...a minimum amount of Rs 25,000 as notified in the relief manual in case of death due to natural calamity and Rs 5,000 in case of grievous injury will now be released immediately," a statement issued by the Himachal Pradesh government said. According to norms, a sum of Rs 4 lakh is provided in case of death, irrespective of the place of residence and nationality, provided the death has occurred within the state. However, Rs 25,000 will be released to the bereaved family members within 24 hours and the remaining amount will be released thereafter within four days, Mokhta added.

Meanwhile, funds to the tune of Rs 1 crore were disbursed to district-level horticulture offices to deal with any eventuality arising from the drought-like situations being witnessed in the hill state due to delay in rain and snow. "The department is closely keeping an eye on the situation and the amount will be used to aid necessary materials such as plants, water tanks, pipes, medicines and micro-organisms to farmers and horticulturists," a spokesperson of the horticulture department said here in a statement.

The orchardists are advised to stop the harvesting and pruning of fruit bearing trees till the rains so that further losses can be avoided, he said. The orchardists with small fields have also been advised to plant fruit plants at a proper distance in the middle of their fields and keep the slope inside so that rainwater is used properly and soil erosion could be reduced, the spokesperson added. (PTI)

Covishield immune responses against Covid variants higher than Covaxin: Study

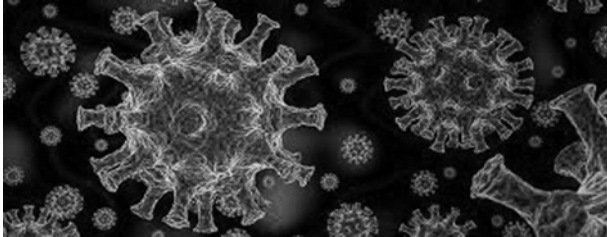
NEW DELHI, JAN 7 /--/ Neutralising antibody responses against the SARS-CoV-2 virus and its variants of concern (VoC) are higher among Covishield recipients than those who took the indigenously made Covaxin, according to a multi-centre study.

The yet-to-be peer-reviewed study, posted on the preprint server MedRxiv on Friday, also found that when compared to pre-vaccination baseline, both vaccines elicited statistically significant antibody levels in both seronegative individuals and seropositive or those who had recovered from Covid-19 infection. Between June 2021 and January 2022, the researchers enrolled 691 participants in the 18-45 age group across four sites in urban and rural Bengaluru and Pune. Participants received either

two doses of Covaxin at 28 days apart or two doses of Covishield at three months apart. The Omicron wave in early 2022 overlapped with the second dose of vaccine in two sites and with both doses in one site.

Participants were sampled at six timepoints for antibody analyses and at four timepoints for cellular analyses. When compared to pre-vaccination baseline, both vaccines elicited statistically significant antibody levels in both seronegative and seropositive individuals, the researchers found. Covishield elicited immune responses of higher magnitude and breadth than Covaxin in both seronegative individuals and seropositive individuals, across cohorts representing the pre-vaccination immune history of the majority of

the vaccinated Indian population. Immunologist Vineeta Bal noted that in young adult population there is a difference in the response to Covid vaccines, if individuals are already infected with SARS-CoV-2 and recovered (seropositives) versus not infected. "In seronegatives, two doses of Covishield



lead to higher magnitude of antibody levels in higher proportion of vaccine recipients as compared to Covaxin recipients," Bal, from Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), Pune and

discussed ways to "trap" some contractors in order to "extort" money. Balbir Singh was administered oath by Punjab Governor Banwarilal Purohit at the Raj Bhavan here Saturday evening in the presence of chief minister Bhagwant Mann. Singh, an eye surgeon, had defeated senior Congress leader

one of the study authors, told PTI. "In terms of waning of immune response with time also the Covishield vaccinated individuals retain antibodies in their blood for longer period in larger proportion of individuals," she said.

The study does not directly look for or

document protection from Covid-19 in the recipients. "Levels of neutralising antibodies as well as T cell responses, according to different investigators, are indirect indicators of protection," Bal said. "The

interim results so far show that Covishield vaccination induces robust neutralising antibodies against the original SARS-CoV2; Covaxin also does it but somewhat less efficiently," she added. "Against later variants of the virus such as Delta and Omicron, especially Omicron, neutralising antibodies triggered by Covishield are not as effective, however, they appear marginally better than in Covaxin recipients," Bal added. Prior studies comparing Covishield and Covaxin were limited to addressing only antibody responses and in particular in the health care worker population who were immunised prior to the Delta wave. There is, however, limited data on cellular immune responses elicited by these vaccines and no direct head-to-head

comparisons or stratification by pre-vaccination serostatus. Vaccination following exposure to the Delta or Omicron variants of SARS-CoV-2 is likely to affect the quality, quantity and duration of immune responses.

For determining future Covid-19 vaccination policy when pan-coronavirus or sarbecovirus vaccines become available, it becomes important to take into account pre-vaccination immune history of the majority of the vaccinated Indian population. "Some unpublished work from other investigators in India seems to suggest that heterologous boosting i.e. Covaxin in Covishield recipients and vice versa works better than homologous boosting," Bal added. (PTI)

The man who doesn't read good books has no advantage over the man who can't read them
Mark Twain

New twist to Assam-Meghalaya border row

Assam and Meghalaya have a five-decade old boundary dispute. Meghalaya, carved out of Assam as an autonomous region in 1970, became a full-fledged State in 1972. In March, Assam and Meghalaya resolved the boundary dispute at six out of total 12 such locations along their 884.9 km boundary, and the next round of talks was to take place soon. Though the latest flare-up did not arise out of this dispute, it happened along a disputed border stretch. Assam has boundary disputes at various points in time with the States carved out of it. The agreement reached in January last year between Assam and Meghalaya to end their boundary dispute in six of the 12 areas, where discord persisted, is a welcome first step. The agreement signed by Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and his Meghalaya counterpart Conrad Sangma, in the presence of Home Minister Amit Shah, had generated hopes that the differences in the remaining six areas will be resolved. On November 22 last year, five villagers from Meghalaya and an Assam forest guard were killed and two others were seriously injured in a firing incident along the boundary between the two states. The conspicuous fact is that, along the 884-km long border, the two states have twelve disputed stretches. The pact sought to resolve the protracted dispute in six of the 12 places along the 884.9-km border between the two states.

In December the same year, the Meghalaya High Court ordered an interim stay on physical demarcation or erection of boundary posts on the ground following the inter-state border pact. This was on a petition filed by certain individuals. The case of the petitioners before the High Court was that concession of territory by Meghalaya, which involved a lot of tribal land and villages, was done without consulting the constitutionally-constituted autonomous bodies. Later, a division bench of the high court refused to interfere with the order of the single judge bench, prompting the petitioners to an appeal in the top court. The Supreme Court stopped the execution of the Meghalaya High Court order staying the memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed by the chief ministers of Assam and Meghalaya for settling the festering boundary dispute between the two states, terming it "unwarranted". A bench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and justices PS Narasimha and JB Pardiwala took note of the submissions of Solicitor General Tushar Mehta and the lawyers representing Assam and Meghalaya, that some of the areas, which are covered under the MoU, are not getting the benefits of the developmental schemes due to the old border disputes and, moreover, the boundary between the two states has not been altered due to the agreement. The boundary dispute between Assam and Meghalaya has lingered for 50 years. However, the effort to resolve it gained pace in recent times. Meghalaya was carved out of Assam as a separate state in 1972, but the new state had challenged the Assam Reorganisation Act, 1971, leading to dispute in 12 border locations. The wound is still festering.

2023 starts with Lula's Presidency in Brazil

REFLEX ACTION

Satyaki Chakraborty

Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva took office Sunday January 1 for a third term as Brazil's president, in a ceremony marked by the absence of his predecessor Jair Bolsonaro and violent demonstrations by far right supporters in different parts of the country.

The 77-year-old ex-metalworker, who previously led Brazil from 2003 to 2010, took the oath of office before Congress, vowing to "maintain, defend and obey the constitution" as he returns to lead Latin America's biggest economy after a bitterly divisive election in October. The event was austere and it marked the remarkable comeback for Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva to the presidential palace within less than five years after being imprisoned on politically motivated corruption charges. The supporters of the newly elected president expressed their sigh of relief on Sunday as finally Bolsonaro left Brazil for Florida in USA without trying to repeat any Trump like behaviour. But he till now refuses to officially recognise the victory of Lula despite the Election Commission rejecting all his post-election appeals. At one time, Lula and his party compatriots were afraid that the defeated president will start a civil war to resist change of presidency.

That finally did not occur giving relief to the anxious Brazilians. Thousands of supporters of Lula attended the victory ceremony and the leftwing cultural workers of Brazil held a series of programmes to celebrate Lula win. Foreign dignitaries including 19 heads of state were in attendance as Lula, who previously led Brazil through a poverty eradication programme from 2003 to 2010, took the oath of office for a new four-year term. Apart from many Latin American country heads, president of Germany, Portugal and the King of Spain attended the ceremony.

Lula took over in Brazil amidst Brazil's own economic woes as also recent setback to the left wing regimes of Latin America which came to power in the recent years. In Peru, the elected president in 2022 general elections Pedro Castillo has been arrested in corruption charges and removed from power. The vice president Dina Boluarte has been nominated as the

new president. Castillo is a pro people leader and he was planning to make lot of changes in favour of the underprivileged, but he did not consult properly his allies and took some decisions unilaterally making him vulnerable. At a time, when the Left was hoping for a transformation in Peru, this is a setback. Similarly in Argentina, the vice president Kichener has been arrested and removed for corruption charges. She belongs to the Peronist Party and has been in the forefront being the president earlier. This is also a big setback in the context of the next national elections in the country. The economy in Argentina is yet to come out of the crisis and this moment, this political shock has weakened President Fernandez's government in 2023.

The Latin American experts expect both political and economic instability in the region as the left forces are still trying to consolidate in the countries they have been ruling. Further, the far right and the other antileft forces have gained some strength due to the failure of some of the regimes to improve the ground situation affecting the common people... Lula has got wide experience in economic management. It is expected that he will be more cautious this time and take steps which will help in improving the economic situation in Brazil which has been in very bad shape during the previous regime due to the impact of Covid 19 on the health of the people as also economy.

Experts point out that the global macroeconomic and geopolitical environment is unlikely to improve much, in 2023 which will impact the region deeply. Mediocre growth in Latin America—currently expected to fall to a meagre 1.7% in 2023, according to the IMF—is likely to keep public discontent high and the approval ratings of the region's leaders low. This will increase the political costs of necessary fiscal adjustments, so most leaders will likely delay them or abandon them altogether, economists point out. The

political situation in other countries of the region is equally under strain. In El Salvador, the political alternative to the president is not there even though there are enough developments about his gross undemocratic actions. Political tensions will also increase in Argentina, Paraguay and Guatemala as they prepare to hold elections amid major corruption allegations against the ruling party leaders. Elections are due in Argentina in October 2023. The ruling combination has to do a lot to improve its image for winning the elections, otherwise, the right will takeover. In the neighbouring Paraguay, on the other hand, the leftist opposition has a fighting chance against the ruling Colorado Party which is enmeshed in corruption scandals.

Guatemala, Nicaragua and Venezuela belong to a different category. The elected presidents are known for resorting to strong arms tactics against the opposition while continuing with the programmes for improving the lot of poor. Of late, the political position of the president Nicholas Maduro of Venezuela has improved with the rebel president propped by the far right derecognized by the opposition. Maduro has opened dialogue with the opposition. That is a good opportunity for the Venezuelan government to prove its credentials.

In all, the Latin American political scenario is not one dimensional now and the trends may take turn against the left to some extent in 2023. In the last fifteen years, fifteen rules governments have been deposed in the region, many of them by the second pink tide. Latin American left leaders are saying that the second pink tide is more focused and led by mature personalities. But the latest developments indicate that the ruling coalitions are lacking in cohesion and not enough attention is being given to the expansion of the popular base by the left to tight the burgeoning right.

In the year 2023, the main task of the Latin American Left is to strengthen the unity of the allies in the ruling coalition.. In the countries, where the right has been defeated, many of them still control the national assemblies and the media. The fight for the Left is very tough and they should be aware of the enormity of the challenge. (IPA)



A hand-rickshaw puller looks for passengers to ferry in north Kolkata on Saturday--Arijit Ganguly

World steel industry gets trapped in an existential crisis

India is the world's second largest steel producer after China. But in terms of per capita consumption of steel, India's number is only about one-tenth of China's. Steel consumption is considered a highly reliable index for a country's development status.

Yet, India is emerging as a source of hope for the global steel industry, which is facing considerably uncertainties in view of a worldwide threat of recession and fall of demand in China due to disruptions in construction activity. The new surge in the pandemic is further aggravating these fears. The global steel industry is, therefore, looking towards India for an improvement in the industry's sagging fortunes.

Plans for the massive expansion in the development of infrastructure is expected to boost steel consumption in India, which is expected to increase demand by 6.7 percent in 2023, according to estimates by the World Steel Association. This will be the highest growth for any country. In terms of steel demand, India has just outstripped the United States in the number-two position after China. The US has now dropped to the third place. India, which meets much of its steel demand from domestic production,

however, also imports significant quantities to take advantage of the price differences.

In this respect, the domestic producers are worried about the downtrends in the global industry, which hasn't had a good year in 2022. With recession concerns swirling, consumer confidence waning and demand softening, the year has been anything but easy for the industry. Also, prices for a number of headline products – from hot-rolled steel to ferrous scrap to pig iron – have been in a steady decline following a rapid run up in the early part of the year.

According to the industry, the end of 2022 and the beginning of 2023 look blighted with uncertainty due to high energy costs, inflation and a new green deal. Reported steel production fell back under 150 million tonnes in November for the first time since February as China's recent recovery lost momentum, according to Rystad Energy. The seasonal revival in most northern hemisphere markets

continued, however, limiting producers' ability to raise prices and even as, compared to a year ago, steel production outside of China is still some 10 percent lower.

Export prices from China have slid slightly over the past month as mills have been looking for sales, seeing slack domestic demand and the need to push volumes. Lower raw material costs have also facilitated a fall in prices. Although the Chinese government has started easing restrictions recently, new record covid cases may spur more stringent curbs again, and the downward trend in steel-making raw material costs may continue in the short run.

According to reports, billet prices in China have slightly increased recently amid hikes in futures prices. Consequently, Chinese exporters are expected to be less aggressive in giving offers to foreign customers amid some recovery in billet prices coupled with the increased strength of the Chinese currency against the US dollar. At the

same time, Japanese exporters continue to increase prices on strong buying interest, despite falling raw material prices.

Export demand is increasing globally while supply remains very tight. The lower raw material prices combined with the weakness of the Japanese yen against the US dollar may limit the price increase in the coming months. Analysts expect offers from Japan to stay steadily high or rise slightly in the coming months to meet the profit targets of Japanese manufacturers.

Indian producers are worried about the flood of cheap imports as demand dries up in traditional steel producers. China accounted for more than a quarter of imports in October, while some Russian steel is also reaching India, according to official sources.

This has to be seen in the context of a flurry of activity in the domestic industry for capacity addition. Arcelor Mittal Nippon Steel, a joint venture between Mittal and the Japanese producer, has plans to more than triple capacity to 30 million tons in the coming decade. Similarly, South Korean steelmaker Posco Holdings and the Adanis are also exploring setting up new mills. (IPA)

| Conventional Crossword | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|--|---|----|----|--|----|----|----|----|----|----|--|
| 1 | | 2 | 3 | 4 | | 5 | | 6 | | | | |
| | | | 7 | | | | | | | | | |
| 8 | | 9 | | | | 10 | | 11 | | | | |
| | | | | 12 | | | 13 | | | | | |
| 14 | | | 15 | | | | 16 | | | 17 | | |
| 18 | | | | | | 19 | | 20 | | | | |
| | | | 21 | | | | 22 | | | | | |
| 23 | | | | | | 24 | | | 25 | | 26 | |
| | | | | | | | | 27 | | | | |
| 28 | | | | | | 29 | | | | | | |

| ACROSS | | | | | | DOWN | | | | | |
|--------|------------------------------|----|-----------------|----|-------------------|------|-------------------------|----|--------------|----|--------------------|
| 1 | Country | 5 | Help | 7 | Frozen treat | 1 | Drinking vessel | 2 | Nothing | 3 | Deeds |
| 8 | Assailed with repeated blows | 11 | Filled pastry | 12 | Angry | 4 | Horned ruminant | 5 | Call for aid | 6 | Stylish |
| 14 | Brave man | 16 | Periods of time | 18 | Field of conflict | 9 | Water pitcher | 10 | 24 hours | 13 | Having left a will |
| 20 | Kill | 21 | Useful thing | 23 | Fuel | 14 | Bargain in petty manner | 15 | Sanity | 17 | Garden tool |
| 24 | Heavenly body | 27 | Consumed | 28 | Vast age | 19 | Serpent | 22 | Dash | 25 | Born as |
| 29 | Cold symptom | | | | | 26 | Golf mound | | | | |

| SUDOKU: 3750 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|---|--|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|--|--|
| | 5 | | 3 | 8 | | | 1 | | | | | |
| 6 | 3 | | 2 | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | | | | 5 | | | | | 6 | | | |
| | | | 7 | | | | | 5 | | | | |
| 5 | | | | 2 | | | | | | 9 | | |
| | 6 | | | | 5 | | | | | | | |
| 1 | | | | 7 | | | | | | 2 | | |
| | | | | | 2 | | | 7 | 1 | | | |
| | 9 | | | 6 | 3 | | | 4 | | | | |

| Yesterday's Solution 3749 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|
| 5 | 7 | 8 | 1 | 9 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 6 | | | | |
| 9 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 8 | 7 | | | | |
| 6 | 4 | 2 | 7 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 9 | 5 | | | | |
| 3 | 1 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 4 | 2 | 9 | | | | |
| 7 | 2 | 9 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 8 | 5 | 1 | | | | |
| 8 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 9 | 7 | 6 | 3 | | | | |
| 2 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 9 | 1 | 8 | | | | |
| 1 | 9 | 7 | 8 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 4 | | | | |
| 4 | 8 | 3 | 9 | 6 | 1 | 5 | 7 | 2 | | | | |

| Yesterday's Cross Word Solution 1758 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|
| C | R | E | A | M | | M | E | L | T | | | |
| A | | G | R | O | V | E | L | | U | | | |
| U | R | G | E | S | | R | I | N | G | | | |
| S | | A | T | T | I | C | | | | | | |
| E | L | M | | | | T | I | P | S | | | |
| S | O | I | L | S | | | | T | O | E | | |
| | | | R | O | O | F | | | | L | | |
| C | L | A | W | | A | B | O | V | E | | | |
| U | | G | E | R | M | A | N | | C | | | |
| E | W | E | R | | E | R | E | C | T | | | |

DISCLAIMER

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Thousands protest against rising terrorism in northwest Pak

PESHAWAR, JAN 7 /--/Thousands of tribesmen in Pakistan's northwest took to the streets to protest against rising incidents of terrorism and kidnapping in the country's tribal districts bordering Afghanistan while demanding immediate restoration of peace in the region.

Over 5,000 tribesmen took out a rally on Friday in Wana, the headquarters of the South Waziristan tribal district, against the growing unrest, terrorism, and kidnappings in their areas. The protest comes amidst rising terrorist attacks in the country, especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces that are believed to have been carried out by the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) group based in Afghanistan.

Pushtoon nationalist and leader of Pushtoon Tahaffuz Movement (PTM) Manzoor Pushteen addressed the protesters carrying placards and banners. The protesters demanded the restoration of peace and harmony in the tribal districts. All the shops and markets were closed in Wana bazaar as a protest against the surge in unrest in the district. Pushteen said the fresh wave of unrest has scared traders and investors and they were not ready to run their businesses in the prevailing law and order situation. He said the tribal youth can take up arms like terrorists if the public order was not improved.

The protesters said it is the responsibility of the government to ensure the protection of the lives and properties of the citizens in the tribal areas. The government should take measures for the maintenance of peace in the area and the release of hostages from the custody of kidnappers, they said.

The TTP has been blamed for several deadly attacks across Pakistan, including an attack on army headquarters in 2009, assaults on military bases, and the 2008 bombing of the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad. In 2014, the Pakistani Taliban stormed the Army Public School (APS) in the northwestern city of Peshawar, killing at least 150 people, including 131 students. The attack sent shockwaves across the world, and was widely condemned. (PTI)

Ukraine hails U.S. military aid as cease-fire said to falter

KYIV, JAN 7 /--/Ukraine's president is praising the United States for including tank-killing armoured vehicles in its latest multibillion-dollar package of military aid, saying they are "exactly what is needed" for Ukrainian troops locked in combat against Russian forces.

Officials, meanwhile, said it was unclear whether Moscow was abiding by a unilateral 36-hour cease-fire for Orthodox Christmas that Ukraine has denounced as a ploy. The latest multi-billion dollar package of U.S. military assistance announced Friday by the White House was the biggest to date for Kyiv. For the first time, it included Bradley armoured vehicles known as tank-killers because of the anti-tank missiles they fire. In his nightly televised address on Friday, Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called it "a very powerful package." "For the first time, we will get Bradley armoured vehicles this is exactly what is needed.

New guns and rounds, including high-precision ones, new rockets, new drones. It is timely and strong," he said. He thanked U.S. President Joe Biden, U.S. lawmakers and "all the Americans who appreciate freedom, and who know that freedom is worth protecting." Ukrainian authorities on Saturday said that a Moscow-declared temporary truce for Orthodox Christmas appeared to have been ignored by some of its forces pressing ahead with the nearly 11-month invasion.

In the fiercely contested Luhansk region of eastern Ukraine, regional Gov. Serhiy Haidai reported continued Russian shelling and assaults. Posting on Telegram, Haidai said that in the first three hours of the cease-fire's supposed start Friday for Orthodox Christmas Eve, Russian forces shelled Ukrainian positions 14 times and stormed one settlement three times. The claim couldn't be independently verified. The Ministry of Defense in Britain, a leading supplier of military aid to Ukraine, said Saturday in its daily readout on the invasion that "fighting has continued at a routine level into the Orthodox Christmas period." Russia's Defence Ministry alleged Friday that Ukrainian forces continued to shell its positions, and said its forces returned fire, although it wasn't clear whether those reported exchanges occurred before or after the start of Moscow's cease-fire. Ukrainian officials dismissed Moscow's unilateral order for a 36-hour pause as a ploy to buy its struggling invasion forces time to regroup.

It was due to end Saturday night at midnight Moscow time, which is 11 p.m. in the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv. Ukrainian and Western officials portrayed the announcement as an attempt by Putin to grab the moral high ground, while possibly seeking to snatch the battlefield initiative and rob the Ukrainians of momentum amid their counteroffensive of recent months. (AP)

Paris court deals blow to French Caribbean pesticide fight

SAN JUAN, JAN 7 /--/ Nearly 20 years after Caribbean islanders sued to hold the French government criminally responsible for the banana industry's extended use of a banned pesticide in Martinique and Guadeloupe, a panel of judges has dismissed their case, ruling that it's too hard to determine who's to blame for acts committed so long ago. The judges in Paris described the use of chlordecone from 1973-1993 as a scandalous "environmental attack whose human, economic and social consequences affect and will affect for many years the daily life of the inhabitants" of the two French Caribbean islands. But they also asserted that even in the 1990s, scientists had not established links between chlordecone and illnesses in people.

"How dare they write such a historical and scientific untruth," Christophe L guevaques, an attorney involved in the case, said

in a statement issued on Thursday. Chlordecone, also known as kepone, was patented in the 1950s by scientists working for Allied Chemical, a US company based in New Jersey now called Allied Corporation, and millions of pounds of the pesticide were produced, nearly all of it exported for use outside the United States. The US government banned the pesticide in 1976, a year after the Virginia health department permanently shut down a Life Science Products chemical plant in Hopewell, Va., whose workers developed slurred speech and other neurological problems blamed on the pesticide. However, chlordecone was legally marketed in France from 1981 until the government banned it in 1990, and its use continued for three more years after that in Guadeloupe and Martinique to kill the banana weevil under an exemption granted by the French government. Decades later, it continues to

contaminate the islands' soil and water. The French government estimates that more than 90 per cent of adults were exposed to chlordecone on both islands, whose combined populations total some 750,000 inhabitants. Among a variety of ailments, chlordecone is associated with an increased risk of prostate cancer, and these islanders suffer prostate cancer at among the highest rates in the world, French cancer researchers say. Other French research links chlordecone exposure to preterm births. "It is unthinkable that those responsible die without being held accountable," L guevaques said, adding that he would urge his clients to appeal the January 2 ruling by the national court for public health disputes.

Other plaintiffs in the 2006 case include the Paris-based environmental group G n rations Futures, which also plans to appeal. "This decision, although it represents a great disappointment,

is not a surprise," the group said in a statement Friday, vowing to continue representing those affected until "the truth comes out and justice is finally served." Ruling in June in a separate lawsuit filed by activists, organizations and victims, the central court in Paris found the French government guilty of wrongful negligence involving the use of chlordecone but denied compensation to those affected, a decision that outraged many. The judges ruled in part that the defendants did not provide specific details to justify "the damage of anxiety they claim".

The legal saga is taking place in Paris instead of the overseas French departments of Guadeloupe or Martinique because it's a public health issue, so it is handled by a special health unit based within the central Paris court. Meanwhile, officials continue testing the islanders for free to detect possible traces of chlordecone in their blood. (AP)

Indian American body celebrates Biden nomination of Richard Verma for deputy secretary of State

WASHINGTON, JAN 7 /--/An Indian-American body has welcomed the nomination of lawyer diplomat Richard Verma for Deputy Secretary of State, a top diplomatic position in the State Department. In December, the White House in a statement said that Joe Biden announced his intent to nominate 54-year-old Verma to be Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources. If confirmed by the US Senate, Verma, also a former US ambassador to India, would be the highest-ranking Indian-American in the State Department. "This nomination is yet another historic addition by President Biden in his

campaign pledge to diversify the current administration," Indian American Impact Fund said in a statement. Verma's historic opportunity to join the State Department is the culmination of his long and illustrious career in public service. "We at Indian American Impact are thrilled to witness and potentially welcome the historic confirmation of yet another visionary South Asian leader," said Neil Makhija, executive director of Indian American Impact Fund. "Verma has long since been an exemplary and integral member of our community, and we are thrilled with President Biden's decision to

nominate him for Deputy Secretary of State," he said and hoped that the US Senate would soon confirm his nomination. As a veteran of the US Air Force, Verma received his PhD and J.D. before serving as a former US Ambassador to India, Assistant Secretary of State, and National Security Advisor to Senator Harry Reid. At the same time, he was Democratic Whip, Minority Leader and Senate

Majority Leader. He is uniquely qualified to step into this new



position in the new year, said the Indian American Impact. "As we begin a new year, we are confident that Congress will swiftly confirm Ambassador Verma just as they did before. We will build on this momentum by advancing South Asian representation at all levels of government. We congratulate both Ambassador Verma and

President Biden for this historic moment," Makhija said. Currently chief legal officer and Head of Global Public Policy at Mastercard, Verma, served as the US Ambassador to India from January 16, 2015, to January 20, 2017. The Indian American Impact works to build power for the Indian American and South Asian community and enact progressive change by activating, engaging, and electing Indian Americans and South Asians across the United States, and working with our allies to deliver policies that lift up all communities, according to their website. (PTI)

Biden faces Israel quandary with new Netanyahu govt

WASHINGTON, JAN 7 /--/ Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's new government is little more than a week old but it's already giving the Biden administration headaches.

Just days into its mandate, a controversial member of Netanyahu's right-wing Cabinet riled U.S. diplomats with a visit to a Jerusalem holy site that some believe may be harbinger of other contentious moves, including vast expansions of Jewish settlement construction on land claimed by the Palestinians. And, Netanyahu's

look forward to working with Prime Minister Netanyahu, who has been my friend for decades, to jointly address the many challenges and opportunities facing Israel and the Middle East region, including threats from Iran," Biden said when Netanyahu took office Dec. 29. Yet while Biden and Netanyahu have known each other for years, they are not close. Biden and former Obama administration officials who now work for Biden still harbor resentment toward the prime minister who, during his previous iteration as Israel's leader, sought to derail their signature

foreign policy achievement: the Iran nuclear deal. Still, the administration is signaling it will engage with Netanyahu while avoiding more extreme members of his government. That approach wouldn't be unprecedented in the region: The U.S. deals with Lebanon's government while shunning members from the Hezbollah movement, a designated foreign terrorist organization that

is nonetheless a domestic political power. But, it would be remarkable for the U.S. to take a similar approach with such a close ally. "We will be dealing directly with Prime Minister Netanyahu," State Department spokesman Ned Price said this week when asked about possible contacts with Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir's, whose visit to the site known to Jews as the Temple Mount and to Muslims as the Noble Sanctuary prompted a major outcry. The inclusion of Ben-Gvir, a West Bank settler leader, and other extreme right-wing figures in Netanyahu's government who are hostile to the Palestinians and opposed to a two-state resolution has put Israel and the United States on opposite paths.

On Thursday, the deputy U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Robert Wood, at an emergency meeting of the Security Council called by Arab states to condemn Ben-Gvir's holy site visit, underscored Biden's firm support for "the historic status quo," especially the "Haram Al-Sharif/Temple Mount." Wood noted that Netanyahu had pledged to preserve the status quo "We expect the government of Israel to follow through on that commitment," he said and stressed that the administration placed a priority on preserving the possibility of a two-state solution. But on Friday, Netanyahu's Security Cabinet approved a series of punitive steps against the Palestinian leadership in retaliation for the Palestinians pushing the U.N.'s highest judicial body to give an opinion on the Israeli occupation of the West Bank. Those moves underscored the hardline approach to the Palestinians that Netanyahu's government has promised at a time of rising violence in the occupied territories. (AP)

Iran executes 2 more men detained amid nationwide protests

DUBAI, JAN 7 /--/Iran said it executed two men Saturday convicted of allegedly killing a paramilitary volunteer during a demonstration, the latest executions aimed at halting the nationwide protests now challenging the country's theocracy.


Iran's judiciary identified those executed as Mohammad Mehdi Karami and Mohammad Hosseini, making it four men known to have been executed since the demonstrations began in September over the death of Mahsa Amini. All have faced internationally criticised, rapid, closed-door trials. The judiciary's Mizan news agency said the men had been convicted of killing Ruhollah Ajamian, a member of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard's volunteer Basij force, in the city of Karaj outside of Tehran on Nov. 3. The Basij have deployed in major cities, attacking and detaining protesters, who in many cases have fought back. Heavily edited footage aired on state television showed Karami speaking before a Revolutionary Court about the attack, which also showed a reenactment of the attack, according to prosecutors' claims. Iran's Revolutionary Courts handed down the two other death sentences already carried out. The tribunals don't allow those on trial to pick their own lawyers or even see the evidence against them. Amnesty International has said the trials "bore no resemblance to a meaningful judicial proceeding." State TV also aired footage of Karami and Hosseini talking about the attack, though the broadcaster for years has aired what activists describe as coerced confessions. The men were convicted of the killing, as

well as "corruption on Earth," a Quranic term and charge that has been levied against others in the decades since the 1979 Islamic Revolution and carries the death penalty. Activists say at least 16 people have been sentenced to death in closed-door hearings over charges linked to the protests. Death sentences in Iran are typically carried out by hanging.

At least 517 protesters have been killed and over 19,200 people have been arrested, according to Human Rights Activists in Iran, a group that has closely monitored the unrest. Iranian authorities have not provided an official count of those killed or detained. The protests began in mid-September, when 22-year-old Amini died after being arrested by Iran's morality

police for allegedly violating the Islamic Republic's strict dress code. Women have played a leading role in the protests, with many publicly stripping off the compulsory Islamic headscarf, known as the hijab. The protests mark one of the biggest challenges to Iran's theocracy since the 1979 revolution. Security forces have used live ammunition, bird shot, tear gas and batons to disperse protesters, according to rights groups.

Also on Saturday, Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei appointed a new hard-line chief of police, the official IRNA news agency reported. Gen. Ahmad Reza Radan replaced outgoing Gen. Hossein Ashtari after Ashtari's eight-year term of service ended. (AP)



GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF FINANCE, DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE
CENTRAL BOARD OF INDIRECT TAXES AND CUSTOMS
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF GOODS AND SERVICE TAX,
5th FLOOR, ATUL BUILDING,
BHIKAJI CAMA PLACE, NEW DELHI - 110066



CONSUMER WELFARE FUND- CALLING FOR PROPOSALS

The Consumer Welfare Fund has been set up in accordance with the Rule 97(7A) of the CGST Rules, 2017. Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs (CBIC) hereby invites proposals from eligible organisations under the CWF Scheme.

OBJECTIVE:
The objective of the Fund is to create consumer awareness on Goods and Services Tax (GST). This includes providing financial assistance and implementing measures in order to promote and protect the welfare of the consumers.

ELIGIBILITY:
Organisations/ agencies/ any government department/ Ministry/ Authority of Government of India/ Public Sector Undertaking/ Private Organisations/ NGOs engaged in Consumer Welfare Activities and who meet the eligibility criteria available on CBIC website at: https://www.cbic.gov.in/resources/indocs-cbec/home_links/consumerwelfarefund/3%20Eligibility.pdf

IMPORTANT DATES:
Applications will be received from 09th January, 2023 to 09th February, 2023 till 11:59 PM. Applications are to be applied via email only. Applications are to be sent to dgst-cbic@gov.in.

GUIDELINES AND APPLICATION FORMS:
 Guidelines on Consumer Welfare Fund are available on CBIC Website at: https://www.cbic.gov.in/indocs-cbec/home_links/Consumer%20Welfare%20Fund%20-%20Calling%20proposals%20under%20the%20scheme
 Application forms are available at: https://www.cbic.gov.in/resources/indocs-cbec/home_links/consumerwelfarefund/7%20A%20application%20form%20-%20%20English.pdf

* For any clarification, email tdgst-cbic@gov.in or contact us at 011-6702800

*** DISCLAIMER:** THE CALL FOR PROPOSAL IS ONLY AN INVITATION THIS DOES NOT CONFER ANY RIGHT / GUARANTEE OF FIXED SANCTION OR GRANT OF FUNDS.

Sd/-
Director General

LS502/11/0019/2223

| IN THE MATTER OF ELECTION TO THE MANAGING COMMITTEE OF THE ALHUDA JUMA MASJID, CALCUT, PORT BLAIR | | | | |
|---|--|-------------------------------|------------|---|
| The election programme is given below: | | | | |
| ELECTION PROGRAMME | | | | |
| SL. NO. | PARTICULARS | VENUE | DATE | TIME |
| 1. | Issue of Nomination Paper. | Al Huda Jumma Masjid, Calicut | 09.01.2023 | 05:00 PM to 08:00 PM |
| 2. | Submission of Nomination Paper. | -do- | 10.01.2023 | 05:00 PM to 7:00 PM |
| 3. | Publication of list of members filed nominations. | -do- | -do- | 7:30 PM |
| 4. | Scrutiny of nomination papers and filing of objection if any in writing to the Retuning Officer. | -do- | -do- | 7:45 PM to 8:15 PM |
| 5. | Publication of list of validly nominated candidates. | -do- | -do- | 08:20 PM |
| 6. | Withdrawal of nomination in writing to the Returning Officer. | -do- | 11.01.2023 | 05:30 PM to 06:00 PM |
| 7. | Publication of final list of contesting candidates. | -do- | -do- | 06:00 PM |
| 8. | Allotment of symbols, if required. | -do- | -do- | 06:15 PM |
| 9. | Polling of votes by secret ballot. | -do- | 15.01.2023 | 09:00 AM to 03:00 PM. |
| 10. | Counting of votes. | -do- | -do- | Immediately after the polling is over and thereafter election result will be declares |
| (Mohammed Afzal) Retuning Officer Appointed vide Order No. 25 Dated: 12.12.2022 | | | | |
| Dated: 06.01.2023 | | | | |

India should focus on democratising Govt data: Prez

NEW DELHI, JAN 7 /--/ After proving its power in the field of software, India should strive to become a hub for software products, President Droupadi Murmu said on Saturday.

While speaking at the 7th edition of Digital India Awards, Murmu said that there should be focus on democratising government data to help technology enthusiasts in the country develop localised digital solutions. "We should leverage the prevailing policies and avail the ecosystem to position the country as a global powerhouse of software and hardware products by building made in India technology," Murmu said. The President said India has emerged as an important country for use of technology for people-centric governance, especially during the pandemic, which has benefitted the rest of the world as well. "Digital India is also playing an important role in enhancing the country's profile on the world stage. This becomes all the more relevant as India takes over the presidency of G20 which is a milestone event," Murmu said. India formally assumed the G20 Presidency on December 1, 2022. The President said India has unveiled indigenously developed 5G technology and the roll out of the 5G services will transform governance as well. "We should focus on democratising government data so that young technology enthusiasts can use it to build localised digital solutions," Murmu said. At the event, the President conferred awards to 22 government entities in the field of digital governance. Murmu said the pace of change in the future will be fast, driven by the use of technology and in this context social justice should be the prime objective of digital innovation. According to the President, India will develop into a knowledge economy only when the digital divide is substantially bridged through the use of technology. "I am confident that India is setting the right example of ensuring the inclusion of vulnerable and marginalised sections of the society, strengthening economic, social and cultural rights in our journey towards Digital Antodaya," Murmu said. Speaking at the same event, Union IT and telecom minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said that India's digital payments progress is setting up a new paradigm. He said there will be a huge focus in 2023 on providing access to credit of Rs 3,000-5,000 at easier terms to street and small vendors. "Small entrepreneurs, who put up small vegetable shops on the roadside, need a loan of meagre Rs 3,000-4,000. Providing that credit with ease on simple terms to those small vendors will be a huge focus area in 2023," Vaishnaw said. (PTI)



President Droupadi Murmu presenting the seventh edition of the Digital India Awards, in New Delhi on Saturday

Man accused of urinating on co-passenger on Air India flight arrested from Bengaluru

Delhi court sends him to 14-day judicial remand

NEW DELHI/BENGALURU, JAN 7 /--/ Delhi Police on Saturday arrested from Bengaluru the man who allegedly urinated on a woman co-passenger on an Air India flight, officials said.

The accused, Shankar Mishra, was traced to Bengaluru through technical surveillance, they said. A court in Delhi sent Mishra to 14-day judicial remand. Mishra allegedly urinated on the woman, a senior citizen, in an inebriated condition in the business class of the Air India flight from New York to Delhi on November 26 last year. The Delhi Police registered an FIR against him on January 4 on a complaint given by the woman to Air India. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Airport) Ravi Kumar Singh said, "Accused Shankar Mishra has been arrested from Bengaluru by a Delhi Police team. He has been brought to Delhi and further investigation into the case is underway."

A Bengaluru Police official said the city police assisted the Delhi Police team in arresting the accused. Mishra had switched off his mobile phone on January 3 and his last location was traced to Bengaluru, Delhi Police officials said. According to sources, he used to take taxis to travel in Bengaluru but following the incident, the accused switched to a private vehicle to commute in the city. His travel history was extracted and the route he used to take to reach his office was followed, they said. Late on Friday night, Mishra's location was traced to Mysuru. By the time the Delhi Police team reached there, he had fled, they said, adding the accused was finally traced at a homestay at Chinappa Layout on the outskirts of Bengaluru which he frequented. Police claimed that he is

not cooperating in the investigation and changing his statements. During interrogation, the accused told police that he does not remember anything about the incident since he was sleepy. It was only when other passengers on the flight told him about his act, he apologised to the victim, police said. Mishra admitted that he was under the influence of alcohol. He claimed that while travelling in the US, he and his



Shankar Mishra, accused of urinating on a woman passenger on an Air India flight from New York to Delhi, being taken away by the police from the DCP office, in New Delhi

friend took turns driving the car and he did not get proper sleep, a senior police officer said. He did not seem apologetic about his actions and claimed that he does not remember what happened on the flight, the officer said, adding statements of his co-passengers on board the same flight will also be taken but most of them are outside Delhi presently. While questioning people in connection with the case, police got to know that at the time of the incident, the lights in the cab were dim. He turned around and allegedly urinated on the woman passenger behind him. The person sitting next to the woman also protested, sources said. Mishra, who was working with US multinational firm Wells Fargo

in India, was sacked on Friday. He studied management at a private university in Mumbai and completed his higher studies in the United States. A background check did not reveal any previous involvement in any case and there was no complaint against him in the American Multinational financial services company where he was the vice president of its Indian chapter. According to the FIR, shortly after lunch was served and the lights were switched off on board AI 102 on November 26, 2022, the inebriated male passenger seated in business class seat 8A walked to the elderly woman's seat, unzipped his pants and urinated on her.

According to the FIR, the accused begged the woman not to lodge a complaint against him, saying he was a family man and did not wish his wife and child to be affected by the incident. The case has been filed under IPC sections 294 (obscene act in a public place), 354 (assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty), 509 (word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman) and 510 (misconduct in public by a drunken person) as well as under the Aircraft Rules. Three Air India crew members on Saturday joined the investigation at the Indira Gandhi International Airport police station here in connection with the onboard urination case, officials said. A senior police officer said nine crew members were called, out of whom three recorded their statements on Saturday morning. Their statements will help police to establish the sequence of the alleged event that took place on the flight last November, the official said. They were called on Friday, but as they were not available in the city, police asked them to join the probe on Saturday. (PTI)

Govt aiming to make country free of Naxalism before 2024 elections: Shah

KORBA, JAN 7 /--/ Naxalite violence has declined over the last decade and efforts are on to rid the country of the Naxal menace before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Saturday.

Shah was speaking at a rally at Indira Stadium in Korba city of Chhattisgarh, a state affected by Maoist violence. Sounding the poll bugle, the BJP leader also urged people to vote out the Bhupesh Baghel-led Congress government in the state in the Assembly elections this year. People should vote for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) if they wanted to see Narendra Modi as Prime Minister once again in 2024, he said, while blaming the Baghel government for a 'rise' in crime and corruption. "Naxalite incidents declined to 509 in 2021, from 2,258 in 2009 when the Congress was in power at the Centre," Shah said. The Narendra Modi government not only ensured that the youth (in Naxalite-affected areas) who used to pick up weapons got access to education and employment, but also worked to eliminate those who wielded weapons, he said.

"Our government's effort is to make the country free of Naxalism before the 2024 parliamentary polls," he added. Taking a swipe at the Congress government, he said: "I want to ask Bhupesh Baghel what he will tell people if they ask him what he has done in his five years' rule. Not that he has done nothing. He has worked to increase corruption, incidents of rape and crimes, and the cutting of forests of tribals." Shah also alleged corruption in the management of the District Mineral Foundation (DMF) funds under the Baghel government. "The Modi government started DMF for the development and welfare of people (in mineral-rich areas) Chhattisgarh



Union Home Minister Amit Shah waving at the audience during a public meeting at Tata College Ground in Chaibasa, Jharkhand on Saturday

received Rs 9,243 crore by way of DMF, but what has this government done with that money? I can tell you where it has gone. See the houses of Congressmen in your area. Those who used to move around on scooter now have an Audi car. Their houses have turned into three-storey buildings... Congress committed corruption in DMF funds," the Union minister alleged.

Shah urged people to teach a lesson to the Congress by voting it out of power and said a BJP government will seek account of every single rupee from Bhupesh Baghel. "If you want to add

momentum to the vehicle of development then you have to put a double engine in it. There is already one engine (referring to the Modi government) and you need to put another by electing the BJP in this year's Assembly elections. Whatever that has not been done, will be completed in five years," he said. Seeking to woo the Other Backward Classes (OBC) which account for 52 per cent of the state's population, Shah said the Congress did nothing for them but the Modi government constituted the OBC commission and ensured that they get constitutional rights. (PTI)



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Boxer Vijender Singh during the Bharat Jodo Yatra, in Karnal on Saturday

Uttarakhand CM visits sinking Joshimath to assess situation, Rahul expresses concern

DEHRADUN/NEW DELHI, JAN 7 /--/ Uttarakhand chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami visited sinking Joshimath on Saturday to assess the situation on the ground. Dhami met the affected people and assured them of all help, officials said. The chief minister also met the team of officials and experts who have been camping in the town since Thursday and took their feedback on the evacuation exercise, they said. He walked through the narrow streets in the affected areas and also went inside houses in which huge cracks have appeared on the walls and ceilings. "Evacuating affected families in the danger zone to safe locations is the government's priority for now," Dhami told reporters. "We are also working on a long term rehabilitation strategy," the CM said. After visiting the affected areas in the Himalayan town, Dhami said that suitable places for relocation of residents near Pipalkoti and Gauchar are also being identified. Officials have been asked not to get entangled in long procedural complexities and take direct clearance from him for projects related to treatment of drainage and sewage systems in Joshimath, he said. Dhami said that Joshimath is an important place from the cultural, religious and tourism point of view and all efforts will be made to save it. The CM also prayed at the famous Narsingh temple in town for keeping its residents out of harm's way. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday expressed concern over the plight of people in Joshimath, where cracks have appeared in hundreds of houses, and asked the state government to take care of the affected populace and ensure their safety in this cold weather. "The pictures coming from Joshimath in Uttarakhand are horrifying... I am deeply disturbed. Wide cracks in houses, seepage of water, cracks in the ground and subsidence of roads are a matter of great concern... A landslide caused the Bhagwati temple to collapse," Rahul said in a Facebook post in Hindi. "Going against nature by continuous digging and unplanned construction on the mountains has led to the people of Joshimath facing a terrible crisis today," Rahul also said. The former Congress president called upon the Uttarakhand government to "take care of people in this harsh weather and arrange for their immediate rehabilitation and ensure the safety of the temple". (PTI)

Annual Athletics Meet of Govt. Model SSS, Sita Nagar

From page-1

Earlier in the morning's inaugural session the Chief Guest, Executive Engineer, Mr. D.R.R. Sidappa, the Guest of Honour, the SHO Diglipur, Mr. Vikas Singh, The Deputy Education officer, Mr. R.P. Pandey and Mr. Satyajit Baidya, PTA Vice chairman felicitated the veteran retired teachers of the zone, Mr. Motilal Das, HM(P), Mr. K.P. Paul, HM(P) and Mr. Subal Biswas (PET) for their outstanding contribution in the field of Education during their service tenures. Impressive march past, spectacular aerobics performances, cultural dances, fancy dress programmes and amazing yoga skills left the audience mesmerised, which turned out in very large numbers to watch the 8th Annual Athletics meet of the Govt. Model Senior Secondary School at Vivekananda Stadium.

DC(SA) inaugurates Maternity Home at GB Pant Hospital

From page-1

The Director of Health Services appreciated the role of District Administration and the officials of the National Health Mission for such innovative ideas. The Health Department could monitor the high risk poor pregnant women and refer them well in advance from Inter Islands to Port Blair to avoid any pregnancy related complications. Earlier, many poor residents avoided coming to Port Blair for advanced treatment due to financial constraints and accommodation.

District Programme Manager, DHS (SA) informed that this Maternity Home has a capacity of 06 pregnant women with one attendant each. He also informed that another 10 bedded Maternity Home was also constructed at CHC Bambooflat and both Maternity Home will be managed by the Directorate of Health Services in coordination with the District Hospital & District Administration, South Andaman to provide allotment of accommodations at affordable fee to the pregnant women.

RSS chief to attend outfit's Netaji birth anniversary function of RSS in city

TMC criticises decision, BJP accuses it of finding politics in everything



KOLKATA, JAN 7 /--/ Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat will attend the outfit's function here on January 23 to celebrate the 126th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. The programme will be held on Shahid Minar Ground, a stone's throw from Red Road, where the state government's official function on the occasion is held. The Trinamool Congress criticised the decision as "an attempt by the RSS and the BJP to appropriate the national icon ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha polls". "Bhagwat Ji will speak on Netaji's ideology, vision and how he had fought for the liberation of the country. The programme will be attended by thousands of swayamsevaks (volunteers) from across the state," an RSS spokesperson told PTI. Bhagwat is expected to arrive in the city

on January 18 but the details of his itinerary are being chalked out, another RSS functionary said. The TMC strongly reacted to the decision, with its spokesperson Jay Prakash Majumdar saying, "RSS had never shown respect to Netaji, it had only spoken ill of him. If one reads the utterances of RSS leaders in the past, one can see how scornful they were about Netaji." "The RSS has suddenly woken up to the valour of Netaji as panchayat polls are round the corner, followed by Lok Sabha polls next year, and they want to assist the BJP," he said. Reacting to the TMC's allegation, BJP state spokesperson Samik Bhattacharya said that the ruling party in the state finds politics in everything, "even if a social organisation such as RSS wants to discuss Netaji's ideals and involve the younger generation in the exercise". (PTI)

GAMES NOTES

Rishabh Pant successfully undergoes knee surgery for ligament tear

NEW DELHI, JAN 7 /--/ Indian wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant, who miraculously escaped a horrific car accident last week, has successfully undergone knee surgery at a Mumbai hospital, according to the BCCI sources.



"Rishabh Pant has successfully undergone knee ligament surgery on Friday. He will be under observation. Further course of action and rehabilitation will be advised by Dr Dinshaw Pardiwala and followed by the BCCI sports science and medicine team," a BCCI source told PTI. The surgery took place at the Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani hospital in Andheri West under the supervision of Dr Pardiwala, the head of the Centre for Sports Medicine, and Director of Arthroscopy & Shoulder Service. Pant was taken to Mumbai by air ambulance from Dehradun since he was not in a position to fly by a commercial airline. The 25-year-old, who was driving from Delhi to Roorkee to surprise his family members in the early hours of December 30, suffered multiple injuries after his speeding car hit the divider and caught fire. (PTI)

Didier Deschamps to remain France head coach till 2026 FIFA World Cup

PARIS, JAN 7 /--/ Didier Deschamps said on Saturday he will remain France coach until the 2026 World Cup after leading the team to the final of the last two editions. Deschamps' contract expired after the World Cup in Qatar where reigning champions France lost to Argentina in a penalty shootout after a thrilling final on 18 December. It had been reported that French Football Federation (FFF) president Noel Le Graet only wanted to give Deschamps a two-year extension until the 2024 European Championship but the coach had insisted on staying in charge until the next World Cup in the United States, Canada and Mexico.



"I am going to announce something which for me is an immense pleasure, and that is that the president has decided to extend (my contract) until 2026," Deschamps said at an FFF general assembly. "I thank the president for his constant support and his continued confidence in me," Deschamps added. "It is essential for the France team to function well." (AFP)

Cummins, Hazlewood bowl Aussies into contention for series whitewash

SYDNEY, JAN 7 /--/ Skipper Pat Cummins bowled Australia into contention to pull off a remarkable victory with a fiery spell against South Africa in an absorbing third Sydney Test on Saturday.

Cummins captured three for 29 in a hostile 14 overs to set up the Australians for a dramatic final day charge for victory and a series clean sweep against the hapless Proteas. At the close on day four, South Africa were batting for survival at 149 for six in reply to Australia's 475-4 declared with Marco Jansen on 10 and Simon Harmer six. The outgunned South Africans have only passed 200 once so far in this series. The Australians need 14 more wickets to pull off an astonishing victory and cannot be counted out after rocking the tourists in Saturday's two dominant sessions of the rain-marred Test.

"I'm pretty excited about tomorrow," said spinner Nathan Lyon. "It's going to be an exciting day's cricket, we know what we have to do." Josh Hazlewood made the initial breakthrough, removing Dean Elgar for 15 continuing the Proteas' skipper's wretched series of low scores. Hazlewood, bowling a lively opening spell, got Elgar with a brutal short-pitched delivery which clipped his glove for a catch by wicketkeeper Alex Carey. Lyon stunned Sarel Elwee who did not play a shot and was bowled top of off-stump for 18 leaving the tourists 37-2 in the 18th over. Four balls later Cummins claimed his first victim with Heinrich Klaasen, caught off a lifter leg-side by Carey for two. Hazlewood broke through again after tea with an inswinger that kissed the edge of Temba Bavuma's bat for Carey to do the rest. Bavuma clouted two sixes off Lyon in his 35 off 74 balls but was a big wicket for the Aussies to leave the visitors 85-4 in the 39th over.



Pat Cummins pinned Khaya Zondo lbw

"Reverse swing is in play, with a little bit of variable bounce, the short ball is difficult to play because of how slow it is coming off the wicket," Hazlewood said.

"I think Ash (Agar) and Gazza (Lyon), it's a big day tomorrow for them with the ball spinning with lefties and righties for them both to work with, there will be plenty happening tomorrow."

Cummins removed Khaya Zondo with a superb yorker that trapped him leg before wicket for 39 and South Africa's fifth wicket. The skipper charged in to lead the Australian bowling assault with two fearsome deliveries thudding into Marco Jansen's upper body. Cummins quickly got another wicket, with Kyle Verreynne edging to Steve Smith at slip for 19 for Smith's 151st Test catch.

"We've just got to stick to our basics, that's what we've done over the last 10 years or so... thrilling day tomorrow, do the basics well and see how we go," Lyon said. After rain again prevented play in the morning

session, Cummins declared his team's first innings after lunch to chase victory. Cummins's decision to declare deprived opener Usman Khawaja of a first Test double century, with the elegant opener stranded on 195 not out.

"I think it's the right call. It would have been interesting to see the wicket after a full four days' play. I think it would have been a nice wicket to bowl spin on," Hazlewood said. The weather forecast is for improving conditions and Australia have potentially 98 more overs on Sunday's final day to finish off the South Africans. In the first Brisbane Test, the Proteas lost all 20 wickets in 86 overs and in Melbourne South Africa lasted 137.3 overs. Australia are bidding for a series clean sweep to seal a place in the World Test Championship final in London in June. Australia are 2-0 up in the series after winning the opening Test by a six-wicket rout in Brisbane inside two days, then hammering the Proteas by an innings and 182 runs in Melbourne. (AFP)

Cristiano Ronaldo experiences surreal start in Saudi Arabia

RIYADH, JAN 7 /--/ The palm trees lining the desert roads leading out of Riyadh's King Khalid International Airport were wet with raindrops when Cristiano Ronaldo arrived this week in Saudi Arabia's capital city.

The surprising weather greeted the football great's shocking move to the Middle East, where the grey skies in Riyadh were more akin to the often overcast conditions of Manchester -- his previous home. It's a surreal start for Ronaldo as he takes the next step of his storied career in a league few know much about. The wet and chilly weather has been so severe that his new team, Al Nassr, was forced to postpone their Saudi league match against Al Ta'ee on Thursday because the rain had impacted the electric system at Mrsool Park, the club's home stadium. The former Manchester United and Real Madrid forward had said at his presentation on Tuesday that he was ready to play immediately. However, the Portuguese

player is supposed to serve a two-match suspension imposed by the English Football Association in November for slapping a mobile phone out of a fan's hand following a game against Everton last April. He may have left the Premier League, but the sanction applies to club football around the world. However, as the match against Al Ta'ee approached, Al Nassr would not confirm if it intended to honor the ban. Where Ronaldo goes, drama seems to follow -- and the will-he-won't-he saga extended to Friday, when Al Nassr finally left him out of the squad for the rescheduled match. The excitement generated by his arrival in Saudi Arabia is undeniable -- even if the idea of him leaving elite European football behind will take some getting used to. Thousands of fans braved the conditions and lined up for a first sight of their superstar signing on Tuesday.

"It's very, very exciting

because Ronaldo is the best player in the world," Al Nassr fan Nawaf Alshmyr told The Associated Press. Earlier that day, an optimistic supporter of reigning Saudi champion Al Hilal had spoken of his belief that his club would respond by signing another icon, someone like Brazil international Neymar. The Ronaldo-effect, it seems, is already taking hold, and the realms of what is possible feel broadened by his very presence -- never mind that he is past his peak and has so far this season been dropped by both Manchester United and Portugal because of his lack of form. His star appeal still resonates -- on the day of his presentation traffic backed up along the streets surrounding the 25,000-capacity Mrsool Park. Al Nassr prepared for his entrance by projecting his image on the stadium's exterior, with strobe lights, fireworks and smoke machines deployed to enhance the atmosphere. His face beamed out from



Cristiano Ronaldo watches from the VIP area ahead of the Saudi Pro League football match between Al-Nassr and Al-Taiai at the Mrsool Park Stadium in the Saudi capital

the greatest football players of all time and the world's most followed individual on social media platform Instagram. Al Nassr has had to enlist an outside public relations company to handle the sudden overload of media interest, but has yet to produce an English language version of its website. Instead, its social media accounts have become a go-to destination for Ronaldo's fanbase,



Suryakumar Yadav celebrates his third T20I century

FA Cup: Marcus Rashford stars as Manchester United beat Everton

MANCHESTER, JAN 7 /--/ Marcus Rashford scored for the fifth straight game as Manchester United beat Everton 3-1 in the FA Cup third round on Friday, heaping the pressure on beleaguered boss Frank Lampard.

Everton travelled to Old Trafford in trepidation after slipping into the Premier League relegation zone this week following a chastening 4-1 home hammering at the hands of Brighton. They made the worst possible start, with Brazil forward Antony scoring in just the fourth minute but were level 10 minutes later after Conor Coady pounced on a howler from United goalkeeper David de Gea.

However, the Everton defender put the ball in his own net early in the second half to hand the initiative back to the home side. Rashford increased United's lead in the dying seconds, scoring from the penalty spot to maintain his record of scoring in every match since the World Cup. Man-of-the-match Rashford, brimming with confidence, said his goalscoring form matched the level of the best spells during his career. The England forward also said the players were desperate

to end the club's trophy drought, stretching back to 2017.

"We want to be in finals and the biggest games," he said. "Ultimately, we want to win silverware and a trophy. Hopefully this season we will get the opportunity to do that." The Red Devils, who won the most recent of their 12 FA Cups in 2016, are in fourth spot in the Premier League in Erik ten Hag's first season in charge and are through to the League Cup quarter-finals. The in-form team opened the scoring when the impressive Rashford surged down the left and into the penalty area before firing the ball across the box into the path of the fast-arriving Antony. Everton appeared to be facing an arduous evening but they were level in bizarre circumstances in the 14th minute.

Amadou Onana won the ball on the edge of the box and fed Neal Maupay, who hit a low cross. De Gea could have used his hands but the ball somehow squeezed through his legs as he clung to the near post with one hand and Coady had the easiest of finishes, changing the mood of the match. Ten Hag urged the United fans to turn up the volume as he came out

after half-time and they were quickly back in front, with Rashford once again playing a crucial role. The England forward cut in from the left and drove into the Everton box, beating Seamus Coleman to send in a cross which Coady turned into his own net. United continued to probe for openings as fans taunted Lampard with chants of "you're getting sacked in the morning".

Everton, showing an admirable fighting spirit, had the ball in the net through substitute Dominic Calvert-Lewin but the goal was ruled out by VAR for an offside earlier in the move. Rashford added gloss to the scoreline from the spot after substitute Alejandro Garnacho was bundled over in the box, sending Jordan Pickford the wrong way. It was Manchester United's seventh straight win in all competitions, either side of the World Cup. Lampard praised his men for their commitment, saying Rashford had made the difference.

"It was a performance that every manager wants with the attitude of the team and the focus and our only focus now is Southampton (in the Premier League)," he said. (AFP)

targeted Mahesh Theekshana (0/48) as he collected three fours from the fifth over. He scooped the first one over square leg, played the second to point and hit the third over mid-off. Tripathi assumed the role of the aggressor as he pummelled Karunaratne (1/52) for twin sixes before perishing off a short ball, caught at short third. India collected 53 for the loss of two wickets in the powerplay and while Gill continued to score at a slow pace, Surya was at his effortless best. The world's number one batter in the format looked like a man from another planet. He reached his half century by sending the ball to the boundary. With Surya firing, Gill tried to up the ante at the other end as well. He hit Wanindu Hasaranga (1/36) for a six but as the batter moved down the wicket to dispatch the ball for another boundary, a leg-break got the better of him to put an end to a 111-run partnership. Gill's wicket saw a change in momentum as India lost skipper Hardik Pandya (4) and all-rounder Deepak Hooda (4) in quick succession. Meanwhile, it was business as usual for Surya as he repeatedly timed the ball to perfection. He hit nine sixes and seven fours in his blazing knock. Towards the end, he found an able ally in Axar Patel (21 not out) as the duo took India over the 220-run mark. (PTI)

AFI announces squad for 10th Asian Indoor Athletics Championships

NEW DELHI, JAN 7 /--/ The Athletics Federation of India (AFI) on Saturday announced a 26-member Indian



contingent to participate in the 10th Asian Indoor Athletics Championships, taking place in Astana, Kazakhstan from February 10-12. The team will comprise 13 male and as many female athletes, including Tokyo 2020 Olympian Tajinderpal Singh Toor and women's national record holder in 100m hurdles, Jyothi Yarraji.

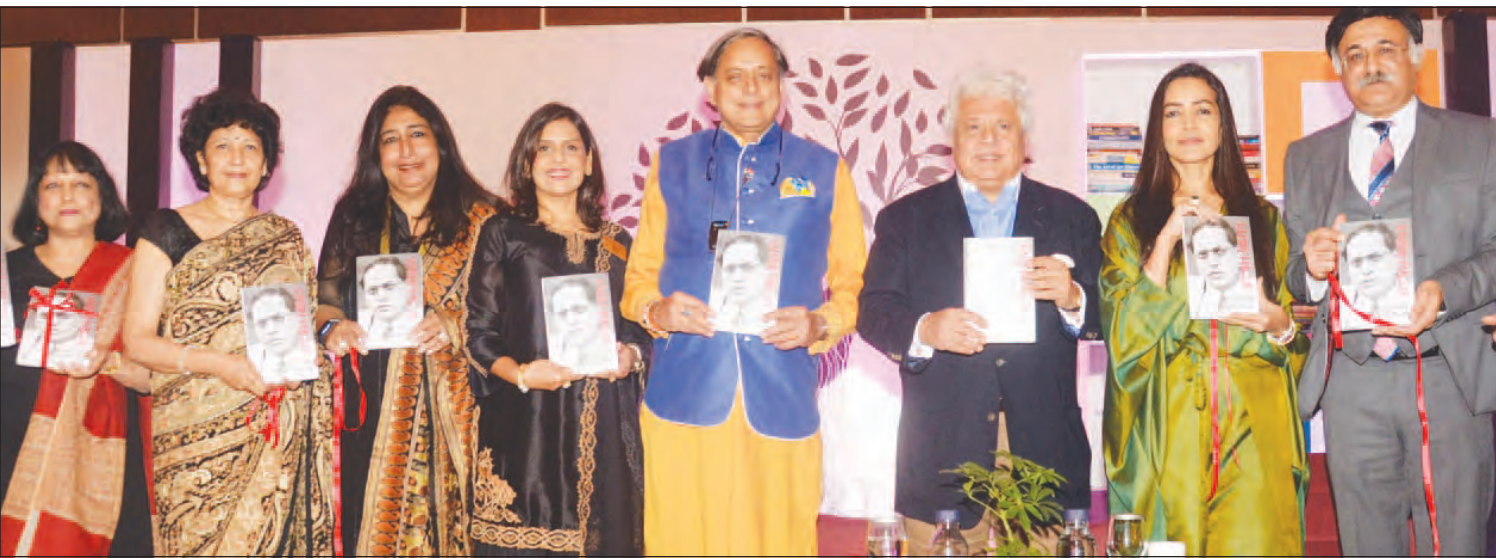
"The selection of these athletes was based on their performances at the 36th National Games and National Open Athletics Championship 2022, and we have high hopes for their success at the event," AFI president Adille Sumariwalla said. In the last edition of the event, India finished with 6 medals, including four silver and two bronze.

The team: (Men): Elakiya Dasan (60m), Amlan Borgohain (60m), Tejas Shirse (60m hurdles), Sarvesh Anil Kushare (High Jump), Aromal T (High Jump), Siva Subramaniam (Pole Vault), Prashant Singh Kanahiya (Pole Vault), Jeswin Aldrin (Long Jump), Muhammed Anees Yahiya (Long Jump), Praveen Chithravel (Triple Jump), Arun AB (Triple Jump), Tajinderpal Singh Toor (Shot Put), Karanveer Singh (Shot Put) (Women): Jyothi Yarraji (60m & 60m hurdles), Archana Suseentran (60m), Sapna Kumari (60m hurdles), Abhinaya Shetty (High Jump), Rosy Meena Paulraj (Pole Vault), Pavithra Venkatesh (Pole Vault), Shaili Singh (Long Jump), Nayana James (Long Jump), Sheena NV (Triple Jump), Poorva Hitesh Sawant (Triple Jump), Abha Khatua (Shot Put), Swapna Barman (Pentathlon), Sowmya Murugan (Pentathlon). (PTI)

ShashiTharoor’s latest book Ambedkar: A Life launched at Kitaab Kolkata event

Parliamentarian and author, ShashiTharoor’s latest book Ambedkar: A Life was recently launched at the Kitaab Kolkata event organized by PrabhaKhaitan Foundation (PKF) at the ITC Sonar presented by Shree Cement. The event was attended by bibliophiles young and old, members of Ehsaas Women and FICCI FLO. Suhel Seth, management consultant, author, columnist and public speaker, was in an hour-long conversation with the author and kept the excitement of the audience on the ledge. The biography of Babasaheb Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar is neither the first one nor the last, but ShashiTharoor’s meticulously-researched work adds a new perspective to one of India’s most revered icons. In Tharoor’s own words, “DrAmbedkar’s greatness cannot be reduced to any one of (his) accomplishments, because all were equally extraordinary.” Tharoor lucidly provides a panoramic view of Ambedkar’s illustrious life while sharing deep insights and anecdotal references into his multi-faceted personality and life’s turning points – historical decisions, social ostracism and stigmas, political leanings, endless struggles and of course his strong personality

which made him stand up for the causes he espoused. Madhuri Halwasiya, Ehsaas Women of Lucknow, introduced the author and conversationalist to the audience and Suhel Seth set the pace of the discussions stating reasons why one should read Tharoor’s book. “It is unarguably one of the finest books on Ambedkar. First, it contextualizes the person who we have credited with the making of the Indian Constitution. Second, it paraphrases, its profiles, it puts into context the enormous intellectual struggle that DrAmbedkar had to wage with people who were his contemporaries. Third, it also tells you that while a lot has changed, nothing has,” Seth said. ShashiTharoor stated a fourth reason to read the book – “The book is mercifully brief. It’s just 200 pages long. Especially in today’s TikTok or Whatsapp generation. So I thought it would be good to write something short and accessible to today’s young people.” Self-questioning – Why (read) Ambedkar and why now? Tharoor said, “You realize that there is probably no other Indian who has more statues of him around the country. Perhaps Gandhi might have slightly more. But there is no village in India without a bust or a statue of



Ambedkar. In these circumstances, he probably is the most revered Indian. He is also somebody whose stature has grown after his death.” Suhel Seth touched upon some of the historical landmarks like in 1927 when

Ambedkar decided that he needed political weaponization to further the cause of the what was then called the depressed classes; in 1932 when Ambedkar had to ask Gandhi ji to call off his fast-unto-death, the first fissures between

the two giants occurred. Commenting on Suhel Seth’s point, ShashiTharoor said, “When you write a biographical account of someone like Ambedkar, these are some of the romantic inflection points.”

Monoshij celebrates New Year withseniors



Monoshij, the mental wellness platform of Techno India Group, celebrated New Year in a grand fashion today with the senior citizens of Snehodiya and Swapnobhor. Present for the occasion were

DebasishSen, IAS (Retd), Chairman, NKDA and Managing Director, WBHIDCO and Prof Manoshi Roy Chowdhury, Founder of Monoshij& Co-Chairperson, Techno India Group. The New Year celebrations began with a cake-cutting followed

by a dance and music performance by students. The next segment of the program was a music performance by eminent singer TathagataSengupta. The senior citizens had an enchanting time. “We have been closely associated with the members of Snehodiya and Swapnobhor from the Covid times, through ongoing interactive sessions with Techno India College and University students, in association with Monoshij. These sessions for the senior members of the society are aimed to increase a sense of connection with one another, feel emotionally supported and add to their positive aspects of life. Today, we are extremely happy to usher in the New Year with the Snehodiya residents and members of Swapnobhor with music as it brings positivity and relaxation of the mind. We also feel that not just today but every day the senior citizens must be valued and taken care of”, said Prof Manoshi Roy Chowdhury, Founder of Monoshij& Co-Chairperson, Techno India Group.

ebowl introduces Chef’s Special Bowls specially for the winter

With the winter season approaching, it’s time to tuck in and indulge all your cravings! ebowl, the subsidiary brand under growing cloud kitchen chain, edabba has launched an all new range of Chef’s special bowls especially for the winter season. Packed with flavours and incredibly wholesome, these bowls make for the perfect winter comfort food. The extensive menu features an array of Indian and Chinese flavours. The brand gives patrons an option to curate their own bowls by selecting mains and accompaniments basis their preferences. They have Choices of two mains which includes Indian options such as Chola Masala, Hyderabad Mixed Veg, MalaiKofta, Rajma Masala, Dal Makhani, Chicken Butter Masala, Chicken Tikka Masala, Chicken Kassa and many more. The choice of Chinese options areChilli Potato, Manchurian Mushroom, Schezwan Chicken, Veg Sweet & Sour amongst others. The choice of accompaniments includeJeera Rice, Pulao, Veg Dum Biryani, Kashmiri Biryani, Awadhi Murgh Biryani, Chicken TikkaKhichdi, amongst



others. The Chinese options for accompaniments include Veg Hakka Noodles, Mix Chowmein, Egg Fried Rice, Egg Chicken Hakka Noodles and many more These comfort food classics are sure to warm you up, so lay back and order in a scrumptious bowl meal from the comfort of your home!

Lake Club Kick-Starts 7th Edition of Natyamela, 2023

Lake Club is all for the 7th edition of Natyamela that will celebrate the rich culture of Bengal’s legacy of Drama and Art. On the inaugural day of the festival a panel discussion titled ‘HabibEkaiEksho’ was organised to mark the birth centenary of the eminent theatre personality, poet and actor, Late HabibTanvir. A calendar of paintings by artistHiranMittraonTanvir’s plays and stage decor was also published. Renowned theater personalities, NaginTanvir(Daughterof Lt. HabibTanvir), Rudraprasad Sengupta, Shamik Banerjee, HiranMittra, Arun Mukhopadhyay, Jayati Bose, Ramchandra Singh, Ashok



Mukhopadhyay, Meghnad Bhattacharya, Suman Mukhopadhyay took part in the discussion. “Ourjourney of organising ‘Natyamela’ began way back in 2015. We were unable to host Natyamela over the last two

years due to the ongoing pandemic. We are glad to announce the launch of the 7th Edition of Natyamela in 2023 for the theatre lovers of Kolkata and the region. Our idea behind this theatre festival is to touch the lives

of people with hope and positivity. It is a celebration of the combination of thought-provoking contemporary art and drama,” said DebabrataDatta, Joint Honorary Secretary, Lake

Club. “We will commence this year’s festival with the Lt. HabibTanvir’s iconic theatre production, ‘CharandasChor’. It will be staged by Tanvir’s own theatre group, Naya Theatre”, MrDutta added.

Bhuvan Bam on playing a character that he hasn't developed

A roller coaster of emotions, comedy, romance, action and drama, Hotstar Specials’ TaazaKhabar is an all-in-one package. Marking the debut OTT debut of social media sensation Bhuvan Bam, the series is a modern-day tale that dismantles the boon and banes of miracles. Produced by Rohit Raj & Bhuvan Bam under the banner BB Ki Vines productions, directed by Himank Gaur and written by the duo Hussain& Abbas Dalal, the series is now available exclusively on Disney+ Hotstar.

Bhuvan Bam is one of India’s biggest digital stars. We’ve seen him play and create multiple characters across his career and now as he makes his digital debut with Disney+ Hotstar’s Taaza

Khabar, he opens up about what it’s like to play a character he’s not created, sources said. Bhuvan Bam says, “Playing a new character is like playing with clay. You’ve no clue how they react under different conditions. You learn to understand them and then craft your skills around to turn them into a pot. It’s a surreal one! From watching legendary shows on the platform to actually being on it is a special feeling. Can’t wait for people to watch what we’ve been cooking for over two years! Viewers can expect anything and everything from this show. TaazaKhabar has a roller coaster of emotions. People would love Vasya and the next moment, hate him! It is a story that’ll connect with the masses, it’ll teach them what to do when they get powerful”

I share silences with all these characters”, says ShilpaShukla

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on Disney+ Hotstar recently. ShilpaShukla has always left us awestruck with her impeccable performances. And as she gears up for her latest release, TaazaKhabar, where she shares memorable moments with BhuvaBamn, JD Chakravarthy and ShriyaPilgaonkar, she opens up about her dynamics with her co-actors and their characters on screen. Talking about her experience ShilpaShukla said, “More than scenes I feel I share silences with all these characters since it’s a ‘less is more’ kind of a reveal. I enjoyed sharing screen space with all but was super thrilled to have shared time with JD sir.”



The New Year started with a gala music launch. Asha Uthup launched ‘Africa Africa’ sung by UshaUthup. Cricket icon, Sourav Ganguly was the Chief Guest for the occasion. The team behind the song ‘Africa Africa’, Padmashri, UshaUthup, music directors duo Shiladitya-Som. ApekshaLahiri, Director, Asha Audio Company and KetanSengupta, Lyricist & CEO, Bengal Peerless Housing Development Co Ltd were present for the launch. Africa Africa talks about the vast wilderness and conservation of

wildlife. For global harmony, there is a need to protect wildlife and how Africa is doing a great job is being highlighted in the song. The music is layered with African beats adding authenticity to the composition. The music for this song has been conceptualized and produced by KetanSengupta, Lyricist & CEO, Bengal Peerless Housing Development Co Ltd., composed, mixed and mastered by Shiladitya-Som. The other song, ‘Dada, We Love You’ is sung also by UshaUthup. The song is a tribute to Saurav on his 50th birthday. It is about the love and admiration that people

have for Dada, alias Saurav Ganguly. It represents the unshakable spirit he has and in spite of the ups and down he has faced in life, he has fought them and came out as a winner. Whenever we think about a comeback story, we associate that with the career of Saurav Ganguly. Conceptualized and written by MrSengupta the music has been composed by Tubai Ray. “Both the songs ‘Africa Africa’ and ‘Dada, We Love You’ are very close to my heart. The former is based on the wilderness of Africa and gives a message on wildlife conservation for the coming generations. Wherein, ‘Dada, We

Love you’ is about our love and admiration for our ‘Dada’, Saurav Ganguly This song is dedicated to Saurav on his 50th birth anniversary”, said MrSengupta. “Apart from composing music, I am a passionate wildlife photographer and have travelled to Masai Mara many a times. When Ketan Da came with the song we were extremely excited and composed the song overnight. The song Africa Africa has a very important message that we feel needs to be conveyed to the younger generation and they should know about the importance of conservation of the wildlife”, said MrChaudhury.

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