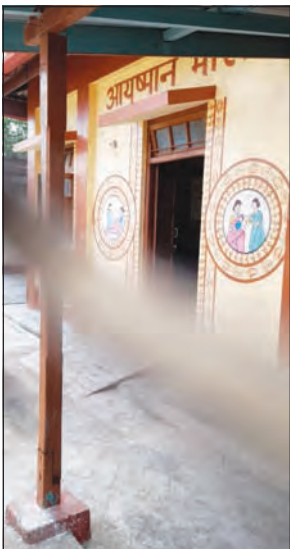


Dairy Farm Health-Sub Centre Medical Staff bit by non-punctual bug

Habitual late-comers cause untold suffering to patients

ROOPA LALL

PORT BLAIR, DEC 12/--/ Medical staff arriving in health centres on time is crucial as every minute counts and any delay by health personnel can be risky for the patients. And in an overburdened healthcare system like ours, efficient use of time is incredibly important. When medical staff are non-punctual, it's a bad factor for the patients as they don't get timely treatment. All it takes is one staff member to come late, and then everybody else is pushed later, regardless of the ability of the health centre to cater to the health-care requirements of the patients. Patients visiting the health-sub centre at Dairy Farm have



The health dispensary at Dairy Farm without a single staff at 10.00 am in the morning on Monday. The health centre official patient visiting time is 8.30 am.

Negligence in duty plays with lives of the sick

complained about the late arrival of the doctor and all other medical staff at this health centre. While patients visit this health centre as early as 8.30 am, the staff started arriving in the centre after 10.30 am. While the staff get around occupying their seats after 10.30 am, patients wait for several hours in advance. The health centre mentions official patients examination timing from 8.30 am to 1.00 pm. This public health centre represents the only

available medical services in these areas. Due to late arrival of medical staff at this health centre, the wait for the patients becomes longer and longer. If a patient arrives at this health-sub centre for treatment in the morning, he has no option but to wait for more than 2-3 hours to avail the treatment. Therefore, the question arises as to whether the daily working hours of the medical personnel deployed in this health-centre start from 10.30 pm? It is often difficult to get treatment in case of sudden accidents. This is because the medical staff are not punctual and hardly care about office punctuality. For them breaking rules is the "express rule."

MP seeks fresh BPL survey in A&N Islands

PORT BLAIR, DEC 12/--/ The Member of Parliament, Mr. Kuldeep Rai Sharma has requested the Lt. Governor to conduct a fresh BPL survey in Andaman & Nicobar Islands so that the maximum number of deserving people can get benefits of various schemes made for BPL people by the Government. Mr. Sharma informed the Lt. Governor that no fresh BPL Survey has been carried out in Andaman and Nicobar Islands for a



long time because of which many deserving and genuine beneficiaries are at total loss. He pointed out that for getting subsidized ration and also for getting Ayushman Bharat Health Insurance Card, BPL cards are still required and hence many beneficiaries are unable to take advantage of schemes of the Government of India. The Member of Parliament mentioned that in far flung Islands there are thousands of people who are facing extreme financial hardship and if a proper survey is carried out then many of these Islanders will be able to get a BPL card and subsequently they will be able to get benefits under schemes of the Government of India.

Two arrested for rape & murder of minor girl

ROOPA LALL

PORT BLAIR, DEC 12/--/ The rape and brutal murder of a 07 years old girl at Brookashabad on 9th December 2022, has sparked widespread outrage among the residents of the islands. PS Pahargaon Police has arrested two persons, father and son duo for committing the heinous crime. According to sources, the girl was reported missing from her house on 8th December at 3.00 pm while the parents filed her missing complaint at PS Pahargaon in the morning hours on 9th December 2022. (Contd. on page-6)

PBGKR fulfills study materials requirements of students



PORT BLAIR, DEC 12/--/ Team Port Blair Guru Ki Rasoi is reaching out to Schools in rural areas, trying to fulfill the basic requirements of the students. When Smt Fathima Bibi, School In-charge, GSS Jirkatang contracted PBGKR and sought to visit the school during which the team was briefed about the situation and materials needed by the students. A list of items such as steel water bottle (1000ml), 200 note books, 12 drawing Book, 10 colouring book, 10, crayons Pkts, 5 poster colour boxes, 20 scrapbook, 100 blue ball point pen, two pencil pkts, 15 geometry box and toys for pre-nursery schools were handed over and all the items were procured and handed over to students. Mr. Mandeep Grewal, President of PBGKR encouraged the students to study as well as participate in sports. He assured every possible support to the students.

GRAND OPENING

The Panache
DESIGNER SAREE BOUTIQUE

OPENING SOON

❖ Saree for Modern Women
❖ Style your saree with Grace & Confidence

Contact: S.C Bairagi - 9474247256 / Dr. Sanjeeta Bairagi - 9284925368

Agency House Arcade,
Shop No. R 3 & 4 Ground Floor, Opp Clock Tower
Aberdeen Bazar Port Blair, A&N Islands

Vibha
A brighter future for children

Australian Consulate-General
Chennai, India

YUVA JAYA
VICTORS OF YOUTH

Golden Opportunity for Andaman Youth
Want to improve your Confidence & Professional Communication Skills
Join Career Readiness Training Program

Unique Features
No Fees for the students (Only 30 students will be selected)
Yuvajaya Professional and Job Readiness Skill Certificate
10 Weeks – 50 days training 2 Hours daily Between 3:30PM – 5:30PM
Activity based mentor led sessions on Career Readiness competencies like

- Professional English Communication
- Team work & Leadership
- Professional Etiquettes
- Networking and Relationship Building
- Critical reflection & Decision making
- Work environment skills

Enroll Now
Send Whatsapp Message to 9474242222
With your Name & Qualification

More details visit
www.yuvajaya.org

Batch starts from 20-Dec-2022
Training Location
VIP Road
Opposite Bangla school
Port Blair

YESHIVA
TRAINING ACADEMY Pvt. Ltd

NEAR MUBARAK MALL, JUNGLGHAT, PORT BLAIR. 744 103
Ph. No. 9476092535; 9933274252; 9476060793

Admission Starts For Following Skill Courses Offered by NDA Govt. of India & All India Paramedical Council

S.No	COURSE NAME	DURATION	QUALIFI
1.	AIRPORT MANAGEMENT	1YEAR	10 TH / 12 TH
2.	AIR & SEA CARGO MANAGEMENT	1YEAR	10 TH / 12 TH
3.	AIRHOSTESS TRAINING	1YEAR	10 TH / 12 TH
4.	CABIN CREW MANAGEMENT	1YEAR	10 TH / 12 TH
5.	PRE - PRIMARY EDUCATION	1YEAR	10 TH / 12 TH
6.	PRIMARY EDUCATION	1YEAR	10 TH / 12 TH
7.	X - RAY TECHNOLOGY	1YEAR	10 TH / 12 TH
8.	SANITARY INSPECTOR	1YEAR	10 TH / 12 TH
9.	MEDICAL LABORATORY TECHNICIAN	2YEARS	12 TH
10.	OPERATION THEATER ASSISTANT	2YEARS	12 TH
11.	AIRFARE & TICKETING	6MONTHS	10 TH
12.	AIRPORT GROUND STAFF TRAINING	6MONTHS	10 TH

- **ADMISSION GOING ON JANUARY - 2023 BATCH.**
- **ADMISSION FORM SUBMISSION LAST DATE 28/12/2022.**
- **FOR INTER ISLAND STUDENTS ONLINE CLASSES ALSO AVAILABLE**

HIGH QUALITY DISCOUNT BHI HIGH!

What are you waiting for bhai?

SRG hari dwar
A HOUSE OF EXCLUSIVE DOORS AND WINDOWS

UPTO 15% DISCOUNT

SRG TRADERS
PHOENIX BAY, PORT BLAIR

SRG DESIGN STUDIO, OPP. TO GOVT. SS SCHOOL GROUND BATHU BASTHI.

Offer valid till 31st August 2022 **CONTACT US: 8001 322 444**

MONDAL JEWELLERS

916 BIS HALL MARK GOLD ORNAMENTS

NEW COLLECTIONS ARRIVAL

CELL: 9434281991, PH: 234778

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

Agnipath scheme voluntary, those having problem don't join: Delhi HC

NEW DELHI, DEC 12 /--/ The Delhi High Court on Monday asked the petitioners who have challenged the Centre's Agnipath scheme as to which of their rights have been violated and said it was voluntary and those having any problem should not join the armed forces under it.

The High Court said the Agnipath scheme has been formed by experts in Army, Navy and Air Force and judges were not military experts. "What is wrong in the scheme? It is not compulsory. To be frank, we are not military experts. You (petitioners) and me are not experts. It has been framed after great efforts by experts in Army, Navy and

Indian Air Force. "There is a particular policy that the government has framed. It is not compulsory, it is voluntary," a bench of Chief Justice Satish Chandra Sharma and Justice Subramonium Prasad said. The bench further said: "You have to show us that a right is taken away. Don't join then. There is no compulsion. If you are good you will be absolved thereafter (after 4 years). Are we the persons to decide it (service in the scheme) should be made four years or five years or seven years."

The High Court was hearing a batch of pleas challenging the Centre's Agnipath scheme. The

Agnipath scheme, unveiled on June 14, lays out rules for the recruitment of youths in the armed forces. According to these rules, those between 17-and-a-half and 21 years of age are eligible to apply and they would be inducted for a four-year tenure. The scheme allows 25 per cent of them to be granted regular service subsequently. After the scheme was unveiled, protests erupted in several states against the scheme. Later, the government extended the upper age limit to 23 years for recruitment in 2022. During the hearing, advocate Kumud Lata Das, representing one of the

petitioners Harsh Ajay Singh, said after being recruited under the scheme, the Agniveers will have life insurance of Rs 48 Lakh in case of contingency which is much less than the existing one.

Whatever the armed forces personnel are entitled to, these Agniveers will get them only for four years, the counsel argued, adding that if the service would have been for five years, they would have been entitled to gratuity. The counsel contended that after four years of service, only 25 per cent of the Agniveers will be considered for being retained in the force and there is no backup plan for the rest of the 75 percent.

On the contention that this scheme has been formed in this way as it is a cost-cutting exercise of authorities, the bench asked where do the forces mention that it is a cost-cutting exercise. "Where do they state it is a cost-cutting exercise? You want us to infer that it is a cost-cutting exercise? Unless they state so, your statement is of no consequence," Justice Prasad said. The bench said that a person is getting a chance to join the armed forces at the age of 17-and-a-half years, "is it not good enough?"

"Is it not a pure domain of policy? Why should we strike down the scheme as bad," the bench asked. (PTI)

KCR to inaugurate BRS office In New Delhi on Dec 14

HYDERABAD, DEC 12 /--/ Telangana chief minister K Chandrasekhar Rao on Monday left for Delhi to inaugurate the office of Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) on December 14, his first visit to the national capital after the Election Commission gave its approval to the name change of TRS.

During his visit to Delhi, Rao, also known as KCR, is likely to address a press conference. Rao would organise a 'yagam' (special form of ritualistic worship) after inaugurating the party office in Sardar Patel Marg in Delhi.

State roads and buildings minister Vemula Prashant Reddy and Rajya Sabha member J Santosh Kumar on Sunday inspected the arrangements for the party office inauguration and the 'yagam', BRS sources said.

Noted Vastu expert Suddala Sudhakar Teja was also present on the occasion. Rao had laid the foundation stone for the TRS office in Delhi in September last year on the land allotted by Centre at Vasant Vihar.

During his earlier visits to Delhi this year, Rao had met Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav and also Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal and discussed various national issues. (PTI)

Priyanka, husband Robert Vadra join Rahul's Bharat Jodo Yatra in Rajasthan

KOTA, DEC 12 /--/ Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi, her husband Robert Vadra and hundreds of women joined Rahul Gandhi as the Bharat Jodo Yatra resumed from the neighbouring Bundi district on Monday which is being observed as a day to spread the message of women empowerment.

The march, which resumed around 6 am from the Tejaji Maharaj Mandi at Babai, is being called a daylong Nari Shakti Pad Yatra on Monday. A large number of women including party workers and women from surrounding areas joined Rahul and Priyanka Gandhi and other yatrins on the Kota-Lalsot Mega Highway as they marched from Babai to Pipalwada in Swaimadhopur district, where they will halt for a break. Rahul Rao, a padyati who has been walking with the yatra right since the beginning on September 7, said, "The BJJ on its 96th day began with the daylong Nari Shakti Pad Yatra at around 6 am from Tejaji Maharaj Temple at Babai village after prayers, singing of national anthem, national song and flag hoisting. A large number of women stood on the roadside to greet the yatrins and join the march, he further said. Monday is the yatra's seventh day in Rajasthan. It is also its last day in Bundi district.

After marching for around 6 km from the Tejaji temple, the yatra entered Tonk district at around 7.15 am and will march around 5 kilometers in Tonk before entering Swaimadhopur through Pipalwada. Over 5,000 women started with Rahul and Priyanka Gandhi when the yatra resumed this morning and a large number of women joined on the way, said Ajay Sharma, Congress' Indergarh (Bundi) block

president, who is also marching along. Rahul also spoke to the padyatris, he added. The 96th day of the BJJ is dedicated women empowerment and that is why it is being called Nari Shakti Pad Yatra for Monday, said BJJ state co-coordinator Kapil Yadav.

Rajasthan is the only Congress-ruled state where the yatra has entered and will cover about 500 km over 17 days before



entering Haryana on December 21. The yatra started from Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu on September 7 and has so far covered the five southern states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Telangana, and then traversed through Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. It will conclude in Jammu and Kashmir in early February 2023, covering 3,570 km in 150 days. (PTI)

Cong expresses strong objections to Sitharaman's 'jealous' remark

NEW DELHI, DEC 12 /--/ Congress on Monday expressed "strong objections" to Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman's comments in Parliament that some people are "jealous" of the country's economic growth, saying India is a democratic nation and every citizen has a right to question the government.

Participating in the discussion on the supplementary demands for grants in the Lok Sabha, Congress member K Suresh said "nobody is jealous about India's progress". "Every single Indian has the right to question... It is called democracy. People's rights are supreme... We are still living in a democracy," Suresh said. Earlier in the day, replying to a question, Sitharaman said it is regrettable that when India's economy is doing well and is growing at a fast rate, some people are "jealous" over it. Suresh said the finance minister is stating that Indian economy is the fastest growing and if this is the case, then "we are not jealous, but we are worried".

The Congress MP alleged that the government is not able to help the working class who was hit hard by the Covid pandemic. Small and medium businesses are suffering due to demonetisation, implementation of Goods and Services Tax (GST) and Covid pandemic, he said, adding the government has not done anything to address their issues. (PTI)

Dimple Yadav takes oath as LS member

NEW DELHI, DEC 12 /--/ Samajwadi Party leader Dimple Yadav, who was elected to Lok Sabha from Uttar Pradesh, on Monday took oath as a member of the House. After taking oath, Yadav touched the feet of Congress leader Sonia Gandhi, who was sitting in the front row of the opposition benches. Yadav greeted leaders of both opposition and treasury benches while going to take oath as well as after taking it. She took oath in Hindi. Her husband and Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav was seen sitting in the visitors' gallery. Yadav won the Mainpuri Lok Sabha seat in a recently held by-election that was necessitated following the death of her father-in-law and SP founder Mulayam Singh Yadav. (PTI)

Have to face consequence if you reduce public debate to this level, SC tells Sisodia

NEW DELHI, DEC 12 /--/ "If you reduce public debate to this level, you have to face the consequences," the Supreme Court said on Monday while hearing a petition by Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia challenging the Gauhati High Court order



dismissing his plea for quashing a criminal defamation case filed against him by Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

The High Court had dismissed Sisodia's petition seeking quashing of the defamation case filed by Sarma over allegations of corruption levelled against him by the Delhi deputy CM. After the apex court showed its disinclination to entertain Sisodia's plea against the November 4 order of the high court, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader withdrew it. Sarma had filed a criminal defamation case against Sisodia for making "baseless" corruption allegations against

him in connection with the supply of PPE kits at "higher than market rates" to the National Health Mission (NHM) authorities during the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. The AAP leader had claimed that Sarma, as the state health minister in



2020, had given the supply orders to the firm of his wife. Sarma has denied these allegations. The matter came up for hearing on Monday before a bench comprising Justices S K Kaul and A S Oka. Senior advocate A M Singhvi, appearing for Sisodia, said the AAP leader had nowhere said any money was taken. "If you reduce public debate to this level, you have to face the consequences," the bench observed, adding the petitioner should have unconditionally apologised earlier. Singhvi said one cannot use the authority to "browbeat" others and that the petitioner had never said any

money was taken. "You have to face the consequences," the apex court asserted, adding the allegations were made during the pandemic. The Supreme Court observed that instead of realising what the country was going through during the pandemic, the petitioner was making allegations. Singhvi later withdrew the petition. After the hearing, advocate Nalin Kohli, who was representing the Assam government, said, "Essentially, while issuing summons, a court has to see whether a prima facie case exists with regard to false imputations which are per se defamatory..." In its order, the High Court had said Sisodia has not been able to make out any case for quashing of the proceedings in the matter which is pending for disposal before the court of chief judicial magistrate, Kamrup, at Guwahati.

The High Court had noted Sarma filed the complaint alleging that on June 4 this year Sisodia addressed a press conference in New Delhi where he made a defamatory statement against the Assam chief minister accusing him of indulging in corruption. It took note of Sarma's complaint about Sisodia accusing him of corruption in giving government contract to his wife's company for purchasing PPE kits. (PTI)

Tharoor raises AIIMS cyber attack in LS, asks Govt to ensure protection of citizens' sensitive personal data

NEW DELHI, DEC 12 /--/ Senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on Monday called for a thorough investigation into the cyber attack on the servers of AIIMS-Delhi and urged the government to take necessary measures to ensure adequate protection of citizens' sensitive personal data and avoid such data breaches in the future.

The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi allegedly faced a cyber attack last month, paralysing its servers. A case of extortion and cyber terrorism was registered by the Intelligence Fusion and Strategic Operations (IFSO) unit of the Delhi Police on November 25. Raising the matter of urgent public

importance in Lok Sabha, Tharoor said the recent cyber attacks on the IT servers of AIIMS-Delhi had resulted in data losses which impeded its normal operations including patient registration, consultation booking and availability of medical records. "The origin, intent and extent of the attack remain unclear and I trust that the government recognising this as a matter of public importance will take the House into confidence about this and the measures taken to prevent a recurrence," the MP from Thiruvananthapuram said.

The possibility of this being a hostile cross-border attack is a grave concern which calls for a thorough investigation and a tough

response, Tharoor stressed. "It also reflects the weak data protection safeguards in our country especially by government institutions. The Personal Data Protection Bill 2019 had created a special category of sensitive personal data including health data that required stringent safeguards but this has unfortunately been done away with in the new draft bill released by the government," he said. "I urge the minister (of Electronics and Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnaw) to take necessary measures to ensure that sensitive personal data of our citizens are adequately protected and to avoid such data breaches in the future," the Congress leader said. (PTI)

RPG attack: 4 suspects who provided logistic support detained, says Punjab Police

CHANDIGARH, DEC 12 /--/ Three days after an RPG attack at a police station in Tarn Taran, the Punjab Police on Monday said it has detained four suspects who provided logistical support in carrying it out.

Two suspects who carried out the attack were yet to be detained, it said. The rocket-propelled grenade was fired at the Sarhali police station in Tarn Taran on Friday night, the second such attack in the state in the last seven months.

Briefing the media here, Inspector General of Police (Headquarters) Sukhchain Singh Gill said four suspects who provided logistic support, motor cycles, etc. in the RPG attack have been detained. "Two persons who executed this act, their identification process is going on," he said. "I cannot disclose any name at this

stage. Identification, detaining of suspects and the process of further identification were going on," the IG added.

Gill said in one or two days, police will disclose more facts including names, who were behind it and how it was done. He said the investigation was being conducted under the supervision of additional director general of police (internal security) R N Dhoke while ADGP (counter intelligence) Amit Prasad was camping in Amritsar. Prima facie, police have got all the clues of this incident, he said, adding that the crime has been unearthed. Further investigation was underway, the senior police officer said. Some unidentified people had fired the projectile which hit the Saanjh Kendra adjoining the Sarhali police station on

the Amritsar-Bathinda highway on Friday night. The projectile first struck the iron grills of the gate of the police station and then hit the wall of the Saanjh Kendra. Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav, who had visited the site, had said that it was military-grade hardware which was suspected to have been smuggled from across the border.

"There is a clear indication that it is a strategy of the neighbouring nation to bleed India by a thousand cuts," the DGP had said. An FIR under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act has been registered in connection with the incident. Earlier in May, a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) was fired at the Punjab Police's intelligence headquarters located in Mohali. (PTI)

Women's Reservation Bill still alive as it has been passed by Rajya Sabha: Ramesh

SAWAI MADHOPUR, DEC 12 /--/ The Congress is committed to the Women's Reservation Bill to ensure one-third of seats in Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies for women, party spokesperson Jairam Ramesh said on Monday. Addressing the press on the sidelines of the party's Bharat Jodo Yatra here, Ramesh said the Bill, which was passed in Rajya Sabha during the Manmohan Singh-led government around 11 years ago, was still alive as Rajya Sabha never dissolves. "The Bill is still alive as it has been passed by Rajya Sabha and once it is passed in Lok Sabha it will become an Act," he said. The Congress has repeatedly demanded that the Bill be brought in Lok Sabha and said the

party would support it, he added. "We want that women should get same reservation in Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha and assemblies as they have got in panchayati raj and municipal institutions," he said. The Congress leader also said former Congress president Sonia Gandhi had written to the prime minister requesting him to bring the bill in Lok Sabha, but it has never been mentioned in the eight years of the Narendra Modi government. He said the Congress was the only political party in the country that has provision of reservation for women in its constitution. The party has amended its constitution to provide 20 per cent reservation to women. "It is a different point that we could not fulfil the target. (PTI)

Over 11k faculty positions vacant in Central Varsities, IITs and IIMs: MoE

NEW DELHI, DEC 12 /--/ Over 11,000 faculty positions are vacant in central universities, IITs and IIMs across the country, according to Ministry of Education (MoE) statistics.

The data was shared by Union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan in a written reply in Lok Sabha. In 45 Central Universities, a total of 6,180 posts of Professor, Associate Professor and Assistant Professor, out of 18,956 sanctioned posts are vacant.

Similarly, in Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), a total of 4,502 posts out of 11,170 sanctioned posts are vacant. In Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), 493 posts out of 1,566 faculty posts are vacant. "Occurrence of vacancies and filling thereof is a continuous process. Central Universities are autonomous bodies, established under respective Central Acts. Their recruitment procedure is formulated by their statutory bodies in

accordance with their acts, statutes, rules and UGC regulations or guidelines," Pradhan said. The minister further said that he has directed all higher education institutions (HEIs) to fill up the vacancies in a Mission Mode. "In addition to writing to all the HEIs to fill up the vacancies in a Mission Mode, the Ministry has set up a monthly monitoring mechanism," he said. Among the vacant posts in the Central Universities and

IIMs, 961 positions are reserved for SC category, 578 for ST category, 1,657 are OBC posts. The vacant positions reserved for EWS and PWD category are 643 and 301 respectively.

"The Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Teachers' Cadre) Act, 2019 has been notified on July 9, 2019 to ensure preparation of the rosters by considering the university as a unit. Also, according to the Act, reservation is applicable in

all the higher educational institutions except the institutions listed in the schedule and few other exceptions as stated in the Act. "As per this Act, reservation is provided for all posts in direct recruitment in teacher's cadre in Central Educational Institutions. After enactment of this Act, no reserved post is to be de-reserved," Pradhan said. There are 23 IITs in the country while the number of IIMs are 20. (PTI)

President, ANVSS urges LG for speedy filling of vacant posts in Electricity dept

PORT BLAIR, DEC 12/--/ Mr. N. PeddiRaju, State President, Andaman & Nicobar Vidyut Shramik Sangh and All India Executive Committee Member of Akhil Bharatiya Vidyut Mazdoor Maha Sangh in a letter to the Lt Governor has urged for filling-up of vacant posts of direct recruitment as well as promotion quota in the Electricity department.

He mentioned that in the department of Electricity, around 1450 post are lying vacant, out of the total post of 3024. Every month about 10-20 employees retire from services and the staff strength is depleting quick and fast. As a result of reduction of workforce, the department is facing hardships to undertake line maintenance and power house work.

The site-offices are falling short of the employees. He further mentioned that one post of Superintending Engineer (HoD) is filled on Current Duty Charges (CDC) basis and not yet filled on regular basis through UPSC. Out of seven posts of Executive Engineer, only two posts of Executive Engineer are filled on a regular basis, of which one EE is under suspension and two posts are filled on Current Duty Charges (CDC) which is required to be filled-up on regular basis. Three posts of EE are lying vacant which are also required to be filled-up on a regular basis through UPSC. The divisions are functioning without EEs and additional charges to the existing EES were given.

Out of 38 postS of Assistant

Engineer, only seven posts are filled on a regular basis and 14 posts are filled on Current Duty Charges (CDC). The promotion of the 31 Junior Engineers to the post of Assistant Engineers are under consideration, which will result in further shortage of strength of JEs in the site-offices.

Apart from these, about 280 posts on promotion quota are also lying vacant, which also required to be filled-up from the feeder posts. Once the promotion is given to the feeder employees, then more vacancies will be created in direct recruitment.

The President, ANVSS also brought to the notice of the Lt Governor that few employees have lost their lives in service due to electrical accidents and a few got bed ridden in such accidents. Preference needs to be given to provide jobs to any family members of the deceased on humanitarian ground for the livelihood of their family.

Kuldeep seeks conducting basic medical tests in PHCs, CHCs

PORT BLAIR, DEC 12/--/ The Member of Parliament, Mr. Kuldeep Rai Sharma has requested the Lt. Governor to issue necessary directions to the Health department that all basic medical tests are being conducted in all PHCs & CHCs of Andaman and Nicobar Islands so that diagnosis becomes easy for doctors and correct treatment can be given to the patients of every corner of these Islands and general public are not harassed.

He mentioned that during his recent visit to North & Middle Andaman as well as Nicobar District, he was approached by a large number of Islanders who have informed him that there are many issues concerning conduct of basic medical tests like X-Ray, Haemoglobin, blood glucose, urine protein, urine glucose, and urine

pregnancy test, thyroid test etc in almost all Primary Health Centers and Community Health Centers either due to lack of testing equipment or due to lack of technicians.

He added that diseases like high blood pressure, high blood sugar, thyroid disorders etc are very common these days and every second person is suffering from these diseases.

The Member of Parliament mentioned that for people living in far flung area it is impossible to visit G B Pant Hospital or Port Blair for every single medical test and hence it becomes absolutely important to ensure that all the PHCs and CHCs are equipped with all testing equipment and there are sufficient number of technicians to carry out the basic test, based on which any kind of treatment is possible.



IGNOU re-registration for January-2023 session

PORT BLAIR, DEC 12/--/ The online Re-registration in IGNOU for January, 2023 session has started on the Samarth portal. All the learners, who have desirous to register for January, 2023 cycle advised to submit re-registration form through online on or before last date i.e. 31st December, 2022. All the learners of 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th semester are advised to make semester fees through online: <https://onlinerr.ignou.ac.in/>. For more details the learners may contact IGNOU Regional Centre, Port Blair over Phone: 03192-242888 or 03192-230111 or Email: rcportblair@ignou.ac.in.

Encroachments in the shape of kutcha house, plantation removed



MAYABUNDER, DEC 12/--/ The District Administration, North & Middle Andaman conducted an encroachment eviction drive against illegal encroachments of government land at Pudumadurai village in Mayabunder. On the direction of Deputy Commissioner (N&M

Andaman) Mr. Satyendra Singh Dursawat, the Tehsildar, Mayabunder and his team evicted encroachment and recovered about 0.90 hectares of land in Pudumadurai village. Encroachers had constructed a kutcha house with sheets and planted banana and

arecanut trees in the government land. The Tehsildar, Mayabunder, Mr. Pillai told EOI that the encroachment eviction drive will continue and all those who have encroached upon government lands will be evicted by the officials of Revenue department in this Tehsil. —KARTIK

Outsider involvement suspected behind scribbling of anti-Brahmin slogans: JNU VC Santishree D Pandit

NEW DELHI, DEC 12/--/ Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) VC Santishree Dhulipudi Pandit on Monday said "outsiders" might be involved in the scribbling of anti-Brahmin slogans on several walls inside the campus and that further inquiry into the matter was underway.

Speaking to PTI, the vice chancellor asserted JNU is a place for everyone and nobody can use it to spread hatred against any group.

Earlier this month, the walls of Jawaharlal Nehru University's School of International Studies (SIS)-II building were defaced with graffiti asking members of Brahmin and Baniya communities to leave the campus and the country. (PTI)



32" Smart TV
Offer Valid on Limited Stock

Festival Sale

CLIMBER

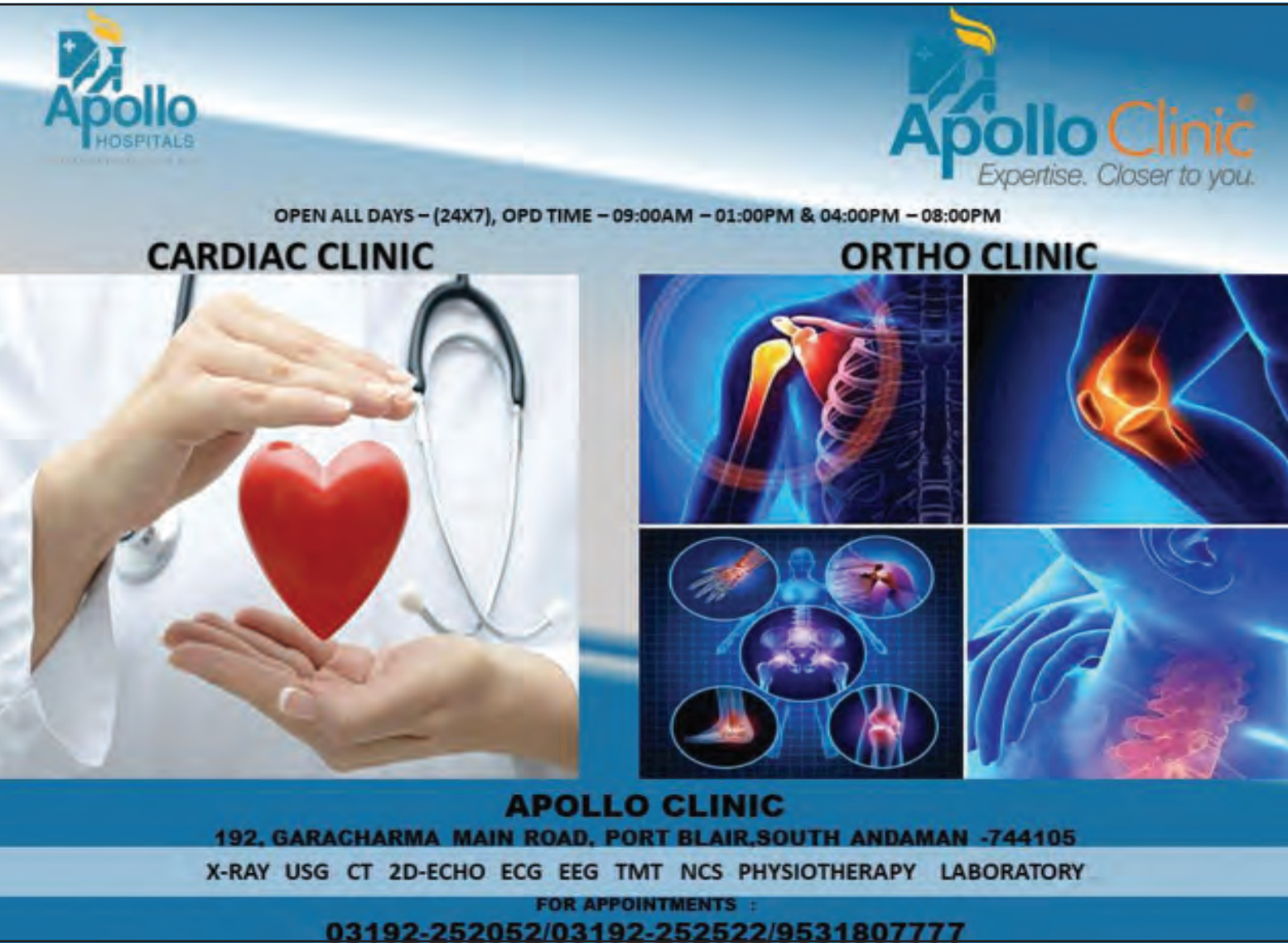
Preeta Cars India Pvt Ltd | Renault Port Blair
Phoenix Bay, South Andaman-744102 | email : gecsalespb@gmail.com
Contact Us: 9564783849 | 9564783856

Kisan Mela by KVK under Jal Shakti Abhiyan



PORT BLAIR, DEC 12/--/ The ICAR-Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Central Island Agricultural Research Institute, Port Blair organized "Kisan Mela" under Jal Shakti Abhiyan at its campus on 9th Dec 2022. The mela was conducted with the theme "Catch the rain: where it falls, when it falls" to raise awareness of the importance of water conservation for Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Mr. H. Manoj, General Manager, NABARD, Port Blair graced the occasion as Chief Guest. He discussed the new technologies involved in conservation of water resources and stressed the farming communities to utilize the harvested rain water judiciously. Dr. Debasis Bhattacharya, Director (I/c), ICAR-CIARI, Port Blair interacted with the farmers and discussed the need of water for sustainability of human civilization and the age-old practices involved in conservation and utilization of it. Dr. T. P. Swarnam, Principal Scientist, discussed the need and ways of water conservation for Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Dr. T. Subramani, Senior Scientist and Dr. Sirisha Adamala, Scientist demonstrated the manual paddle pump which is suitable for low depth water lifting and conveyance at the farmers field. Dr. N.

Bommayasamy, Dr. Thanmai Paul and Dr. Nitu Sindhu coordinated the field visit to the instructional farm of KVK. Dr. B. K. Nanda, S.M.S. (Agri. Engg.), coordinated the overall activities of the Kisan Mela and demonstrated the water harvesting through a lined pond and micro-irrigation installed at the instructional farm of KVK. School students of various schools participated in the drawing and model making competition and farmers participated in the debate competition organized on the occasion. In the debate category for farmers, Ms. Smita Sahu, Smt. Joyshna Das and Ms. Raj Kumari bagged first, second and third positions whereas for students in drawing competitions, Silpi Sil of G.S.S.S., Manglutan, Saritha of G.S.S.S., Port Mout and Jeet Munda of G.M.S., Humfrygunj secured first, second and third positions. In model making competitions, G.S.S.S., Port Mout bagged first positions, G.S.S.S., Manglutan secured second position and G.S.S.S., Garacharma and Invent Public School, Sippighat jointly owned third prize whereas Don Bosco S.S.S., Chouldari and G.M.S., Humfrygunj bagged consolation prize. A total of 120 nos. of participants attended the program.



Apollo Hospitals
Expertise. Closer to you.

OPEN ALL DAYS - (24x7), OPD TIME - 09:00AM - 01:00PM & 04:00PM - 08:00PM

CARDIAC CLINIC
ORTHO CLINIC

APOLLO CLINIC
192, GARACHARMA MAIN ROAD, PORT BLAIR, SOUTH ANDAMAN -744105
X-RAY USG CT 2D-ECHO ECG EEG TMT NCS PHYSIOTHERAPY LABORATORY

FOR APPOINTMENTS :
03192-252052/03192-252522/9531807777

READ EOI
KEEPS YOU AHEAD



Shyam N Shyam

Festive Collection
NAYRA - CUT
STRAIGHT PANT SETS
SHARARA & PLAZZO
CROP-TOP LEHENGAS
Special Plus Size Collection. Sizes Upto 3XL

Aberdeen Bazaar, Port Blair, Andamans



TEXTILE LAXMI NEERAJ TEXTILE
A Complete Family Showroom

Fresh Collection for YOUR FAMILY

ABERDEEN BAZAR | BATHU BASTHI

One must know oneself, if this does not serve to discover truth, it at least serves as a rule of life and there is nothing better
Blaise Pascal

Delhi HC judgement, a historic moment for women’s rights

The Delhi High Court recently upheld women’s right to terminate pregnancy. It was indeed a historic moment for women’s rights movement across the country. The court gave permission to a 26-year-old woman to undergo medical termination of her 33-week pregnancy. The HC observed that in cases with specific circumstances, it is the mother who has to take the ultimate decision taking into account whether the unborn child can lead a dignified life. In the specific case in which the HC gave its order, it was found that the foetus was suffering from certain cerebral abnormalities. It goes without saying that in circumstances where the new born is suffering from any serious health complication, despite all the love and care a mother can provide, the child is considered a burden and the blame ultimately falls on the woman. Countries with quality medical facilities not just monitor the mother’s health during the pregnancy but also the health of the foetus and provide informed advice in case of apprehensions. When the pregnancy does continue, no sooner the new born has been brought to life, all medical parameters are analysed and diagnosis carried out to ensure that all questions arising out of the apprehensions have been addressed. The Delhi High Court judgement will, therefore, have a far reaching impact as it sets a precedent for numerous such cases to come in the future. The right to abortion has been a debatable issue across the globe and even the first world countries have failed to recognise this right. India, however, has recognised this choice of a woman in its law. The high court judgement is not just a shot in the arm for women’s rights to pregnancy but has the potential to provide the much needed force to usher in changes in the way the medical fraternity views the matter.

The Parliament of India, in order to abolish the social evil of female foeticide, enacted in 1994 the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act-also known as the Prohibition of Sex Selection Act. However, in secrecy the act of sex selection still continues, to the extent that new born girls are abandoned by the families, mostly without the knowledge of the mothers. India, which aims to be the next world leader, ought to address the issue on war footing. Health care facilities in the country need a huge overhaul. India needs to invest heavily in the infrastructure of healthcare in the countryside. We still face acute shortage of doctors and specialists and super-specialists and our district hospitals are overburdened. Thus, providing state-of-the-art healthcare to citizens across age groups and genders and to their unborn is of utmost necessity. A healthy State means a healthy economy, thus the adage ‘health is wealth’.

Union Budget exercise for funding States becomes trickier

REFLEX ACTION

Dr. Gyan Pathak

It was as clear as a crystal even during the pre-budget consultations of the Union Ministry of Finance for the fiscal 2023-24 on November 25 that the fiscal positions of most of the states were in dire situation, and now, when the budget exercise has begun in right earnest, Modi government is finding the issue trickier that it has presumed.

During the pre-budget consultations the states finance ministers had demanded more funds from the Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman along with greater say in implementing centrally-sponsored schemes and an increased for royalty on minerals. Had it not been the last full budget for the Modi government before the general election 2024 in the country, it would have simply ignored the demands as it has been doing for the last four budgets during their second term since 2019. The demands are old but the political situation demands a more careful handling. It is not a secret that the Modi government has been in favour of a ‘strong centre’ which talks about ‘one nation and one …everything’. They have even made such policies and implemented in such manners that erodes ‘federal structure’ of the country. The situation had found voice in the Tamil Nadu’s Minister of Finance Palanivel Thiagarajan who said during the pre-budget consultations that states, cutting across party lines, that centrally sponsored schemes are constraining states’ fiscal autonomy since in some schemes states end up contributing large amount which is more than the Centre’s contribution.

Modi government have always tried to financially weaken the states by not providing enough funds to them and has prevented them from raising taxes through implementing GST. Several states have demanded for justice because they feel that the Modi government is not giving them their justified share in the tax revenue. All these have political implications in the pre-election year. If the states are financially crippled they cannot perform well, especially the opposition ruled states, against which Modi led BJP can successfully campaign. However, if the opposition ruling establishments are able to successfully convince the people that they have been victimised by the

Centre, the BJP will have to pay the price. Thus, there is every risk of creating a double-edged political sword that can potentially benefit and also harm the BJP, making the issue of the ‘amount of funding’ the states trickier. Centrally sponsored schemes have always been seen as a political tool of the Centre through which the Centre plays political right up to the Panchayat level.

It should be noted that after implementation of three-tier system of governance in India – Panchayati Raj, States, and the Centre are constitutionally required not to interfere with each other’s affairs. However, it has been remained in the statute book only, not on the ground. Centre devises schemes from the top and implements it up to the Panchayat level only for doing politics while ignoring the rights of the local bodies and also the states. Centre does not even give weightage to the say of the States and the Panchayats. It is in this backdrop, that the states across the party line had demanded during the pre-budget consultations that they should be given greater flexibility in implementing Centrally sponsored schemes. Bihar’s Minister of Finance has even said that centrally sponsored schemes should be limited as the burden on states for such schemes are increasing, while states are fund starved.

Royalty for minerals are major source of income for the country, but states have always been demanding for more royalty since minerals are mined from their lands but they are getting pittance from that in the form of royalty. Centre and the private companies are benefitting the most, while they remain fund starved. Union Ministry of Finance is finding the demand too difficult to accept now, since mineral rich several states are opposition ruled which may become politically stronger with increased royalty.



Christmas shopping on in full swing at New Market on Monday—Arijit Ganguly

However, social sector is becoming victim to the Modi government’s strategy of keeping the states fund starved. People have started cursing Modi government more than the state governments for failure in helping them overcome the present day tribulations of price rise, inflation, joblessness, lack of social security and access to health services, medicine, diet, and even education to their children. It is therefore imperative for Modi government to keep people happy during the pre-election year as well as weakening the opposition ruling establishments in the states through restricted flow of funds from the Centre. Since the states fiscal deficits and revenue position are already in very bad shape, the flow of funds is demanding ever more careful considerations by the officials involved in budget making.

Gross fiscal deficit of the states for 2021-22 was Rs 8,18,584 crore as against Rs 9,31,652 crore in the revised estimate for 2020-21. Actual gross fiscal deficit of states in 2019-20 was Rs 5,24,710 crore. As for the gross revenue deficit, it was Rs 1,21,495 crore in actual in 2019-20, which rose to Rs 3,95,149 crore in 2020-21. It was budget Rs 1,17,779 crore for 2021-22, and there are indications that it is going to rise in the revised estimate. Gross primary deficit in 2019-20 was Rs 1,73,322 crore which grew to Rs 5,38,301 crore in 2020-21. Budget estimate for primary deficit in 2021-22 was Rs 3,80,015 crore which is most likely to increase. States own tax revenue in 2019-20 was Rs 12,23,993 crore which almost remained stagnate in 2020-21 at Rs 12,41,117 crore. The budget estimate for 2021-22 was Rs 15,94,665 which is not likely to be met due to slow economic recovery. Gross non-tax revenue for states was Rs 2,60,891 crore in 2019-20 which declined to Rs 2,11,453 crore in 2020-21. Budget estimate for 2021-22 was Rs 2,86,742 which is not likely to be met on account of sluggish economic conditions.

State’s interest liabilities are also very high. It is growing fast from Rs 3,51,389 crore in 2019-20 to Rs 3,93,351 crore in 2020-21 and Rs 4,38,569 crore in 2021-22. Union Finance ministry has to tread very carefully in dealing with the state finances, since it has become a politically sensitive issue for the pre-general election year. (IPA)

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

- | ACROSS | | DOWN | |
|--------|------------------|------|------------------------|
| 1 | Counterfeit | 1 | Kill |
| 4 | Small fish | 2 | Concealed |
| 9 | Cover | 3 | Vote to accept |
| 11 | Meander | 5 | Drive forward |
| 12 | Worship | 6 | Eternal city |
| 13 | Prophetic sign | 7 | Affirm with confidence |
| 14 | Saucy | 8 | Camping equipment |
| 15 | Strong thread | 10 | Worth |
| 19 | Coral isle | 16 | Roam |
| 21 | Seabird | 17 | Wanderer |
| 25 | Dry | 18 | Fixed gaze |
| 26 | Proverb | 20 | Permission |
| 28 | Prevalent | 22 | Ireland (poet) |
| 29 | Large vehicle | 23 | Fissure |
| 30 | Place of ingress | 24 | Camera part |
| 31 | Seeks charity | 27 | Joke |

SUDOKU: 3724								
					7		4	
	5	2						3
	4		2	1				
		6				7	1	
	1		7		2		3	
	9	3				8		
			1		5		2	
1						9	8	
	2		8					

Yesterday's Solution 3723								
1	9	6	3	8	4	5	7	2
5	7	3	9	2	6	4	8	1
8	2	4	7	5	1	3	6	9
3	1	7	6	9	2	8	4	5
2	8	5	4	7	3	9	1	6
4	6	9	8	1	5	7	2	3
9	3	2	1	4	8	6	5	7
7	5	8	2	6	9	1	3	4
6	4	1	5	3	7	2	9	8

Yesterday's Cross Word Solution 1732								
R	A	I	N		J	A	P	A
I		R				S	A	L
C	H	I	C		S	P	I	T
H		S	A	F	E		N	O
				G	E	R	M	S
L		N	E	R	V	E		
E	G	O		N	E	A	P	B
G	A	T	E	S		N	I	C
A	V	E	R			C		A
L	E	D	G	E		D	A	W

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

Qatar’s World Cup success punctures FIFA’s political fantasy

If the Qatar World Cup proved anything, it’s that sports and politics are inseparable Siamese twins joined at the hip.

Politics popped up at every twist of the World Cup’s road, whether related to the right of freedom of expression of players, sports commentators and fans; anti-government protests in Iran; anti-Israeli sentiment among Qataris and Arabs; a backlash against Western, particularly German, critics of Qatar; or ultra-conservative religious rejection of soccer as a sport.

Qatari efforts to stage manage the intrusion of regional politics ranged from picking and choosing which protests fit its foreign policy agenda to seeking to ensure, where possible, that events elsewhere in the region would not overshadow or inflame passions during the World Cup. Amid escalating violence between Israelis and Palestinians, Mohammad al-Emadi, the Qatari official handling Hamas, the Islamist group that controls the Gaza Strip, travelled to the region to ensure that it and Islamic Jihad, another Gaza-based organization, would not respond with rockets to Israeli use of lethal force against Palestinian militants on the West Bank.

Qatar feared that a response to last week’s killing of an Islamic Jihad commander on the West Bank and near-nightly Israeli raids could spark a renewed Israeli intervention in Gaza, already crippled by a 15-year-long Israeli-Egyptian blockade. The Qatari pressure puts in a different perspective the Gulf state’s endorsement of expressions of support for the Palestinians during the World Cup in the form of pro-Palestinian flags and T-shirts and a refusal by Qatari and

Arab fans to engage with Israeli reporters covering the tournament. Despite refusing to follow in the footsteps of the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan in recognizing Israel without a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Qatar has a long-standing working relationship with the Jewish state that serves the interests of both countries.

The Gulf state, often at Israel’s request, has pumped millions of dollars into paying government salaries in Gaza, providing aid to thousands of families affected by past wars, and funding fuel for the Strip’s power plant as well as infrastructure projects. Moreover, Qatar became the first Gulf state to put money into Israel when it funded in 2006 a six-million-dollar stadium in the predominantly Israeli Palestinian town of Sakhnin, an investment long before the UAE-led Arab recognition of the Jewish state 14 years later.

Sakhnin and the Doha Stadium are home to Bnei Sakhnin, Israel’s most successful Israeli-Palestinian club. As a result, allowing expressions of pro-Palestinian sentiment during the World Cup served multiple Qatari purposes. It gave a release valve to Qataris, a minority in their own country, who were concerned about the impact on their society of the government’s live-and-let-live approach towards soccer fans with very different

cultural values visiting their country during the World Cup. Preventing fans from taking pro-LGBT paraphernalia such as One Love and rainbow-coloured armbands and shirts into stadiums served a similar purpose.

It also allowed Qataris to vent their frustration at perceived double standards in European and American criticism of Qatar’s rejection of LGBT rights, particularly after the German team’s hands-over-mouth gesture in protest against FIFA’s denial of their right to wear pro-LGBT armbands. In one instance, Qataris wore pro-Palestinian armbands of their own to a match as a protest against the donning of a pro-LGBT One Love band by German Interior Minister Nancy Faeser, who attended the game. Expressions of pro-Palestinian, anti-Israeli sentiment also suggested that Qatar’s refusal to recognise Israel was more in line with Arab public opinion than efforts to project the UAE-led recognition of the Jewish state as genuinely popular and indicative of a drop in support for the Palestinian cause.

If anything, recent polls show that public support for establishing diplomatic relations with Israel had fallen across the Arab and Muslim world, including in countries that normalized their ties to the Jewish state. In Bahrain, 20 per cent of the population supports the accords, compared with 45 per cent in 2020, according to a Washington Institute for Near East Policy

poll in July. Support in Saudi Arabia fell from 41 to 19 per cent. Even in the UAE, where normalisation had the greatest impact, support dropped to 25 per cent this year from 47 per cent in 2020. For Qatari World Cup managers, Palestine was low-hanging fruit. Protest against the government in Tehran was a far trickier challenge.

A regional behemoth, Iran is a partner as well as a potential threat with which Qatar shares the world’s largest offshore gas field. Maintaining relations with Iran has allowed Qatar, at times, to be a background mediator with the United States on issues like the moribund talks to revive the 2015 Iranian nuclear agreement. Qatar feared that allowing stadiums to become venues of confrontation between opponents and supporters of the Iranian government could have persuaded Iran to rank the Gulf state, alongside Saudi Arabia, Israel, and the United States, as an instigator of sustained anti-government protests in which security forces have killed hundreds. As a result, Qatar sought to prevent anti-government banners, T-shirts, and pre-revolution flags from entering stadia. The problem resolved itself when Iran was knocked out of the World Cup in the group stage. Yet, the larger issue remains. The Qatar World Cup demonstrates that FIFA’s insistence that sports and politics can be separated amounts to a political fantasy.

More concerning than that, it enables FIFA and autocratic World Cup hosts like Qatar to decide what are convenient and inconvenient expressions of politics. That hardly makes for a level playing field, the starting point for any sport. (IPA)

FOCUS

James M Dorsey

SEVA SUCHNAYEIN
<i>All the sailings are subject to weather conditions</i>
INTER ISLAND SECTOR: MV Campbell Bay will sail for Campbell Bay via Nancowry on 15.12.2022 (Thu) at 1000 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on 17.12.2022 (Sat) at 0900 Hrs from Campbell Bay via Nancowry, Passenger tickets for the above sailing will be issued to the general public from 13.12.2022 (Tue) onwards at STARS Ticketing Counters. MV Bharat Seema will sail for Car Nicobar via Little Andaman on 16.12.2022 (Fri) at 0700 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on 17.12.2022 (Sat) at 1600 Hrs from Car Nicobar via Little Andaman. Passenger tickets for the above sailing will be issued to the general public from 14.12.2022 (Wed) onwards at STARS Ticketing Counters. MV Bharat Seema will sail for Car Nicobar via Little Andaman on 19.12.2022 (Mon) at 0700 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on 20.12.2022 (Tue) at 1600 Hrs from Car Nicobar via Little Andaman. Passenger tickets for the above sailing will be issued to the general public from 16.12.2022 (Fri) onwards at STARS Ticketing Counters. Nalanda will sail for Campbell Bay via Nancowry on 21.12.2022 (Wed) at 1000 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on 23.12.2022 (Fri) at 0900 Hrs from Campbell Bay via Nancowry. Passenger tickets for the above sailing will be issued to the general public from 19.12.2022 (Mon) onwards at STARS Ticketing Counters. MV Bharat Seema will sail for Car Nicobar on 23.12.2022 (Fri) at 0700 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on 24.12.2022 (Sat) at 1600 Hrs directly Car Nicobar. Passenger tickets for the above sailing will be issued to the general public from 21.12.2022 (Wed) onwards at STARS Ticketing Counters. MV Campbell Bay will sail for Campbell Bay via Nancowry on 27.12.2022 (Tue) at 1000 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on 29.12.2022 (Thu) at 0900 Hrs from Campbell Bay via Nancowry. Passenger tickets for the above sailing will be issued to the general public from 23.12.2022 (Fri) onwards at STARS Ticketing Counters. MV Bharat Seema will sail for Car Nicobar on 28.12.2022 (Wed) at 0700 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on 29.12.2022 (Thu) at 1600 Hrs Car Nicobar via Little Andaman. Passenger tickets for the above sailing will be issued to the general public from 26.12.2022 (Mon) onwards at STARS Ticketing Counters. LITTLE ANDAMAN: Nalanda will sail for Little Andaman on 15.12.2022 (Thu) at 0900 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 2100 Hrs from Little Andaman. . Nalanda will sail for Little Andaman on 18.12.2022 (Sun) at 2100 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on 19.12.2022 (Mon) at 0800 Hrs from Little Andaman. . Campbell Bay will sail for Little Andaman on 21.12.2022 (Wed) at 0900 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 2100 Hrs from Little Andaman. Nalanda will sail for Little Andaman on 29.12.2022 (Thu) at 0900 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 2100 Hrs from Little Andaman. Note:Passenger tickets for the above sailings i.e. (for 15, 18 & 21" Dec., 2022) will be issued to the general public from 13.12.2022 (Tue) onwards at STARS Ticketing Counters. MV Campbell Bay will sail for Little Andaman on 23.12.2022 (Fri) at 0900 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 2100 Hrs from Little Andaman. Nalanda will sail for Little Andaman on 26.12.2022 (Mon) at 0900 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 2100 Hrs from Little Andaman. Nalanda will sail for Little Andaman on 29.12.2022 (Thu) at 0900 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 2100 Hrs from Little Andaman. Note:Passenger tickets for the above sailings Le (for 23" 26" & 29" Dec, 2022) will be issued to the general public from 20.12.2022 (Tue) onwards at STARS Ticketing Counters. DIGLIPUR & MAYABUNDER: MV Dering will sail for Diglipur via Mayabunder on 21.12.2022 (Wed) at 1900 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on 15.12.2022 (Thu) at 1230 Hrs from Diglipur via Mayabunder. Passenger tickets for the above sailing will be issued to the general public from 13.12.2022 onwards at STARS Ticketing Counters ? MV Dering will sail for Diglipur via Mayabunder on 17.12.2022 (Sat) at 1900 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on 18.12.2022 (Sun) at 1230 Hrs from Diglipur via Mayabunder. Passenger tickets for the above sailing will be issued to the general public from 15.12.2022 onwards at STARS Ticketing Counters. . MV Dering will sail for Diglipur via Mayabunder on 21.12.2022 (Wed) at 1900 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on 22.12.2022 (Thu) at 1230 Hrs from Diglipur via Mayabunder. Passenger tickets for the above sailing will be issued to the general public from 19.12.2022 onwards at STARS Ticketing Counters. . MV Dering will sail for Diglipur via Mayabunder on 23.12.2022 (Fri) at 1900 Hrs from Haddo Wharf and will sail for Port Blair on 24.12.2022 (Sat) at 1230 Hrs from Diglipur via Mayabunder. Passenger tickets for the above sailing will be issued to the general public from 21.12.2022 onwards at STARS Ticketing Counters. FORESHORE SECTOR: Note: Passenger tickets for the Foreshore Sector vessels will be issued to the general public at STARS Ticketing Counters two days prior to her scheduled departure date. will sail for Port Blair on the same day at 1630 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep. MV Strait Island will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 13.12.2022 (Tue) at 1700 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sall back to Port Blair on 14.12.2022 (Wed) at 0600 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep. • MV Bambooka will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 14.12.2022 (Wed) at 0630 Hrs from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail back to Port Blair on 15.12.2022 (Thu) at 0600 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep. RANGAT MV Chouldari will sail for Rangat via Shaheed Dweep, Swaraj Dweep, Strait Island & Long Island on 14.12.2022 (Wed) at 0700 Hrs. from Phoenix Bay Jetty and will sail for Port Blair on 15.12.2022 (Thu) at 0700 Hrs from Rangat via same route. sall for Port Blair on the same day at 1600 His from Shaheed Dweep. MV Strait Island will sail for Swaraj Dweep on 15.12.2022 (Thu) at 1300 Hrs from Shaheed Dweep Jetty and will sail back to Shaheed Dweep on the same day at 1430 Hrs from Swaraj Dweep.

PS Ograbraj seizes 225 gms of ganja, four nabbed

PORT BLAIR, DEC 12 /--/ The team of Police Station Ograbraj has busted a Narcotics trafficking module in the area and in raids spanning 2 days and booked four persons under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 with a recovery of 225 grams of illicit Ganja. On 08th December 2022, acting upon a credible information a team comprising of SI T DillaRao, SHO, PS Ograbraj, SI Tejeswar Rao, HCs Ashok Roy, R .K. Rathore, PCs Molina, Vishal Kumar, Firoz was constituted under the supervision of Sh.Arshdeep Singh Panwar, SDPO Bambooflat, conducted a two day long operation leading to arrests of Rakesh Mondal S/o Shri. Motilal Mondal (38) yrsPvt. Worker R/o Tsunami Shelter, Chouldari, Mohd. Miraj Ansari S/o Mohd. Kalimuddin Ansari R/o Tushnabad, AkashBiswas S/o Shri. RajuBiswas R/o Haddo, Ward No. 01 and S. Poowathi Raja S/o Shri.Subbaiah R/o Haddo, Sunder Colony, who all were involved in trafficking of Ganja in various parts of South Andaman district. A total of 225 grams of Ganja were recovered in the operation. Further investigation of the case is in progress. The general public is requested to share information pertaining to any crime or other illegal activities to Police at 112, 03192-232100 & 03192-233077. The identity of the informant will be kept secret.

14th State Sqay Championship 2022 held in Girl's school auditorium

PORT BLAIR, DEC 12 /--/ Islands Sqay Martial Art Association and International Human Right Council Andaman & Nicobar State board jointly organized 14th State Sqay Championship 2022 in the Girl's School Auditorium on 10th and 11th of December 2022 in which 100's of Materials Art Students participated in the championship. The Championship was organized under the chairmanship of Master M.D. Selvam Black belt 7th Dan and Dr. C. Parthiban Black Belt 3rd Dan and ShriAnand Raj, President ISMMA. In which different events such as individual Loba (Fight), individual kawankey, individual Musical aerosqay (artistic movements), senior league championship and grand championship events were organized. The opening ceremony was attended by Dr. Hemanth Kumar Sharma jI, principal JNRM and Mr. Kannadasan Managing Director IECT and Mr. PandiKannan and Mr. Richard Batton Members officials of International Human Right Council and Shri V.D Sivabalan Advocate High Court graced the function. The main attraction of the championship was fights between Champion to Champion for winning the grand champion title. In which the following men and women won the grand champion title.

1. R. Dinesh : (Men category) Grand champion
2. B. Gayatri : (Women category) Grand champion
3. SafiqSheikh : (Junior boy's category) Grand Champion
4. SreeVashnavi: (Junior girl's category) Grand Championship

the closing ceremony was graced by Smti. PramilaKumariAdyakshaZillaParishad, South Andaman and by Mr. Madankumar Gupta State Consumer Commission Member Judge who gave always the medals, certificates and trophies to the winners and to the grand champions, overall the 14th State Martial Art Championship was ended with grand success.

AFFIDAVIT
I, V RAMANI is LEGALLY WEDDED SPOUSE OF No 6464918A Rank Havildar Name P SIVAN (Retd.) presently Resident at BURMANALLAH village under Port Blair Tehsil, South Andaman district do hereby solemnly affirm and declare as under:- 1. That I have changed/ correction in my Date of birth from 10-11-1952 to 14- 09-1960, due to erroneously wrongly entry of date of birth in PPO and service record. That my actual date of birth is 14-09-1960 (Fourteen September nineteen sixty) 2. That I am producing this affidavit for the purpose of evidence for my date of birth 3. That I shall at all times hereafter in all records, deeds and writing and in all proceeding dealing with transactions, private as well as under all Occasions what so ever be known my date of birth as only 14-09-1960 (Fourteen September nineteen sixty). 4. That what is stated above is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information and belief. Nothing materials has been concealed there from. Place: 12/12/2022 Date: Port Blair Deponent VERIFICATION I, the deponent above named, do hereby solemnly declare and verify that the contents of the above affidavit are true to the best of my knowledge and belief and nothing has been concealed or suppressed there form. Deponent

AFFIDAVIT
I, P SIVAN is presently Resident at BURMANALLAH village under Port Blair Tehsil, South Andaman district do hereby solemnly affirm and declare as under- 1. That I have changed my name from SIVAN to P SIVAN due to erroneously wrongly entry of name in PPO service record. That my date of birth is 02- 10-1957 (Two October nineteen fifty seven). 2. That I am producing this affidavit for the purpose of evidence for my name. 3. That both names SIVAN AND P SIVAN pertain to one and the same person. 4. That I shall at all times hereafter in all records, deeds and writing and in all proceeding dealing with transactions, private as well as under all occasions what so ever be known as only P SIVAN. 5. That what is stated above is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information and belief. Nothing materials has been concealed there from. Place: 12/12/2022 Date: Port Blair Deponent VERIFICATION I, the deponent above named, do hereby solemnly declare and verify that the contents of the above affidavit are true to the best of my knowledge and belief and nothing has been concealed or suppressed there form. Deponent

CPI(M) seeks halting of admission process for B. Tech in DBRAIT

PORT BLAIR, DEC 12 /--/ CPI (M) has demanded to stop the process of admission in the Engineering courses in DBRAIT, Port Blair till the pending court cases on the affiliation issues are concluded. In a letter sent to the Lt. Governor, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Mr. D. Ayyappan, State Secretary, CPI (M) brought to the notice of the Lt. Governor that the authorities in the Administration have invited applications from eligible candidates for admission to B.Tech courses in the DBRAIT, Port Blair. He referred to the news item published in a local daily recently inviting online appli-

cations for various Branches of B.Tech in the DBRAIT. Mr. Ayyappan drew the attention of the Lt. Governor to the agitations resorted to by the B.Tech students of DBRAIT during the last few months, which created unrest among the people in general and student community and parents in particular over the fate of the students who were admitted to various B. Tech branches in the DBRAIT from 2019 onwards. He said that the University refused to give affiliation to the Engineering courses of DBRAIT from 2019 onwards citing various deficiencies in the functioning of the DBRAIT.

It was reportedly on the orders of the Hon'ble High Court that the provisional admission was given to B.Tech streams for the last 3 years. CPI (M) Secretary said that since the matter is pending before the Court, admitting students again to the courses which had no affiliation from the Pondicherry University will precipitate the matter further. CPI (M) informed the Lt. Governor that in the absence of affiliation/approval from the Pondicherry University, it is illegal and unjustified to admit students to B.Tech courses in DBRAIT. It is surprising to note that as done

earlier, this year also, no mention has been made in the advertisement while inviting online applications about the pending court cases relating to the affiliation of the Engineering courses with the University. This will also lead to further unrest among the students and agitation by students and parents besides causing court cases. Hence, ShriAyyappan requested the Lt. Governor to look into this matter and direct the authorities concerned to stop the process of admission in the Engineering courses in DBRAIT, Port Blair till the pending court cases on the affiliation issues are concluded.

Blood donation camp to mark International Volunteer Day

PORT BLAIR, DEC 12 /--/ International Volunteer Day is observed by NYK, Port Blair on 5th December 2022 and continues up to 11th December 2022. The occasion is observed to promote the spirit of volunteerism among people worldwide, encourage voluntary efforts and to recognize volunteer contributions and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the local level. This year's theme of this day is "Solidarity through Volunteerism".

As part of this, a blood donation camp will be organized by Nehru Yuva Kendra, Port Blair in association with Maharashtra and Andaman Nicobar Blood Donor Association at Maharashtra Mandal Auditorium timing at 10.00 am on 13th December 2022 at 10.00 am. About 40 youth will voluntarily donate blood on this occasion.

It is a fact that there is a huge demand for blood day by day in GB Pant Hospital Port Blair. Because with the increasing cases of dengue/ malaria, other patients, operation cases also have to run around for one unit of blood and this causes a lot of trouble faced by the patients and their attenders. This blood will be helpful for the needy patients of far-flung areas of these islands.

No talks with Pak until it rejects terrorism: J&K LG Sinha

JAMMU, DEC 12 /--/ Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday said no talks will be held with Pakistan unless it does not reject and openly criticise terrorism.

He said terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir is taking its last breath as its backbone has been completely broken. "Some people are often battling for talks with Pakistan. They say security and normalcy cannot return here (Jammu and Kashmir) unless there are talks with them (Pakistan). I strongly reject this notion," Sinha said. He was speaking at a function here on Monday evening. "As per the policy of the government of India, there is no question of holding talks with Pakistan unless and until it doesn't reject terrorism and criticise it openly," the Lt Governor said. They (some politicians) try to raise it by saying that that is the only right path, he added. He lashed out at those "spilling blood of innocents on this land". Quoting Abhimanyu in Mahabharata, he said, "Security forces dismantled and broken six barricades of terrorism. Now only the seventh barricade remains. I hope that this 7th barricade is broken fast." Asserting that peace and normalcy cannot be bought to Jammu and Kashmir through "bargaining", Sinha said, "GoI has a clear-cut policy that one cannot buy peace but it has to be established. We are following that." He said at

Pollution in Mumbai: Kant identifies oil refineries, garbage burning as key factors

MUMBAI, DEC 12 /--/ Amid poor air quality ahead of G-20's maiden working group meeting in the financial capital, a top government official on Monday said long-term measures are needed to help mitigate pollution in the megapolis. Speaking on the eve of the meet, India's G-20 Sherpa Amitabh Kant said the two refineries run by state-run entities have committed to reducing liquid sulphur and other sulphur content emissions over the next 2-3 months.

Kant said civic body commissioner IC Chahal raised the issue of emissions from state-owned oil refineries with him, following which he took up the matter with the Petroleum Secretary.

The two refineries are modern ones which do not

emit smoke, but give out sulphur dioxide, Kant said, citing information provided to him. "In the case of Mumbai refineries, SOx emissions are well within the prescribed norms of 10.43 ppm," Kant said, adding that the refineries have committed to reducing emissions in the short term. Stating that long-term measures like switching to electric mobility are required to mitigate the problem, Kant also listed out other issues. The challenges in Mumbai are different from the ones in New Delhi, which is also plagued with difficulties, he said.

"One of the challenges is that the Deonar dumping ground (is) also near the refinery. Burning there should be stopped. "Tata Electric has two stacks (located) south of Chembur and back side of BARC, which should

switch over to cleaner forms," Kant added. It can be noted that the Deonar dumping ground has been a widely discussed issue, while he seemed to be referring to the 930 MW coal-fired thermal power plant of Tata Power at Trombay as well.

Kant said at the four-day meeting starting Tuesday, efforts will be made to arrive at a consensus on the green development pact and added that the country is championing changes in lifestyles for the environment.

The development working group, which will begin its meeting on Tuesday in Mumbai, is the custodian of the G-20's developmental agenda, and India will showcase its human-centric sustainable development goals story undertaken through interventions like direct benefit transfer, he said. (PTI)

J&K marching into golden age: LG

JAMMU, DEC 12 /--/ Jammu and Kashmir is marching into its "golden age" with core values of people-first and ideas and ideals of forefathers, Lt Governor Manoj Sinha said on Monday as he paid rich tributes to Dogra military general Zorawar Singh on his martyrdom anniversary. Sinha sought full recognition of General Zorawar Singh's contribution and significance in India's history and said the new generation must be reminded of his military campaigns in Ladakh, Baltistan, and Tibet and his immense contribution to the Dogra empire's expansion under Maharaja Gulab Singh. After his successful campaigns in Ladakh, General Zorawar Singh boldly attempted the conquest of Western Tibet (Ngari Khorsum) but was killed in the battle of To-yo during the Dogra-Tibetan war, he said. The Lt Governor was speaking at an event organised by General

Zorawar Singh Memorial Educational and Charitable Trust to commemorate the martyrdom day of the General. "General Zorawar Singh had envisioned a strong and prosperous J-K, in which every citizen can live a life of dignity and self-respect. We are committed to creating a prosperous and inclusive society," Sinha said. Speaking about the "transformational journey" of J-K, he said the Union Territory is marching into its "golden age" with core values of people-first and ideas and ideals of forefathers. Sinha urged the people to discharge their responsibilities to accelerate the process of development. Throwing light on the life and military campaigns of General Zorawar Singh, the Lt Governor said he was one of the greatest military commanders who made the country proud with his unparalleled bravery and military tactics. (PTI)

one point in time "bargaining" was done to buy peace in Jammu and Kashmir. "That era has passed away. Now it is time to establish durable and long-lasting peace." "That time has gone when there were incidents of stone pelting (in the valley) and our neighbouring country used to issue calendars for strikes. Schools, colleges and universities used to remain shut," he said. Today, the common man is living in peace and earning his bread and butter in normalcy, the Lt Governor added. "Security forces have been able to dismantle terror financing. Now houses are also being dismantled. This process will continue till the last sign of terrorism is wiped out here.

We will be successful in ensuring peace, progress and prosperity in Jammu and Kashmir," he said. Sinha said some people used youths as cannon fodder to mislead them to engineer stone pelting and "give sacrifices", while their children were studying in peace in other parts of the country and abroad. Lives of thousands of people were lost and Kashmiri Pandits faced the worst as they had to flee their homes in the valley due to terrorism, he said. However, there is change now. After a long time, youths are watching films in cinemas in Shopian and Pulwama districts, he added. (PTI)

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS

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

1. NIT NO. EE/PRI/SAD-I/GEN/2022-23/84 **Name of Work:** - Renovation of Black Top road from H. Mohd. house to Play Ground at Stewartgunj under Stewartgunj Gram Panchayat. **Estimated Cost Rs:** - 27, 14,085/- **Earnest Money Deposit:** - 54,282/- **Time of Completion:** - Six (06) Months, Tender Fee: - ₹.500/- & last date & time of submission of bid: - 20/12/2022 (1500 hrs)

The tender forms and other details can be obtained from the website <https://eprocure.andaman.gov.in>.
Tender ID: - 2022_RDPRI_8391_1

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

Bogtui killings accused Lalan Sheikh found dead in CBI custody



NEW DELHI, DEC 12 /--/ In a suspected case of suicide, the prime accused in the violence in Bogtui village of West Bengal's Birbhum district was found dead in CBI custody on Monday, officials said. Lalan Sheikh, who was arrested on December 4 from a hideout along the Bengal-Jharkhand border, was "found hanging" in the agency's Rampurhat camp office in Birbhum, a source in the Central Bureau of Investigation said. "The body of the prime accused in the Bogtui violence was found hanging in the washroom of the guest house, where we have set up our temporary camp, at around 4:30 pm. We have informed the police and all necessary procedures are being followed," the CBI source told PTI.

The agency has informed the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and judiciary in accordance with the laid down procedure, officials here said. At least 10 people were killed in the arson and violence in Bogtui that followed the murder of local TMC leader Bhadu Sheikh on March 21. The CBI is probing the case on the orders of the Calcutta High Court. (PTI)

Mamata arrives in Meghalaya to address TMC meeting ahead of Assembly polls



Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee greeting TMC workers and supporters who gathered outside Umroi airport to welcome her in Meghalaya. TMC national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee is also seen — Photo : EOI

SHILLONG, DEC 12 /--/ West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee arrived here on Monday as part of her three-day visit to Meghalaya where she will address a Trinamool Congress workers' convention to boost the morale of the party functionaries ahead of the Assembly elections due early next year. The TMC supremo was welcomed by the party's Meghalaya in-charge Manas Ranjan Bhunia, state unit president Charles Pyngrope and Mukul Sangma, the Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly. Mamata was accompanied by TMC national general secretary and her nephew Abhishek Banerjee. Hundreds of party workers gathered outside the Umroi Airport here to greet the top functionaries of the TMC and were seen waving party flags. "Hundreds from across Meghalaya greeted Hon'ble Chairperson @MamataOfficial & National Gen Secy @abhishekaite as they received a GRAND WELCOME at Umroi Airport!," the TMC said on Twitter. During her three-day visit, she will address a TMC workers' convention at the State Central Library in Shillong on Tuesday, a party leader said. "Mamata Banerjee's visit is to set the tone for the 2023 polls and she is expected to boost the morale of the party workers and prepare a strategy for the Assembly elections," the party leader said. The West Bengal chief minister will also participate in pre-Christmas celebrations here on December 13. In November 2021, 12 of the 17 MLAs of the Congress had joined the TMC, making it the principal opposition party in the 60-member Assembly of the hill state. Of the 12 legislators, Himalaya Shangpliang resigned from the assembly and also from the party last month, reducing the TMC's strength in the House to 11. Notably, the TMC has been trying to strengthen its foothold in the northeastern state along with Assam and Tripura in the region. TMC's national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee had visited Meghalaya twice this year. During his last visit, Banerjee had inaugurated a Trinamool Congress party office in Garo Hills and also met church leaders besides addressing a public meeting in western Meghalaya. (PTI)

India fastest growing economy, Oppn raises questions out of jealousy: FM in LS

NEW DELHI, DEC 12 /--/ India is the "fastest-growing" economy under Prime Minister Narendra Modi but there are "people" in the Opposition who keep raising questions over the country's progress just out of "jealousy", Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in Lok Sabha on Monday. The finance minister's remark came during the Question Hour after Congress member from Telangana A Revanth Reddy raised the issue of depreciation of the rupee against the dollar and sought to know from the government if it has any action plan to control the situation. The Congress MP from Telangana alleged that the Modi government has "ruined" the country's economy since 2014 and also referred to Prime Minister Modi's remark made during the erstwhile

Congress-led UPA regime that the rupee had gone into the ICU when it was valued at Rs 66 against a dollar. Replying to Reddy's question, Sitharaman said the Congress member,



while referring to Modi's remarks on the value of the rupee against the dollar in the past, should have also spoken about the economic indicators of that time. "Economy was certainly in the ICU then. India was kept in fragile five," she said. "India is the fastest growing economy today" despite the pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war, the Union minister asserted. "This is a matter of pride. But they are making fun of it," she said. "It's sad that they talk such things out of jealousy when our economy is doing well. Today these people are standing against the Indian economy," the finance minister hit back. Sitharaman asserted that the

Indian rupee has been strong against "every currency". "And, that is proved and I can read the records," she added. The US dollar is getting "stronger and stronger" due to "the policy adopted by the US Fed", the finance minister said. In the last couple of weeks, the foreign reserves have gone up because of the flow of FDIs and FIIs, she said. "The fact remains that the reserves are going up. That's why, at this time, talks about foreign exchange, rupee depreciation, reserves coming down or investors running away are actually not proven by data," Sitharaman added.

While asking a supplementary question, Congress member Reddy said the government under Prime Minister Modi has borrowed over Rs 18 lakh crore in the past eight years alone while the country's borrowing from 1947 to 2014 stood at over Rs Rs 55.87 lakh crore. "You are living on borrowing Rs 10 lakh crore every year this government has completely ruined the country," he charged. (PTI)

LS Speaker warns members against referring to anyone's caste or religion in House

NEW DELHI, DEC 12 /--/ Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Monday warned members against referring to anyone's caste and religion in the House after a Congress MP alleged that Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman made certain remarks about his proficiency in Hindi because he belonged to a particular community. Taking serious exception to the word used by Congress member A Revanth Reddy to refer to his own social category during the Question Hour, the Speaker pointed out that people have not elected the members to Lok Sabha on the basis of their caste and religion. "Anyone here should never use such words in the House. Otherwise, I will have to take action against such a member," the Speaker warned. Birla also took serious exception to the Congress member asking the Speaker not to "interrupt"

him when he was asking a question. Birla asked the Congress leader in the House, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, to make his party members understand that they should never make such comments about the Speaker. "You are the Leader of the House. Make members understand that they should never comment on the Speaker in the future (that you (Speaker) cannot interrupt'. Did you understand what I said?" Birla said. The issue appeared as Reddy began asking a question on the depreciation of the rupee against the dollar, referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's earlier remark when he was the chief minister of Gujarat that the rupee was in the ICU (intensive care unit). "Sir, you cannot interrupt," Reddy said as the Speaker objected to his comment and directed him to limit himself to asking the question. (PTI)

Indian, Chinese troops clash along LAC in Tawang sector; minor injuries on both sides

NEW DELHI, DEC 12 /--/ Indian and Chinese soldiers clashed at a location along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Tawang sector of Arunachal Pradesh on December 9, resulting in minor injuries to a few personnel from both sides, military sources said on Monday. They said the Indian troops resolutely confronted the Chinese PLA soldiers. "On December 9, PLA troops contacted the LAC in Tawang Sector which was contested by our troops in a firm and resolute manner. This face-off led to minor injuries to few personnel from both sides," said a source. The sources said both sides immediately disengaged from the area. "As a follow up to the incident, our Commander in the area held a Flag Meeting with his (Chinese) counterpart to discuss the issue in accordance with structured mechanisms to restore peace and tranquillity," the source said. "In certain areas along the LAC in the Tawang Sector in Arunachal Pradesh there are areas of differing perception, wherein both sides patrol the area up to their claim lines. This has been the trend since 2006," the source said. (PTI)

Bhupendra Patel takes oath as Gujarat CM; 16 other ministers also sworn in

GANDHINAGAR, DEC 12 /--/ Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Bhupendra Patel on Monday took oath as the Chief Minister of Gujarat for a second straight term in Gandhinagar in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Sixteen other ministers, including eight of cabinet rank, were also sworn in.

The new entrants include 11 former ministers. The Cabinet ministers include Kanu Desai, Rishikesh Patel, Raghvji Patel, Balvantsinh Rajput, Kunvarji Bavaliya, Mulu Bera, Kuber Dindor and Bhanuben Babariya. Harsh Sanghvi and Jagdish Vishwakarma were sworn in as ministers of state with independent charge. The six other ministers of state include Parshotam Solanki, Bachu Khabad, Mukesh Patel, Praful Pansheriya, Kuverji Halpati and Bhikhusinh Parmar. Patel was administered the oath as the 18th chief minister by Governor Acharya Devvrat at a function held at the HeliPad Ground near the new Secretariat. Top BJP leaders, including Union ministers and chief ministers of the states where the party is in power, were present at the swearing in ceremony. They included Union minister Amit Shah, UP

CM Yogi Adityanath, Maharashtra CM Eknath Shinde, Haryana CM Manohar Lal Khattar, Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma, Karnataka CM S R Bommai, Goa CM Pramod Sawant, MP CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Arunachal Pradesh CM Pema Khandu and Haryana Deputy CM Dushyant Chautala. Union ministers Smriti Irani, Ramdas Athawale, and Sarbananda Sonowal also attended the ceremony.

In the just-concluded Gujarat Assembly elections, counting for which was held on December 8, the BJP won a seventh straight term by winning record 156 seats in the 182-member House. The Congress won 17 constituencies and AAP 5. Patel, 60, resigned as chief minister along with his entire cabinet on Friday to pave the way for the formation of a new government following the election results. Patel was elected as the leader of the BJP legislative party on Saturday, following which he met the Governor and staked the claim to form the next government. Patel won the Ghatlodia seat with the highest margin of 1.92 lakh votes in the elections. A low-profile BJP leader and the first from the Kadva Patidar sub-group to become CM, Patel replaced Vijay Rupani in September 2021. (PTI)



Prime Minister Narendra Modi shaking hands with Bhupendra Patel after he was sworn in as the Chief Minister of Gujarat, in Gandhinagar

B'desh seeks India's cooperation on Rohingya crisis

DHAKA, DEC 12 /--/ Bangladesh, which is hosting over a million Rohingya refugees, has sought India's cooperation to peacefully repatriate the people who were forced to take refuge in the country to evade persecution in Myanmar, officials said on Monday. Parliament Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury sought India's assistance when Indian High Commissioner in Dhaka Pranay Kumar Verma called on her at the Sangsad Bhaban (Parliament House) on Sunday. "The Speaker told the envoy that Bangladesh extended refuge to this huge

number of Rohingyas, pointing out that India, as well, had given shelter to Bangladeshis during our 1971 Liberation War and the people recall that episode with respect," a Jatiya Sangsad Secretariat spokesman said. Chaudhury, he said, sought Indian support for the peaceful repatriation of the forcibly displaced Rohingyas to their homeland in Myanmar's Rakhine state, which they fled to evade a ruthless persecution under a military crackdown in 2017. Over a million Rohingyas fled Myanmar to Bangladesh since a military clampdown began there in



—File photo

August 2017 to oust a predominantly Muslim ethnic group from their homeland at Rakhine state. They now live in sprawling makeshift refugee camps. Bangladesh and Myanmar have held talks on repatriation of displaced Rohingya refugees back to their homeland, but they failed to resolve the issue. India in the past has said it wanted safe, secure and sustainable Rohingya repatriation. Bangladesh also sought previously India's help in persuading Myanmar authorities to take back their people while officials said since the military takeover there,

Dhaka was trying to negotiate with the junta with assistance from China, thought to be on good terms with authorities in Naypyidaw.

During the meeting at the Speaker's office at the Parliament Complex, the speaker and the Indian envoy also discussed issues on friendly relations between the two countries, trade advancement, energy cooperation, climate change and women empowerment. The Speaker said Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the then Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi set the foundation for the

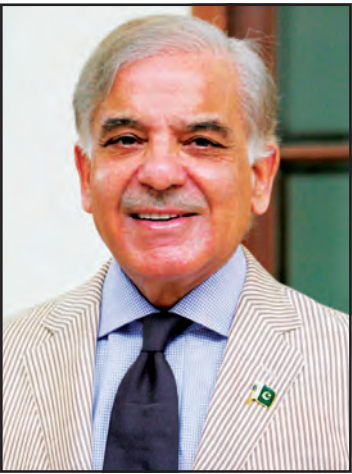
historical relationship between the two countries with their wisdom. The High Commissioner said socio-economic conditions of the two countries would be improved further so that they could jointly face the global challenges. Verma, who arrived in Dhaka on September 21, presented his credentials to President Abdul Hamid on October 27. He called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on November 30. He also called on Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen and hosted a reception to celebrate the 51st anniversary of Maitree Diwas. (PTI)

Pak PM condemns 'unprovoked' firing by Afghan Taliban forces in border town Chaman

KARACHI, DEC 12 /--/ Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday condemned the "unprovoked" firing by Afghan Taliban forces in the border area of Chaman in the restive Balochistan province that killed seven people and said that the interim government in Kabul must ensure that such incidents were not repeated in the future.

The Pakistani Army's media wing initially said six died in Sunday's shelling, but the death toll later rose to seven. Sixteen others were wounded, the army said, blaming the casualties on the "unprovoked and indiscriminate fire" of heavy weapons by Afghan forces on civilians. The firing in Chaman, the main border crossing for trade between the two countries, follows a series of deadly incidents and attacks that have skyrocketed tensions between Islamabad and Afghanistan's Taliban rulers. Condemning the incident, Prime Minister Sharif tweeted that the interim government in Kabul must ensure that such incidents are not repeated in the future. A senior Pakistan government official said that "it was unprovoked and indiscriminate gunfire which continued for a while and this included artillery shelling by Afghan Border forces." The Pakistani Army's media wing described the incident as "uncalled-for aggression" and said Pakistani troops had given a "befitting" but "measured response" and avoided targeting civilians on the other side.

The Foreign Office condemned the incident and have called on their



counterparts in Kabul to understand the severity of the situation and take strict action against those responsible for the unprovoked firing and shelling. "Such unfortunate incidents are not in keeping with the brotherly ties between the two countries," it said. "The Afghan authorities have been informed that recurrence of such incidents must be avoided and strictest possible action must be taken against those responsible," it said in a statement. The FO said authorities in both countries remained in contact to ensure there was no escalation of the situation. Pakistan and Afghanistan share a 2,600-km volatile border.

Chaman remains a busy border trading area for Pakistan and Afghanistan and has also been a flashpoint for clashes between border forces on both sides. The Chaman border crossing, also known as Friendship Gate connects Balochistan province to Afghanistan's Kandahar. It was closed last month after an armed Afghan crossed onto Pakistan's side of the border and opened fire on security troops, killing a soldier and injuring another two. Islamabad has completed almost 90 per cent of fencing work along the border despite protests from Kabul, who contested the century-old British-era boundary demarcation that splits families on either side. Successive regimes in Afghanistan, including the US-backed governments in the past have disputed the border and this has historically remained a contentious issue between the two neighbours. (PTI)

Iran execution: Man hung from crane in public amid protests

DUBAI, DEC 12 /--/ Iran executed a second prisoner on Monday convicted over crimes committed during the nationwide protests challenging the country's theocracy, publicly hanging him from a construction crane as a gruesome warning to others.

The execution of Majidreza Rahnavaad came less than a month after he allegedly fatally stabbed two members of a paramilitary force after purportedly becoming angry about security forces killing of protesters. The development underscores the speed at which Iran now carries out death sentences handed down for those detained in the demonstrations that the government hopes to put down. Activists warn that at least a dozen people already have been sentenced to death in closed-door hearings. At least 488 people have been killed since the demonstrations began in mid-September, according to Human Rights Activists in Iran, a group that's been monitoring the protests. Another 18,200 people have been detained by authorities. Iran's Mizan news agency, which falls under the country's

judiciary, published a collage of images of Rahnavaad hanging from the crane, his hands and feet bound, a black bag over his head.

Masked security force members stood guard in front of concrete and metal barriers that held back a gathered crowd early Monday morning in the Iranian city of Mashhad. Mizan alleged Rahnavaad had stabbed two security force members to death Nov 17 in Mashhad and wounded four others. Footage aired on state TV showed a man chasing another around a street corner, then standing over him and stabbing him after he fell against a parked motorbike. Another showed the same man stabbing another immediately after. The assailant, which state TV alleged was Rahnavaad, then fled. The Mizan report identified the dead as "student"

Basij, paramilitary volunteers under Iran's Revolutionary Guard. The Basij had been deployed in major cities, attacking and detaining protesters, who in many cases have fought back. A heavily edited state television report aired after Rahnavaad's execution showed clips of him in the

courtroom. In the video, he says he came to hate the Basijis after seeing video clips on social media of the forces beating and killing protesters. The Mizan report accused Rahnavaad of trying to flee to a foreign country when he was arrested.

Mashhad, a Shiite holy city, is located some 740 km (460 miles) east of the Iranian capital, Tehran. Activists say it has seen strikes, shops closed and demonstrations amid the unrest that began over the Sept 16 death in custody of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old woman who had been detained by Iran's morality police. Mizan said Rahnavaad was convicted in Mashhad's Revolutionary Court.

The tribunals have been internationally criticised for not allowing those on trial to pick their own lawyers or even see the evidence against them. Rahnavaad had been convicted on the charge of "moharebeh", a Farsi word meaning "waging war against God". That charge has been levied against others in the decades since the 1979 Islamic Revolution and carries the death penalty. (AP)

Indian-origin Sikh youth shot in Canada's Alberta province; dies

TORONTO, DEC 12 /--/ A 24-year-old Indian-origin Sikh man has died of gunshot wounds in the Canadian province of Alberta, with police citing homicide as the reason for his death, the second such incident this month in this country. The victim, identified as Sanraj Singh, was located by the police in Edmonton city when they responded to a gunshot report on December 3 night, an Edmonton police news release

said. Singh was found sitting in a vehicle in medical distress. The police performed CPR, a life-saving technique, until the Emergency Medical Services arrived and declared him dead. The autopsy report revealed homicide to be the manner of death, the press release said. According to the police, a suspect vehicle was seen leaving the area, and photos of the same were released by homicide investigators. (PTI)

India, Lanka resume flight service between Chennai and Jaffna

COLOMBO, DEC 12 /--/ India and Sri Lanka on Monday resumed flight services between Chennai and Jaffna, three years after the island nation discontinued the services due to the Covid pandemic.

The first flight on resumption of services landed this morning at the Jaffna International Airport, Upul Dharmadasa the Chairman of the Airport and Aviation Services told reporters. Jaffna airport officials said the Alliance Air service landed at Jaffna at 1125 am local time.

A small ceremony was conducted to welcome the flight which had 14 selected passengers, mostly officials, on board. The return to Chennai was scheduled



for 2.50 pm local time. The Alliance Air flights would operate four times a week between the two cities. The airport in Palaly was

named the Jaffna International Airport as Sri Lanka's third international airport in October 2019 and had its first flight from

India's climate action focus is on mindful consumption: Bhupender Yadav

LONDON, DEC 12 /--/ India as a country remains committed to being part of the solution to the climate change crisis with a focus on encouraging the world towards mindful consumption as opposed to mindless utilisation, Union minister for environment Bhupender Yadav said on Monday.

Addressing the Climate Finance and Technology Summit of India Global Forum in Abu Dhabi virtually from New Delhi, the minister said India is keen to work in partnership with the UAE as the host of the COP28 summit next year and there are great synergies to be found in the sector with India's G20 Presidency. He also highlighted Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of Mission LIFE or Lifestyle for Environment climate action agenda that invites the public to partner on the mission to combat climate change. "Whether it is

individually or collectively, the world must focus on mindful consumption rather than mindless utilisation," said Yadav. "Mission LIFE is a movement where we need public support and contribution from every individual. Sustainable production and sustainable consumption is the need of the hour. That's part of the last COP also. We feel that everywhere in the world, Mission LIFE is needed by every person in this world," he said.

With reference to the recently concluded COP27 climate summit in Egypt, Yadav welcomed "sufficient progress" in some areas

but lamented that the funding and technology transfer pledges for the developing world remain unfulfilled. "I am happy that we unanimously agreed to implement the loss and damages action, called for by developing countries, at COP27...As far as we are concerned, we say that India is always a part of the solution and not the problem," he said. Asked about his

disappointments around the Egypt Summit, the minister pointed to news of some coal mines being opened in western countries. "I feel by the next COP, the implementation stand taken in



India can play bridging role in divides caused by conflicts such as Ukraine: Jaishankar

LONDON, DEC 12 /--/ India can play a bridging role in an increasingly divided world around conflicts such as the war in Ukraine, external affairs minister S Jaishankar said on Monday.

At the India Global Forum (IGF) UAE summit in Abu Dhabi, the minister highlighted two big divides in the world today, largely impacted by the Russia-Ukraine conflict and analysed the role countries like India and the UAE can play. "One is the East-West divide centring around Ukraine and the other is a north-south divide centring around development," said Jaishankar. "Ukraine is also having an impact on

except politically. It is in our interest to ensure a political process that ends this conflict," he said. Russia launched a special military operation in Ukraine on



February 24. The Russian action has been widely condemned by the US-led West.

India has repeatedly called on Russia and Ukraine to return to the path of diplomacy and dialogue and end their ongoing conflict. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has spoken to the presidents of Russia and Ukraine on multiple occasions and urged for immediate cessation of

hostilities and return to the path of diplomacy and dialogue for the resolution of the conflict. In his bilateral meeting with Russian President Vladimir

Putin in Uzbekistan on September 16, Modi said "today's era is not of war" and nudged him to end the conflict. India has not yet criticised the Russian attack on Ukraine and has been maintaining that the crisis should be resolved through dialogue.

Earlier, Jaishankar opened the UAE summit, organised by UK-headquartered India Global Forum, with a keynote address around the geopolitical developments in the region and the role being played by India and the UAE as "partners for global impact". On UAE-India bilateral relations, the minister noted that the historic ties have within it "centuries of comfort" with an often "intuitive" element. He pointed to the UAE as India's third largest trade partner and second largest export destination and an important partner as the country with more Indian citizens than anywhere else abroad. (PTI)

China to drop some travel tracking as it relaxes Covid rules

BEIJING, DEC 12 /--/ China planned to stop tracking some travel on Monday, potentially reducing the likelihood people will be forced into quarantine for visiting Covid-19 hot spots, as part of an uncertain exit from the strict pandemic policies that helped fuel widespread protests.

At midnight, the smart phone app that recorded a person's travel between cities and provinces will be disabled. Another app used to restrict the movement of those who test positive or enter an area with a recent outbreak remains in effect. They're

part of a package of pandemic apps, some of which have also been used by local governments to suppress protests. The move follows the government's dramatic announcement last week that it was ending many of the strictest measures, following three years during which it enforced some of the world's tightest virus restrictions. That included near-constant testing, open-ended lockdowns and requirements that a clean bill of health be shown to access public areas. Last month in Beijing and several other cities, protests over the restrictions grew into calls for leader Xi Jinping and the Communist Party to step down a level of public dissent not seen in decades. While met with relief, the relaxation has also sparked concerns about a new wave of infections potentially overwhelming health care resources in some areas.

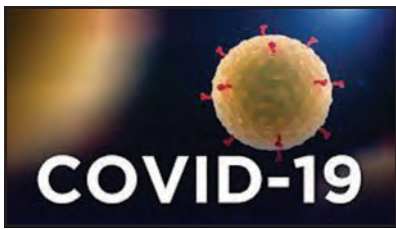
The easing of measures means a sharp drop in testing, but cases still appear to be rising rapidly. China reported 8,500 new infections on Monday, bringing the nation's total to 365,312 more than double the level on Oct 1. It has recorded 5,235 deaths compared to 1.1 million in the United States. China's government-supplied figures have not been independently verified and questions have been raised about whether the ruling Communist Party has sought to

minimise numbers of cases and deaths. Fever clinics at hospitals in Beijing received 22,000 patients on Sunday 16 times higher than previous week.

Following a rush last week to buy cold and flu medicine in many major Chinese cities, pharmacies in Hong Kong have reported a run on such medications by customers supplying relatives in mainland China, according to Lam Wai-man, chairman of the pharmacy trade association in the semi-autonomous southern Chinese city. Hong Kong has already lifted most of its

Covid-19 restrictions. "Everyone on the mainland wants to buy some pills to have in reserve at home," Lam said. Alan Cheung, the owner of the Sands Medicine Shop in the Wan Chai district, said he was receiving around 10 inquiries about flu medication from mainland residents every day. "Normally, no one would ask me about this kind of product," Cheung said. The uncertainty and apparent growing number of cases have forced the cancellation of events from foreign embassy holiday parties to next spring's Formula One Chinese Grand Prix car race in Shanghai.

Xi's government is still officially committed to stopping virus transmission, the last major country to try. But the latest moves suggest the party will tolerate more cases without quarantines or shutting down travel or businesses as it winds down its "zero COVID" strategy. Facing a surge in Covid-19 cases, China is setting up more intensive care facilities and trying to strengthen hospitals' ability to deal with severe cases. At the same time, part of the relaxation means the government will allow those with mild symptoms to recuperate at home rather than being sent to field hospitals that have become notorious for overcrowding and poor hygiene. (AP)





TODAY MATCH
Semi-final 1 :
Argentina vs
Croatia Time:
12.30 AM IST

GAME NOTES

Ronaldo won't make 'heat of moment' decision after Portugal's FIFA World Cup exit

LISBON, DEC 12 /--/ Cristiano Ronaldo said on Sunday "there's no point in reacting in the heat of the moment," as he responded to Portugal's World Cup elimination. Ronaldo stayed in Qatar as many of the Portugal squad returned home and landed in Lisbon on Sunday afternoon. "To win a World Cup for Portugal was the biggest and most ambitious dream of my career. Fortunately, I won many titles of international dimension, including for Portugal," Ronaldo wrote on Instagram. His post did not talk about international retirement but he started Portugal's last two matches in Qatar on the bench, a decision which provoked debate in Portugal and across the football world. "Let's hope that time will be a good counsellor and allow everyone to draw their own conclusions," he wrote.

Bruno Petkovic reveals secret behind team's strong mental strength

DOHA, DEC 12 /--/ Croatia striker Bruno Petkovic says the team's mental strength that has propelled them to two penalty shoot-out wins at the World Cup has deep roots in the country's struggle for independence. Petkovic scored a late equaliser to cancel out Neymar's opener for Brazil in the quarter-finals, before Zlatko Dalic's team held their nerve to win on spot kicks. They also beat Japan on penalties in the previous round. It is a familiar pattern for Dalic's men, who four years ago reached the final via three extra-time wins in the knockout stage, two of them after shoot-outs. "I think one of the reasons (for this mentality), is that we are a small country," Petkovic said on Sunday. "Even though as players we are young, we know how our country was made and gained independence in the 1990s." "We learned about this from our parents. We learned you fight, you work hard and you don't get anywhere without that," added the 28-year-old, who has become a national hero since his equaliser broke Brazilian hearts. Some of the older players in the team have strong connections to the conflict in the Balkans in the 1990s. Veteran midfielder Luka Modric was displaced as a youngster and defender Dejan Lovren was forced out of his childhood home. (AFP)

Rahane, Ishant likely to lose central contracts, Surya, Shubman set for promotion

NEW DELHI, DEC 12 /--/ The BCCI is likely to remove out-of-favour Test specialists Ajinkya Rahane and Ishant Sharma from its annual central contracts while Shubman Gill and Suryakumar Yadav may get promotion when the list for the 2022-23 season is finalised during the Board's Apex Council meeting on December 21. Hardik Pandya, who is being seen as future T20 captain, is likely to get a promotion to Group B from C. The meeting, which has 12 items on the agenda, will be held via video conference. A review of Indian team's performance in the T20 World Cup and Bangladesh One-Day is not part of the agenda but if chairperson deems necessary, non-listed items can be considered for discussion. In a novel gesture, the Apex Council will also ratify a one-time payment for V Jaydevan, whose rain-rule formula is being used in domestic white-ball games for more than a decade now. At the international level, ICC uses Duckworth-Lewis-Stern method (DLS) while VJD is used for Mushtaq Ali T20, Vijay Hazare Trophy and erstwhile Deodhar Trophy and Challenger Trophy. One of the major items on the agenda is "Retainership Contract" of senior men and women cricketers. It is understood that former vice-captain Rahane and speedster Ishant, who are out of India contention, will be axed from the fresh list. (PTI)

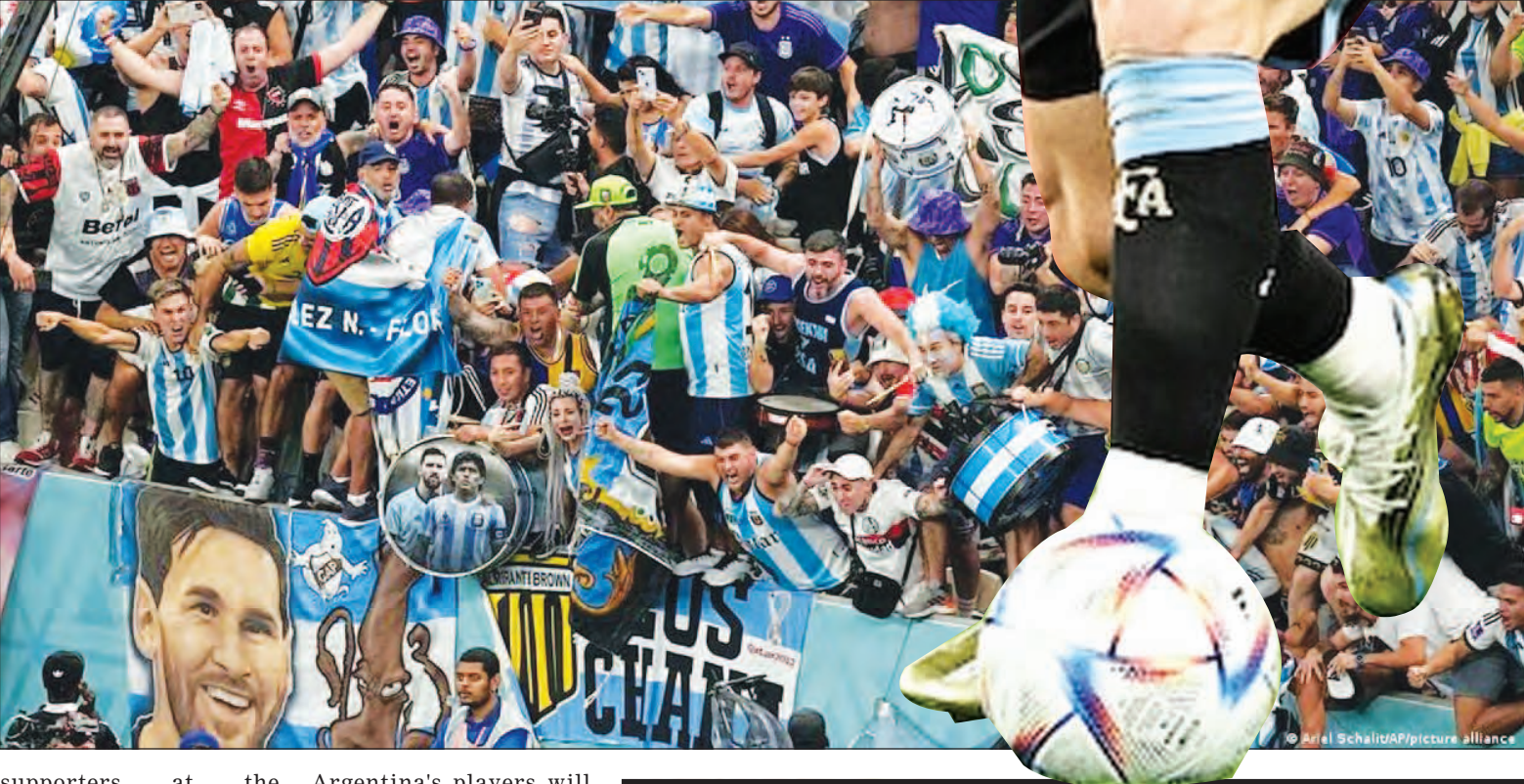
India's updated squad for Bangladesh Tests: KL Rahul (c), Shubman Gill, Cheteshwar Pujara (vc), Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer, Rishabh Pant (wk), KS Bharat (wk), Ravichandran Ashwin, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Shardul Thakur, Mohd. Siraj, Umesh Yadav, Abhimanyu Easwaran, Navdeep Saini, Saurabh Kumar, Jaydev Unadkat. (PTI)

After Neymar, Croatia aims to end Messi's World Cup dream

AL KHOR, DEC 12 /--/ Lionel Messi and Argentina's World Cup dream remains alive but an indefatigable Croatia side inspired by the enduring brilliance of Luka Modric stands in their way in Tuesday's semi-final in Doha. Argentina have recovered from the shock of losing their opening game in Qatar to Saudi Arabia and made the last four with an exhausting win on penalties against the Netherlands at the end of a fractious quarter-final on Friday. Having been 2-0 up and cruising after 83 minutes, with Messi setting up one goal in sublime fashion and netting a penalty, they conceded twice late on and had to survive extra time before triumphing 4-3 in a shoot-out. Backed by an enormous contingent of travelling supporters who have brought the passion, noise and colour of Argentina's own stadiums to this World Cup, Messi and his teammates are starting to believe this really could be their year. "We have balls, passion, heart and we are doing this for 45 million people," said goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez, and Argentina's optimism now has only increased after seeing great rivals Brazil go out in the last round. Now aged 35, this has been billed as Messi's last chance to win a World Cup, eight years on from Argentina's defeat in the final to Germany in Rio de Janeiro. He is determined to seize the chance and has already scored his first two goals in the knockout rounds of any World Cup, netting against Australia in the last 16 before his penalty against the Dutch. World Cup glory would complete a wonderful career for the seven-time Ballon d'Or winner, who is possibly the greatest club player ever. After years of being unfulfilled at international level he inspired Argentina to victory at last year's Copa America, but he knows there are no more dogged or durable opponents than Croatia. After all, any sense of relief at avoiding having to play Brazil in the last four will be tempered by the prospect of facing a Croatian side who knocked out the favourites on penalties and never know when they are beaten. "They are a great team who matched up to Brazil

and at times were much better," admitted Messi. "They have good players across the whole midfield and they have been working with the same coach since the last World Cup, so they all know each other very well." Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni switched to a five-man defence against the Netherlands as he brought Lisandro Martinez into his line-up. But the midfield is always key against Croatia, with Modric still controlling games at 37 and Marcelo Brozovic and Mateo Kovacic completing a formidable trio. After reaching the final four years ago, Croatia have beaten Japan and Brazil on penalties to make the semis here. They have gone to extra time in eight of their last nine major tournament knockout matches and the nation of just four million people has nothing to lose as they eye a place in the final against France or Morocco. And in Modric they have a master, the 2018 Ballon d'Or winner who starred as Croatia beat Argentina 3-0 in the group stage four years ago. "I think Mateo, Luka and Marcelo are the best midfield in history. When you pass them the ball, it is safer than having your money in the bank," said Josip Juranovic, another standout at right-back. "We are so lucky to have them in the team." Modric's history with Argentina goes back to 2006, when he made his international debut for Croatia aged 20 in a friendly between the teams. Messi scored in that game but Croatia won 3-2. Zlatko Dalic's team will not be afraid of Argentina or their number 10 when the sides meet again at Lusail Stadium. Asked about how they would handle Messi, Croatia forward Bruno Petkovic responded: "We don't have a specific plan, at least not yet, for stopping Messi and usually we don't concentrate on one player, but Argentina is not only Messi." Two players who will not feature for Argentina, however, are defenders Gonzalo Montiel and Marcos Acuna, both of whom are suspended. (AFP)

Argentina revel in 'home' support at World Cup



supporters at the tournament. That sizeable support has been augmented by thousands of Qatar-based migrant workers from India and Bangladesh, where Messi and Argentina enjoy widespread support. "Compared to France, Argentina aren't quite at the same level as a team -- but they are a team who are benefiting from the support they have here," the Argentina-born former France striker David Trezeguet told AFP. At the end of each of their victories at the World Cup, after joining supporters in post-match singing,

Argentina's players will repeat the line that they are playing for "45 million" of their compatriots. "What I do, I do for the 45 million, They are going through a bad economic period. Giving people joy is the best thing that I can do at the moment," said Argentina goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez, the hero of Friday's penalty shootout win over the Netherlands. Trezeguet believes the bond between Argentina's players and their supporters has been forged by the economic crisis battering the country, where inflation has skyrocketed.

Join our Team

WE'RE AVAILABLE

FOR printing Job

For Newspaper (Daily/Weekly/Fortnightly/Monthly)

please contact

ECHO PRINTING PRESS

KOLKATA
81, Nilgunj Road, Kolkata-700 109, Cell: 98307 64546/98301 34580

GUWAHATI
Gorchuk, Near Katabari Maszid, Guwahati- 781 035
Cell: 94350 44633/98307 64546

SILIGURI
Jaduvita, P.O.: Champasari, PS:Pradhan Nagar, Siliguri-734 003
Cell: 98307 64546/98301 34580

PORT BLAIR
Dollygunj, Port Blair- 744 103, Cell: 99332 260853