

## CS INAUGURATES GYANODAYA

**Calls upon students to continue learning and develop scientific temperament for a better career**

PORT BLAIR, JAN 17/--/ The Chief Secretary, Mr. Keshav Chandra on Monday inaugurated State Level Science & Mathematics exhibition 'Gyanodaya-2022-23, in the auditorium of Govt. Girls Sr. Sec. School. Gyanodaya was organized by the Education Department, A&N Administration in collaboration with SamagraShiksha, UT Mission Authority, A&N Islands and Department of Education in Science & Mathematics, New Delhi. Addressing the gathering, Mr. Kesav Chandra said that Science is basically a window of our society, our education system and the temperament that we exhibit. The scientific fervor once instilled in the minds of children becomes a real

truthfulness, simple and it is replicable, the Chief Secretary said. He urged the teachers to continue to instill in children the wonders of Science and how it can play a crucial role in mitigating the challenges of life. Congratulating the Education Department led by the Commissioner-cum-Secretary, Secretary (Education) and Director Education for the tremendous work in the betterment of education in Isles, the Chief Secretary said, the students-teacher ratio in A&N Islands is one of the best in the country with 10.7 students to 1 teacher, 17 Atal Tinkering Labs are functioning in the Islands and 67 schools have Integrated Science Labs and 22 Sr. Secondary Schools are having Science

Streams with well-equipped separate labs for Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Maths. He remarked that it is a matter of great pride that the Island territory with its geographical distance from mainland has been able to produce such competent students who are at par with mainland students who have access to the best institutions and coaching facilities. He said, every year, many students from Isles are able to get into premier Medical and Engineering Colleges in mainland, which is not a mean achievement and this kind of exhibition is a stepping stone to further showcase their talents and compete with the students in mainland. The Chief Secretary along with the Commissioner-cum-Secretary, Secretary (Education) and Director (Education) also released the Gyanodaya Souvenir on the occasion. Earlier, the Chief Secretary went round the exhibits and evinced keen interest in the models on display by the students. He interacted and patiently listened to their explanation about the themes and working of their models and projects. Speaking on the occasion, the Commissioner-cum-Secretary, Mr. Nikhil Kumar lauded the students for their wonderful exhibits. He appreciated the innovative models displayed by the students and remarked that some of them can be developed into economically viable projects, which can be replicated in real life including educational institutions. Welcoming the gathering, the Secretary (Education), Ms. Veditha Reddy said, 'Gyanodaya' is a State Level Science & Mathematics exhibition which is held every year. However, due to COVID Pandemic, it could not be held since the last three years. (Contd. on page-6)



harbinger of the progress of the Nation and the Society. Lauding the students for the spectacular display of their exhibits/projects, he said, each student who has displayed their projects deserves a huge appreciation and applause. "Your work is no less or inferior to anybody else", the Chief Secretary told the students and encouraged them to continue learning and develop scientific temperament. He also complimented the teachers and parents for the support and guidance rendered to the students in coming up with such innovative ideas and solutions for day to day challenges through their projects and models, making it envision worthy.

Mentioning that the philosophy of Science is extremely important, the Chief Secretary said, it was the American Historian and Philosopher of Science, Thomas Kuhn's scientific philosophies that changed the entire gamut of Science, thereby enabling people to differentiate between Science and pseudo-science. He said, the 18th century Industrial revolution was based on scientific revolution with one single principle i.e. to make life simpler where there is a challenge or difficulties in human existence. Science is based on the fundamentals of consistency, accuracy,



## Media fraternity expresses gratitude to CS for allotment of media room

**Greater interaction between local government and media urged**

ROOPA LALL

PORT BLAIR, JAN 17/--/ The media fraternity here has expressed their sincere gratitude to the Chief Secretary, Mr. Keshav Chandra for allotment of the media room to the mediapersons. At a simple function on Tuesday, the Chief Editor, The Andaman Express (Hindi) and Municipal Councillor, Ward No-8, Smt. Laxmi Ganeshan inaugurated the media room at the Directorate of Information Publicity & Tourism. The media room was allotted to the local Journalists during the period of former Lt Governor, Late I. P. Gupta. However, during the period of Covid-19, the room was taken by the IP&T department for performing Covid-19 related activities. For a long time, the media persons have been requesting authorities in the IP&T to provide the media room to local Journalists so that they can organize meetings and discuss various media related activities. Finally, a media team met the Chief Secretary, Mr. Keshav Chandra and requested him for allotment of the media room to the local Journalists. The Chief Secretary



immediately directed the Secretary (IP&T) for allotment of the media room to the media persons within 5 days. As per the direction of the Chief Secretary, the media room was handed over to the local media persons. (Contd. on page-6)

The Member of Parliament, Mr. Kuldeep Rai Sharma called on Admiral D K Joshi (Retd.), Lt Governor, A&N Islands and Vice-Chairman, Islands Development Agency at Raj Niwas on Tuesday. During the interaction, discussion were held in regard to investments in excess of Rs. 90,000/- Crores during last 5 years in mega Infrastructure/Tourism/Hospitality/Connectivity projects in Andaman & Nicobar Islands and recent decision by Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Government of India, to float Expression of Interest by end January 2023 for International Container Transshipment Terminal (ICTT) to bring in investment of Rs. 17,000/- Crores.

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# Nadda's term as BJP chief extended till June 2024

## Party will win bigger mandate than 2019: Shah

NEW DELHI, JAN 17 /--/ BJP president J P Nadda's term was extended till June next year at the party's national executive meeting on Tuesday, with Union home minister Amit Shah asserting that it will win the 2024 Lok Sabha polls with a bigger mandate than 2019.

The widely expected development underlines the party's preference for continuity as it gears up for the all-important Lok Sabha polls next year, expected in April-May. Shah told reporters here that defence minister Rajnath Singh, a former party president like him, moved the proposal of extending Nadda's tenure till June next year and the executive unanimously endorsed it.

The BJP's parliamentary board has already approved the extension of Nadda's term as the party president. "I, on behalf of the party, express heartfelt gratitude to



J P Nadda

the party during the Lok Sabha elections, he will be following the footsteps of his predecessor Shah, whose tenure was also extended so as to allow him to spearhead the organisation during the 2019 polls. The home minister expressed confidence that the BJP, under Prime Minister

Narendra Modi and party chief Nadda, will achieve a bigger win than the last general elections. He lauded Nadda's leadership, saying he connected the party organisation with the service of people during the Covid-19 outbreak. "During the pandemic, our party has done a lot of significant works under Nadda-ji's leadership; be it about providing food and rations to the poor or taking people to hospitals for check-ups and treatment," he added.

Shah further said that throughout Nadda's leadership term, the BJP has worked on the principle of 'Seva Hi Sangathan' right from the booth till the national levels. Noting that the party won many state Assembly polls under Nadda, Shah said the BJP won 73 Assembly by-polls out of 120 held during his tenure. It was under Nadda's leadership that the BJP performed well in Bihar, and

again formed the government in Maharashtra and Haryana, he added. The BJP won Assembly polls in Assam, Manipur, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh during Nadda's tenure as the party president, Shah said, adding that it also formed the government on its own for the first time in Goa.

Talking about the recent victory in the Gujarat Assembly polls, Shah said: "Under Nadda's leadership, the BJP organisation converted Modi's magical leadership into votes and the party registered a record-breaking victory by winning 156 Assembly seats." He further said that the booth strengthening programme and the 'Vijay Sankalp Rally' are among the biggest takeaways of Nadda's leadership. Nadda had become the BJP president on January 20, 2020 for a term of three years. (PTI)



Union Home Minister and former BJP president Amit Shah at party's National Executive meeting, in New Delhi on Tuesday

### Joshimath crisis: Technical survey of houses to be demolished in JP Colony begins

GOPESHWAR, JAN 17 /--/ As the crisis in subsidence-hit Joshimath in Uttarakhand deepens, the Chamoli district administration on Tuesday began a technical survey of the damaged buildings situated in JP Colony for the demolition exercise. A majority of houses in the colony, which is located in one of the worst-hit Marwari area of Joshimath, are single-storey buildings with roofs made of tin sheets. "A survey of damaged buildings of JP colony has begun after which a formal order to dismantle them will be issued," Chamoli district magistrate Himanshu Khurana said. "A technical team is on the spot to conduct the survey. When it will submit its report, the order to demolish the unsafe buildings in the colony will be issued," Khurana said. JP Colony houses employees of Vishnu Prayag hydro-electricity project and the residential buildings here are made of light construction material, and their dismantling may not take long, an engineer engaged in the survey said on request of anonymity. The colony was vacated on January 3 after an underground water channel burst on January 2.

The Uttarakhand government had on Monday decided to mechanically demolish all such buildings in JP Colony whose retrofitting was not possible. Ranjit Kumar Sinha, secretary, disaster management had said cracks on some of the buildings in Joshimath have widened by 1 to 2 millimetres, but they are old fissures not new. "The area from Hathi Pahad to JP Colony and the Alaknanda river is the most affected by land subsidence as there is pressure underneath the ground," he said. The senior official said the decision to dismantle the already damaged buildings and infrastructure in the colony is part of a strategy to ease the burden on the affected area. He also clarified that the cracks on the ground are being filled not to hide them, but to ensure that rainwater does not percolate through them to further weaken the foundation of the town. However, water flowing constantly from an underground channel burst near JP Colony on January 2 has ebbed from 540 LPM in the beginning to 163 LPM now. Joshimath, the gateway to famous pilgrimage sites like Badrinath and Hemkund Sahib and international skiing destination Auli, appears on the edge of a precipice with gaping cracks appearing on buildings, roads and public facilities. (PTI)

### Mandaviya invites global leaders to partner with India to make world healthier place

DAVOS, JAN 17 /--/ Union health minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Tuesday invited global leaders to partner with India to make the world a healthier place and said the government is institutionalising medical tourism through a new 'Heal In India' initiative. This will create an enabling framework for providing health services to the world at large, Mandaviya said during the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2023 here. He invited all the stakeholders to look at India as a land of opportunities and take advantage of the same by partnering with India. "This endeavour would lead towards making India and the world a healthier place," he said while addressing a Health & Healthcare Community



Mansukh Mandaviya

Dinner organised by the WEF. "We are working towards augmenting health infrastructure and have initiated multiple schemes to strengthen health systems and improve health service delivery with focus on quality, accessibility and affordability of healthcare services," the minister said.

Talking about India's vision of according the topmost priority to healthcare as 'seva' (service), he said: "Be it launch of the world's biggest government funded health assurance scheme, PM Jan Aarogya Yojana covering approximately 500 million people or establishment of 150,000 health & wellness centres, we have put the vision of 'Antyodaya', that is, 'Rise of the last person' into action in healthcare and a key facet of ensuring Universal Health Coverage." Mandaviya said India has the highest number of USFDA manufacturing plants outside the US, besides being a world leader in generic medicines. (PTI)

### Concerted efforts made to increase representation of women in Central govt jobs: Jitendra Singh

NEW DELHI, JAN 17 /--/ Union minister Jitendra Singh on Tuesday said the Centre has made concerted efforts to increase the representation of women in Central government jobs and provide them a balance between professional and family life.

Singh said the reforms in governance introduced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi provide an enabling environment for working women and the department of personnel and training (DoPT) is implementing them.

The minister of state for personnel said it has been decided to grant special maternity leave of 60 days to women central government personnel in case of death of a child soon after birth or stillbirth keeping in view the potential emotional trauma. The Union minister said in continuation of 730 days of



Jitendra Singh

employee while she is on CCL, he said and added that the employee can also undertake foreign travel after taking clearances from appropriate authorities in advance.

The minister said that a

special allowance of Rs 3,000 a month to women employees with disability has been granted for child care with effect from July 1 last year. He said a special leave provision has been made in connection to inquiry of sexual harassment. Leave up to a period of 90 days can be availed by an aggrieved women government servant and it will be granted during pendency of inquiry, Singh said.

The leave granted to the aggrieved women government employee under this rule will not be debited against the leave account, the minister said, according to a personnel ministry statement.

The minister pointed out that during Covid, special provisions for women officers and staffers were made through various office memorandums. These

### BJP dubs AAP chief Kejriwal 'egoistic leader' after Delhi CM's tirade against LG

NEW DELHI, JAN 17 /--/ Hours after Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal launched a tirade against Lt Governor VK Saxena, the BJP dubbed the AAP chief an "extreme egoistic leader" who believed that winning an election had given him the "right to misinterpret and override Constitutional provisions".

In a statement, the BJP's Delhi unit working president Virendra Sachdeva quipped that it was shocking that a party that did not have a single MP in Lok Sabha was dreaming of forming a government at the Centre. Addressing the Delhi Assembly on Saxena's

alleged interference in his government's work, the chief minister said: "Not even my teachers checked my homework as much as the LG scrutinises my files." "The LG is not my headmaster. The people have elected me as chief minister," he said. Kejriwal further claimed that Saxena had told him during a meeting that the BJP won 104 wards in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi elections because of him and that the saffron party would win all seven Lok Sabha seats in the national capital in the next General Elections.

The Delhi chief minister added that the Lt Governor did not have the power to make decisions on his own. "The Supreme Court has clearly said that he cannot take a call on issues barring the police, land and public order," he said.

In a sharp rebuttal to Kejriwal's speech, Sachdeva said everything Kejriwal and his party had been doing post its "crushing defeat" in the Gujarat assembly elections indicated that he had lost his political balance and mental peace. "The way CM Kejriwal is debating with the Lt Governor of Delhi and trying to misinterpret

### Media report on 'multiple side-effects of Covid vaccines' ill-informed, erroneous: HealthMin

NEW DELHI, JAN 17 /--/ The Union health ministry on Tuesday said media reports claiming admission of 'multiple side-effects of Covid-19 vaccines' by Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) officials are ill-informed and erroneous. Citing an RTI response, a recent news report had claimed that ICMR and CDSCO officials have admitted to side-effects of Covid-19 vaccines, citing a plethora of ramifications arising out of them. "It is clarified that the news report is ill-informed and provides erroneous information," the ministry said, referring to the report. In line with the policy of the Union ministry of health of proactive disclosure aligned with global scientific evidence in the public domain, the ICMR provides responses to questions under the RTI Act related to advantages and disadvantages of Covid-19 vaccines. The ICMR response simply provided links of reputed websites of the World Health Organization (WHO), Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the ministry of health where compiled global evidence on various Covid-19 vaccines is available, the ministry said in a statement.

As is the case with all other vaccines, those who get vaccinated with different Covid-19 vaccines may experience mild symptoms like injection site tenderness, pain, headache, fatigue, myalgia, malaise, pyrexia, chills, arthralgia etc. Rarely, few individuals may experience severe adverse events depending upon certain pre-disposing conditions, the statement stated. Global research studies have shown that Covid-19 vaccination has helped in reducing the severity of the disease by preventing hospitalisations and deaths due to Covid-19 and benefits of the vaccines overwhelmingly outweigh any adverse effects. (PTI)

### BJP govt's neo-liberal policies benefiting only corporates, multi-billionaires: Kerala CM

KOCHI, JAN 17 /--/ Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Tuesday criticised the "neo-liberal economic policies" of the ruling BJP at the Centre saying only the corporates and the multi-billionaires are its beneficiaries. Vijayan said the jobs in the organised sector have come down drastically while no steps have been taken to fill the over 10 lakh vacant positions in the Central government. "Under the BJP rule, corporates are flourishing in our country. The number of multi-billionaires is also increasing. But our country is in the 107th position in the global hunger index and in the poverty index we are at the 131th position. These indices show that the situation in our country has worsened," Vijayan said while addressing the diamond jubilee celebrations of the pro-left Non-Gazetted Officers (NGO) Union here.



Pinarayi Vijayan

The Kerala chief minister urged the BJP government to focus more on uplifting the poor and downtrodden of the country instead of framing policies to help the corporates. The veteran CPM leader accused the Union government of trying to 'strangulate' the Kerala government financially. He said the state government was trying to bring out an alternative policy for the benefits of the poor. "What have you done for the majority of the people in this country who are commoners? A government should focus on the welfare of the people. The governance in our country is for the corporates and not for the poor. Kerala is trying to put forward an alternative policy to this but the Centre is against it and trying to financially strangle the State," the Left leader said. Vijayan said in the last eight years only 0.33 per cent of the job seekers could obtain a job while the rest remain unemployed. "Over 10 lakh posts are lying vacant across the country in the Central government sector. In the last eight years, only 0.33 per cent of job seekers could enroll in jobs in the country. The rest are unemployed. In our country 82 per cent of workers employed in the unorganised sector have no job security or other benefits," he added. (PTI)

### No inputs of threat to Bharat Jodo Yatra in J&K: DGP Dilbag Singh

SRINAGAR, JAN 17 /--/ Jammu and Kashmir DGP Dilbag Singh on Tuesday said there are no inputs of a possible threat to Rahul Gandhi-led 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' and that adequate security will be provided to the march when it reaches the Union Territory.

"The Yatra will enter Jammu from Punjab in a day or two. For a few days, the march will be in different districts of Jammu and then it will enter the Kashmir Valley. "The Yatra will be in Kashmir for three to four days. We have discussed that (in the security review meeting). We have discussed the arrangements at the range-level and the district-level. Whatever security measures need to

be taken, they will be taken," Singh told reporters here. The march, which started from Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu on September 7, will conclude with Gandhi hoisting the national flag in Srinagar. It has so far covered Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab.

Asked if there was any threat input about the Yatra, the top cop said: "There is no such input." To a question on whether the Yatra will be allowed on foot, the DGP replied that it will be regulated in such a manner that people do not face any

inconvenience. "These things will be regulated because there is traffic and other things. A huge yatra can cause inconvenience to people as roads can get blocked. This is a Yatra and is taken both on foot as well as using vehicles. "Our endeavour will be to take forward the march with vehicles wherever there is a single road, and in rest of the places, the participants may be advised to walk on foot where the roads allow," Singh said. He asserted that the Yatra can be "guided from the security point of view as well wherever it is needed". AICC J-K in-charge Rajni Patil, earlier in the day, said the Jammu and Kashmir administration has granted permission for a

mega rally to mark the culmination of the Bharat Jodo Yatra at Srinagar's Sher-e-Kashmir Stadium on January 30.

Patil said the Yatra will enter Lakhanpur (in Jammu and Kashmir) from Punjab Thursday evening. "After halting for the night, Gandhi will lead the yatra from Hatli Morh in Kathua from 7 am the next morning (January 20)," Patil said, adding that the rally will reach Jammu on January 23. She added that Gandhi will leave the Union Territory on January 24, crossing Udhampur and Ramban towns. DGP Singh also said that measures will be put in place for smooth celebration of the Republic day. (PTI)



## Condolence Message

PORT BLAIR, JAN 17/--/ ANTCC President, Mr. Ranganlal Halder, along with the Chairman- Campaign Committee, Mr. G. Bhaskar and the entire Congress family deeply mourn the sudden demise of Mr. Vijay Rai Sharma, S/o Bahadur Rai Sharma, R/o Junglighat.

They felt and conveyed his heartfelt condolences and prayers to give strength to the bereaved family members and also prayed for giving eternal peace to the departed soul. The last rites will be taken over from his residence on 18th January 2023.

## IGNOU re-registration for January 2023 session last date extended

PORT BLAIR, JAN 17/--/ The last date for Re-Registration for January 2023 session in Indira Gandhi National Open University's is extended upto 31st January, 2023. For online Re-registration, the students are advised to log on to <https://onlinerr.ignou.ac.in/> for timely payment of their 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th semester fees through online. For more details, visit IGNOU Website - [www.ignou.ac.in](http://www.ignou.ac.in) or contact IGNOU Regional Centre, Port Blair over Phone: 03192-242888, 03192-230111 or Email: [reportblair@ignou.ac.in](mailto:reportblair@ignou.ac.in).

## Rangoli competition by SPARSHA

PORT BLAIR, JAN 17/--/ In commemoration of the diverse harvest festival being celebrated all across the country, the Society for Promotion of Serve Humanity Among Youths (SPARSHA) in association with Sai Youth Club, Shore Point conducted an open to all Rangoli



competition. All together 12 contestants from different age groups participated in the competition held on 14th Jan 2023 at Sri Ram Mandir Complex, Shore Point. Mr. MK Sundaram Ex-Zilla Parishad Member, Mr. K Balakrishna, Pradhan GP Shoal Bay and

Mr. Debkumar Bhadra, President SPARSHA judged the rangoli put up by the contestants. Miss C Kavitha was declared first, Miss D Pramila stood second and Miss P Poojitha was adjudged third in the competition. The valedictory function was conducted coinciding Makara Sankranti celebration at Ranchi Basti playground on 15 Jan, 2023. Prize and certificates were given to the winners and consolation prizes were given to other contestants for their participation in the competition.

The valedictory function was graced by a large number of villagers including Pradhan and Up-Pradhan GP Shore Point, President, Vice President, other officer bearers and members of SPARSHA, Sai Youth Club, Sahodara Yuvajana Sangam Bambooflat. Mr. K Suresh representing Pyramid Meditation was also present among other guests and dignitaries. Mr. K Neela Kantam conducted the programme.

## Blood donation camp at Fire Service headquarters

PORT BLAIR, JAN 17/--/ The A & N Police Fire Service during the on-going Police Raising week, 2023 organised a "Voluntary Blood donation camp" at Fire Service (HQs) on Tuesday. About 43 volunteers of A & N Police, including Police Radio, IRBn and Fire Service participated in the blood donation camp with the aim to serve the general public. It is pertinent to mention that seven donors were from general public.

The programme was organised in coordination with Dr. Shahina Mustaqim, Medical Officer (I/C), Blood Bank, GB Pant

Hospital, Port Blair and officials of A&N AIDS Control Society. Mr. S.K. Jain, IGP



(L&O) inaugurated the blood donation camp in presence of Smti Varsha Sharma, SSP (Fire), Mr. Sandeep, DySP (Fire) & other Fire Unit Officers. He appreciated the donors as every blood donor is a life saver.

## Knockout football tournament

PORT BLAIR, JAN 17/--/ Under the promotion of Sports and Fitness programme of Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan, a District level Knockout football tournament was organised by Fit Andaman Sports Club which was



supported by Nehru Yuva Kendra, Port Blair. In the tournament, about 25 teams from the District participated. The tournament was inaugurated on 2nd January /2023, at Mannarghat playground. The final match was held on 16th Jan. 2023 and played between Mannarghat Youth Club Vs. United Sporting Club, Port Blair in which Mannarghat Youth Club won the match by one goal to nil. The tournament was sponsored by TSG foundation, Star

Bazaar Bambooflat, PB Guru Ki Rasoi (NGO) and IMFC. On the occasion of the final match of the tournament, Mr. TSG Bhaskar, Director of TSG Foundation was the chief guest. Winners and runners were awarded with trophies by the chief guest and other guests. The chief guest also spoke on the need for organizing sports meets for the youth, which is helpful in promoting a sense of discipline, self-help, cooperation and friendship and thereby promote a true healthy lifestyle among the youth.

Mr. Sebastin Tirkey, Chairman, Andaman Adivasi was guest of honor and said that rural youth should also take part in sports meets to exhibit their talent in National Level sport meets. Mr. Nasir SHO, Bambooflat, Mr. Sanjay Meshak, Social Worker and Mr. KP Mammy, International Athletics were also present on the occasion Mr. Gopal Ch. Biswas of Nehru Yuva Kendra, Port Blair also briefed about the purpose of the programme and propagated the message of healthy body and healthy mind through sports among the youth. All tournaments were held at night and a large crowd witnessed all this tournaments.

## Fit Andaman Sports Soccer League-2023

PORT BLAIR, JAN 17/--/ The final of Fit Andaman Sports Soccer League 2023, was held between United Sports Club and Gram Panchayat Mannarghat on 16th Jan 2023 at Hill View Stadium, Malapuram. Gram Panchayat Mannarghat won the final by 1-0. Mr. Sanjay (Unni) of Gram Panchayat Mannarghat was awarded player of the match. Pradhan and all the PRI members of GPMG

congratulated the team and the all villagers



## Motorcycle, car rally to mark Road Safety Week

PORT BLAIR, JAN 17/--/ As part of the Road Safety Week, the Transport Department will be organizing a motorcycle & car rally from 11:00 am onwards from Netaji Stadium to Dollygunj Junction. A road safety awareness programme will also be held from 05:30 pm onwards in the auditorium of Tagore Government College of Education on 18th January 2023. The Road Safety Week being celebrated throughout the country as per the guidance received from the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways. The programme will focus on generating awareness among the younger generation of the country to inculcate a sense of responsibility among them in the field of road safety.

## Half portion of road closed

PORT BLAIR, JAN 17/--/ Half portion of the road from Minnie Bay Junction to Utkrosh Gate will remain closed for resurfacing of the road w.e.f 16.01.2023 (AN) to 21.01.2023, a notification issued by DM (SA) said.

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*We are more ready to try the untried when what we do is inconsequential. Hence the fact that many inventions had their birth as toys*  
**Eric Hoffer**

## WPI, CPI: Signs of easing inflation

Easing of supply side pressure, especially with respect to fruits and vegetables, along with a favourable base effect has helped in moderation of wholesale inflation. Due to high base effect and softening of global commodity prices, the wholesale inflation is expected to come in around 3.1 per cent in the March quarter of FY'23. Similar to Consumer Price Index (CPI), the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) is also losing momentum, driven by both base effects and falling food prices. Further declines are expected in import costs to keep WPI contained in the coming months, but CPI pass through may be limited for now. The significance of the downtrend in CPI and WPI inflation is that it will enable the monetary policy committee to pause after one more, say, a 25-basis point rate hike in February. Therefore, higher rates will not impact the growth recovery underway in the economy now. With signs of easing inflation, it will be a tough task for RBI to decide on the trajectory of interest rates in next monetary policy meeting. The RBI's monetary policy committee is scheduled to meet on February 6-8 to decide on the policy interest rate. The RBI has so far hiked rates by 2.25 percentage points since May, with the latest 35 basis point hike in December, 2022.

The wholesale price-based inflation declined to a 22-month low of 4.95 per cent in December 2022, mainly due to fall in prices of food articles, especially vegetables, on easing supply side pressure and a higher base of last year. This is the seventh straight month of declining WPI-based inflation. It was 5.85 per cent in November 2022 and 14.27 per cent in December 2021. Even though declining prices of vegetables and onions pulled down inflation rate of food articles, wheat, pulses and potato remained expensive, along with protein-rich items like milk and 'egg, meat and fish'. The last low level of WPI inflation was recorded in February 2021 at 4.83 per cent. The deceleration in WPI comes in line with retail inflation data released last week, which showed CPI inflation eased to 5.72 per cent in December. The CPI-based inflation remained within the RBI's upper tolerance limit of 6 per cent for the second month in a row.

As per data released on Monday, WPI inflation in fuel and power rose marginally from 17.35 per cent in November to 18.09 per cent in December 2022, while in manufactured products it softened to 3.37 per cent last month. WPI inflation in crude petroleum & natural gas cooled to 39.71 per cent in December, against 48.23 per cent in the previous month. Core inflation too declined to 25-month low of 3.2 per cent in December 2022 due to lower input cost, especially of commodities.

# Sinking of land at Joshimath fallout of reckless construction activities

## REFLEX ACTION

D. Raghunandan

governmental negligence, must be fully rehabilitated and given due compensation immediately so that they too do not have to wait indefinitely as supplicants for what is due to them.

However, the longer-term issue of on-going and continuing construction activities related to roads, hydro-electric projects and haphazard urbanisation without taking into consideration the fragility of the mountain ecosystem and its vulnerabilities, must also be addressed. Whereas decisions regarding immediate response measures in the aftermath of the Joshimath disaster were taken at a meeting of state and central government officials, the National Disaster Management Authority, Geological Survey of India, and the National Institute of Hydrology, numerous earlier reports by these very institutions and the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology raising danger signals have been ignored. Study reports by these institutions, including high-powered committees set up by the state government dating back to the famous MC Mishra Committee report of around 50 years ago, and other experts have underlined the geomorphological, geological and seismic fragility of the region and the consequent dangers of major construction activities.

These experts have pointed out that Joshimath, and many other towns in the region, have been built over very weak and unstable soil and stone substrate consisting of loose material left behind by glacial movement and earlier landslides. This limits the carrying capacity of settlements which have, however, grown haphazardly and to over-burdened size in terms of residents and increasing numbers of tourists. The region is classified as seismic Zone-V, the highest level of vulnerability to earthquakes and seismic activity, which can be exacerbated by heavy

construction activity such as blasting and tunnelling as done in the area. Blockage of natural drainage by poorly planned construction can also cause instability and exacerbate landslides. As a result, satellite data reveal that Joshimath has been sinking at a rate of 6.5cm per year.

The chief minister of the BJP government of Uttarakhand, Pushkar Singh Dhami, has misleadingly described this as a "natural disaster" while, on the other hand, construction activities at the NTPC's Tapovan-Vishnugarh "run of the river" hydel project, whose tunnelling work has been undertaken close to the town, and the Joshimath-Badrinath highway, have been halted in response to local anger. Blasting has been prohibited in the area, but locals have pointed to sign-boards announcing schedules for blasting in different construction pockets. Even now, despite the ban on construction, TV channels have reported that, in the absence of any monitoring, some sort of construction activity is taking place in the area. This total lack of regulation and enforcement is characteristic of infrastructure construction in the region. The famous Char Dham Highway linking major religious sites was allowed by the Supreme Court to be widened and proceed unhindered, with no regulation imposed. Joshimath is today paying the price for this "development at any cost" approach.

It is likely that other parts of Joshimath town will also suffer from subsidence in months and years to come. Other towns and locations in the region are also similarly vulnerable. The valley town of Rudraprayag has already reported cases of major cracks in residences and other buildings.

It is clear that, whatever measures are taken to tackle the current Joshimath disaster, a comprehensive review is required of infrastructure and other construction activities in the fragile western Himalayan region. What is required is a well-conceived pathway towards environmentally sensitive development minimising harm to local residents and visitors. (IPA)



Fibre statues at various stages of making at Kumartuli on Tuesday--Arijit Ganguly

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

ACROSS						DOWN					
1	Liabie	3	Percussion instrument	6	Ill-mannered	7	Insect	9	Cult	10	Large
11	Rodents	13	Select group	16	Minute particles	18	Level	19	Male swan	20	Fish
21	Self	23	Country	24	Narrow beams	25	Tavern	1	Proverb	2	Female swan
								4	Regrets	5	Floor covering
								6	Automaton	8	Hackneyed
								9	Slender support	12	Make up for
								14	Molten rock	15	Ship's small room
								17	Disdain	18	Desire with rivalry
								20	Hill	22	Spirit

SUDOKU : 3759												
4				7	9	2						
					2	1						
	1	6	5									
			7			3						
9	7								2	1		
		8				6						
						8	7	6				
		1	2									
		3	9	6							2	

Yesterday's Solution 3758												
4	1	7	8	3	5	6	9	2				
8	2	6	1	4	9	7	5	3				
5	3	9	7	2	6	1	4	8				
7	6	1	2	9	4	3	8	5				
9	5	3	6	7	8	2	1	4				
2	8	4	3	5	1	9	7	6				
3	9	8	5	6	7	4	2	1				
6	7	5	4	1	2	8	3	9				
1	4	2	9	8	3	5	6	7				

Yesterday's Cross Word Solution 1767												
R	A	J	A	H		L	A	M	E			
A			P	I	R	A	T	E				
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R	A	S	P					I	R	E		
	L		I	D	L	E	R		W			
M	I	E	N		O	V	E	R	T			
	S	L	E	E	V	E						
G	E	M	S		E	R	R	O	R			

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# TN Governor just following the tradition

From Jagdeep Dhankar to Ravindra Narayana Ravi, Narendra Modi's governors specialize in terrorizing state governments with chief ministers for target practice. Show the Dravidian stock of Tamil Nadu 'Get Out Ravi' posters and they will spit, and stomp on them in bottled fury. If nobody isn't, Governor RN Ravi is the most unpopular man in Tamil Nadu. He wants Tamil Nadu renamed "Tamizhagam" and the popular reaction is "Ah'Chi".

This was the status of Governor Jagdeep Dhankar at the time when he was relieved of his Modi-given charge to keep West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee angrier than a bee in the bonnet. Mamata could not have gotten a better 2022 present than when the gift of the vice-presidency was presented to Governor Jagdeep Dhankar by the man who weaponized not only 'Didi 'O Didi', but also the post of Governor.

Ask an opposition politician what he thinks of "BJP governors" and it'll be snorts of disgust. The next thing broadcast will be the falling standards of the average Modi-appointed Governor, the sole person responsible for the sad spectacle of federalism undermined, part of the basic structure of our Constitution, going to

the dogs. Not that Governors and State governments had raging love affairs before 2014. But what's been ailing governors of Opposition-ruled states, ever since Narendra Modi lodged in 7, Lok Kalyan Marg, is a foul epidemic worse than that launched from Wuhan.

Governor Jagdeep Dhankar made somebody as stalwart and mercurial as Mamata Banerjee to cringe, which called for the governor to be borderline irreversibly rebellious. Dhankar cared little for constitutional niceties. Part of the reason why more West Bengal electorate voted for 'Didi' was the bulldog-ish behaviour of Governor Jagdeep Dhankar. For the Trinamool Congress, Dhankar joining the ranks of good riddance was a godsend. Jagdeep Dhankar was the prime example of a weaponized governor. Also, the best example of a man brought in to shackle federalism, pen it, and guillotine it.

Governors let loose on states are part and parcel of Modi's SOP. It should not surprise anybody that all opposition-ruled states have Governors

at war with state governments. The confrontations are as if choreographed. It is a surprise things haven't descended to the level of a constitutional crisis. Fact is, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's governors leave very little to the imagination. They are predictable. They are like 'bots' with AI. Modi's governors do not "aid and advice" state governments, they're keyed for maximum disruption.

The Modi-appointed Governor of Telangana is another example of a loggerhead. Dr. Tamilisai Sounderajan was made Telangana Governor in 2019, and ever since, Dr. Sounderajan has been giving Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrashaker Rao recurring nightmares. It's been one faceoff after another. In November 2022 Tamilisai delayed clearing the Telangana Universities Common Recruitment Board Bill, 2022. Earlier, Dr. Sounderajan was quoted saying, "We're governors, not rubber stamps to approve every decision made at cabinet meetings attended by CM's family members."

## FOCUS

Sushil Kutty



## ANTCC organizes Bharat JodoYatra in North & Middle Andaman



**PORT BLAIR, JAN 17/--/** As a part of the National Programme of the AICC, BHARAT JODO YATRA was conducted in North & Middle Andaman District covering a distance of 201 kms. The yatra started from Diglipur (HathiLevel) on the 6th of January 2023 and ended in Baratang Island on the 12th of January 2023. Each Day, the yatra ended with a public meeting and interaction with the general

public. The yatra created a lot of awareness on the activities of Mr. Rahul Gandhi and also on the issues being faced by the nation at large. Many issues being faced by our Islanders were also taken up and discussed in the Bharat JodoYatra meeting. A Large number of people joined the Bharat Jodoyatra at different villages and encouraged the yatra. The permanent yatra members numbering about

45 completed the yatra very successfully from Diglipurto Baratang which inculcated great enthusiasm among the youths and elders of various villages of North and Middle Andaman Islands. The yatra ended with a grand public meeting at Baratang Island where senior leaders of the Congress Party addressed the gathering. The yatra received a very good response all over the Islands.

## NSUI State President demands to reopen college canteen at JNRM campus

**PORT BLAIR, JAN 17/--/** The State President of National Students' Union of India A&N Islands, Mr. M.A Sajid has requested the Administration for reopening of the college canteen at the JNRM Campus. In his letter addressed to the Chief Secretary, Andaman & Nicobar Administration, he said that the students of JNRM are suffering due to lack of canteen facilities which directly affect the physical diet and mental health of the Students. He said that the students were reaching college in the early morning hours with a hope to get some refreshments and breakfast in the college campus. He also stated that as the due closure of college canteen, the students are inactive in class or bunking class for breakfast and consuming unhygienic consumables outside the Campus. He further requested the administration to take immediate steps for reopening of the college canteen in the JNRM campus.

### Date for claiming subsidy extended

**PORT BLAIR, JAN 17/--/** The beneficiaries selected for availing subsidy towards 'Construction /Purchase of New Motorized/ Mechanized Fishing Boats' under UT plan during the year 2021-22 have been informed that the time period for submission of complete report along with required documents for claiming financial subsidy to the respective Assistant Director of Fisheries has been extended up to 31st March, 2023.

## Tourists sounded note of caution

**PORT BLAIR, JAN 17/--/** It has come to the notice of the Tourism Department that some tourists while on visit to the Natural Bridge at Laxmanpur-II, Shaheed Dweep walk on corals and protected marine biodiversity due to lack of information and knowledge. The coral reef & coastal ecosystem is fragile in nature and therefore, it needs to be protected & conserved.

In view of this, it has been decided by the Tourism Department of A&N Administration that henceforth, tourists visiting Natural Bridge at Laxmanpur-II should compulsorily take the services of Certified Tourist Guide, to properly guide visitors/tourists with Do's & Don'ts etc. This step has been initiated to conserve and protect the fragile ecosystem of this unique ter-

rain. The visiting tourists/visitors/general public have been requested to abide by the instructions/directions of the authorities and co-operate and also be part of the conservation of marine ecosystem. The prescribed fee for Certified Tourist Guides for visiting Natural Bridge, Laxmanpur-II, Shaheed Dweep are as under:-

No. of tourists	Guide fee	Time required for guiding	Locations
Tourists 1-10	Rs 500/-	<sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> an hour	Point 1
Tourists 1-10	Rs 1000/-	1 hour	Point 2
Tourists 1-10	Rs 1 500/-	<sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> hour to 2 hours	Point 3

## Seven more Specialist doctors appointed

**PORT BLAIR, JAN 17/--/** The Andaman and Nicobar Administration is committed to provide better Health care facilities to the population of this UT which is scattered across different remote Islands. As part of the strengthening of Health facilities in A & N Islands, 7 more Specialists have been appointed by the A & N Administration and posted to different Health Institutions of these Islands following interview on 27.09.2022.

Specialist	No of post	Posted at
Surgical Specialist	01	G. B. Pant, Hospital, Port Blair
Medical Specialist	02	CHC, Rangat CHC, Diglipur
Anesthetist	01	G. B. Pant, Hospital, Port Blair
Gynecologist	01	G. B. Pant, Hospital, Port Blair
Pediatrician	01	CHC, Bambooflat
Dermatologist	01	G. B. Pant, Hospital, Port Blair

This step will not only improve the Health services in these Islands but will also reduce the referral of the patients to mainland for further treatment. By posting Specialists, the Administration has fulfilled the long pending demand of the people of these Islands. Further, the Health Department will make efforts to extend better health facilities in future too.

# Exposure of highway stretch in Uttarakhand to landslides likely to increase: Study

**NEW DELHI, JAN 17/--/** Scientists have found that vulnerability of the highway stretch in Uttarakhand between Joshimath and Rishikesh to landslides is likely to increase, owing to continued vegetation removal and destabilising of slopes.

An average landslide density of 1.25 landslides per km was recorded by scientists for the 247-km-long stretch on NH-7 highway. The study conducted a systematic survey of landslides and derived a statistical model, aimed at quantifying landslide susceptibility along the NH-7 at a high spatial resolution, the findings said. Based on an inventory of more than 300 landslides along the corridor following exceptionally high rainfall in September and October 2022, the study identified the main factors governing the occurrence of mass-movement events. The findings of the study were brought out in a preprint paper by scientists from University of Potsdam in Germany and Indian Institute of Technology in Roorkee.

"The highest density of landslides occurs between Rishikesh and Srinagar within lithozone 2 and between Pipalkoti and Joshimath in lithozone 1," the study said. "Lithozones

encompass rocks of similar lithology, or composition. We did a regrouping of the lithologies from the geological map of Uttarakhand," said study author Jurgen Mey, Institute of Environmental Science and Geography at the University of Potsdam. The high landslide density in lithozone 2 is likely related due to the pronounced fissility, or the capacity to shear along the grain, and cleavage of the dominating shales and phyllites associated with material softening, percolation and weathering, causing a general decrease in rock strength, the study said. "Yes, these rocks are vulnerable to heavy rainfall. But many parts of the Himalayas have similar features, so it is hard to avoid such terrains. However, with proper stability measures, such slopes can be made safer," said Reet Kamal Tiwari, assistant professor, Department of Civil Engineering at Indian Institute of Technology in Punjab's Ropar.

Tectonic activity too contributes to a general decrease in rock strength by creating shear surfaces with low friction angles, the study said. "Because the Himalayas are tectonically active, these rocks have been deformed and modified so that they feature a lot

of discontinuities, along which they can fail more easily. Adding the steep slopes and the high intensity rainfall (trigger), landslides will be frequent," said Mey. Road segments, where the adjoining hill slopes parallel bedding, joints or foliation planes are particularly vulnerable, the study said. The study found an intriguing spatial agreement between recent constructions for road widenings and landslide occurrences in the region under investigation. The road was widened by removing vegetation and excavating soil and rocks, potentially creating unstable slopes, the study said. "Land cover change and climate change are the dynamic factors influencing landslide occurrence, whereas, slope degree and the soil are constant factors.

"We will see an increase in landslides in future, if the land use continues to change as per the current trend. We need to analyse these trends and keep them in front of us during town planning and other such activities," said Tiwari. In fact, these disturbances have led to frequent landslides along the NH-7 previously as there have been previous studies also reporting about 300 landslides occurring along the road more than 10

years ago, the study said. "Our data indicates that 20 40 per cent of the recorded landslides are reactivated slope failures which underscore that slopes are recurrently unstable during periods with intense rainfall," the study said. "We will see more landslides in the future in the Himalayan region if such heavy rainfall instances continue," said Tiwari.

During mapping, the scientists also noticed that some slopes were engineered during the last years with retaining walls, yet many of which also failed. Damages and fatalities may become even more frequent in the future, the study said. The entire Upper Ganga basin is susceptible to extreme rainfall events and climate change projections - although subject to high uncertainties - indicate a trend towards more frequent extreme events due to elevation-dependent warming and a likely increase of summer monsoon precipitation by 4-25 per cent, the study said. It also said that exposure to landslides was likely to increase. Road construction and increased traffic volumes attract more people, who will strive for new economic opportunities associated with roadside sites. These sites are of

ten more susceptible to landslides as construction often implies vegetation removal and slope destabilization, the study said. A reduction of traffic may disrupt the cycle of increasing hazard and exposure, the study said. It concluded that the main controlling variables for landslides occurrence are slope angle, rainfall amount and lithology. The Himalayan landscape presents a challenging environment for the construction and the maintenance of roads, even as close to 11,000 km of roads were built in the Indian Himalayan states, as attributed to media reports. (PTI)

## Dawood has 2nd wife, his sister Haseena Parkar's son tells NIA

**MUMBAI, JAN 17/--/** Fugitive underworld don Dawood Ibrahim has a second wife who is a Pakistani and he has lied about divorcing his first wife, his nephew has told the National Investigation Agency which is probing a case pertaining to a global terrorist network and a criminal syndicate involved in terrorist and criminal activities in India. The statement of Alishah Parkar, son of

Dawood's sister Haseena Parkar, is part of the charge sheet filed by the NIA in the case in November last year. The case is related to a global terrorist network and a transnational organised criminal syndicate, namely 'D-Company', which it claimed is involved in various terrorist and criminal activities in India. "Dawood Ibrahim Kaskar wife's name is Maizabin and he is having three daughters Marukh

(married to Junaid, son of Javed Miandad), Mehrin (married) and Maziya (unmarried) and one son Mohin Nawaz (married)," Alishah Parkar said in the statement, which was made available recently. "Dawood Ibrahim is having a second wife, she is Pakistani Pathan," he said, adding that Dawood Ibrahim shows that he has divorced his first wife, but the fact is it's wrong. Parkar further mentioned that Dawood Ibrahim lives in a defence area behind Abdullah Gazi Baba Dargah in Karachi, Pakistan, along with his family. The NIA in its charge sheet alleged that Ibrahim had sent a "huge amount of money" through hawala channels to accused arrested in the case pertaining

to aiding terrorist activities of 'D-Company' in India. These activities were related to carrying out terrorist attacks in Mumbai and other parts of India to strike fear among people. The D-Company has established a special unit to strike terror in people of India by attacking eminent personalities, including political leaders and businesspersons, the probe agency further claimed. Ibrahim and his close aide Chhota Shakeel have been shown as wanted accused in the charge sheet. The three other people charge-sheeted are Arif Abubakar Shaikh, Shabbir Abubakar Shaikh and Mohammad Salim Qureshi all Mumbai residents and arrested in the case. (PTI)

## Foetus found in Noida drain, cops launch investigation

**NOIDA, JAN 17/--/** A foetus was found abandoned in a drain in Uttar Pradesh's Noida on Tuesday, prompting the local police to lodge an FIR and launch an investigation into the matter, officials said.

The foetus, believed to be around five to six months old, was spotted by sanitation workers at Harola village under Phase 1 police station limits, a senior officer said.

"The supervisor of the sanitation workers informed the local police

station after which the foetus was taken into custody and sent for post mortem," Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (Noida) Ashutosh Dwivedi said.

The additional DCP said an FIR has been lodged under the Indian Penal Code section 315 (Act done with intent to prevent child being born alive or to cause it to die after birth) against unidentified accused. Further investigation and legal proceedings in the case are underway, the police added. (PTI)

**VETERINARY COUNCIL OF INDIA**  
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**PUBLIC NOTICE**

IT is hereby informed that Veterinary Council of India will be using NEET (UG) 2023 Merit List for admission of students to B.V. Sc. & A.H. Degree course for the Academic Year 2023-24 for filling up of seats in recognized Veterinary Colleges under 15% All India Quota (AIQ). Students desirous to take Admission to B.V. Sc. & A.H. Degree course under 15% All India Basis are hereby advised to appear in NEET (UG) 2023 to be conducted by National Testing Agency (NTA) on 7th May, 2023 [Sunday]

**Sd/-**  
**secretary, VCI (Addl. Charge)**  
**CBC-01222/12/0003/2223**

**NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER**

**No.Ten/DB/CD/KMT/2022-23/73** **dt. 11/01/2023**

The Executive Engineer, Construction Division, Andaman P.W.D, Kamorta invites on behalf of the President of India, online Item Rate tenders from the **experienced and eligible contractors having valid GST Registration and requisite experience of having successfully completed similar works(s) in terms of cost dealing with civil works with any of the Govt. Organizations in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands having no adverse remarks for following works.**

- NIT No. 08 /NIT(KMT)/SE/CN/2022-23 Name of work:- *Improvement of Rural Road from main road to permanent shelter at MRN at Katchal.* Estimated Cost : ₹ 1,63,27,030/- EMD: ₹ 3,26,541/- Period of completion : 12(Twelve) months. Tender ID. : 2023\_APWD\_8902\_1**
- NIT No. 04 /NIT(KMT)/SE/CN/2022-23 Name of work:- *C/o footpath and coaltar road upto seashore and CC footpath within Kakana village, Kamorta. SW : C/o CC footpath 03 mtr wide for a length of 1048 mtrs and 1.20 mtrs wide for a length of 857 mtrs i/c 04 Nos 1.00 x 1.00 mtrs RCC Box culvert culverts and toe wall cum drain.* Estimated Cost : ₹ 2,50,54,553/- EMD: ₹ 5,01,091/- Period of completion : 09(Nine) months. Tender ID. : 2023\_APWD\_8886\_1**
- NIT No. 33 /NIT/DB/CD/KMT/2022-23 Name of work:- *Repair, renovation and painting of GSSS Champin at Nancowrie.* Estimated Cost : ₹ 41,05,846/- EMD: ₹ 82,117/- Period of completion : 06(Six) months. Tender ID. : 2023\_APWD\_8905\_1**
- NIT No. 34 /NIT/DB/CD/KMT/2022-23 Name of work:- *Construction of Check dam alongwith laying pipeline from check dam to Police Barrack at LOP Tillong Chaung Island.* Estimated Cost : ₹ 45,56,419/- EMD: ₹ 91,128/- Period of completion : 06(Six) months. Tender ID. : 2023\_APWD\_8906\_1**

Bid Document Publishing Date	: 12/01/2023 (1600hrs)
Bid Document Download/Start Date	: 12/01/2023 (1600hrs)
Bid Submission Start Date	: 12/01/2023 (1600hrs)
Bid Submission Closing Date	: 30/01/2023 (1000hrs)
Bid Opening Date	: 30/01/2023 (1030hrs)

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

**Executive Engineer**  
**Construction Division**  
**APWD, Kamorta.**

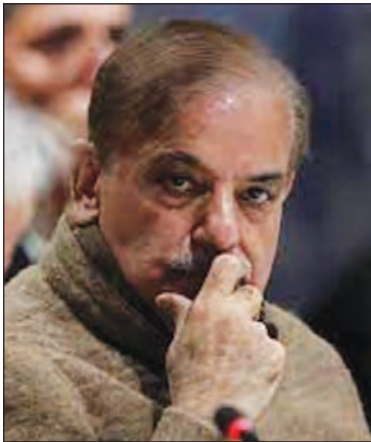
**9585/23**



## Pak PM seeks 'sincere' talks with India to resolve 'burning' issues; says UAE can play important role

ISLAMABAD, JAN 17 /--/ Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has sought "serious" and "sincere" talks with his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi for the resolution of the "burning" issues, including on Kashmir, and said the UAE could play an important role in facilitating the resumption of dialogue between the two nuclear-armed neighbours.

Prime Minister Sharif made these comments during an interview with the Dubai-based Al Arabiya news channel on Monday. Relations between India and Pakistan have been strained over the Kashmir issue and cross-border terrorism emanating from Pakistan. India has previously rejected any third-party mediation on the Kashmir issue. "My message to the Indian leadership and Prime Minister Narendra Modi is that let us sit down on the table and have serious and sincere talks to resolve our burning issues like Kashmir," Sharif said. He said Pakistan and India are neighbours and have to "live with each other." "It is up to us



**Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif**

to live peacefully, make progress or quarrel with each other, and waste time and resources. We have three wars with India and it only brought more misery, poverty, and unemployment to the people," he explained. "We have learned our lesson and we want to live in peace provided we are able to resolve our genuine problems. We want to

alleviate poverty, achieve prosperity, and provide education and health facilities and employment to our people and not waste our resources on bombs and ammunition, that is the message I want to give to Prime Minister Modi," he elaborated. India has maintained that terrorism and talks cannot go together and Islamabad should provide a conducive atmosphere for resumption of dialogue. The ties between the two countries nosedived after India abrogated Article 370 of the Constitution, revoking the special status of Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcating the State into two Union Territories on August 5, 2019. India's decision evoked a strong reaction from Pakistan, which downgraded diplomatic ties and expelled the Indian envoy. Trade ties between Pakistan and India have essentially been frozen since then. "We are nuclear powers, armed to the teeth and if God forbid a war breaks out, who will live to tell what happened," he warned. During the interview, Sharif said the United Arab Emirates (UAE) leadership

could play an important role in bringing Pakistan and India together. New Delhi has maintained that Kashmir is a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan and no third country has a role in it. "The Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir and the Union Territory of Ladakh are and always will be integral and inalienable parts of India. No other country has a locus standi to comment on the same," the ministry of external affairs has said previously. Sharif said the UAE was a second home for millions of Pakistanis, days after he visited the Gulf nation, which was aimed at securing fresh loans, ramping up bilateral cooperation and trade ties. He also lauded Saudi Arabia for being a "friendly and brotherly country." "Before Pakistan came into being, and was carved out of India, millions of Muslims had brotherly relations with Saudi Arabia and were visiting Makkah and Madina," he added. Last week, Pakistan's Foreign Office said it welcomed third-party mediation in the resolution of all outstanding issues with India, including Kashmir. (PTI)



**Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee offering candy to a local girl during her visit to Subhashini Tea Estate, in Alipurduar. TMC national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee is also seen. The CM distributed clothes among local people and interacted with them — Photo : EOI**

**Mamata objects to Centre's proposal on collegiums, says it seeks to interfere in functioning of courts**

KOLKATA, JAN 17 /--/ Chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday objected to the Centre's proposal for the inclusion of government nominees in the collegium system on appointments to the higher judiciary, claiming the BJP administration seeks to interfere in the functioning of the courts. Stating that she is in favour of the freedom of the judiciary, Mamata claimed that if the Centre's proposal is accepted, there will be no value for the recommendation made by the state government for appointment of judges in high courts. "This is a new type of planning. If the Central government's representation is there in the Collegium of the Supreme Court, then state governments will also obviously include their representatives in the collegium," she said. The chief minister then asked what the result of that would be. "There will be no value in the state government's recommendation. Ultimately the central government will directly interfere with the functioning of the judiciary. That we don't want," she said. The chief minister's reaction came after Law Minister Kiren Rijiju has written to the Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud for the inclusion of government nominees in the collegium system on appointments to the higher judiciary. Rijiju's early January letter to the CJI and the remarks on Monday came amid a tug-of-war between the government and the judiciary over the process of appointments of judges to the Supreme Court and High Courts. (PTI)

## Have huge respect for Sikh Community: Rahul in Punjab

HOSHIAHPUR, JAN 17 /--/ Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday said he has huge respect for the Sikh community and added India would not be India had it not been for their contribution. Rahul's remarks came in the backdrop of opposition parties in Punjab targeting the Congress and seeking Gandhi's apology over the 1984 anti-Sikh riots. When asked that opposition parties like Shiromani Akali Dal are raising questions on his visit and want him to apologise for the 1984 Operation Bluestar and the anti-Sikh riots months later, Gandhi replied that former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on the floor of the Parliament had made his and the Congress party's position very clear. "Former Congress president Sonia Gandhi has also done that and I fully endorse what (former) Prime Minister Manmohan Singh ji and Sonia Gandhi ji said. I have also made my stance abundantly clear in the past," he told a press conference here on the sidelines of the Bharat Jodo Yatra. Replying to a question that he appeared to be attempting a "reconciliation" in Punjab, the Congress MP said: "I have tremendous affection and I would go even further and say I have tremendous love and affection for the people of Punjab, and in particular the Sikh community. So, reconciliation is a small word." "I have love and affection for the people of this state and I have huge respect for the Sikh community for what they have done and for what they are going to do in future," he said. "It is an emotional statement. I think India would not be India, had it not been for the Sikh community. You play a central role here and in many ways, you are the part of the backbone of this



**Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with a physically challenged supporter during the party's Bharat Jodo Yatra, in Hoshiarpur district, Punjab**

country and that is something I value tremendously," said the former Congress president. Replying to a question on infighting in the Punjab Congress during last assembly polls, Rahul said his party lost the poll because of a lot of anti-incumbency. "There had been issues between the leadership but these are manageable issues and in coming time, these issues will not be there. There is no such problem and everybody is walking together," he said. The Congress leader slammed the AAP government in Punjab, saying it failed to give a vision to the people of the state. On a question about Congress leaders joining the BJP and if that has led to a leadership crisis in the party, and the role of Navjot Singh Sidhu once he is out of jail, Rahul said: "My experience is pretty much, anybody who goes to the BJP, goes there because of a particular type of pressure. "It is a hidden pressure you can call it. It is generally a result of pressure from the CBI, pressure from the ED, pressure from cases. So, we are quite happy that these types of people are not in the party anymore and I think, as far as the party is concerned, what I have seen on the streets is tremendous enthusiasm, extremely dynamic workers and a mix of senior and young leaders," he said. "So, what I see in the Congress Party is extremely capable leadership all the way from the top to the worker level. So, I am not worried about that. In fact, I am quite happy that some of this sort of riff-raff has gone somewhere else. Everybody will have a role to play. We are a democratic party. We like to involve all people and function together," he said. Replying to a question on a man rushing him to hug him during the yatra in Hoshiarpur, Rahul said: "I do not know why you are calling that a (security) lapse. I think the person was checked by the security people, he was a bit over-excited. (PTI)

### CS INAUGURATES GYANODAYA

From page-1  
She informed that the Block level and Zonal Level exhibitions were conducted in the month of October and November in which various Schools participated in the competition including Private Schools, out of which, 115 students including 22 students from Private Schools were selected to represent and showcase their exhibits today. The best selected projects will represent A&N Islands at the National Level Exhibition to be held in New Delhi, she said.. She informed that in A&N Islands, there are 22 Senior Secondary Schools having Science Stream in which about 1100 to 1200 students are pursuing their studies in Science stream. To develop scientific temperament among students, 10 Atal Tinkering Labs in Govt. Schools and 7 in Private Schools are functioning in the Islands, she said.

More than 100 exhibits were on display at the exhibition by the students from nine educational zones from Diglipur to Campbell Bay. Earlier, students from Govt. Model SSS and Govt. Boys S presented a welcome song. The Director, Education, Mr. Aditya Kumar Jha proposed the vote of thanks. The inaugural programme concluded with a silent National Anthem presented by the Special Children.

### Media fraternity expresses...

From page-1  
Sharing his thoughts, the Chief Editor, The Andaman Express, Mr. K Ganeshan also expressed gratitude to the Chief Secretary. He also expressed his gratitude to the Secretary, IP&T and Director (IP&T) for their cooperation and support to the local media here. Mr. Ganeshan underscored the need for greater interaction between government departments and media so that achievements of various government departments can be disseminated through the media. Mr. Ganeshan informed that earlier the media room was provided with facilities like TV, Internet and computer facilities for the use of Journalists. He informed us that he will take up these issues with the IP&T authorities.  
Mr. Vijay Kumar Roy, Editor-in-Chief, The Echo of India and Mr. Yadagiri, General Secretary, A&N Media Federation also spoke on the occasion.

## Subsidence-hit Joshimath residents seek permanent rehabilitation at safe location

JOSHIMATH, JAN 17 /--/ People staying in temporary relief camps in subsidence-hit Joshimath have sought permanent rehabilitation at a safe location where they do not have to face the same crisis again.

Joshimath, the gateway to famous pilgrimage sites like Badrinath and Hemkund Sahib and international skiing destination Auli, is facing a major challenge due to land subsidence. "We want relocation of a permanent nature at a secure place where we don't confront the same situation again," says Sunaina Saklani who completed her graduation recently said. "They (authorities) are

talking about rehabilitating us in Pipalkoti and Gauchar. Karnaprayag has already begun to sink, what if the same thing happens there too? Where shall we go if we face the same situation in Pipalkoti and Gauchar," she said. Sunaina Saklani is one of the four daughters of Durga Prasad Saklani whose house in ward no. 7 of Sunil area was the first to develop cracks in Joshimath around one year ago. "The cracks were small then. They have grown bigger since January 2. If action was taken when papa first gave his application to the administration, the situation may not have been as bad as it is today,"

Sunaina's younger sister Neha said. Around a week ago, the family had to shift to a temporary relief centre, 1.5 km from their home, after it was demarcated as unsafe for living. However, they keep returning to their dilapidated home to take care of their livestock left behind. According to the girls, their father does farming in Joshimath and their mother is ill. The shift to the relief camp has had an unsettling effect on everything. It has disturbed my studies and the condition of my mother, who underwent a surgery in Dehradun recently, has worsened, Neha, a first year intermediate student said. (PTI)



**Locals take part in a protest against a thermal power project in landslide-hit Joshimath town of Chamoli. Many locals consider the project as a reason for recent land subsidence in the town**

### Bengal govt has sought immediate release of PMAY funds from Centre: Official

KOLKATA, JAN 17 /--/ The West Bengal government has written to the Centre demanding the immediate release of funds under the PM Awas Yojana (PMAY), underlining that the state will fail to meet its March 31 deadline for building 11 lakh houses, if there is any further delay, a senior official said. The letter, sent by the state on Monday, is a reply to the Union ministry of rural

development's 493-page communication, seeking details of expenses made as part of the scheme, the official said. Notably, the BJP-led Union government has been sending inspection teams to West Bengal to examine the allegations of corruption in the implementation of PMAY. The state, in the letter, has clarified it has already answered all the queries of the Centre, and

sought pending funds at the earliest. "It has been mentioned in the letter that the state, despite severe financial crisis, has borne 40 per cent of expenses under the Awas Yojana scheme. The letter has also stated that it will not be possible to complete the work to build 11.5 lakh houses by March 31 if the funds are not released soon," the official said. Under the scheme, the

Centre bears 60 per cent of the cost, and the state 40 per cent. The official claimed the state government has borne Rs 4,800 crore, and the central government is yet to send its share of Rs 13,000 crore. "As a result, work for the housing project has been put on hold. We have requested the Centre to send the money for the housing scheme at the earliest," he said. (PTI)

## What are PM, FM hiding: Cong on Union minister's 'recession' remarks

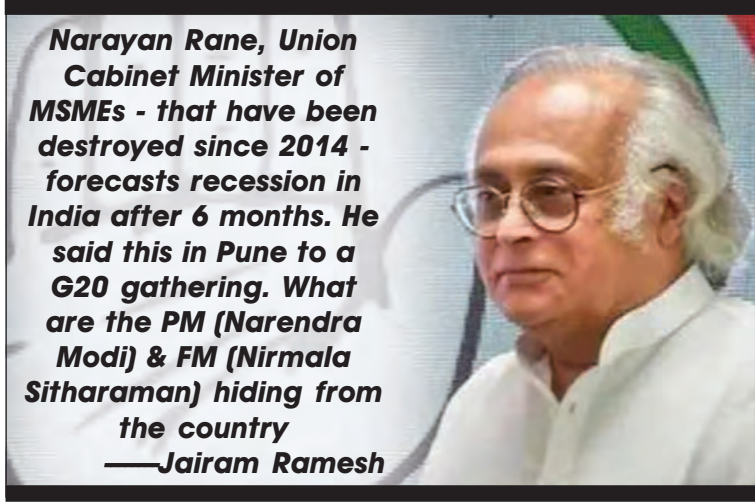
NEW DELHI, JAN 17 /--/ What are the prime minister and the finance minister hiding from the country, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh asked on Tuesday after Union minister Narayan Rane indicated that India may face an economic slowdown after June.

The minister for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) told reporters in Pune on Monday that if India faces an economic recession, it will happen only after June, but the Centre was making all efforts to avoid such a situation. He said developed countries were already facing an economic downturn. "Narayan Rane, Union Cabinet Minister of MSMEs - that have been destroyed since 2014 - forecasts recession in India after 6 months. He said this in Pune to a G20 gathering. What are the PM (Narendra Modi) & FM (Nirmala Sitharaman) hiding from the country," Ramesh asked on

Twitter. Rane's comments came after inaugurating the G20's 1st Infrastructure Working Group (IWG). India currently holds the presidency of the G20 grouping. "As I am in the Cabinet, some information is available to us and

whatever advice we get from PM Modiji (Prime Minister Narendra Modi), on that basis, we can say that there is an economic recession in big countries. It is a reality," he told reporters. "To ensure India is not impacted or to stop (the

economic slowdown), which is expected to come after June... Modiji and the Centre are making efforts to ensure the people of the country are not impacted by the slowdown," Rane said. India is set to lose its fastest-growing major economy tag this year going by the seven per cent GDP expansion projected by the Statistics Ministry in the fiscal year ending March, this is on the back of weakening demand at home and abroad. That growth rate will be second only to Saudi Arabia's expected 7.6 per cent growth. While India's industrial activity reverted to expansionary territory with the November 2022 Index of Industrial Production (IIP) posting an annualized growth of 7.1 per cent vis-à-vis a contraction of 4.2 per cent in the previous month, global headwinds led to exports contracting by 12.2 per cent to USD 34.48 billion in December. (PTI)





## UK home secy orders extradition of arms dealer Sanjay Bhandari to India

LONDON, JAN 17 /--/ British home secretary Suella Braverman has ordered the extradition of Sanjay Bhandari, an accused middleman and consultant in arms deals, to India to face charges of tax evasion and money laundering. According to Home Office sources, the extradition was ordered last week and Bhandari now has 14 days until the end of this month to appeal against the order in the



Sanjay Bhandari and Suella Braverman

administrative division of the High Court in London. The 60-year-old faced two extradition requests from the Indian authorities, the first related to money laundering and the second to tax evasion. The development comes two months after a UK court in November ruled that Bhandari can be extradited to India to face charges of tax evasion and money laundering and paved the way for the British government to order his extradition. District judge Michael Snow, who heard the case at Westminster Magistrates' Court in London last year, had concluded that there are no bars to him being extradited and decided to send the case to the Indian-origin home secretary Braverman.

The judge concluded a prima facie case had been established with respect to both extradition requests. "He failed to declare his overseas income and assets...He benefited from the income and assets that had not been declared. A reasonable jury can properly infer benefit from his undeclared income and purchase of substantial assets overseas," the court said in its ruling. The Indian government's extradition request for Bhandari had been certified by then UK Home Secretary Priti Patel in June 2020 and he was arrested on an extradition warrant the following month that year. The London-based businessman has been on bail on security provided to the court as he fought extradition on the cases against him by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and Enforcement Directorate (ED). According to the court documents, Bhandari is wanted in India for intended prosecution for an offence of money laundering contrary to the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) 2002 and for offences of tax evasion contrary to the Black Money (Undisclosed Foreign Income and Asset), Imposition of Tax Act 2015 and Income Tax Act 1961.

Bhandari, who was resident in India for tax purposes at the time in 2015, is accused of concealing overseas assets, using backdated documents, benefiting from the assets not declared to the Indian tax authorities and then falsely informing the authorities that he did not possess any overseas assets. He, however, denies the allegations. The UK's Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), on behalf of the Indian authorities, argued that Bhandari's conduct amounts to "fraud by false representation" in the British jurisdiction. Bhandari's defence team had sought to argue against the prima facie case and also on human rights grounds, claiming a "real risk" that he would be subjected to torture by the police and of a breach of his Article 3 of the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR) rights because of the conditions in Indian prisons, from "non-state agents and from the prison guards". "Assurances have been given in this case. It is the Government's case that the defendant will be held at ward No. 4 Central Jail No. 3, Tihar Jail Complex in New Delhi," the judgment noted. "India is a friendly country governed by the rule of law. I have not been made aware of any assurance that has not been honoured," it added. (PTI)

## Indian student from Punjab dies in car crash in Australia

MELBOURNE, JAN 17 /--/ A 21-year-old Indian from Punjab was killed in a fatal car crash in Australia's Canberra, a media report said. Kunal Chopra from Hoshiarpur district, who held a student visa in Australia, was returning from work around 7 am when his car collided with a concrete pumping truck on William Hovell Drive in Canberra last week, SBS Punjabi, a multi-cultural and multi-lingual broadcaster in Australia, reported. According to the preliminary investigations, Chopra's car crossed to the wrong side of the road into the path of the city-bound truck. Chopra was announced dead on the spot. This was Canberra territory's first road fatality for 2023. Acting Inspector for Road Policing Travis Mills said the major collisions team continued to investigate the accident of Chopra, who arrived in Australia in February last year. "We are heartbroken, and his family back home is shattered and inconsolable," Honey Malhotra, a cousin of Chopra who stayed with him in Canberra, told SBS Punjabi. Malhotra said he was making arrangements to send Chopra's mortal remains to his family in India. Friend and community representative, Gurpreet Singh Gill, said the tragedy has left the tight-knit Indian community in Canberra in deep shock. "We are in touch with his family, and also with the Indian High Commission, which is helping with the repatriation of his mortal remains to India," Gill told SBS Punjabi, urging young students to remain vigilant on the roads. Chopra's accident comes days after the Shepparton crash that left four men of Indian origin dead, another tragedy that shocked the community in Australia. (PTI)



# LeT's deputy leader Makki designated global terrorist by UN, India welcomes move

UNITED NATIONS/NEW DELHI, JAN 17 /--/ In a major diplomatic victory for India, Abdul Rehman Makki was designated a global terrorist by the UN after China lifted its hold on a joint India-US proposal to blacklist the deputy chief of Pakistan-based terror group Lashkar-e-Taiba.

The UN Security Council's 1267 ISIL (Da'esh) and Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee added 68-year-old Makki to its list of designated terrorists on Monday, subjecting him to an assets freeze, travel ban and arms embargo, after years of efforts by India and its allies. Makki's listing comes seven months after China, a close

ally of Pakistan, had put a hold on June 16, 2022 on a joint proposal by India and the US to designate the head of the political affairs wing of JuD/LeT and the brother-in-law of LeT chief Hafiz Muhammad Saeed. Responding to a question on why China decided to lift its technical hold on blacklisting Makki as a global terrorist, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin defended the move, saying that listing of terrorists is conducive to enhancing global counterterrorism cooperation and praised Islamabad for

backing counter-terrorism efforts. "Terrorism is the common enemy of humanity," Wang

important international counterterrorism mechanism" and listing of terrorists or terror organisations under the aegis of the UN is conducive to enhancing international counterterrorism cooperation in response to terrorist threats, he said. India on Tuesday welcomed the UN Security Council decision to declare Makki as a global terrorist and said threats from terrorism in the region remain high and sanctions by the UNSC are an effective tool to curb such threats. External affairs ministry spokesman



Abdul Rehman Makki

Wenbin told a media briefing in Beijing. "The 1267 Committee (of the UN Security Council) is an

## Turkey's top diplomat travels to US amid troubled ties

ANKARA, JAN 17 /--/ Turkey and the United States will aim to smooth out a series of disagreements between the NATO allies when the Turkish foreign minister visits Washington this week. But expectations that outstanding issues can be resolved are low.

Mevlut Cavusoglu departs on Tuesday for a meeting with US counterpart Antony Blinken on a rare visit by a top Turkish official. US President Joe Biden's administration has kept its distance from Turkey because of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's increasingly authoritarian direction and policies curbing rights and freedoms. Positioned at the crossroads between East and West, Turkey remains strategically important for Washington. Last year, the Turkish government helped broker a crucial agreement between Russia and Ukraine that allowed millions of tons of Ukrainian grain to be transported to world markets, averting a food crisis amid the war.

NATO allies, however, frequently find themselves at odds over a number of issues, with the biggest disputes centering on Turkey's purchase of Russian-made missiles and American support for Kurdish militants in Syria. The acquisition of the S-400 air defense system in 2017 led to sanctions and Turkey being removed from the development program for the next-generation F-35 fighter plane. After losing out on the F-35, Ankara is currently trying to restock its F-16 fleet. But the deal

faces opposition in Congress. Cavusoglu sounded confident this week that the deal for the purchase of 40 F-16 jets as well as technology for the update of its existing fleet would overcome congressional hurdles. "We have reached an agreement with the (Biden) administration, and it is important that the administration has emphasized that the agreement is not only important for Turkey but for NATO as well," Cavusoglu told reporters. "If the administration stands firm... then there will be no problem."

US State Department deputy spokesman Vedant Patel responded Friday to media reports that the Biden administration is also seeking congressional approval for shipping F-35s to Greece, another NATO member and neighbor that is growing increasingly irritated by Ankara's threats. "Turkey and Greece both are vital, vital NATO allies and we have a history of, of course, supporting their security apparatuses. But I'm just not going to get ahead of the process here," Patel said using the name for Turkey preferred by Erdogan's government. In Syria, US support for the Kurdish militant group YPG since 2014 has angered Ankara because of links between the YPG and the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, which has waged a 39-year insurgency against Turkey and is listed as a terrorist organisation by the U.S. and European Union.

Backing for the YPG has led senior Turkish officials to accuse Washington of

ties to terror attacks such as November's Istanbul bombing that killed six people. US concern over Ankara's cozy relationship with the Kremlin has been reinvigorated by the war in Ukraine. Despite Turkey's ties with Moscow producing breakthroughs such as the grain deal and prisoner swaps, Washington is worried about sanctions-busting as Turkish-Russian trade levels have risen over the last year. Ankara's feet-dragging over ratifying bids by Sweden and Finland to join NATO has added to friction between the allies. Turkey's recent attempts at rapprochement with Syria after a decade of bitter enmity has opened another break with the US.

Following a meeting of Syrian and Turkish defense ministers in Moscow last month, the U.S. State Department reiterated its opposition to countries normalizing relations with Damascus. On Thursday, the department's main spokesman, Ned Price, said at a regular media briefing that "we have not seen that this regime in Damascus has done anything that would merit normalization or merit improved relations." "Anyone engaging with the regime should ask how that engagement is benefiting the Syrian people again, a people that have borne the vicious brunt of what their own government has inflicted upon them," Price added. The US military has also warned that a threatened Turkish operation against the YPG in northern Syria could destabilize the region and revive the Islamic State group. (AP)

## Taliban official says 9 men lashed in public in southern Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD, JAN 17 /--/ Nine men were lashed in public in southern Afghanistan on Tuesday as punishment for different crimes under the country's new rulers, a Taliban-appointed official said.

The lashings were the latest example of harsh policies imposed by the Taliban since they seized power in the country in August 2021 policies that reflect their interpretation of Islamic law or Sharia. Haji Zaid, a spokesman for the Governor's Office in southern Kandahar province, said in a tweet that the lashings took place at the sports stadium in the city of Kandahar, the provincial capital.

Each man was lashed between 35 and 39 times in front of Taliban officials, religious clerics, elders, and local people, he said.

Zaid's tweet did not elaborate on the crimes the nine were accused of or provide other details.

The spokesperson and other Taliban officials in Kandahar could not immediately be reached for more comment. Last month, the Taliban executed an Afghan convicted of killing another man, the first public execution since the former insurgents returned to power.

The execution was carried out with an assault rifle by the victim's father in western Parah province as hundreds of spectators and many top Taliban officials watched. No country has officially recognised the new Afghan government under the Taliban, who previously ruled Afghanistan in the late 1990s. (AP)

## Indian-American Krishna Vavilala honoured with MLK Grande Parade Special Award

HOUSTON, JAN 17 /--/ Indian-American Krishna Vavilala has been honoured with the MLK Grande Parade



Special Award for the 86-year-old community leader's contributions towards connecting the Indian diaspora with the mainstream America as the US celebrated the legacy of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. King, a champion of civil rights for Blacks, was born on January 15, 1929, in Atlanta, Georgia. Vavilala, a longtime Houstonian and the founder and chairman of the Foundation of India Studies (FIS), has in the past led several MLK Grande Parades, dressed as Mahatma Gandhi with the sole purpose of bringing the Indian community closer to the Black community, based on the principles of non-violence, which both Gandhi and MLK Jr. had followed. The award -- a trophy and a plaque -- was presented by Charles Stamps, the chairman and CEO of MLK Jr. Parade Foundation, at its glitzier gala night on Sunday amidst thunderous applause. Charles spoke highly of Vavilala and appreciated his dedication to spreading the message of both Mahatma Gandhi and MLK Jr, who were continents apart, yet shared the same vision and followed the same path.

A strong believer in promoting peace and racial harmony, Vavilala while accepting the award said: "Initially when I was called about this award, I thought it was a hoax. Having lived in this country for over five decades, I have observed that there is very little social interaction between the Blacks and the Indian communities in our daily lives. So, I wanted to do something about it. I must be one of the very few people in America who has seen Gandhi in person." "The memory of me as a nine-year-old seeing Gandhi during his visit to Rajahmundry, my hometown in 1946, is still stuck in my mind," he narrated. "My grandmother took me and my two sisters on a bullock cart to see Mahatma Gandhi," Vavilala stated. "My inspiration to participate in the MLK parades came after I got the Gandhi statue installed in Hermann park, in 2003-2004," he said.

"We all know, Martin Luther King Jr. had established a historic link between India and America, by adopting Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence in his civil rights movement. It is my belief that the Indian diaspora should participate in the annual MLK parades to help bring about social justice and racial harmony," he added. Meanwhile, members and supporters of the FIS on Monday morning braved the wintry weather and walked in the 29th Martin Luther King Jr. Grand Parade in midtown, Houston. "FIS's participation in the MLK parades is purely to pay homage to the late civil rights leader who had adopted Gandhi's methods of passive resistance and non-violence in his struggle to achieve equal civil rights for the Black community, thus enabling permanent bondage between people of America and the people of India. This relationship is expected to endure the test of times for many generations to come," Vavilala told PTI.

The 17-year-old organisation has routinely participated in MLK parades for 12 years and also won the parade's Grand Marshall Award in 2015. Vavilala, a BITS Pilani alumni, is a retired Electrical Engineer, originally from Andhra Pradesh and now a naturalised American citizen settled in Houston.

Over the years, Vavilala has kept Gandhi's vision relevant in Houston and was instrumental in proposing the installation of a life-size Gandhi statue at Herman Park, a constant reminder of "peace in a cowboy state" of Texas. Vavilala was instrumental in 2006 in establishing the India studies programme at the University of Houston and responsible for initiating the India Studies programme at Texas Southern University in May 2022. (PTI)

## Germany to appoint regional official as defence minister

BERLIN, JAN 17 /--/ German Chancellor Olaf Scholz will appoint a regional official as the new defence minister following the resignation of the much-criticised Christine Lambrecht, the DPA news agency reported Tuesday.

The defence minister-designate, Boris Pistorius, is a member of Scholz' Social Democrats, and has been serving as interior minister of Lower Saxony since 2013. The 62-year-old Pistorius will have to steer the project of modernising Germany's military and oversee expanding weapons deliveries to Ukraine. Pistorius will also quickly be thrown into the deep end of the new job.

US defence secretary Lloyd Austin is scheduled to visit Berlin this week and then host a meeting of allies at the Ramstein Air Base in western Germany. On Sunday, the German and French governments will hold bilateral talks that include a meeting of the countries' joint security council. Lambrecht had been defence minister since Scholz became chancellor in December 2021. Critics had long portrayed her as out of her depth. (AP)

Arindam Bagchi also said India will continue to press the international community to take credible, verifiable and irreversible action against terrorism.

Makki has occupied various leadership roles in LeT, including raising funds for the organisation, he said in New Delhi. "Threats from terrorist organisations in the region remain high and listings and sanctions by the UNSC, are an effective tool to curb such threats and dismantle terror infrastructure in the region," Bagchi said. Decisions to list individuals and entities under the 1267 Sanctions Committee are made through consensus. (PTI)

## Democratic institutions being weakened; number of democracies diminishing: Swiss Prez

DAVOS, JAN 17 /--/ Swiss President Alain Berset on Tuesday said the number of democracies worldwide has diminished very much and the world is at a tipping point with democratic institutions being weakened.



Alain Berset

"In certain places, the rule of law is under threat even in some democratically constituted states. And the rule of law is also at risk of eroding in the international system," Berset said in a special address at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2023 here. He said the post-war order is currently experiencing its greatest crisis and Russia's invasion of Ukraine constitutes a brutal attack on a peaceful country. "But it is also a brutal attack on international law and multilateralism. The war is causing great suffering. And it is playing a decisive role on the global development of democracy," the President said. He lauded the solidarity shown by democratic countries with Ukraine and rued that the aggression has come, of all countries, from a member of the UN Security Council, which as per the UN Charter: bears "primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security". Berset said Switzerland will make every effort to again strengthen international law and multilateralism in the UN Security Council.

The President also said inequality worldwide has continued to grow and inequality brings with it huge political and social collateral damage. "What we call populism is essentially a reaction to growing inequality. We all know that: Extreme inequality undermines social cohesion. It creates resentment, causing us to seek scapegoats. And it is politically toxic, eating away at our faith in democracy," he added. "The number of democracies worldwide has diminished very much. According to Freedom House, around 50 per cent of the world's population lived in democracies ten years ago. Today, that figure is just 20 per cent. "Business as usual is no longer an option: We must take steps to defend steadfastly the foundations, that are a prerequisite for civilised coexistence," the President said. "Self-interest and supporting those weaker than ourselves. We have long considered these to be two different things. Now we know: They are one and the same," Berset said. (PTI)

## Indian-American attorney becomes 1st LGBTQ woman of colour to take oath as US City Council member



Janani Ramachandran

HOUSTON, JAN 17 /--/ Janani Ramachandran, a 30-year-old Indian-American attorney, has emerged as the youngest and the first queer woman of colour to take oath as the Oakland City Council member in the US state of California.

Ramachandran took the ceremonial oath wearing a saree as the Oakland City Council member for District 4 in an inauguration ceremony held on January 10. "WE WON! Honored to be the next City Councilmember for Oakland District 4!! I will officially be the youngest Council member in Oakland's

history, the 1st #LGBTQ woman of color & 1st South Asian to serve on Oakland City Council," the public interest attorney tweeted.

She took to Twitter to express her gratitude and said, "Immensely grateful for all those who believed in me and helped build our movement. Honored to have my loved ones by my side as I took the ceremonial oath!"

Ramachandran describes herself as "a daughter of immigrants from a small village in South India. Ramachandran currently serves on the California Commission on Asian

and Pacific Islander American Affairs and has previously served as a Commissioner at the City of Oakland Public Ethics Commission, according to her website.

The Stanford University and University of California, Berkeley pass-out has worked in several legal non-profits.

As a first-time candidate in her 2021 run for State Assembly, she shocked political experts by advancing to the special election runoff, coming out on top amongst a field of previously elected officials, her website said. (PTI)



# Kishan likely to play in middle-order as India face plucky New Zealand

**HYDERABAD, JAN 17** /--/ Having stirred a debate after being left out of the squad despite a world record double hundred, Ishan Kishan is expected to be in the playing eleven in the upcoming ODI series against a tough New Zealand. KL Rahul's unavailability due to personal reasons opens up a slot for Kishan, but he may not be asked to open during the three-match series starting here on Wednesday. Kishan had to sit out of the Sri Lanka series despite scoring the fastest double hundred in the history of ODIs, against Bangladesh in the preceding series. Shubman Gill, who was rewarded for his consistency and picked ahead of Kishan to open alongside skipper Rohit Sharma, made the most of the opportunities with scores of 70, 21 and 116 in the Sri Lanka series. No changes are expected to the opening combination against the Black Caps but Rahul's unavailability means Kishan is expected to keep wickets. Kishan has batted in the middle-order thrice in the 10 ODIs he had played, therefore adjustment should not be an issue. KS Bharat, who is the second wicketkeeper in the squad, is likely to warm the bench as he is more of a cover in Rahul's absence. In a World Cup year, every game is significant and India would aim to build on the gains from the Sri Lanka series even though the performance of their opponents was underwhelming to say the least. The big takeaways for India from the Sri Lanka series was the performance of the top three and Mohammed Siraj's ability to pick up wickets with the new ball. Like Gill and Virat Kohli, Rohit also looked in sublime touch with scores of 83 and 42 but would like to get a big hundred which has also eluded him for some time now.

Kohli though is back to scoring hundreds at will and looks hungrier for runs more than ever, which should set alarm bells ringing in the New Zealand camp. While he was one of India's steady batters in ODIs in 2022, Shreyas Iyer failed



India's Ishan Kishan attends a practice session at Greenfield International Stadium

to convert his starts in three games as scores of 28, 28 and 38 would suggest and to make matters worse, the middle-order batter now has been ruled out of the three-match series against New Zealand owing to a back injury. In Iyer's absence, the indomitable Suryakumar Yadav will get at least three chances to cement his place in the side. Surya and Hardik Pandya in the middle-order will surely add firepower at the back-end. Rajat Patidar, who plays for Madhya Pradesh in the domestic circuit and Royal Challengers Bangalore in the Indian Premier League, has

been named as Iyer's replacement for the rubber against the visiting Kiwis. Patidar has earlier been part of ODI team for past few series. Besides Rahul, Axar Patel has also been given a break for the series and his like-for-like replacement in the eleven could be Shahbaz Ahmed. It remains to be seen if the team management gives Shahbaz a go or bring in Washington Sundar, who could be handy against the left-handers in the New Zealand camp. India have so far preferred to play a finger and a wrist spinner each in the playing eleven,

leaving them to choose between Yuzvendra Chahal and Kuldeep Yadav, who provided the much needed wickets in the middle overs in the two games against Sri Lanka. Whether Kuldeep and Chahal could be played together like it used to happen five years back or the team management decides otherwise is there to be seen. Chahal did not play after the first ODI due to a sore shoulder but he should be available for selection for the series-opener. Siraj, Mohammad Shami and Umran Malik will be the likely specialist pacers in the team with Hardik Pandya being the all-rounder. Though New Zealand don't have the services of star players Kane Williamson and Tim Southee for the series, the hosts will have to be at their best to better the visitors. Stand-in-captain Tom Latham played a blinder the last time the two teams met in an ODI. The team is coming from a high of a series against Pakistan in Karachi. Opener Finn Allen, who was not at his destructive best in Karachi, would be looking to take the attack to the India bowlers. The hosts need to find a way to stop the belligerent Glenn Phillips who single-handedly won New Zealand the decider against Pakistan despite being half-fit. (PTI)

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

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

**MATCH STARTS 1.30 IST.**

## GAME NOTES

### Shreyas Iyer ruled out of NZ series due to back injury, Patidar drafted in

**HYDERABAD, JAN 17** /--/ Middle-order batter Shreyas Iyer has been ruled out of the three-match ODI series against New Zealand owing to a back injury, the BCCI said on Tuesday. Struggling to convert his starts in recent times, Iyer will now be heading to the National Cricket Academy (NCA) for further assessment and management. "Team India batter Shreyas Iyer has been ruled out of the upcoming 3-match ODI series against New Zealand due to a back injury," BCCI secretary Jay Shah said in a statement. Rajat Patidar, who plays for Madhya Pradesh in the domestic circuit and Royal Challengers Bangalore in the Indian Premier League, has been named as Iyer's replacement for the rubber against the visiting Kiwis. Patidar has earlier been part of ODI team for past few series. India play the first ODI against New Zealand here on Wednesday. In his last three outings, Iyer got out after making 28, 28 and 38, respectively. In the absence of Iyer, the indomitable Suryakumar Yadav could get at least three chances to cement his place in the side. (PTI)

### Australia can recreate magic of 2004

#### Test series win in India: Gilchrist

**MELBOURNE, JAN 17** /--/ Former Australia skipper Adam Gilchrist is confident the Pat Cummins-led side will be able to win the Border-Gavaskar series in India after 19 years if they go in with three seamers to partner spinner Nathan Lyon. The former wicketkeeper-batter, who was Australia's stand-in skipper during the 2004 series win -- the only one they pocketed since 1969 -- added that experimenting with a new spinner in sub-continental conditions has never worked, and Cummins should refrain from doing that. "I think they'll do it (win the series). I really do. I think they've got a squad and final XI that will have a lot of similarities to the team we rolled with in 2004," Gilchrist was quoted as saying by Fox Sports on Tuesday. "So often teams go to India hoping to unveil some new spinner that's going to come in and adapt and bedazzle in India -- it doesn't really happen," added Gilchrist. (PTI)

### Pace of deliveries is little slower in U-19 cricket: Shafali Verma

**BENONI (SOUTH AFRICA), JAN 17** /--/ With 74 senior international appearances under her belt, Shafali Verma is finding the pace of U-19 bowlers in the ongoing junior Women's World Cup, slightly easier to face. Shafali, who has already played 51 WT20Is and 21 WODIs besides two Tests for India senior team, is currently leading the U-19 national side in the Women's U-19 T20 World Cup. She has already stamped her class with 16-ball-45 against South Africa and 34-ball-78 against UAE in consecutive win for the Indian girls. "There is lot of difference because the ball is coming in little slow in the U-19 and the wicket is also in the slower side and we are trying to get used to that. And of course, a little bit of difference, seamers have good pace, a good mind-set here also but they are all learning and I really enjoying playing with them," Shafali was quoted as saying by 'Star Sports'. (PTI)



### Women's Hockey: Rani Rampal scores on comeback as India thrash SA 5-1

**CAPE TOWN, JAN 17** /--/ Rani Rampal made an impressive comeback to the national side with a goal to her name as India crushed South Africa 5-1 in the first Test of



the four-match series here. Returning to the side for the first time since playing against Belgium in the FIH Women's Hockey Pro League 2021-22 last June, former captain Rani opened India's scoring in the 12th minute on Monday night before Monika (20th), Navneet Kaur (24th), Gurjit Kaur (25th) and Sangita Kumari (30th) found the back of net four times in the second quarter to hand India a commanding 5-0 lead at half-time. South Africa's lone goal was scored by captain Qunita Bobbs in the 44th minute. The second match will be played late on Tuesday night. (PTI)

## I am not too loyal to players: Jurgen Klopp



**LIVERPOOL, JAN 17** /--/ Jurgen Klopp says he will not leave Liverpool unless he is told to go, hinting at a major overhaul of his ageing squad at the end of the season. A sixth Premier League defeat of the campaign at the weekend means the 2020 champions are 10 points outside the top four with just over half the season remaining. Klopp last year signed a contract extension until 2026 and the 55-year-old stressed only the sack would prevent him seeing that through. "Either the manager's position changes or a lot of other things change," he said. "So as far as I am concerned unless someone tells me I will not go. "So that means maybe there is a point where we have to change other stuff. We will see that, but that is something for the future. Like summer or whatever. Not now. "I have space and time to think about it -- we have to play better football now." Captain Jordan Henderson (32), Fabinho (29) and 31-year-old Thiago Alcantara remain first-choice picks in a midfield that is showing its age but Klopp denied he was being too loyal to the old guard. "The problem is too complex. You have a good player who did a lot of good things in the past and then in your mind (you think) maybe that's it for him," said the Liverpool boss, speaking of the need for rejuvenation.

"If you can then go out and bring in another player to replace (him) that makes sense. If you cannot bring anybody in you cannot bring anybody out. That is the situation." Klopp, whose team face Wolves in an FA Cup third-round replay on Tuesday, also rejected the suggestion that longer-serving players had stopped listening to him. "I was not that often in a similar situation but I know exactly how it works when things don't go well," he said. "There is a list of things you go through and one of the things is the players aren't listening to the coach anymore. "In Germany we say the manager doesn't reach the team anymore. So I understand it looks like this sometimes but it is just not the case. You can take that off the list." (AFP)

## Small stadiums, high temperatures: what Ronaldo can expect in Saudi

**RIYADH, JAN 17** /--/ After lighting up football's biggest stages, Cristiano Ronaldo faces a very different reality in Saudi Arabia with smaller stadiums and less exalted teams -- and some very high temperatures.

Ronaldo, 37, says he's embracing the "challenge" of the Saudi Pro League, a step into the unknown for a player who is more used to Real Madrid's heaving Santiago Bernabeu stadium or the "Theatre of Dreams", Manchester United's Old Trafford. The transition has been eased by the combined 400 million euros he'll receive in wages from his new team, Al Nassr, and a separate payment to act as an ambassador for an expected Saudi World Cup bid, according to sources close to the club. But it will be a big adjustment for the five-time Ballon d'Or winner, who will soon be running out at modest venues including the 6,000-seat Al Batin Stadium. After an exhibition appearance against his great rival Lionel Messi's Paris Saint-Germain in the Saudi capital Riyadh on Thursday, Ronaldo will make his Saudi Pro League debut for Al Nassr on Sunday. The 16-team league will take Ronaldo from Dammam on the Gulf coast to Jeddah on the Red Sea, as well as desert-bound provincial cities such as Majma'ah and Hofuf, a hub for Saudi Arabia's date industry. While Al Hilal and Al Ittihad, the giants of Saudi football, play in 62,000-capacity home grounds, a handful of Pro League teams have small venues for less than 10,000 fans, and some pitches are surrounded by running tracks. "Sometimes the stadiums are not in the best condition," Moqbel Al-Zabini, editor-in-chief of the Al Riyadhiah newspaper, told AFP, cautioning that

empty seats are a common sight. "The attendances that Ronaldo is used to will not exist. We are not used to seeing stadiums full to capacity," he said. Ronaldo's home ground will be Al Nassr's 25,000-capacity Mrsool Park, which lies on a university campus in Riyadh and was packed

played, can remain above 30C (86 Fahrenheit) in August and September, and from March until the end of the season. "The weather will pose a challenge to Ronaldo... but I think he will adapt and excel," said Saleh al-Khalif, Al-Riyadiah's deputy editor-in-chief. Saudi Arabia is a leading force in

Asian football with six World Cup appearances, including a famous victory over Messi's Argentina at the recent edition in Qatar. Al Hilal and Al Ittihad have won six AFC Champions League titles between them. With Ronaldo, Al Nassr will have hopes of qualifying for this year's competition and joining their great rivals as Asian champions. Although the Pro League's standards cannot match the heights of England, Spain and Italy, where Ronaldo has spent his career so far, it is a competitive division. The Saudi league was launched in 1976 but in the 14 years since the Pro League became the top tier, there have been six different winners. Khalif said the league's "strength and diversity" were comparable to English football, insisting it would be no "walk in the park" for Ronaldo. The Pro League is packed with 128 foreign players from 48 countries, with each team allowed to sign eight. At Al Nassr, coached by Frenchman Rudi Garcia, Ronaldo's team-mates include Colombia and ex-Arsenal goalkeeper David Ospina and Brazilian midfielder Luis Gustavo, formerly of Bayern Munich. Ronaldo's first task will be to keep Al Nassr on top of the league and secure their first title in four years. But the other teams will be highly motivated to stop him. "Ronaldo is a legend... and all teams will play to beat Ronaldo," said Khalif. (AFP)

for his gala unveiling earlier this month. Chartered planes will ferry the superstar and his team-mates to away games, club sources said, sparing him long coach trips through the desert landscape. The Pro League season runs from August to May, avoiding the worst of the fierce summer heat when temperatures routinely top 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit). Even the evenings, when many games are



## India's 'Hockey Village' set for transition from bamboo sticks to artificial turf



**SAUNAMARA (ODISHA), JAN 17** /--/ In the small village that has given India some of its biggest hockey players, it all starts with sticks made from bamboo or kendu tree. Every evening more than 100 children at Saunamara, a hamlet of little over 2000 tribal inhabitants in Odisha's Sundargarh district, play on a dusty ground, pursuing their dreams of becoming the next Dilip Tirkey, Amit Rohidas or Subhadra Pradhan.

Their fortunes, though, could change soon as an artificial turf will be ready by next month. That means the village, which is located just over 100km from Birsa Munda Stadium, the world's largest all-seater hockey-specific venue in Rourkela, could churn out more international players. Saunamara is now known as the 'Hockey Village' of India as it has given the country former men's team captain and Hockey India

president Tirkey, current national team player Amit Rohidas, India junior team vice-captain Dipsan Tirkey and ex-India women's skipper Subhadra, among others. This village is part of the Balisankara block of Sundargarh district, which is now considered the cradle of Indian hockey, having given more than 60 national team players, both male and female. "There were no proper hockey ground in my village when I grow up. We had to play wherever we get some space. But now my village is going to have an artificial turf," Tirkey, one of the finest defenders of his time and most capped player for India with 421 matches, told PTI. "I am very happy for the children of my village and, at the same time, feeling proud of the contribution of my village for Indian hockey," said the 45-year-old, who made his India debut in 1995 and retired in 2010,

before becoming HI chief. He said the artificial surface being laid out at his village is a sand-filled turf, which is most appropriate for schools and is a publicly accessible facility, because of its lower cost and multi-functionality. The astro turf used for international matches costs at least Rs 4 crore but the price is lower for sand-filled artificial pitches. The Odisha government has started laying synthetic turfs in all the 17 blocks of the Sundargarh district and some of them are already completed. The laying of the artificial surface at the Saunamara village, with the accompanying field marking, is completed. Only the goal posts are to be erected. It will also have change rooms and other facilities at the front side which will have a proper entrance. (PTI)

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