

REVERBERATION

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A weekly echoing the mood of the people, comes to you on every Monday

Chief Secretary reviews issues related to power generation and distribution

Port Blair, May 22

The Chief Secretary, Shri Jitendra Narain reviewed the power outages issue with the Commissioner-cum- Secretary (Power) and Secretary (Power). He directed Secretary (Power) to immediately set up a Central Control Room in his Office on 24x7 basis with a responsible Officer or Engineer as in charge and give wide publicity in social and print media by listing the names, mobile number and telephone

of the shift wise in charges.

It was also directed that Secretary (Power) shall give wide publicity in social and print media regarding the division wise Control Rooms to be set up on 24x7 basis with the details of shift wise in charges EE or AE, their mobile and telephone numbers, areas covered under the Division immediately so that public can approach them to attend local power outages caused by area specific distribution network faults so that the same can be

rectified immediately.

The Chief Secretary further directed the Commissioner-cum- Secretary (Power) to immediately constitute teams headed by Secretaries, DC and senior Officers and generation station wise to daily visit and monitor the power production on hourly basis vis-a-vis the generating capacity, load factor etc to ensure that there is no sabotage to lower the power production deliberately with mala fide motives, a press release received here said.

Vehicles not meeting BS VI Emission Norms from mainland not allowed in Isles: STA

Port Blair, May 22

It has been observed that old and polluting commercial vehicles registered in other States/ UTs are being brought into the UT, thereby damaging the pristine environment of these Islands. Hence, in order to protect the environment, it has been decided by the State Transport Authority that already registered commercial vehicles in mainland would be permitted to ply in the UT only if these are in compliance with

BS VI emission norms. Vehicles not meeting the BS VI emission norms brought from mainland will not be allowed to ply in the UT and stringent penal actions would be initiated against the owners.

General public have been advised not to bring any commercial vehicle which are not meeting the BS VI emission norms from other States/ UTs into this UT, a press release from Transport Deptt. said.

MP demands Forest Tours for Students, Waste Wood Supply for SHGs, Bamboo Park and Elephant Rides Facilities for promotion of Tourism



Port Blair, May 23:

The Member of Parliament of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Shri. Kuldeep Rai

Sharma recently called on the Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (PCCF) and requested him arrange trips to various forest areas for school students under new initiative 'Know Your Jungle' for execution and recreation, which will not only give extensive knowledge about Andaman Flora and Fauna but also keep our children physically fit and mentally active.

He also requested to provide waste woods from Chatham Saw Mill and Betapur Saw Mill to SHG groups and train the members of SHG groups to convert the waste woods into attractive souvenirs.

Shri. Kuldeep Rai Sharma also requested the PCCF to establish

a Bamboo Park with all available wild and exotic species of Bamboo, found in Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

He said that such a park will not only be an excellent place of Tourist Attraction but also will be a great place for organizing education tours for school students.

He also requested the PCCF to introduce Elephant rides in more Islands, which can also become a great Tourist Attraction and help our Tourism Industry.

During the meeting the PCCF assured to do needful regarding these issues.

'Island Music Festival' at Corbyn's Cove enthralls gathering with electrifying performance by local artistes



Port Blair, May 22

The two-day 'Island Music Festival' organized by the Tourism Department which began at Corbyn's Cove yesterday attracted hundreds of people from different walks of life. The gathering cherished soulful melodies and rhythmic dance performances by the artistes of the Islands. The festival

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Online awareness prog. on marine products exports for stakeholders engaged in marine fish processing held

Port Blair, May 20

'District as an Export Hub' initiative of Govt. of India envisages to convert each District of the country into an export hub by identifying products with export potential in the District. The Government of India has identified South Andaman District as one amongst the 75 Districts in the country for pilot initiative under 'District as an Export Hub' scheme. The Andaman and Nicobar Administration has identified Marine Fishery Products, Coconut Products and Tourism as the products for export from the A&N Islands.

To take forward the initiative, the Directorate of Industries in association with Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), Kolkata, Marine Product Export Development Authority (MPEDA), Chennai and Export Inspection Agency

(EIA), Kolkata organized an online awareness programme on marine products exports for Officers of A & N Administration and stakeholders engaged in marine fish processing today.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri Arjun Upadhyay, Deputy Director General, DGFT Kolkata enlightened the participants about the programme 'District as an Export Hub' and the objectives of the scheme. He further informed that the A & N Administration is the 1st among the State / UT to adopt the Export Action Plan for the above products that have been submitted to DGFT Kolkata for further action.

Dr. Ansar Ali, Deputy Director, MPEDA, Chennai made a detailed presentation on the role of MPEDA for export of

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EDITORIAL

SC bid to put the Gyanvapi genie back in the bottle

By taking the Gyanvapi mosque case away from the trial court and assigning it to a district judge in Varanasi, the Supreme Court is apparently trying to put the genie back into the bottle. Instead of placing the cork on the bottle, it delegated the task to the district judge so as to follow due process. It, however, held the subordinate court on a leash as it kept a special leave petition filed by the mosque committee on the matter alive. The SC specifically instructed it to prioritise the question of maintainability and the resultant survey, which was challenged by the Muslim side citing the Places of Worship Act, 1991.

The Act was brought in a year before the demolition of the Babri structure in Ayodhya to retain the religious character of shrines with Independence as the reference point. The SC said it did not want to go into interpreting the 1991 law at this stage but indicated a couple of its sections could have left the door ajar for allowing survey of contested places of worship.

In other words, what was thought to be a watertight Act might not be so after all. This is like the GST council's decisions that the SC last week ruled to be only recommendatory. But the Gyanvapi case is an individual initiative and a title suit against Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb's demolition of the shrine. It is not the product of any mass movement or supported by any political outfit though it is under the benign shadow of a friendly party in power in Uttar Pradesh. Till the time it does not disturb law and order and threaten the secular fabric, the SC reckons such forays can be managed locally without breaking a sweat.

That said, another challenge came from a Mathura district court, which ruled that a case by the Krishna Janmabhoomi deity against an abutting mosque was maintainable. Anyway, the Sangh Parivar is on record as having said that it was not interested in reclaiming any disputed site other than Ayodhya. If anything, claims of finding a Shivalinga in the Gyanvapi complex, if validated, would ultimately serve to strengthen attacks of right-wing academics against historians like Dr. Audrey Truschke who argue Aurangzeb was benevolent, not barbaric.

Online awareness.... from page 1

marine products and about various schemes being implemented by MPEDA for export promotion. Ms Kavita Mishra, Deputy Director, Technical, EIA made a detailed presentation on various certification and procedures required for export of Marine products. Dr Shaktivel and Dr Vinoth from MPEDA made detailed presentation on export performance of India to various countries, the scientific methodology of fish processing for longer self-life for acceptance in export

market. The Directorate of Industries, A&N Administration made a detailed presentation on the assistance available under Prime Minister's Formalization of Micro Food Processing enterprises Scheme (PMFME).

The training was attended by 26 Officials from Directorate of Fisheries, Directorate of Industries and CIARI and 24 prospective entrepreneurs including existing entrepreneurs engaged in fish processing, a press release from Industries Deptt. said.

Andaman & Nicobar Administration's efforts yield results - internet rates slashed by 50% - 60% for TSPs; Chief Secretary expresses gratitude to Shri K Rajaraman, Secretary (Telecom), GoI

Port Blair, May 20

Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision of Digital India envisages high speed bandwidth availability for all groups of people at affordable cost for maximum utilization for various electronic services including digital payments. The Department of Telecommunication has slashed the internet bandwidth tariff provided through CANI-SMC project by 50% to 60%. This has been possible due to continuous persuasion with Ministry by the Hon'ble Lt Governor and Chief Secretary, A&N Administration.

The Officers from DoT, New Delhi, Shri Sanjay Varshney, DDG along with Shri K P Mohan, DDG, DoT (Term Cell) and Shr Atul Kareliya, Director, DoT (Term Cell) handed over the Office Order dated 20.05.2022 issued by DoT related to revised tariff of bandwidth created under submarine Optical Fibre Cable



Connectivity between Chennai and Andaman & Nicobar Islands (CANI Project).

The Chief Secretary has expressed gratitude to the Hon'ble Minister of Communication and Secretary (Telecom) for making special tariff for A&N Islands. He also advised the Officer to ensure that the reduction of tariff is passed to all the users in totality.

The Chief Secretary also stated that the lower revised tariff will not only facilitate all

strata of society especially the students community, but also aid the Commerce & Industry, thus improving the economic activities of A & N Islands. The Chief Secretary during the discussion with DoT also emphasized on improvement of last mile connectivity. The Officials of DoT informed that the Ministry has taken various initiatives to improve the last mile connectivity, thereby making the abundant bandwidth available even in the remotest Islands.

EMF radiation emission test conducted by DoT in A&N Islands; found to be within permissible limits

Port Blair, May 22

Telecommunication services have been playing an extremely important role in our economy and more so during pandemic/ disaster situations. The need for telecom services has gone up in an unprecedented manner in recent times. There is an immediate need for faster expansion of telecom infrastructure in A&N Islands. This calls for speedy deployment of towers to expand the coverage. DoT has planned to provide 4G mobile coverage by installing 128 towers for covering 85 uncovered villages and seamless coverage along NH-04 in A&N Islands.

However, due to misconceptions and misinformation, public at some locations are apprehensive whenever a tower is proposed in the vicinity of residence etc.

Department of Telecom (DoT) has created a mechanism to ensure that radiation limits from telecom towers are



maintained by all telecom service providers (TSPs) within limits. All TSPs have to give periodic self certificates to this effect and DoT Field Offices have been mandated to audit 10% BTS every year.

During this week, DoT A&N team surveyed BTS network working in Kalapathar & Govind Nagar at Swaraj Dweep area and measured radiation level of towers working of all telecom service providers (TSPs) therein and radiation level was found well within the permissible limits.

It is pertinent to note that so far, DoT A&N has tested 371 out of 782 BTS till 20th May, 2022 in Andaman and Nicobar UT and found radiation level for all tested towers are well within the permissible radiation level. Apart from this, DoT has created a portal www.tarangsanchar.gov.in wherein there is a provision for the general public to see the radiation level of towers in their vicinity by entering their area postal PIN code.

Considering the mobile
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Ukraine, wheat ban to be discussed at Biden-Modi meet: US NSA



IANS, WASHINGTON, May 23: The Russian invasion of Ukraine and Indian restrictions on wheat exports will be among a range of issues that will figure at the upcoming meeting of the Quad in Tokyo next week and the bilateral between American President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the US has said.

Modi and Biden will meet with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Australia's newly elected Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese, for the second in-person summit of the Quad, short for Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, on Tuesday in Tokyo.

The two leaders will also meet bilaterally, US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan confirmed in a gaggle with reporters travelling with Biden from South Korea to Japan, the second leg of his first trip to Asia as President.

India and the US have not been on the same page on the Russian invasion of Ukraine. New Delhi has not condemned the invasion withstanding unrelenting pressure from the US and others such as the UK, who had, together with their other allies, have come to Ukraine's aid with money and materiel with the stated intention of driving back the army

of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The issue was discussed at the highest level between President Biden and Prime Minister Modi when they met virtually in March for a Quad meeting. They discussed it again in a short video conversation that kicked off the 2+2 ministerial dialogue in April. And they will discuss it again.

"It won't be a new conversation. It will be a continuation of the conversation they've already had about how we see the picture in Ukraine and the impacts of Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine on a wider set of concerns in the world, including this food security concern," Sullivan said in response to a question if Ukraine will come up at the meeting of the two leaders.

Asked if the US would push India on wheat exports, the National Security Adviser said "food security will be a topic of conversation at the Quad".

India's ban on export of wheat has raised international concerns with western leaders calling for New Delhi to behave more responsibly as the world grapples with shortages caused by the war ýý Russia and Ukraine together account

for about 29 per cent of global wheat exports, and India is the world's fourth largest producer of wheat after China, the US, and Russia.

Sullivan was also asked a general question about how the Biden administration balanced the priority it accords to democratic and human rights in its foreign policy with the accusations of "human rights abuses and maligning Muslim minorities" in India.

"President Biden has been clear from the beginning of this administration that we'll speak out when we see any form of departure from or deviation from basic principles, fundamental freedoms, human rights, the values of democratic institutions, and the rule of law. That's true for a range of countries. And, you know, we don't single India out," he said.

He added: "We have found a way both to pursue practical cooperation with countries that are democratic and non-democratic, while, at the same time, being clear and consistent of where our values lie."

Human rights have become a new source of friction in India-US ties. From ignoring them as in the past, the Modi government has been increasingly more confrontational.

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, during his last visit to the US for 2+2 ministerial dialogue, said: "People are entitled to have views about us. We also are entitled to have views about their lobbies and vote banks. We will not be reticent. We also have views on other people's human rights, particularly when it pertains to our community." He had meant the US, though he was not that specific in this instance.

Temples destroyed in past should be rebuilt: Goa CM Sawant



PTI, NEW DELHI, May 22: Amid the ongoing row over Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi, Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Sunday said all the temples destroyed in the past should be rebuilt, while asserting that the BJP government in the state has made budgetary allocation for reinstating temples demolished during the Portuguese rule.

Sawant also said the Goa government has been making efforts to promote "cultural tourism" in the state and wheedling people to visit temples of the coastal state.

Participating in a media conclave organised here on the occasion of the completion of 75 years of RSS' weeklies Organiser and Panchjanya, Sawant said, "In the 450 years of Portuguese rule, there was a destruction of the Hindu culture and many people were converted. Temples of the state were destroyed. We are going to rejuvenate all of this. I believe wherever there are temples in destroyed condition, they should be rebuilt. This is my firm opinion."

Responding to a question of Organiser editor Prafulla Ketkar, Sawant said his government is working overtime to promote cultural tourism in Goa, which is one of the most sought-after destinations for tourists.

"In every village, there are a couple of temples. We have to take people from the beach to the temple," Sawant said, adding his government is pushing for "cultural tourism".

As many BJP-ruled states are inclining towards uniform civil code (UCC), Sawant said Goa already has this code in place and every state must have it.

"I say proudly that Goa has been following uniform civil code since its liberation. I believe all other states must follow the UCC. We have discussed the Goa UCC with other chief ministers also," he said.

Sawant also blamed the then Congress government for delay in Goa's liberation, saying that India became independent in 1947 while the state achieved its liberation in 1961.

When asked about mining in Goa, Sawant said that his government is working on restarting mining in the state which has been banned since 2012.

A local court in Varanasi on May 16 directed the district administration to seal a spot in the Gyanvapi Masjid complex after counsels representing the Hindu petitioners said a Shivling was found during a court-mandated videography survey.

However, a mosque management committee spokesperson disputed the claim, saying that the object was part of a "fountain".

A day later, the Supreme Court directed the district magistrate of Varanasi to ensure the protection of an area inside the Gyanvapi-Shringar Gauri complex where a 'Shivling' was said to have been found and allowed Muslims to offer 'namaz' and perform "religious observances".

Online test for filling non-gazetted government posts to be held before year-end: Jitendra Singh



PTI, NEW DELHI, May 22: Union Minister Jitendra Singh on Sunday said that there will be an online Common Eligibility Test (CET) for filling up non-gazetted posts from this year.

The Minister of State for Personnel said this while chairing the joint meeting of all the six autonomous bodies under the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) at North Block here.

The exam will be conducted before the year end by the National Recruitment Agency (NRA).

It will be a game-changer, providing ease of recruitment to the job aspirants with at least one exam centre in each district of the country, Singh said.

The CET is a path-breaking reform carried out by the DoPT to bring about "ease of recruitment" for young job aspirants and it will prove to be a major boon for the youth,

especially those living in far-flung and remote areas.

Singh said the historic reform will provide a level playing field to all the candidates, regardless of his or her background or socio-economic status.

There will also be a huge benefit to women and 'divyang' candidates and for those who find it financially unviable to appear for multiple tests by travelling to multiple centres, a statement issued by the Personnel Ministry said.

Initially, the test will be conducted in 12 languages, including Hindi and English.

Later, it will be conducted in all the languages mentioned in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution.

Singh said Prime Minister Narendra Modi introduced the "whole of government" concept which has not only removed silos but also facilitated an integrated holistic approach to governance.

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EDUCATIONAL VISIT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN TO INS UTKROSH



Port Blair, May 22:

As a part of 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsava', an educational visit was organised for school children to INS Utkrosh and Air Traffic Control (ATC) complex by the A&N Administration under the aegis of HQ Andaman & Nicobar Command on 18 May 21. A total of 102 students along with four guides from various schools participated in the visit as a part Annual Training Camp. On arrival, the students were taken to Sankalp Samark, which is a tribute to the resolve of the soldiers of India National Army and their innumerable sacri-

fices. The visit included static display and introduction to the various aircraft and their capabilities. Additionally, the students were also taken to ATC tower where they were imparted with hands-on knowledge on the aspects of Air Traffic Control.

While concluding the educational visit, a briefing was also conducted to inspire and motivate the young minds to cultivate their dreams to join Indian Armed Forces. This opportunity was gainfully utilised by the students to enhance their knowledge, while simultaneously having fun.

DSS to operate cargo vessel between Port Blair & Southern Group of Islands twice a month

Port Blair, May 20

The Directorate of Shipping Services will be operating the cargo vessel MV Chuglam between Port Blair and Southern Group of Islands twice in a month i.e. on 1st & 15th of every month. All Departments / Consigners have been informed to avail the sailings and book the required quantity of cargo to be transhipped from the Commercial Wing of DSS well in advance.

Now, the vessel MV Chuglam is planned to sail for Campbell Bay via Car Nicobar, Chowra, Teressa, Katchal & Nancowry on 01.06.2022 at 1700 hrs from Haddo/Chatham

Wharf and will sail for Port Blair immediately after discharging/ loading of cargo at respective ports.

Booking of cargo for the above sailing will commence from May 23 onwards between 0900 hrs & 1300 hrs at Commercial Wing. Loading of cargo will commence from May 26, 2022. All the consigners have been requested to adhere to the loading schedule in order to maintain the sailing as promulgated. Consigners are further advised to book actual quantity of cargo to be transhipped, as no excess cargo will be allowed, a press release from DSS said.

Chief Secretary conducts review of Transport Department

Port Blair, May 20

The Chief Secretary, A&N Administration, Shri Jitendra Narain has done review of Transport Department, A&N Administration with Secretary (Transport) and Director (Transport). He expressed his displeasure with the way things are going and has given them 10 days time to improve the performance, efficiency and integrity. The areas that were directed to be looked into are licensing, permits, fitness of vehicles, pollution control and working of STS

Workshop etc. It has been directed that cameras must be placed all over the Transport Department and the touts must be identified and arrested.

Also, the inflow of time barred and out dated polluting commercial vehicles trucks, tankers that are coming in Port Blair through Kolkata and other places unrestricted/ unchecked, despite orders to not to allow such vehicles, shall not be allowed forthwith.

Additionally, court cases of the Transport Department, A&N Administration must be well defended. The public have

also been requested to point out the problems issues, corruption allegation and difficulties with the Transport Department to the Secretary (Transport) (Mob - 9811990696, Ph. No.- 233227) and the Director (Transport) (Mob: 7503360103, Ph. No: 230225 email id- dirtpt.and@nic.in and also write about the corruption modus operandi, assets details of corrupt officials and touts etc. General public can also write to CS Office in this regard, a press release from Directorate of Transport said.

Maharashtra, Kerala, Rajasthan reduce VAT on petrol, diesel after Centre cuts excise duty

PTI, NEW DELHI/MUMBAI/CHENNAI, May 22 : Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Kerala have decreased VAT on petrol and diesel after Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's call to provide further relief to consumers following a cut in excise duty by the Centre, though some other states appeared reluctant citing their inability to take more strain on revenue.

Senior Congress leader P Chidambaram on Sunday wondered whether the states can afford to give up revenue from the Value Added Tax (VAT) on petrol and diesel unless the Centre devolves more funds or gives them more grants, likening their situation to being between "the devil and the deep sea".

The Shiv Sena-led Maharashtra government slashed the VAT on petrol by Rs 2.08 per litre and diesel by Rs 1.44 per litre.

A statement issued by the government said the state exchequer will have to bear an annual loss of Rs 2,500 crore as a result of this decision.

However, the DMK-led government in Tamil Nadu said that it is neither fair nor reasonable to expect states to reduce their taxes.

State Finance Minister Palanivel Thiaga Rajan said the central government had never consulted states when it increased the taxes and Tamil Nadu was already incurring a loss of over Rs 1,000 crore due to the earlier tax cut announced by the union government in November 2021.



Despite the tax reduction announced by the Centre on Saturday, the rates were still high compared to 2014, he pointed out.

"The Union Government's levies on petrol have gone up substantially in the past seven years. Though the revenue to the Union Government has increased manifold, there has not been a matching increase in the revenues to states. This is because the Union Government has increased the cess and surcharge on petrol and diesel while reducing the basic excise duty that is shareable with the states," he averred.

Post the November 2021 reduction in excise duty on petrol by Rs 5 per litre and that on diesel by Rs 10 a litre, 25 states and UTs had cut VAT to give further reprieve to consumers battered by record-high retail prices.

States ruled by non-NDA parties like Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal did not do so.

Responding to the minister's remarks that states were not consulted by the Centre before increasing fuel prices, BJPTamil Nadu president K Annamalai wondered

if such a practice was followed during the earlier UPA regime, in which the DMK was a key constituent.

Speaking to reporters, he gave a "72-hour" ultimatum to the ruling DMK to implement its poll promise on fuel price cuts.

Tamil Nadu's main Opposition AIADMK also urged the ruling DMK to implement its poll promise of reducing prices of petroleum products.

However, the Left Democratic Front government in Kerala had on Saturday promptly announced a cut in the state tax on the prices of petrol and diesel by Rs 2.41 and Rs 1.36 per litre respectively, following the reduction in fuel prices by the Centre.

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot also said the state government will reduce VAT by Rs 2.48 per liter on petrol and Rs 1.16 per liter on diesel.

In Madhya Pradesh, Congress leader Kamal Nath demanded that the BJP government reduce VAT on petroleum products to further bring down the rates.

Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati said it was the duty

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Zero tolerance policy towards encroachment on Govt. land



Port Blair, May 20:
Continuing its zero tolerance policy towards encroachment on government land, the revenue department of South Andaman District carried out eviction drive committed over Government land at Port Blair Tehsil.
On 19.05.2022 encroachment eviction drive was carried out upon land bearing Sy. No. 145/1 which stands recorded as Grazing land, situated at Radha Nagar vil-

lage, encroachments in the shape of arecanut plantations has been cleared and an area of 1.00 hecets restored to its original shape.
Also, on 20.05.2022, encroachment in the shape of newly constructing 04 pillars were removed from land bear-

ing Sy. No. 36/P situated at Dhudline village and an area of 100 Sqmtrs. has been restored to its original shape.
It is further submitted that the encroachment eviction drive will continue in coming weeks within Port Blair Tehsil.

Maharashtra, Kerala, Rajasthan... from page 4

of not only Uttar Pradesh but also of other states to immediately announce a cut in VAT on fuel.
In BJP-ruled Karnataka, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai said his government will consider a further cut in fuel tax. “The decision (Centre’s) has come on Saturday night, let’s see, we will consider it,” Bommai told reporters here in response to a query.
Bommai was last month non-committal on any further cut in fuel tax by the state government and had maintained that any decision in this regard will be taken after looking at the economy of the state.
A source in the Goa government said the Pramod Sawant-led dispensation will not further reduce the VAT on petrol and diesel as it “might hurt the economy”. Goa levies 26 per cent VAT on petrol and 22 per cent on diesel.
The ruling Trinamool Congress in West Bengal said the state will cut taxes once it lifts the “economic blockade” and releases the funds due to the state.
TMC national spokesperson Sukhendu Sekhar Ray said on Saturday that West

Bengal will slash fuel prices once the Centre cleared its dues amounting to Rs 97,000 crore.
Last month, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said that she will reduce the tax on petroleum products in the state once the central government cleared all the pending dues it owed to the state.
The price of petrol on Sunday was slashed by Rs 8.69 a litre and that of diesel by Rs 7.05 per litre following the government decision to cut excise duty on auto fuels.
Former finance minister Chidambaram said the states are getting very little by way of sharing of duties on petrol and diesel. “I wonder if they can afford to give up that revenue unless the Centre devolved more funds or gave them more grants,” Chidambaram said. The situation is like being between “the devil and the deep sea”, he said in a series of tweets.
Announcing the duty cut through tweets, Finance Minister Sitharaman exhorted all state governments to also cut local sales tax or VAT. “I wish to exhort all state governments, especially the states where the

reduction wasn’t done during the last round (November 2021), to also implement a similar cut and give relief to the common man,” she said.
Welcoming the move, Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said, “I want to highlight the fact despite this second reduction in central excise, price of petrol & diesel in states like Maharashtra, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand & Kerala remain around Rs 10-15 higher than in BJP-ruled states.” Rates differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes such as VAT.
Andhra Pradesh has the highest VAT on petrol and diesel in the country, followed by Rajasthan and BJP-ruled Madhya Pradesh. “This (high prices in non-BJP ruled states) is due to the refusal of their respective state governments to reduce VAT. It is time for these states to wake up & reduce VAT to provide relief to their consumers,” Puri said.
The Congress government in Rajasthan had cut VAT following the November 2021 decision. Punjab, which was ruled by the party then, had seen the biggest reduction due to a cut in VAT rates.

‘Island Music..... from page 1

provided an opportunity for the budding artistes of the Islands to showcase their talent.
The dance performers of Vibes Dance Group presented a theme based dance in which they created awareness about POCSO and child abuse. This impressive performance was appreciated by one and all present at the venue. Another dance competitor, Marimuthu through his electrified solo performance on film song ‘Mukabala Mukabala’ enthralled the gathering.
A group of Chota Nagpuri artistes led by Sashi Lakra danced on the tunes of Chota Nagpuri song. The team performed yesterday as well as today at the entrance of the venue involving the tourists and the islanders. The western dance performance by the students of Waves Dance Studio captivated the audience at the venue.
The ‘Koun Panam’ live band enthralled the gathering with their opening song ‘Dil Se Re’. The students of DBRAIT presented Marathi dance which impressed one and all. The self-composed patriotic song by Ms Bundini Kumari from Katchal delighted the gathering. Food stalls selling delicious snacks and eatables also attracted the visitors. The music festival also featured dance and karaoke song dedication.
In the singing competition, Brishty Ray & Shailender Singh won the first prize while Manjuri & Prashant bagged the second prize. The third prize was won by Rathin Roy & Pradeep. Similarly, in the dance competition, Vibes Dance Academy stood first while Marimuthu got the second prize. Third prize was won by Misha. Consolation prizes were awarded to Debashree Halder and A Jyoti & Group of DBRAIT.

Online test for..... from page-3

The context and concept of governance are undergoing reorientation to suit the current needs and requirements of the 21st century India, he said.
The review exercise of autonomous bodies functioning under central ministries and departments is of utmost importance in view of furthering the aim of “minimum government, maximum governance”, efficient use of public funds and reducing financial burden on the government exchequer, besides making the governance people-friendly.
Heads of all the six autonomous bodies gave a detailed presentation about their mandate, work, budget and aims and objectives during the meeting, the statement said.
These institutes include NRA, Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA), Civil Services Officers Institute (CSOI), Grih Kalyan Kendras (GKK), Central Civil Services Cultural and Sports Board (CCSCSB) and Kendriya Bhandar (registered under Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act), it said.
Singh directed senior officials to explore the possibility of the merger of GKK and CCSCSB due to the overlapping mandate, and aims and objectives.
He asked the officials to come out with a feasibility report within a month.
The minister also directed the Kendriya Bhandar to open more outlets at centres of GKK and IIPA for increasing sales and cost-cutting.
Singh asked the Kendriya Bhandar to go the whole hog to promote its unique product of organic pulses and build a brand for the same.
He also lauded Kendriya Bhandar officials for achieving 500 per cent growth in sales from Rs 750 crore in 2017-18 to Rs 4,000 crore in 2021-22.

EMF radiation..... from page-2

expansion plan for introduction of 5G, the number of towers is to be increased from 329 to 500 plus within the next 2 years. Therefore, DoT A&N Port Blair has requested co-operation from every stakeholder including the general public to shed all misconceptions about mobile tower radiations and come forward to extend all possible support for faster roll out of telecom infrastructure to meet the unprecedented demand and improve quality of telecom service in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, a press release from Department of Telecom, A&N Islands said.

Not worried about my rivals, want to hit 90-metre mark this season: Neeraj Chopra



IANS, NEW DELHI, May 22: Tokyo Olympic gold medalist Neeraj Chopra on Saturday said that he is not worried about the big performances of their rivals at the beginning of the season but he aims to hit the 90-metre mark this season.

Neeraj is currently working hard on his body, strength as well honing his skills with his coach Klaus Bartonietz at the training base in Turkey.

On the other hand, his rivals — world champion Anderson Peters of Grenada and Tokyo Olympics silver winner Jakub Vadlejch of Czech Republic — had come up with 93.07m and 90.88m throws respectively in the Doha Diamond League on May 13.

However, the star Indian athlete, who has a personal best of 88.07m and won gold in Tokyo Olympics with a throw of 87.58m, doesn't want to take pressure and instead wishes to give his best.

"There is no fixed target for any specific event, I try not to take that pressure on myself. Peters and Valdech must be working hard and so they are doing well. Yes, there is the aim of crossing 90m which I have always said and I am hopeful it will happen this year in some competition," Chopra said in a virtual media interaction.

"I know competition is tough and growing. It also depends on the day's performance, weather and other conditions, how we manage them. I normally don't think about surpassing anybody's performance or record. I just go out to give my best," he added.

The 24-year old hasn't taken part in any competition since winning gold in Tokyo on August 7 last year. His first competition of the season will

be at the Paavo Nurmi Games in Finland on June 14, followed by the Kuortane Games four days later. Chopra is also planning to feature in the top-flight Diamond League Meeting in Stockholm on June 30 before heading for the June 15-24 World Championships in Eugene, USA.

Though Neeraj doesn't want to rush into things, he is hoping to do well in the World Championships.

"I don't have to hit 90m straightway, 86 or 87m at the start of the season will be fine. My main target this year is to do well in the World Championships. Then there is the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham (July 28 to August 8) where I will defend my gold (won in 2018 CWG)," he said.

The athlete also spoke about his training and

preparations for the upcoming season.

"The off season was good. I have started throwing training, two throwing sessions in a week. I also do sprinting, lifting weights etc. I have started working on my technique, on my runway, picking up speed and blocking," said Neeraj.

"I don't need to make major changes, mostly focussing on my technique, which angle I have to throw, on my blocking, from where I have to start my runway. I don't want to get injured while doing major changes," he added.

The golden boy also mentioned that his goal is to remain injury free and wants to peak at the right time.

"My aim is also to end the season injury free. I am starting 40-45 days before the World Championships so that I can peak there. I am going to have three events next month in the space of just over two weeks," said Chopra.

"Initially, I had planned to compete in Doha Diamond League (May 13) but dropped later. I could have started a bit early had we known that Asian Games would be postponed," he added.

Hurdles I've faced in my career have made me mentally strong: Nikhat Zareen



PTI, NEW DELHI, May 20: Hardened by the difficult circumstances in her career, newly-crowned World Champion boxer Nikhat Zareen said she has adopted a combative approach where "whatever happens I have to fight and give my best."

Continuing her stellar run, Zareen out-punched Thailand's Jitpong Jutamas by unanimous 5-0 verdict to clinch the flyweight (52kg) gold in Istanbul on Thursday.

"These two years, I focused on my game only and whatever the weaknesses were there in my game, I tried to improve," Zareen told reporters after her bout.

"I worked on my strong points

and on where I lacked in my game. I worked on the aspects where I needed to work and made myself strong.

"All those hurdles which I have faced in my career have made me strong. I have become mentally strong after all these and my thought process is that whatever happens, I have to fight and give my best," she added.

Zareen's golden feat comes two-years after she had written to then sports minister Kiren Rijiju asking for a "fair trial" for the Olympic Qualifiers.

Zareen was trolled on social media mercilessly for this while the legendary Mary Kom had caustically asked "Who Nikhat Zareen?" Zareen eventually lost the bout to Mary Kom in the trials, missing out on a chance to qualify for the Tokyo Games.

The 2011 junior world champion also had to overcome a career-threatening shoulder injury, which kept her out of the ring for a year and saw her miss all the big-

Kartik Aaryan trained for a week to ace 'Tandav' moves in 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2'



IANS, MUMBAI, May 22 : With 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2' garnering an opening day collection of 14.11 crore, Kartik Aaryan's stock is running high in Bollywood, beating all recent Hindi releases since 'Sooryavanshi'.

And the movie climax is expected to keep the collections going strong in the days ahead.

The second half of the film has been especially garnering a lot of praises from fans and reviewers for the way Kartik Aaryan has performed a particular scene where he does the Tandav dance. While people are familiar with the young star's dancing skills, his Tandav performance depicts another dimension of his talents.

As per a source, "Kartik

trained non-stop for an entire week to nail that small dance sequence where he performs Tandav. It is a very difficult dance form for someone who has never learnt Indian classical dance and he managed to grab it and how within a week's training under Guru Chinni Prakash."

Kartik Aaryan is riding high on delivering the biggest opener of the year with this film's Day 1 collections overtaking films like Sanjay Leela Bhansali's 'Gangubai Kathiawadi' and Yash Raj Films' production 'Jayeshbhai Jordaar' starring Ranveer Singh. With 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2' now out, Kartik has a lineup of massive films ahead too including, 'Shehzada', 'Captain India', 'Freddy' and Sajid Nadiadwala's untitled next.

ticket events like the Commonwealth Games, Asiad and World Championships in 2018.

"In 2017, I dislocated my shoulder, I had to go under surgery and then I didn't take part in any competition for a year. I came back in 2018 but I wasn't at my peak so I missed the big tournaments CWG, Asiad and World Championships. "But I didn't give up and after the comeback in 2019 haven't looked back. I have taken all competitions as an opportunity and I believed in myself. Because of that here I'm today."

Zareen will now prepare for the Commonwealth Games trial for which she will have to drop her weight and come down to 50kgs.

"In the CWG there's a 50kg division, I will prepare for that now."

The 25-year-old Telangana pugilist has started her preparation for the Paris Olympics but is unsure which weight category she will compete in.

She'll either have to climb up to the 54kg or come down to 50kg.

Talking about the difficulties of changing a weight class, she said it would be easier to drop weight.

"It's difficult to change a weight category whether you drop down to a weight division or move up to a weight division.

"It's more difficult when one moves from a lower weight to a higher weight as you are at a disadvantage with the other boxers being a bit heavy as they come in that weight by dropping their body weight. So one faces more strong boxers."

"I guess if I play in 50kg category, it will not make much of a difference. Normally my weight remains 51. 51.5 kg so my body will work well in 50kg. So for some time, I will continue in the 50kg weight division."

The 2019 Asian Championships bronze medallist has had a busy 2022 and her aim is to remain injury free.

"The challenge is to keep body at peak level, after Strandja I had to give the World Championship and Asian Games trials