

PM to visit Manipur and Tripura on January 4 PM to inaugurate and lay the foundation stone of 22 projects worth over Rs 4800 crore in Manipur

PIB
New Delhi, Jan 2:

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will visit the states of Manipur and Tripura on 4th January, 2022. At around 11 AM, Prime Minister will inaugurate and lay the foundation stone of 22 Developmental Projects worth over Rs. 4800 crore in Imphal. Thereafter, at around 2 PM, in Agartala, he will inaugurate the New Integrated Terminal Building at Maharaja Bir Bikram Airport and will also launch two key development initiatives.

PM in Manipur

In Manipur, the Prime Minister will inaugurate 13 Projects worth around Rs. 1850 crores and lay the foundation stone of 9 projects worth around Rs 2950 crore. These projects relate to diverse sectors such as Road Infrastructure, Drinking Water Supply, Health, Urban

Development, Housing, Information Technology, Skill Development, Art and Culture, among others.

In line with the country-wide projects to improve connectivity, the Prime Minister will lay the foundation stone of construction of five National Highway Projects to be built at a cost of more than Rs 1700 crore. The construction of these highways with a cumulative length of more than 110 kilometres, will be a major step to improve the road connectivity of the region. Another important infrastructure that will enhance seamless year-round connectivity to Silchar from Imphal and reduce traffic congestion, is the construction of Steel Bridge built over Barak River on NH-37 built at a cost of over Rs 75 crore. This Steel Bridge will be inaugurated by the Prime Minister during the Programme.

Prime Minister will also dedicate, to the people of Manipur, 2,387 mobile towers built at a cost of around Rs 1100 crores. This will be a major step in further boosting the mobile connectivity of the state.

Prime Minister's endeavour to provide clean drinking water to every household will get a boost with the inauguration of the drinking water supply projects in the state. The projects being inaugurated by the Prime Minister include the Rs 280 crore worth 'Water Transmission system of Thoubal Multi-purpose project', which will provide drinking water supply to the Imphal city; the Water Supply Scheme project by Water Conservation, for Tamenglong Headquarters built at the cost of Rs 65 crore, to provide safe drinking water to residents of ten habitations of Tamenglong district; and the

'Augmentation of Senapati District Headquarter Water Supply Scheme' built at a cost of Rs. 51 crore to provide regular water supply to the residents of the area.

In an effort to strengthen the health sector in the state, Prime Minister will lay the foundation stone of 'State of the Art Cancer Hospital' in Imphal worth around Rs. 160 crore on PPP basis. This cancer hospital will greatly benefit the people of state in reducing the out of the pocket expenditure, who otherwise have to go outside the state for availing cancer related diagnostic and treatment services. Further, to boost the Covid related infrastructure in the State, Prime Minister will inaugurate '200 Bedded Covid Hospital at Kiyamgei' which has been set up at a cost of about Rs. 37 crore in collaboration with DRDO.

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In Manipur BJP will form a government on its own: Assam CM, Himanta Biswa Sarma

Agency
Guwahati, Jan 2:

Assam chief minister, Himanta Biswa Sarma said that in Manipur BJP will form a government on its own and we will have a proper BJP government in Manipur.

Manipur is going to assembly polls early this year. Sarma who is also the convener of Northeast Democratic Alliance (NEDA), a platform of non-congress parties in the region while talking to media persons on Saturday said, "Winning Northeast was not one of those occasion the BJP has come to stay in Northeast and this will be proved after these batches of elections."

He added, "My own assessment is that after five successful years our governments will be repeat across the region. In Assam and Arunachal Pradesh we are having a BJP government for the second time. In Manipur we are going to form a government on our own this time,



earlier we had a big coalition. I am confident this time we will have a proper BJP government in Manipur."

He added, "In Nagaland, Mizoram and Meghalaya we will have a stronger NDA and stronger BJP. In Tripura we are going to repeat."

BJP's ally National President of the National People's Party (NPP) has hinted that it will contest the Manipur polls on its own.

NPP is a partner in the ruling BJP led coalition government in Manipur. In Meghalaya NPP is leading the six party led coalition government which is supported by BJP.

In 2017 assembly polls Congress emerged as the single largest party with 28 MLAs, Manipur assembly is 60-member assembly. Later around eight Congress MLAs left the party. BJP won 21 seats.

BJP got support from NPP and Naga Peoples Front (NPF) which won four seats each. One MLA each from Trinamool congress, Lok Jan Shakti party and lone independent member supported the government.

Tripura, Nagaland and Meghalaya will go to assembly polls in 2023, while assembly elections in Mizoram will be held in 2024.

2nd Anniversary for ILP observed at Jiribam Around 93 lakhs revenue collected in two years from ILP implementation in Jiribam

IT Correspondent
Jiribam, Jan 2:

On the completion of two years for the implementation of Inner Line Permit (ILP) System in Manipur, the Jiribam District Police observed 2nd Anniversary today at the entry gate of the District.

The observation was attended by Deputy Commissioner, Jiribam W. Malemnganba Chengelei; Superintendent of Police, Jiribam K. Rabikumar Singh along with many other officials.

Addressing on the brief data of ILP since its implementation from 1st January 2020, the Superintendent of Police, Jiribam K. Rabikumar Singh said on the completion of two years for the implementation of ILP, around 93 lakhs rupees were collected as fees from Manual and E-ILP pass at Jiribam District. The e-



ILP was launched by the Chief Minister of Manipur on 2nd September, 2021. Since the inception of e-ILP portal, around 22358 nos. e-ILP temporary Inner Line Permit was issued and 1894 permit was renewed.

Superintendent of Police, Jiribam stated that Manipur has been included in the railway map, an ILP counter had opened at railway station of Jiribam so as to issue ILP pass to the passengers

who were entering Manipur through railway. He added that to implement such an ILP system public support is also needed, he appealed for the mass public support for the proper implementation of the ILP system.

The District police make its full efforts to implement the ILP system precisely at Jiribam District, he added.

The Deputy Commissioner, Jiribam W. Malemnganba

Chengelei said since the inception of the ILP system, the district police, Jiribam, strictly enforced the ILP system at Jiribam.

He added, as per instruction of Chief Minister of Manipur on his visit to Jiribam District at 'Go to Village' programme, the District Administration has prepared an estimate proposal for setting a modern ILP counter with proper facilities for staff and public.

2021 ends with the decrease in journo-killings globally: PEC

IT Correspondent
Geneva, Jan 2:

Press Emblem Campaign (PEC), the global media safety and rights body, wishes all media workers around the world a happy, secured and prosperous new year. The bygone year witnessed the killing of 79 media employees by assailants in 29 countries marking an improvement in journo-murder index by 14% (where 92 were killed in 2020).

PEC has lately confirmed the death of Burmese journalist A Kay Sai (also known as Sai Win Aung) because of serious head injuries by the shell operated by the Myanmar military junta at Maekheewar vil-

lage of Karen State on 25 December last. Sai (38) was trapped in crossfire between the junta forces and KNLA rebels and finally hit by artillery from Tatmadaw.

"We strongly condemn the killing of journalists by the Burmese military personnel. Prior to him, Yangon-based freelance photojournalist Ko Soe Naing died under military custody on 14 December. PEC condolences their demise and urges the military dictator Min Aung Hlaing to deliver justice to the bereaved families," said Blaise Lempen, secretary-general of PEC.

Myanmar (also known as Burma or Brahmadash) is witnessing a series of unpleasant incidents since 1 February

2021 military coup that deposed the democratically elected Aung San Suu Kyi-led government in Naypyitaw, where the media fraternity also faces unprecedented atrocities. The military personnel detained nearly 125 journalists in the last 11 months and nearly 30 are still behind bars.

Afghanistan emerged as the most dangerous country for journalists with 12 casualties in 2021, followed by Mexico (10 dead), Pakistan (7), India (6), the Philippines, Yemen (4 each), Democratic Republic of Congo (3), Myanmar, Bangladesh, Brazil, Colombia, Kenya, Nigeria, Somalia, Azerbaijan, Ethiopia, Burkina-Faso, Turkey (2 each), etc.

Rebel group CORCOM boycotts Prime Minister Modi's visit to Manipur; calls total shut down on Jan 4

IT News
Imphal, Jan 2:

Armed rebel group CORCOM has boycotted the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the state of Manipur on January 4 and called total shut down on Jan 4.

In a statement, the Publicity Committee of CORCOM said that the proposed visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the state of Manipur is neither for development of the state nor for ensuring freedom to the people of the region but for strengthening the colonial regime using the mask of democracy to this region. The statement said that the

CORCOM calls total shut down to the entire region of Manipur (Kangleipak) from 1 am till the Prime Minister remains in the region. The total shut down will be exempted for health sector, fire service, water supply and rituals occasion.

The CORCOM statement further said that the visit of Narendra Modi to Manipur (Kangleipak) is related with the state assembly election which is scheduled to hold in the early part of this year. It said that election is the only weapon or smokescreen to show the world that India is a democratic country. It said that election is a tool use by India to prove the world that India is

a democratic country and thus occupy space in the United Nations Security Council as Non-Permanent membership as well as the chairperson of the three Sub-Committee of the United Nations.

The statement also added that India is a country which does not recognize independence. It abrogated the Article 370 and segregated Jammu and Kashmir state into two Union Territories. On the other hand, Manipur which had its own constituency and rule by a government elected by the people was also forcibly occupied by violating all norms of International laws and placed it in the lowest status. It was only on January 21, 1972 that

Manipur (Kangleipak) became a state of India. The kind of act is an ignorance of the Independence by India. The statement also said that except for Meghalaya and Tripura AFSPA 1958 has been imposed in other parts of WESEA region since 1958. Under the shadow of the act many innocent souls have been taken and many were raped. The case of Oting massacre in Nagaland is also one among the subjugation of the region. Instead of listening to the voice of the people for revoking of AFSPA from the state of Nagaland the Indian Government extended the AFSPA for another 6 months.

In the state of Manipur too

even after the verdict of the Supreme Court in connection with the PIL filed by families of 1528 victims of AFSPA the government of India is not issuing the prosecution sanction to those perpetrators. Justice is still not served to the families of the 1528 victims of AFSPA till date. The very act is an indication that showed that there is no civil administration in the region. The promise for lifting of AFSPA by political parties is just a propaganda for election campaign. The CORCOM questions the reason for conducting election by using huge number of armed occupation army as election should be held without any fear.

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Intending candidate alleges intimidation by supporters of sitting MLA

IT News
Imphal, Jan 2:

Intending candidate of Langthabal Assembly Constituency, Karam Nabakishore has alleged intimidation by workers of sitting MLA Karam Shyam for contesting the upcoming state assembly election scheduled to hold in February or March this year. Karam Nabakishore is the intending candidate for NPP.

Talking to reporters at his residence at Langthabal Kunja yesterday, Karam Nabakishore said that some supporters of Karam Shyam assaulted his supporters including his

brother's son on the evening of December 31 and tried to pull up his nephew. He further said that the same group of people later came to his house and threatened him not to contest the election.

"They even threatened me to burn my house if I do not change my decision for contesting the election", Karam Nabakishore said. He added that the group of people was later rounded up by his supporters and two of them were captured while others managed to escape. Nabakishore then blames the police for failure to arrest them when handed over to them.

New Year starts with Stampede, Terror and Tax

Talking Points

Narvijay Yadav



The new year began with sweet and sour experiences this time. People could not celebrate the arrival of the new year openly as before. Partying was not allowed in many cities and states including Delhi, Bangalore and Mumbai. However, there was no such restriction in Himachal Pradesh, so more than 20 thousand tourists reached Shimla. Actually the tourists were invited by the Himachal Tourism Department through advertisements via radio and other mediums. But the party was spoiled by an intelligence input that Pak terrorists were planning to blow up the Ridge Maidan in Shimla with a bomb. Following this input, suddenly at 7.30 pm the police force instructed the tourists to return to their hotels and by 8 pm the Ridge and the Mall Road wore a deserted look. However, tourists were told that the Omicron variant was the reason to remove everyone from the Ridge. All the shops were also closed by 8.30 pm. Hence, the fun turned into a crisis.

On the other hand, in Jammu district, a huge crowd gathered inside the Vaishno Devi temple complex to celebrate the new year. An altercation caused a stampede killing more than a dozen people and injuring around twenty. The stampede happened after 2.30 am. The Vaishno Devi Temple Trust had not made adequate arrangements to control the crowd, due to which this tragic incident took place. With the beginning of the new year, some sour and sweet developments came to the fore on the economic front as well. The move to increase GST on textiles was pulled back after protests by finance ministers from Delhi, Gujarat, West Bengal, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu. The Home Textile Exporters Welfare Association (HEWA) had also opposed the proposal to raise the GST slab from 5 per cent to 12 per cent from the very beginning. HEWA director Vikas Singh Chauhan had written a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi requesting him not to increase the GST on clothes. Thanking the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, he said that due to increase in GST, shopkeepers, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) and traders would have suffered huge losses and ultimately the common people would also be troubled by inflation. Covid has already broken the back of industries, but now these traders and entrepreneurs will be able to move forward towards the goal of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

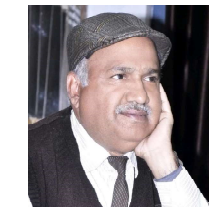
Even though the decision to increase the GST on clothes has been deferred till next month, it has been increased to 12 per cent on footwear, which will make shoes 7 per cent more expensive. Fortunately shoes are not bought every now and then, whereas clothes are needed more. In another development the common man is going to suffer. Now withdrawing money from an ATM will cost more. Banks spend a lot of money on maintenance and security of ATM machines, hence, for transactions beyond the free permissible limit (five times) from the bank's own ATMs, now Rs 21 will be charged per transaction. Earlier this charge was Rs 20. However, extra charges are always imposed when you use another bank's ATM. As of 31 March 2021, there are 1,15,605 onsite and 97,970 offsite ATM machines in the country. The first ATM in the country was installed in Mumbai by HSB Bank in 1987.

LEARNING - A Solution for Quality of inclusive Education in 2022

Since beginning of the pandemic, the world education industry has taken a ride on the technology wave in order to cater to the needs of children through the past two years. While this mode of learning is on the highway route for a large section of students who are who are, essentially, city based, a large section continue to be deprived and is still lagging behind because of the lack of connectivity in the remote regions of the country. The only solution of the problem is a concerted and effort to establish connectivity in these rural areas as well as inculcate a blended learning process throughout all education establishments.

In 2022, this basic problem needs to be mitigated in order to make education more accessible and employable for students. The facets of education have taken an unprecedented turn, globally and that has also helped to identify the short coming of this system in handling the challenges. The hybrid model of education seems the only way out at the moment to continue the education process while keeping the hazards of the pandemic at bay.

From classroom to online learning, the new normal for education has been changing rapidly in the past two years. We can assume that the new year will continue to embrace blended learning as the best solution to be education system. This will help to mitigate the problem of complete online learning to



By: Vijay GarG

some extent. In the hybrid model of learning, students can obtain an array or real world skills that could continue to benefit their careers in future. These include independent research skills, self learning, proficient communication across modalities and computer literacy.

Blended learning combines modern learning technologies with traditional learning methods. Like any learning process, blended learning also comes with its benefits and drawback that are important to consider when adopting it. Blended learning is particularly useful to those who are not too comfortable with technology. It also allows room for students to learn at their own pace, besides reducing overhead costs of the institution.

What to expect in 2022:

Shifting from online mode of education, 2022 saw new development including adding various information and communication technologies (ICT) to impart practical teaching and problem solving using

Introduction

..... Who is not? Who is not using media in today's world? The corporate world, politicians, Human Rights Activists, Environmentalists, government or private establishments, entertainment industries, etc. all rely on media to advance and further their cause. Media has always been a tool for social engineering and is still the most effective tool for societal reformation. With the understanding of the effectiveness of media, for some people, media today is power – a power that can be used for their own vested interest, a power to suppress the dissent of the common people, a power to promote their images, and so on and so forth. Having said so, it was also the media that helps our freedom fighters who were waging war against the British colonial ruler, in mobilizing the people to wake up for breaking the chain of slavery. The great father of the nation Mahatma Gandhi, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, BR Ambedkar, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Jawaharlal Nehru, etc. all use media as a medium to mobilize the people to fight for justice and freedom. The legacy still continues. No matter how some people keep control of media for their own purposes, nowhere in the world none had/have ever succeeded in suppressing the voice of the common people. It is next to impossible for even a country run by a dictator to suppress media that carries the voice of the people. To understand more about the power of media in the context of India, let us begin with the challenges of media (print media) as well as the role of media during the Indian freedom struggle.

The rise of media (print) in India - British Government reaction

The rise of the print medium of mass media started after the arrival of Printing press machines from Portugal at the Jesuit St. Paul's College in Old Goa in 1556. The printing press

the internet. In 2022, we can expect to see further innovations and developments in software and technology to make lessons more engaging and to improve the learning experience among students. Even teachers are of the opinion that technology is now a classroom necessity and not a luxury. With the rigorous curriculum that all teachers have been forced to follow for the past two years, most of them have become tech-savvy and feel comfortable in using technology to impart learning.

However, blended learning allows the human touch to remain in the education process. Many teachers still get a feeling of satisfaction and achievements through physical classes where they have their students.

Learning that makes us future-ready:

The only flip sides of the pandemic situation is that it has armed the education system for future crises many teachers feel that in future if schools again have to be shut for natural calamities or any other circumstances, the learning process will not stop.

In the coming months, it is only possible to upgrade the technology and also encourage extensive training of teachers so they can brace the system without any hesitation. However, in the process, it is also important to note that comprised in the process.

While teachers and students focus on learning new technologies and software, quality education should not be compromised. With so much to focus on, students are easily losing concentration on studies and take more interest on technology and internet.

Who is not afraid of media?

By- Rinku Khumukcham

was brought for missionary purposes. However, it was only in 1780 that the first newspaper in India was published by James Augustus Hickey in 1780. The name of the paper is "Bengal Gazette". It was an English newspaper. In that newspaper, James Hickey exposed the corruption of the East India Company. Warren Hastings, the first British governor-general of India did not like the report published in that newspaper and the publication of the newspaper was shut down within two years. Then comes the Calcutta Gazette, Bengal Journal, Madras Courier, and Bombay Herald from 1784 to 1789. Bombay Herald was later changed to Bombay Gazette. With the publication of certain newspapers, the then British colonial ruler first introduced the "Censorship of Press Act" in 1799. That was because Lord Wellesley wanted to control the media from using it as a tool by the French government. As per the Censorship Act, publishers are forbidden from publishing any articles or reports against the government. The then regime was so afraid of the press that all publishers were to submit the materials to the censor board before any publication.

The Censorship Act was however abolished by Lord Hastings in 1818. That was when first India's vernacular Bengali newspaper called "Samachar Darpan" got published. In 1882 Raja Ram Mohan Roy started "Sambad Kaumudi". The newspaper started publishing injustice meted out to the people during British rule. After a year the then acting Governor-General of British East India Company John Adam introduced the Licensing Regulation Act in 1823.

That act restricted the publication of newspapers without getting license. Because of that act, many newspapers have to be shut down. Three years later (i.e. in 1826) India's first Hindi newspaper "Udant Martand" was born. Since then every 30th of May has been celebrated as Hindi Journalism Day. In 1835, Charles Metcalfe, the then acting Governor-General of India abolished the Licensing Regulation Act. Charles Theophilus Metcalfe is considered to be the Liberator of Indian Press due to the execution of liberation policy by repealing ordinances that control media in 1823. The East India Company was not in favour of abolishing the act and thus he had to resign from his post within one year.

In 1868, Amrita Bazar Patrika started publication in Bengali language. From then till 1870 many Indian language vernacular newspapers came into existence. Those newspapers started criticizing British Policy. In 1878, Lord Lytton, the Viceroy of India passed the famous Vernacular Press Act. That act banned all Indian language newspapers. At that time there were around 35 Indian language newspapers. The Bengali newspaper Amrita Bazar Patrika was converted into English language newspaper. In 1882, Lord Ripon, the Governor-General of India repealed the Vernacular Press Act.

The shutting down of James Hickey's Bengal Gazette by Warren Hastings, the introduction of the "Censorship of Press Act" in 1799, the passing of Vernacular Press Act in 1878, and the Licensing Regulation Act in 1823 by the then colonial master showed the might of the media.

Media in Post independent India

As a student of journalism, it will be interesting to get a glimpse of media in post-Independent India. For media, it makes no difference on the role it played whether it was during a colonial regime or a regime elected by the people. The media always highlights the voice of the people. It acts as the nation's conscience keeper. Like it did during the colonial era, media reports or editorials condemn the venality of politicians and corruption in public offices. If there is a slippage in public morals or slackness

in national purpose media is sure to deplore the trend. The media gives us advice to - protecting the environment, driving the highways, preventing deforestation, and even voting. If there is a political or social controversy, a large section of the media has an opinion in one way or the other.

In his book 'My Country, My Life', Lal Krishna Advani, the former Home Minister of India wrote that, for the first time in the history of post-independence India, the Press censorship has been imposed in June 1975. Significantly, Mrs. Indira Gandhi used All India Radio to announce that the President had proclaimed a state of emergency under article 352 of the Indian Constitution at 8 am on June 25, 1975. (page 204, My Country My Life, by LK Advani).

The period from the year 1975 to 1977 was perhaps the darkest history of Indian media leaving aside the political activists. It was the time when freedom of report reality was shattered. It was the time when journalists were jailed for expressing the truth. Prime Minister Narendra Modi also term the period as the darkest days in the history of the post Independence era. Almost all those who got imprisoned were from the media fraternity. Is not it because late Mrs. Gandhi had a complete understanding of the power of mass media, or else why should she target the media?

When it comes to the state of Manipur, Nongmeikippam Sanajaoba, popularly known as NK Sanajaoba, who is the pioneer of investigative journalism in Manipur faced several kind of harassment and intimidations from the then government.

His writings over those two decades during 1960s-70s in Lamyanba, a monthly journal published by Pan Manipuri Youth League, were against the anti-people system and its power brokers. In his regular column "Yukhal Marumda" NK Sanajaoba exposed nexus of corrupt officials, thikadars and suppliers, who are but the looters in the name of democracy and freedom.

His fearless expression of truth became a model for the educated youths of his day. Obviously, the men in power, unsurprisingly, tried to suppress his views in Lamyanba. As a testimony of his courage and commitment, we can recall two instances in his life. His home was raided by the police coming in two full police trucks in cold nights of October 1969. This was published as a letter to Inspector General of Police, Imphal on 22 October 1969.

The full text of Lamyanba Journal Editor NK Sanajaoba letter to the Inspector General of Police, (IGP)

Imphal: LAMYANBA (An Organ of PANMYL)

Head Office, Yaikul, Police Line, Imphal

Ref. No. Panmyl /DC/ 6-69 Date 22.10.69.

To
The Inspector General of Police; Imphal, Manipur.

Sir,

I beg to state that the raids on my house by two truckloads of your Armed Police personnel at the late hours of night both on the 9th and 11th October, 1969 had not only caused grave harassment to the members of my family but also created panic among my neighbours. It has not only constituted a serious encroachment on my privacy and personal liberty but also caused a great damage to my reputation and prestige both as a responsible citizen and a social worker of the country.

I take the strongest exception to your action in causing the raid on my house. I demand from you an unqualified apology for such actions of yours. In the event of no such apology being received from you on or before the 25th October 1969 dur-

ing office hours, I shall consider myself free to send to the press the full text of this correspondence.

You may take note of the fact that I am always busy in the office of the Pan Manipuri Youth League, Imphal in connection with such works as the management and edition of its most popular Journal Lamyanba besides keeping a number of other engagements in my capacity as the Head Master, the Hindi High School, Imphal and the Joint Secretary, the Manipur Cultural Integration Conference, Imphal, Manipur.

Yours Faithfully,

N.K.Sanjaoba Singh Editor, Lamyanba, Panmyl.

N. K. Sanajaoba was arrested from his office. He was kept in prison. The arrest and re-arrest of NK Sanajaoba repeated multiple times, because the then government of his time fear his courageous report on corrupt government officials. **The post-1990s media was a completely different scenario. It can be translated as a blessing in disguise.** The advent of the internet and simultaneously the digital media has brought so much change to the media.

Television medium though came to India in the early 80s, its real impact reaches out to the public in the 1990s. It was when Pranoy Roy started his own private news channel in collaboration with the Star TV that the real taste of television medium news started giving a new taste to the news consumers. Since then there is no stoppage to the growing of the television news channel in India. According to a report published in indiatelevision.com in July 2016, there are 892 private satellite television channels operating in India as per source from the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. The report further said that of the total 892, 403 are private news and current affair channel. This was a report about 2016, in December 2020, 907 channels were available on satellite television across India.

When television came into existence there was apprehension among the public particularly the news consumer on the fate of print medium newspaper. As for the radio it has its own unique taste and it continues to remain as the most convenient medium accessible by everyone. The coming of smart phone did not change the popularity of radio medium.

The apprehension of affecting the print media with the coming of the television media just turns out to be a misplaced imagination which never happens. Of course the coming of the digital media did impact the marketing of the hard copies of print newspaper, but there were no dearth of print media publication by more and more people notwithstanding the fact that there are over 900 private television broadcasting news, current affairs or entertainment 24x7.

In 2020, the number of registered newspapers and periodicals across India peaked to **more than 143 thousand**. Despite a declining growth rate in the country's print market, the number of registered publications has increased consistently and significantly since financial year 2001.

Despite the advancement in the internet enabled communication technology and the invention of new smartphones with all the surfing and browsing facilities a factor that impact not only in print media marketing but also in the television media marketing, print newspapers in India sees a significant surge in revenue in the past one decade. The same is with the Television media as running of media house – both print and electronic media like television depend on the revenue for running of the office like, production of programme, printing of hardcopy newspaper and besides payment of salary to the journalist and non journalist team working for the specific media firm.

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Third dose can boost vaccine effectiveness against Omicron to 88%, show UK studies

Agency
New Delhi, Jan 2:

A third dose of Covid-19 vaccine can boost a person's resistance to Omicron variant of coronavirus by as much as 88 per cent, new studies conducted in the UK have found.

This is a significantly higher degree of protection against the latest mutated strain when compared to second dose, whose effectiveness begins to wane after a period of six months.

Sharing a UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) report compiling the findings of these studies, Dr Eric Topol, professor of molecular medicine and director of the Scripps Research Translational Institute, pointed out that vaccine effectiveness drops to 52 per cent against Omicron around 6 months after taking the second shot of a Covid-19 vaccine.

However, a third or booster dose substantially bumps up immunity and lowers the odds of contracting a Covid infection with serious symptoms that could lead to hospitalisation.

"That's a big boost of protection for 3rd dose vaccine vs hospitalisation from Omicron



infection. Vaccine effectiveness increased from 52 per cent (due to 2-dose waning after 6 months) to 88 per cent after the 3rd dose," Dr Eric Topol said in a tweet.

While the UKHSA report does mention studies pointing to lower vaccine effectiveness against Omicron as compared to the Delta variant, waning as early as 10 weeks after the third dose. However, it conclusively indicates that risk of emergency care or hospitalisation in Omicron cases was half of that for Delta.

Furthermore, the risk of hospitalisation is lower for Omicron

cases after a second and third vaccine dose, with an average of 81 per cent reduction in the risk of hospitalisation after three doses as against unvaccinated patients.

According to preliminary analysis, vaccinated school-aged children (5 to 17 year olds) who are infected with Omicron have a lower risk of hospitalisation compared to Delta cases.

In the case of symptomatic infections, the risk of hospitalisation in Omicron cases was estimated to be reduced by an average of 68 per cent in those who have taken

a third dose, when compared to similar individuals who were not vaccinated.

"Combined with the protection against becoming a symptomatic case, this gives a vaccine effectiveness against hospitalisation of 88 per cent (78 to 93 per cent) for Omicron after three doses of vaccine," the UKHSA report said.

HOW INDIVIDUAL VACCINES FARED

The studies also showed that among those who had received two doses of AstraZeneca (Covishield in India), there was no effect against Omicron from five months after the second dose.

Whereas those who had received two doses of Pfizer or Moderna, vaccine effectiveness dropped from around 65 to 70 per cent down to around 10 per cent by six months after the second dose.

"Two to four weeks after a booster dose, vaccine effectiveness ranged from around 65 to 75 per cent, dropping to 55 to 70 per cent at 5 to 9 weeks and 40 to 50 per cent from 10 weeks after the booster," the report said.

Registration for kids 15-18 begins for their first shot from tomorrow; 10-crore target population

Agency
New Delhi, Jan 2:

AS the active Covid case load nationwide crossed 1 lakh Saturday, the registration for vaccination for children between 15 and 18 years, a crucial milestone in expanding immunity beyond adults, got under way.

Data on the Cowin dashboard showed 3,15,416 registrations for this age group until 11.30 pm Saturday.

Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya appealed to parents to register their eligible children. "If the children are safe, then the future of the country is safe," he tweeted.

This began a week after the Prime Minister's announce-

ment that Covid-19 vaccination will start January 3 for children.

According to official estimates, there are an estimated 10 crore children in the 15-18 age group eligible for the vaccination. The Union Health Ministry has announced that Bharat Biotech's Covaxin will be the one that will be administered to eligible children — in two doses 28 days apart.

The move comes amid caution over the rapid spread of the Omicron variant.

On Saturday, India reported 22,775 new cases in the last 24 hours. The country's active caseload stood at 1,04,781. According to the Health Ministry, out of 1431 Omicron cases, 488 cases have

been either discharged or recovered or migrated. According to Cowin, India's COVID-19 vaccination coverage exceeded 145.46 crore until late Saturday.

Besides vaccines for children, the Prime Minister had also announced, in his December 25 address to the nation, that healthcare and frontline workers will get a booster — he called it "precaution dose" — from January 10. The "precaution dose" will also be available from January 10 for citizens above the age of 60.

He said that parents were worried about children returning to schools and colleges. "This decision (to vaccinate) will help reduce their stress," Modi said.

Covid-19 cases rising in Delhi but don't panic, infections are mild: CM Arvind Kejriwal

Agency
New Delhi, Jan 2:

Amid the surge in Covid-19 cases in the national capital, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal urged people to act responsibly, but asserted there was no need to panic as most infections are mild.

Citing official data, Arvind Kejriwal said daily Covid infections in Delhi were growing by leaps and bounds with every passing day, whereas active cases have tripled in the last three days.

"Covid-19 cases are increasing rapidly in Delhi, but there is no need to panic. Currently, the active cases in the city are 6360.

Three days ago, there were 2291 active cases. Active cases have increased three times in three days," he said at a press briefing on Sunday.

"923 cases were registered on December 29, 1313 cases on December 30, 1796 cases on December 31, 2716 infections on January 1. Today, 3100 new cases expected to be reported," he added.

The Delhi CM claimed that data shows most Covid patients in the city don't need hospitalisation and almost all cases are mild or asymptomatic. Even so, the government is making preparations for a possible third wave on a war footing.

"Only 246 hospital beds

were occupied yesterday. As of now, only 82 oxygen beds in hospitals are occupied. This figure has remained the same for the last several days. There is no patient coming who needs oxygen. Delhi government is prepared with 37,000 beds," said Kejriwal.

"Wear a mask, do social distancing, wash your hands with soap and don't worry," he advised.

While the emergence of the new Omicron variant has sparked fears of a third wave, there has been a constant surge in the Covid-19 tally in the national capital which recorded 7,865 cases in the last seven days.

Contd. from Page 2

Who is not afraid of

In the last couple of years almost all conventional media houses have been severely hit with financial crisis. Covid-19 pandemic is not an excuse, the crisis started even before the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. This opportunity has not been missed out by any of the game players of India who are in different profession. It was at this time that the multinational companies, corporate giant, political parties started funding either illegally or illegally to make use of the media for their own purpose.

If one recalled, the 2014 pre-election, every student of mass media will certainly remember how political parties particularly the media used to reach out their election promises to the people. Several printed leaflets, hoardings or bill boards could be seen incurring huge amount of money for publicity matter. Some political parties having understood the impact of the social media even open IT cell to reach out to the public for election campaign.

The nation had witnessed certain TV news channel reporting and analyzing or debating in favour of a specific political party. Circumstantial evidences showed that huge amount of money is being spent to media of any kind — either in print or electronic, to garner vote during election. And except for some journalists with integrity who still continues to stick to their professional ethics, almost all media houses, both print and electronic media have today set their agenda to make sure that their media houses sustain with the kind of financial assistance they accrue from either the political parties or the owner of the corporate houses.

Why all these big shot never missed out any opportunity to grapple media houses and wanted to remain in the upper hand and to make them set agenda to promote them. Is not it because they are really afraid of media and if not why should they do that?

Tools enforce due to fear of media (an effort to silence report)

Even as the constitution of India has guaranteed freedom of speech and expression under article 19, there are also certain provisions under various sections of the Indian laws which put limitation to common people particularly to the journalists. Irrespective of control of media by either the owner of the corporate houses or the politicians, it is always next to impossible to silence the media. That must be the reason for the establishment to impose certain laws to curtail the free speech and expression to curtail the media. Controver-

sial sedition laws (Article 124 A, 153 B of the Indian Penal Code), National Security Act, Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, etc. are some of the tools in the hands of the establishment to control the free speech particularly free reporting by the journalist community. According to a report available in Scroll.in, 154 journalists were arrested or faced government hostilities between 2010 and 2020. 40% of these journalists were reported either to have arrested or faced hostilities in 2020 alone. Most of them are from among those who refused to bow for mercy of the so called powerful individuals who wanted to control media. In today's India there are reports of government utilising various statutory or autonomous bodies or even the judiciary to curtail the voice of journalist. But the fact is that all those machineries when left with no means came to media to seek justice. We all know how four senior judges of the Supreme Court of India — Justice J Chelameswar, Justice Ranjan Gogoi, Justice MB Lokur and Justice Kurian Joshe, all top and high profile judges of the highest court of the country came to press on January 18, 2018 mounting a virtual protest against the Chief Justice Dipak Mishra.

When it comes to the state of Manipur, every media houses had information about the district police issuing reminders about what not to publish or broadcast in media.

With election time approaching nearer, political parties are busy setting agenda to use media as a tool for their campaign. There are reports of some even employing dozens of people to monitor the reports and analysis appeared on media.

Conclusion:

Well in democratic society media is often considered as the fourth estate. American President Abraham Lincoln once said that a country without media is more preferable to a country without governance. From the common men working from hand to mouth to people running the government or any establishment, media in any medium is a tool for their own protection or a weapon that can destroy their images or the voice of the people. Even a government run by a dictator is keeping their own watchdog to control media. Communist countries like China or Cuba have strong censorship legislation to make sure that their system is not ruined by the media.

(This article was presented on National Press Day observance 2021 organized by DIPR, Govt. of Manipur.)

Assam CM hints at removal of AFSPA, says 'positive development expected this year'

Agency
Guwahati, Jan 2:

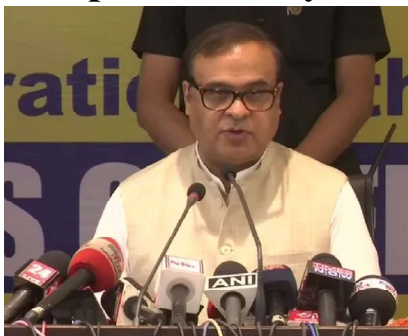
Hinting at the removal of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, from Assam, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said some positive development is expected during the year.

"As far as AFSPA is concerned, Assam will see some rationalising in 2022 ... How and when we don't know. But I am an optimistic man. We are looking at 2022 as a year of hope. There will be some positive moment regarding AFSPA," he told reporters.

Political parties of the Northeast, civil society groups and rights activists have termed AFSPA as "draconian" because of the special powers it grants to the Indian Armed Forces to maintain public order in "disturbed areas".

It was imposed in Assam in November 1990 and has been extended every six months since then.

The Act is currently imposed in Assam, Nagaland, Manipur (excluding Imphal Municipal Council Area),



Changlang, Longding and Tirap districts of Arunachal Pradesh, and areas falling within the jurisdiction of the eight police stations of districts in Arunachal Pradesh bordering Assam.

The CM also said that the era of tribal militancy is over in the state as all insurgent groups are coming forward for talks with the government.

He also termed the demand for a discussion on sovereignty by ULFA(I) a stumbling block saying his gov-

ernment is trying to break the impasse.

"The era of tribal militancy is over. All militant groups have come forward... Our last hurdle is ULFA(I). Excluding them, all other outfits have surrendered arms," PTI quoted him as saying.

The CM said that during interactions with people who are directly or indirectly in touch with ULFA(I) chief Paresw Barua he has learned that he is in favour of a "negotiated settlement".

BSF tightens security at border areas ahead of PM Modi's visit to Tripura

Agency
Agartala, Jan 2:

Security has been tightened at the India-Bangladesh border ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Tripura on January 4, confirmed the Border Security Force (BSF) on Saturday.

While speaking to media, BSF Commandant Ratnes Kumar, 120 Battalions, said

that whenever there is VVIP movement near border areas, alertness is usually increased to ensure there is no untoward incident.

"We have also increased patrolling along the border," he added.

It should be noted that PM Modi is slated to visit the northeastern state on January 4 and inaugurate a new terminal building at Maharaja

Bir Bikram Airport in Agartala.

With the inauguration of the new terminal building, the Maharaja Bir Bikram Airport is about to introduce itself to the list of international airports.

Sources also say that the Prime Minister will address a public gathering at Swami Vivekananda Stadium in the state capital of Agartala.

Omicron tally rises to 1,525; 27,553 new COVID-19 cases, 284 deaths recorded in 24 hours

Agency
New Delhi:

A total of 1,525 cases of Omicron variant of coronavirus have been detected across 23 states and Union Territories so far, out of which 560 have recovered or migrated, according to the Union health ministry's data updated on Sunday.

Maharashtra recorded a maximum of 460 cases, followed by Delhi at 351, Gujarat 136, Tamil Nadu 117 and Kerala 109.

India's COVID tally rose to 3,48,89,132 with 27,553

fresh cases, while the active cases have increased to 1,22,801, according to the data updated at 8 am. The death toll has climbed to 4,81,770 with 284 more fatalities, the data showed.

The active cases have increased to 1,22,801 comprising 0.35 percent of the total infections, while the national COVID-19 recovery rate was recorded at 98.27 percent, the ministry said.

An increase of 18,020 cases has been recorded in the active COVID-19 caseload in a span of 24 hours. The daily positivity rate was re-

corded at 2.55 per cent. The weekly positivity rate was also recorded at 1.35 per cent, according to the ministry.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 3,42,84,561, while the case fatality rate was recorded at 1.38 percent.

The cumulative doses administered in the country so far under the nationwide COVID-19 vaccination drive has exceeded 145.44 crore.

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on 7 August, 2020, 30 lakh on 23 August, 40 lakh on 5

September and 50 lakh on 16 September. It went past 60 lakh on 28 September, 70 lakh on 11 October 11, crossed 80 lakh on 29 October, 90 lakh on 20 November and surpassed the one-crore mark on 19 December. India crossed the grim milestone of two crore on 4 May and three crore on 23 June.

Meanwhile, with the administration of 25,75,225 vaccine doses in the last 24 hours, India's COVID-19 vaccination coverage exceeded 145.44 Crore (1,45,44,13,005) as per provisional reports till 7 am today.

Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya reviews Public Health Preparedness to COVID19 and National COVID19 Vaccination Progress with States/UT

PIB
New Delhi, Jan 2:

Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare today virtually interacted with State Health Ministers and Principal Secretaries/ Additional Chief Secretaries of States/UTs to review the Public Health Preparedness to COVID19 and progress of National COVID19 vaccination campaign. The meeting was held in view of the rising cases of the Omicron variant and the recent decisions to roll-out vaccination for the age group 15-18 years and precautionary dose for identified vulnerable categories. The meeting was officiated by the Union Health Secretary Shri Rajesh Bhushan.

State Health Ministers who joined the meet included S Pangnyu Phom (Nagaland), N K Das (Odisha), Dr. Prabhuram

Choudhary (MP), Ma Subramanian (Tamil Nadu), Keshab Mahanta (Assam), Anil Vij (Haryana), Satyendar Jain (Delhi), Alo Libang (Arunachal Pradesh), Banna Gupta (Jharkhand), Mangal Pandey (Bihar), T.S. Singh Deo (Chhattisgarh), Chandrima Bhattacharjee, MoS Health (West Bengal) and others.

The Union Health Minister noted at the very outset that globally, countries are experiencing 3-4 times the surge in Covid-19 cases in comparison to their earlier peaks. The Omicron variant being highly transmissible, a high surge in case can overwhelm the medical system. He therefore advised the States to leave no stone unturned in ramping up infrastructure to manage a high surge so that India escapes unscathed from this episode of COVID-19.

Dr. Mandaviya said in this regard that irrespective of the COVID variants, measures for preparedness and protection remain the same. He urged the states to re-invigorate their teams to work at the ground level and strengthen monitoring and containment mechanisms. This was followed by a comprehensive and detailed

discussion on various aspects of COVID management including ramping up of hospital infrastructure; increased testing; stringent restrictive measures for breaking the chain of transmission; and stress on COVID Appropriate Behaviour among the masses. Critical bottlenecks in medical infrastructure were also discussed.

Security Forces apprehends insurgent

IT News
Imphal, Jan 2:

Phundrei Battalion of Assam Rifles under the aegis of IGAR (South) in a joint operation with Manipur Police apprehended one insurgent of the proscribed group UNLF near Umathel in Kachchong

District yesterday. Based on specific input, a joint operation of Assam Rifles with Manipur Police was launched which led to the apprehension.

The apprehended insurgent has been handed over to Waikhong Police Station for further investigation.

Sports

Man City late show at Arsenal opens up 11-point lead

Agency
London, Jan 2:

Pep Guardiola admitted an exhausted Manchester City had luck on their side to open up an 11-point Premier League lead as the English champions came from behind to beat 10-man Arsenal 2-1 to start 2022 off on a winning note.

City are well on course for their fourth title in five seasons thanks to an 11-game winning run, but were made to toil until Rodri's winner deep into stoppage time by the Gunners.

A 5-0 thrashing by City when the sides last met in August saw Arsenal off to their worst start to a league season in 67 years.

But Mikel Arteta's men have rallied to rise to fourth in the table and showed why as they deservedly led at half-time through Bukayo Saka's seventh goal of the season.

Riyad Mahrez levelled from the penalty spot before Gabriel Magalhães stupidly got himself sent off for two quickfire bookings just before the hour mark.

And the 10 men just failed to hold out for a point when Rodri poked home from close range after Aymeric Laporte's shot was blocked.

Plastic bottles rained down on the Spanish international as



he celebrated with the Arsenal supporters furious as they voiced their frustration at the officiating after seeing a penalty appeal of their own waived away in the first half.

"They were better," said Guardiola. "It was difficult because we didn't have energy."

City are one of only two Premier League teams not to have had a match postponed in recent weeks due to rising cases of coronavirus, meaning they have played nine games in the last 32 days.

Arsenal's clash with Wolves in midweek had been

called off and they looked the fresher side. They ran the champions ragged in the first half despite missing the presence of Arteta, who tested positive for Covid-19 for the second time earlier this week.

The first big decision to go against the home side came on 12 minutes when Martin Odegaard went down as he tried to round City goalkeeper Ederson.

The Brazilian was given the benefit of the doubt by the referee and VAR, but Ederson appeared to have gone through

the Norwegian's foot to get to the ball.

"Confusing is the right word, we are looking for consistency," said Arsenal assistant manager Albert Stuivenberg.

"For me the Odegaard one is a clear penalty."

Martinelli's missed chance

Arsenal did get the half-time lead they deserved when Saka swept home Kieran Tierney's pass into the bottom corner. That was just the second Premier League goal City had conceded in the first half all season and Guardiola's men bounced back in a dramatic second period.

Arsenal were furious when Stuart Attwell was sent to review Granit Xhaka's pull on Bernardo Silva seven minutes after the break when he had not been for Odegaard's penalty appeal.

Mahrez made no mistake from the spot in his final City appearance for a while due to his participation in the African Cup of Nations with Algeria.

The game then turned in the course of an incredible 60 seconds. Firstly, Arsenal somehow did not retake the lead when Nathan Ake rescued Laporte's wayward header from crossing his own line before Martinelli hit the post with an open goal on the rebound.

Contd. from Page 1 PM to visit Manipur and Tripura....

A step towards realization of the Prime Minister's relentless efforts for the rejuvenation and transformation of Indian cities, will be the completion of multiple projects under the 'Imphal Smart City Mission'. Prime Minister will inaugurate three projects of the mission, developed at a cost of more than Rs 170 crore, including the Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC), 'Development of Western Riverfront on Imphal River (Phase I)' and 'Development of Mall Road at Thangal Bazar (Phase I)'. The Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC) will provide a variety of technology based services in the city, including traffic management, solid waste management and city surveillance. Other development projects under the mission will boost tourism & local economy and provide employment opportunities.

The Prime Minister will lay the foundation stone of 'Centre for Innovation, Innovation, Incubation and Training (CIIT)' to be built in the state at a cost of about Rs 200 crore. This project is the biggest PPP initiative in the State and will provide a boost to the Information Technology sector, besides creating employment opportunities in the state.

Prime Minister will also lay the foundation stone for construction of Manipur Institute of Performing Arts at Gurgaon, Haryana. The idea of such a cultural institute of Manipur in Haryana was first mooted in 1990 but it could not materialize for the last many years. The institute will be built at a cost of more than Rs 240 crore and will promote the rich art and culture of the state. Further strengthening the rich cultural heritage of the state, the Prime Minister will inaugurate the refurbished and renovated Gopinath Temple at Imphal. He will also inaugurate the INA complex at Moirang that will showcase the significant role played by Indian National Army (INA) in India's Independence Movement.

In line with the mantra of 'Sabka Saath-Sabka Vikas-Sabka Vishwas', Prime Minister will lay the foundation stone of 72 Projects worth more than Rs 130 crore under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram. These projects will provide the infrastructural support in health and education sectors for holistic development of the minority communities.

To strengthen the handloom industry in the State, Prime Minister will lay the foundation stone of two projects worth Rs. 36 crore namely, 'Mega Handloom Cluster' at Nongpok Kakching in Imphal East Dis-

trict, which will benefit about 17,000 weavers in Imphal East District and 'Craft and Handloom village' in Moirang which will help the weaving households, harness the tourism potential of the Moirang and adjoining Loktak Lake and generate employment for the local people.

Prime Minister will also lay the foundation stone for the construction of Government Residential Quarters at New Checkon to be built at a cost of around Rs 390 crore. This will be an integrated housing colony with modern amenities. He will also lay the foundation stone of a ropeway project at Ibudhou Marjing, Imphal East.

Other projects being inaugurated by the Prime Minister include the new Industrial Training Institute (ITI), Kangpokpi under Enhancing Skill Development Infrastructure (ESDI) and a new office building of the Directorate of Information and Public Relations.

PM in Tripura
During his visit to the state, Prime Minister will inaugurate the New Integrated Terminal Building of Maharaja Bir Bikram (MBB) Airport and launch key initiatives: Mukhyamantri Tripura Gram Samridhi Yojana and Project Mission 100 of Vidyajyoti Schools.

have been used as tools by the politicians and spewed venom to spread crimes of different forms which is very unfortunate.

In view of the mass spread of Covid-19 cases following the Kumba mela and the recent Omicron pandemic, the High Court of Allahabad had directed the Prime Minister and the Election Commission of

India to postpone the election schedule in five states including Manipur. However, there is no postponement to the election which showed that India does not care for the lives of Manipuri people. The CORCOM appealed the people to stay away from the visit of Narendra Modi to protect themselves from Covid - 19 pandemic.

Government to formulate air sports policy

Agency
New Delhi, Jan 2:

The government plans to formulate a national air sports policy as well as set up an apex body for air sports.

The civil aviation ministry has sought comments from the public on the draft National Air Sports Policy (NASP 2022) till January 31.

The plan is to promote air sports by making it "safe, affordable, accessible, enjoyable and sustainable", according to the ministry.

The policy will cover sports

like aerobatics, aeromodelling, amateur-built and experimental aircraft, ballooning, drones, skydiving and vintage aircraft.

Under the policy, an Air Sports Federation of India (ASFI) will be established as the apex governing body while associations for each air sport will handle day to day activities.

The air sports associations will be accountable to ASFI with respect to the regulatory oversight.

Further, ASFI shall represent India at FAI and other global platforms related to air

sports. The Federation Aeronautique Internationale (FAI), headquartered in Lausanne, Switzerland is the world governing body for air sports.

"The vision is to make India one of the top air sports nations by 2030," the ministry said.

The draft has been prepared by a committee comprising senior officials from the Union government, Indian armed forces, Aero Club of India, National Cadet Corps and air sports experts.

With COVID-19 cases shooting up, BCCI postpones U-16 tournament

Agency
New Delhi, Jan 2:

The BCCI has decided to postpone the National U-16 boys tournament for the Vijay Merchant Trophy for the second year in a row owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

BCCI secretary Jay Shah has written to all the state bodies that since U-16 play-

ers are not vaccinated, the Board has decided not to take risk as there is a high possibility of a surge in the number of positive cases in the coming days.

"After consulting experts and seeking views of the medical team and operations team, it has been decided that keeping health and safety in mind, the U-16 Vijay Mer-

chant Trophy is postponed for the season," Shah wrote in the letter.

"The primary reason being participants are still not vaccinated and as such are vulnerable. We should exercise caution and not be adventurous and put lives of our talented cricketers at grave risk," Shah further wrote.