

Cops found guilty of drugs smuggling will face wrath of law: CM N. Biren Singh

IT News
Imphal, Jan 17:

"No matter who, there will be zero tolerance for anyone involved with illegal drugs trade," said Chief Minister N Biren Singh today.

This statement came as a response to the questions raised by opposition Congress and other social organisations in the state over the recent arrests of five Manipur Police personnel for alleged drugs smuggling.

On Monday, as many as five Manipur police commandos were arrested for allegedly smuggling contraband items including over 1 kg of heroin and WY tablets at Kuraopokpi along national highway 102 (Imphal-Moreh road).

Manipur CM Biren Singh, who attended the BJP national executive meeting held in Delhi said, "Investigation into this case is currently underway. Rest assured, all those who are found guilty will face the wrath of the law."

Notably, Congress President K Meghachandra inquired as to who will bear moral responsibility for the



cops catching cops smuggling drugs and urged the Kakching SP to swiftly and thoroughly investigate the case.

Expressing serious concern over poppy cultivation, drug production, manufacturing, and its adverse effect on Manipuri society, the Committee of Civil Societies Kangleipak (CCSK) also demanded the government to take up stringent actions

against perpetrators as per law of the land.

The Chief Minister further stated that security forces, teams of the forest department and officials of district administrations, etc. are diligently carrying out the tasks of destroying poppy plantations with co-ordination at targeted areas.

Spraying of herbicides by using drone technology was also successfully carried out

during a mass poppy destruction drive carried out at Mongjang village under Saikul police station in Kangpokpi district on Monday.

"We have started deploying drones to destroy poppy plantations. More such missions to be carried out in all the areas where poppy is being cultivated," CM Biren Singh said.

Union Ministry of Health appoints Dr. H. Priyosakhi Devi as Director of RIMS

IT News
Imphal, Jan 17:

The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare gave an additional charge of the post of Director RIMS to Dr. H. Priyosakhi Devi, ENT RIMS up to April 11, 2023. Following the order, Dr. Priyosakhi had taken charge as in-charge director this afternoon. The ministry also cancelled the order of appointing Dr. L. Ranjit as an additional charge to the post of RIMS director.

"In compliance with the Hon'ble High Court order dated 19.12.2022 in W.P. (C) No.867 of 2022 filed by Dr. H. Priyosakhi Devi vs UOI & others, this Ministry's order No.U.12025/53/2022-NE dated 12.10.2022 entrusting additional charge to the post of Director, RIMS to Dr. L. Ranjit Singh, Prof. Obst & Gynaec, RIMS, Imphal is hereby cancelled. The additional charge to p post of Director, RIMS, Imphal is hereby entrusted to Dr. H. Priyosakhi Devi, Prof., ENT, RIMS, Imphal upto



11.04.2023 or till the regular appointment of Director, RIMS, Imphal, or till further orders, whichever is the earliest," said an order dated January 16, 2022.

It is worth mentioning that Manipur High Court in 19 December last year quashed and set aside an order of October 27, issued by the under-secretary of the Union Health and Family Welfare Ministry, entrusting additional charge for the post of director, RIMS to

Dr L Ranjit for a period of six months i.e. up to April 11, 2023, or till a regular appointment of director, RIMS or till further notices.

The High Court said that quashing the order will not preclude the official authorities from making a fresh interim in-charge arrangement in respect of the vacant post of Director, RIMS, Imphal strictly in terms of the provisions of Rule 12(1) (III) of the Rules and Regulations of RIMS.

State Police beefs up security measures at various places in valley districts

IT News
Imphal, Jan 17:

The Manipur state police have beefed up security measures in various trouble prone parts of the state by launching cordon and search Combining Operations (CASO) after two bombs were recovered at different places in the valley districts of the state.

Police conducted cordon and search operation at Nagamapal areas Ngarigali, and

Maharani bridge in the heart of Imphal city areas by teams of commandos Imphal West district (CDO-IW) from 8:10 am to 8:50 am today.

During the operation, around 130 individuals were verified properly and 11 persons were picked up and handed over to City police for further verification, the police said.

Another cordoned and search operation was also carried out in the surrounding areas of the Manipur University,

Imphal West district from 06:00 am to 7:40 am. Around 80 houses including rented houses and 140 individuals were verified in the operation but no one was picked up for further verification, the police said.

Similarly, similar operation was conducted in and around the Bishnupur bazaar in Bishnupur district. As many as 140 persons to whom 11 were detained for further verification, the police said.

It may be mentioned that an old hand grenade was found in the courtyard of one Aheibam Tombimacha of Andro Khoibu Leikai in Imphal East district and yet another bomb was discovered in the kitchen garden of one Theitalong Longmei of Luwangsangbam Kabui Khul under Heingang police station. The police bomb disposal squad detonated the bombs at different locations, the police added.

Kangpokpi Forest Division and District Police destroyed illegal poppy plantation

IT News
Imphal, Jan 17:

A combined team of Kangpokpi Forest Division and District Police, Kangpokpi and Imphal East destroyed illegally cultivated poppy in the hill ranges of T Khullen and Lhangsom Villages under Siakul SD. The poppy destruction teams were led by Range Forest Officer, Kangpokpi Range at T Khullen where a total of 3.5 Ha was covered. 17Ha area was cleared of illegal poppy cultivation at Lhangsom hill ranges. Along with poppy plants, illegally erected huts and items found in the huts used in poppy cultivation were all destroyed too.

The efforts to eradicate poppy from the State with such drives shall continue in other poppy cultivated areas of the State. It may be reiterated that breaking up op of land for non



forestry purposes in notified forests of the country is a violation of rules laid down by Indian Forest Act, 1927 read with Manipur Forest Rules, 2021. The Divisional

Forests Officer, Kangpokpi Forest Division already issued warning to those indulging in such acts who will be dealt with severely as per law.

NNPGs and the NSCN (IM) publicly declare unconditional commitment ; NSF appreciates the decisions

IT News
Imphal, Jan 17:

The Naga Students' Federation had stated that the NNPGs and the NSCN(IM) had publicly declared their 'unconditional commitment to collaborate on the basis of the respective agreements, with immediate effect, for resolution of the Naga historical and political rights' with the Government of India and appreciated the decision.

"This is in furtherance of the 'September Joint Accordant' of 14 September 2022 which paved the way for the formation of 'Council of Naga Relationships and co-operation' led by Convenor

of NNPGs and the Chairman of NSCN, 'to explore, at the earliest, realistic ways for Nagas to move forward on the basis of Naga historical and political rights', a statement b NSF said.

The statement further added that this development comes as a booster for the Naga public to shed our differences and ceaselessly work towards ensuring that lasting peace is brought about in our Naga homeland, through the healing of our spirits. Despite this welcoming development, the NSF is dismayed at the continued delay tactics been adopted by the GOI in the negotiation process to hammer out the differences with the Naga

negotiators pertaining to the key core issues of the Naga National Flag and Constitution.

The Federation reiterated its earlier stand to never accept a 'forced solution' and that the impending negotiated solution should ensure that the dignity and rights of every single Naga soul is respected and upheld.

The NSF demanded to the GOI to exhibit utmost sincerity and commitment in the negotiation process so as to ensure that the aspiration of the Naga people for an Inclusive, Honorable and Acceptable Solution to the protracted Indo-Naga Political issue is brought about without any further delay.

The Federation while extending our warmest New Year greetings to the Naga people also fervently appeal to everyone to be mindful of individuals publicly indulging in rhetoric, either in words or actions, pertaining to the Indo-Naga Political issue.

"We have to zealously guard our cause which is legitimate, just, fair and righteous from the lure of these individuals, tirelessly scheming with our adversaries, to undermine it. Their distorted tales should no longer confuse us. Instead, we should fearlessly advocate our inalienable historical and political rights' to the world at large", the statement said.

RUCO observes 20th Foundation Day

IT News
Imphal, Jan 17:

20th Foundation Day of Rural United Clubs' Organisation (RUCO), Lamshang, a conglomerate of 20 local clubs from Iroishemba to Phayeng , Singda Dam, Lamdeng to Sanjem Chirang was observed today at Sanjem Chirang Youth Club, Community Hall.

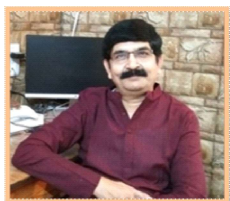
In connection with the foundation day a cleanliness drive was conducted by the

club members the secrete site of Poiraiton at Lamdeng Chingdum macha. The RUCO also distributed blankets to 30 aged people of Sanjem Chirang village. Gifts were also given to former members and founder of RUCO.

A function organised in connection with the foundation day was attended by P. Nando Luwang, President All Manipur united Clubs' Organisation (AMUCO) as Chief Guest, while Kh. Lokendro, President of Rural

United Clubs' Organisation (RUCO) presided over the function. State Awardee Khaidem Heramani Khaba also president of Imphal West District United Clubs' Organisation (IWDUCO), Head Master of Khurkhul Sadar Patel High School, Huyam Priyobarta Singh, Principal of Ideal Public School, Singda Chingsubam Ibochou Singh and Vice President of AMUCO Takhellambam Gandhi Meetei attended as Guests of honour.

5-days working week – Bank Strike Justified



By: Vinod Chandrashekhar Dixit

The United Forum of Bank Unions (UFBU) have decided to go on two-day strike from January 30 demanding a five-day working week for bank staff, among others. Apart from 5 day week, the UFBU is also demanding immediate commencement of negotiations on the charter of demands for wage revision, updating of pension for retirees and resolution of residual issues like updation of pension, immediate start of negotiations on charter of demands for wage revision and adequate recruitment in all cadres, among others. As per reports, the United Forum of Bank Unions has been trying for the last 28 months to resolve the remaining issues, however, no positive response was given by the Indian Banks' Association. The 11th wage settlement of bank employees occurred on November 11, 2020, between the Indian Banks' Association and the United Forum of Bank Unions, the umbrella body of trade unions in the banking sector.

Some of the issues related to the agreement, in which a 5-day week in banks, stagnation increment is not given to banks by the Indian Banks Association, besides promotion and salary, pension fixation issues etc. Two Saturdays (2nd and 4th) were declared off in 10th bipartite settlement, signed on the 25 May 2015. This was termed as a great achievement by bank unions, who have been asking for five-day week. Before two Saturdays off, all Saturdays were half day working, as such, technically no benefit was passed on in terms of working hours. The demand of bank employees' is not unreasonable because Central Government and most State Government offices work only five days. A five-day week is already available in the international banking system. It is also available here - the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), central and state governments, and companies in the public sector work for (only) five days a week.

The working conditions in the Banks have been strenuous. Poor infrastructure, lack of adequate staff has made the officers work till late in the night, resulting in poor health, huge pressure on the officers, which culminates in serious work-leisure mismatches, life style diseases and of late, repeated acts of suicides being committed by the officers of the Banks.

With the advancement of technology, most of the transactions can be processed without physically visiting branches. Since 2015, the banks have developed various alternative delivery channels for delivery of various services and most of the services like, fund transfers, bank statements, cheque book requests, loan applications, cash withdrawal, transaction enquiry, account opening, life certificates etc. are available online without human intervention. In a letter to the Indian Banks' Association, the All India Bank Employees' Association has proposed that working hours per day may be increased by 30 minutes and the present working hours may be advanced by 30 minutes in the morning. It has also proposed increasing the existing customer service hours/non-cash transaction banking hours by 30 minutes. According to AIBOC, India is in the midst of digital revolution. As per experts, India is set to leapfrog many advanced countries in this space. Customers in the country are leaning towards digital adoption of financial services faster than previous estimates. There will be a paradigm shift in banking transactions from the brick and mortar banking to digital transactions concept. It is quite evident that the work pressure in the banking industry is the highest in the country and due to this branch banking should be done only during weekdays, keeping in mind the health of employees and their ability to perform. Having five days a week will lead to higher productivity and improve the efficiency of bank employees. Don't we think, 5 days week will also be a positive step in the direction of Digital India in conformity with PM's vision?

Political Dynasties Cripple Democracy



By: M.R. Lahu

India's political spectrum witnessed a complete transformation when an outsider from Delhi with a layman's profile invaded it. Decades of Indian politics was full of powerful transcriptions of dynastic narratives that defined, decoded and at times demonised it in various vernaculars. Narendra Modi's invasion into the political domain of India came with an unprecedented force and it was an unpredicted exercise until a decade ago. And the main reason such an exercise seemed unrealistic and insensitively brushed under the carpet was the political force that controlled India for decades with the power it garnered by playing its political shrewdness on the innocence that India's landscape is inhabited with. The transformation seems to be completely overlooking all narratives effectively erasing the dynastic influence. The desperation of the dynasts and their shenanigans have often been surfacing with an ostensible denial.

Would family dynasties cripple Indian politics? Before answering this, let us know who forced the desperation emanating from a total collapse of one of the dynasties to invent exercises such as a revival yatra across the country? The answer comes from the dynast himself. Rahul Gandhi from the supreme Nehru-Gandhi dynasty conclusively recognises the threat and revealingly proclaims it with all sensibility. He says that it is not the BJP but the RSS, the ideological parent of the BJP that his party is fighting its way against. His quip seems to be a delib-

erate portrayal of Narendra Modi as an instrument in the hands of the larger framework of the Sangh. His lamentation on the Sangh Parivar is realistic as the reach and effect of the right wing group could overthrow the decades old dynastic supremacy. In his latest address in Haryana during his Bharat Jodo Yatra he reminisced a little bit of the Indian epic the Mahabharata and to the gathering of his party cadre he said, the RSS is the 21st century Kauravas and India's selected billionaires are standing with the Kauravas. And the 'tapasya' in him calls his party the conglomeration of the Pandavas.

To understand the significance of such an analogy, we need to know the epical importance of the two segments of the same royal family. On one side are the Pandavas the proponents of righteousness and on the other side are the Kauravas being immersed in treacherous demonization. Rahul Gandhi is seen beautifying his party with his refined vocabulary and emboldened oratory. So, the real threat according to him is not the BJP but the invasive power of the RSS. Hegemonizing India's political institutions, dynasties have transformed them into family enterprises and Rahul Gandhi is a product of such a family enterprise. His rise to political significance in India tells us tales of a feeble democracy and its antithetical impulses. For him, political powers emerging from outside the jurisdiction of dynasties do not count to be reliable and supposed to be unsustainable. RSS, on the other hand is seen to be tabled as a platform which efficiently moulds leaders for the cause of the country. Its imagination, capturing the gist of India's ethical and cultural veracity is often misread and embellished. The hullabaloo on the RSS chief's views on Hindutva and his latest quips on India's minority essentially resembles the restlessness of an ideological opponent being unprepared for an intellectual dialogue.

Political dynasties in India have

always camouflaged their real intent by misappropriating the democratic values of the country. The latest act of undermining the power of democracy in India was the induction of Tamil Nadu Chief Minister's son into his cabinet. A healthy democracy always creates space for fresh and genuine faces. This deteriorating trend in Indian politics began with the Nehru-Gandhi family which showed the way and served licences to all the power centers that later metamorphosed into dynasties. Training centers of RSS, the shakhas, are probably busy in reversing this unethically political enterprising of the family dynasties. It keeps outsourcing its efficient cadre to the BJP and the situation emerging in the saffron party is by design dangerous for the political dynasties across the country and this caused Rahul Gandhi to come up with the Pandava-Kaurava analogy.

For a fact checking we can examine the trend in the RSS-BJP confluence. The list of its most prominent leaders deputed to the BJP by its parental organisation must startle us. Leaders like A.B. Vajpayee, L.K. Advani, Narendra Modi, M.M. Joshi, Nitin Gadkari, Pramod Mahajan, and Ram Madhav are a selected few. The list is endless and the interesting aspect is that nobody among them comes with a family baggage. It is unnecessary to suspect their organisational efficiency. An ideological paradigm that A.B. Vajpayee is known to have brought into Indian politics is familiar to the Indian polity. Therefore, the Congress' scion is justifiably disillusioned about the RSS presence behind the BJP's dominance. When he says his fight is not against the BJP but against the ideology of the RSS, he convincingly comprehends the impact of Sangh-ism in Indian politics and the perils that the dynasty he represents has shrunk into.

Parties converted into family enterprises are evidently depicting the ideological and structural decline of

India's democracy. The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in Tamil Nadu is wary and shaky at the rise of K. Annamalai the BJP president of the state. Stalin's incompetence to counter the intellectual eloquence and political shrewdness of Annamalai became another reason for his son's induction into the cabinet. Annamalai, on the other hand is a disciplined party cadre of the BJP and emerging as a crucial challenger to the DMK dynasty in Tamil Nadu where its principal opponent AIADMK has shrivelled into insignificance. Annamalai's deep-rooted Hindutva conscience and his fine tuning with the Sangh have made him the suitable choice for the party.

Pundits, watchful of the degradation of the Indian political system seem to be appreciative about the manufacturing mechanics of the BJP workers by the Sangh. Undoubtedly, its new generation leaders are equally capable to row the party across turbulent political waters. Tragically, political dynasties are often seen fulfilling the familial requirements by being in power and in a democracy, if parties stoop into familial entertainments, we will witness the downfall of the democracy and its most important institution, the parties. Irrespective of electing its new president, the Congress party is still seen heavily leaning on the Nehru-Gandhi family and the image makeover Yatra by its leader indubitably tells us the intensity of degradation the party has come across. The rise of a dynasty in any party indicates the fall of its genuine leaders and the party's disconnection from the grassroots. It seems the political discourse that the Sangh and its affiliates are trying to ignite in India's political spectrum is to question the obfuscating impact of the dynasties and their debilitation of India's democratic edifice. Rahul Gandhi's revival strides made him sense this tremor.

(The author is a Freelance Journalist/Author of "India @ 75- A Contemporary Approach")

A Budget for Bharat

By: Anil Padmanabhan

This year's Union Budget—the 11th in a row from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA)—is being presented in the backdrop of exceptional circumstances. Not only is a deeply divided world facing an unprecedented economic challenge that is being compounded by climate change, this is also the last regular Budget ahead of the general election next year.

Ever since the covid-19 pandemic struck in 2020, the world has been subjected to repeated shocks of unprecedented magnitude—the Russia-Ukraine conflict, followed by the ratcheting up of interest rates by the United States Federal Reserve, and most recently the fresh surge in the covid-19 pandemic in China.

The combined impact of the pandemic, geopolitical tensions, drying up of global liquidity and the commodity price shocks has brought the world—including the United States, the largest economy—dangerously close to a recession.

However, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, will have cause for cheer. India continues to challenge this grim global narrative with its economy poised to log an impressive 6.5-7 per cent growth in 2022-23. Even better, the Finance Minister has sufficient cause to believe that this is largely the outcome of the policy playbook the NDA adopted since it assumed power in 2014.

The New Playbook Since it assumed power nine years ago, the NDA has sought to pivot the Indian economy. These policy changes have been appreciated and validated most recently, by the global investment banks, World

Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

It began with the rollout of the Goods and Services Tax (GST)—the single biggest indirect tax reform—which, for the first time, economically unified the country. The GST principle, 'One Nation, One Tax', made the economy more efficient by dramatically reducing friction. Not surprisingly, monthly gross GST collections now average over Rs 1 lakh crore—in November the accruals to the exchequer was Rs 1.45 lakh crore.

To incentivise and revive private sector investments the union government slashed corporate tax rates to 22 percent from the prevailing 30 percent; in addition, it fixed a lower rate of 15% for companies incorporated after 2019—this scheme is extended till 2023.

Similarly, the passage of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) in 2016, helped with the mitigation of the legacy bad debts of commercial banks. According to the Economic Survey of 2021-22, financial creditors recovered Rs 2.55 lakh crore, of the Rs 7.94 lakh crore debt owed to banks, at the end of 30 September 2021. This repair of the financial sector, which also included capitalisation of bank balance sheets, restored the ability of commercial banks to lend.

The NDA also undertook a major ideological reset after it formalised the policy of privatisation—the most recent example was the sale of Air India to the Tata group. Simultaneously the union government has taken to monetisation of idle assets owned by the public sector to generate funds for big-ticket Greenfield infra-

structure projects—the underlying strategy is to crowd-in private investment.

The pursuit of fiscal prudence, unlocking of financial resources and buoyancy in tax collections has provided the wherewithal to the FM to fund infrastructure projects and the covid-19 relief packages.

More importantly, it is now evident that the structural reforms which improved economic efficiency, proved to be a buffer against the economic devastation unleashed by the pandemic.

Digital Public Goods

The Indian economy also received an unexpected boost from the rapid rollout of Digital Public Goods (DPGs) like Aadhaar, Unified Payments Interface (UPI), CoWin, Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC), Account Aggregators, Health Stack and Open Credit Enablement Network (OCEN), over the last decade.

These DPGs have been created as an open digital ecosystem, which enables the private sector to use these digital rails to create innovations in payments, health care and so on. At the same time, by dramatically lowering the cost of entry, these DPGs accelerated formalisation of the economy and democratised access to identity, covid-19 jobs, payments, credit and more recently e-commerce.

These public digital rails have also been used by the union government to accelerate the rollout of the Direct Benefits Transfer, estimated to be cumulatively over Rs25 lakh crore. The resulting disintermediation has also prevented leakages and savings to the exchequer upwards of Rs 2 lakh crore.

Further, these beneficiaries have become key stakeholders in the Indian economy—where previously they were outside looking in.

Pandemic Blues

The onset of the covid-19 pandemic, consequent lockdown of the economy caused immense distress to both lives and livelihoods, not just in India but the entire world. Unlike other nations though, India did not opt for a fiscal stimulus to revive the economy.

Instead it pursued a calibrated strategy, wherein it initially focused on saving lives and then gradually put the spotlight on livelihoods—even while it bolstered the material basis of the vulnerable segments by rolling out the free food grain scheme for 80 crore people; which has now been extended till December 2023.

While this extraordinary social safety net together with the big push for providing electricity, drinking water, sanitation and housing for all, succeeded in mitigating damage to those at the bottom of the pyramid, the structural reforms has made the economy more efficient.

The impact is yet to manifest itself as the Indian economy was busy repairing the damage caused to the banking sector by an unprecedented surge in bad debts. Further, the back-to-back setbacks beginning with the pandemic, dampened the recovery process. However, with these one-off shocks fading the economy is poised for a rebound, providing a healthy backdrop for this year's Budget.

Over to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

(The author is a freelance journalist who tweets @capitalcalculus)

Concentration is the key factor to boost your memory



By: Vijay GarG

A student's mind should be like the still waters, cool and calm. It helps you to concentrate better and hence improves the memory power. It's a fact that memory cannot be improved without giving importance to concentration.

So, let's focus on building concentration at the first place, and then try to improve your memory.

How to improve concentration?

Choose a specific place for studying

Try to fix your mind at a specific place while studying, and always study in that designated place only. You may choose libraries or any other quiet rooms (free from any distractions) for studying. This will help you to concentrate better as your mind will stay focused on a particular thing. Avoid chatting, browsing the phone or doing any other activity that are nothing but a way of distraction. Try to keep your study place clean, and it should be spacious with good ventilation and lighting.

Focus on goals that are achievable

Set your goals according to your potential and priorities. It's better to focus on only those goals that are achievable rather than setting unrealistic goals just for the sake of excellence. Therefore, make short-term and specific goals and start working on them. This will not only help you to achieve your set targets but also allow you to do all the activities with focus and concentration. Define your objectives, and let your mind focus on that. You will realize after a while that you are able to concentrate better by doing this.

contd. on page 3

Letters, Feedback and Suggestions to 'Imphal Times'

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Remote voting demonstration postponed as Opposition parties express concern about EC proposal

Agency
New Delhi, Jan 17:

The Election Commission on Monday put off the demonstration of how voting machines could be used to cast votes from a remote location as most political parties attending expressed their opposition to the proposal, The Indian Express reported.

At the meeting held in Delhi, the poll panel was slated to show a prototype of a remote electronic voting machine to representatives of eight national parties and 40 state parties. However, it did not conduct the demonstration as parties sought a more detailed discussion on the matter, unidentified officials told the newspaper.

The poll panel had said that the remote electronic voting machine has been developed

to enable domestic migrants to vote in elections without having to travel to their home constituencies.

The Election Commission had earlier asked political parties to submit their opinions on the proposal in writing by January 31. On Monday, it extended the date till February 28.

Ahead of the meeting, the Congress had on Sunday called for a meeting of Opposition parties to discuss their concerns about the voting machines. After the meeting, party leader Digvijaya Singh said that most of them were not in favour of the poll panel's proposal.

At the meeting on Monday, political parties agreed with the broader aim of improving voter turnout, an unidentified Election Commission official said, according to the Hindustan Times. However, some parties

demanding that the demonstration of the machines be carried out in states, while some demanded that the concept of domestic migrants should be defined, the official said.

With the exception of the Bharatiya Janata Party and, to an extent, the Biju Janata Dal, all political parties reportedly opposed the poll panel's proposal. The BJP's representative, Union minister Bhupendra Yadav, said that the party agreed that "missing voters" should get a chance to exercise their franchise, but the procedure for ensuring this was a matter of discussion.

Congress MP Digvijaya Singh said that the poll panel's concept note showed that it was confused. "No opposition party wants to see the demonstration of a remote voting machine," he said, according to PTL. "First the issue of the need

to have such a machine should be settled."

Aam Aadmi Party MP Sanjay Singh also questioned the need for remote voting machines, saying that there were other ways to increase voter turnout. "How will we campaign in different states among eligible migrant voters using RVM [remote voting machines]?" he asked. "When there is a bye poll on one seat, say Jalandhar, RVM is not acceptable."

The Election Commission had said on December 29 that the remote electronic voting machines could be used for up to 72 constituencies from a single remote polling booth. "The migrant voter would thus need not travel back to his/her home district to exercise his/her franchise of voting," the poll panel had said in a press release.

Lowest daily Covid cases recorded in India since March 2020

Agency
New Delhi, Jan 17:

India recorded 89 new coronavirus infections, the lowest since March 27, 2020, while the active cases declined to 2,035, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Tuesday.

The Covid case tally stood at 4.46 crore (4,46,81,233).

The death toll stands at 5,30,726, the data updated at 8 am stated.

The daily positivity was

recorded at 0.05 per cent while the weekly positivity was pegged at 0.09 per cent.

The active cases now comprise 0.01 per cent of the total infections, while the national COVID-19 recovery rate increased to 98.80 per cent, the ministry said.

A decrease of 84 cases has been recorded in the active COVID-19 caseload in a span of 24 hours.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 4,41,48,472,

while the case fatality rate was recorded at 1.19 per cent. According to the ministry's website, 220.17 crore doses of Covid vaccine have been administered in the country so far under the nationwide vaccination drive. India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 2020, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5 and 50 lakh on September 16.

The country crossed the grim milestone of four crore on January 25 last year.

Indian Coast Guard Organises SAR Op Course



By Raju Vernekar
Mumbai, Jan 17:

A one week long search and rescue operations (SAR Op) course began at the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) Western Region's Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre (MRCC) on Monday.

The course organised under the aegis of the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme (ITEC), was inaugurated by Commander of the ICG Western Region (COMCG) Manoj Baadkar. 22 officers from Mauritius, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Seychelles, Sri Lanka and Maldives are attending this course.

ITEC is administered by the Development Partnership Administration-II Division of the Ministry of External Affairs. Instituted in 1964, it is one of the oldest institutionalized arrangements for international capacity building having trained more

than 200,000 officials from over 160 countries in both the civilian and in the defence sector.

Since 2014, India has offered close to 100,000 world-class capacity building trainings and scholarships at premier institutions in India, along with a chance to experience the culture and hospitality of India.

Apart from the regular calendar-based training programmes, India also responds to country-specific requests for training in specific areas of governance by organizing customised training programmes which are designed and delivered by the leading institutions in India.

Today, ITEC utilises a bouquet of varied modalities to meet its mandate of capacity building. Even as we have commenced in-person (or on-campus) courses, we have also introduced modalities like eITEC (for online trainings us-

ing digital delivery platforms), ITEC-Executive (short-term policy-focussed, in-person trainings for senior government executives), ITEC-Online and ITEC-Expert (onsite capacity building assignments carried out by Indian experts).

In another development as a run up to the Coast Guard week celebrations, a visit of school students to ICGS Sankalp was organised in Mumbai. The students, teachers, NCC cadets visited the ship. They were explained about the role and function of ICG. On the occasion, the students expressed desire to join the forces.

The Indian Coast Guard Day is celebrated on first February every year. This year, India will be observing the 47th Indian Coast Guard Day. Coast Guard Day is celebrated in honour of organisations from every country that look after maritime security and also the need of a country.

Cold wave conditions prevail in Delhi, minimum temp recorded at 2.4 Deg C

Agency
New Delhi, Jan 17:

Cold wave conditions prevailed in Delhi with the minimum temperature at the Safdarjung observatory, the city's base station, settling at 2.4 degrees Celsius.

It was a notch above Monday's minimum temperature of 1.4 degrees Celsius, the lowest in the month since January 1, 2021.

Foggy weather disrupted road and rail movement in some parts of the northern region. At least 15 trains were delayed by one hour to eight hours due to foggy weather, a spokesperson of the Northern Railways said.

The Palam observatory, near the Indira Gandhi International Airport, recorded a visibility level of 500 metres. According to the weather office, "very dense fog" is when visibility is between zero and 50

metres, between 51 and 200 metres is 'dense', between 201 and 500 metres 'moderate' and between 501 and 1,000 metres 'shallow'.

Safdarjung had recorded a minimum temperature of 1.1 degree Celsius on January 1, 2021. It logged a minimum of 1.9 degrees Celsius on January 8 this year.

The all-time low of minus 0.6 degree Celsius was recorded on January 16, 1935.

The weather station at Lodhi Road, where the India Meteorological Department (IMD) headquarters is located, recorded a minimum temperature of two degrees Celsius on Tuesday.

The minimum temperature settled at 2.8 degrees Celsius at Anagar in southwest Delhi, 2.2 degrees Celsius at the Ridge in central Delhi and 2.3 degrees Celsius at Jafarpur in west Delhi.

On line safety - Do's and Don'ts for the teens

By: Satya Gopal Dey and Keisam Pradip Kumar

In this era of information, technology, life is at a halt without internet and smartphones. The Internet, mobile phones and other electronic media and gadgets provide children and young people with levels of access to information, culture, communication and entertainment impossible to imagine just a few years ago. With many of their extraordinary benefits, however, come hazards. The Internet and associated technologies have made abusive images of children easier to create and distribute, and provide significant new opportunities for abusers to access and make contact with children and young people online. While information and communication technologies (ICT) have not created crimes involving sexual abuse and exploitation of children, they have enhanced the scale and potential of some old and familiar ones.

As parent and guardian, the role is to keep a friendly yet close vigil on the children. As soon as the child starts accessing the internet, talk to them about what they are reading, watching and who they are communicating with online - and keep the conversation going as they grow older. Ask your child what sites they visit or apps they use, write a list, and look at them together. Talk to your child about what you think is appropriate, and remind them that this may be different for other parents and their children.

Listen to your child and reach an agreement about what is right for your family. Remember the time will come when they will access the internet outside the safety of home and you want them to be prepared for that.

It's vital to teach them about their online reputation, too, and how they must be careful about how they behave, interact with people and represent themselves in such a public forum. They must always remember that the internet isn't private. According to Laura Easterbrook, it is obvious to monitor your child's time online, particularly younger children. Keep the computer in a central spot in the home where it's easy to keep an eye on what your child is doing and viewing online. For mobile devices, you can set them to forget Wi-Fi pass codes so your children can not go online without you knowing. You can also try to make an agreement that there are no tablets, laptops or gaming in bedrooms.

For younger children, you might also consider checking browser histories after your child has been online to see what sites they are visiting. This approach obviously gets harder as children grow older and work out how to clear histories - which is more reason to open the lines of communication about internet use at an early age.

Guardians and parent need to know the parental control systems. Innocent searches online can lead to not-so-innocent results, so it's wise to

know how to use the parental controls, search restrictions offered by web browsers, internet service provider and devices. For example, the Safe Search Filters feature on Google will block sites with explicit sexual material. To turn it on, go to Settings/Safe Search Filters. Although not 100 per cent accurate, parental controls can help prevent your child from seeing and accessing most violent or sexual material.

Other significant areas are every picture and personal detail that is posted and shared on social media and the internet contributes to someone's digital footprint. The big risk with this is that once information is shared publicly, it can be used in ways you may not expect and cannot control. You should also assume that anything that is put online is permanent (it can sometimes be deleted but not always before others have seen it and saved it). For this reason, children and young people need to be smart about protecting their images and information. The same goes for parents who regularly post pictures of their children online.

Teach your child to stay in control of their digital footprint, by only sharing with people who they know and trust. Rather than posting to all their friends on social media, encourage them to be selective and use the privacy settings on the social media platforms they use.

It's the role of the adult to educate themselves on ways to be safe on social networks so that one can give the best advice

vice to the children. Sign up to the social networks and apps your children are using and find out how to use the privacy settings and reporting mechanisms. Talk about how they can stay safe on social networks, including talking to a trusted person when they are worried, and being aware of what constitutes online bullying - both as a perpetrator and a victim.

Lead by example and always model the kind of positive online behaviour you would like your children to use. If they see you being cautious and respectable when you are online, they are more likely to follow in your footsteps. And, yes, this includes limiting your own screen time.

Ultimately, you don't want to instil fear in your child or prevent them from experiencing the many educational, entertainment, social and other benefits of the internet, but rather give them the skills and knowledge they need to know how to make the most of it and avoid the dangers. Each and every one needs to know about the cyber safety legislation in India, whom and where to report.

(Satya Gopal Dey - Is an acclaimed Child Protection Specialist, and Head - Child Protection, Advocacy and H.R - Vikramshila Education Resource Society and Keisam Pradip Kumar : A Journalist and Former member of Manipur Commission for Protection of Child Rights)

Contd. from Page 2 Concentration is the key factor....

Meditation is a must to boost concentration

A lot has been said on the power of meditation and its benefits on your life. Yes, it's true. Make it a practice to meditate at least for 10 minutes on a daily basis and you will start observing the changes within a month. Meditation helps in controlling the mind from moving here and there, and you become totally active at the present moment. It is a must for every student to practice meditation to improve concentration and hence memory power.

Now that we have shared some useful ways of improving your concentration power, let's proceed to the ways of improving memory:

Practice to read loudly while studying

This may sound a little weird but that's how it works when it comes to improving memory power. The next time when you try to memorize something, make sure to read it loud and repeat it for 3 or 4 times. Once you have done that, try to write it down. It

will surely help you to boost your memory. However, don't try this when you are studying at a library or classroom.

Discuss the topic that you have learned

Once you have learned a respective topic, start discussing it with your friends. This will help you to revise the subject and memorize it for a longer period of time without even putting an effort to study it again. Discussing a topic lets your brain to store the information and hence you tend to remember it for a longer period. This is one cool way to boost your memory power. Try it from now onwards.

Visualize, draw and learn to boost your memory

If you are finding it difficult to memorize something, try to imagine the scenario, and draw it on a paper as per your understanding. This will help you to learn and memorize the topic quickly. Your brain is more receptive to visual and images, therefore, you will be able to learn a particular topic by draw-

ing a rough sketch of it. This works perfect with Mathematics and Science subjects.

Chewing Gum helps in improving memory

Studies have found that spraying a scent at your study room or chewing gum helps in boosting your memory. Spray your favorite scent while you study and then spray the same scent when leaving home for the exam. In no seconds, you will be able to remember everything that you studied during that day. Similarly, it's good to chew a gum while you read or study as it not only helps you to stay focused but also boosts your memory.

Last but not the least, be positive and believe in yourself to achieve excellence in whatever you are doing. In case, you have something to say, please don't hesitate to pen down your views in the comment box below. You can also share this article in your circle to let your friends know about the way to improve concentration and memory power.

Iconic Events Week held at INA Moirang



IT News
Imphal, Jan 17:

"Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav Iconic Events Week" to commemorate the 126th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was held today at INA Memorial, Moirang.

Works and YAS Minister Govindas Konthoujam attended the function as the Chief Guest. The Minister also hoisted the national flag followed by band display on the tunes of "Kadam Kadam Badhaye Ja", request

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Govindas Konthoujam called on the gathering to never forget the sacrifice and contribution of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose for the country's independence. Min-

ister Govindas also encouraged students to draw inspirations from Netaji's sacrifice and courage for a progressive India.

An inspiring 10 minute documentary film depicting the life of Netaji Subhas Chandra was screened to the audience during the celebration. Khenjonglang Group also presented a moving docudrama on the life and work of Netaji for India's freedom.

Earlier in the day, Prabhat Pheri was carried out at Keithelmbanbi to mark the occasion. A drawing and painting competition on Netaji's life was also held today at Nambol. Besides, a blood donation camp as well Mega Free Medical Camp was also organized at Kangvai.

Other dignitaries attending today's function included Th. Shanti Singh, MLA Moirang, Tongbram Robindro, MLA Thanga, M. Asnikumar, Chairman, Loktak Development Authority, Maj General Rajan Sharawat, IGAR (South) and Brig. Michael D'Souza, 27 Sector, Assam Rifles. ADM Bishnupur H. Bobby Sharma, AC to DC Shri Ejaj Hassan, students, NCC cadets and several locals also attended the function.

It may be mentioned that after Manipur's events, the "Iconic Events Week" will be held in sequence in Nagaland, Gujarat, Odisha and West Bengal. The culmination event is scheduled on January 23 at Port Blair, Andaman & Nicobar Islands with Home Minister Amit Shah as the Chief Guest.

BJP top body praises Modi's 'inspiring' leadership, hits out at Opposition's attempts to 'malign'

Agency
New Delhi, Jan 17:

Opposition attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the highlight of discussion on the first day of the Bharatiya Janata Party's national executive meeting Monday. Briefing the media after the discussion, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said, "The Opposition ran a negative campaign against the PM on Pegasus (snooping scandal), Rafale deal, enforcement directorate and money laundering cases, the central vista project, economic status based reservation and demonetisation. All these cases were fought in court and judgment has been in favour of the central government. The Supreme Court crushed Opposition's negative campaigns and exposed them through legal responses."

Law minister Kiren Rijiju, who moved the resolution on the first day of the two-day national executive meeting highlighted six instances of Opposition campaigns to "malign" the PM and create suspicion among the public about the PM's intention, at a time when Modi was trying to build India's image of a "Vishwa Guru" or world leader, said those present at the meeting.

The BJP's concern for the PM's image comes in the wake of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's ongoing Bharat Jodo Yatra, which many feel has helped the Opposition party establish connect with the public. Sources in the BJP told ThePrint that while it remained to be seen whether the Yatra can help get votes for the party, it was definitely a well-organised mass contact programme, which touched a chord with people.

"The Prime Minister's intention is clear. (Modi's) leadership is not corruptible, (it is) leadership which works for country. His (Modi's) leadership is in-



spiring and top BJP leaders lauded the PM's leadership role in the national executive," said Sitharaman.

Rijiju's nine-point resolution also included a discussion on India's G20 presidency and assembly elections — both this year's upcoming ones in states like Karnataka, Tripura, Nagaland and Meghalaya and the party's victory and loss, in Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh, late last year, with Chief Ministers of the poll-bound states presenting their strategy for the upcoming elections, said sources.

"BJP chief J.P. Nadda said in the National Executive meeting that 2023 is very important and we have to fight and win nine state elections this year and then general elections in 2024," BJP member of Parliament (MP) Ravi Shankar Prasad told the media Monday.

The MP added that while Nadda termed BJP's victory in last year's Gujarat elections "historic and unprecedented", about the Himachal elections — which BJP lost to Congress — Nadda said "our effort to change the *riya* (tradition of alternate party in power) of Himachal did not succeed. We lost with only a small margin of 1 per cent votes. Earlier, this difference used to be five per cent or more".

Interestingly, both Sitharaman and Prasad said that the resolution was silent on the subject of Nadda's tenure as BJP president, which is set to end this month, and no discussion on it was held on the first day of the BJP national executive meeting.

The BJP, which won 303 seats in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, has set a target of 350 seats in next year's polls. The party has drawn up a list of 160 seats where it feels its hold to be weak, and Union Home Minister Amit Shah is scheduled to visit 11 states this month as part of a programme to focus on such seats.

While the party's loss in Himachal and doubts about the possible outcome of this year's assembly elections in Karnataka have pushed the BJP to redraw its campaign strategy, the focus on the PM's image is part of the game plan, as Modi's image is the party's most credible asset, said party leaders.

"On the global stage due to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's efforts, India's image has been enhanced, whether it be in the G20 (presidency), or the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (chairmanship) or the UN Security Council short-term leadership, branding of

India has emboldened," said Sitharaman.

She added: "Prime Minister Modi's assertion that this is not an era of war during his telephonic talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin echoed in the G-20 declaration at Bali."

The Prime Minister was also praised by Nadda in his address to the BJP National Executive, who lauded the economic advances made by the country under Modi, those present at the meeting told ThePrint.

According to senior party leaders, planned investment in G20 events was a brand-building initiative by the BJP, as heads of various countries are expected to participate in the September summit. "Indians feel proud when global leaders acknowledge our leadership. It will help us in our domestic electoral campaign," said a BJP leader.

The party has also chosen the subjects 'vishwa guru Bharat', 'India as cultural *samvahak* (carrier or ambassador)', 'seva va samarpan (service and dedication)', and 'sangharsh se siddhi (from struggle to fulfillment)' as themes of an exhibition at the meeting venue to highlight the achievements of the Modi government.

SII's Covid vaccine Covovax approved as heterologous booster

Agency
New Delhi, Jan 17:

The Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) has approved market authorisation to COVID-19 vaccine Covovax as a heterologous booster dose for adults who have been administered two doses of Covishield or Covaxin, official sources said on Monday.

The DCGI's approval came

following recommendation by the Subject Expert Committee of the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO).

Prakash Kumar Singh, Director of Government and Regulatory Affairs at the Serum Institute of India (SII), had recently written to the DCGI for the approval of Covovax heterologous booster dose for those aged 18 years and above in view of the escalating COVID-19

pandemic situation in some countries, an official source had said.

"The Subject Expert Committee of the CDSCO on Wednesday deliberated on the issue and had recommended for market authorisation of Covid jab Covovax as a heterologous booster dose for adults who have been administered two doses of Covishield or Covaxin," an official source said.

Sports

Indian women's hockey team rout South Africa 5-1

Agency
Cape Town (South Africa), Jan 16:

The Indian women's hockey team registered a stellar 5-1 win over South Africa in the first game of the four-match series on Monday.

For India, Rani (122), Monika (202), Navneet Kaur (242), Gurjit Kaur (252) and Sangita Kumari (302) scored, while South Africa found the back of the net through captain Quanita Bobbs (442).

Vaishnavi Vitthal Phalke, the industrious midfielder took to the pitch as a senior for the first time as she was selected to start against South Africa in this game. It marked a momentous occasion for the young player who led the Indian women's junior team at the Unipharm U23 5-Nation Tournament 2022 in May.

India got into their passing rhythm quickly and pushed South Africa back into their own half early on in the quarter. India took the lead through Rani (122), who expertly converted a penalty corner to make it 1-0 in favour



of the Indian women's hockey team. The first quarter came to a close soon after as India went into the first interval with a slender lead.

India started the next quarter at a high tempo as they were dominating possession and carving out chances at will. They scored four more goals in quick succession as Monika (202) started India's

blitz. Navneet Kaur (242) made it 3-0 in favour of India as she calmly slotted the ball into the net after a brilliant team move.

Gurjit Kaur (252) skillfully converted a penalty to extend the Indian women's hockey team's lead as the South African players were struggling to find a foothold in the match. Right before the quar-

ter came to a close Sangita Kumari (302) masterfully deflected the ball into the net from a penalty corner to further extend the Indian women's hockey team's advantage. India went into the half-time break with an emphatic 5-0 lead.

After the break, India continued to look for more goals as they were pressing the op-

position relentlessly. Despite India's constant pressure South Africa were slowly growing into the game in the third quarter as they were starting to retain the ball well.

South Africa did manage to pull a goal back through Quanita Bobbs (442) who skillfully converted a penalty corner to make it 5-1. Soon after the quarter came to a close, South Africa were showing signs of a fightback going into the last quarter but India looked comfortable with their 4-goal advantage.

In the final phase of play, India was looking to extend their lead as South Africa were looking for a grandstand finish as they were hoping to get something out of the game. India was retaining the ball expertly as South Africa were chasing the game. Both teams did not find the back of the net in the fourth quarter and the game came to a close at 5-1 in favour of the Indian women's hockey team.

The Indian women's hockey team will next take on South Africa again on Tuesday.

FIH World Cup 2023: Argentina hold Australia to 3-3 Draw; France edge out South Africa

Agency
Odisha, Jan 17:

Three-time champions Australia and heavyweights Argentina played out a thrilling 3-3 draw in the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup on Monday.

Hayward Jeremy opened the scoring for Argentina by converting a penalty corner in the ninth minute but Argentina's Domene Tomas restored parity in the 18th minute.

Beale Daniel then produced a field goal to put Australia in the lead but Argentina were once again back in the game courtesy Casella Maico's 32nd minute strike.

Playing catch-up all evening, Argentina took the lead for the first time when Ferreira Martin scored in the 48th minute.

They looked on course to clinch all three points on offer but Govers Blake scored in the dying minutes for Australia as

the two sides split points.

In the other Pool A match, Charlet Victor converted two penalty corners to help France defeat South Africa 2-1.

South Africa's lone goal came from the stick of Beauchamp Connor as he converted a penalty corner in the 15th minute.

In the Pool C matches in Rourkela, three-time champions Netherlands thrashed New Zealand 4-0, while Malaysia eked out a 3-2 win over Chile.

Brinkman Thierry scored two field goals in the opening quarter while Bijen Koen and Hoedemakers Tjep added two more goals to help Netherlands inch closer to a quarterfinals spot.

Having won both their games, the Netherlands sit pretty atop Pool C with six points. New Zealand and Malaysia are second and third respectively with Chile in fourth place.