

## Mass Destruction of Poppy Cultivation underway at CCpur, Kangpokpi and Chandel

IT News  
Imphal, Jan 18:

The Forest Department of Manipur has initiated special operations against illegal poppy cultivation in forest areas from January 16 onwards, as decided in a meeting chaired by the Forest and Environment Minister Thongam Biswajit Singh held on January 15 at the Forest Department.

In the first Phase, areas under Churachandpur Forest Division, Kangpokpi Forest Division and Chandel Forest Division are being taken up.

On the first day, under Churachandpur district, about 50 hectares of illegal poppy cultivated at V. Lhangnom, Thangjing hills were destroyed by joint teams of 190 personnel

from Churachandpur Forest Division, Police, NAB, 1st IRB and 2nd IRB and an FIR case have been registered accordingly. Similarly, 80 personnel of Kangpokpi Forest Division, Police, NAB, and 151 MR destroyed 4.23 hectares of illegal poppy cultivation at Harup Naga under Kangpokpi Forest Division; and 70 personnel from Kangpokpi Forest, Police, NAB, and MR destroyed 10.12 hectare of poppy cultivation



at Mongjiang, Saikul and an FIR case have been registered. Further, about 3 hectares of poppy plantation have been destroyed at Laison village, Tuikhong block under the Unclassed Forest of Chandel Forest Division. Under Churachandpur district, about 55 hectares of illegal poppy Mongken, Thangjing Hills, Churachandpur Khoupum PF has been destroyed by joint teams of 165 personnel from Churachandpur Forest Division, Police, NAB, 1st IRB & IRB and an FIR case has been registered. Similarly, a joint team of Kangpokpi Forest Division, District KPI, and Imphal East destroyed 3.5 hectares and 17 hectares of illegal poppy cultivation at T Khullen, Saikhul Range and Lhangsom Village, Saikhul respectively under Kangpokpi Forest Division. FIR has been registered under NDPS Act. 80 personnel from Ukhrul Forest, Police, and 6th MR destroyed

20 hectare of poppy cultivation at Champhung Hill range under Unclassed Forest of Ukhrul Forest Division and an FIR case has been registered under NDPS Act. During the operations, a total area of 170 hectares of poppy plantation has been destroyed. Huts and articles used in the cultivation of poppy such as fertilizers, salt packets, herbicides, etc were burnt and destroyed.

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## Dental College RIMS observed Prosthodontist Day



IT News  
Imphal, Jan 18:

The Department of Prosthodontics, Dental College, RIMS, Imphal observed Prosthodontist Day today at

Library Hall, Dental College RIMS, Imphal. Prof. H. Priyoshakhi Devi, Director, RIMS, Imphal inaugurated Poster and Model display in connection with the observance of Prosthodontist Day.

During the program, Director of RIMS, Imphal, Prof. H. Priyoshakhi Devi mentioned that she has witnessing the progress and development done at the dental college. She was impressed and en-

couraged by staff and the students for observing Prosthodontist Day in well-organized manner. She also appealed to all dental staffs and students to make Dental College, RIMS, Imphal as one of the best dental college in North East region and also assures to help any grievances from dental college at her best level during her tenure as director RIMS, Imphal. The staffs and students of Dental College should cooperate with director in making RIMS a good institute.

The program was attended Dr. Nandini D.B, Principal in-charge, Dental College, RIMS, Imphal, Prof. Anand Rajapur, HOD, Dr. Nitai Debnath, Dr. Babina Chironm, faculty, staff and students of Dental College, RIMS, Imphal.

## MSFDS announces selected screen projects for screen lab

IT News  
Imphal, Jan 18:

With an effort to nurture a culture of good cinema in the State, Manipur State Film Development Society (MSFDS) has launched its first screenplay incubation and mentorship programme, inviting present and fresh screenwriters from Manipur to apply with a screen project, to be developed during the 6-month intensive Screenplay Lab.

A statement by Sunzu Bachaspatimayum, Secretary, MSFDS, said that altogether 15 screenplay projects were received for the Lab and out of them, the Screen Lab Selection Committee shortlisted 7 projects for the mentorship programme. The selected projects dealt with contemporary issues, steeped in cultural nuances.

To make the Screen Lab fruitful, it will be divided into

two phases: Applicants would be mentored on the basics of Screenwriting, adopting a combination of online and offline mode of interaction in the first phase. After a thorough understanding of the basics, the applicants would then be mentored on their specific projects in the second phase by film industry expert from outside the State, the statement added.

The selected projects of

the 1st MSFDS Screen Lab 2022 are-

- 1) Leitai Jagoi by Maipaksana Haorongbam,
- 2) Night and Night by Ashok Veilou,
- 3) Ima by R.K. Johnson
- 4) Smell of the Ripening Field by Alexander Leo Pou
- 5) Ashukpa by Maharabam Abhijit Singh
- 6) The Scent of a Mother by Nandeibam Pramoda
- 7) Bewhiskered Courier by Suresh Khuraijam

## ECI announces assembly elections dates for Meghalaya, Nagaland & Tripura

Agency  
New Delhi, Jan 18:

The election commission of India (ECI) has announced dates for assembly elections in the three Northeast states of Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura.

Polling for the assembly elections in all the three Northeast states of Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura will be held in one phase.

Polling for the assembly elections in Meghalaya and Nagaland will be held on February 27.

On the other hand, polling for the assembly elections in Tripura will be held on February 16.

Meanwhile, counting of votes in all the three Northeast states of Meghalaya,

Nagaland and Tripura will be held on March 2.

"Our teams would be ready to serve more than 62.8 lakh electors combined in the three states (Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura) including 31.47 lakh female electors, 97,000 voters above the age of 80, and 31,700 PwD voters," informed chief election commissioner Rajiv Kumar.

He added: "Over 1.76 lakh first-time voters will also participate in the assembly elections in the three Northeast states (Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura)."

The term of legislative assemblies of three states – Nagaland, Meghalaya and Tripura are due to expire on March 12, March 15 and March 22, 2023 respectively. "The commission visited

three states (Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura) during January 11-15 and held detailed review meetings. Also met political parties and have responded to almost all state-specific issues raised by them and measures to be put in place as per contextual and felt requirements of each state," the CEC said.

The EC also announced that 376 polling stations in Meghalaya, Tripura, and Nagaland will be manned by women staff.

ECI Suvidha Portal (<http://suvidha.eci.gov.in>) to provide online nomination & affidavit facility to candidates/political parties. Permissions for rallies, meetings, etc. can also be applied online through this portal. Saksham App for Accessible Elections.

## NIA busts "terror funding module" in Moreh, 5 arrested

IT News  
Imphal, Jan 18:

With the arrest of an alleged suspect, a Myanmar national, a total of 5 individuals including two Myanmar nationals were picked up in the "terror funding/extortion module" launched by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) at two places, one at India's border town Moreh and another on Myanmar side, an official source said here on Wednesday.

The sleuths of NIA, in its continuance crackdown related to some insurgent outfits operating along the Manipur-Myanmar border, conducted yet another raid on the Myanmar side close to Manipur's Moreh border town and arrested one individual on Tuesday, the source said.

The raid was carried out

after getting green signals from the Myanmar authorities concerned, the source said.

One suspect identified as S Bruce was arrested on the charge of carrying out extortion activities for an underground group. Several incriminating documents, a laptop, and mobile phones were also recovered from the possession of Bruce, who has been brought to Imphal on Tuesday.

On Friday, NIA carried out raids at 5 different locations in Moreh, India's last border town in the Manipur sector, and arrested 4 persons in relation to the terror funding/extortion module. Over Rs 30 lakh, several incriminating documents, and 4 mobile handsets were also recovered from them.

Four alleged accused namely Suraj Jaswal, Santosh Gupta, Deepak Sharma, and Napoleon were produced be-

fore the Duty Magistrate, Imphal.

On perusal of the case record and after hearing the submission of the NIA, the court remanded them into seven days of NIA custody till January 20, 2023.

The raids were conducted following reports that crores of rupees were collected by insurgents and deposited a huge amount of money to the banks and other funding syndicates operating in the Indo-Myanmar border in the Manipur sector.

NIA has reportedly announced that raids would be continued at its opportune time as some suspects of banks, syndicates and insurgents are under its radar. It is worth mentioning that there are around 30 insurgent outfits operating along the Indo-Myanmar border in the Manipur sector.

## Celebration of National Girl Child Week begins at Ukhrul Headquarter

IT News  
Imphal, Jan 18:

The Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS) department of Ukhrul District has kick started a 5-day programme on girl's child education and empowerment under Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBB) at DRDA Hall, Mini-Secretariat, Ukhrul today. Deputy Commissioner of Ukhrul District Shri. Krishna Kumar IAS attends the opening ceremony of the programme as the Chief Guest in the presence of DPO of ICDS Smt. AW. Shinreipam, AC to DC & SDO LMBLOCK, A Rohini Kumar and PO of DRDA Shri Ngamreiwung.

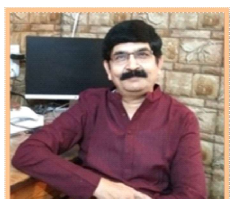
The Chief Guest welcome every girl child born in the district and said they are the backbone to the future of the district and state. Every parent should ensure equal treatment to all the girls in the family. He further said the government in particular ICDS should take proper initiative to empower girl in the region.

During the event of the opening ceremony signature campaign was held and pledge was read out. The pledge read that every citizen in the country should act in all possible ways individually and collectively to eliminate gender biased discrimination and sex selection that threatens the

birth and the survival of girls. It added to enable girl's child education and ensure that girls are born, loved and nurtured to become equal & empowered citizens of the country.

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao programme was initially introduced on 22nd January 2015 all over the country with an aim to bring balance in the sex ratio in India. The programme was initiated by three ministries, the Ministry of Women and Child, Ministry of Family Welfare and Ministry of Education, Government of India. The programme was specially meant to empower female child and reduce discrimination in the society.

# Bank of India – an Impressive growth in Net Profit –Q3



By: Vinod Chandrashekhar Dixit

Bank of India one of the most Trust branded banks in India has posted net profit for the October to December 2022 period improved to Rs 1,151 crore, up by 12 percent on a year-on-year basis and 20 percent sequentially.

The robust loan growth led to a 64% y-o-y net interest income (NII) to Rs 5,596 crore. Global net interest margin (NIM) improved by 101 basis points (bps) y-o-y to 3.28% as of December 31 while domestic NIM expanded by 121 bps to 3.72%.

The bank's provisions increased by 461% to Rs 1,879 crore in Q3FY23. The increase in provisions is mainly on account of ageing assets and higher provisioning on standard assets. RAM Advances grew by 13.2% on YoY basis and it constitutes 54.1% of gross advances. The Current and savings accounts (CASA) deposits increased by 3.7% on YoY basis.

It is today stronger, bigger, more vibrant and confident bank. Bank of India's name is now a household name and synonymous with growth, development and efficiency. The bank has the best of technology and best of capabilities. Customers acquisition and introduction of new projects, campaigns and products as well as services have given a new impetus to BOI. BOI is strengthening on quarter to quarter. Bank is on a continuous drive towards pursuing Technology Up gradation and Digitization measures. BOI expects most of their customers to use digital platform for most of the banking services. Only those customers need to come to the branches who cannot meet their banking needs through digital mode. It is crystal clear that COVID 19 has brought a broad and deep transformation and nearly twice the number of customers visiting the branch, now use the newly launched BOI digital apps. As on Dec '22, BOI's Internet Banking users has increased to 8.37 million in Dec '22 from 8.08 million in Mar '22. Mobile Banking users has increased to 7.58 million in Dec '22 from 6.10 million in Mar '22 and UPI users has increased to 14.84 million in Dec '22 from 12.96 million in Mar '22.



Bank of India is in various stages of readiness, as and when it is ready to take up financial inclusion Bank has been aggressive in financing Govt. Sponsored schemes and achieving all the targets allotted. It is today stronger, bigger, more vibrant and confident bank. There is no doubt that a successful execution of a digital enabled Bank will go a long way in ensuring that BOI remains competitive in the market place.

# Benefits of Pine tree & its leaves

By: Sanjenbam Jugeshwor Singh

A mystical tree worshipped in many past civilizations, the Pine tree represents **immortality** in the Far East due to its **long life span** and its peculiar sap. It usually grows atop **rocky mounts**, in **dry and poor soil** that are **acidic and sandy**. The pine tree can grow to gigantic sizes, and its circumference is impressive. How **tall** can it grow? Depending on the **variety**, this evergreen conifer can grow to between 50 and 150 feet (15 to 45 meters). Its **spongy bark** renews itself and falls off like **scales**. **Needles** land on the soil and take a long time to break down, thus preventing underbrush growth. This type of tree is more common in the **coolest portions** of our planet, both in the far North and the far South. It resists **cold climates** well.

All the pine trees belong to the **Pinaceae family**. "Pine" is the generic, common name for all the trees belonging to the "**Pinus**" genus. There are at least **111 different species** in this genus. Sometimes it is called "**pinewood**". This tree's name goes back to ancient **Greek, Celtic and Sanskrit with the root word "Pinu"** which means "**drink**" or "**food**". The story of pine goes back a long time. Indeed, in **Japanese culture**, cypress and pine trees play a part in specific ritual implements and portions of temples in Shinto beliefs. As for the **Roman Empire**, the fertility goddess Cybele inspired devotions to pine trees to symbolize **eternal renewal** in the cycles of **Nature**. The famed oriental **Taoists** would have **pine seeds, needles and sap** as their favorite diet since they said it "made their bodies light and capable of flight".

In **Europe**, there are several different **pine tree species**: maritime pine, Scots pine, Swiss pine, eastern white pine, black pine, Aleppo pine, **Pinus uncinata**, stonepine, loblolly pine, mugo pine... But now, what are the **properties** of this very famous tree? In North America and in Europe, **young growth of Scots pine trees** have long been an ingredient to prepare **herbal tea**. Indeed, its **benefits** are known to treat: **rheumatism and wounds that are rebellious to healing** (in the form of lotions); **common colds and pulmonary tract mucus lining inflammation** (in the form of inhaled vapor treatment). **Century-old traditional medicinal baths** are an integral part of what the German people believe in. The hygienist doctor **Kneipp** used his influence to help medicinal baths

become a common treatment for many **ailments** in Germany. Indeed, pine tree is particularly recommended to treat **diseases resulting from nerve malfunction, neuralgia disorders and rheumatism**. Relaxing in a **bathtub with pine tree extracts** is for sure beneficial to your **health**. To best appreciate its **health benefits**, keep the least tender shoots from your collection of fresh young shoots, and add them to the hot water. Use a cloth pouch to make it easy to pick the leaves out later and throw them to the compost. It is possible to bathe in water infused with pine as described above, but **inhaling the raw power of a pine tree forest in nature** is another experience altogether. Indeed, if you've got the chance, go for a walk in a thick pine tree forest, and gulp the air into your lungs. It is loaded with pine extract, a **lemony camphor-like fragrance**.

Previously, white pine **young stems** were very much appreciated in cooking by the **Iroquois American Indians**. They snacked and ate them **raw**. This dietary habit was also familiar to the **American Indians** of British Columbia who would also chew on raw shoots from other pine tree species. Some have found different ways to cook young pine tree shoots, and when you add them to **vegetables** at the end of cooking or toss some in **mixed salads**, their taste will make you ooh and ahh in wonder. Other prefer to **steam** those young pine shoots, and serve them after just a few minutes' worth of steaming. Dipped in salad dressing or mustard, it's delicious! The **edible portions** of the pine tree are, among others: **pine nuts or pignoli** are the seeds. Together with parmesan cheese and basil, they form the base of the famous Italian **pesto** or French **pistou**; **pine needles**; inner **pine bark**; **young male flowers**; and, to wrap it up, some tribes like the Nlaka' pamux in British Columbia would lick up **sweet secretions**. A variant of guttation this liquid was called "mother tree breast milk". **Young stems** of pine trees – especially the tenderest ones – are very much appreciated in **mixed salads**. Collect them at the tip of branches, right at the spot where needles haven't yet grown. Once harvested, dry the young stems on a cloth or veil with a lot of air circulation. Keep away from moisture and light. When dry, store them in a paper bag, a cardboard box, a glass jar or a metal tin.

You can also sow a cloth pouch to store them, too. To prepare your **bathtwater**, dip the pouch with about 18 Oz (500 grams) young pine tree shoots in the water. You can also prepare a concentrated young pine shoot infusion and add that to the bathwater. 2 or 3 quarts or liters are enough to prepare the **infusion**. After the bath, it is highly recommended to lie down and relax for about 30 minutes to an hour (at most). Then, resume your daily activities.

Not very long ago, **pine needles** were used to produce plant-based felt or wool. This went by the name **wood wool, forest wool or plant wool**. It makes a great stuffing for **mattresses**. Pine needles are also excellent to protect plants that grow in acidic environments, like rhododendron or azaleas. Spread them around those plant's trunks. The typical needle-shaped leaf is found in all species of the Pinaceae family and it is the arrangement of these needles in bundles or fascicles that is the most characteristic feature of the genus **Pinus**. In some pines, e.g., *P. strobus* or *P. palustris*, the needle is shed after the second growing season, but in most species they persist longer and in the extreme, up to 36 years in *P. longaeva*. Actually, pines have three kinds of leaves. The first appear after the seed germinates and are called cotyledons or "seed leaves." These are small soft needle-shaped leaves and their number varies from 3 or more (*P. contorta*, *banksiana* and *sylvestris*) to eighteen or more (*P. lambertiana*, *sabiniana* and *maximartinezii*). As soon as they emerge, they are capable of respiration and photosynthesis. Shortly after the cotyledons come the juvenile leaves which are shaped like the cotyledons and are solitary and arranged in a spiral. These are usually shed in several weeks after the adult leaves, which have a basal sheath and the fascicular arrangement characteristic of the genus **Pinus**, make their appearance.

The outer layer of the adult leaf is the waxy cuticle which protects the leaf from drying. In the cuticle are minute openings known as stomata and these permit the movement of carbon dioxide into and oxygen from the leaf. In most haploxyton (white) pines the stomata are on the ventral (lower) surfaces and the diploxyton (yellow) pines have stomata on both ventral and dorsal surfaces. These stomata often form fine

white streaks running along the length of the leaf. The leaves of the diploxyton pines are generally stiffer and arranged in fascicles of 2 or 3 needles (sometimes more) and the haploxyton pines usually have softer needles in fascicles of 5 needles (sometimes less). The basal sheath of diploxyton pines lasts for the life of the leaf whereas the basal sheath of the haploxyton pines is soon shed or, in the case of the pinyon and fox-tail-bristlecone group (Section Parrya), it curves back to form a "rosette".

The internal structure of the leaf is complex and includes a photosynthesizing parenchyma ("chlorenchyma" or mesophyll) and resin canals which may be located just beneath the cuticle (often in the haploxyton pines) or varying deeper within the needle (often in the diploxyton pines). Centrally there are fibro vascular bundles, which form the basis of classification of the genus **Pinus** into the subgenera **Strobus** (the "soft" or "white" pines) with one (haploxyton) fibro vascular bundle and **Pinus** (the "hard" or "yellow" pines) with two (diploxyton) fibro vascular bundles. The resin canals connect with the stomata are involved in gas exchange and the fibro vascular bundles connect ultimately with the xylem involved with the transport of nutrients, sugars and water between the top of the tree and the roots. Pine and its various extracts are used in many ways in traditional medicine. While its parts like bark and pollen are more extensively researched, the benefits of pine needle tea are less known. However, these are used quite extensively in traditional medicine. Pine and its various constituents are known to be possibly rich in antioxidants, which may help to protect you against diseases. So, whether it is tea, bark extract, or pollen, as multiple researches have shown, you will get a good dose of immunity. The pollen extract was found to contain potent antioxidant and anti-inflammatory compounds. Similarly, different studies have validated the presence of antioxidants commercially available bark extracts, like flavanogenol. A Berkeley study found that the antioxidants in the bark were so potent that they could boost the effect of vitamin C and other antioxidants in our food.

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# India Envisions a Healthier World Order



By: Dr Mansukh Mandaviya

Beginning with the G20 Health Working Group Meeting in Thiruvananthapuram, India will unveil its vision of a Global Health Architecture that enables both rich and poor countries to access universal healthcare and resist the emergencies caused by epidemics and pandemics.

India's vision of a healthier globe emanates from the philosophy of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbham* (the world is one family) that translates into One Earth, One Family, One Future. In health terms, this principle encour-

ages G20 members to consider local health crisis and collaborate to create universal solutions. As part of India's G20 presidency, policymakers from member countries and experts from the medical fraternity shall unfold the foundation and framework of a Global Health Architecture at a series of Health Working Group meetings, starting this month. The Global Health Architecture is envisaged to equip countries to face the next health emergency and institute robust healthcare systems.

World over, COVID-19 resulted in the collapse of fragile health systems and further sharpened disparities and inequalities in Low-and-Middle Income Countries (LMICs). It made world leaders realise that health emergencies in a single country can impact health systems across the world; the interdependence over life-saving drugs, vaccines, medical equipment and devices became apparent during the pandemic.

A single country, however well-

equipped and endowed with medical infrastructure, may not be able to turn the tide against a crisis like the pandemic. For LMICs, the situation in such times worsens as access to basic health is restricted and uneven. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has defined the central objective of India's G20

Presidency as "healing, harmony and hope". He envisages a more human-centric globalisation that envisions universal healthcare as a key priority.

Considering the lessons learnt during the difficult phases of COVID-19, the Indonesian presidency (2022) called for strengthening the Global Health Architecture, encouraging health sector institutions across countries to build a system that endures under extreme pressure. COVID-19 also enhanced the climate change challenges: increased zoonotic events, extreme weather conditions and water and vector borne diseases continue to increase threats for epidemics.

For India, the Global Health Architecture rests on three key priorities. The first is strengthening national capacities to prevent, prepare and respond to major outbreaks. The agenda will include a "One

Health" approach and Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR). Partnering with multiple organisations like the WHO, World Bank, G7, Access to COVID 19 Tools Accelerator, this effort will attempt to synergise existing strengths and identify the bottlenecks in the system.

One Health approach is critical in addressing the linkages between human, animal and environment sectors to resist the impact of AMR on communities. Coupled with pandemic counter measures that are affordable, equitable and universal in access, G20 India Health Track aims to facilitate seamless interweaving towards global health emergency architecture. It plans to work towards creating a bank of best practices that address health emergencies from different countries. Already, considering the future risks, the Saudi Arabian, Italian and Indonesian Presidency established the Financial Intermediary Fund for pandemic prevention, preparedness and response.

The second priority of G20 is strengthening cooperation in the pharmaceutical sector in order to improve the mechanism of equitable access to quality vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics. Indian ge-

nerics are valued across the world. In FY 2022, pharma products worth \$24.47 billion were supplied to 200 countries. India continues to provide affordable HIV drugs and anti-TB generics to several LMICs. Out endeavour shall be to create a more conducive framework for clinical trials, R&D support and affordability of medical counter measures, especially to the LMICs.

India's role in addressing life-saving vaccine inequity has been acknowledged and appreciated worldwide. While high income countries during COVID-19 speeded to wards buying billions of doses of the vaccine, several poor countries struggled to protect their citizens from the catastrophic challenges of the virus. People from LMICs stayed unprotected and vulnerable for close to a year with no access to vaccines. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, India provided critical doses to more than 100 countries during the most difficult phase of COVID-19 through the 'Vaccine Maitri' initiative. This was accomplished without loss in quality or hiking the prices of vaccines and drugs.

With the aim to strengthen the pharma sector, the government has

introduced production-linked incentive schemes. It has planned Bulk Drug Parks to create world class infrastructure facilities and initiated Medical Device Parks to provide easy access to standard testing and laboratory facilities. Building common facilities will reduce cost of production and enhance better availability and affordability of medical devices.

While Italy (2021 Presidency) and Indonesia (2022 Presidency) concentrated on setting up regional manufacturing and research hubs, India's G20 Presidency proposes to address the gaps in the availability, accessibility and affordability of medical countermeasures. It shall continue to prioritise global networks for R&D and manufacturing for medical countermeasures and end-to-end medical countermeasure platforms during its presidency.

The third priority is digital health innovations and solutions to aid universal health coverage. The global COVID-19 experience has amply demonstrated how digital technologies can help in remote data capture, medical diagnosis and virtual care. The experience was transformative in India.

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# Key takeaways from BJP national executive meet: Community outreach, Modi image & focus on youth

Agency  
New Delhi, Jan 18:

Concluding the two-day BJP national executive meeting Tuesday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi called on party workers for a mega outreach to the marginalised sections of the society. Nine states have their assembly elections this year and the BJP could benefit from the support of these communities.

PM Modi also called party workers to hit top gear in "400 days" left for 2024 Lok Sabha elections and aim for two-thirds majority.

While this was not the party's last national executive meeting before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the event was significant since four states — Tripura, Meghalaya, Nagaland, and Karnataka — go to polls between February and May this year.

## Better outreach

Despite its best efforts, the BJP has only moderately been successful in reaching out to the Muslim community — it recently won the bypoll in UP's Rampur assembly constituency, the stronghold of Samajwadi Party's (SP) Azam Khan. In fact, the election was necessitated as sitting MLA Khan was disqualified following a sentence in a 2019 hate speech case.

There is also talk of elections in Jammu and Kashmir this year and PM Modi said the party should reach out to Sikhs, Christians, and the Bohra and Pasmenda communities among Muslims so as to dispel their sense of alienation. He said the party should not focus on votes but on bringing these communities within its fold.

Sources within the party told ThePrint a large section of the Christian community has



still not warmed up to the BJP. The party gets Christian votes in Goa but not in Kerala and the Northeastern states, they pointed out.

They added that farm laws, which were eventually repealed, alienated the Sikhs.

For expanding the party base, it has to reach out to communities that traditionally vote for Opposition parties, the PM said.

## Modi's image

In its resolution, the BJP national executive slammed the Opposition for portraying a negative image of Modi. The party's concern over the PM's image comes from Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's ongoing Bharat Jodo Yatra, which many feel has helped the Opposition party establish a connection with the public.

Modi's image is the party's most credible asset, said party leaders, adding that the coming G20 Summit will only enhance the PM's image as a "vishwa guru".

"The Opposition continuously ran negative campaigns against the BJP and used abusive language to attack the PM on many issues such as Pe-

gasus, Rafael deal, Enforcement Directorate money laundering, Central Vista, economic basis-reservation, demonetisation. All these cases were fought in court and the judgment has been in favour of the central government. The SC crushed the Opposition's negative campaigns and exposed them through legal responses," Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said to the press on the sidelines of the national executive meeting Monday.

Lauding the PM for boosting the country's image on the international stage, she added, "On the global stage, due to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's efforts, India's image has been enhanced, be it in the G20 (presidency), the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (chairmanship), or the UN Security Council short-term leadership."

## Focus on young voters

PM Modi asked the party to focus on the youth. Young voters comprise a huge votebank, said sources in the party. But unemployment is an issue that can alienate them, pushing them towards the Opposition, they said.

The PM suggested voters in the 18-25 age group be made aware of India's contemporary political history and the 'misgovernance and corruption' of the previous governments.

"Focus on creating an awareness among the youth....," he said.

Ways to expand voter base Set on expanding its base in the south, the party is promoting cultural exchanges between the north and south Indian states under Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat (programme to promote cooperation between different states/UTs) — the central government's Kashi Tamil Sangam was one such attempt in that direction.

The national executive resolution praised the PM for celebrating Veer Bal Diwas which was aimed at improving strained ties with the Sikh community.

Modi also called for the party to focus on border villages. The party, he said, must also play a role in the development of aspirational districts while running parallel programmes to tackle malnutrition and other such issues.

# India reports 128 new Covid cases, active caseload declines to 1,998

Agency  
New Delhi, Jan 18:

India logged 128 new coronavirus infections, while the active cases declined to 1,998, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Wednesday.

The Covid case tally was recorded at 4.46 crore (4,46,81,361).

The death toll stands at 5,30,728, with one each reported from Karnataka and Maharashtra, the data updated at 8 am stated.

The daily positivity was recorded at 0.07 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 has increased to 98.80 per cent, according to the health ministry website.

A decrease of 37 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 4,41,48,645, while the case fatality rate was recorded at 1.19 per cent. According to the ministry's

website, 220.18 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 3 and 50 lakh on September 16. It went past 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and surpassed the one-crore mark on December 19. The country crossed the grim milestone of four crore on January 25 last year.

# 21st Edition of India France Bilateral Naval Exercise - "Varuna 2023"

By Raju Vernekar  
Mumbai, Jan 18:

The 21st Edition of the Bilateral Naval Exercise between India and France — "Varuna 2023", which commenced on the Western Sea-board on Monday will be on till Friday.

While the bilateral exercise between the two navies was initiated in 1993, it was named as "Varuna" in 2001. Now it has become a hallmark of India — France strategic bilateral relationship.

From India the indigenous guided missile stealth destroyer INS Chennai, guided missile frigate INS Teg, maritime patrol aircraft P-8I and Dornier, integral helicopters and MiG29K fighter aircraft are participating, an official statement read.

The French Navy is being represented by the aircraft carrier Charles De Gaulle, frigates FS Forbin and Provence, support vessel FS Marne and maritime patrol aircraft Atlantique.

The exercise will witness



The Indian Navy frigate participating in exercise- "Varuna 2023".

advanced air defence exercises, tactical manoeuvres, surface firings, underway replenishment and other maritime operations. Units of both navies will endeavour to hone their war-fighting skills in maritime theatre, enhance their inter-operability to undertake multi-discipline operations in the maritime domain and demonstrate their ability as an integrated force to promote peace, security and stability in the region.

Having grown in scope and complexity over the years, this exercise provides an opportunity to learn from

each other's best practices. The exercise facilitates operational level interaction between the two navies to foster mutual cooperation for good order at sea, underscoring the shared commitment of both nations to security, safety and freedom of the global maritime commons.

Indo-France joint exercises are being held in different areas regularly. Both the countries have also built on their longstanding air force cooperation through the tactical bilateral exercise, "Garuda", held alternately in France and India.

# How to Beat Stress During JEE Preparation?



By: Vijay GarG

JEE is one of the most competitive exams in India. The exam is an entry point to the prestigious IIT, which is one of the premium institutions for engineering aspirants. Stress during the preparation for JEE is inherent;

A high level of stress can affect the mental space of the student and thereby cause them to deliver poor quality output. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the various methods through which JEE aspirants can combat this and come up with a fool-proof method for JEE groundwork.

Here are some strategies for dealing with stress during JEE preparation, as well as techniques that work:

## 1. Calibrating a routine

A well-defined routine is a much-needed requirement

while preparing for JEE. A preformatted schedule on the daily agenda will help the student confirm that they are on the right path and keep them highly motivated. A timetable of how to do things can help students better analyze them and complete the syllabus.

## 2. Exercise

Incorporating yoga or any other form of exercise can help to relieve stress to a great extent. Exercise can induce a good amount of calmness. The practice of meditation, which is synonymous with bringing inner and outer peace to the body, will also help in improving the concentration and direction for the preparation of JEE.

## 3. Short Breaks

Continuous hours of study can tire the brain and decrease its efficiency in absorbing information. An ample number of breaks is a requirement so that the brain doesn't get fuzzy over time. Short breaks can help revive the spontaneity of the brain and can result in better access to information and a better understanding of concepts. It can help students induce freshness into their mundane study hours and help them with greater mental capacity and a timely energy boost.

## 4. Eat a well-balanced diet!

When preparing for an exam, it is always ideal to stay away from junk food choices. Junk food does not add any kind of nutrition to the body and might hamper overall health. Taking in nutrient-dense foods will result in improved memory power. It will not make the brain run into a slumber mode. Fruits and vegetables have a very high amount of vitamins and will act as fuel for your steady preparation of JEE.

## 5. Sleep Well!

JEE preparation requires well-structured preparation. It will have intense study hours, memorization of concepts, and well, the list goes on!

Every student invests long hours in studying but fails to incorporate a good sleep schedule. This imbalance can have drastic effects on the body and elevate stress to an unknown limit. A good amount of sleep is an essential requirement while preparing for JEE. It can provide relaxation to the brain and the body and can help with better memory retention. The interpretation of a well-rested brain is more impeccable than that of a stressed brain.

## 6. Scalable Target

A goal-driven study is the most effective way to reflect and gain control over your

JEE preparation. But setting a goal which you have no chance of achieving can affect confidence. An unachievable target can mentally exhaust the aspirant and will, in turn, make them look down upon themselves. Charting out small targets will help them gain a sense of confidence; small steps can make the bigger picture rosier.

## 7. Quality over quantity!

An aspirant should not define the preparation in terms of quantity. Quantifying the efforts will not give any self-satisfaction; it can demoralise confidence. Bragging about the long study hours will not gain you any competitive advantage. A good preparation demonstrates how well the aspirant has absorbed conceptual knowledge. A long 12-hour study is nothing if the aspirant can not reciprocate the same in the examination.

## 8. The right study materials

Study material plays a key role in the preparation for JEE. There are numerous study materials available in various publications on the market, making selecting the most effective material an even more difficult task. In such a situation, it would be ideal to seek recommendations from students who have previously

taken the JEE exams. They can guide you in getting the best publications that will help in the seamless preparation of JEE. Before buying the JEE material, it would be good to take a quick look at the content and understand whether you are able to follow the concepts effectively. You can also use the study materials provided by the best engineering entrance coaching centres in Kerala.

## 9. Revision

A good revision is one of the best tips on how to beat stress during JEE preparation. It can affect your preparation positively. It can help you analyse your strengths and weaknesses. Understanding the weaknesses will help you concentrate more on those areas and will also help in effectively preparing those weak points.

## 10. Communication with friends and family

Aspirants should not get themselves lost in the preparation for JEE. They need to be in constant touch with friends and family and communicate at times of any difficulty. At times when the aspirants feel morally compromised, their families can help them elevate their mood and boost their self-confidence.

## Contd. from Page 2

# India Envisions a .....

Millions of citizens used the COWIN app to access the vaccine programme; thousands moved to online medical consultations; in remote areas, teleconsultation proved to be life-saving. We have witnessed in the last two years, an impressive increase in HealthTech start-ups in India. Government of India's free telemedicine service, eSanjeevani, has recently crossed a remarkable milestone of 90 million crore teleconsultations. India's platforms of tele-medicine have bridged the last mile delivery gaps of achieving targets of Universal Health.

Coverage (UHC), it is pertinent to note here that India is marching ahead to attain goals of UHC through the health assurance initiatives such as Ayushman Bharat PMJAY where more than 500 million people are eligible for free of cost tertiary healthcare, backed by technology to make it portable, scalable and paperless across states.

Under this priority, we plan to promote the Global Digital Public Health Goods — Telemedicine, Teleradiology, Teleophthalmology and even an e-ICU. CoWIN has been shared with several countries as a digital public health good. The collective efforts of G20 members

will result in creation of an ecosystem that provides open access to several LMICs for more equitable healthcare. India plans to draw a framework for the Global Initiative on Digital Health and harness the potential of artificial intelligence in building more resilient infrastructure.

During difficult phases of COVID-19, India carved a position for itself as one of the leaders in universal vaccination programmes. At a time when several countries endowed with better healthcare infrastructure have been challenged on several fronts, India has demonstrated how timely planning, efficient management of vaccination cold chains, R&D in vaccine development, focussed policy decisions and integrated implementation through strong Centre-State collaboration can achieve COVID vaccination of more than 2.2 billion doses.

Enriched with the experience, the G20 Presidency provides us the mandate to assume a leadership position for the Global South and propose a fresh vision of a healthier world order.

(The author is a Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare, and Chemicals and Fertilisers)

# Naga political issue: We will not allow any constitutional crisis in Nagaland, says CM Rio

Agency  
Kohima, Jan 18:

Nagaland government would not allow any constitutional crisis caused due to the civil society being adamant on not participating in the forthcoming Assembly election in the event that the Naga political issue remained unresolved, Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio on Tuesday said.

The solution to the much-expected Naga political issue depends on the negotiating parties and the legislators and common people can only put pressure for an early solution, Rio said.

The Chief Minister, who is likely to leave for New Delhi on Wednesday, welcomed the joint statement of the NSCN-IM and Naga National Political Groups (NNPG) declaring "unconditional commitment" to collaborate for the resolution of Naga political issues with the Central government.

"Everyone wants a solution to the Naga issue. The solution depends on the negotiating parties and not the common people... People can put pressure. All the 60 members of the Assembly are acting as facilitators and continuing their pressure too," he said.

Besides the Naga political

issue, the influential Eastern Nagaland People's Organisation (ENPO) remained firm to boycott the elections if their demand for a separate state — of 'Frontier Nagaland' — was not met before polls.

Despite the Nagaland government's repeated appeals, the powerful Naga group remained firm to boycott the Assembly elections.

Claiming that the six districts — Mon, Tuensang, Kiphire, Longleng, Noklak and Shamator — have been neglected for years, the ENPO has been demanding a separate state since 2010.

On the state government's

appeal to ENPO to reconsider its decision to boycott the state election to press for its separate state demand, Rio hoped that they would respond in a "positive manner".

The Centre has been holding separate negotiations with the dominant Naga outfit NSCN-IM since 1997 and the NNPG, comprising at least seven groups, since 2017.

A Framework Agreement was signed with NSCN-IM in 2015 and Agreed Position with NNPGs in 2017. The stalemate continued as the NSCN-IM remained firm on its demand for a separate flag and constitution for the Nagas.

# JP Nadda gets extension as BJP chief till June 2024

Agency  
New Delhi, Jan 18:

BJP president J P Nadda's term was extended till June next year at the party's national executive meeting on Tuesday, with Union Home Minister Amit Shah asserting they will win the 2024 Lok Sabha polls with a bigger mandate than 2019.

The widely expected development underlines the party's preference for continuity as it gears up for the all-important Lok Sabha polls, expected in April-May next year.

Announcing the decision, Shah told reporters here that Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, a former party president like him, moved the proposal of extending Nadda's tenure till June next year and the executive unanimously endorsed it.

Later in a tweet, Nadda, expressing gratitude towards Prime Minister Narendra Modi and all members of the BJP's national executive, said, "we have to form the BJP government in the next Lok Sabha elections with more than two-thirds majority under the leadership of Modi ji."

The BJP's parliamentary board has already approved the extension of Nadda's term

as the party president.

"I, on behalf of the party, express heartfelt gratitude to Nadda-ji for his committed leadership and contributions, and extend the best wishes for his future term," Shah said.

With Nadda set to lead the party during the Lok Sabha elections, he will be following the footsteps of his predecessor Shah, whose tenure was also extended so as to allow him to spearhead the organisation during the 2019 polls.

Shah expressed confidence that the BJP under Prime Minister Narendra Modi and party chief Nadda, will achieve a bigger win than the last general elections.

The minister lauded Nadda's leadership, saying he connected the party organisation with the service of people during the COVID-19 outbreak.

"During the pandemic, our party has done a lot of significant works under Nadda-ji's leadership; be it about providing food and rations to the poor or taking people to hospitals for check-ups and treatment," he added.

Shah further said that throughout Nadda's leadership term, the BJP has worked

on the principle of 'Seva Hi Sangathan' right from the booth till the national levels.

Noting that the party won many state assembly polls under Nadda, Shah said the BJP won 73 assembly bypolls out of 120 held during his tenure.

It was under Nadda's leadership that the BJP performed well in Bihar, and again formed the government in Maharashtra and Haryana, he added.

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

Talking about the recent victory in the Gujarat assembly polls, Shah said, "Under Nadda's leadership, the BJP organisation converted Modi's magical leadership into votes and the party registered a record-breaking victory by winning 156 assembly seats."

He further said that the booth strengthening programme and the 'Vijay Sankalp Rally' are among the biggest takeaways of Nadda's leadership.

Nadda had become the BJP president on January 20, 2020 for a term of three years.

# Saving one-horned rhinoceros

IT Correspondent  
Guwahati, Jan 18:

The incidents of rhinoceros poaching in various forest reserves of Assam in north-east India has decreased drastically. Brutal laws against the poachers, strengthening of ground staff inside the protected forest areas and increasing public awareness in the fringe localities of national parks and wildlife sanctuaries across the State have positively impacted the mission to save the one-horned rhinos. Unlike other parts of the globe, common people of Assam irrespective of their political, ethnic or religious differences, maintain a strong will to protect the giant animals.

For records only two rhinos were poached in Kaziranga National Park & Tiger Reserve since 1 January 2021 till date. The last incident took place probably in the last week of December 2021, as a decomposed carcass of a fully-grown (around 30 years old) female rhino was recovered inside the world famous forest reserve next month. As the precious horn was missing, for which the gigantic animal was appar-

ently hunted down, it could not be a natural death. But it was not confirmed when exactly the rhino was killed.

Chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma asserted that Assam recorded 'zero' rhino poaching cases in 2022 as a boost to the rhino conservation efforts. He also added that it was the first time in two decades that there was no incident of rhino poaching across the State. Native to the Indian subcontinent, the single horn rhino (also known as rhinoceros unicornis) is one of the worst affected rhino species. The reason behind the poaching of rhinos is due to the high demand for horns in a number of countries (including China) where people term it as a black ivory. A matured horn may fetch a huge sum of money in the international market. The animal enjoys great sexual power, as its mating time may continue for 45 minutes. So many people unscientifically believe that one can achieve the unusual power with the help of rhino horns (using it as a traditional viagra).

The rhino horns are also believed to have other medicinal values supposing to cure

the high fever, stomach ailment and cancer. Taiwan, Thailand, South Korea, Vietnam and the Middle East are also known to be huge markets for the horns, where the use of horns for medical purposes and scientific research are legalised. Rhinos are recognized as vulnerable by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and India's wildlife protection act gives enormous power to the rangers for protecting the grass-eating pachyderm. The veterinarians argue that rhino horns comprise the same protein that constitutes the formation of hair.

Rhinos are recognised as a pride to the people of Assam and the 800 square kilometer Kaziranga reserve supports around 2,613 priced animals (whereas the global population of one-horned rhinos is around 3,700). The UNESCO world heritage site on the south bank of mighty river Brahmaputra also gives shelter to over 150 Royal Bengal tigers & around 250 leopards, over 5500 Asiatic elephants, a sizable number of buffaloes, different species of deer, birds, fishes, etc.

Besides Kaziranga, other forest reserves namely Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary

(around 107 rhinos), Orang National Park (125) and Manas National Park (50) also support the rhino population to make a total count for Assam of over 2650 living rhinos. Every year, over 100 rhinos die because of natural causes in those forest reserves. Assam expects to increase the rhino population to 3,000 as the incidents of poaching are decreased following the deployment of ground forces with sophisticated weapons and other modern gadgets.

There was a time when Assam used to lose 27 rhinos to poachers in 2013 and 2014. Next year the count was reduced to 17, and 18 cases were reported in 2016. With the declining trend, 2017 witnessed only seven incidents of rhino poaching, followed by seven in 2018, three in 2019, two cases in 2020 and 2021. No less than 55 poachers were arrested last year, where four were killed in encounters. The development also attracted appreciation from Prime Minister Narendra Modi who complimented the government and people for maintaining efforts to conserve the critically endangered species.

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# Mass Destruction of Poppy...

A Press release by the Forest Dept said, "The Forest Department will continue these intensive operations in these Forest Divisions and will carry out operations in other Forest Divisions wherever poppy cultivation is detected by involving all concerned Departments. POR/ FIR will continue to be registered as per relevant Acts/ Rules for taking up illegal poppy plantations in Forest areas against persons responsible. Further, stern legal action will follow up. Altogether, 5 (five) FIRs have been filed against village Chiefs/ Cultivators/unknown persons.

Illicit poppy cultivation in forest areas violates provisions of the Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act 1985. The use of forest land for non-forest purposes violates the provision of the Forest (Conservation) Act 1980, the Indian Forest Act 1927, and the Manipur Forest Rules 2021. Poppy plantations have been found inside notified forest areas which is a clear violation of the Act/ Rules governing the Forests. The opium/ poppy is a key source of many narcotics and psychotropic drugs and leads to substance abuse in

society while poppy cultivation is a serious threat to the forest, environment, and surrounding areas. The deforestation and degradation due to poppy cultivation on vast tracts of forests have become one of the major causes of deforestation and degradation of forests in the State. Forest Department, therefore, makes an earnest appeal to all local communities to refrain from indulging in poppy cultivation and join hands in the 'War on Drugs' Campaign to eradicate poppy cultivation in the forest areas as well as protect the forests."

# Sports

# Saudi Arabia businessman bids USD 2.6 Million for Cristiano Ronaldo - Lionel Messi ticket

Agency  
Riyadh, Jan 18:

A Saudi real estate mogul won a ticket to see Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi face off in a friendly after bidding \$2.6 million at auction, an official said Tuesday.

The match on Thursday in Riyadh is set to pit Messi's Paris Saint-Germain against a select side made up of players from Ronaldo's new club Al Nassr and their Saudi rivals Al Hilal.

It will mark the first time Ronaldo has played any football in the kingdom since signing a contract with Al Nassr that runs until 2025 and is worth more than 200 million euros (\$214 million), according to sources close to the club.

The five-time Ballon d'Or winner is scheduled to make his Saudi Pro League debut for Al Nassr on Sunday.

To promote Thursday's friendly, Turki al-Sheikh, an



advisor at the Royal Court and head of Saudi Arabia's General Entertainment Authority, announced a charity auction for a special ticket that would come with perks like photo opportunities with players and access to the locker rooms.

Bidding started at 1 million Saudi riyals (\$266,000) and the auction closed at 11:30 p.m. local time on Tuesday.

Sheikh then announced on Twitter the winning bid of 10 million riyals (\$2.6 million) had come from Mushref al-

Ghamdi.

"Congratulations, you deserve it, and may God reward you with good," Sheikh said.

The proceeds from the auction are due to go to the national charity campaign known as Ehsan.

Besides Messi, PSG stars expected to play on Thursday include France striker Kylian Mbappe and Achraf Hakimi, who last year in Qatar helped make Morocco the first Arab and African team to reach the World Cup semi-finals.

The Saudi select team includes Salem Al-Dawsari, who scored the winning goal in the Green Falcons' shock defeat of Argentina in the World Cup's group stage.

Oil-rich monarchy Saudi Arabia, which has been snapping up sports assets as part of a drive to soften its austere image, is often accused of "sportswashing", or using sport to distract attention from human rights controversies.

Ronaldo is expected to receive a combined 400 million euros in the kingdom, including a separate payment for his work as an ambassador for an anticipated World Cup bid for Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Greece, according to sources close to Al Nassr.

# FIH World Cup 2023: Belgium play out 2-2 draw against Germany

Agency  
Bhubaneswar, Jan 18:

Defending champions Belgium found the equaliser with six minutes left in the match to play out a thrilling 2-2 draw against Germany and keep themselves in the hunt for a direct quarterfinal qualification in the FIH Men's World Cup here on Tuesday.

Cedric Charlier gave Belgium the lead in the ninth minute with a field goal but Germany came back strongly and struck two goals through Wellen Niklas (22nd minute) and Tom Grambusch (52nd, penalty stroke).

Victor Wegnez scored a field goal in the 54th minute to save Belgium from defeat in the Pool B match.

Belgium and Germany are on four points from two matches and the group topper

will be decided in their respective last matches on January 20 at the Bira Munda Stadium in Rourkela.

Belgium take on Japan while Germany face South Korea. Belgium are currently on top of the pool on the basis of better goal difference of plus five as against plus three of Germany.

South Korea came back from one goal down to beat Japan 2-1 in an earlier Pool A match.

Lee Jung-un struck two field goals (eighth and 23th minutes) after Ken Nagayoshi had given South Korea the lead in the first minute through a penalty corner.

South Korea are at third spot with three points. They had lost to Belgium 0-5 in their first match. Japan had also lost their first match against Germany 0-3.