

23rd edition of Island Tourism Festival gets off to colourful start CS urges govt officials to reach out to masses with Gol schemes during GSA



ROOPA LALL

PORT BLAIR, APRIL 18/- The 23rd edition of Island Tourism Festival organized by the Department of Tourism, Andaman and Nicobar Administration got off to a glittering start on Wednesday.

The Chief Secretary, A&N Administration, Mr Anande Majumdar inaugurated the festival as chief guest at a gala event organised in the auditorium of Govt. Girls School here this

evening. The Adhyaksha, Zilla Parishad, South Andaman, Baby Fareeda, DGP, Smt Nuzhat Hassan, Smt. Rupa Ray and senior officers of the Administration were present at the inaugural function. The festival will continue up to 22nd April, 2018.

In his address, the Chief Secretary stated that the festival is a unique event and is an opportunity to showcase the rich cultural heritage of the Islands to the people visiting the Islands, including

the artists from different cultural zones of the country. This year, some new initiatives have been taken to add new events in the Festival, such as wellness tourism, adventure water sports, kite making & kite flying, Nicobarese Canoe racing etc. he said.

The Chief Secretary said, for the first time, the event is being organized at a new venue, instead of the earlier ITP Ground; and sought feedbacks from all participants as well as the

visitors to the event venue, whether the idea of conducting the ITP in a different venue was good.

The Chief Secretary also appealed to the officials of the Administration for involving the Islanders in the implementation of the Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (GSA) that has been launched by the Prime Minister so that it can be achieved within the timeframe. He also expressed gratitude to all the Departments, especially Tourism and Arts & Culture Departments, for their efforts in organising the Festival.

Welcoming the gathering, the Secretary (Tourism), Mr Ramesh Verma informed that a number of new attractive events have been added in the Festival this time. The main attraction will be the performances of the cultural troupes from South Zone Cultural Center (SZCC) and East Zone Cultural Center (EZCC), including Lakshadweep Island. For the first time, besides the Islands artists, he said and expressed hope that the visiting artists will enjoy their stay here and exchange knowledge of their culture and lifestyles with the Isles' artists. The Director, Art & Culture, Smti Geetika Sharma proposed the vote of thanks.

Around 240 artists from SZCC, EZCC and Sangeet Natak Akademi, along with a 28 member Group from Lakshadweep under 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat' programme, are participating in the Festival, representing Rajasthan, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, Haryana, West Bengal; besides, 58 local cultural groups, comprising of about 1000 artists.



Picture shows employees from different government department including Police, Agriculture, Forest and PRI members participating in a cleanliness drive as part of observance of Swachh Bharat Parv near Helipad, Mayabunder in North Andaman on Wednesday. (Pix: KURMA RAO)

CG Commander reviews progress of infra projects at Hut Bay



PORT BLAIR, APRIL 18/- The Commander Coast Guard Region (A&N), Inspector General K R Suresh, TM, visited Hut Bay on Wednesday to review the progress of infrastructure projects. The COMCG(A&N) and Smt Jayanthi Suresh, President Tatrakshika (A&N) Region

laid foundation stone for Sailors in-living accommodation at Coast Guard OTM complex, Vijayanagar, Hut Bay by illuminating the lamp, performing "Bhumi puja". Dignitaries from various agencies including Central/ State Government organizations from Little Andaman were present during

the ceremony. The President Tatrakshika (A&N) planted trees within the premises of the complex to encourage green environment and also to inspire CG personnel in developing hobbies towards gardening. The Commander Coast Guard Region (A&N) also assessed the progress on

various ongoing constructions at the site. The Flag officer, while addressing the CG fraternity, emphasized the importance of continued efforts by all towards development of infrastructure and asked everyone to continue with the same zeal and enthusiasm to achieve new goals.



Picture shows fire fighters of Rangat led by Inspector Dilip Karmakar conducted a fire safety demonstration at the STS Bus Terminus on Wednesday. As part of observance of Fire Safety Week, lectures on fire safety was also presented. Employees of the Transport Department and passengers witnessed the demonstration. (Pix: V Senthil Kumar)

Vigil mounted on illegal transport of Paduak furniture in Middle Andaman

V SENTHIL KUMAR

RANGAT, APRIL 18/- In the wake of mushrooming timber business in the North and Middle Andaman region, the Forest Department in Middle Andaman has intensified vigilance on transport of furniture items particularly those made of paduak. Several furniture items made of paduak have been seized by the Forest Department from trucks transporting the material without proper documents in the past 15 days, as per information.

The Forest Department has reportedly directed beat employees deployed in Forest Check Posts to intercept all transport vehicles and conduct inspection of the timber materials loaded. During intercepts conducted in the past few days, huge quantity of furniture items made of paduak has been seized after the transporter failed to produce proper documents like bills etc.

"Many government employees in the North and Middle Andaman district purchase furniture made of paduak from local manufacturers on relatively low prices and without obtaining bills against the purchases. After their transfer to the South Andaman region, they get the paduak furniture transported to their homes. The practice has increased manifold in the past few years giving rise to illegal sale of furniture made of paduak here. The initiative of the Forest Department has drawn accolades as it will put a curb on illegal trade of timber particularly paduak," said a resident of Rangat.



With rising temperatures, fishes vanish from markets at Rangat



V SENTHIL KUMAR

RANGAT, APRIL 18/- With mercury levels on the rise, fishes have vanished from the local markets at Rangat in Middle Andaman. As per reports, for the past more than seven days, not a single variety of fish was found available in the retail market here leaving consumers at their wit's end about the unprecedented scarcity.

Local fishermen claim that fishes have moved to deeper seas due to the rising temperatures causing scarcity of the commodity. "Majority of the fishermen in these islands carry out fishing activity close to shores and are not properly equipped to undertake deep sea fishing. In the Middle Andaman region, it seems that fishes have moved to deeper seas due to the rising temperatures. The situation is likely to become normal after heat levels subside," said a fisherman.

"We have been compelled to change our menu at home since fishes were

Foreign yacht berths at Campbell Bay



BALRAM SINGH

CAMPBELL BAY, APRIL 18/- A foreign yacht, SY VIRGINIA, made a port call at Campbell Bay on Monday. The yacht with three Russian nationals on board developed some technical snags following which it berthed the jetty here. According to reports, the vessel was on its way to Thailand from Jordan and last called at Maldives. The engine of the vessel stopped functioning due to over-heating. The ship crew has reportedly sought assistance from the administration for supply of spares to rectify the fault.

EVENTS TODAY

- PUBLIC HEARING**
Lt Governor to hold Public Hearing for common citizens at APWD Guest House, Mayabunder from 9 am to 10 am.
- SAMMELAN**
Hasya Kavi Sammelan from 6 pm in the auditorium of Govt. Girls. Sec. School. ITP 2018
- Island Tourism Festival at Marina Park, road adjoining Marina Park, Rajiv Gandhi Water Sports Complex, Netaji Stadium, Andaman Club, Fisheries Museums and Govt. Girls Sr. Sec. School campus. Till April 22.
- FIRING PRACTICE**
By Unit 280(1) Fd Wkpy copy EME at Chinthe Long Range, Brichgunj from 9.30 am to 1 pm.
- SAILING**
MV Bharat Seema to sail for Hut Bay at 9 pm from Haddo wharf.
- OBSERVANCE**
Andaman and Nicobar Police Fire Services observing Fire Services Week with various events. Till April 20.
- CAMPAIGN**
Village Self-Governance campaign being conducted in these islands. Till May 5.

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