

Himachal cabinet to withdraw 'politically-motivated' cases

DHARAMSALA, JAN 11 /- The Himachal Pradesh Cabinet has decided to withdraw all "politically-motivated" cases filed during the previous Congress dispensation, including those against the Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association (HPCA) led by BJP MP Anurag Thakur.

The Cabinet, in a meeting chaired by chief minister Jai Ram Thakur, also decided to wind up Himachal Pradesh Beverages Limited (HPBL) set up last year to handle liquor trade in the state. It decided to review all cases registered during the erstwhile

Congress dispensation and withdraw those that "smack of political vendetta". Any decision in such cases would be taken on the basis of merit, the official said. The cases over land allocation to the HPCA attained political significance as it was headed by Anurag Thakur and the decision to allot land was taken when his father Prem Kumar Dhumal was the chief minister.

The Cabinet also decided to wind up Himachal Pradesh Beverages Limited (HPBL) set up last year to eliminate wholesalers and handle the liquor trade. The

BJP, while in the Opposition, criticised the decision of the government and alleged irregularities in procurement and sale of liquor.

The government also decided to initiate inquiry into losses suffered by the government after the move. The previous government had suspended licences issued to wholesalers and designated HPBL as sole agency for procurement and sale of liquor to retail vendors. The Cabinet also decided to fix the responsibility on officers, responsible for the creation of HPBL and revert to the old policy.

The cabinet also gave its nod to disengage the counsels including Kapil Sibal, P Chidambaram and Salman Khurshid for representing the state in various cases, including those against the HPCA. The Cabinet has sought a report on whose direction a huge fee was paid to the advocates to represent the state.

The cabinet also decided to remove all the additional and assistant Advocate Generals appointed by the previous government and appoint a committee for selecting the new appointees.

BJP Congress release list of star campaigners for Rajasthan by-polls

JAIPUR, JAN 11 /- The BJP and Congress today announced their list of star campaigners aimed to sway the voters in the by-elections due in Ajmer and Alwar Lok Sabha constituencies and Mandalgarh (Bhilwara) Assembly constituency on January 29.

To launch an aggressive campaigning in the poll-bound constituencies, the BJP declared a list of 40 star campaigners, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, BJP national president Amit Shah, Union home minister Rajnath Singh, Union transport minister Nitin Gadkari and chief minister Vasundhara Raje. The list released by the state BJP office also includes names of Union ministers Piyush Goyal, C R Chaudhary, P R Chaudhary, Arjun Ram Meghwal, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, national general secretary Bhupendra Yadav, organisation secretary Ram Lal, national joint secretary of the organisation V Sankar MP Dushyant Singh and his wife Niharika Raje, MP Arjun Meena and other ministers of the government. Surprisingly, the name of Ajmer MLA and state school education minister Vasudev Devnani has not been mentioned in the list.

Rise in temp gives Kashmir residents respite from cold

SRINAGAR, JAN 11 /- There was some respite for residents of Kashmir from intense cold as the minimum temperature rose by several degrees at most places in the valley and Ladakh region. There was a considerable improvement in the minimum temperature in the valley and Ladakh region on Wednesday night. Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, recorded a low of minus 3 degrees Celsius, nearly three notches up from minus 6.3 degrees the previous night which was the coldest night of this winter so far. Record low temperature over last few days in the city had led to freezing of fringes of famous Dal Lake and other water bodies as well as water supply pipes.

An official of the MET department said the night temperature in Qazigund in south Kashmir settled at minus 2.8 degrees Celsius up from yesterday's minus 5.4 degrees.

Kerala govt permits prisoners to donate organs to close relatives

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JAN 11 /- The Kerala government today decided to permit prisoners in state jails to donate their organs to close relatives, but with certain conditions.

The decision was taken at the cabinet meeting chaired by chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan. "The prisoners can henceforth donate their organs to close relatives and the government has decided to make necessary amendments in the Kerala Prisons and Correctional Services (Management) Act 2014," a



Team members of Ice Hockey tournament from the local villages during the inauguration of the match organised by ITBP under Civic Action Programme at an altitude of 11,200ft, in Leh on Thursday.

J&K's accession to India was people's will: Culture minister

NEW DELHI, JAN 11 /- Jammu and Kashmir's accession to India was the will of the people of the state, culture minister Mahesh Sharma today said.

Sharma was inaugurating an exhibition at the National Archive Museum here commemorating 70 years of the state's accession to India. The exhibition has on display war diaries with operational trails, the Indo-Pak war of 1947-48, original letters, telegrams, documents, and citations. All these have been publicly shared by the ministry of defence for the first time.

"The purpose of curating this (exhibition) is to show the young generation how Kashmir became a part of India. It (the accession) was the will of the people of Kashmir," Sharma said. "Maharaja Hari Singh, when he signed this instrument (of accession), only after that, I repeat, only after that,

the Indian forces went to that area. This need to be showcased," the minister said. According to him, people of Kashmir have been "sometimes questioned" but they have copied the Gandhian thought and philosophy and want to be in India. "and that has been rightly showcased by this exhibition through the pictures," said Sharma.

He urged the youth to visit the exhibition to know more about the accession of then 'rhyasats' (princely states) to the Indian Union. "This is what our Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision is of 'shantarat, shreshtha bharat' (United India, superior India)," he said. Asked about the presence of divisive elements in the state, Sharma said the prime minister and the people of Kashmir had been giving them a befitting replies over the years. "And more such replies will follow," said Sharma.

Ex-BJP MP Nana Patole returns to Congress

NEW DELHI, JAN 11 /- Former BJP MP Nana Patole, who quit the ruling party following differences with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on agrarian issues, today said he has rejoined the Congress.

Patole, who resigned from the Lok Sabha last month over the Centre's alleged poor handling of agrarian issues, had left the Congress to join the BJP ahead of the 2014 elections. He won the Bhandara-Gondiya parliamentary seat in Maharashtra. "Yes, I have joined the Congress. I will take whatever responsibility the party gives me, either at the national or the state level," Patole told news agency over phone from Yavatmal. He said he would continue

government press release read. However, the prisoner needs to meet certain conditions for the process to take place. Like, the organ donation can be made by prisoners to their close relatives only. Also, they have to take sanction from the concerned court, the same which convicted them, besides the medical board nod for any such organ donation.

"It was also resolved that the period the prisoner is hospitalised post donation, will be considered as parole and the hospital expenses will be met by the jail department," the release added. The release also made it clear of there being 'no relaxation in prison term' for the prisoner following the organ donation. Notably, the government took the decision on hearing about the experience of P Sukumaran, a convict serving life sentence in Kannur central jail, who had sought permission to donate one of his kidneys.

However, before a decision could have been taken, the patient in question had passed away.

TN transport strike puts question mark on Pongal festivity

CHENNAI, JAN 11 /- Prolonged protest by transport workers of Tamil Nadu, which entered eighth day today, has put a question mark over the travel plans of Tamilians moving to their hometowns to celebrate the harvest festival of 'Pongal' on January 14.

People were unable to book tickets as booking counters remained closed at the Chennai Mofussil Bus Terminus here for the third day. Usually, heavy rush is witnessed during the Pongal season when scores of people working in other parts of the state and elsewhere travel home to celebrate the festival with their families. The state government is also trying to address the situation by employing temporary drivers possessing valid driving licenses to ply the vehicles.

Quota demand: Maharashtra gov't starts survey of Maratha community members in villages

Mumbai, Jan 11 /- The Maharashtra government is conducting a sample survey of the Maratha community members in over 700 villages of the state, ahead of the deadline set by the Maratha Kranti Morcha over its demand of reservation.

According to Maharashtra State Backward Class Commission chairman Justice (retired) M G Gaikwad, the sample survey has been undertaken for data collection to ascertain the economic backwardness within the community to justify its demand for quota in public service and educational institutions.

The Maratha organisations in Maharashtra last month gave an ultimatum to the state government that it should address their demands chief among them being reservations for the community by February 10. They plan to revive the agitation after February 10, the birth anniversary of Maratha warrior king Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

Gaikwad said the survey will focus on three main bases the financial, educational and employment status of the Maratha community members.

"The result of the survey would be assessed by the commission once it is completed," he said and added that the two villages from each of the 356 tehsils in Maharashtra and some municipal councils will be covered under the sample survey.

The selection of villages has been done by the regional officers of the commission. He said further, Quotas for Marathas, a politically influential community that constitutes around 30 per cent of the state's population, has been a hugely contentious issue. The Bombay High Court had in 2014 disallowed 16 per cent reservation for them in government services and educational institutions.

Kamala Mills fire: 7 even-day police custody for '1 Above' pub owners

MUMBAI, JAN 11 /- Jigar Sanghvi, Kripesh Sanghvi, and Abhijeet Mankar, the co-owners of '1 Above' pub, arrested in connection with the December 29 Kamala Mills fire that claimed 14 lives, were today sent to police custody for seven days.

They were produced at Bhoiwada court in Dadar today which remanded them to police custody till January 17, senior Inspector Ahmed Pathan of N M Joshi Marg police station said.

While the Sanghvi brothers were arrested from suburban Andheri on Wednesday night, Mankar was arrested earlier today from Marine Lines area of the city, police said. The three had been on the run since the fire took place in the early hours of December 29.

They have been booked for culpable homicide not amounting to murder as well as other offences of the Indian

Penal Code. Earlier, the police had arrested Abhijeet Kariya for allegedly sheltering the three and also two managers of the pub.

Initially, a case was filed against '1 Above's' management, but later, cases were filed against owners of Mojo's Bistro as well, after a fire brigade report stated that the blaze had originated from the latter.

One of the owners of Mojo's Bistro, Yug Pathak, has been arrested while his partner Yug Tulli is still at large. Pathak is the son of K K Pathak, a former Director General of Police (DGP) of Maharashtra.

Police said Tulli was spotted at Hyderabad airport the day before yesterday but disappeared from the spot after he was unable to fly.

On December 29, a fire had swept through the two pubs in Kamala Mills compound in central Mumbai, resulting in the death of 14 people.

State Notes

MP govt asks schools to hold Surya Namaskar sessions today

BHOPAL, JAN 11 /- The Madhya Pradesh government has directed all educational institutions in the state to hold Surya Namaskar and Pranayam sessions on January 12, to mark the birth anniversary of spiritual leader Swami Vivekananda. However, it also made it clear that participation in the Surya Namaskar or sun salutations would not be mandatory. Surya Namaskar will be performed in all academic institutions from 9 am tomorrow," a government press release said today.

Three Nepalese held in UP for propagating Christianity

SHAHJAHANPUR, JAN 11 /- Three Nepali nationals were arrested here for allegedly propagating Christianity, the police said today. Indri Bahadur Tamad and Mek Bahadur, residents of Sindhpur Chowk, and Shukra Rai of Makwanpur in Nepal had arrived in the district three days ago and were residing in Town Hall locality. They were arrested on Wednesday after locals complained that they were propagating Christianity and distributing some literature in Osman Bagh area, Police Circle officer Sunil Shukla said today. The locals alleged that when they objected to such activities, the Nepalese got into an argument on religion and passed comments on the Hindu Gods, Shukla said.

Kejriwal to address rally in Maharashtra today

MUMBAI, JAN 11 /- Delhi chief minister and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) organizer Arvind Kejriwal will address a rally at the birthplace of Jijabai, mother of Maratha warrior king Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in Buldhana on Friday. Kejriwal will address the rally at Sindkhed Raja in Buldhana district, and pay tributes on her birth anniversary, party sources said. Every year, lakhs of people, mostly from the politically dominant Maratha community, gather at the place to pay their respects to the King's mother, Jijabai. Bahadur had initially denied permission for the rally citing law and order issues, but the rally, slated tomorrow morning, will be held as planned after AAP leaders took up this issue with chief minister Devendra Fadnis and senior police officials, the sources said.

Uttarakhand madrasas to teach Sanskrit

DEHRADUN, JAN 11 /- The lower committee of Uttarakhand Madrasa Education Board (UMEB) has given its nod to a proposal seeking inclusion of Sanskrit and Computer Science as optional subjects in madrasas all over the state from the next academic session. At present, madrasas in the state offer Maths, Science, Ayush and Social Science as optional subjects. The lower committee of the board on Wednesday cleared the proposal for inclusion of Sanskrit and Computer Science as optional subjects, UMEB deputy registrar Akhlaq Ahmad told news agency PTI.

Hiring of Vehicle at Alipurduar Division
E-Tender Notice No. S&T/APU/25, dated: 09-01-2018. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following work:
E-Tender No.: AP-ST-07-2017; Name of work: Hiring of 1 (one) No. Innova/ Scorpio/ Tata Safari for official use of S&T Department of Division in N.F. Railway. Advertiser Tender Value: Rs. 51,400/-; Earnest Money: ₹17,000/-. E-tenders will be closed at 11:30 hrs. on 12-02-2018 and will be opened at 10:30 hrs. on 15-02-2018. The complete information with tender document of above work will be available in website www.ireg.gov.in
DRM/S&T, Alipurduar (W)
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
HIRING OF NON AC DIESEL OPERATED MOTOR VEHICLE WITH DRIVERS
E-Tender Notice No.: 72W-2/APU/25, dated: 09-01-2018. Name of Work: Hiring of 3 (Three) Nos. non AC Diesel operated motor vehicle with license drivers for official use of ADENHQ/APDJ, ADEN/Estu/APDJ from Alipurduar Jn. to any stations of Alipurduar Jn. for a period of 24 months. Advertiser Tender Value: ₹33,29,221.32/-; Earnest Money: ₹66,500/-; E-tender will be closed at 13:00 hrs. of 12-02-2018 and opened at 15:00 hrs. of 12-02-2018. The complete information with tender document of above work will be available in the website www.ireg.gov.in
Divisional Railway Manager (W) Alipurduar Jn.
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile