



THE ECHO OF INDIA

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Coordination glitches spell doom for Garacharma families



ROOPA LALLI

PORT BLAIR, MAY 31/- Two families at Garacharma Ward no. 2 have been residing under perpetual fear of a tree crashing incident for the past many years. Cyclone Mora passed without causing much damage. 'Vardah' inflicted huge devastation in the past, but it's the confusion and lack of coordination between government agencies, which is taking a toll on the households again this monsoon spell. According to reports, a meeting held under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary way back in 2016 empowered the Andaman Public Works Department to remove the dangerous tree stands along the roadside and near government buildings. The Sub-Divisional Magistrate is the competent authority to grant permission to fell/ removal of trees standing dangerously in individual lands. Further, the Forest Department was authorized to trim or cut trees within the forest reserve areas. As per the resolution, the Sub-Divisional Magistrate of South Andaman, in the month of August 2016, issued a conditional order directing upon the Executive Engineer of Construction Division-III, APWD, South Andaman, to cut or trim the dangerous tree branches near the semi-RCC houses of Smt Seetha and Smt Laxmi constructed over the said government land reportedly at Swachh Bharat Colony in Garacharma to prevent any calamity. Contravening the order, the Assistant Engineer of Construction Division-III, in his report to the Executive Engineer, maintained that the complainants constructed the houses right below the massive twigs of the tree and without removing the structures, trimming or felling of the trees is practically impossible. The agency also demanded that the case may be forwarded to the Forest Department or other specialized agencies having expert machinery to fell a tree having girth of 5.20 dia. "Stormy weather can send the tree crashing down on our houses any time resulting in huge loss of property and life. We have been raising our concerns with the government agencies for long. The Sub-Divisional Magistrate issued an order last year directing the APWD to take necessary steps to prune the tree. However, no action has been taken in this regard till date. In fact, the government agencies appear to shrug off their responsibility to ensure safety of the masses," said a member of one of the distraught families.

Illegal sale of PDS kerosene detected at Police Lines



ROOPA LALLI

PORT BLAIR, MAY 31/- Acting on complaints, a team of Civil Supplies Department led by Assistant Controller of Legal Metrology, Mr. Rajesh, raided a shop near Police Lines and seized 10 litres of blue kerosene meant to be distributed by the government through the Public Distribution System (PDS). A case has, however, not been registered against the owner of the shop, Channai Shree and the file has been sent to the Chief Secretary of the UT Administration. According to sources, the Chief Secretary will now take a call whether to register a case against the shop owner or issue a stern warning considering the quantity of the seizure.

LG chairs 8th meeting of State Planning Board

Rs. 4263.28 cr for Action Plan 2017-18, Vision 2030, plan till 2024 approved

PORT BLAIR, MAY 31/- The 8th meeting of the Andaman & Nicobar State Planning Board (ANSPB) was held in the conference hall of Megapode Resort on Wednesday under the chairmanship of the Lt. Governor, Prof. Jagdish Mukhi, who is also the Chairman of A&N State Planning Board. During the meeting, the Vision-2030, 7-year Strategy up to 2024 and three year Action Plan 2017-2020 for sustainable and equitable development of Andaman and Nicobar Islands was approved. The meeting was attended among others, by the Member of Parliament, Shri. Bishnu Pada Ray, Chief Secretary, Shri. Anindo Majumdar, Adhyaksh Zilla Parishad (South Andaman), Shri. Jaydeep Kumar Dev, Adhyaksh (North & Middle Andaman), Shri. Saw Tathu, Chairperson (PBM), Shri. B. Eswar Rao, Chairperson (Social Welfare Advisory Board), Dr. Poonam Arora, Principal Secretary (Planning)-cum-Member Secretary (ANSPB), Shri. Raajiv Yaduvanshi and senior officers of the Administration. Addressing the gathering, the Lt. Governor said the feasibility of the proposals and plans formulated and presented by the respective Heads of Departments will be looked into for implementation. He also exhorted the Officers to work with honesty and utmost commitment in realizing the plans laid out by each Department. Expressing satisfaction over the development taking place in A&N Islands and in achieving the targets, the Lt. Governor remarked that A&N Islands have made remarkable progress in various sectors and is No. 1 in achieving the targets, for which, we should be proud of. He lauded the officers of the Administration for their concerted efforts in this regard and hailed the level of awareness among the PRI representatives. The Member of Parliament, Chairperson, DPC (South Andaman), Chairperson, DPC (North & Middle Andaman), Chairperson (PBM), Chairperson (SWAB) and Chairperson, DPC (Nicobar) gave their valuable suggestions/ views for inclusion in the document during the sectoral presentation. The suggestions include grant of fund



for back log works of PRIs, starting of medical ship to cater to the needs of far flung needy patients, construction and maintenance of rural roads under PMCSY II, establishment of Jal Board for better management of drinking water, construction of sea wall at different parts of the Islands, upgradation of ports and jetties, improvement in level of education especially in Maths, English and Science as well as infrastructure upgradation, prevention of banks erosion, compensation to PBM on loss of octroi, shortage of staff in Zilla Parishad Offices, strengthening of CSCs, increase in the number of seats in the chartered flights, especially the chartered flight between Port Blair and Vizag. Secretaries of major departments viz. Shipping, Port Management Board, Rural Development & Panchayat, APWD, Power, Forest, Information Technology, Health, Education, Police, Tourism, Social Welfare, Civil Aviation & Transport, etc. gave PPT presentation on the sectoral Vision, Strategy and Action Plan for their Departments. Earlier, the Member Secretary welcomed the august body and briefed about the process of the making of the Vision, Strategy Action Plan and financial outlays in his Power Point presentation. The Government of India has discontinued the system of Five Year Plans & Annual Plans and distinction of Plan and Non-Plan. The Government of India has adopted a new system i.e. Vision, Strategy and Action in view of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be attained by 2030. The NITI Aayog has advised the Administration to prepare Vision, Strategy, Action Plan for Andaman and Nicobar Islands with effect from 2017-18. The A & N Administration has taken proactive steps to introduce the new system of preparation of developmental plan in the Islands. Andaman and Nicobar Administration is following decentralized planning, thus the Administration has all the local bodies to participate in the exercise of formulation of the documents for bringing out a realistic development plan keeping in view the Hon'ble

Prime Minister's vision of 'Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas'. Gram Sabha, meeting of Panchayat Samitis, Zilla Parishads, Island Tribal Councils and Municipal Council were convened for prioritising the local requirements for inclusion in Vision, Strategy & Action Plan of local bodies and line departments. District level documents so prepared were placed before the A & N State Planning Board in the meeting. The Member of Parliament, Chairperson, DPC (South Andaman), Chairperson, DPC (North & Middle Andaman), Chairperson (PBM), Chairperson (SWAB) and Chairperson, DPC (Nicobar) gave their valuable suggestions/ views for inclusion in the document during the sectoral presentation. The Chief Secretary, A&N Administration concluded the meeting by expressing with thanks to all members who participated in the meeting and for their valuable contributions for improving the documents. The Chief Secretary assured the board that the suggestions have been taken note off and will be examined & implemented in letter and spirit. The Board under the chairmanship of the Lt. Governor has approved the Vision, Strategy and Action Plan with the suggestions offered by the members. Sectoral outlay of Rs. 4263.28 crores for the 2017-18 as proposed in the Action Plan 2017-18 has also been approved by the Board.

Kolkata tourists accuse WB-based Travel Agency of fraud

M SURESH KUMAR

PORT BLAIR, MAY 31/- A group of tourists from Kolkata accused a travel agency based in North 24 Parganas, West Bengal for committing fraud worth lakhs of rupees. Altogether, 22 members from 10 families mostly elderly persons approached the Police Station Aberdeen on Wednesday to register a complaint against the owner of the travel agency, named Boutic Travels Pvt. Ltd having address at 4, West Ghosh Para Road, Shyam Nagar, North 24 Parganas, West Bengal alleging defraud and breach of agreement of the tour package. The police, however, asked the tourists to register the complaint at the concerned police station in West Bengal after which the visitors departed for Kolkata this afternoon. According to the tourists, they booked a travel package on May 2 this year worth Rs. 4,06,000 for a seven day tour to these islands from May 24 for 22 persons. The entire payment was made in advance to the travel agency. But in the early hours next day, we were 'thrown out' of the hotel as there was no reservation for us and eventually he had to seek accommodation at Gold Star Beach Resort," said a member of the group. "The travel agency even did not arrange for our return tickets from Havelock and we reached Port Blair in two batches. Despite Neil Island being part of the itinerary, the travel agency did not arrange for our Neil visit. After returning back to Port Blair, we stayed at Aries Hotel for three days. But to our shock, the hotel staff informed us today that the travel agency has not paid the lodging charges. Moreover, the travel agency booked only 15 tickets for the group while we had to purchase the remaining seven on steep fares. We did not expect such unprofessional conduct from the owner of the travel agency, who despite receiving the entire payment in advance, forced us to face numerous hardships during the tour," said the member. "Left with no other option, we approached the local police station. After giving a patient hearing, the police sub inspector spoke to the travel agent over phone and instructed him to clear all the payments by 5 pm today after which we were let off 'by the hotel staff,' added the visitor.

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EVENTS TODAY

- Exams: Written examination for admission to RMC, Dehradun to be conducted at TGCE from 10 am to 12 noon and from 2 pm to 3.30 pm.
- Firing practice: By CRPF Unit, Dollydang, at Police Firing Range, Bilrine from 6am to 12noon.
- Sailing: MV Nancowry scheduled to sail for Vizagat 4 pm from Hadda Wharf. MV Campbell Bay to sail for Campbell Bay via Hut Bay, Chowra, Teressa and Nancowry at 7 am from Haddowharf.
- Yoga: Free yoga classes for general public on Common Yoga Protocol (CYP) by the Yoga unit of AYUSH Hospital at Girls School from 5 am to 6:30 am and from 4 pm to 5:30 pm in the auditorium of Govt. Girls Senior Secondary School. Till June 21.
- Coaching: Summer coaching camp, hobby classes in swimming for boys and girls below 16 years by the Department of Sports.

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